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passing of the Home Rule Bill through the British House of Commons.

It would appear that a vast multitude of the people of Great Britain gave to Gladstone the honourable post which Sargeant Bagnet in "Barnaby Rudge" gave to his jewel of a wife, viz. that of thinking for him and expressing his opinion on every subject of discussion. When Gladstone was convinced, they were convinced. When Gladstone retired they fell at once into disorder.

Gladstone's successor has proved a political muddler, and by his inexplicable conduct in retiring when he should have dissolved Parliament he handed the key of the situation to the wary Conservatives.

A distinguished Protestant writer has said that if Leo XIII were twenty years younger he would reform the world. Is it too much to say that if Gladstone were twenty years younger he would force the Liberal programme through all the opposing barriers of old fogeyism, vested interests, and blue blood, till the British Empire would stand out freed from the stains of hereditary injustice, and appear amongst the nations of the earth respectable and respected?

Amongst the Irish Parliamentary Party who have done yeoman service for their country the name of Michael Davitt justly occupies an honoured place.

The son of an Irish tenant farmer evicted from his holding when Michael was still a child, he tasted the bitter draught of land-lord tyranny and injustice almost at his entrance into this world of toil.

Forced by straitened circumstances to work in a factory for his living while still a boy, he met with the accident that deprived him of his right arm. Reverses had upon his indomitable nature the effect of spurring him on to renewed efforts to master the problem of life. The memory of the ruthless act of injustice by which he and his family had been hurled on the roadside for non-payment of an impossible rent, burned its way into his soul, and his fixed resolve to labour with all his powers for the extirpation of land-lordism, root and branch, out of Ireland, was made with an intensity and earnestness that never knew relaxation in all his after career.

Ever longing to be of service to the island home of his love, he joined that movement which in the sixties filled the young generation in Ireland with hopes of the dawn of a brighter day, and which at the same time spread dismay and terror amongst the hereditary enemies of his native land. They were the men of whom it was said "They loved their country, not wisely but too well."

Davitt paid a heavy penalty for the crime of loving the land of his fathers, as the gloomy portals and frowning walls of England's penal prisons can well testify. But the long and weary years spent in the convict's garb, and in association with the vilest specimens of British humanity, had upon the refined and sensitive nature of Davitt the effect of drawing out all the latent philosophy with which nature had lavishly endowed him. No book in modern times has created such a sensation as Michael Davitt's "Leaves from a Prison Diary." It raised the ex-convict to a position amongst contemporary litterateurs only equalled by the status he at once attained amongst the philanthropists and social reformers of the nineteenth century.

And this book was one of the results of the catastrophe that deprived Davitt of his liberty but could not chain the noble intellect that God had given him. No man in this world who has succeeded in winning the applause and honour of his fellows, whether for literary, military, forensic, political, or mercantile success, takes more pride in his laurels than does Michael Davitt in the memory of his chains and servitude endured for the unflinching love of his native land. With him the words of the poet are something more than mere inane sentiment where he says—

"Far dearer the grave or the prison,  
Illumed by one patriot name,  
Than the trophies of all who have risen  
On liberty's ruin to fame."

Since his entry into public life at Home, Davitt has distinguished himself by his devotion to the cause of the Irish tenant farmers. For their benefit he founded the Land League which proved so effectual in combining all denominations of the farming class in the Old Land, and no man has yet seriously charged Mr Davitt with mercenary motives in giving his brilliant services to the cause of his faith and fatherland. I say advisedly faith, for the two are inseparably bound up in the hearts of Irishmen, and no better Catholic or more devoted son of Holy Church has drawn in with his mother's milk that abiding and ineradicable affection for the faith of St Patrick which mark his spiritual children all the world over.

If proof were wanting of the esteem in which Irish ecclesiastics hold Davitt, it was abundantly given in the Southwark division of London in several of the large towns of England and Scotland and by not a few in various parts of Ireland quite recently.

Now that Davitt is about to honour our adopted land with a visit, is it not a foregone conclusion that his countrymen here and all who respect honour, consistency, and talent will rise to give him such a welcome as will leave pleasant memories of the land of loveliness in the southern seas to cheer him on the time to come in the hard, up-hill work that he and his colleagues have before them? To doubt for a moment that the Irishmen in New Zealand will give Michael Davitt a hearty and a glorious "*ceud mile faillte*" would be to insult their intelligence and discredit their patriotism.—I am, etc,

JAMES O'NEILL.

Catholic Presbytery, Milton.

## MR DAVITT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION

MR DAVITT in lecturing at Sydney on Monday evening the 8th inst. is thus reported by the *Freeman's Journal* :—

Mr Davitt, who had a tremendous reception, the whole audience rising and cheering, began his address by an allusion to the too great importance attached by friends of the Home Rule cause in Australia to the split in the party as it exists at the present time in Ireland, and said that there was a tendency to attach too much importance to the recent defeat of the Home Rule movement by the action of the Houses of Lords. What did a defeat more or less mean to a cause like Home Rule? It had suffered many defeats during the last hundred years, and it had survived them, and would triumph in the end. Speaking of the new Unionist Ministry, which had "so unnecessarily alarmed you here," Mr Davitt said: Lord Salisbury and the Duke of Devonshire are the nominal leaders of the party, but Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain will be the active factors in the opposition to Home Rule. Well, we have fought Mr Balfour before, and we are prepared to fight him again (cheers). He has tried coercion once (laughter). He filled Tullamore gaol with his opponents; but those of them who did not die undergoing that ordeal, are to the front again (loud cheers) and every one of them will be prepared to go to Tullamore gaol again—if Mr Balfour is politically foolish enough to try that experiment again (cheers). I do not think he will, and, what is more, I believe that he would honestly desire, so far as he is concerned himself, to avoid a resort to a coercive policy in Ireland (hear, hear), I may be wrong in my estimate of the leader of the coalition party in the House of Commons. I may perhaps be a little too generous, but I have studied his character very closely, both in the House of Commons and outside, during the last three or four years, and I am convinced that when he discovers, as Mr Gladstone discovered, that force is no remedy for the government of Ireland, and that the Irish people are not going to be bribed by small concessions into relinquishing their demand