

Then during the present session the Liberals have presented an admirable front to the Conservative party; and what is more, they have done a great deal towards the attainment of their own wishes. The feeling in the constituencies against the licensing clauses of the Local Government Bill has been intense, as every Member knows from the petitions he has had to present, and it has been entirely owing to the action of the Liberal party that the Government have abandoned them. This week has seen a very important discussion, namely, that with regard to Sunday closing. I paired in favour of the retention of the 9th clause, in order to enable the County Councils to make Sunday closing a possibility in their respective districts. I believe that in that respect I have your hearty sympathy. (Cheers.) I hope that we shall be able to weld the Local Government Bill into a good measure. With regard to it there are two parties in the House of Commons. One is anxious, as far as possible, to take power away from the magistrates; the other to give the County Councillors nothing to do, and make their office of no importance whatever. I sympathise with neither of these parties. I want to see the magistrates doing their criminal business, as they have done it in the past very well, and to see further work given to the County Councillors, and their office made an honourable position, which the best citizens will be eager to fill. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the Conservatives, I believe the seeds of dissolution have already been sown. The Conservative party is as difficult a party to lead in the House of Commons as any party that ever existed, and my belief is that after a short time has gone by discontent will have shown itself so largely amongst the rank and file, in consequence of the action of the leaders, that they will fall easy victims at the next general election. (Cheers.) When the seeds will ripen into dissolution is quite another matter. I was not one of those who thought this Parliament was likely to last only a short time. There is a duel in vogue amongst the Japanese in which each combatant begins by plunging a sword into his stomach. Our duel with the Conservative party is not likely to begin by our witnessing them commit the happy despatch; they are not likely to give us a dissolution as long as they can possibly postpone it; and my belief is that you will have time to furnish your club and get yourselves into working order before the next general election comes. In conclusion, the hon. gentleman said he had not attempted, in addressing the meeting, to blink the differences that existed between the different political parties. At the same time, he thought Mr. Beaumont would agree with him that he had not been offensive in his remarks to the Liberal Unionists who had favoured them with their presence. He should not, however, have been doing right if he had not put forward the views which animated ninety-nine out of every hundred of the electors of the Morley Division. (Cheers.)

LIBERALISM IN THE MORLEY DIVISION.

SPEECHES BY MR. MILNES GASKELL, M.P., AND MR. H. F. BEAUMONT, M.P.

