



DUKE OF WELLINGTON

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**A**RTHUR WELLESLEY, DUKE OF WELLINGTON, familiarly known as "the Iron Duke," one of England's greatest generals, was born at Dangan Castle, County Meath, Ireland, May 1, 1769, and died at Walmer Castle, Kent, Sept. 14, 1852. The third son of Garrett Wesley, first Earl of Mornington, and younger brother of the Marquess of Wellesley, he was educated at Eton and at the military college of Angers, in France, where he specially studied engineering. He first served abroad in the Low Countries, but in 1797 his earliest campaigning was in India, where he rendered important services in the Mysore War, and later on defeated the warlike Mahrattas in the battle of Assaye (September, 1803). Returning to England in 1805, he entered Parliament in the following year, and in 1807 became chief secretary for Ireland and served in Cathcart's expedition to Denmark, which ended in the bombardment and capture of Copenhagen. His military honors were now to be won in the Peninsular War, where he defeated the French marshals one after another at Talavera, Busaco, Salamanca, Vittoria, and drove Soult across the Pyrenees, and in 1814 defeated him at Orthez and Toulouse. The war with France came for a time to an end with the first abdication of Napoleon, but Wellington's triumph over the great Corsican general was yet to be won after the escape of Napoleon from Elba. Wellington had meanwhile, with the rank of field-marshal, received his country's thanks and honors, but he was now to make an undying name for himself by his prowess in the crowning triumph of Waterloo, and to receive from the English nation, besides a peerage and the thanks of Parliament, the substantial awards of his piled-up prize money. It was some years after the peace ere he took part in public affairs, though the remainder of his life was devoted to statesmanship. From 1828 to 1830 he was prime minister, and he was later on member of several ministries, and an intimate private friend and confidential adviser of his sovereign, until death claimed him, in his eighty-fourth year, and his country gave him a public funeral and burial in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The place he had won for himself in the hearts of his countrymen was absolutely unique, for in his day no face and figure were better known to the population of London than "the great Duke," and hardly any other hero of the nation has better earned the honor and reverence of his generation.

### SPEECH ON CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, APRIL 2, 1829

**M**Y LORDS,—It is now my duty to move that your lordships read this bill a second time, and to explain to your lordships the grounds on which I recommend this measure to your consideration. I may be under the

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necessity of requesting a larger portion of your time and attention, upon this occasion, than I have hitherto been in the habit of occupying; but I assure you, my lords, that it is not my intention to take up an instant of your time with respect to myself, or my own conduct in this transaction, any farther than to express my regret that I should differ in opinion on this subject from so many of those for whom I entertain the highest respect and regard.

However, my lords, I must say that I have considered the part which I have taken upon this subject as the performance of a public duty absolutely incumbent upon me; and that no private regard, no respect for the opinion of any noble lord, would have induced me to depart from the course which I have considered it my duty to adopt.

I must say likewise this, that, comparing my own opinion with that of others upon this subject, I have, during the period I have been in office, had opportunities of forming a judgment upon this subject which others have not had; and they will admit that I should not have given the opinion I have given if I was not intimately and firmly persuaded that that opinion was a just one.

My lords, the point which I shall first bring under your lordships' consideration is the state of Ireland. I know that by some it has been considered that the state of Ireland has nothing to do with this question — that it is a subject which ought to be left entirely out of our consideration. My lords, they tell us that Ireland has been disturbed for the last thirty years — that to such disturbance we have been accustomed, and that it does not at all alter the circumstances of the case as they have hitherto appeared.

My lords, it is perfectly true that Ireland has been disturbed during the long period I have stated; but within the last year

or two there have been circumstances of particular aggravation. Political circumstances have in a considerable degree occasioned that aggravation; but besides this, my lords, I must say, although I have no positive legal proof of that fact, that I have every reason to believe that there has been a considerable organization of the people for the purposes of mischief.

My lords, this organization is, it appears to me, to be proved not only by the declarations of those who formed and who arranged it, but likewise by the effects which it has produced in the election of churchwardens throughout the country; in the circumstances attending the election for the county of Clare; in the circumstances that preceded and followed that election; in the proceedings of a gentleman who went at the head of a body of men to the north of Ireland; in the simultaneous proceeding of various bodies of men in the south of Ireland, in Thurles, Templemore, Killenaule, Cahir, Clonmel, and other places; in the proceedings of another gentleman in King's County; and in the recall of the former gentleman from the north of Ireland by the Roman Catholic Association.

In all these circumstances it is quite obvious to me that there was an organization and direction of some superior authority. This organization has certainly produced a state of society in Ireland which we have not heretofore witnessed, and an aggravation of all the evils which before afflicted that unfortunate country.

My lords, late in the year a considerable town was attacked in the middle of the night by a body of people who came from the neighboring mountains, the town of Augher. They attacked it with arms, and were driven from it with arms by the inhabitants of the town. This is a state of things which I feel your lordships will admit ought not to exist in a civilized country.



