

forefathers should be restored. (Applause.) Suffice it to say that the principles of the Land League were rallied round—"the land for the people, and Ireland for the Irish." (Applause.) The only principle was that landlordism should be abolished in Ireland. This confiscation of the lands has been the cause of all the misery in Ireland. Time after time thousands of people have been carried away from Ireland, yet there was room for them and to spare. And he would say it here this evening, it was his opinion and the opinion of much greater men than himself, that landlordism was responsible for every drop of blood shed in Ireland. He took it that he was speaking to an audience composed almost exclusively of Irish men and Irish women; there is scarcely one but is driven away from their country. He remembered reading in the *London Times* and *Saturday Review* that the Irish were flying away from their country as the Red Indian from Manhattan. From every quarter of the world there are Irishmen who are crying from the four corners of the earth that Ireland should be at liberty at last—that Ireland should break the fetters of liberty. (Applause.) What has been the position of Ireland? It must be universally admitted that poverty, starvation, and misery exist in Ireland at the present time. This was owing to one or other of three causes: Either the people are lazy, or the land is poor, or is over-populated. So far from its being over-populated, it was a land deserted. He preferred to give his own experience of what he had seen. In the county of Kildare one of the richest in Ireland—where he had spent six of the happiest years of his life in a Jesuit College there—take that country alone, miles and miles of acres of land could be traversed without meeting a single person, but here and there were to be seen the ruins of habitations, the only remaining evidence of the blighting influence which had been shed by landlordism. None of these three reasons therefore could ever hold good for the admittedly unprosperous state of Ireland to-day. At the best of times an Irish farmer could scarcely pay rent and support their families. He had seen farmers denying themselves, their wives, and their children the necessary articles of furniture and necessaries of life in order to pay the rent. He had found in some districts as many as twenty pawn-tickets which had been obtained for various articles in order to face the landlord so as to save the eviction of the family from their home. Several were not able to live at all. There may be men to whom it is impossible they can understand these circumstances. He had been told by farmers themselves that they were not able to pay the rent demanded; and on the one hand they were threatened with eviction if the rent was not paid, whilst on the other their wives and children were looking out for bread. It was so many cases of this character that called Parnell and Dillon to America that they might keep the Irish people alive. That money went to keep thousands and thousands of people who must have been driven from their homes. In many cases latterly the Irish tenants have seen it necessary to feed their children and clothe themselves before paying landlords the rent. (Hear, hear.) Messrs. Parnell and Dillon deserved the respect of Irish people all over the world. (Applause.) He would make this statement. The Land League had not progressed very far with its mission before Parliament thought necessary to imprison Parnell and one thousand of its leaders. Of this the landlords took advantage, and shortly after Parnell's imprisonment, evictions began to multiply to an alarming extent. Unfortunately, the money subscribed for the relief of tenants and their families could not be made use of. This led to the re-organisation of the Ladies' Irish Land League for the distribution of the money. He was truly gratified to learn on his arrival in Kumara that there was a Ladies' Irish Land League in formation. The Land League was formed to constitutionally bring about a peasant proprietary. It had partly succeeded. He had shown how far the Land League had proceeded on its road. Upon it has been built up the Irish National League, to take up the work where left off by the Land League when it was suppressed. But the National League has a wider programme than the Land League. It also demanded for Ireland the restoration of that Parliament which for so many years legislated so wisely for the country, and by restoration of which only they could look forward to peace and prosperity. (Applause.) Last year there had been thrown out of house and home upon the roadside 36,000 people who were as much entitled to the land as the landlords. This number comprised 5200 families who were cast adrift. Last November twelve months he met Miss Parnell, who, hearing that he was so disposed, asked him to go and witness some evictions that were to take place on the borders of Wexford and Carlow, not far from Newtonbarry. He went, and was met at the station by the Rev. Father Delaney, who drove him in his trap to the scene of the evictions. He remembered the day as if it were but yesterday. It was a cold bitter day, the hills were covered with snow, and icicles hung dripping from the trees. On the roadside were three miserable cottages, in which no freeborn Australian would think of housing his horses or his dogs. From these the families were to be evicted, not because they could not pay their rent, but because they had become members of the National Land League, and had attended some meeting. He could realise the fact that these hovels were human habitations, some 50 policemen drew up and arranged themselves round those dwellings; they were accompanied by three or four men in plain clothes, armed with hatchets. Admittance was demanded. The people within maintained a sullen silence. Those with hatchets were then ordered to advance and break down the doors. Every article of household furniture, beds, and remnants were thrown out on to the snow-clad road. Then from the houses went a procession of old men and women, young children clinging to their parents and wondering at the scene, and in ignorance of their fate. He remembered one poor old woman throwing up her arms as she came out, and exclaiming, "My God, I have lived here sixty years, and now there is no roof to cover my grey hairs." As he stood and watched that scene he registered a vow silently that he would devote his life in order that he might rid Ireland of that baneful system of eviction which caused women and children to be so treated. Sir, there are people who declare that emigration is the course which the Irish people should make use of. The members of these three evicted