On Saturday afternoon the Liberals of the Mirfield district of the Morley Division took part in the ceremony of laying memorial-stones of a new club-house. The Liberal party in the flourishing little town of Mirfield has had the advantage of a club since 1881. Gradually the number of members has increased until it has become necessary to provide more accommodation. Last year a suitable plot of ground was purchased in Knowl-road, and a company was formed with the view of providing the necessary funds for the erection of a building. Up to the present time 987 £1 shares have been issued, and, though the entire cost, including furnishing, is estimated at £2,200, little doubt is entertained that the additional amount will soon be forthcoming. The plans have been prepared by Mr. Alfred A. Stott, of Mirfield and Heckmondwike, and they show a handsome building with a frontage to the road of 20 yards. The principal entrance leads to a vestibule, and this to a hall, on the right of which is a large reading-room with cloak-room attached; and on the left a spacious billiard-room. Behind the latter is a smoke-room, and to the rear of the reading-room a kitchen with lavatories. Upstairs there is another billiard-room, a room for meetings 11ft. 6in. by 15ft., a smaller room, and accommodation for the caretaker. The contracts have been let as follows:—Masons and bricklayers, Messrs. W. and J. Milner; joiner, Mr. John Stevenson; plumber and glazier, Mr. C. Dinnes; plasterer, Mr. Albert Shaw; painter, Mr. Henry Roberts; all of Mirfield; and slater, Mr. George Fawcett, of Dewsbury. The members of the club, preceded by the local brass band, marched in procession to the site, where the ceremony was witnessed by a large concourse of the inhabitants. The weather being fine, it passed off satisfactorily. The proceedings were conducted by Mr. J. Walmsley, the Chairman of the Club Committee, and amongst those present were Mr. C. Milnes Gaskell (the Member for the Morley Division), and Lady Catherine Gaskell, Mr. H. F. Beaumont (Member for the Colne Valley Division) and his daughter, Miss M. F. M. Beaumont, Mr. Mark Oldroyd (Dewsbury), Mr. S. W. Pilling, Mr. W. Wilson, Mr. J. Walker, and Miss Walker, Miss H. E. Fox, Mr. G. H. Tattersfield, Mr. S. Walker, Mr. Henry Roberts, Mr. John E. Walker, Mr. A. A. Stott, and others. A brief account of the position of the institution and of the arrangements for the erection of the new building having been given by the Secretary (Mr. J. Scargill), the memorial-stones were duly laid, the first by Lady Catherine Gaskell, the second by Miss Beaumont, the third by Miss Fox, and the fourth by Miss Walker, and to each lady a silver trowel, bearing an appropriate inscription, was presented by Mr. J. E. Walker, Mr. Pilling, Mr. Walmsley, and Mr. W. Wilson respectively. A rosewood mallet was presented by Mr. Stott. To the ladies who had thus officiated, a vote of thanks was accorded on the motion of Mr. TATTERSFIELD, seconded by Mr. S. WALKER, and supported by Mr. H. BEAUMONT.—LADY CATHERINE GASKELL returned thanks for the honour done her, saying that she should be glad to know what she could contribute towards the furnishing of the club.—MR. GASKELL then addressed a few words to the assembly, congratulating his Liberal constituents in the district on the prospect of obtaining a comfortable and commodious club-house, and trusting that it might greatly tend to strengthen the position of the party in the division.—MR. BEAUMONT returned thanks on his daughter's behalf, Mr. MARK OLDROYD replied on behalf of Miss Fox, Mr. J. WALKER tendering thanks on behalf of his daughter.—At the close of the proceedings the band played the National Anthem.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the Town Hall under the presidency of Mr. MARMADUCE FOX, and the ladies and gentlemen above-named, as well as the Rev. J. Kitchener, the Rev. W. Matthews, and Mr. F. Stapleton, were also on the platform.

