GREAT ANTI-COERCION MEETING AT WREXHAM.

PRESENTATION TO THE RIGHT HON. GEO. OSBORNE MORGAN AND MRS MORGAN.

SPEECHES BY THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT KILCOURSIE, M.P., THE RIGHT HON. G. OSBORNE MORGAN, M.P., AND MR. J. EMMOTT BARLOW.

The Wrexham Public Hall, the scene of many imposing and important meetings, was crowded on Saturday evening by a large and representative and enthusiastic audience, which had assembled for the purpose of protesting against the Irish Coercion Forever-and-ever Bill introduced by the Government, and of presenting Mr. Osborne Morgan with a portrait of her husband in addition of the deep obligation the county, and particularly its eastern division, owes to her distinguished husband; whilst to the right hon. gentleman himself, as a token of the high appreciation in which his services are held by those constituents whom, for a long period he has served so faithfully and so well.

The evening's proceedings commenced at 8 o'clock, when Mr. Arthur Evans, of Gwersyllt Hill, took the chair. He was supported on the platform by Mr J. E. Barlow, Liberal candidate for the Denbigh Boroughs; Mr. Morgan, who was the object of the enthusiastic cheering, Mr and Mrs C. M. Holland, Brynygrog; Mr. Wm. Thomas, J.P., and Miss Thomas; Councillor, Mrs and Misses Roe, The Pines; Mr. and Mrs Lloyd, Bryntirion; Mr. and Mrs Darby, Wrexham; Miss Littlebuy; Mr F. A. Sturge; Mr T. C. Jones, J.P., Mrs Jones, and Miss Jones, Leeswood House; Mrs Tilston, Gresford; Mr Tudor Rhoscolyn; Mr. J. Ll. Hughes, Llwyn-Celyn, Rhosddu; Mr. Williams, Acre House, Cefn; Councillor and Mrs Benj. Owen; Mrs Jones, Kingsley; Mr. Wm. Jones, Bryn Offa; Councillor and Mrs Walter Jones; Councillor W. R. Evans; Mr S. Moss, junr., B.A., Rossett; Mr. P. Seagrave, J.P.; Rev. David Roberts; Mr Ed. Roberts, Brymbo; Councillor and Mrs Edwd Lloyd; Mr. Jones' Secretary; C. J. Gibbons; Edward Hooson, Rhos; F. L. Rawlins, Wrexham; Edwin Ault; Mr J. H. Pierce; Mr W. H. Tilston, &c.

The gentleman who was loudly cheered on rising, said that Mr Osborne Morgan was rather late, so that they must begin the meeting without him. (Laughter.) He was reminded on Good Friday by a Tory friend, who had been in Mr Gladstone's camp for many years, they would lack several prominent Liberals who had seceded from them, men who had formerly given their support to the party, but who declined to follow Mr Gladstone in his dangerous policy with regard to Ireland. (Laughter.) They regretted their absence, but they had the satisfaction of knowing the sentiment of the district had been against them. (Cheers.) He thought that some of them had found out that there was vast difference between swimming with the stream and swimming against it. It required a little more courage and resolution to do it, but he who attempted to stem the tide of public opinion, would find it a wild struggle. (Hear, hear.) Their dissentient friends had attempted to stem the tide of public opinion, but they could not do it, and they had attempted to do so again they would find themselves stranded. (Laughter and cheers.) What was the amount of damage they had done to the Liberal party at that division. He (the speaker) had given the matter every attention, and had ascertained from voters (hear, hear, hear)—and he never heard him say one word with reference to Ireland and the Irish that was not consistent with the desire that Irishmen should manage their own affairs. (Cheers.) He was quite one thing for a man to dissent from the action of one individual member of Parliament, or from the terms of a speech delivered by a member of Parliament, for instance, or some of the opinions of Mr Parnell—(hear, hear)—but still he might notwithstanding be perfectly convinced of the necessity of making Ireland a contented part of the United Kingdom by the only means now known as Home Rule. (Cheers.) He thought the present opportunity, which was to be made the occasion of a presentation to Mr and Mrs Morgan, notwithstanding the gloomy aspect of the political horizon, was a most favourable one for showing that the former friends had left the party they were faithful to the man who for over seventeen years had been faithful to them. (Loud cheers.)

The Chairman then called upon Mr C. M. Holland to make the presentation, the portrait being exhibited on the platform during the ceremony.

