





LAND AND LIBERTY



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BY

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DUBLIN:

JAMES DUFFY AND CO., LTD.

38 WESTMORELAND STREET

1908

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LAND AND LIBERTY.



THE place of this book is Kilmainham Jail, Dublin; its time is the Spring of the year 1908; its author is Laurence Ginnell; the occasion of writing is the author's imprisonment without trial for alleged contempt of the Land Judge's Court, and his consequent restraint from more useful work; and the purpose of writing this same book is to explain:—

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I.—FOR IRISH READERS

IT seems that an Irishman writing for the public on a matter of social politics is expected to be more mindful of British opinion than of his subject. Why should people trouble themselves reading what he has to say unless he omits unpleasant truths and says only what pleases them, when they can find more interesting matter in "Three Days on a Jaunting Car," by Mr. Tourist or Mr. Journalist, who knows everything so much better? These gentlemen are free from our miserable limitations of truth, and have the inestimable advantage of blank minds, being in some matters not prejudiced but securely ensconced beyond the reach of fact, and determined, so far as they are determined about anything, to learn only what they like and state only what pleases their readers. Then, too, many of the readers who prefer fiction to truth in relation to Ireland would not care, and some of them would be distinctly pleased if Ireland and all her people and concerns were sunk in the Atlantic Ocean. If the truth may be told without offence, this book is written by one who does not wish it to fall into the hands of any such people. It might displease them; and although that is no part of its purpose, the degree in which it displeased them might be a measure of its correctness. Another reason why they should not read it is, that the thoughts, words, acts, and whole life of plain and modest people like us of tiny outlook and puny power, who have not yet got beyond the primitive stage of local patriotism, must be an abomination to all who think imperially, to whom Irish nationality is either a nuisance or a toy to be played with, her land problem sordid and insignificant, and the fragment of

that problem to which the anti-ranching agitation and this book are ostensibly confined too small for any except contemptuous notice. With all our hearts, let strangers not notice it at all, but attend to their own business and leave us to attend to ours. On the other hand, Irish readers, whether friendly or hostile, can read this book intelligently, because they will start with the common knowledge that the ultimate object of agitation and book is to help in ridding this land of domineering strangers who are enemies from the mere fact of being strangers and domineering. To rid Ireland of her enemies is the first condition of permanent service. Of Nationalists working towards that common end, some begin at the top, others at the foundation. Some aim first at getting hold of the machinery of government, though the population grows thin during the struggle; others at preserving the people by giving them a firm grip of the land as the first and greatest, and it may be the necessary step towards the common end. Some prefer the course of attacking the alien directly in his own Parliamentary arena, and subject to rules of his own making; others deeming themselves equally entitled to chose arena, rules, matter, and time, gladly adopt any form of genuine attack, and are specially pleased when attacking the alien garrison *in situ*. For this purpose land is a subject of inestimable value, visible to all eyes and appreciable by ordinary mortals as well as by statesmen.

It may be asked why wantonly begin a book with a disagreeable paragraph, thus repelling open-minded readers and destroying the chance of converting them? Because the class of people to whom I refer have minds neither open nor openable, even with an oyster knife, to truth or reason in relation to Ireland, I decline to be suspected of desiring to convert them. They are the class of people who say, "The Imperial Parliament will do everything that is necessary for you, but nothing more is necessary;" the class of people who have made our

proximity to England a curse when it might have been a blessing ; the class of people who deny we have any grievance so long as we merely ask redress, admit it in panic when we resort to violent agitation, deny it again when we cease. I scorn to appear desirous of conciliating such irrational and contemptible people when I am not so, but am thoroughly convinced that a drubbing is the one thing they need and deserve, and the only thing that would do them any real good. That is why.

For the satisfaction of the Irish people at home and in banishment some of the time of my restraint from work of more direct utility may be spent in elucidating the causes, objects, motives and methods of the anti-ranching movement. A distinguished friend of the ranchers inwardly, and of the people outwardly, has publicly called the reasons for this movement "dust," and publicly staked his money on the ranchers' bullocks against the people. He modestly omitted to explain that he had at the time a number of beasts grazing free among the said bullocks as his reward for diverting the people's attention from the ranches. Adopting his metaphor, this book is a consolidation of the "dust" suggested by me in October, 1906, and successfully raised in the latter half of 1907 ; with, of course, everything in the nature of appeal, incentive, and personal spark carefully eliminated.

II.—THE ALLEGED OWNERSHIP OF LAND

LAND is so essential to the mass of mankind all the world over that it is usually coupled with Liberty. A State may become for a time so successful in manufacturing industries and commerce, and so absorbed in them, that the importance of land seems to recede and to be disregarded. That condition is, and can only be, temporary, and it is rarely free from elements of danger. All other institutions grow and flourish and decay and are no more. Dynasties rise and fall; countries are swept by revolutions; but the abiding earth—mother, nourisher, and grave—is always here to yield, in return for man's peaceful labour, generous sustenance for man and for the beasts that are useful to man and subject to him. No other raw material can be made to do this in the same measure and variety as land. So much is this the case that the ownership of land in itself implies dominance and generates a passion for security, which in its essence is Liberty. Kept within bounds in the public interest, shared by all, and not by one or a few against the rest, this is a virtue, and makes for general liberty, prosperity and peace. The same passion in individuals, unrestrained by law or community, allowed or encouraged to monopolise the land to the exclusion of others, is injurious to those others, infringes their liberty, and degenerates into tyranny in the monopolists. If one man owned an entire country, the rest of the inhabitants, in case he allowed any to remain, would not be free whether the single owner was a despot or not. Ownership of land is always accompanied by power and is always a matter of capital national importance.

Statesmen, judges, and even land judges, who should be accurate in this matter, commonly seem to admit landlords'

pretensions to ownership by speaking of them as "owners." With some this is merely for convenience of speech, and nothing more than permanent tenure is meant. For that purpose the word will be occasionally used even in this work, after showing its erroneousness *in limine*. While most people speak of landlords as "owners" in complete and excusable ignorance, there are undoubtedly some who, knowing the difference, do it by design, and the design is a dishonest one. Absolute ownership, such as one has in a hat or a watch, includes the right of use or destruction at pleasure. In no rationally governed country would any man be allowed to destroy land, as by cutting a dam and letting the sea flow over it. All land belongs ultimately to the State, that is to the whole community. The law of the State or community recognises only estates or interests in land, not owned but held by tenure, varying in kind and duration and maintained by the law with the primary object of promoting its greatest productiveness for the common weal, by securing the undisturbed possession of those who work the land. Land being limited in area, to recognise absolute ownership in it would be to acknowledge a right in anybody to buy up the whole country, banish all the people, and destroy the nation. Absolute private ownership of land would be inconsistent with the absolute right of the people to reside there, inconsistent with individual and national safety, inconsistent even with government. The assertion of such a private right would be the most presumptuous of all usurpation. A government which connived at it would absolutely forfeit the allegiance of the people. No people and no government can legitimately recognise absolute private ownership of land.

"No man is in law absolute owner of lands. He can only hold an estate in them."—*Williams' English Law of Real Property*.

"The land is not a man's creation ; and for a person to appropriate to himself a free gift of nature, not made to him in particular, but

which belonged as much to all others until he took possession of it, is *prima facie* an injustice to all the rest. To make such an institution just, it must be shown to be conducive in the general interest, in which this disinherited portion of the community has its part The strongest interest which the community and the human race have in land is that it should yield the largest amount of food and other necessary and useful things required by the community."—*John Stuart Mill*.

"Seeing that men are born into the world without their own wills, and being in the world they must live upon the earth's surface, or they cannot live at all, no individual or set of individuals can hold over land that personal and irresponsible right which is allowed them in things of less universal necessity. Land, properly speaking, cannot be owned by any man."—*J. A. Froude*.

"The entire soil of a country belongs of right to the entire people of that country, and is the rightful property, not of any one class, but of the nation at large, in full effective possession, to let to whom they will, on whatever tenures, terms, rents, services, and conditions they will, one condition being, however, unavoidable and essential—the condition that the tenant shall bear full, true, and undivided fealty and allegiance to the nation and the laws of the nation, whose land he holds, and owns no allegiance whatsoever to any other prince, power, or people, or any obligation of obedience or respect to their will, orders, or laws."—*James Fintan Lalor*.

Estates in land are of various kinds. Fee-simple, which is the highest the law recognises, is a derivative from feudal tenure, an estate always limited, sometimes so limited as to be little more than a stewardship. The feudal tenant, or baron, had to render suit and service to the king, and had to pay on behalf of himself and all his vassals whatever form tribute or public revenue took at the time. In the course of political doings and undoings, the feudal tenants managed to shift public burdens from their own shoulders on to those of their vassals, at the same time transferring to them the name, character, and liability of tenants and exacting payments to themselves, no longer for the public use but for their own as

landlords. This is nothing more than a general idea of the net result of centuries of change. With the details of the changes through which it was reached we are not concerned here beyond remarking that it still makes the English land system extremely complex and landed property in consequence difficult and expensive to deal with. A corrupted version of the same system transplanted to Ireland on the successive occasions of conquest and confiscation, and maintained by force against the native owners, is the origin of Irish landlordism, probably the most unmitigated scourge ever inflicted upon any people, the fruitful seed for three centuries of most of our sufferings, degradation and decay, a system so inherently and incurably bad that all now concur in demanding its abolition, differing only as to the method.

There are some other real estates in land less than fee-simple. Chattel interests, which tenants as now understood hold, are also of various kinds. A landlord may, or may not, be absolute owner of the deeds, wills, and other documents of title to an estate as a tenant may be of a lease of his farm, and—what is a test of ownership—both are free to burn or otherwise destroy such documents as are their absolute property. Neither is entitled, nor would either be allowed by a constitutional Government or a free people, to destroy the land, or to use it in any way inconsistent with the public well-being. Land differs from every other kind of property in that it is always “held” or “occupied,” never “owned.” The State or community always has, and never can divest itself of, the ultimate ownership and the right and duty of resuming possession of land whenever required for the public benefit. This right is absolute. Its legality does not depend upon any question of compensation. Except in the course of revolutions, or when so-called owners of land forfeit their titles, land is never taken from a permanent holder without some compensation.

If a nation has a right to live in its own country, every person

constituting that nation participates in that right, except such as forfeit it by serious crime. Otherwise the right would be fallacious. Who would be entitled to discriminate between those who had it and those who had it not? To prevent any person realising that right is to trespass upon his personal liberty and impair the safety of the State to that extent. To prevent a number realising that right, or deprive them of it if they already enjoy it, is treason to the nation, in addition to the injustice and injury inflicted upon the individuals.

Permanency of tenure the State alone has power to give, maintain, modify, or withdraw. The primary object with which it is given is to promote the fullest development of the soil for the benefit of the community by securing, as the most effective means to that end, the immediate reward of industry to the industrious. On the other hand, the practice of industry upon land is what entitles the holder to claim a continuance of that security. Neglect or misuse of land, failure to make it productive or beneficial to the community, forfeits any claim to permanency of tenure. The State, representing the community, is not bound to maintain, but is bound to terminate, an abuse of a privilege which it has conferred, even if the abuse be of a negative character. Neglect or misuse of land, the property of the State, can never be merely negative. When the abuse takes the high form of destroying the nation itself, as in Ireland, when the land so misused is necessary for the preservation of the people, and when those same people, notwithstanding their prior claim to the land, are still willing to pay its full value, the duty of the State to resume possession of that land and restore it to the people's use and benefit is imperative, and is rendered easy by the people's liberality. If in such a case an executive Government fail in its duty, the people are absolved of obedience to that Government, and the duty reverts to the people themselves, who are ultimately the State.

Such are the limits of ownership of land. It only remains

to add the obvious corollary that this permanency of tenure at which we aim, and which may conveniently be called popular ownership, can exist only, because it can be secured only, under the protection of a constitutional Government ; that is, a native Government, no matter what its form, answerable to the people who own the land.

Many things called Charters and other high-sounding names are found on examination to have been in reality charters to rapacious aristocrats to encroach more and more upon the property and liberties of the common people. The indigenous popular local assemblies which in most countries in early times arranged the distribution, tenure, and use of land, were discouraged and ultimately extinguished, and all power centred far away, unapproachable by, and therefore unfavourable to, any but the monopolists. They—the trespassers upon popular liberty and popular property—turned what was little more than feudal jurisdiction into ownership, constituted themselves the unrepresentative law-makers and the only courts left to the people to complain against their trespasses. Whatever the people did not voluntarily abandon was wrung out of their hands until they all became dependants and the monopolists owned the land, made the laws, and ruled the country. They would have similarly monopolised light and air had that been physically possible. All unreasonable monopoly is bad and immoral. That of land is worst, most unreasonable, and most immoral. The guilty land monopolists are just the persons who sometimes complain that the King's writ does not run in certain places. They bear complacently the fact that the moral law, though of older and of higher authority than the King's writ, is prevented from running to the extent of their unreasonable monopoly. They are not all land nationalisers in Great Britain and Ireland who now question the right of a small set of selfish and unrepresentative men to monopolise the land for themselves and their progeny, and who deny that class laws of

this tainted origin, in derogation of moral law, impose any obligation except it be to break them. Such laws owe their continued existence to two causes:—(1) superstitious respect for law without regard to its source or quality; and (2) the difficulties of the clumsy legislative machine bequeathed by the same monopolists. Land monopolists are the only people who deny that land is the greatest property in the world that can be subjected to man. The tenacity with which they hold land exposes the unreality of their denial. Probably in the future as in the past those who own the land will largely rule the country. What is wanted is that they should be the many and not the few—the fertilising workers and not the sterilising idlers—so that the land may teem with food and wealth for the benefit of all.

Monopolisation of land by a small number, to the exclusion of the mass of the people, is scarcely legal, and is certainly unconstitutional and immoral. It is an evil that has had to be dealt with in many times and countries. It was condemned by the Prophet Isaias, and has been suppressed with a strong hand, never by the aristocracy but sometimes by the people in open revolution, and sometimes by enlightened rulers, including, for example, several kings of England down to Henry VIII., Popes from Sixtus IV., to Pius VII., and Frederick the Great of Prussia. Such were the anti-ranchers of the past. Except by the monopolists—the landed aristocracy and ranchers of their respective times—the morality of the repression has never been questioned. No doubt ancient monopolists suffered for want of the advocacy of modern English journalists, with their sensitive consciences, to watch over the morals of the ancient anti-ranchers. Had our present-day critics been able, some centuries ago, to teach people who did not know them as well as we do, they might possibly have produced some effect. As things are, their gentle appellation of “highway robbery” is not adopted by their contemporaries as a correct description of

the anti-ranching movement, nor does anyone think a whit the worse of us for having attempted with the hazel a duty which the law had neglected, and gone to jail for the attempt.

In some respects England has suffered and is suffering severely as a consequence of land monopoly ; but for reasons which it is not our business to examine at length, that fact is not fully realised by the sufferers or by many of their leaders. The world in all its history probably never contained in one place so great a mass of human suffering and moral and physical degradation as exists to-day in London, the metropolis of the British Empire and the richest city in the world ; and other cities in England have large aggregations of wealth and misery side by side. Of all the causes that have produced that discreditable and dangerous result, there is none of such originating and persisting potency as the monopoly of land. Of England's present ghastly institutions of pauperism and unemployment, territorialism is the fruitful mother. There is indeed at present in England a cry of "back to the land ;" but so weak and faulty is it as to make a real land reformer despair of the English democracy. First, English democrats have not yet grasped the elementary fact that as the people of England increased in number they were entitled, of right, to have more and more of the soil of the country made available to them for labour and livelihood, and that no right existed in any person or class to impose prohibitive terms. Secondly, their recent timid little Acts to get people back to the land actually contemplate their going back as tenants, with landlords over them as of old, and therefore mainly, in spite of all precautions, for the further enrichment of the landlords and the future impoverishment of the people and precariousness of their condition. It is almost incredible, but positively sickening, when one finds that English radicals have not yet got beyond this. Their excuse is that, as compared with Ireland, the danger of people suffering too severely is mitigated by the fact that most.

of the landlords will be resident, if not in the immediate vicinity at least in England, and will have some sense of patriotism ; and also by the multiplicity of other industries open to the people in their own country. Why did not these mitigating facts and virtues operate during the last sixty years to keep on the land the number on it at the beginning of that time and increase that number ? They were not thrown off cruelly as in Ireland, but conditions were imposed which crushed them off the land, deterred them from it, denuded the country, made life intolerably dull, forced the people in detail to other industries which must always be precarious, and thus overcrowded the city labour markets. Agriculture is the greatest of all self-supporting industries, and the one industry which need not be precarious. But the workers, not the idlers, must be made the owners. To make the agriculture of the future also precarious by making it in any way dependent upon a small, selfish, and idle class, is not reform but reaction.

