

## THE MARCH OF THE NATION.

(The Nation, October 17.)

At the invitation of the Very Rev. Dr. Kavanagh, P.P., Mr. Parnell met the Archbishop of Dublin and the Archbishop of Cashel in Kildare on Sunday. In the course of the day a large public demonstration was held in the town, at which Mr. Parnell attended and spoke. The following is a full report of what he said on the occasion:—

People of Kildare,—It is just four years ago to-day that I had an engagement to visit a neighbouring town in this county, where a very different scene was subsequently enacted to that which I now see before me. Just four years ago to-day, as I was commencing my journey from Dublin to Naas, I was arrested and taken to Kilmainham gaol (continued groaning), and at Naas, where the representatives of the people had assembled constitutionally in convention, and where I was to have gone, the representatives of a brutal and unconstitutional power had lined the streets with soldiers to obstruct and prevent the free expression of the people's will (cheers). These four years have made a great change, and I think the pictures presented by that scene at Naas and by the scene to-day illustrate well the difference (hear, hear). Where are the soldiers and where are the police? (Loud cheers, and cries of "Not one.") Where is all the rest of the infamous panoply by which British misrule in Ireland seeks to preserve its power? All gone (cheers). Anyhow they are nowhere to be seen to-day (cheers, and a voice, "We may thank you for it"). But there are other lessons to be learned from the meeting of to-day. I think the events of the past day or two in Kildare present an unprecedented spectacle for the consideration of statesmen in regard to their doings in Ireland (hear, hear). For the first time, I believe, in history it has fallen to the lot of a town in Kildare to be honoured with the presence of two archbishops (cheers), and two such archbishops (renewed cheers, and cries of "Long may they live"). The four able and patriotic members of the hierarchy who are now your guests, the numerous array of the clergy of your county whom I see around me, afford indubitable tokens that the union of priests and people has been cemented (cheers), has been cemented afresh in Kildare, never to be broken (cheers). I could dwell for long upon the illustrious character, the illustrious position, of the dignitaries who are now present in your town (hear, hear). I could remind you of the thrill of joy with which the appointment of his Grace of Dublin was received by Irishmen all the world over (cheers). I could allude to his great learning and to the profound ability with which he has dealt with the political and religious questions of the day. I welcome him (loud cheers) as one of the strongest supporters that Providence has ever vouchsafed to your cause (cheers). I could remind you of the long services to Ireland, undertaken in times of great risk and peril—and especially of grave risk and peril to so high an ecclesiastic—by his Grace the great Archbishop of the South, the Archbishop of Cashel (cheers). In him the Land League always had its strongest and most stalwart defender (cheers). And when, after the suppression of the Land League, we formed the National League to take up its work, and more than its work (cries of "Bravo"), that great man was the first to come forward and give his adhesion to the movement, to defend its constitutional character from its detractors, and to prove that the people of Ireland, banded together in this great organisation, were banded together peaceably and constitutionally, and not for the purpose of crime, outrage, and disrespect of the law.

A Voice—Three cheers for Parnell, and success to Davitt (cheers).

Mr. Parnell—These four years have achieved many things. You triumphed over and broke down coercion (cheers). You have snuffed landlordism (cheers). We will put the curb in their mouths by-and-by (cheers). The labourers, in the labourers enactment, have received the first earnest of the intention of the legislature, to recognise some portion of their birthright in the soil.

A Voice—It is time.

Mr. Parnell—Your Parliamentary representatives have turned what had been before our time a mockery and a dishonest delusion into a reality, and by good and honest services they have attracted to themselves the confidence, the sympathy, and the respect of every Irishman from the highest to the lowest—from the archbishop to the humblest peasant in his cabin (cheers). I am entitled to say, then, that never within the same short period has any nation, by constitutional action only—by peaceable means—made such enormous and gigantic strides (cheers). You have achieved as much in that time as many other nations have only gained after a long and bloodthirsty struggle. But it is rather concerning the future that I have come to speak to you to-day (cheers). The great and all absorbing topic in Ireland, agricultural country as she is, and depending on the soil for her very existence, is the land question. The land question is at the root of all other questions (hear, hear). The land is the only dependence of the people. And what is the present position of the land question? In my judgment the landlords are standing on the brink of a precipice, and they are doing their best to get themselves pushed over it. They are engaged at present in their congenial and accustomed operation of endeavouring to draw blood out of a stone (laughter and groans). The land during the last year or two has not earned any rent. I doubt very much whether during the last year it has earned anything at all. It certainly has not earned the judicial rents. So far as we can see, the Irish landlords are about to enter into a conspiracy to extract the present rents out of the tenants whether they can pay them or not. We saw the other day that the Cork landlords had met and come to a resolution that they regarded the judicial rents as the rents which they were going to exact if they could. Well, I do not regard judicial rents as being any more sacred than any other rent (cheers).—We never compromised our position by accepting either the Land Act of 1881 (cheers) or the judicial rents (cheers); and we are in this position, that we are able to say that nobody can point to any word of ours which gave away the right of the Irish people to turn upon the judicial rents if these rents proved to be such that they