Mr. C. MILNES GASKELL, M.P., who was enthusiastically received on being introduced by the Chairman, addressed the assembly on political affairs. He said—I am very glad that you are making a great occasion of to-day. We don't lay the foundation-stones of Liberal Clubs every day in the Morley Division. I think the last Liberal Club in whose opening I took part was that inaugurated at Morley before the division was constituted; and I am afraid some of our friends think Morley rather a dull division. The reason we have not a great deal of excitement in it is because the majority of the Liberal party in 1885 was so large; and if you want to make a scene of continual excitement you must cut off two noughts from the majority. If you return me by only 35—I hope you won't, however—(laughter)—I feel certain you will have visits from Cabinet and ex-Cabinet Ministers during the whole of the time the next Parliament lasts. (Renewed laughter.) It is a good thing, however, that you should on these occasions meet together and put your shoulders to the wheel in order that you may perfect your organisation so that you may be ready for the next election. The fashionable thing at present at such gatherings is for the Gladstonians to abuse the Liberal Unionists for full twenty minutes—(laughter)—and I should be inclined to follow that course if I were not in an awkward position, and that is that I am speaking on behalf of a club that has received the services of ladies of Liberal Unionist families, and is prepared to accept any subscriptions handed in by those belonging to that party. (Laughter.) Although I intend for a few minutes to criticise the position of the Liberal Unionists, yet I don't propose to exhaust my vituperative vocabulary. Members of the two sections of the Liberal party meet together harmoniously in the same clubs—Brooks's, the Reform, the Devonshire, and the National Liberal Clubs—and these will continue to admit us within their walls for social purposes. I am not going to congratulate Mr. Beaumont and the party which calls itself Liberal Unionist on their position. It is a very powerful party, however, and exercises great influence at the present moment. It is virtually wielding the government of the country. I remember the time when we thought it quite impossible that the Whigs should ever hold the reins of power again. But what is the state of things at the present moment? The Whigs are virtually governing England. My belief is, however, that at the next election the existence of the Liberal Unionists as a party will terminate. (Cheers.) As far as I know, at no time has a third party been viewed with favour by the English people. At the end of the last century there was a party calling itself the Old Whigs, that left the rest of the body on account of the excesses committed in the French Revolution; but they came back to the body when the question of Catholic Emancipation first came to be discussed. A historian writing about that party, or members of it, in 1792, said "In agitated times like these public opinion ranges itself on the one side or the other, and can find no resting-place in a middle term such as that which a few fastidious noblemen and gentlemen might seek to recommend." Three Reform Bills have been passed since that date; and I venture to think that the effect of those Acts is, if anything, to accentuate those words. To come to more recent days, what was the effect of the recession of the Whigs in 1866? They objected to a Reform Bill because it was too strong for them. They must have bitterly regretted to find that their efforts were entirely unavailing, and that a far more comprehensive reform was carried in the following year. They came back to the party; and judging from the knowledge of the past, my belief is that at the end of this Parliament the Liberal Unionists as a party will not exist any longer. I think it will break up into two portions, one of which will ally itself permanently with the Conservative party, and the other, finding that many concessions have been made—many concessions have been made with regard to the Home Rule Bill presented to Parliament in 1886—will probably return to the old standard, and I venture to think that amongst those who do return will be those who have subscribed to the founding of your club. (Cheers.) I don't think that the Liberal party has at any time presented a better front to the enemy, or had an organisation more ready for the fray of a general election, than it does and has at present. I don't suppose that our great leader has ever been in better heart than he is at this moment. (Cheers.) It was amusing to hear Mr. Chaplin a few days ago urging upon the House of Commons that Mr. Gladstone's memory was failing. If the youngsters of the House of Commons had the same memory as Mr. Gladstone they might congratulate themselves uncommonly. (Cheers.) It is only the other day that we won a great victory at Southampton; that was followed by another great victory in the Aytr Burghs; and to-day the Tory majority in the Isle of Thanet has been brought much lower than it was in 1886, and even lower than it was in 1885. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. F. BEAUMONT, M.P., who was applauded on rising, said—My thanks, in the first place, are due to Mr. Gaskell for letting me off so excessively easy. (Laughter.) They are due in the next place to you for the kindness you have shown me to-day, and for the honour you have done my daughter. It is true that I have worked amongst you and for you in the Liberal cause in the past, and I believe I am working in the interest of that cause at present, although I have no doubt many of you think differently. Mr. Gaskell talks of a third party, and of its not being likely to exist long. I would remind you, however, that there has been a fourth party led by Lord Randolph Churchill, and that it is still in existence. I believe the Liberal party to which I have the honour to belong is not dead either. At least, to use the language of the prize ring, we come up smiling. Mr. Gaskell says that the Liberal Unionists are a most powerful party, and have something