In ancient Ireland, from pre-historic times, the land always belonged as a birthright to the mass of the people, a certain portion of it being redistributed periodically to give each successive generation of young men in need of land a start in life ; and every human homestead was sacred against seizure or hostile intrusion, except for crime. Such was the Brehon Law, in harmony with the spirit and practice of the people. Not all the persecutions of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, nor all the evictions of the 19th century, have been able to wholly eradicate that idea of the race, according to which an industrious and crimeless Irishman is entitled to sufficient land to sustain himself and his family when there is land available not required for the sustenance of other Irishmen. Old, extremely old, though that idea is, it is morally just, economically sound, and in striking agreement with the system actually in operation in some parts of Switzerland.

Land from which people have been evicted, and the grass

of which is let each season to a grazier, is confessedly not used for the owner's sustenance or for the good of the community. The man who takes the grass—now called a rancher—is not, and does not claim to be, a legitimate farmer or tenant, but only a jobber or speculating gambler in cattle and in grass. His trade is not agriculture, and does not require any agricultural knowledge, but only butcher's knowledge and a talent for making bargains. Ranching, like all forms of gambling, exercises a degrading fascination upon those who practise it. They are frequently town adventurers who risk on it money made in other pursuits, or, it is said, other people's money. Their trade is an immoral pest. Some have home farms, but use these also for grazing only, and do no tillage. It is no hardship, but may be beneficial to these to change their profession from gambling on other people's land to practising real agriculture on their own. Under proper conditions this would pay better, while being useful also to labourers, traders, and other industrious people in the vicinity, and through these to the entire district. The rancher has no sort of ownership, tenure, or interest in the land, but only in the grass for the season ; and the length of his term of that is limited to eleven months designedly to evade the law, which might confer some interest in the land if the term extended to twelve months. Having no title to the land, having nothing but the temporary use of the grass growing on it, he does not reside on it, he cannot build a house or other structure on it, he cannot till a perch of it, he cannot so much as turn a sod of it. There is no employment given on the ranch by owner or rancher. Even the ordinary drains are not scoured as a rule for thirty years ; so that some fine land which formerly grew wheat, and would of course do so again, from sheer neglect runs into rushes where the soil is dense, and where the soil is cold runs into heath. From these causes, and from constantly feeding store cattle, the land steadily deteriorates year after year. That misuse of

land might be defensible in a new, undeveloped and uninhabited country. The inhabitants have been driven off some of the finest land in Ireland to turn it into that condition in which it is now about as useful to the community as a dead limb would be to a human body. No constitutional government answerable to that community would have allowed such a crime or would tolerate such a system. Its existence proves, apart from the other proofs, the absence of constitutional government, and throws a clear duty upon the people.

III.—RANCH-MAKING—EXTERMINATION

FOR extensive outdoor grazing on the ranch principle the requirements are wide areas with no inhabitants or traces of inhabitants, such as intersecting roads or fences. To men accustomed to real ranching in America, the idea of practising that system in a country so small and varied as Ireland, even if it were uninhabited, would appear ridiculous. But it becomes atrocious when it involves banishing an ancient nation out of its native land to allow an insignificant group of monopolists to try the mad experiment. It throws into the shade the despotism of William the Conqueror when he drove the English inhabitants out of what is now the New Forest. Some Irish grazing tracts are as near in size to the American scale as the condition of the country allowed; but we have given to the name ranch an opprobrious meaning and applied it to all grass tracts formed of evicted lands and used for grazing only.

The lands of Ireland that are now ranches comprise the richest areas in the country; but they also comprise some medium land and some inferior land. In ancient times all those lands were occupied by peasants as proprietors to the extent to which the Brehon Laws allowed private property in land. Later, the richest areas were confiscated, cleared of Irish chief and peasant, and planted with English colonists, some of the Irish being allowed to remain on the poor and bare lands which were not worth seizing. "Lean" and "fat" were the English terms applied to the land, and no one passing through Ireland at the present day can fail to notice that those confiscatory decrees are still operative—that the native Irish are for the most part on the "lean" lands, while the "fat" lands

are uninhabited and are the properties of persons still as a rule strangers to us, never having acclimatised. In some instances the former owners were allowed to remain on a portion of what had been their property, but usually as tenants to the colonists. The people left on the barren lands were of course also transmuted into tenants to the new landlords. These and their descendants imposed rents and increased them from time to time at their unfettered discretion, and with more regard to their wants and avarice than to the value of the land. From them the people held, not under a law of tenure, but under a law of eviction.

Without going back to the confiscations, forfeitures, and other euphoniously-named acts of State plunder under Henry VIII., Elizabeth, James I., Cromwell, and William III., confining ourselves to the acts of individual landlords, we find that these acts comprised numerous wanton desultory evictions for non-payment of exorbitant rents throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and that the greatest clearances of all were effected, not in the remote past, but in the reign of "Victoria the Good," as she has been called. On any failure to pay the rent arbitrarily fixed by the landlord, or even though it were paid, on his mere covetousness or caprice, the peasants were evicted with the help of the law, soldiers, police, crowbar brigade, and battering ram, the aged and infirm and the women and children were dragged from their beds and from their domestic hearths, their dwelling-houses and out-offices carefully levelled to the ground to make re-entry impossible, their farms consolidated to make a ranch, and the people for miles around on the same and on neighbouring estates warned that if they dared to give shelter to any of the outcasts they themselves would be cast out. If the landlord happened to have bog or mountain or rock land unable to grow grass, and which he wanted to have reclaimed at his victims' expense, he allowed some of the evicted tenants to squat there and begin that work

for him. As soon as they had by their labour made that lean land fat, the day of their second destruction had come. Their poor homes were violated and destroyed, their improvements seized and confiscated, and out the poor people were again thrown, penniless and desolate, fertilisers of the earth treated worse than if they had committed some horrible crime. Desperation rather than physical strength sustained the men to fly whither they could. Women and children cowered in the shelter of ditches or furze-bushes or upturned carts, though snow or rain might fall or frost pinch. Perhaps before many days had passed fewer infants sought the milkless breasts, and the shy, sensitive, but starved mother was forced for the first time in her life to beg—to beg, not bread for herself, much though she needed it, but a coffin in which to bury her offspring. That was the kind of conciliation practised by Irish landlords in their day of power—and a long day it was. They called the process “improving an estate.” It is practised still to some extent. Those who practised it and their successors, instead of accusing the people of a desire for confiscation should hide their heads for shame at the sound of that word. The career of landlordism has been one of confiscation, theft, and cruelty.

Throughout the 19th century a large portion of Irish rents were not yielded by the land, but were paid out of hard savings of Irish boys and girls abroad. The landlords, with the help of the laws made by their own class to suit their dishonest purpose, as his pistol suits the robber’s hand, were able to intercept and put into their own pockets, not rents yielded by land, but the tributes of filial affection which the tenants’ children had sent home from America for the comfort of their parents. The landlords, who talked haughtily about the rights of property and scorned to recognise that it had any duties, watched the American letters—the poor little property of their serfs—as a hawk watches its prey, and, calling American dollars rent of Irish land, appropriated every cent of it.

Where were the unctuous moralists and law-abiding economists whose nerves are so much disturbed by cattle-scattering when men-scattering, women-scattering, and children-scattering were in progress for the purpose of turning their homes into ranches? Those were scatterings, not of cattle, but of human beings made to God's image and likeness, though Irish. They were scatterings without cause, without mercy, and without thought or care of where the people went or what became of them; and, meanest of all, they were in some instances carried out after the American letters had been pilfered. Will any one of those who presume to lecture us defend that conduct before any decent audience in the world? Will anyone defend the laws, some of which are still in full vigour, which allow land to be dealt with in that manner, and enable the rich to rob the poor in that manner? Laws, which are the contrivance and the tool of a covetous and selfish class, used as an instrument of wrong, can have no claim to respect and none to obedience beyond the extent of the force behind them. Idlers and knaves preach at us about the sympathy of landlords for the people. We have seen it in detail, and it was worse and meaner than the Curse of Cromwell, because it had not the excuse of arising from war. Who but the landlords have committed the devastation of our country? God alone knows how many homes their "sympathy" cursed and levelled, how many hearts it broke, how many children it tore from their parents and dashed in poverty and shame upon a foreign shore; how many parents it left to die of want, with no one to moisten their fevered lips, or close their dying eyes, or follow their remains to pauper graves. God alone knows the hardships, mental and physical, endured by those victims and their scattered families, the number and intensity of their cries, which must have pierced the heavens. It would be hard to find in history a match for the anti-human position of landlords in Ireland. They never became popular chiefs, for the sufficient reason that solidarity

is impossible between people and their destroyers. No wrong has ever been redressed, no good ever accomplished for the people, by men who gloze over tyranny and desire to have it ignored or forgotten and the guilty treated as honest persons. Here is what James Fintan Lalor wrote in 1847 of Irish landlords :—

“ They form no class of the Irish people, or of any other people. Strangers in this land they call theirs, strangers here and strangers everywhere ; owning no country and owned by none ; rejecting Ireland and rejected by England ; tyrants to this island and slaves to another ; here they stand, hating and hated, their hand against us as ours against them, an outcast and ruffianly horde, alone in the world and alone in its history, a class by themselves. They do not, and never did, belong to this island at all. Tyrants and traitors have they ever been to us and ours since first they set foot on our soil. Their crime it is, and not England's, that Ireland stands where she does to-day—or rather, it is ours that have borne them so long.”

Irish landlordism is inseparably associated in its nature, as well as in its history, with cruelty, confiscation, and debauchery too foul to be specified here or in the hearing or reading of pure-minded people. If Lalor thought the landlords had in 1847 reached the lowest attainable degree of criminality, and that any subsequent change should be for the better, he was wholly mistaken. Owing to the landlords, Ireland stands to-day worse by half her population and by more than half her industry and human interests than she did sixty years ago. No doubt the most extensive clearances began in the midst of the famine ; but they were continued intermittently on a wholesale scale until 1886. It is officially recorded that in the three years 1849—50—51, 190,000 families were evicted, probably exceeding a million people. The official returns do not contain the many who were turned out without legal process, and the many who fled from their homes at the approach of inevitable doom. Lalor had been in his grave a quarter of a century when one landlord in Meath left 700 human beings homeless

in a single day, for no default on their part and no reason on his, but that the law enabled him to do what he pleased with so much of Ireland's surface, and what he pleased was not to leave an Irish human being on it. Not satiated with that much "conciliation," he afterwards bought another tenanted estate in the same county, apparently for the satanic pleasure of throwing the people out on the roadside. Neighbouring landlords, so far from denouncing the wanton and inhuman cruelty of a member of their order, promptly warned their tenants, at their peril, not to give a night's refuge to any of the evicted people, and joined the evictor in demanding and obtaining coercion for the country and armed forces to counteract just popular indignation. In the commission of these crimes the law was not passive, but virulently active. Englishmen have made the world ring with indignation about Neapolitan and Bulgarian atrocities, while these far worse atrocities and this national tragedy were being perpetrated under and with the concurrence of English law and rule. What was "atrocious" in Naples and Bulgaria was "law and order" in Ireland. One of the ranches in my own constituency was formed in a single day by evicting the entire population of forty families without cause, all their rents having been paid. No employment is given on the land now, no professional man, artisan, shopkeeper or any other member of the community derives any advantage from that land more than if the sea covered it. The owner does not reside in the district. As a rule, the winter season was deliberately chosen for evicting the people in order to intensify their sufferings. In one notorious case in Meath the members of the doomed family were stricken with typhus and could not be taken out of the house. Did the law or the landlord shrink in horror from banishing mankind in that condition? Not at all. The roof and walls of the house were removed with the help of Queen Victoria's armed forces; and the Sacraments of the Christian religion had to be

administered to the dying creatures protected only by a winnowing sheet from the falling snow. Death soon brought mercy which law and landlord had denied.

That was the landlords' form of "conciliation." That is how the ranches were formed. That is how the people were scattered. That is how landlordism and English law have made Ireland a land of desolate ranches, deserted villages, and decaying towns. How fast asleep British humanitarianism can manage to be with reference to a gigantic wrong, and how wakeful and alert to find fault with the people when they attempt a remedy. Without adopting, we may note a reflection of Mr. Lecky, the Unionist historian, on this subject. In his "*Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*" he says:—

"It is probable that the true source of the savage hatred of England that animates great bodies of Irishmen on either side of the Atlantic has very little real connection with the Penal Laws, or the Revolution, or the Union; it is far more due to the great clearances and the vast unaided emigrations that followed the Famine."

A man who takes up a farm from which another has been unjustly evicted has always been regarded in Ireland as a public enemy, corresponding to the blackleg in a trade strike, but doing more far-reaching and permanent injury. A rancher is a wholesale grabber, because he takes up a number of evicted farms thrown into one. As the presence of such men in the country is an incitement to evictors, they are constructively accomplices in the eviction clearances—the blackest crimes in history. Incited by the ranchers, the evictors drove the people off the land, scattered them like noxious vermin with complete indifference to their fate, ruined them and their homes and the towns and villages that depended on them. In those regions now desolate there is scarcely a field in which the sites of former human habitations cannot be pointed out by some person still living—living perhaps in a workhouse. Stories of the lives, manners, and characteristics of the banished

inhabitants are still current. No doubt their homes were humble to a degree, because "well salted with rent." Still they were dear to their owners as is his palace to the king, endeared by their associations and by the people's knowledge that these were the only homes they could ever hope to have in Ireland. They were scenes consecrated to domestic love and joy and sorrow, the various human vicissitudes, and the purest Christian virtues. On those lands, now deserted, innocent lives were spent, contented labours performed, and harmless sports enjoyed. The people were easily satisfied—too easily—yet the little they required was grudged to them. For that love of home, which is a virtue prized and cherished in every rightly-governed country, and which is the surest foundation of order and peace, our people have been scourged and banished. The exile's home, the bottom of the ocean, the bogs and swamps and gravelly hills, the workhouse, the asylum, and the premature grave, all have taken their respective portions of our unfortunate people, whose greatest misfortune was their excessive submissiveness, as though they were victims of God, or fate, or nature, and not of wicked man.

Thus Ireland has been reduced to the deplorable condition of the land over which a desolating war had swept. She has endured physical effects as bad as those of war, moral effects infinitely worse, and the ignominy of defeat without any of the compensations of war. She has endured more of the horror, loss, damage, misery, and degradation of war within the last sixty years of so-called peace than if actual war had been raging in the land all the time. Only a remnant of our race now remain in their ancient home. Let it not be placidly assumed that even this remnant is spared. Evictions carried out by the crowbar brigade, battering-ram, and military forces are now rare, because few people remain on good land to evict. To say that the forty thousand young and healthy people who still leave Ireland each year never to return do so as a result of

“habit,” “disease,” or “vice,” is at once untrue and vicious. They go because they are crushed out and left no alternative by the continued stealthy operation of relentless laws and of the condition of things which those laws have created. They go because Ireland is stifled as if under an economical air-pump. It is quite impossible for people in a prosperous manufacturing country, surrounded by all the elements of an active and healthy community, to realise the fatal character of continued emigration from Ireland in its present depleted condition. That circumstance creates a disposition to regard a bare assertion of fact as an exaggeration or effort of the imagination. Official statistics prove more than we assert ; but who reads them or cares about them? The official returns show that in 1906, when we were enjoying the first instalment of the millenium under Mr. James Bryce, forty thousand of the most healthy, vigorous, and enterprising of our young men and young women, seeing themselves denied a field for profitable effort—seeing the land still withdrawn, field by field, from tillage and turned into grass to the extent of 50,000 acres in the same year—left their country to sink lower and lower and went to any other to which they could manage to escape. Substantially the same thing occurred in 1907 under Mr. Birrell. The official figures showing these facts have been published, but have attracted less attention than a racing calendar or a return of railway traffic, partly because they only showed a continuity of that to which we have been long accustomed, as though it were a law of nature that Irish parents should rear sons and daughters only for export, and that Irish land should be withdrawn from the Irish people and let go out of cultivation. We have been hearing all our lives that the country was at its worst and was on the point of mending. No one can truthfully say it has mended, is mending, or can mend until either the people or their destroyers are indisputably supreme. When every new country values additions to its adult popula-

tion at an average of £300 per head, it is obvious that the loss to the old country is greater because the less efficient stay at home. The land going out of cultivation is only one of many symptoms of loss. The feigned wonder that we are not content with our country in this condition, and the pagan assumption that we should be content because we are being governed in accordance with some economical theory, are responsible for much crime and consequent social and political turmoil. If we are right in holding that our people, like the native people of every country, have an inalienable right to an opportunity of making their living at home, the real wonder and shame is that they have so long and so patiently submitted to extermination, whether prompted by avarice or by inhuman theory. When we remember that the fertility which fits land to be turned into permanent pasture is in many cases due to the unrewarded industry of former occupants, and when we read of the rewards that await industry so applied in foreign lands, we cannot without bitterness reflect upon what Ireland is to-day and the different country it might be if that industry had been fostered at home or treated with any measure of honesty. How little the spirit of alien rule has changed when to-day, as ever, patriotism is a crime in the eye of the law, and he is treated as a designer of evil who asks, "Will the voice of a resident people ever again be heard over those rich but silent lands?" English sophistical economists are too much absorbed in the ledgers of the few to be able to spare any consideration to the hearts and souls of the many. On the principle of testing food suspected of poison by throwing it to a worthless dog, dependent countries like Ireland are convenient subjects on which to practise dangerous experiments. The actual condition of Ireland to-day is literally that of a man who has lost half his blood by violence and all whose wounds are open and bleeding. Ireland's best blood continues to flow. It is not she that turns her children away; the system tears them from her breast as inexorably as

the sheriff did thirty years ago. Indifference of rulers to the system which produces these results is tyranny, and that is so though the rulers were not merely Liberals but archangels. To undertake government is to undertake to govern properly. Those who undertake this duty in relation to Ireland draw big salaries of our money for discharging that duty properly and, having power, continue the misgovernment with sophistical jests for sauce ; who profess sympathy but instead of applying the remedy ask us to be patient without one. Those men betray any principle of liberty they ever had and are unfit to rule any country. To call such government "Liberal" is mockery. The statesmanship which finds no better use to make of successive generations of Irish youth than to banish them, or jail them for resisting banishment, while land goes out of cultivation, that statesmanship is self-condemned and disgraced before the world.

