

tic, but we had lived to see it since adopted and recommended by a Committee of the House of Lords. In the winter of 1879 one of the now regularly recurrent famines fell upon Ireland, and Mr. Parnell sped across the Atlantic to beg bread for the people, and before he went he advised them to keep a firm grip of their holdings, to feed and educate their children before paying their rent, that where their rents were excessive they should demand reductions, and that all the power of England was not sufficient to carry out a policy of universal eviction, and that the only thing necessary to ensure success was union. His words rang throughout the land. It was the preaching of a new gospel—a gospel of life and hope—and the people hearkened to it and combined as never in their long and chequered history had they combined before (applause). Before three months the landlords had practically yielded, and substantial reductions of rent were everywhere the order of the day. The Government, between two fires, hesitated, and the Government that hesitated was lost. They yielded to the landlords on the one side, and they introduced a galling but useless Coercion Act; they yielded to the Land League on the other hand, and they introduced a weak and halting Land Act. In both of these policies they failed. There was no sane politician at Home who did not acknowledge to-day the disastrous failure of Forster's Coercion Act, and before sitting down he hoped to prove the failure of Gladstone's Land Act. This Land Act was regarded by the Land League as a stage on the road upon which they were travelling. It contained principles for which generations of Irishmen had contended in vain. But it was based upon wrong lines, and it was unmistakably an attempt to bolster up a rotten system. First it afforded protection to some at any rate of the tenant farmers, and consequently the Land League did not reject it; on the other hand the League would have been false to its principles if it had accepted the Land Act as an ultimate settlement of the question. It determined to test this Act by test cases taken from the different localities in Ireland. No one knew how the newly-constituted Land Courts would construe the provisions of the Act, but everybody knew that if four or five thousand tenant farmers applied to these Courts, a hopeless block would be the result. If the Act were a valuable one, the most that could be hoped was that when a few cases in a district had been tested, the landlords would then agree with their tenants upon the same basis out of Court, and thus save time and endless legal expenses. In a moment of blind folly, the Government listened to the counsels of Mr. Forster, and a reign of terror commenced. The Land League was suppressed, first by the arrest of its leaders and then by the arrest of its clerks, and men of moderate political views, good social standing, and stainless characters, were seized upon suspicion, and, untried and unaccused, were cast into the common prisons of the country. Martial law in all its horror was proclaimed throughout the land, and absolute power over the lives and properties of the people was vested in the hands of six military magistrates, all of them men like Mr. Clifford Lloyd, who had gained their experience of government in Ireland by riding roughshod over the Coolies of British India (bisses). Public meeting was declared to be illegal, and the national Press of the country was gagged and suppressed. The land was flooded with spies and informers, and day by day people were maddened by the accounts they read of the cruelties practised by the constabulary and other agents of the Government. In October, 1881, there commenced a winter of unutterable horror. Innocent blood was spilled in Ireland, and the friends and enemies of Ireland alike stood aghast at the daily record of outrage and crime. This was a painful subject for an Irishman to speak upon, but it was his duty to vindicate his country from the responsibility of such crime. One of the parrot cries against the Land League movement was, forsooth, that it was the origin and source of agrarian crime and outrage. It was not created by the League. It was as old as the land system. It was at its height during the time of famine. In the winter of 1879, however, for the first time in the whole history of Ireland, there was a famine of terrible severity absolutely unaccompanied by any increase of crime whatever—a winter when generous Australians and New Zealanders contributed freely to keep life in the famished bodies of the Irish people. Why was this? In the winter of 1879 the Land League had just sprung into existence, and set about collecting money for the starving people and stemming the tide of eviction. From the establishment of the League up to the time of its suppression there were only five agrarian murders in all Ireland, and only eight murders of all kinds in Ireland. Where was the country in the whole civilised world which in three years could present such a light record of capital offences? When the League was suppressed, its restraining influence was destroyed. Evictions, which before had been effectually checked, rapidly multiplied all over the country, and the very ladies who, like angels of mercy, came to the side of the evicted families were seized as malefactors and flung untried into prison. He read an extract from a pastoral letter of the Most Rev. Dr. Nulty, giving an account of an eviction of which he had been an eye-witness. He expressed his belief that the outrages committed in the winter of 1881 by a maddened people were, in many cases, not one whit greater in their enormity in the sight of a just God than were some of the outrages committed in the desecrated names of law and order and justice by the agents of the Government. He also related the incidents connected with the murder by soldiers of Ellen McDonough during an eviction. He deplored and detested Irish crime, he went on to say, but that crime was due to English mis-government. England had sown the wind and had reaped the whirlwind, and upon her head rested the primary responsibility of much of the innocent blood that had been shed in Ireland. With the release of the leaders of the people however, agrarian crime and outrage steadily diminished. Mr. Gladstone's Land Act had two main objects in view—first, to bring redress within reach of every tenant who could prove that he was suffering injustice, and secondly, to conciliate the good will of the Irish people, and spread peace and prosperity throughout the land. In neither of these had it been successful. It had now been in operation two years, and of the 600,000 farmers about 80,000 had applied to the Land Courts for redress, and only 40,000 cases have been decided by the Courts of first instances, 60 per cent. of which had been appealed against, and were still