Mr Holland said—It is a very pleasing duty devolved upon him of presenting to Mrs Osborne Morgan, on behalf of the subscribers, a portrait of her husband, the Right Hon. Osborne Morgan, who had been for many years connected with the representation and many of the county of Denbigh, together with an address to Mr Osborne Morgan. (Cheers.) He needed not to enumerate to that meeting the very valuable services which the Right Hon. gentleman had rendered to that his constituency but to the country at large in the cause of Liberal progress and reform during the time that he had represented them in Parliament. They were all known to them, and to no one perhaps better known than to his helpmate and wife (cheers)—who had stood by him in the hour of trial and rejoiced with him in the hour of success. He was sure on behalf of us to Mr Osborne Morgan, their hearts went out in warm appreciation and regard. (Renewed cheering.)

The address was as follows :—

To the Right Honourable George Osborne Morgan, M.P., Bryndyfrydwy.

SIR,—The members of the East Denbighshire Liberal Association and your friends in the constituency generally desire, on the occasion of the presentation of your portrait to Mrs Osborne Morgan, to express the high esteem and affection with which they regard you.

We have watched the Parliamentary career of the county of Denbigh in 1868, entitled as it was in 1874, and twice in 1880, nor the choice made in 1885 by this Division of the county when it became East Denbighshire under the new Redistribution Act. The arduous character of the contest was recognised by our great leader, the Right Honorable William Ewart Gladstone, when he pronounced your return victorious the "Midlothian of Wales." We desire to thank you for the indomitable courage you displayed in 1868, notwithstanding the powerful opposition with which you were suffering, and the opposition of some of those who had been your most wealthy and apparently most influential supporters, and to express to you our sympathy against testifying, and that in trying times, the great confidence which we repose in you.

We thank God, and congratulate you most heartily on your restoration to health, and we venture to express the opinion that your recovery is symbolical of the condition of the party in this constituency.

At the last election a few, let us doubt the wisdom of Mr Gladstone's Irish policy, by reason of the opposition of some of our great men and some of the more prominent members of the party locally, hesitated to support you on that question. Now we believe their number is infinitesimal, and we feel every confidence that at the next election you will be returned by a decisive majority.

All Wales takes a special interest in your political career, recognising your great services to the cause of religious liberty and education in every Welshman, in connection with the question of burials, sites for places of worship, the abolition of university tests, and in many other ways.

Welshmen generally, and we especially, regarded with very great satisfaction your selection by Her Majesty for the important office of Judge Advocate General and Under Secretary for the Colonies, which you have successfully held.

We trust that you may be spared to represent us in Parliament, and to fight the battle of freedom and justice for many years to come, and promise you our most hearty and faithful support.

Signed on behalf of the East Denbighshire Liberal Association, and in a great measure by the Liberals of the Public Hall, Wrexham, this twelfth day of April, 1887,

EDWARD EVANS, President.
JAMES ROBERTS, Chairman.
ARTHUR E. EVANS, Hon. Secretary of the Presentation Fund.
W. ATKINS TILSTON, Secretary.

Continuing, Mr Holland asked Mrs Osborne Morgan's acceptance of the admirably executed portrait of her husband ; and he also asked Mr Morgan to accept the address which he had just read. (Cheers).

The Chairman then put the question to the meeting, whether he should sign the address, which having been unanimously answered in the affirmative, he was again cheered as he affixed his signature.