"When the inhabitants of a country leave it in crowds because the government does not leave them room in which to live, that government is judged and condemned."—*John Stuart Mill*.

IV.—THE RESULT—DECAY

THE repeal of the corn laws and opening of the ports free to foreign grain, while leaving the ownership of land in the hands of monopolists, is the great economic cause of rural depopulation throughout the British Islands. Cobden perceived scarcely half the evil he attempted to cure, with the consequence that his partial reform is more than counter-balanced by the aggravation of the part he omitted to touch. Had he freed the land for the people when he freed the ports for corn, his reform would have been complete, there would be to-day a large rural population in Great Britain and Ireland, far less pauperism than now exists, and the word "unemployment" would probably be unknown. Letting corn in free and leaving the land tied enabled and induced the monopolists to stop tillage, turn the land to grass, and force the people out of the rural districts, there being then little or no importation of cattle or meat. Work having ceased in the country, the people were not required there, and could not make a living there. In England they were not removed violently or in great masses as in Ireland, but were on one side forced away by conditions growing more difficult, and on the other attracted to cities and to manufacturing and other industries. In Ireland, where no such industries existed, forcing the people off the land meant forcing them out of the country. Hence, although there is just complaint against the depopulation of rural districts in England, and a very proper cry of "back to the land," the population of the country as a whole has doubled during the last sixty years, while that of Ireland as a whole has been reduced to half, and the population of the most fertile districts

reduced to one-eighth of what it was sixty years ago. The increase in Dublin and Belfast tends to conceal the decrease in the rest of the country. For instance, omitting the city and County of Dublin, the population of Leinster in 1841 was 1,600,958; and in 1901 it was only 704,623. Even these figures do not reveal the severity of the loss, being only the general loss over a broad area. If counties and smaller districts are taken, it is found that the more fertile the land the greater the havoc, that some districts have been reduced to one-eighth of their former population, that where the land is particularly fertile, and therefore capable of supporting the largest population, mankind has been almost wholly exterminated, and that it is mainly on the inferior and unproductive lands the people have been allowed to remain. The people have been left on those lean lands because they are lean, and because it is only by human labour any profit can be derived from them. For forty years the fiendish banishment of the people, destruction of human habitations, and increase of flocks and herds were the facts adduced in vice-regal after-dinner speeches to prove Ireland's growing prosperity. If there were any truth in that fashionable theory, Ireland would now be the most prosperous country in Europe, instead of being a wreck among the nations. Disregarding for the moment the crime against the people and all national and historical considerations, it is instructive, and an irrefutable proof of bad government, to find, as anyone can do by consulting official statistics, or *Thom's Directory*, that the whole policy of land monopoly is as unsound economically as it is anti-human, and that in the parts of Ireland where the soil is richest there is positively least wealth because there are fewest people. The County of Meath may be taken as typical of the richest soil in Ireland. It surpasses all the counties in the value of its cattle. In all other kinds of property it is the poorest in Ireland, and its total wealth is less than that of any of the cultivable counties, that is, of those not occupied by

mountains. This shows that although the deteriorating and sterilising effects of the ranching system are most quickly discernible in the case of inferior soils, it reduces even the richest soils, which are capable of producing most and supporting most people, to the condition of producing less money's worth than inferior land which is populated. Even if we entertained the impudent assumption that Ireland was created not for the Irish people, but for the convenience of another nation, and that the Irish may be banished when it suits that nation's convenience or pleasure, it turns out that the banishing does not pay, that the sordid theory is economically unsound, and that the government of Ireland stands condemned, even judged from the English standpoint.

On the vital matter of population a further remark has to be made. Alarming as is the decline in numbers, the decline in efficiency is greater still. Persons often express surprise at this, but it is the inevitable consequence of an adequate cause. While the physically and mentally healthy and energetic emigrate, the physically and mentally inefficient and dependent stay at home—some for want of courage, and some because they would not be admitted into a new country. The unprecedented result is, that hospitals and lunatic asylums are constantly being enlarged, while the population of the country is diminishing, and a country deliberately made the poorest in Europe has to support a larger proportionate number of dependent persons than any other known country. That is a result of British rule, not matched anywhere except under the "Unspeakable Turk."

The lands capable of supporting the most people are in every country in which they are populated the most beneficial to the neighbouring towns and villages. Crowds of well-to-do people frequenting a town are more beneficial to it than a herd of cattle passing twice a year to the nearest seaport. No one doubts that the rule would hold good in Ireland as everywhere

else. In their present condition, as denuded of man and traces of man, as if some malignant demon had swept over them, the Irish ranches are positively injurious to every industrious class, and cast a withering blight over every human interest within reach of them. Bog or barren hills in their place might have some inhabitants with human interests, however poor. In the midst of thousands of acres, deteriorating for want of being tilled the labourers are lamentably few, and even those few often suffer for want of employment, and are forced to emigrate or to swell the ranks of unskilled city labourers. It is entirely misleading to suggest that the blight of land monopoly is confined to the country. It gluts the city labour market, and deprives the city mechanic and trader of customers, and it is the greatest of all obstacles to the provision of cheap and healthy dwellings for the working classes, and indeed for all classes, in cities and towns. Few realise to what extent the pinching want, the hunger and misery, drunkenness and crime, of cities and towns are the direct outcome of evictions in the country. Industrial life in towns has steadily and necessarily declined as the rural population has diminished. The decline and diminution initiated by the eviction clearances continue, and must continue, from the mere silent operation of the present system and its consequences, until the engine of its progress has been reversed—land monopoly abolished. Various little handicrafts and village and domestic industries, which formerly flourished, have long been extinct. Many of the villages have themselves disappeared. Towns have languished and withered into sickly villages, deriving their sustenance from the poorest lands in their respective neighbourhoods. Farmers, mechanics, labourers, traders have been banished, if not directly by the evictor, no less certainly as a result of his operations. The spirit of enterprise has been killed and the difficulty of living increased for the people who remain. The universal grass, which now in summer time stretches in green

bands along the empty country roads, has invaded the streets and market places, on some of which it can now be mown. While towns in other lands are full of the joyous animation of busy and prosperous people, proud of their thriving industries and of their stately schools, in many of our towns and villages the finest inhabited houses are the workhouse and the police barrack. Some towns look as if they had undergone a siege, and had been bombarded with shot and shell, and are remarkable chiefly for the pathetic greatness of their ruins, fragments and silent witnesses of a lost prosperity. The system that has brought Trim, on its fine river in the midst of fertile Meath, to its present condition stands convicted as a gigantic and systematic crime, disgraceful in the last degree to the ruling power. Kells, in the same county, has a smaller population, less vitality, and more poverty to-day than it had in the days of Columbkille, thirteen centuries ago. In all the cases, of which these are typical, nature has been bountiful, law and landlordism adverse. Our only progress has been backwards and downwards, a steady diminution of people, of employment, and of money. Monopolisation of land is, without doubt and without exception, the greatest cause of all these evils, and of stagnation and decay where these are most accentuated. The proximity of extremes of wealth and poverty, dangerous in some countries, takes in Ireland, where land is the chief life-sustaining material, the form of land monopoly and landlessness. Even allowing that a few land monopolists may become prosperous, they are so only in comparison with, and at the expense of, the rest of the community ; and they themselves are so few that they can no more form a community than the pillars of Karnac constitute a city. Life is essentially progressive. Stagnation is death. Ranching no more represents human progress than does a lizard in a tomb or a fungus on a dying tree. Malign human ingenuity has hardly ever devised, even in the Christian provinces of the Turkish Empire, a system

better calculated to blight and destroy. Familiarity has too long induced us to bear, as the prisoner bears his chains, what shocks anyone seeing it for the first time. The whole system and all its ghastly effects are comprehensively described by the ruling class as "law and order." Where is the use of our deceiving ourselves by applying sweet names to odious and deadly things? As other institutions may be called systems of life, that under which we live, especially ranching, is a wasting disease, a system of death, a national dissolution. And if it be this, who will say, in presence of such a tragedy, that men have no duty?

Ireland is naturally as well adapted for certain manufactures as are some manufacturing countries. She is better situated and adapted for commerce than some that have succeeded commercially. Every reader of her history knows that in both these respects she would long ago have established a position but for English jealousy and English legislation giving effect to that jealousy. She was deliberately crushed until England was in exclusive possession of the market, including the Irish market. In the 18th century while English ports were closed absolutely against some Irish products, and closed by prohibitive tariffs against other Irish articles, all Irish ports were open to all kinds of English goods. The Irish people, left nothing but the land to live by, were driven off the best land and maltreated on what remained. While other civilised countries, not more favoured in any respect except by suitable laws, spring into population, industry, wealth and happiness, Ireland steadily sinks lower and lower, in industries and commerce because of her powerful and unscrupulous rival, and internally because her best lands have been stripped of people and monopolised and partially sterilised by an anti-Irish and anti-human faction. Rivers and streams which formerly kept mill wheels in motion now run idly to the sea, passing by wreckage and ruined walls on their way. In many cases even

the ruins have been obliterated. Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Normandy grow wealthy, largely from supplying English markets with their products, because their industry is not crippled by either English rule or an alien garrison. Ireland naturally more favoured for a similar existence, is denied it by that blighting rule and its consequences. The success of Irish emigrants in self-ruled countries in fair competition with people of other nationalities is a perpetual proof that the decay of Ireland is due, not to lack of civic virtue in the people, but to alien laws, and rulers and institutions. But we have more positive and pointed proof on every hand. Remembering that statesmen must be held responsible for the necessary consequences of their measures, it is folly for anyone to attempt to deny that the ruin of Ireland, her present disgraceful condition, the education of a favoured faction at the expense of what was originally devoted to the poor, and the enforced ignorance of the nation at large, the express statutory destruction of her industries and commerce as they began to spring up, her people left nothing but the land to live by and then driven off the good land, her good land cleared of man and her bogs and swamps overcrowded; her consequent chronic poverty and periodical famines, the emigration of the healthy and the accumulation of the refuse of her children; it is folly for anyone, in face of these necessary results of a deliberate and adequate policy of demoralisation and destruction, to deny that the present condition of Ireland is the calculated and inevitable result of British rule. If in such circumstances in a Christian province of Turkey a plea of the Sultan's innocence were put forward it would be spurned with scorn. No such plea is admissible. The British parliament is unquestionably guilty, and every member of it who cannot point to efforts to stay that policy shares that guilt. Lecky, the historian whose impartiality no one now questions, says:—

“The commercial legislation which ruined Irish Industries, the

confiscations of Irish land which demoralised and impoverished the nation, were all directly due to the English government and the English parliament."

Details of the dishonest enactments may be seen in Miss Murray's "*History of the Commercial and Financial Relations between England and Ireland*;" and an excellent summary of them is given in Mr. Micks' Minority Report on the Working of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. When English legislation and English trade jealousy deliberately killed the nascent industries and commerce of Ireland, and enabled a small alien faction to withdraw the good land from the use of the people, it did not merely inflict a great injury, which a war might do and which time might heal. It created a permanent state of things which is a continuing evil like a running sore, of which every man responsible for the government of Ireland must continue to be held guilty until it is cured, and which cannot be cured by any amount of sympathy, still less by sneers and epigrams, but must be dealt with in a manner as strong and persistent as that in which the evil was deliberately created by England. To bid us wait patiently is to increase the evil and to make a remedy more difficult, to sentence 40,000 of our young people every year to transportation, and to leave those who stay at home worse than before.

Ranching is such an unmitigated evil, so destructive of industry and of the people themselves, its abolition would be so beneficial to all classes of industrious people, and is so earnestly and universally desired by them, that it will always be a wonder why the people, with power to destroy the system, spared it so long, why their awakening to the remedy has been so tardy. If passive resistance to injustice is admittedly a tame form of protest, in what category of merit or of potency must passive submission be put? Every patriotic Irishman, irrespective of party, looking at the state of his country to-day, must feel a loss of self-respect in the continuance of this system, in the neglect of

the universal duty of self-preservation, in his country having been so long a common subject for the quack experiments of rival alien politicians devoid of Irish patriotism if not hostile to it. It is not nature's decree, but theirs, that Irish streams should flow idly to the sea for ever for no better reason than because the land is fertile ; and it is the obvious duty of all who care for Ireland to reverse that decree. Once made vividly conscious of the evil and of the remedy within their power, no government answerable to them could afford to prolong the disease. It owes its fatal continuance to the excessive patience of the people and the fact that they have no constitutional government.

Alien statesmen and economists take only a detached, political and economical interest in our affairs, such as an anatomist takes in a corpse he is dissecting. Scarcely one of them in any party realises the duty of anticipating and preventing human suffering or the decay of a subject nation, or would risk his little finger for any such purpose. For us, Ireland is the inalienable home of our race. Every sod of her soil is sanctified and endeared from time immemorial by the triumphs and sufferings and sacrifices and all the varied history of those whose names we bear, whose blood runs in our veins, and whose glories and humiliations alike are ours. The recovery of the soil of our country, historically ours, morally ours, owing its fertility to the industry of our forefathers, is absolutely vital to the existence of an Irish nation in Ireland. When an end is vital for the existence of a people, it is the duty of government to promptly provide means of attaining that end, and of the community to make efforts and sacrifices if necessary for that purpose. At long last politicians of all parties recognise this and admit that the tragedy has been carried too far, and that, economically as well as morally, ranching is out of place in Ireland. The Act of 1903 affords adequate inducements for restoring the land to the people, but the legal owners, true to their past, still oppose. A parasitical class which can survive only by the ruin of their

country call for immediate extinction, and we are asked to wait until we have succeeded in conciliating them and also succeeded in convincing a majority of the English people of our necessities. I will deal in a special chapter with conciliating the landlords. On convincing the English people little need be said. We do not want anything from them. Irishmen in Parliament always support English measures of real reform, though no Englishmen ever come to Ireland to advocate them. I for one decline to tramp England for the purpose of convincing Englishmen of Irish grievances which do not concern them, which they do not care about, which I deny their right to touch, and which it is our business, and ours only, to touch and settle. The mass of the English people are responsible for Irish grievances only to the extent of stupidly electing to Parliament men opposed to their welfare and ours. If we were equal before the law, our reform should no more wait upon Englishmen being convinced than their reforms wait upon our being convinced. If no such equality exists, the only way to move rulers who disregard our reasoned demands is the natural method of attempting to do our own business in whatever way may be open to us.

V.—CONTRAST—WHERE THE PEOPLE OWN THE LAND

ENGLISHMEN, even when they honestly try, never quite understand the intense desire of the Irish people for the land of their country. They speak of it contemptuously as "land hunger," as though it were a vice. It is a virtue, and one which wise rulers of men cultivate. It is a virtue which, if it ever existed to the same extent in England, has been chilled or extinguished by territorialism on one side and on the other side by the commercial spirit, the prevalence of manufacturing industries, the abundance and variety of other modes and means of living. In Ireland the people have retained and cherished racial associations with every field and rath and hill, every stream and wood; historical associations with the whole of Ireland; family and personal associations with certain places and districts, not dependent upon either beauty or use. An Irishman, after living in foreign countries, among strange peoples, a life which would have divested him of all sentiment, had that been possible, travels across lands and oceans to visit once more, and with uncovered head to shed unseen tears over some spot hallowed for him, though to other eyes the most commonplace imaginable. The love of the land partakes of the character of the love of a mother's grave. When to that is added the absence of other means of living, the desire for a home, and the impossibility of getting one in Ireland, except on the land, and when the alternative is exile from a land so dear, the intense desire for the land is adequately accounted for without having exhausted the reasons for it. All the reasons are creditable, and are such as wise rulers would strengthen, encourage, and satisfy.