were unable to pay them in the future. That is one portion of the landlord conspiracy to exact rents which have not been made; and there is another conspiracy, or rather another portion of the same conspiracy—they are using the Land Purchase Act in many cases through the country to intimidate their tenants who are in arrears to buy their farms at a price which it will be impossible for them to maintain hereafter—that is to say, they are endeavouring to make a dishonest bargain with the tenants to give them (the landlords) more than the land is worth, in order that they may get out of their position and substitute the State and the English taxpayer as the landlord, and leave the new landlord to bear the loss which otherwise should fall to the lot of the old one. I said a while ago that the landlords were standing at the brink of the precipice. There can be no shadow of doubt that the Land Act will be amended in the very near future, either by an English or an Irish Parliament (cheers), so as to bring about a further reduction of the judicial rents of at least 30 or 40 per cent (cheers). There can be no shadow of doubt about that. The English Parliament would do it, let alone an Irish Parliament. The new Democratic Parliament won't be at all so tender of the rights of landlords as the last one was, even supposing the settlement of the question is to be left to them—which I don't think it will be (cheers). And I don't suppose the new Democratic Parliament, elected by household suffrage in England, will continue to go on paying twelve thousand policeman—Irish policemen. For what? Not to preserve the peace, not to arrest stray donkeys that may be trespassing on the roadside (laughter), not even to bring an odd young man who may have taken perhaps a sup too much after a fair—not even to bring an odd young man to the barracks. No. They are paying all these men for the purpose of extracting rackrents for Irish landlords. But it is not that alone. They have to keep thirty thousand soldiers in the country as well, and at the time of the Land League they had to keep forty thousand (cheers). So that, practically speaking, you have an expenditure of five or six millions of pounds sterling a year nearly all of it paid by English taxpayers, and all for the purpose of screwing rackrents out of the Irish tenants. I am very sure that that sort of thing will not be allowed to go on. Would not it be a very wise thing for the Irish landlords to recognise the situation in time—to see that if they don't be reasonable they will be chucked overboard altogether? (Cheers.) The best advice that I could give to them would be this. I would say to them—Use this Irish Land Purchase Act that has been passed in a just and equitable spirit towards your tenants. Sell to them as far as the six millions of money will go at a fair value. Don't be standing out for a high price, because you won't get it, and perhaps the day will come when you will get nothing at all (laughter). Refrain from using this Act as an engine of intimidation. Take it as it was offered to you, as we offered it to you when we helped in its passage. Take it as a golden bridge to escape from an untenable position (hear, hear, and cheers), and be thankful to the tenants. I would say, on the other hand, that where a fair offer is made to them by a landlord to sell there is nothing to be got either for themselves or for the country by refusing or holding out against it. We have had some definitions of what is or what would be a fair price for the tenants to give. There have been different opinions given as to the number of years' purchase which a tenant ought to give and which he ought not to exceed. I should not like, owing to the very varying circumstances affecting land in Ireland, to lay down any hard-and-fast rule as to the number of years' purchase to be given by a tenant at the present judicial rents, but I would say this to you, that where an estate is for sale the tenants of that estate should meet together and make up their minds what rent they can afford to pay for the future from year to year—what rent they would be able to pay their landlords if their present landlords continued in this position—what rent they would be able to pay while fulfilling their obligations to their family and the community at large, and I would say that in my judgment the judicial rent very much exceeds that rent. When you have decided upon this you should deduct from that fair rent the various charges—annual charges—which the landlord has to pay now, and which you will have to pay if you become your own landlord. For instance, you should deduct half the poor-rate; you should deduct half the county cess in those cases where the landlord at present allows half the county cess; you should deduct the income tax, which the landlord now has to pay, and which you would have to pay if you took his place; you should deduct the tithe rent charge; you should deduct the agent's fees and costs of collection (laughter); you should deduct an allowance for bad debts, for even Irish landlords very seldom in these years get the whole of the rackrent; and you should further deduct an allowance for the additional taxation which will certainly in the near future be placed on the land for the purpose of developing the education of the country (cheers). You should add these deductions together and deduct the total of that from the fair rent, and when you have made these deductions you will arrive at the nett amount which the landlord is in habit of getting, and probably very much more than the nett amount which he will be in the habit of getting if he continues to be a landlord. You will then be able to give him a liberal number of years' purchase. I would give him a liberal number of years' purchase on the nett amount that he is likely to get. I wish to say a few words with regard to the position of the present Government. The present Government are, at all events, entitled to this consideration from you—that they have resolved during the interval between the old Parliament and the new to rely on the capacity for self-government of the Irish people to restrain the minority amongst them from the commission of offences against the law, from crime or outrage of any description. They deliberately refrain from renewing the Coercion Act, and the fact that they have taken up this position—I don't say that they could have done anything else (laughter)—the fact that they have taken up this position is being used as an engine against them—I consider most meanly—by the English Radical and Liberal party (cries of "Chamberlain"). I think, men of Kildare, you should bear that in mind, and you should resolve that, as far as in you lies, nothing that you do or advise should be such as to make the present Government regret the position they have taken (cheers). I was pleased to see that