The right hon. gentleman, on rising to respond, received a most enthusiastic reception. He said that during the many years he had had the honor of representing them in a great many ways he had received many kindnesses, but he did not think that upon any occasion had that kindness and that sympathy been brought home to the electors as it had been that night. (Hear, hear.) That free and spontaneous act—for whatever might be the case with regard to Ireland, it was clear there was no coercion in the matter—(loud laughter)—that free and spontaneous kindness had touched his wife and himself very deeply. He thought he might say on behalf of his wife, and on his own, that they were deeply touched by the connection with the presentation, had been the number of working men—and working women too—who had generously contributed to the object. (Cheers.) He asked that he did not say that in any boastful sense, but he ought to say, to remember it was because when the battle was full the tongue was not always ready. (Hear, hear.) He did say that as long as he lived he should never forget the kindness they had shown to him, and which they looked upon the portrait not only feel gratified on account of the work itself, painted as it was by a very talented artist, the son of Mr Spasgrave—(hear)—whose name Dandyhirion man, but as a proof of their spontaneous and generous kindness. (Cheers.) He had to thank them most heartily for the address which had been presented to him. He thought it was drawn in terms—(no, no)—but there was one thing he thought in which they would all concur, and that was the tremendous nature of the conflict in which they were all engaged some nine months ago. (Hear, hear.) It was a conflict somewhere in an account of the Great Plague, that those people who were able to escape from that dreadful scourge were so elated by that escape that they thought they would never die. (Laughter.) He thought they were somewhat inclined, after the last great struggle, to take that view in a political sense. (Cheers.) He thought a man who could go through such an ordeal as that, and still succeed, ought to be able to face any future danger. It was bad enough to fight people in front of one ; that was what they all had to do, but when they came up right and left and behind, it became a very nasty matter. (Cheers.) It was awkward when one-third of the officers were throwing up their commissions and another third were going to the enemy's camp. (Renewed cheers.) Fortunately, there were some exceptions—Mr Sparrow being one of them (cheers)—every employer of labour turned against him. (Shame.) He had literally to go underground for his majority. Great credit was due to Mr Parnell for the tactics he ought to be written in marble, and offences in sand ; but he should like to ask some of their Liberal Unionist friends, as they called themselves—and he did it in all humour and kindness—where was what they had gained by the course they took nine months ago? (Nothing.") They had put a Tory Government into power, and they had made themselves—(hear, hear)—the Right Hon. R. H. I. el R. Churchill called the crutch of the Tory party —(laughter and cheers)—a crutch which would be chucked away as soon as it could conveniently be dispensed with, and that was the fate of the Irish which satisfied nobody, not even the Dublin correspondent of the *Times*, who would swallow most things—(laughter)—and they had got the most unjust and most unconstitutional Coercion Bill ever put upon the table of the House of Commons (Cheers.) They would get nothing more ; for the Government which went out for coercion could give them nothing but coercion. They knew what the issues were. Bills had been sent into the House of Lords—Land Bills, Tithe Bills, and Mines Regulation Bills. Why, the blight tell them, while in office, Lord Salisbury—(cheers)—was present at considerable inconvenience, and was on his way to help the Liberal candidate at Taunton, when there was a vacancy—(cheers)—would hear him out. That those Bills were thrown out was not to be wondered at, for no ground of dignity and efficiency of the House of Commons, than those Bills. The efficiency of the House of Commons were thrown to the winds, and with almost indecent haste Mr Smith brought in the Irish Coercion Bill—(" shame ")—showing that the object was to secure the efficiency and the dignity of the House of Commons, but to coerce Ireland and the rules which enabled the Government to do that, were also called them to coerce Parliament. He had listened to or read nearly every speech that had been made upon the subject, and as far as he could gather the only argument advanced was the schoolboy one of the Tory party. They were to "You brought in a Coercion Bill in 1881, and another in 1882 ; therefore we bring in a Coercion Bill in 1887." (Laughter.) In the nineteen years he had been in Parliament he had given many votes which he had since regretted, but he had never voted more unwillingly for anything than for the Coercion Acts of 1881 and 1882. But there were two great differences between those Acts and the Bill now introduced. The votes given against the Acts of 1881 and 1882 not more than a third of the representatives of Ireland voted ; but now of 101 members from Ireland they had no less than eighty-five who were opposed to the Bill to be rushed through. (Cheers.) They had no right, he maintained, to challenge the verdict of a people, and then to refuse to accept that verdict because it was against them. (Cheers.) The Irish were not to be treated with that systematic indifference, that lordly contempt for the wishes of the representatives of Ireland voted for Home Rule ; six-sevenths of the legally constituted representatives of Ireland voted for Home Rule ; six-sevenths of the legally constituted representatives of Ireland voted for disestablishment of the Church in Wales—(cheers)—but the majority of the English members declined to listen to them any more than if Ireland or Wales was a crown colony. (Hear, hear.) The votes of the English members would lead a large part of Scotland and nearly the whole of Wales to look upon England as a foreign country, if not a hostile power. (Hear, hear.) There was a great difference between the circumstances under which the former Coercion Acts were introduced. The Liberals, at any rate, Mr Forster and Sir George Trevelyan, could