Apologists for the present land monopoly, and opponents of the change herein advocated, assert as their chief argument that some of the best land is too good to be tilled. Are they aware that this is impudent blasphemy and treason to the common weal? It assumes no less than an inherent right in a few monopolists to turn us all out of Ireland, if all the land were suitable for their purposes. The monopolists and their apologists must certainly allow that the landless people have abnormal forbearance when such pretensions openly expressed are not followed by a complete popular clearance of the ranches. No nationalist and no democrat could make any terms with a doctrine so subversive of national right and of personal liberty, or could admit for a moment that a nation might be sacrificed to any economical theory originating in the gluttonous greed of an outside people. But the doctrine is utterly unsound economically. In the most thriving continental countries all classes of land are occupied by peasant proprietors. When natives of those countries are told of the way in which good land in Ireland is monopolised and withdrawn from cultivation, they call it monstrous, scarcely credible, and say it must be due to very unsound agricultural organisation. They little know that landlords never organised agriculture here in the continental sense of a polity; that they never reclaimed or improved land, but always watched for the purpose of confiscating, and were helped by laws made by their class to confiscate the improvements of others; that the only things they did organise, and the only things for which they will be recorded in Irish history, are land-grabbing, rent extortion, pilfering American letters, evictions, famine, pestilence, emigration, and social and political turmoil. These stand to their eternal discredit. And it is the miscreant class who have destroyed our country, and whose continued presence is, and while it lasts, will be a continued blight, who presume to say that, because certain lands are fertile and moderately productive without labour, the Irish people must be

excluded from them. Their system has been tested economically, and is a ghastly failure here, while the rival system which we propose in its place is triumphantly successful everywhere it has been tried. The costly Department of Agriculture which, since its foundation, has been so helpful to grass-farming, and can scarcely be credited with increasing the tillage of Ireland by a single acre, cannot be charged with friendship for such a movement as this against ranching. Yet a few years ago this Department found occasion to publish in its *Journal* the opinion of an expert on this subject of tillage, and these are his words :—

“On a reasonably well-managed tillage farm of average quality and commercial position the farmer can earn from seventy to ninety shillings an acre, whereas by grazing the same land forty-five to fifty shillings an acre can be earned only by the finest management. . . . Provided the proper crops are grown, the better the land the more certainly should it be tilled. . . . Since the growing and consumption of tillage crops upon average land is more profitable than the growing and consumption of pasture, the growing and consumption of an increased tillage crop must be more profitable than the growing and consumption of a similarly increased pasture. It therefore follows that no land is too good to be tilled—remembering always that appropriate crops must be grown.”

There is nothing so invariably to the public advantage as that the soil of a country should be cultivated to its highest productiveness. The degree in which this is done will, in normal conditions, be the degree of prosperity, urban as well as rural, and will also be the degree in which the State is free from internal trouble. Where the land is neglected and other industries do not flourish, the people are naturally backward, impoverished, and discontented. A large proprietor working a tillage farm has certain advantages over small proprietors in the use of labour-saving machinery, buying and selling things in quantity, and in some other respects. But these advantages are found in practice to be more than counterbalanced by the

fact that his labourers, being all hired, have not the same interest in the work, or care of the property, with which all the members of a peasant family are inspired. Agriculture is carried to the highest degree of productiveness only when the land is divided into small farms, the property of the people, who live on them and work them, subject to the State alone. The reasons for this are obvious. Men work best for themselves, or, in other words, when the fruits of their labour are secured to them. Ownership is the only permanent security. The land and home being their own, no one having power to disturb them so long as the public charges are paid, and no individual having power to increase the charges, all the members of the family, male and female, old and young, cheerfully and proudly contribute their measure and kind of useful work. A number of busy hands and brains constantly applied to each small area over a country produces effects so different from ranching as to make it a different world. Certain that the fruits of their toil will be their own, and that every well-directed effort will further increase and secure their property, all the members of the family emulate each other in what is in these circumstances a pleasant exercise of mutual love and devotion, an effort of ambition, and in no sense a laborious task. The sense of secure ownership makes work a pleasure and not a toil. As Arthur Young said long ago of the peasants of the arid Landes of France, ownership turns their sands into gold. There is no demoralising watching of bells or of hours as among hired people. Vigilant industry, always waiting upon opportunity, promptly avails of it. The habit of continual honest industry in affairs that are their own disciplines the people in that fine civic virtue which the contrary habit of hirelings so often undermines and destroys. There is nothing in that humble sphere so well calculated to develop intelligence and probity, and there is no stronger incentive to industrious habits, thrift, sobriety, neatness of person and of

home, emulation in well-doing, integrity and independence of character, than the ownership of a home and a little farm, to people content with the modest comfort which it invariably yields. In a rural district occupied by peasant proprietors there is practically no poverty, drunkenness or crime. The graceful combination of modesty and independence, courtesy and self-respect, is found among peasant proprietors in greater numbers and in higher perfection than in any other class in any land. Pauperism is a thing unknown in such a community. No one who has visited a land of peasant proprietors and witnessed their admirable qualities and habits but longs to see similar conditions set up in his own country, and similar advantages and opportunities given to his own people. The life generates love of the actual soil supplementary to the general love of country, thus furnishing the strongest bulwark against social and political change. People once established as peasant proprietors on just terms become conservative, because they have something worth conserving. The fabric of the State can have no stronger foundation than they are. They desire no change, and resent the suggestion of violent change. British representatives abroad, when reporting on the condition of the agricultural population in the countries to which they are accredited, commonly say of a country where the working population own the land that there is no land question, that all seem satisfied with the existing land laws, and that no change is contemplated or desired, though in some of those cases the land laws have been in force eighty or ninety years. Such is the effect in legislation, as in other work, of doing a thing properly. In a country blessed with a numerous and prosperous rural population the cities and towns are busy in a sound trade, mechanics have constant and profitable employment, there is considerable social intercourse between town and country people to their mutual advantage, healthy and contented people have healthy offspring, there is little or no

pauperism, no dependent population, no famine, no chronic poverty, as in Ireland.

When we remember the pledge of internal stability which the peasants' intense love of country furnishes to the State; when we remember that it is to the small peasant proprietors rather than to discontented city masses that the most prosperous nations in Europe owe their prosperity, sustenance, strength and security, and that whether for peace or for war a contented peasantry is a sure reliance, we begin to understand the phenomenon frequently met with in history, that real statesmen, whether emperors, kings, or captains, despots and tyrants though they may have been in other respects, have been far more favourable to an independent peasantry than petty parasitical landed aristocrats ever have been.

The life of peasant proprietors is too full of interest for the growth of petty vices, as their lands are too well cultivated to grow weeds. They could not afford to leave their lands uncultivated as the best land in Ireland is left. Their property and labour being secured, they practise the system that yields the largest and quickest returns, namely, thorough tillage of the soil and growth of the crops for which it is best suited. In the parts of those countries occupied by peasant proprietors cattle are rarely to be seen grazing at large except on mountain slopes or other uncultivable land. Both dairy cattle and cattle for the butcher are fed and fattened indoors on soil, forage crops, root crops and corn. Where land is good, outside grazing would be considered extravagant waste—a system suited only to primitive and nomad tribes. By indoor feeding they produce far better and quicker results, and incidentally provide themselves with first-class manure. With this and plenty of labour they frequently take two crops off land in a year and rarely less than three crops in two years. By high cultivation and indoor feeding they usually make a twenty-acre farm yield more produce and of greater money value than a hundred-acre grazing farm of the best land could possibly do.

So much do peasant proprietors value land that many farms are not divided into fields by fences as with us ; nor are there always fences or hedges as mearings between farms. Orchards and gardens are frequently quite unfenced, and the fruits are never tampered with. Not a weed is to be seen anywhere. The land does not seem to grow them. From constant destruction of weeds for many successive years, the race seems to be extinct. The cultivation of the land is more intense than could be profitably practised in Ireland except near a city market, or with quicker and cheaper carrying facilities than we now possess. But an improvement in the direction of more and better tillage is possible everywhere ; and when secured by ownership on proper terms it would pay everywhere.

Supersensitive people sometimes object that in those continental countries women are sometimes to be seen working in the fields. They forget how much better and womanly it is to do short spells of light work in their own fields among the members of their own families than to work in hordes or herds a whole day in steaming and unwholesome factories, or even to sit idle at home. Not only that, but many respectable and well educated girls now eking out a miserable existence at typing and other kinds of work at starvation wages would be very much better off living a wholesome and varied rural life. Those women who occasionally for a change do a little outdoor work in their own fields are their own mistresses, have their homes beside them to run to, are free and healthy and happy, keep themselves and their families and homes neat and respectable, and are rather to be envied and imitated than commiserated with or despised. The thrift of those people never descends to parsimoniousness. Their frugality is always practised in abundance and comfort. They do not foolishly pay their money for food-stuffs imported from other countries. They import very little of what their own soil is capable of producing. They use plenty of natural food, and wear good clothes, mainly

of home production. Corn, vegetables, milk, butter, home-killed bacon, fatted calf, fowl and eggs are things most people could put up with. A generous toil to the producers is elementary common sense and true wisdom ; and there is no landlord to prevent its being practised. The practice of country people living on inferior foreign food is carried to excess only under British rule in Ireland, for the benefit of British trade, but for the further impoverishment and deterioration of the Irish people.

Flesh meat is an important article of food most economically produced of the highest quality by peasant proprietors. But hardly any farmer in a country of peasant proprietors relies exclusively on the production of fat animals, and with a considerable number that is not even the main product. Butter, cheese, milk, eggs, honey, and other animal products are articles of high value. Crops also of various sorts, fruits, flowers and their products not used or intended for home consumption have a ready market. The constant aim is to produce the highest priced articles for which the soil and climate are suitable, selling them or consuming them at home, according to the balance of advantage. Whether products are consumed at home, sent to local markets, or exported depends in some places upon a system of neighbourly co-operation and in others upon the species of crop grown, the soil, the current price, the facilities of transit, and other practical considerations. Again, though agriculture is thus deprived of the monotony which characterises it under landlords, and is rendered varied and interesting, neither men nor women confine themselves to that industry. According to taste and circumstances they branch out into horticulture, fruit culture, and numerous industries more remote than these, some undertaken as a recreation, but all none the less made interesting and profitable. Some of the women even produce lace and other useful and beautiful products of domestic industry which always command high prices because the close attention of hand and brain is essential to their artistic finish.

Highly instructive comparisons might be made between Ireland and certain parts of France and Germany. But those countries are so extensive, comprising what are geographically different countries with different climates and products, that for the limited range of products which any small country can produce an average struck over their whole area would be misleading. Comparing Ireland with the small neighbouring countries with which it is properly comparable, and with which it has to compete in the English markets, we find, taking an average over the whole of each country, that in 1906, every one hundred acres was divided between tillage and pasture in the following proportions :—

		Tillage.	Pasture.
Denmark	...	93	7
Holland	...	71½	28½
Belgium	...	87	13
Ireland	...	28	72

In a table of averages Ireland stands the worst in Europe. Averages invariably tend to soften asperities and conceal what most deserves attention. We know there are parishes comprising the best land in Ireland in which there is not one acre of tillage to 99 of pasture.

The following are the numbers of live stock in those countries per 1,000 of the population :—

		Cattle.	Sheep.	Pigs.
Denmark	...	711	339	363
Holland	...	302	109	154
Belgium	...	250	33	146
Ireland	...	1,040	897	279

In none of these countries but Ireland does the number of cattle approach the number of people. It must be remembered, too, that in the other countries a large percentage of the cattle are milch cows, whereas in Ireland the vast majority of them

are dry cattle. A cattle salesman or butcher on looking at this table might say it was better that Ireland should produce more cattle than the sort of people she sometimes produces. Be that as it may, the change which these troublesome people propose for the benefit of Ireland would be also for the benefit of the butcher and his customers. While we would have more people in Ireland we would also have more cattle and better cattle, not in spite but in consequence of the number of people. If Ireland produced cattle in proportion to her area under grass, according to the first table above she should produce five times as much as the average of the countries with which we are comparing her. Does she produce five times as much, four times, three times, twice, or even as many head of live stock as those countries do? The following are the numbers of live stock produced per 1,000 acres:—

			Cattle.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Total.
Denmark	...	...	264	126	209	599
Holland	...	...	322	116	164	582
Belgium	...	...	411	54	240	705
Ireland	...	...	261	218	73	552

Ireland, with the largest area and best land under grass and most thinly populated, produces the smallest number of cattle per 1,000 acres of her whole surface. Her roaming cattle grow more slowly than house-fed cattle. Her pastures being unable to finish them at all seasons of the year, she has, after building them up to sell them at a disadvantage as stores, a precarious trade which disease might destroy, while the continental people finish every beast they feed for the butcher. Apart from common knowledge, it is needless to add that those prosperous countries are self-ruled. That is attested as unmistakably by their prosperity as Ireland's subjection to aliens is attested by her decay. Had they been subject to external control they could never have prospered; if subjected to it now, their prosperity

would inevitably decline. Economic success and popular well-being accompany freedom as constantly as economic decay and human misery accompany political subjection.

Even under the limitations of alien rule, the superiority of tillage to grazing cannot be concealed. Pursuing a similar comparison in Ireland herself, county by county, so far as official statistics enable one to do, one makes the startling discovery that the counties of richest soil possess least wealth, that of the cultivable counties, that is, those free from mountains, there is least wealth in Meath, because it has most solitude, fewest people, fewest horses, least tillage, least dairy cattle and dairy produce, least pigs, poultry and eggs, least of all the kinds of property that can only co-exist with population and tillage, and its aggregate wealth is least. If we take Ireland as a whole we find that notwithstanding the enormous amount of her best land that is devoted to the pasturage of dry stock, and the comparatively small amount of land, and that the poorest land, devoted to dairying and tillage, still the value of the dairy produce, pigs, poultry and eggs, exported, and the amount of money brought into Ireland for them annually exceeds by about half a million sterling the value of the cattle exported.

Statistics, foreign and Irish, prove, as conclusively as does the marked contrast between the respective conditions of the people, that the alarm raised about the anti-ranching movement threatening the destruction of the Irish cattle trade is directly contrary to fact. Under the system of farms of moderate size which it aims at substituting for ranching, with tillage and house-feeding, Ireland's trade in fat cattle might easily be quadrupled, while the number of her dairy cattle and the output of dairy produce—pigs, poultry, eggs and honey—might be increased still more largely. The price of these things would go, not as the price of ranch cattle goes, to banker, money-lender, or the pocket of a single monopolist, but into

crowded households of busy people, the honourable reward of honest work and care, the proper encouragement of future effort. This is no movement of Man against Beast, except in the sense of ending the present dominance of the beast to the exclusion of man. The direct effect of its success would be to increase the number of beasts under subjection to man by increasing the number of men and women. Man and plough, far from being hostile to beasts, increase their number and improve their quality.

In a country of peasant proprietors agricultural labourers are not a class apart. They are mostly young men temporarily deprived of home or freed from home work, but trained in the spirit of working for self and therefore valuable to an employer. Far from being men who have made up their minds to continue always wage-earning labourers, they are gathering experience, saving money, waiting to inherit some particular farm, or to be able to buy one as soon as opportunity offers. From the variety of human vicissitudes operating upon a great number of holdings, opportunities of acquiring bits of land are so numerous as to be practically within the reach of every industrious man. There are at the same time automatic safeguards against both sub-division and consolidation of holdings.