families, numbering eighteen, were left with their furniture on the ditch's side. They emigrate! Among them there was not only not enough to enable them to emigrate, but there was not among them all enough to bring them to the nearest village to obtain food or shelter for the night; for, mark you, policemen were stationed with fixed bayonets to prevent them re-entering their homes. But he thanked God that in his pocket there was the money of the Irish National Land League, wherewith he had found relief and protection for these unfortunate people in their holdings. The Irish National Land League was constituted to bring about a remedy, and to recover by fair and equitable means, the land for the rightful owners. From the time when Mr. Gladstone, frightened into a momentary consciousness of the injustice under which Ireland suffered, introduced his Land Act of 1870 down to 1881, there had been no less than 31 bills introduced, all of which had been thrown aside contemptuously. Mr. Butt, in 1876, introduced a bill by an overwhelming majority. This was the state of affairs when Charles Stuart Parnell commenced to advocate the cause of the Irish. (Applause.) And it was not until Mr. Parnell and the Irish members saw that the Government would not listen to their demands, and endeavour to redress their grievances, that Mr. Parnell's party entered on that policy which had earned for itself the title of the obstructive policy. (Applause.) He told the Government that unless they agreed to listen to the crying demands of the people, he and his colleagues would put their feet down and obstruct business. Time after time men were sent to Parliament from Ireland to support Mr. Parnell in his obstructive policy, until in a few years he had twenty members by his side. (Applause.) And so in August, 1880, Mr. Gladstone brought in his bill entitled, "Compensation for Disturbance Bill." Mr. Gladstone, in introducing this measure, declared with great solemnity to the representatives of Great Britain and Ireland that "there were a certain number of people in Ireland under sentence of eviction, to whom sentence of eviction was equal to sentence of death," and unless it were passed, some 15,000 people would suffer eviction—and eviction meant to suffer death by starvation. This Bill prevented eviction within a certain period; it was a paltry measure, but it had some effect, and a cry of joy went up from Ireland. But another institution—an institution elected by nobody—the representatives of nobody—these people, the noble House of Lords, threw the Bill out. The hopes of Ireland were thus shattered. The Irish party then waited to see the next step Mr. Gladstone would take. He made not one more single effort to stand between the people and the death which he himself said was awaiting them. It was then, and not till then, that Charles Stuart Parnell and Michael Davitt joined hands, and, raising the standard of the Land League, gathered round it the manhood of the country, and swore, come what might, come weal, come woe, never more to quietly lie down to starve amid plenty. (Loud applause.) The principal object of the Land League then formed was to bring about the abolition of landlordism and the establishment of a peasant proprietary by legal and constitutional means. No distinction was to be made between the landlords, whether they got the land by paying for it, or by confiscation—they were all to be paid a fair and just value for the land taken from them. How did they succeed in this object? Landlordism still lived, but its backbone was broken, and the day was not far distant when it would be no more.—(Applause.) The Land League had made three great achievements—first, they induced, by fearless agitation, the Government to introduce and deal with the Land Bill of 1881; second, they compelled the landlords, by way of reductions in rent, to disgorge, so to speak, £3,000,000; and the third and greatest achievement was the instilling into the minds of the people a spirit of independence and determination which would never allow the doings of the past to be re-enacted.—(Hear, hear.) He remembered on rent days seeing the poor farmers, with hat in hand, meekly standing before the agent; and, seeing them when a well-dressed stranger, came along the road, stand on one side, and humbly bow with uncovered head for fear he might be a friend of the landlord.—(Laughter and applause.) The Land League had changed all this and there would be no more bowing or scraping, and no more doffing of hats to broadcloth coats. The Irish members had found, upon careful scrutiny of Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill, that it required amendment, there being three great defects in it. The first was that, while it appointed courts to fix the rents, it enacted that no man who held land under lease, at no matter how exorbitant a rent, could have any benefit from the court. No less than 150,000 farmers held leases, for which they had to pay heavy rents under compulsion, the only alternative being to die or emigrate to a strange land. The second defect was that the Government, while admitting the rents to be exorbitant, said that all arrears up to the last penny of these exorbitant rents must be paid up before they could get a benefit of the measure. The third great defect was that the Government proposed only to advance three-fourths of the purchase money, when they could reasonably be expected to advance the whole of it. The Government unfortunately refused to listen to Mr. Parnell's amendments. Mr. Gladstone was a great man, and his intentions were good, and he would no doubt have been prepared to give to Ireland a great deal if he could have been sure of his party following him. But he was at the very bottom of his character an inordinately vain man, and his vanity was wounded because fault was found with his bill, and refused to the Parnell party the amendments they demanded. Mr. Parnell at this conceived the idea of testing the Land Act, by taking from each parish in Ireland three or four cases of rack rent, to be decided before the land commissioners first. With 600,000 tenant farmers in the land, Mr. Parnell's proposition was a very commendable one, when the saving of legal expense to the tenant, and also to the landlords, was considered. In every point of view it was a fair and equitable proposal, but Mr. Gladstone refused to listen to it. When organising the scheme, Mr. Gladstone, in a moment he never ceased to regret, caused Mr. Forster to throw Mr. Parnell and others into prison. What had been the result? The Land Act reduced the rents 25 per cent., and there was an all-round reduction of £75,000 per annum which cost £350,000 to bring about. If this reduction was to be a permanent one, the result would be satisfactory. But the