give chapter and verse for what they had done. He recollected Mr Forster coming to the House, and saying—he spoke from memory—that the number of agrarian crimes in Ireland in the first months of 1882 was 2,700. He would read them in a few minutes from a speech of Mr Balfour, for he thought they would show that Ireland really was never more free from crime than last year. (Cheers.) Now, the whole year there were in all Ireland, exclusive of threatening letters, only which could hardly count, only 670 agrarian outrages, or not two per day. But the figures as to the last quarter of the year were most astounding. In the three months and the long nights agrarian outrages were generally rife, but in the last three months of the year there were, exclusive of threatening letters, only 42 agrarian offences. There was no case of conspiracy, of manslaughter, of conspiracy to murder, or of assault upon the police, and only one case of aggravated assault. (Cheers.) Let them compare that return with the agrarian crimes in the English county or with those from London, and the balance would be enormously on the side of Ireland. (Cheers.) "But," said Mr Balfour, "you have got a number of undiscovered crimes." (Laughter.) To which once was there of that ? He quoted the charges of four Irish judges ; Irish judges did not—as English judges did—go circuit with the police, and they went into all sorts of stories furnished by policemen and interested witnesses, but even then, if Mr Balfour quoted the charges of four judges, Mr Parnell could produce those of twenty judges, and he was bound to say that if ever a man knocked the bottom out of a case, so far as it had any bottom—(laughter) —Mr Parnell knocked the bottom out of Mr Balfour's case. (Cheers.) And what was the other evidence ? Mere cock and bull stories which a Minister standing in his place in the House ought to be thoroughly ashamed to quote. (Cheers.) He thought very few of them would have any idea how far this Bill exceeded any other Bill which had ever been introduced. It abolished trial by jury altogether in Ireland. It subjected certain offences which were to be tried not by a jury of the defendant's fellow countrymen, but by two resident magistrates—(" shame")—who might sentence him to six months' imprisonment—(shame)—two resident magistrates were not like our stipendiaries, lawyers, men trained to weigh evidence ; they were military men, whose qualifications, even for what he heard an Irish member describe, seemed to be that they had been good boys at the army, and that they had very large families. (Laughter.) The fact of having a large family was not a qualification which should enable a man to send him to prison for six months. But the most extraordinary which these enormous powers of summary jurisdiction could be exercised was what was called boycotting. They had no definition of boycotting in this New Act, apart speech that boycotting was an offence which could not be defined by law. But was there no boycotting in England or Wales? What was the Primrose League but a boycotting machine ? (Cheers.) He looked upon the Primrose League as a gigantic system of boycotting. One way in which it was done was that a lady entered the tradesman's shop and says : " Mr Jones, I dislike your politics very much, and I am sorry to say that I saw your name as a member of the Liberal committee. I am sorry to say that after to-day it will be necessary for you to send in your bill, and I shall be under the painful necessity of dealing with Mr Williams." (Laughter and cheers.) He was glad to see that an English member had given utterance to the opinion that the portion of the Bill should at any rate not be applied to England. (Laughter and cheers.) He would allude to another section, for it was right that they should know these things. (Hear, hear.) Any person who, within twelve months after execution of any writ of possession of any house or land, shall wrongfully take or hold possession of such house or land shall be liable to six months' imprisonment. (Cheers.) That was the Bill their members, Mr Kenyon—(groans)—and the rest of the Liberal member for West Denbighshire—(renewed groans)—supported with his vote. There were offences in which trial by jury could not be done away with. Treason, for instance. They never would be brought over to England for trial. Such Acts would do more to disintegrate the bond between the two countries than all the Acts of Parliament which could be brought in. (Cheers.) But the Bill was to be an Act for ever and for ever. (Laughter.) With the Liberals coercion was a hateful incident ; now it was to be a standing dish. But that Bill, bad as it was, would not be workable. The reason why criminals had escaped in Ireland was not because juries would not convict, but because witnesses were unwilling to come forward. (Hear, hear.) He knew if the Bill were the work of the Tories—in the words of Dr. Watts' hymn, " It is their nature to"—(laughter)—and the Tories would be powerless if they were not assisted by the so-called Liberal Unionists. What were they to say of their dear old friend John Bright, who had told them that force was no remedy ? Joseph Chamberlain—(laughter and hooting)—the people's idol—(laughter)—and of that sturdy Radical, Mr Caine, who they saw on the eve of a division prowling about the lobby, seeking whom he could devour—(laughter)—They pleaded that they were supporting law and order, but there was always some specious disguise with which to clothe the naked deformity of coercion. As Mr John Morley quite recently said, they had been told to promoted the Bill for cutting off the heads of his wives he described it as a Bill to amend the law of summary jurisdiction—(laughter). The Liberal Unionists reminded him of an advertisement he had seen " body furnishing on the three years' hire system—(laughter);—the Unionists had hired themselves to the Tories, and at the end of three years they would be in a worse position than at present. And what was the state of things which would continue until the rank and file of the Liberal party took the matter into their own hands—the rank and file had to educate their leaders, but when more than one-half of the Liberal party had been converted by the noblest contest that ever tried the genius of a statesman, or taxed the loyalty of a party. (Prolonged cheering.)