VI.—THE REMEDY—RESTORE THE LAND TO THE PEOPLE

THE land is the main abiding source of wealth in every country. Its tenure, distribution, use, and the burdens placed upon it determine whether the nation shall be rich or poor, and are therefore matters of vital national importance. Of all industries, agriculture is the greatest and most self-sustaining wealth-producer. It is at the same time the most stable, the safest against the dangers of commercial depression, strikes, corners, war, and other phenomena to which industries carried on by people massed together in mines, factories and ports are exposed, and which sometimes suddenly leave the families of the workers in want. No such sudden calamity is ever known or is possible to peasant proprietors working their own land. In the land we have, under our hand, the greatest and most enduring source of wealth and of boundless, beneficent possibilities undeveloped and awaiting only the application of labour for its release. Any land monopolist who denies this is contradicted by his own practice. It is proved with equal conclusiveness by the decay of our country, and by the prosperity of the countries in which peasant proprietary prevails, that to divorce labour from land is fatal to the country in which it is done. The system of farming without labour, into which Ireland has grown during the last sixty years, is the immediate cause of her present decayed condition, threatening bankruptcy and the extinction of the whole rural population and the consequent extinction of other industries. An ideal method of effecting a remedy would be such a tax upon land values as would dispose monopolists to sell by making it unprofitable for them to hold more land than they

could actually work. This would solve in the most just and peaceful way many urban as well as rural problems otherwise insoluble. But we shall all probably have passed to our eternal reward before the decrepit old Parliament at Westminster has groped its way to this solution. In our actual circumstances, reason and example show that the available remedy for Ireland's present condition is in no respect different from what it would be in any other country that found itself in like condition. It is to do what has been done in the countries with which we have been contrasting Ireland. It is to give to the Irish people such advantages as contemporary peoples enjoy; to release the land from the present monopolists and restore it to the people; to release the people's faculties, energies and impulses, atrophied by the present system, and to give them free access to the land and free play for their powers; to emancipate the land and emancipate the people on it; to abolish landlordism in all its forms, and make all tenants owners of their holdings on fair terms; to rescue the untenanted and non-residential lands from the dominion of the beast and break them up for the purpose of enlarging uneconomic holdings and forming new economic ones for people able and eager to work them and pay for them; to divide the ranches, reclaim the wastes, leave not a cultivable acre in Ireland unused, and subject the country to free man armed with plough and spade; to stop emigration and reverse its current in the only way immediately open to us without manufacturing industries, by offering home and livelihood to farmers' sons, mechanics, labourers, and other steady men, whose character affords a guarantee that the land will be well worked and paid for. To free the land from the blighting grip of idlers and restore it to the people, with national liberty for its secure enjoyment—this is the specific change at which we aim. Few impartial persons will question that it is the change which this country needs most urgently.

We do not seek retaliation upon those whose predecessors

maltreated ours. Apart from Christian charity, we wish to be more usefully occupied. We do not even seek simple restitution without payment, just though such a claim might be. Willing to forget as soon as it is stopped the systematic crime by which our people and country have been brought to their present condition, our purpose is simply to reverse, without inflicting loss upon anyone, the wicked policy of clearances, consolidation and desolation, and to have the evicted lands on which neither owner nor tenant resides broken up again into farms of moderate size and restored to the immediate use of Irish men and women, who are willing to live on them, work them, and pay the full value of them.

The dissolution of land monopoly would necessarily lead to more and more tillage and mixed farming until that kind of farming for which Ireland is best adapted and best situated would predominate. Even where the soil is best, neither fat cattle nor dairy produce can be produced throughout the year without tillage. For reasons common to men all the world over, the greatest productiveness is attained on small farms worked by their owners. It is the only rural system in which the national and individual interests are precisely identical. A man works best and is most careful when the reward of his labour is secure to him; and the nation derives the maximum of benefit from such an arrangement. The only adequate permanent security is ownership. We want improved methods of agriculture by all means, as fast as the people become proprietors. Improved methods in the hands of tenants benefit only the landlords by making the tenants better rent-payers. Unless tillers of the soil own it, they are only conduits of an improved pattern for the benefit of landlords. Their tillage is neither good nor profitable to them, because it is not free. For high-class and profitable agriculture, the worker's ownership, acquired on just terms, is as essential as air. Here as elsewhere free tillage and a full rural life would yield not only first-class agricultural results

but would overflow into the culture of fruits, flowers, bees, and the production and creation of markets for these and many suitable kinds of collateral and congenial industries, arts, crafts, and various sorts of business now non-existent. Time and material and perhaps money now wasted as trivial would find good uses, profitable and interesting, and giving employment and play to a variety of tastes and talents.

Of all the instructive lessons to be derived from Irish official statistics, few expose the unsoundness of the present system and the fallacies by which it is defended more conclusively than the fact that, notwithstanding the immense area of our best land devoted to pasture, and the comparatively small area, and that inferior land, devoted to tillage, still the value of the dairy produce, bacon, poultry and eggs exported from Ireland exceeds by about half a million pounds each year the value of cattle exported. Land monopoly and ranching, discredited morally, are by that fact discredited economically also. With the pick of the land, the primest areas, devoted to pasture, the working farmers on inferior lands produce better results, bring more money into the country, and maintain such business as there is, which might vanish altogether if it depended on the ranchers. At present some of the best areas in Ireland are devoted to the wasteful process of building up the frames of cattle, not to be sold fat, because constant grazing has rendered much of the land unable to fatten, but to be sold as stores or raw material for English buyers to finish and profit by.

Among the many things Ireland is admirably adapted for producing and admirably situated for sending to the best markets may be mentioned supplies for the breakfast-table, which, when of high quality, always have a ready sale at high prices. These include such homely things as butter, milk, cream, eggs, bacon. We shall be in the best position for enjoying the stock joke about the insatiability of John Bull's appetite when, like the people of Normandy, Belgium and Denmark, we take full

advantage of our proximity to English markets, which are the best in the world, and when we are raking in John Bull's sovereigns in return for our supplies. While England has money to spend on high-class articles of food, every free people within reach of the English markets aim at producing those high-class articles and supplying them fresh and sweet and at the highest price. It is in such articles small countries can most successfully compete with the vast foreign and colonial sources of supply. With carrying facilities quickened and cheapened, Irish butter, cream and eggs of Tuesday could easily be on London breakfast-tables the following Thursday morning, fresh, first-class, and at the highest price. That is far from being the case now. Fowl, eggs, honey, and some other commodities are produced on a mixed farm with little perceptible strain upon the resources beyond the careful utilisation of things which would otherwise go to waste ; and yet when the results are marketed they bring a return of ready money which is useful to agriculturists and to the neighbouring towns in which it is spent. If men able and eager to work land and pay for it are planted over it on just terms and carry on mixed farming in which forage and root crops and corn for house-feeding and fattening would predominate, the productiveness of the soil would be enormously increased ; the output of fat cattle, dairy produce, pigs and general agricultural products varying according to the soil and circumstances might easily be quadrupled, not as now at special seasons, but steadily throughout the year ; the home market for stores would be proportionately improved ; horses would necessarily increase as well as home-grown corn for them, for the increased population, and possibly for export ; work and money to pay for it would be abundant ; plenty of men would be found to do it, and the new system, secured by ownership and by an independent Irish legislature, would be the salvation of the farmer and of the country. For all this it may be necessary to place Irish railways under popular control, to work

them in the interests of Ireland and not as at present in subservience to English interests and antagonistic to those of Ireland. In other countries railways promote industries. Though that is obviously one of the purposes for which they are constructed, the fact has to be stated in Ireland where they serve no such purpose. Our railways check and prevent industries by charging higher freights to Irish centres than from them, and thus flooding the country with products of established English industries. Traders in Irish towns are able to get goods delivered to them more cheaply from England than from any part of Ireland. Partly to the same cause is due the growing use of English coal in Irish dwellings even in the vicinity of uncut peat bogs—an anomaly as incongruous as would be the sending of turf to Whitehaven.

Take, for example, a thousand-acre ranch in Meath, now devoted exclusively to the feeding of dry stock, and on which resides only a herd who is not allowed to till a sod of the land. If all that land were divided into six-acre farms, as in some of the Swiss Cantons what a difference it would present with 166 families working busily on it, what a different amount it would produce, and what a difference the bare necessaries of the people would make to the nearest towns, compared with the custom of a solitary herd! A district populated with industrious and prosperous people supports a town; an unpopulated district blights a town. For Ireland, however, let us simplify the matter by supposing the ranch divided into twenty-acre farms. There would then be fifty families with their countless activities and wants, more than fifty horses and carts and ploughs, 100 cows, 100 calves, fat cattle at all seasons and twice as many of them as the ranch ever fattened, as many store cattle and sheep as ever it fed, large quantities of corn, beans, forage and root crops for home consumption, home markets and export, according to prices and circumstances; flax, hemp, or tobacco according to suitability of soil; 50 gardens and orchards with their products,

500 hives of honey ; probably 250 pigs, poultry of all kinds, and eggs beyond number ; and the people themselves, proud of their station, active, intelligent and joyous. Contrast all that wealth and human activity and interest with the silence and solitude of the ranch. Side by side with all the wealth in crops, dairy, garden, and farm-yard produce, the live stock would, as in continental countries, be more numerous, better bred, more quickly finished, and of greater value than the ranch in pasture could possibly produce. It is therefore the direct reverse of truth to represent the anti-ranching agitation as one of Man against Beast, except so far as regards supremacy. In Ireland under the monopolists beasts have supplanted men. In Ireland under peasant proprietors men would flourish and multiply, and beasts also as a consequence. As in the continental countries with which we have compared Ireland, the number of live stock would be greater because of the people and of the people's industry. As in those countries also, the people having an abundance and variety of excellent food of home production, animal and vegetable, would live to a much larger extent than they do now on this wholesome food, and less money would leave the country for those things which Irish soil can well produce. Under the intelligent care of a responsible government the present wasteful practice of paying our money for food-stuffs which could be produced at home of as good quality would be reversed, and we would be exporting things of the highest quality and price and bringing home the money for local circulation. Instead of a solitary grazier exporting cattle to England and importing all his requirements, even to clothes for his family and dip for his sheep, and of no more use to local trade than if he were an absentee ; instead of a herd or a few sapless tenants unable to pay for their necessaries because the landlord had drained them of their last shilling, the shops of traders and of artisans would be crowded with customers and clients demanding the best and paying for it.

Ireland's poverty is intensified by the fact that a considerable amount of her money is either idle and unproductive or invested in foreign, including British, enterprises, producing no effect except an injurious one upon Ireland. Home circulation is the true economic function of money. It would be difficult to enumerate the variety of ways in which the change herein proposed would cause money to circulate at home. The increased number and prosperity of the people, the increased harmony and enlightened sense of community of interest between town and country would, regardless of Parliament, create an effective popular ban against the importation of anything that Ireland could well produce, not alone in food-stuffs, but in clothing, agricultural implements and machinery, and the numberless requirements of a prosperous people. In rural districts in which suitable native raw material abounds the surplus energies and skill of the people would find a profitable outlet in works in wood, stone, pottery, peat, and other material now unused. No town would be without one or more kinds of manufacturing industry, no village without some handicraft and a desire to emulate some other village. Through the revival and development of the home market, answering to the requirements of the people, town and country communities would mutually strengthen each other and contribute to the material part of our National Renaissance. Is it any wonder that tenants and purchasers, half-employed labourers and mechanics, shopkeepers and townspeople generally pining for customers, are delighted to help, so far as they can, the movement which promises to effect such a beneficial change at their doors. They cannot help seeing, they cannot by any possibility conceal from themselves, the obvious fact that the breaking up of the great sheep-walks and bullock-ranches and the planting of them with human beings under proper conditions would at once put an end to the present listless stagnation; would give rise, in addition to agriculture itself, to many considerable industries now

non-existent, to numerous small domestic arts and handicrafts accessory to farming or congenial to country people, and restore the hum and flush of life to places now stricken with silence and decay. Agriculturists would find occasional change of occupation as good as rest. There is hardly a limit to the profitable activity of healthy, educated, independent peasant proprietors ; and Irish peasants possess every natural aptitude fitting them to avail of such advantages to the full, when once secured as owners on proper terms. Instead of broken down agricultural labourers and peasants crowding the urban labour market, the attraction for willing workers, skilled and unskilled, would be to the country. This would materially relieve the congestion of poverty-stricken people in the slums and purlieus of crowded cities, and diminish moral and physical deterioration—things unknown in active rural life. Clearly, the recovery of the land is no mere rural project. It concerns all who live by honest industry, and every useful member of the community would benefit by the change we propose.

Though as a rule it is unwise to give much heed to misrepresentations, there may be a use for some honest people in stating with some degree of precision the real objects of the anti-ranching movement. It is to stud Ireland over with peasant proprietors burdened with no more than a just price, secure, therefore industrious, therefore prosperous, therefore contented. But it is not to make Ireland exclusively a land of small peasant proprietors and nothing besides. It is rather to create in her a sufficient number of that class for her general well-being, and as the first essential step towards enabling her to put to her credit other things, educational, industrial, commercial, artistic, literary, etc.

One has small claim to be considered an Irishman who does not desire to see the Gaelic language revived and generally used, suitable manufacturing industries revived and flourishing, Gaelic pastimes prevailing, and a national pride in resuscitating

and promoting whatever is characteristic of and creditable to our race. These various objects enlist the special activities of different sets of persons and deserve the help of all. All engaged in them are doing good work, and if there is anyone who helps none of them he must be very selfish or very ignorant. But, since the value of all these things is mainly for those who stay in Ireland, rather than for those who must leave it for want of land to live upon, they are unsafe guides who, while themselves giving no practical help to any industry, indiscriminately encourage in a rural district industries of doubtful, fantastic, or impossible character, for the obvious purpose of diverting the people's attention from the untenanted land, the greatest of all fields of industry, the least doubtful, the most easily revived, the most secure against every form of ill fortune, at once the most self-sustaining and most helpful to all others, above all, that which directly and immediately stops emigration and provides and maintains home customers to support other industries, people to speak the language, play the games, and maintain the nation with its national individuality and characteristics. So great is this project that if it were to fail all others should fail in consequence. Success in other national objects must be more or less determined by success in this. The recovery of the land for the people means the saving of the nation, and is a national and not a departmental problem. To break up the grazing tracts and plant the people back upon them for the purposes of life and industry is the speediest way to stop the stream of emigration, lays the surest foundation for all other industries and interests, and so closely affects national life that by promoting it all national interests are promoted, by neglecting it all are neglected, by opposing it all are opposed. The recovery of the land for the people means the preservation of the people, and is therefore secondary only to the recovery of national self-government, if it be not a necessary precedent to that measure.

Anxious though the people are to bring to an end the slothful ranching system which has reduced large expanses of our country to one-eighth of their productive power and less than one-eighth of their inhabitants, they have no desire to create rural congestion even on good land. Nor do they desire to spoil any wooded demesne or other beautified land or to commit vandalism of any kind. On the contrary, they strongly dislike the present practice of landlords denuding of trees lands they are about to sell ; and as soon as given power and opportunity, the people will cordially co-operate in a general scheme for beautifying and sheltering the entire country. Still less will the free peasantry desecrate, or allow to be desecrated, any historic ground or historic object, rath, earth-mark, pillar-stone, Ogham, or abbey ruin. They do not desire, and this agitation does not touch, the demesne of a resident landlord or the home farm of a resident farmer, no matter how the land is used. These, if not made up of evicted lands, may remain in their various sizes, except to the extent of enlarging labourers' plots and giving pasturage to the cows of the neighbouring poor. The only land the people claim in addition to that in their occupation is untenanted and non-residential land, on which neither owner nor tenant resides, which is all in grass, and on which no employment is given. All this is land from which people have been evicted. All non-residential land used for grazing only, and therefore misused, giving no employment, and detrimental to the common weal, is claimed by the people, no matter who owns the cattle that graze upon it. Hence, even if the common pretence that the cattle belonged to the owner of the land were true, it would in no sense weaken the people's claim.

What, then, is an economic or self-sustaining farm? Clearly the monopolists who have reduced the best parts of our country to a store-raising ranch are not competent to answer this question. They have no practical knowledge of legitimate

farming but regard it with disfavour as a rival to their own game. The Department of Agriculture is the public authority in Ireland which ought to be competent, since it is maintained at enormous public expense for that among other purposes. It says "about fifty statute acres of average quality." This definition may be correct in Ireland's present circumstances. But it is our duty and purpose to see that some of those circumstances shall be altered so as to make a much smaller farm economic among farms of various sizes. The absence of such variety in the official article in which the definition occurs, and the general policy of the Department, lead to the inference that in the theory of the Department there would be larger farms, but none smaller, than fifty acres, and, apparently, an unoccupied social chasm between farmers and the occupants of union cottages. If that is the idea, we do not want it realised. We ought to have no such chasm. We should do nothing calculated to accentuate or perpetuate unbridgeable or insurmountable class distinctions. Rigid theorists would, if they had their way, by aiming at unnatural and unattainable uniformity of pattern, bring the world to geometrical sameness but hopeless human confusion. We do not find nature so rigid, and human nature surely requires freedom of play and variety of action. No one disputes that an intelligent man established on just terms as owner of a good farm of fifty acres adequately equipped, and having sufficient labourers at command, could manage to live. If it were possible and desirable to cut the whole country into that pattern, it would still be doubtful if its economic merits would reconcile us to its monotony. But it is neither desirable nor possible. We must remove and not perpetuate artificial barriers between classes. We want no community of uniform hedges cast in the same mould, without ambition to rise, and without possibility if ambition did exist. In a country like ours in which the purest and best of our race have been crushed to the very earth, often because of their innate merit, and where

the fairest flower of virtue and genius may fitly spring from the humblest cabin, we want no unbridgeable chasm separating labourers and peasants from other people ; no distance between classes beyond what education, intelligence, character, and sustained manly effort can overleap ; no height which any person may not attain by merit or forfeit by crime ; no purse-pride or three-cow pride ; and, except in tales of a departed age, no distinctions of blood apart from personal merit. It is no part of our aim, nor should any person or theory be allowed, to disinherit, by placing any artificial obstacle in the way of, people whose rights are unquestionable and indefeasible, as a rigid application of the fifty-acre minimum would certainly do. In the Highlands of Scotland where land is inferior to any in Ireland, fifty acres is the maximum limit of a small holding. We object to the practice of tyranny, even when given the euphonious name of economic theory. Whether a farm is self-sustaining or not, does not always depend upon its acreage. The quality of the soil, the situation in relation to market or railway, and the industry and intelligence of the proprietor, are also elements in the case. We want no mechanical similarity of holding. Better economically, more beneficial to all, fairer to look upon, and far more easily attainable, would be a varied country and a varied people ; gradation of means, fruitful in emulation and variety of crops, methods, dates, quality and yield ; in neatness of work and of home ; in aspirations and opportunities of gratifying them ; in free formation and development of individual character ; in variety and grades of intellectual culture, worthy ambitions, and the numberless ways in which, in such a community, intelligence and worth may be manifested and merit won. We want to re-build our nation with a view to a future worthy of her distant past, self-supporting, self-defending, enlightened, prosperous, happy, to live in friendship, charity and peace with herself and with all the world. Such I firmly believe to be a natural foundation upon which an Irish State might

securely rest. It is the popular definition of "law and order." Let idle moralists compare it with that which has hitherto prevailed in Ireland.