to say about the ruling of the country. He also accuses us of being Whigs. I don't think there is a man amongst you who can go back to the time when I first took part in politics who can accuse me of being a Whig. I have never given a vote which I did not think belonged strictly to the Radical party. Even last week I voted for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, and I did not observe a great many Whigs voting for that. I have always taken the line of voting with the Radical party, believing the Radical party in the main to be right, and I think it is hardly fair to call Mr. Bright, Mr. Chamberlain, and many gentlemen like myself Whigs. It is not so long since you were selecting a Member for this constituency, and I did my best to get you to select my hon. friend here. What was the charge brought against him then? That he was not Liberal enough; that he was too much of a Whig. I told you that you were mistaken, that Mr. Gaskell was a sound, true Radical, and such he has turned out. I congratulate you on having got him as your representative. (Cheers.) As for myself, I am not killed yet, nor do I intend to be killed by any remarks made by anybody. If anybody kills me, it will be the electors of the Colne Valley. (Cheers.) Allow me to assure you that I don't anticipate that result. I have the greatest confidence in my friends the electors of the Colne Valley, and believe they will return me again. (A Voice: "Never.") Somebody says "Never." Don't prophesy, sir. At a meeting in the Colne Valley—I think it was in 1885—there was a gentleman good enough to say that if I voted against Mr. Gladstone's bills it would be a thousand to one against my being elected for the Colne Valley again. I ventured to tell him he miscalculated the chances, for here I am still. I only wish there had been some of the extreme gentlemen of the Colne Valley present to-day. I think the kindness you have shown me would have taught them a lesson. I feel rather loth to tell the story of what happened the other day, but it would be a pity to miss it. I took the trouble to put it on paper. On a Sunday afternoon, not three miles from here, a young lady was walking alone in the woods within 200 yards of my house, and she was accosted by four gentlemen (heaven save the mark!) from the Colne Valley—at least one of them accosted her, the others going into the wood, and he told her that if I, Henry Frederick Beaumont, went again into Slaithwaite, they would shoot me. (Laughter.) These were not lads, they were men between forty and fifty years of age. The young lady replied: "I should not be surprised if you see Mr. Beaumont here directly; he very often walks here." The words were hardly out of her mouth before I appeared walking with two of my daughters. This man immediately said, "Please don't call Mr. Beaumont yet until my pals come out of the wood." The other men were absolutely stealing what belonged to the man they wished to shoot. Well, that is the way some of the constituents in the Colne Valley spend their Sunday. Possibly this is in consequence of the celebrated visit of a statesman to the Colne Valley not long ago. I beg your pardon, I called him a statesman. I am wrong. I shall be told this was a joke. Well, it is a hideous joke. I don't believe any man in the district of Mirfield or Morley would do that to his worst enemy. I don't believe there are many in the Colne Valley who would do that; I hope and believe there are few indeed. I told you that your Member would be a credit to any constituency. It is true that he and I differ on one phase of the Liberal cause, but that difference may possibly some day come to an end. I should like to see the difference arranged. (Hear, hear.) I believe that if the great leader of the Liberal party—the Gladstonian party—Mr. Gladstone—would give us some idea of what he wishes to propose—I know there is a difficulty—I know that the part of the Opposition is to oppose, and not to show their hand—but if he would give us some sort of idea as to his views of the future, he would be prepared to meet the thinking part of the constituencies of England in a fair and liberal spirit. I think it is possible we might agree on a measure that would suit the English nation and the loyal population of Ireland. I don't believe that he or any Government could propose at the present moment or in the next five years what would suit the policy of the agitating class in Ireland, who gain their livelihood from a source I need not mention. I have been killed before now. That celebrated gentleman the Member for Northampton, whom I once designated a notorious purveyor of Truth, told me that he thought he had killed me. I presume that by this time he has found out his mistake. I don't believe in being killed so easily. I believe there is a future before us all of good work for the Liberal party. I believe you will work heart and soul to send your friend and my friend Mr. Gaskell back to Parliament as your representative, and though it may seem a prophecy that everybody may not agree with, I believe my constituents will do the same by me. Having voted as I always have done in the interests of that which I believe to be Liberal—Radical, I will continue to do so, and I believe in the end (if I have not it now) I shall gain the sympathy and support once more of the Liberal party in my own district.

The Rev. J. KITCHENER said the Liberal party had the welfare of the people at heart, and had always stood up for the masses. Mr. Gladstone and his party had passed measures which had extended the liberties of the people and increased their power.

The Rev. W. MATTHEWS strongly condemned the Irish policy of the Government, and said he believed the day would come when Lord Salisbury and his crew would be swamped, and other men would take their places, and redress the wrongs that had been done to Ireland and remove anomalies that exist in England.

Addresses were also delivered by Mr. G. H. Tattersfield, Mr. H. Roberts, Mr. F. Stapleton, Mr. W. Wilson, Mr. J. E. Walker, and Mr. Longson.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman concluded the proceedings.