Later in the year still, a similar event occurred in Charleville; and in the course of last autumn the Roman Catholic Association deliberated upon the propriety of adopting, and the means of adopting, the measure of ceasing all dealings between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Is it possible to believe that supposing these dealings had ceased, that supposing this measure had been carried into execution, as I firmly believe it was in the power of those who deliberated upon it to carry it into execution; is it possible to believe that those who could cease these dealings would not likewise have ceased to carry into execution the contracts into which they had entered? Will any man say that people in this situation are not verging toward that state in which it would be impossible to expect from them that they would be able to perform the duties of jurymen or to administer justice between man and man for the protection of the lives and properties of his Majesty's subjects? My lords, this is the state of society to which I wish to draw your attention, and for which it is necessary that Parliament should provide a remedy. But before I proceed to consider what those remedies ought to be, I wish just to show you what the effect of this state of society has been upon the King's prerogative.

My lords, his Majesty could not create a peer, and the reason he could not create a peer was this: His Majesty's servants could not venture to recommend to him to incur the risks of an election, and those which might have attended any accident at the election, which might have occasioned the shedding of blood. Such a disaster must have been productive of an immediate civil war in the country; and not only was that the case, my lords, but I confess that I had the strongest objection to give another triumph to the Roman Catholic Association.

Then we are asked, "Why do you not carry the law into execution?"

My lords, I have upon former occasions stated to your lordships how the law stood in respect to the Association; and your lordships will observe that in all I have stated hitherto there was no resistance to the law. The magistrates were not called upon to act. There was no resistance to the King's troops; indeed, except in the case of the procession to the north of Ireland, they were never called into duty. There was no instance, therefore, in which the law could be carried into execution.

When we hear, therefore, noble lords reproaching the government for not carrying into execution the law in Ireland, as it was carried into execution in England, the observation shows that they do not understand the state of things in Ireland. The truth of the matter is, that in England, when the law was carried into execution in the year 1819, a large body of persons assembled for an illegal purpose; they resisted the order of the magistrates to disperse, and, having resisted that order, the magistrates directed the troops to disperse them. But in the case of Ireland there were no circumstances of the same kind: no order was given to disperse because no magistrates were present; and if they had been present there were no troops to disperse them.

The truth is, the state of society was such as rendered these events probable at every hour; and it was impossible the magistrates could be at every spot, and at all times, to put an end to these outrages, which really are a disgrace to the country in which they take place. My lords, neither the law, nor the means in the possession of government enabled government to put an end to these things. It was necessary, therefore, to come to Parliament. Now, let us see what chance there



was of providing a remedy for this state of things by coming to Parliament.

My lords, we all know perfectly well that the opinion of the majority in another place is that the remedy for this state of things in Ireland is a repeal of the disabilities affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. We might have gone and asked Parliament to put down the Roman Catholic Association; but what chance had we of prevailing upon Parliament to pass such a bill without being prepared to come forward and state that we were ready to consider the whole condition of Ireland with a view to apply a remedy to that which Parliament had stated to be the cause of the disease?

Suppose that Parliament had given us a bill to put down the Roman Catholic Association, would such a law as that which passed lately be a remedy for the state of things I have already described to your lordships as existing in Ireland? Would it do any one thing toward putting an end to the organization which, I have stated to your lordships, exists—toward putting an end to the mischiefs which are the consequence of that organization—toward giving you the means of getting the better of the state of things existing in Ireland, without some further measure to be adopted? But, my lords, it is said, "If that will not do, let us proceed to blows!" What is meant by "proceeding to blows" is civil war!

Now I believe that every government must be prepared to carry into execution the laws of the country by the force placed at its disposal; not by the military force unless it should be absolutely necessary, but by the military force in case that should be necessary; and, above all things, to endeavor to overcome resistance to the law, in case the disaffected or the ill-disposed are inclined to resist the authority or sentence of the law. But in this case, as I have already stated to your

lordships, there was no resistance of the law: nay, I will go further, and will say that I am positively certain that this state of things, existing in Ireland for the last year and a half, bordering upon civil war (being attended by nearly all the evils of civil war), might have continued a considerable time longer, to the great injury and disgrace of the country; and nevertheless those who managed this state of things, those who were at its head, would have taken care to prevent any resistance to the law, which must have ended, they knew as well as I do, in the only way in which a struggle against the King's government could end.

They knew perfectly well they would have been the first victims of that resistance; but knowing that, and knowing as I do that they are sensible, able men and perfectly aware of the materials upon which they have to work, I have not the smallest doubt that the state of things which I have stated to your lordships would have continued, and that you would never have had an opportunity of putting it down in the manner some noble lords imagine.

But, my lords, even if I had been certain of such means of putting it down, I should have considered it my duty to avoid those means. I am one of those who have probably passed a longer period of my life engaged in war than most men, and principally in civil war; and I must say this, that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice whatever, even one month of civil war in the country to which I was attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it.

I say that there is nothing which destroys property, cuts up prosperity by the roots, and demoralizes character, to the degree that civil war does. In such a crisis the hand of every man is raised against his neighbor, against his brother, and against his father; servant betrays master, and the whole