To the natural question, is the presence of small land-holders in the community in a comfortable condition economically possible? I answer unhesitatingly, yes. It is only the prevalence of an evil system, with the wreck it has wrought and the false ideas it has generated, that makes such a question possible. Holdings quarter the size of what we contemplate support some of the most prosperous populations in Europe. The fifty-acre theory would be wholly erroneous under a rational land system such as we hope to set up in Ireland. The people will be better off and happier under an elastic system which disregards theory. As guides, theorists are safest after the event. Let us have what suits us. If prosperity and happiness result, theorists will not fail to arise in the fullness of time to explain how we became prosperous and happy. It is vile to raise any unnecessary obstacle between a human being and the civilising and soothing influences of family life, which are impossible to attain without a home. A country is in an unnatural condition, and its government is immoral, in which, owing to the monopolisation of land a home is not within the reach of every honest and industrious man. The scheme I have briefly outlined will on investigation be found to be economically sound. I none the less decline to rest the claim of the Irish people to the soil of Ireland on that fact so long as monopoly of land exists. Their right to the land is absolute; can be forfeited only by an ill use of the land or other grave offence; and only an Irish authority could have any right to exact the forfeit.

Unfavourable as the circumstances of Ireland have been every person with rural experience must have occasionally noticed snug homes creditably kept internally and externally, occupied by comfortable, intelligent, well-reared families, on holdings as small as four or five acres. In some instances the

occupant keeps a horse and makes the principal part of his living by doing various sorts of horse-work for his neighbours. In other cases he develops some peculiar mechanical or other skill, and on becoming more or less of an occasional necessity for many people he makes as comfortable, if not as certain, a living as many a farmer, and without working so hard for it. The call for such men would increase with population. A man without that intelligence in such a holding, or even in a larger one if he had sons, would find his level and be useful as an occasional labourer for hire. A sprinkling of holdings of every variety is economically sound; but no community or nest of small holdings close together should be created or allowed, except as accommodation for a town or centre of trade; because that would destroy the means and opportunities of rising and create mutual depression and the evils of congestion. Some artisans through the country and in villages are passionately fond of land and surprisingly skilful in making it produce good crops. No men seem to realise more clearly than they do that labour is the best fertiliser that can be applied to land. It would be monstrous to discourage a taste so laudable while monopoly exists in the country.

As part of our National Renaissance, we should revive the ancient Irish conception of home as a sanctuary against civil legal process, inviolable except for crime. It should not be in the power of any individual to leave an entire family homeless for the recovery of a civil debt. The presence of a Homestead Law on the Statute Book would, as in some of the American States, produce the desired effect without actual resort to it. The general prosperity which peasant proprietary, established on sound business principles, would diffuse would also reduce the necessity for applying such a law.

A very small patch of land may furnish a site for a home, which is a primary human want. That fundamental requirement satisfied, a man does not expect the patch to be more

than his centre of operations, or it may be to supplement his other resources and produce things which are best and most convenient when had at one's home. With the criminal passion for monopoly extirpated, and with the help of that free trade in land which a proper system of peasant proprietary would necessitate, opportunities for enlarging or exchanging a patch would be numerous, and a man's progress upwards would depend on the intelligent application of his own industry. Such a system, by furnishing a powerful and constant incentive upward, would be the most effective cure for intemperance, indolence, untidiness, unpunctuality, waste, and the various vices and weaknesses which an alien system has bred. The country would become a prolific nursery of the most honourable and most useful practical virtues; the best instincts of our race would at last acquire free development on native lines corresponding to that which other nations enjoy, and rural life would be sweetened by the sovereign and abiding charm of frank spontaneity and truth to its own self. The system would require the abolition of the old tedious and costly method of conveyancing, and the substitution for it of a simple public register in each district of all the land within the district, showing in respect of each holding the owner's name, the area, valuation and rate, and all mortgages and charges affecting it. A sale of land would be completed quickly and inexpensively by entering the new owner's name in this register. The system would also provide checks against letting, against monopoly, and against capricious and injurious use of land, and would allow land to be held only for occupation, residence, and actual rational use. The method of acquiring and holding land and, where necessary, obtaining loans from a government source for working it properly, should be made so elastic that poverty of itself would be no bar to a man getting land or a loan, so long as the land itself was security, and there was evidence of the applicant's character, ability and earnest purpose to work the

land properly and discharge the liabilities. Recognition of the superiority of the human being over everything else should be thorough. If the land and the credit-worthiness of the individuals were not deemed sufficient security, money for reproductive works should be made available at the lowest rate at which the State can make advances, through local credit committees on the joint security of the members, and subject to their control on the Raiffeissen system. This has already been found beneficial to the people in poor districts, and would, under a peasant proprietary, become generally applicable. In connection with it a general system of mutual insurance would probably grow up, the payments towards which would all be kept in Ireland, gradually forming a great national reserve fund, instead of going, as Irish insurance money now does, to pay dividends and build palaces in England and Scotland. With awakened interest in our affairs and control of them, other leakages of Irish money would be stopped one by one.

Poverty on the large scale with which alien rule has made us familiar is unknown in any country of peasant proprietors ; and as for general famine, its occurrence would be quite impossible in such a country. Poverty, and the necessity of making public provision for poverty, are avoided by the simple process of giving the people such free access to the land that all have enough, and there is no permanent separate class of agricultural labourers depending wholly upon wages. With us hitherto land monopolists have been wont to assume spasmodically the philanthropic air and talk of "relieving" distress, of which their monopoly has been the chief cause. We purpose, by striking at and removing that cause, to prevent distress. If people are given free access to the land, if every man is allowed and encouraged to become a land-owner to the extent that his natural forces enable him to do, the ghastly and demoralising institution of poor-law unions will gradually disappear from rural districts and diminish in urban districts. The attitude

of mind which would deny to an agricultural labourer the right to look and strive upward must be eradicated. Farmers and labourers are parts of the single and indivisible agricultural interest; each in the long run shares any permanent benefit or injury to the other. With an earnest local effort, and very little, if any, legislation, a few acres could at once be added to the plot of every labourer who is situated on a ranch or on a large farm. He and his family would thus be provided with home work for slack seasons, with home-grown food, and with winter feeding for a cow, which is a necessity for a young family. Every employer knows that men so circumstanced, from the practice of intelligent care and resource in the management of their own small affairs, become the most valuable to an employer, and that a large increase of their number in the present ranching districts is not alone eminently desirable, but essential to the revival of tillage. Under Section 8 of the Labourers' Act of 1906, surplus land acquired by a district council may be let temporarily; and there is nothing in the Act to prevent the letting to labourers as to other people. Form No. 6 under the Act is designed for the purpose of acquiring a tract of land. Section 8 of the Act gives power to distribute the land. Neither the form nor the section has any use or meaning except this. Both are blocked and rendered nugatory by the Local Government Board. That administrative block could be removed without legislation. Land should be added in this way to a labourer's plot with a view to subsequent incorporation, enfranchisement of the holding thus enlarged, and the removal of the financial burden in respect of it from the ratepayers to such labourers as had in the years of probation shown their ability to work the land creditably and pay for it. With such a prospect, this would probably mean every labourer who had got the chance. Mr. Chief Secretary Birrell, writing on the 9th April, 1908, illustrates the unchangeable, anti-Irish attitude of Dublin Castle by saying:—

“During the discussion of the Labourers’ Bill of 1906, there was never at any time an indication that the policy you favour was meant to come within the scope of the Government’s proposals.”

As a lawyer and as Chief Secretary, Mr. Birrell is fully aware that many things to which the same argument would apply have nevertheless become law, that the rent-fixing Land Acts expressly secured tenants’ improvements, that during the discussion of those acts the landlords never hinted their intention of confiscating the tenants’ improvements, that nevertheless they do this with the help of commissioners and judges, and that to mention in debate our purpose of enlarging labourers’ plots where vacant land is available would have been to defeat our purpose in the Act itself. At present the Act leaves the enlargement of labourers’ plots in the manner described possible ; and a Liberal statesman, by refusing to allow it to be done, is merely exposing his own littleness and leaving the good deed and the credit which will accompany it to some Conservative successor. The position of peasants and agricultural labourers on bits of land that are their own is radically different from that of wage-earners, in that being largely self-supporting, a temporary cessation of work from weather or other cause does not pauperise them. The whole community, as well as themselves, derive from this the advantage of immunity from burden in such events, as well as permanent security and quietude. The health and comfort of the labouring population is not a mere labour question. It is one which ought to concern, as it certainly affects, everybody. Local representative bodies should have an effective voice in the choice and distribution of land in their respective districts, and in the selection of suitable applicants for the land and for government loans. All Irish representative bodies should, on behalf of the rate-payers, resent, reject and repudiate liability for losses arising from transactions relating to land, except to the extent to which they are given some power of control.

It is often assumed that only labourers emigrate from Ireland. Ireland needs for her own use every true heart and strong arm she produces. We cannot spare any class, except idlers, and we desire to retain and get back as many workers as possible. But far too many young men and young women on whose education and training their parents, and in some instances the public, have spent money, as soon as they find themselves equipped for adventure hurry away out of the present cramped environment of life in Ireland, to give to other lands more rationally ruled the benefit of their sharpened intellects and training. We want to make Ireland such as will fill them with ambition to work and stay in it, and we want to attract back as many of them as we can. We want to make Ireland like those happy continental countries which have "no land question." A numerous rural population secure in the fruits of their labour, and therefore comfortable, will bring back buoyant life to the now dreary wastes.

One of the standing wonders of public life is, whether they are all men of slow and painful perception who aspire to the profession of statesmanship, or whether it is that profession, or the training for it, that makes them so, or whether the failing is affected and a vice. All who want anything done beneficial to the democracy agree as to the fact. Gentle and simple know that for successful agriculture, a contented people, and a strong and peaceful State, the cultivators of the soil must own it free of unfair burden. Under the system briefly and crudely outlined in this chapter, Ireland could safely and comfortably employ and support a rural population of ten millions, whose requirements would afford an independent home sustenance for a larger urban and manufacturing population than Ireland now possesses. With such a population, with the industries indicated and the spirit this would generate, Ireland would be exporting and receiving money for things which she now imports. The change would bring money into circulation in Ireland as

in the countries with which we have compared her, banish stagnation, chronic poverty, want of employment, intermittent famine; would make life full and happy, useful and pleasant, and revive activity, hope, enterprise, and contentment in country, village, and town. Profiting by the lesson of the Roman empire, whose dissolution had for its beginning the removal of the peasant proprietors from the Roman Campagna, our modest aim is to begin the foundation of a new and happy Ireland by planting such proprietors firmly and justly on the territory of which Tara is the centre, and following the example throughout the entire ranching districts. The necessity for this reform has been so fully recognised by Parliament that a pretence of carrying it out was made in 1903, to facilitate the passing of the Land Act of that year. But while the provisions of that Act favourable to the monopolists were made mandatory, those for our purpose were left merely permissive and enabling, and have been blocked by the monopolists. We want to make the popular provisions operative and to preserve the life-blood of Ireland by stanching her deepest wound. The ranches are in imminent danger of being bought up by capitalists, English, Scotch, or Irish, to be still used as ranches. If that were allowed to happen the people's opportunity would be gone. It is our duty to prevent that calamity. Opportunities are given to be availed of. This opportunity must be availed of now or never. The people feel that the opportunity having come to their hands, a duty comes with it. They regard it as more than a duty, a high privilege, to help in reversing the wicked policy of the past and in giving relief and joy and hope to the down-trodden whose only desire is to be allowed to live in freedom and peace in their native land. We want to give them homes in the country, where alone the homes of the poor can be thoroughly wholesome, where the problems of sanitation and health find their best and easiest solution, where the people could with advantage live to a greater extent than they now do upon commodities of

local production, and where all the social, physical, and moral conditions are most favourable. We want to develop the varied resources of the country and to give free play to the varied capacities of the people. We want to repeople the desolate evicted areas and rekindle the fires long quenched ; to restore the remnant of our disinherited people to the land from which in most cases their ancestors were evicted ; to give the Irish a hold once more of the richest parts of their grand old country, change the face of the land, give joy to aching hearts at home and in exile, reverse the Curse of Cromwell, and have an actual part in starting our country upon a new career of industry, prosperity, learning, arts, sciences, virtue, and happiness under the aegis of Liberty for the secure enjoyment of them all. An Irish State based upon this foundation would be, for prosperity and stability, an object of international envy. A happy people would be so many rocks at its foundation. We cannot afford to forget, and it is our duty to remember what bitter experience has so long taught us, that the great industry of agriculture on which the lives and means of our nation would mainly depend would require that constant and jealous care which only a native and responsible government can bestow, and that it would be utterly unsafe under the control of the British Parliament and British Treasury or any other alien power.

We are not ashamed of this project ; nor need our exiled kindred, who have made efforts and sacrifices on our behalf, and who are entitled to be considered, be ashamed of it. Puny statesmen are only wasting their time trying to make us ashamed of it. In the eyes of impartial men ours is a splendid, a holy, and a feasible purpose. If it is to our method they object, why do not they, who have a choice, apply a better method. Let them call our work by what bad names they please, it is really one of national regeneration, a work so unquestionably good that it appeals to every manly fibre in the people's nature, that when correctly understood it has the moral and financial support

of all industrious and fair-minded people, and that many of those who opposed it in the early stages are now glad to be allowed to swallow their own words in silence and to have their opposition forgotten. If the problem were left to Irishmen, divided though they are reputed to be, they would solve it speedily, not unjustly, and with practical unanimity. Whoever outside Ireland is disposed to dispute our claim and purpose had better ask himself what right he has to interfere in this domestic matter. There is nothing abstruse or unjust in what we propose. It is a simple and natural reform which the course of events is making inevitable. It may be delayed a short time ; it cannot be prevented. If carried out promptly now, when the people see its necessity and have learned their power, it would, more than any other change now possible, promote the welfare and peace of Ireland. The longer the reform is delayed the worse for all concerned and the less satisfactory in the end. If left undone until people not concerned see the necessity of it—say the people of France, England, or some other country—then the mildest local action that can be taken must be such that the noise of it will reach those people and the logic of it convince them and make it their business. To mere constitutional calls for justice, howsoever long repeated, not being their business they give no heed.

VII.—LAND LAWS FROM 1881 TO 1902

THE one only solution of the Irish agrarian problem is to restore the land to the people absolutely on reasonable terms. The possible methods of doing this seem to be (1) a patriotic and equitable act of the landlords now spontaneously and without more ado selling all their lands except occupied demesnes for the true value with a bonus added ; (2) failing such a voluntary act on the landlords' part, an Act of Parliament compelling them to do this essential thing ; (3) the two foregoing methods failing, popular conciliation ; and (4) the three foregoing methods failing, popular agitation. That is the situation.

The first method being too good for this world, we proceed to consider the others, and first the main efforts of the British Parliament in the past to discharge its primary duty of providing for the safety and well-being of the people by bringing land laws into consonance with justice in Ireland.

In the Great Famine of 1846—7—8 a million and a half of human beings died of starvation and famine-fever while corn enough to feed twice the population then in Ireland was grown in and exported out of the country. That crime of unexampled magnitude and atrocity, the joint work of the British Government and of Irish landlords, was so enormous that it would look like trifling to go beyond it to mention isolated cases of individual tyranny however numerous and however bad. If the landlords as a class had any conscience, if the British Government of Ireland by any Party were accessible to any appeal for justice or for mercy, the land laws and other laws which produced that shocking result, so disgraceful to rulers and to ruling class, would have been promptly amended or withdrawn without other appeal. As no result of laws could be more ghastly, so no appeal could

be stronger than the death of a million and a half of innocent people from artificial famine.