awaiting judgment in the final Court of appeal. These decisions resulted in reductions amounting to £70,000. To bring about this miserable result it had cost the tenant farmers £100,000 in legal expenses, the landlords another £100,000, and the country £150,000 for the working of the Courts. The Land League, without expense to the people, obtained a reduction in rent amounting to something like £3,000,000. Mr. Gladstone subsequently introduced the Arrears Act one of the provisions of which he had copied word for word from a Bill he (Mr. Redmond) had previously introduced in the House of Commons. A committee of the House of Lords had now adopted the principle advocated by the League for purchasing the land on a system of peasant proprietary, the Government to advance the purchase money for sixty-three years at 3½ per cent., repayable by instalments. This committee was composed entirely of Irish landlords, and indeed the system would be found advantageous not only to the tenant, who would become the proprietor of the land after a limited number of years, but also to the landlords, who would thus be afforded a means of escape from the heavy mortgages on their lands. He dealt with objections to the scheme. In conclusion, he said, they proposed not emigration, but migration; they proposed to take the people from the over-populated districts, and to employ them on the works of reclamation of waste land, and then to settle them down as owners of the soil which they had won back from the mountain and the moor. It seemed to him that any man who had read aright the history of Ireland since the great famine could not advocate immigration as the great panacea for Irish ills. Within the last thirty years 3,000,000 of Irish people had emigrated from Ireland; 75 per cent. of these had been under 35 years of age. What did that mean? It meant that the young and the strong—who should be the wealth producers of the nation went, and the old and decrepit, those who were the least able to provide for themselves or to increase the general prosperity, remained behind. As emigration had gone on, so had increased the general poverty and the misery of the people; as emigration had increased so had increased the number of cultivated acres which statistics would show them had annually gone back to the mountain and moor. To his fellow-countrymen his last words were of hope and encouragement. He was convinced as he was of his own existence that Ireland's long political night was well-nigh over. However her plains and valleys still lay shrouded in darkness; but the watcher on the tower saw a break in the far east and a ruddy glow on the mountain top, and he knew that the God of Day had arisen, and that anon he would flood every nook and corner of the land with his broad light, and that darkness and the things of darkness should disappear. When that moment came, that moment for which their forefathers so long and vainly waited and prayed and struggled, there would go up to heaven a cry from an emancipated people that would be echoed o'er the ocean and wafted by the four winds to the corners of the world—that would be chorused in America, and re-echoed here under the Southern Cross—and the sea-divided Gael, wherever they might be, would hear that cry, and would rejoice for they would know that the God of Justice who had decreed that those who sowed in tears should reap in joy had at last rewarded the tears and sufferings of a faithful people, and that Ireland—their Ireland—was free—(loud and long continued cheers.)

Mr. Perrin moved—"That this meeting approves of the views on the Irish land question as propounded by Mr. Redmond, and is of opinion that they should be carried into effect."

Mr. J. B. CALLAN seconded the motion. M.R. REDMOND, he said, was one of the representatives of the Land League, and therefore spoke with authority, and everyone here could now read that the objects he advocated were objects which commended themselves to every just mind. Mr. Callan paid a compliment to the Press in Dunedin for the reports of Mr. Redmond's lectures, stating that in many other colonial cities the newspapers had carefully abstained from reporting him. Some thanks were due to the Dunedin Press, which had refused to follow such a little spiteful policy.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Carroll for presiding, said that he felt very much obliged to the people of Dunedin, especially his own fellow-countrymen, for the reception they had met with here. They had no reason to complain of the conduct of any portion of the public, and he might say they had reason to be thankful for the enthusiasm displayed by their countrymen. He drew the attention of the audience to the fact that copies of a pamphlet on "The Irish Land League and the Land Question" could be procured in the room.

Mr. W. E. REDMOND seconded the motion, which was carried by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN, in acknowledging the vote, stated that of all the public compliments paid him in Dunedin he prized most highly that just accorded.

The landlords of the Queen's County have apparently been influenced by Mr. Monroe's advice that they should be a combative party like Mr. Parnell and his friends. The landed magnates of the County have therefore been putting themselves "in evidence" within the past few days. On Thursday week Lord Castletown, of Upper Ossory, and thirteen J.P.'s met in Maryborough in answer to a circular calling on the Queen's County landlords "to assemble in their strength and show the Liberal Government that they were determined to protest in their strongest manner against the infringement of their rights." The individuals, however, who had been appealed to, failed to "assemble in their strength," Lord Castletown and the thirteen J.P.'s being all who attended. The scion of the House of Ossory, who took the chair, expressed his deep regret that many of their friends had turned absentees. As nothing could be done in such a small meeting, it was resolved to adjourn and come together on "a future day." Not disheartened by this failure another meeting was held in Maryborough on Monday for the purpose of reconstituting the Conservative Association of the County. Resolutions were passed in favour of serving objections to all who were not entitled to be on the register, and appointing a general committee for political purposes.