

CONSERVATIVE MEETING AT MIRFIELD.

Under the auspices of the Mirfield District Conservative Association, a public meeting was held last night in the Town Hall, Mirfield, for the purpose of hearing an address by Mr. R. A. YERBURGH, M.P. for Chester. Mr. J. H. WHEATLEY (President of the Morley Division Conservative Association) presided. There was a good attendance, though the hall was not nearly filled.

Mr. F. ELLIS (President of the Spen Valley Conservative Association) moved the following resolution:—

That this meeting expresses its unabated confidence in Her Majesty's Ministers, and congratulates them on the success which has attended their endeavours to make the present session productive of useful legislation for the United Kingdom.

Mr. J. A. BROOKE (President of the Huddersfield Conservative Association), in seconding the resolution, alluded to the recent Liberal meeting at Huddersfield at which the song—"God Save Ireland" was sung. They might have heard, he said, something about the singing of that song in a vast public meeting in praise of the Manchester murderers. He was happy to tell them that the Huddersfield Junior Liberal Association, under whose auspices that song was sung, had, with tolerable frankness, confessed their error; and expressed their regret for it. It seemed that the whole thing was a mistake from beginning to end. The song was chosen by one of their secretaries, without consultation with any of his superiors or co-ordinates or subordinates. It was sung by mistake, and yet, to show the slippery nature of the ground upon which Gladstonians stood at the present time, the whole of the meeting, and the whole of the platform, with no less than five Members of Parliament upon it, sung that song which they now repudiated with indignant horror, and with a fervour which was perfectly extraordinary. Platform and people rose, and they sang that song with honours which they paid only to the National Anthem. That showed the deplorable weakness of the Gladstonian position at the present time—(cheers)—and that the Gladstonians had not the slightest independence. They had, therefore, lost all sense of political responsibility. They had all prostrated themselves, not before principle, but before the commanding form of Mr. Gladstone. Having lost all principle, it came to this—that no less than five Members of Parliament, in obedience, as Mr. Summers told them, to the breaking out on the organ of an exciting tune, sang words which now they denounced, and all sympathy with which they repudiated with almost horror. It seemed to him that the lesson which they should learn from this was that if once a man forsook principle and bound himself to any personality, however great, he was standing on slippery ground and would surely fall. (Hear, hear.) As he had said elsewhere they accepted that explanation with all frankness. At the same time he thought it had come a little bit late. It took three weeks before the explanation came, and they were told in the explanation that they were waiting for their next monthly meeting. (Laughter.)

The resolution was carried with a few dissentients.

Mr. R. A. YERBURGH, M.P., then addressed the meeting. He referred to the condition of the army and navy, and said they should speak out plainly to their Members and say they were determined that the army and navy should be kept in an efficient condition. Alluding to the debate in the House of Commons with regard to the increase of sentences on appeal by County Court Judges in Ireland, he said he was present during the debate, and gave his vote in support of the Government, because he thought that the County Court Judges in no way exceeded the powers they possessed under the law as it at present stood, and therefore, in his opinion, it was not the province of the House to pass a motion of censure upon those gentlemen for exercising the powers that undoubtedly belonged to them; but at the same time, he thought to increase those sentences was a grave error of policy—(hear, hear)—and as such, he, for his part, distinctly disapproved of it. While saying that, they could not fail to remark that there had been many instances in which County Court Judges had proceeded in the opposite direction, by diminishing or quashing sentences which had been passed upon offenders. What they did remark in Mr. Gladstone's speech was his vehement attack upon County Courts. He did not call them courts of justice, he called them "so-called courts of justice," implying that these County Courts were not courts of justice at all. He regretted extremely that Mr. Gladstone should have stooped so low as to make use of such an expression as that, and he (Mr. Yerburch) hoped he would never find it in his way to use such language of courts of justice again. Noticing the condition of Ireland, the hon. gentleman said juries in that country were no longer afraid to do their duty, and social order was again being restored. He believed that the Irish question was in a fair way of settlement, and he had not the slightest doubt that if the Government remained in office sufficiently long the National League would die of inanition. (Hear, hear.) He trusted that while the Government was successful in its contest with the forces of disorder, it would not forget to pay due attention to the wants of the Irish people. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) He was sorry that the Government had expressed no intention of bringing in a bill to deal with the question of arrears and debts in Ireland this session. In conclusion, Mr. Yerburch said he was told that this was a perfectly hopeless division for a Unionist candidate to carry. (Hear, hear.) He did not believe it. They had the best of the argument and the best of facts; and arguments and facts must win in the long run. (Hear, hear.)

On the motion of Mr. SHEARD (Batley), seconded by Mr. J. WHEATLEY, a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Yerburch for his address.