The only response was the initiation, in the midst of the famine, of the most cruel and extensive evictions that had been carried out since the clearances of conquest under Cromwell. Landlords, many of whom had intercepted and put into their own pockets in lieu of irrecoverable arrears of rent money sent through them to relieve the starving people, now, with those alms in their pockets, turned upon the people whom they had deprived of food, and evicted them, with the help of Queen Victoria's armed forces. Some persecutions recorded in history have, it is true, been more violent and bloody; not one in any age or country has ever taken so many human lives. The Terror of the French Revolution and all the wars of Napoleon were only child's play compared with the slaughter in Ireland during those three years under Queen Victoria. Properly understood, it was the more horrible for being bloodless. The sword could hardly draw blood from people famishing of hunger. The tragic destruction of human life and human habitations was on a scale so vast that in presence of it the lesser crime of confiscating all the property of the tenants in their holdings—which standing by itself would have been a monstrous injustice—is lost sight of. Those homesteads that were demolished were the tenants' own construction and property; the improvements which enabled the tenants to pay high rents had been made by themselves. In many instances those very improvements which made the land fit to be converted into ranches belonged to the tenants, were the work of their hands and of their money, and proved their ruin. Landlord-made law enabled the landlord at one stroke to destroy the people and to seize their wealth. As a rule all the buildings, drains, fences, farm-roads and all that goes to constitute and maintain a homestead and make a farm workable were created by the tenants and their predecessors in title at their sole expense. In Ulster, the tenant's occupation

interest in his holding as a home and a going concern, and the value of his improvements, were partially secured to him by the Ulster Custom established by the colonists three centuries ago. But even in Ulster the Custom was not the law. Its extent and interpretation depended upon the strength of local public opinion. In the other provinces on the destruction of the clan tenure no other was substituted on behalf of the people, and the landlords' unrestricted will became the land law. That the property of the native tenants in their holdings in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught was at least equal to the property of the planters in Ulster, needs no argument to prove. But an Irish tenant talking of justice or equity to a landlord would be like a lamb bleating to a hungry tiger for mercy.

A few years after the Famine the tenant-righters of all Ireland, north, south, east and west, united in the Tenants' League, put forward their modest demand for what was then called the "three F's," fixity of tenure, fair rent, and free sale. British statesmen admitted its justice and moderation, but did nothing. In 1860 time was found to legislate in reference to Irish land, but it was only to strengthen the landlords and weaken the tenants still more. Statesmen were content to hold that Irish tenants-at-will were tenants by contract or by prescription according to the theory that suited the particular purpose of themselves and the landlords at the time. Popular indignation was the only restraint upon the rapacity of Irish landlords until 1881. Legislative obduracy which the Famine did not soften and which the arguments of the Tenants' League did not move was clearly not amenable to either pity or reason. The claim admitted in 1852 to be just and moderate made no parliamentary headway whatever until 1881, and then not in response to reason or justice or mercy or parliamentary action, but in obedience to the Land League agitation.

The *raison d'être* of the Act of 1881 was, that Irish tenants were not free agents, were not able to make free bargains with

landlords, that unfair advantage was taken of their position, that the terms of their relationship were determined arbitrarily by one party and submitted to by the other, there being no alternative, that the stronger party was habitually robbing the weaker, that this was the real cause of agrarian trouble amounting to semi-revolution, and that the State should set up a special tribunal to give the weaker party some measure of protection against the stronger. The Act created the Land Commission, and sub-commissions to value farms, revise the rents hitherto fixed by the landlords, and fix, for terms not exceeding fifteen years, fair rents on the landlord's property in the holdings.

The Land Act of 1881 is the Act for which Mr. Gladstone gets credit. Its real author was not in Parliament, and his remains now lie in the quiet churchyard of Straide. Though the Act fell far short of Michael Davitt's idea, and was based upon an entirely different principle from his, aiming as it did at restraining dishonest landlordism instead of expropriating it, and though time has shown Mr. Davitt's to have been the wiser plan and the only ultimate solution, still this Act remains the best ever passed by the British Parliament for Ireland. Its greatest potential value consisted in being an instrument of transition if administered impartially. It was itself essentially unsound as a permanent land system for Ireland, because in the very best circumstances, as a tenant's statutory term approached expiration, he would naturally suspend expensive tillage and improvements, if not in the hope of a low rent, at least to prevent excessive rent. This danger would always be aggravated in Ireland by the certainty of being rented to the full value, without regard to who created that value. It was significant also, and deserves to be remembered, that the Bill not only fell short of Mr. Davitt's idea, but that, although being the nearest approach to justice ever made by the British Parliament in relation to Ireland, the Irish Party under Mr. Parnell criticised it severely, and went so far as to walk out of the

House of Commons on the second reading, thus intimating that they declined to accept any responsibility for the Bill. It is to this strong nationalist attitude we owe the best that is in the Act. Had the Land Commission and staff, entrusted with its administration, been appointed impartially, and fixed rents on just principles in accordance with the spirit of the Act, no rents would have been allowed on the tenants' property or improvements, the old rents fixed by the landlords would in consequence have been reduced by probably an average of 50 per cent; this would have disposed the landlords to sell at just prices, for which no government would have had any difficulty in providing money, and the Irish agrarian problem would have been settled long ago peacefully and safely in Mr. Davitt's way, the only final way.

That Act was the first statutory recognition of the tenant's property in his holding, and the first statutory restraint upon landlords' rapacity and power. It was intended to be a charter of justice to the tenants of Ireland; but the administration of it was, in true English fashion in dealing with Ireland, entrusted almost exclusively to the nominees and partisans of the class whose dishonesty had given occasion for the enactment. They made it, and their successors have ever since made it, a charter of confiscation. Probably Mr. Gladstone, seeing that his great Act was in danger of being discredited, made an honest effort, according to his lights, to secure its impartial administration. But his knowledge of Ireland was at that time very imperfect; he had no conception of the difficulty of introducing any measure of justice to Ireland, and his success was only infinitesimal. After the Bill had been denounced in language of greater violence, probably, than has ever been applied to any other bill, and as soon as it was passed, the very men who had denounced it, the convicted criminals whose dishonest conduct it was intended to restrain, set themselves to capture the working of it and, with the help of Dublin Castle, succeeded. The results were what might have been expected.

The first section of the Act expressly entitled every tenant to whom it applied to sell his tenancy or occupation interest for the best price he could get for the same, and in the event of his being disturbed in his occupation, to obtain compensation for the tenant-right and for the improvements to which he might be entitled. The eighth section of the Act provided that no rent should be allowed or made payable in respect of improvements made by the tenant or his predecessor in title, and for which he or they had not been compensated. The tenant-right and the improvements being thus marked off as the tenant's own property, it followed that the landlord was not entitled to be paid rent in respect of either, or to be paid for either in the event of his selling the holding to the tenant. The joint or dual ownership, which had always existed in equity, was thus at last recognised by statute.

The law, and the facts to which it applied, were so clear that no intelligent person could fail to appreciate them. The Commissioners and Sub-Commissioners, however, succeeded at the outset in confusing both law and facts, and they and their successors have succeeded in continuing that confusion during the twenty-seven years in which rent-fixing has been in operation. This was and is their method of securing against the people the class interest through which they received their appointments. During the whole of that time they have, in the landlords' interest, shirked the plain elementary duty of laying down the principle upon which a fair rent ought to be fixed, with the result that there has always been, and still is, radical disagreement among them on this and other fundamental points. The first provision of the Act was repealed and the tenants' occupation interest confiscated and transferred bodily to the landlord by a series of decisions, of which that of Mr. Justice Meredith may be taken as the type—that any form of competition which had the effect of unduly inflating the letting value of a holding beyond what would otherwise be its fair letting value, was not

to be taken into consideration as a ground for increasing the fair rent. That is a characteristic example of Irish judicial interpretation. Plausible, negative, and apparently even favourable to the tenant, a stranger unacquainted with the facts would imagine it was upright. Its effect was to ignore and by ignoring, to confiscate the tenant's property in his holding, to put rent upon the full value of the holding as it stood, as though it all belonged to the landlord, and this under the same Act, which so far recognised part of the property to be the tenant's as to forbid putting rent on it, and empowered the tenant to sell it. The plausible decision, like a smiling pick-pocket, contrary to two provisions of the statute and to justice, confiscated all the tenant's property and transferred it to the richer man. It is sought to conceal this dishonesty by judicial casuistry; but the entire country has too much reason to know it, for all rents are fixed in accordance with decisions of this kind, and one Chief Secretary after another has so admitted in Parliament.

The Land Commissioners have talked dishonestly from the beginning, talk dishonestly still, and get each Chief Secretary in turn to talk dishonestly in Parliament, of the fairness of charging a tenant the full true value of his holding. That would be fair if the tenant had acquired the holding in that condition from the landlord as the result of a fair business transaction, as tenants are said to do in England. But when, as is the rule in Ireland, the holding has never been the subject of a fair business transaction, when the buildings, drains, fences, farm-roads, high tillage, and other improvements which are sunk in the earth and cannot be carried away, and which in the case of a reclaimed farm constitute the greater part of its value, and in all cases a considerable part, have been made and maintained by the tenant and his predecessors in title, and never compensated for in any way by the landlord or his predecessors, the value of these improvements belong to that

tenant by every right divine, equitable and statutory. To put either rent or price on them is dishonesty, and is putting a perpetual fine upon the tenant for having been industrious. In such a case the raw material of the soil, that and nothing more, is the landlord's, and for that and nothing more should the tenant be obliged to pay either rent or price.

The inherent value of the land itself was a constant subject of exaggeration in every case. Competent court valuers, some of them respectable men in private life, when reproached with having laid undue rent upon holdings of that bad, cold class which would revert to utter barrenness but for the tenants' constant industry, have many a time admitted in confidence that they knew perfectly well the holdings yielded no rents, and that the money called rent had to be found elsewhere; "but other valuers meet with the same class of holdings and put rents on them, and if my reports were strictly just, or even near it, I would be simply dismissed and another valuer sent over my work." The Act, intended as a charter of protection to the weaker of two sections of the community, has all along been administered so much in favour of the stronger as not to permit a public official to be honest.

The result was that the average reduction of rents fixed by the landlords was only about 20 per cent., when, had justice or the statute been observed, it could not have been less than 50 per cent. In spite of justice, and in spite of the statute, the administrators, in connivance with the landlords, held that the tenant had no property in his holding, that the thing which Parliament empowered him to sell was not his but the landlord's, that he should neither sell nor enjoy it as his own, but should pay rent for its use, and that in case he purchased the holding he should pay for what was already his own by every title. In these circumstances it was little wonder that a large number of tenants were induced to accept paltry reductions given by their landlords and have them registered as "judicial," without any in-

spection or judicial hearing, on the ground that appearing before the partisan tribunal might not prove worth the cost and worry. We shall see in the next chapter how these poor people jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

In the circumstances of Ireland, with people desperately fond of their homes, if for no other reason because they were the only homes they could ever hope to have, too eager to hold them if rent could be procured anywhere or by any means, there could be no more conclusive proof that judicial rents were excessive than the fact that in many cases they were not paid. Hence it is not wonderful that in 1887, when the Act of 1881 had been only six years in operation, Parliament found it necessary to administer to the Land Commission probably the greatest statutory rebuke ever administered to a State Department. The partisanship of the Commission had over-reached itself. Parliament found it necessary to declare in the Act of 1887 that the Land Commission had acted so partially, and had fixed for fifteen years, under the name of "fair rents," rents which were so unfair as to be unpayable ; and the rents so fixed had to be further reduced and the first term broken before it had run a third of its course.

Unabashed by this rebuke, the Commission, supported by the Castle lawyers and the landlords, continued this practice with no perceptible change and with injustice so glaring that in 1896 Parliament found it necessary to declare again, more explicitly and emphatically, in agreement with universal fact and common knowledge, that all improvements should be deemed to have been made by the tenant until the contrary had been proved. The rules and practice repealed this provision also, abolished the presumption in favour of the tenant, put upon him the onus of proof and required him to lodge with his application a schedule of the improvements he intended to claim. In the leading case of *Robb and Downshire*, by which numberless cases were afterwards ruled, the Land Commission put extra

rent upon the tenant because he had built for himself a dwelling-house which they considered too good for the farm. Probably no other tribunal in the world claiming a judicial character would punish a man for having built a good residence for himself on his own farm at his own expense. The Commissioners were a statutory body acting under a statute which gave them no authority whatever to do anything of the kind. Nevertheless, they deliberately increased the rent in respect of the house as if the landlord had built it. Robb appealed against the monstrous decision ; but by doing so he only put himself to further expense. The promoted Castle-hacks on the Bench upheld the monstrous decision for which there was neither law nor justice. Robb had committed "ameliorative waste" and should pay the penalty. In another typical case a tenant of a low-lying farm subject to much wet, drained it at great labour and expense, and showed his drains to the court valuer when on the land inspecting the farm for a fair rent. All this was admitted in court, but because the tenant had not lodged a schedule of his drains no allowance was made for them. Rent was fixed on the farm as it stood, improved by the drains, as if the landlord had made the drains. This enhanced rent, like that on Robb's house, was in effect a permanent fine put upon the tenant for having made the drains, though he had done more than the statute required him to do to secure his property in them. The court, in open violation of the statute and of justice, confiscated that property and imposed a fine for no better reason than because the tenant had not complied with a technical requirement, not of the law, but of the court itself.

Any honest man who reads the statutory provisions intended to secure to tenants their property in their improvements must allow that they are as adequate and as explicit as any tenant's advocate could desire, and that an educated man who construes them in any sense contrary to their obvious one must be convicted of malice rather than excused on the ground of stupidity.

Section 5 of the Land Act of 1870 says:—

“All improvements shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to have been made by the tenant or his predecessors in title.”

Section 8 of the Land Act of 1881 says:—

“No rent shall be allowed or made payable in any proceedings under this Act in respect of improvements made by the tenant or his predecessors in title, and for which the tenant or his predecessors in title shall not have been paid or otherwise compensated by the landlord or his predecessors in title.”

Section 1 of the Land Act of 1896 says:—

“(3) No rent shall be allowed or made payable in respect of an improvement made by the tenant on a holding by reason only of the work constituting such improvement not being suitable for the holding.”

“(5) A tenant shall not be deemed to have been paid or compensated for any improvement not made in pursuance of a contract entered into for valuable consideration.”

In defiance of these plain enactments, the Land Commissioners and Sub-Commissioners, with the inspiration and guidance of Castle lawyers on the Bench and proceeding thither, have proved stronger in defending landlordism than Parliament in reforming it; have filched, and are to this day filching, the tenants' property from them and transferring it to the landlords, and have thus turned a law of potential beneficence into a scourge of the people. The decisions, rules, forms, instructions and general practice under which they act have been deliberately and skilfully designed to ignore the tenant-right and improvements and any tenant's property in holdings and, by ignoring, to take out of the pockets of the tenants, money they had honestly earned and transfer it to the pockets of the landlords. In ostensible obedience to Parliament, trivial changes have been made, but in substance and effect the decisions, rules, forms, and practice are still the same and nullify the Acts. In the debates on those Land Acts no one suggested that they would be

used for confiscation and dishonesty and that the provisions above quoted would be wrenched and given a meaning directly contrary to that intended. Yet Mr. Secretary Birrell with full knowledge of this and of the fact that the law has been for twenty-seven years, and is to-day, perverted in the manner described refuses to permit a popular and logical interpretation of the Labourers' Act of 1906, on the sole ground that the particular construction was not mentioned in debate. Statutory provisions may be reversed to favour landlords, but must not be logically construed if they would favour labourers and ratepayers.