The Chairman then read the following resolution :— "That this meeting deeply regretting the deplorable conduct of a small but important section of the Liberal party in supporting with the reactionary Tory Government, thus enabling them to impose upon the country the ignominy of a most tyrannical Coercion Bill for Ireland, without just cause or any reasonable excuse, and in direct opposition to the solemn declaration of the electors at the last election by a majority of nearly two to one, pledges itself to use every means to frustrate this retrograde Tory policy, and prevent as far as possible the baneful results that must follow from the extension of the system of such unjust laws. (Cheers.) This meeting also declares its full confidence in the Right Honorable William Ewart Gladstone, M.P., —(loud cheers)— in the righteous policy of Home Rule for Ireland as the only true and lasting bond of union and peace of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." (Renewed cheering.)

Viscount Kilcoursie, on rising to move the resolution, was greeted with very hearty cheering. He said before he addressed himself to the resolution, he desired to convey his sense of the very high honour which he had conferred upon him in asking him to address such a constituency in such a crisis. He said such a constituency, because when they realised that it had been the proud boast of the Liberal party in Wales—(hear, hear)—when it had shown itself to be impervious to the entreaties of the Primrose League—(laughter)—when it had preferred its own manly independence—(laughter)—to anything which could be offered by the seceders, he said that to address such a constituency was no mean honor. (Cheers.) What was the crisis which they were met. It was one of the gravest crises through which the nation had ever been called upon to pass. It was to protest against a Coercion Bill, which was to bind fetters more galling than any hitherto worn upon the limbs of Ireland, to bind them round the necks of her sons and of her daughters. (Hear, hear.) And what were the grounds upon which this Coercion Bill had been introduced. He would briefly consider them. It should there be any Conservatives in the room—and he hoped there were many—(hear, hear)—would be reminded that the authority was Lord Randolph Churchill, who, speaking at Bristol, said no one would cynically remark that at that time Lord Randolph was anxious to catch the Irish vote, and if there was any doubt that opinion, he was afraid his love of truth would not allow him to contradict him—(laughter)—said "We believe to be a constitutional doctrine, that special legislation must be based upon the existence of great emergency." Now, was there in Ireland "a great emergency?" (No.) He would venture to quote the very highest authority he could quote upon the subject of Ireland, one who understood the country as no one was greater than any other man in England—Mr John Morley— (Cheers.)—Mr Morley speaking last we said, "Ireland has not been for many years more free from crime than she is now." Therefore, he said, Lord Randolph Churchill's "great emergency?" (Laughter.) But if there were some Conservatives who did not quote Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's speech of last year said "Parliament has granted to Ireland complete political freedom in Parliamentary elections by the ballot and extension of the Franchise, and it is absolutely inconsistent with that freedom to continue permanently the old-fashioned Government of Ireland by a system of Coercion." (Laughter and applause.) If the Government proposed to make their Coercion Bill permanent, for reasons to be written the word " permanent." (Cheers.) He had only quoted Conservative authorities, but he thought he had said enough to show that it was the most iniquitous Bill that had ever been laid upon the table of the House of Commons. (Cheers.) Such were the grounds upon which the Tory party brought forward the Bill. What was the object and what would be the effects when it was passed ? It was to his mind a Bill which provoked opposition and then by tyranical means would try to coerce it out. It provoked opposition, and should be met by what he would call the provisions for dealing with that opposition ? He presumed that at that meeting, in that room, they were all ready to make use of any demonstration in Ireland, if such a thing should not be held, it would be broken up by the police and the military, and should any show of resistance be made, an order would be given the military and the police, to quote the telegraphic words, "to fire low and not to hesitate to shoot. (Shame.) "A whiff of grape shot for the Hottentot-Irish," that was the Tory remedy. If the meeting having been broken up, what became of his right hon. friend Mr Morgan ? They would be taken before a resident magistrate, who could send them to gaol for six months with or without hard labour, and he had understood that if he was to would pass the sentences, he thought they would be with hard labor. (Laughter. What about the freedom of the press? Mr Balfour said that there were no prosecutions of the press, and from whom, but Sir Charles Russell—(cheers)—one of the highest legal authorities in the kingdom, said "In the event of the editor of *United Ireland* or *The Freeman* in Ireland writing a letter, which the editor of a London paper, advising the tenant not to be in a hurry to buy back the land in the Government's Land Act, by which the tenants obtained twenty years purchase when ten or fifteen years was the value, he thought he could prevent these gentlemen from being prosecuted?" (Cheers.) That was said before the whole Government bench, and it was not denied by reply and he took it that in that case silence implied consent. (Hear, hear.) Mr Caine, speaking at Hawick, said when the Bill passed, all the Irish people knew that the Bill which they would have taken before a resident magistrate, who could send them to gaol for six months with or without hard labour, and he had understood that if was who would pass the sentences, he thought they would be sent