The Castle judges enact laws as well as repeal what the legislature has enacted. A good illustration occurs in the interpretation of this same Act of 1881. It excluded from its benefits "future tenants," obviously meaning tenancies created after the passing of the Act. Those two harmless-looking words have been converted by judicial interpretation into a scourge for many innocent men and a veritable gold-mine for rackrenters. Commissioners and judges set to work and created a new and permanent class of people called "future tenants," including many who had occupied their homes and farms in unbroken succession to their fathers and grandfathers for generations. Four distinct modes were discovered or invented of swelling their ranks by technically breaking existing tenancies. A fifth mode was provided in the eviction-made-easy section of the Act of 1887, dispensing with the slow and expensive process of actual eviction, and turning a tenant into a caretaker or future tenant by means of a registered letter sent through the post office. A tenant deprived of his status in any of these stealthy ways at once becomes a caretaker or tenant-at-will, an outlaw so far as regards legislative protection, and may be dragged like a thief by a policeman from the house he and his predecessors have built and the home they have created. Under impartial administration the number of future tenants would probably not amount to 1,000. Those now in

that position are variously estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000. Persons without actual knowledge might suppose, as they are told by some whom the shoe does not pinch, that the iniquity of rack-renting and the question of rent-fixing had lost their importance now, when dual ownership stands universally condemned, when all parties desire full ownership to be conferred upon one of the partners, and when the Act of 1903 has provided an immense sum of money to accomplish this transfer. Unfortunately this vast scheme of land purchase has been so planned as to make rent-fixing, past and present, of more vital importance than before. No one connected with land has any doubt about this. The relevancy of rent-fixing to the question of price, and by consequence to the question of breaking up the ranches, arises from the institution of the extraordinary method of price-fixing on the basis of existing rents without inspection, and therefore regardless of value, and from extending the liability beyond the purchasers to the whole community. If rents are unjust, so also necessarily must be the prices based upon them. Bad though unjust rents were, yet, being in their nature temporary, and binding only individuals who could escape, at least through bankruptcy, without involving their neighbours, the country could tolerate them. When unjust rents are being changed for permanent annuities calculated upon those unjust rents, when the number of years' purchase no longer depends upon value, but upon the avarice and skill of one of the parties and the simplicity and embarrassment of the other, when that State protection which was necessary for the weaker party in the fixing of rent for fifteen years, is withdrawn in the fixing of an annuity for 68½ years, when upon individuals breaking down the ratepayers must make the damage good, and when the price of untenanted land must be largely ruled by the price of what is tenanted, the dullest can see that the importance of rent-fixing is enormously enhanced and is no longer limited to tenants, but extends to the landless people,

is no longer a mere rural question, but one that concerns cities and towns as well. People in this country are not so wealthy that they can afford to endow a vanishing and vicious class to an extent to be fixed by that class itself. After noting what occurred towards the close of 1902, we will examine what has been done, in response to this danger, to raise the character and improve the practice of the Land Commission, and whether it deserves the confidence of the public who maintain it and with whose property it deals.

In 1902, after official valuing and rent-fixing had been nineteen years in operation, it was seen that, owing to the partial administration, the people were not prospering, poverty and acute difficulty in paying rent still continued general, emigration and general decay continued, many thousands of acres of land went out of cultivation each year, and the country was forced to definitely abandon the hope of justice from the land courts and to revert to the Land League plan of expropriating the landlords and establishing a peasant proprietary. This time the demand was expressed as "universal compulsory sale." So important was it held to be that it was placed on the programme of the national political organisation second only to the demand for legislative independence, a position it still occupies. In 1902 Mr. Secretary Wyndham introduced an Irish Land Bill which, though gravely objectionable in some respects, would probably have proved more beneficial and less dangerous to the purchasers and to the country than his Bill of the following year is now proving. Instead of compulsory sale he offered a contrivance for inducing tenants to buy from a landlord willing to sell. But he expressly declared this contrivance to be subject to amendment, and even as it stood it was protected by inspection on behalf of the Land Commission. His Bill of the following year, though nominally voluntary, applies to facts which enable a selling landlord to make it compulsory, and precludes inspection and all protection for the tenant. The

Bill of 1902 was rejected by the Irish Party, without whose concurrence in the then condition of Parliament it could not pass. Probably one of the factors leading to the rejection of the Bill was the fine spirit then prevailing in the country. A "menacing agitation" was proclaimed to make the demand for compulsory sale irresistible. The country showed itself quite ripe for such a movement. The landlords, by way of countermove, formed a "Trust," ostensibly for fight, but in reality to meet the funeral expenses of their system. The country was showing great spirit; the Jubilee Coercion Act was put in force; public meetings were prevented; public feeling was running high; men were beginning to go to jail for principle, and numerous other symptoms of approaching success began to appear. A lively winter was all that was needed to secure compulsory sale, and the people were eager to make the winter lively for that purpose.

Shrewd landlords and party leaders saw that in a fair fight they were going to be beaten, and that their only chance of safety lay in some successful ruse. Mr. Wyndham, anxious to serve his class, gave a broad hint to landlords that they should come to provisional terms with the tenants during the parliamentary recess as to the lines on which the Bill of the next year should be constructed. Percentages of reduction as an automatic mode of arriving at the price of land, without inspection, was a characteristic landlord idea of a method that would suit the class, on the same principle that a vendor of bad butter, or whose firkin has a bottom in the middle, does not like inspection. The plan had been repeatedly mentioned at meetings of the Landlords' Convention. At the meeting of that body held at 35 Dawson Street, Dublin, on Friday, 29th August, 1902, O'Connor Don said:—

"I hold, however mistaken I may be, that compulsory sales in the sense which I have indicated, are not outside practical politics, and that, sooner or later, they will come; and I hold further that the

sooner the question is settled the better for owners of property. . . . If judicial rents are fairly assessed, all the peculiar circumstances of locality, character of soil, its productive capacity together with all the draw-backs attendant on production and distribution, have already been taken into account, and all that remains is a mere matter of calculation. Without going into details, it seems to me that it would be easy to fix a limit at which a tenant who wished to compel an unwilling landlord to sell, should have the right to exercise the compulsion ; on the other hand, an equally operative limit could be placed on the owner who wished to force a sale when his tenants had no desire to purchase. These limits should be set by Act of Parliament."

Here was an elaborate suggestion of a zone system with power of compulsion on both sides. By a curious coincidence, while I was engaged writing this chapter an extensive land agent unexpectedly visited me in Kilmainham Jail, and, in the course of conversation, claimed that he was the author of the zones. The day of expropriation was known to be at hand, and the best method of extracting the largest amount of money was simultaneously occupying the minds of the more intelligent landlords and agents. To get a zone system adopted by any prominent Nationalist on behalf of the tenants of Ireland was a much bolder idea, but so rich in possibilities that it was worth trying. An unofficial amateur agent named Captain Shawe-Taylor was sent out waving a flag of truce, and calling a joint conference of landlords and representatives of tenants to discuss their differences and try to find a settlement during the parliamentary recess. This gentleman, helped by the fact that he was utterly unknown, as he has again become, proved the saviour of his class and their best friend since Oliver Cromwell. Acting under skilful guidance, he reconnoitred the ground carefully, and fearing that the tenants of Ireland, if asked to appoint representatives for such a purpose would either spurn the proposal or appoint their most capable men, he himself gaily appointed "tenants' representatives." The matter apparently appealing to him as a good practical joke,

he saw nothing more incongruous in this than if he were allotting the parts in a masquerade. The gaiety was only on the surface. The appointments were really made by those behind the scenes, whose names, if disclosed, would have alarmed the people and spoiled the game. The event proved that the very best selection had been made—from the landlords' point of view. Unfortunately the gentlemen appointed fell into the trap. They had at that time sufficient power among the people to stop the agitation for compulsory sale, and this was done.

The Land Conference met and went through the form of debating, as if extempore, the parts of a "settlement" already outlined at the Landlords' Convention, and apparently complete in the pockets of several landlords and agents. The conclusions were foregone. The chairman of the Conference has since admitted in the House of Lords what critics of the Conference said all along, and what the subsequent facts only too conclusively prove, that the main object of the Conference was to enable tenants to pay big prices! We shall see in the next chapter how thoroughly it succeeded. Does anyone imagine that the tenants of Ireland, on the eve of winning compulsory sale, would have sent representatives to a conference to concur in such an object? Rumour says the attitude of one "tenants' representative" towards the chairman was repeatedly expressed as "Whatever you say, my Lord." According to the most voluble of the members, subsequently confirmed by results, a piteous appeal was made for generous treatment—for whom? Was it for the unfortunate tenants who had been scourged for centuries, paying exorbitant rents for their own property? Was it for the unfortunate tenants who had been wasting their lives and sweat and blood, denying themselves and their families the comforts of life, in order to make money for landlords to spend abroad? Was it for the people who, when every other resource had failed, and

the land had not yielded the rent, borrowed money to pay it, and to keep roofs over their heads? Was it for the people who, in spite of their industry and frugality, were neck and ears in debt from having given everything to the landlord? Everyone acquainted with the country knew that the tenants were embarrassed, and no one could have any doubt about the cause. Neither conversation nor the Report of the Conference showed that any effective voice had been raised on behalf of the tenants. The piteous appeals were made, and made successfully, for rackrenters and evictors, for idle men who had squeezed the last shilling out of the people, and robbed American letters, because, forsooth, their ill-gotten money was ill-gone, and they were embarrassed. It was urged by their spokesmen that their nominal properties were not their own, being mortgaged to their full value, that they were paying 5 or 6 per cent. interest on heavy mortgages, and that sale on terms of business or justice would mean their ruin. The veteran plunderers were embarrassed and, though it was not in Ireland they had wasted the money, their Irish victims were asked to help them. Culprits and victims were supposed to have representatives there, but, while generosity was impudently claimed and triumphantly won for the culprits, not even a pretence of justice was obtained for the victims. The Land Conference, as we shall see, largely undid the work of the preceding twenty-three years of Irish agrarian agitation.

The Report of the Land Conference, *alias* Dunraven Treaty, the most valuable victory ever achieved by the landlords in the whole course of their history, the most disastrous to the tenants and to the rest of the community, was adopted "unanimously." It was a final acceptance of defeat on behalf of people, who certainly had given no authority for any such purpose. Though it tacitly abandoned, without a particle of authority from the tenants, their claim for compulsory sale on the eve of victory, and betrayed the principle of the Land League, it contained,

also of course without authority from the tenants, the following clause, which the landlords wanted :—

“XII. That the amount of purchase-money payable by the tenants should be extended over a series of years and be at such a rate in respect of principal and interest, as will at once secure a reduction of not less than 15 per cent. or more than 25 per cent. on second term rents or their fair equivalent, with further periodical reductions as under existing Land Purchase Acts, until such time as the Treasury is satisfied that the loan has been repaid. This may involve some assistance from the State beyond the use of its credit, which, under circumstances hereinafter mentioned, we consider may reasonably be granted.”

This is plausible and treacherous like the Meredith judgment already discussed. A stale landlord contrivance edited in Dublin Castle, it was innocuous until it had been signed by a few Nationalists in the name of the tenants of Ireland. That ensured the enactment of the zones in 1903, with all the loss and danger they bring with them. The people who, six months before, had cheerfully responded to the call for a “menacing agitation” were now advised to practise a whining, denationalising, one-sided conciliation.

The unauthorised abandonment of the claim for compulsory sale, and the unauthorised adoption of the zones at the Land Conference, make exorbitant rents now the question of most vital and urgent importance for tenants, whether they remain tenants or become purchasers, and make it important also for the entire ratepaying community. The Land Conference, by making the passage of the Act of 1903 in its present shape possible, enabled the decomposing landlord system to inflict a further deadly blow upon Ireland. Tenants who were getting no chance of buying their holdings on any terms, who in spite of all the boasted Land Acts, and in spite of their industry and self-denial have not a penny saved, and are crushed by a single bad season, whose crops were lost last season and who are nevertheless pressed for rents which cannot be paid except with borrowed money or money withheld from the shopkeeper who feeds and

clothes them, such tenants look upon the Land Conference as their Metz, and have no alternative but to fly out of the country or press for compulsory sale.

In these circumstances, what has been done to purify the Land Commission, to enable it to diminish injustice, and entitle it to confidence? This has been done: it has been degraded. Vicious always, to debase it further was not difficult. The one member of the Commission who had shown capacity and impartiality in differentiating between the tenant's property and the landlord's, and who constantly pointed out, though in vain, that it should be exonerated from rent and from price as the statutes plainly intended, was removed from the Commission without a particle of cause beyond the capacity and impartiality which ought to have secured him in his position; and though he was, and still is, a Nationalist, I do not remember that any Nationalist voice was raised in protest against the sacrifice. The baneful effects of the Land Conference are not confined to the zone mechanism for extorting ruinous prices for land. The landlords, having succeeded beyond their expectations in getting a conference, in getting adopted at it their system of fixing prices regardless of value, in securing the removal of inspection and of every check upon dishonesty, and in getting this system enacted by Parliament, saw that this inflating mechanism put within their grasp such fancy prices as they had never before hoped for. The effect of this was to excite their cupidity beyond measure. The next integral part of their scheme was, with the help of Dublin Castle, to bring rent-fixing courts into utter discredit by making them more openly partisan than they had been, by having the idle formality of inspection generally dropped, not even a pretence made to value improvements or find out who made them, but, on the Land Conference principle, existing rents taken as fair, and a nominal reduction, or none, given where 20 per cent. would have been given before 1902. The cost of labour and local burdens might have increased, seasons

might have been bad, product short, and prices low ; but since the zone system of price-fixing was adopted the tenants might as well plead to the passing wind as to the Land Commission for fair rents. By all courts fixing judicial rents since 1902 the abuse of judicial process in land cases has amounted to a scandal, the object being to discourage tenants from looking for fair rents, and by that means to force them to purchase on the landlord's terms. Both English parties are fully aware of all this, especially the ministers responsible for the government of Ireland. The present Chief Secretary and Attorney-General, being fully aware of it, are accomplices in the dishonesty, whether they approve of it or not.

The Land Act of 1881, which set up the public system of valuing land and fixing rents, was also to a small extent a Purchase Act. Had its rent-fixing provisions been impartially administered, it would have proved the most powerful of all inducements to landlords to sell at the true value of their property, the aggregate of which would probably not exceed half what the same property will now cost under the Act of 1903. The Act of 1885, commonly called the Ashbourne Act, was the first statute expressly for the sale of land to tenants. It was followed by the Acts of 1891 and 1896. Overlooking unsubstantial differences, it is sufficiently accurate for the present purpose to say that under those Acts the State advanced to a selling landlord, and obliged the purchasing tenant to repay, with interest, the gross value of the farm ascertained by official inspection on behalf of the Land Commission ; that is, the value of the landlord's interest and the value of the tenant's interest combined. In other words, though the property was admittedly joint, and the object of the Acts was to substitute single for dual ownership, the landlord was treated as if he had been a sole owner of the whole, paid for his own portion and paid for the tenant's portion in addition ; and the tenant was forced to repay the joint sum with interest. The landlord was paid for

a portion which did not belong to him, and the tenant was forced to pay for what was already his own property. The Land Commission refused to consider anything but the security which the holding as it stood afforded to the State for the amount advanced, and they advanced that whole sum to the selling landlord, regardless of the fact within their knowledge that only part of the property was his to sell. They, a public department, made themselves accomplices in his dishonesty. The value of the tenant's interest was the measure of the extortion. There was not, and is not, any statutory authority for this dishonesty. It is a logical development of the Castle lawyers' interpretation by which, in fixing rents, in violation of the statute and of justice, the tenant's property was, and still is, ignored, and by being ignored confiscated and transferred to the landlord. It is very questionable if those prices would stand the test of an impartial legal tribunal. It would be impossible to maintain that they were just. Tenants impoverished by life-long rackrenting, and eager to escape from landlordism at almost any price, were not in a condition to have the legality tested in the House of Lords ; and that was the only tribunal from which impartiality could be expected. The Commissioners did not expressly fix prices, any more than they do now. To use that as a defence, as has often been done in Parliament, is a dishonest subterfuge. By fixing the limit of advance, they practically fix the maximum price, and that is the price that has been paid. While doing this they knew, the knowledge was constantly brought home to them, and is recorded in their official records, that the power of landlords and agents over tenants is quite as great in relation to price as in relation to rent and is sufficient, in conjunction with the desire to escape from landlordism and the desire to become owners, to induce unfortunate tenants to sign purchase agreements at almost any price. They knew that the more embarrassed tenants are, the more helpless to resist this pressure, and that, for some pretended relief from irrecoverable arrears,

a tenant, beggared by life-long rackrenting, will readily sign an agreement to purchase at a price which he knows his holding can never yield. It is idle to preach honesty to poor men in a matter in which the State helps the rich to rob the poor. In 7,838 cases under those Acts the Commissioners refused to advance the amounts at which the tenants had agreed to purchase, chiefly because they were in excess of the gross value. Those prices had consequently to be cut down to the gross value, the maximum sum the Commissioners would advance, in order that the sales might go through. The existence of the Land Commission ready to fix the limit of advance, and therefore of price, was a constant check against excessive extortion beyond the gross value of the thing sold. It allowed the tenants' property in his holding to be confiscated and transferred to the landlord, and was dishonest to that extent, but it stopped the dishonesty at that point in order that the State should not suffer. The State for this purpose under those Acts meant Great Britain and Ireland. It was as bad finance as it was unwise statesmanship to invent or allow the continuance in operation of a system of land sale under which a tenant, with perhaps an older ancestral title than that of the landlord and greater value in money and labour sunk in the homestead and improvements, was forced to pay for these things which were his own creation, in addition to the value of the raw soil.

VIII.—THE LAND ACT OF 1903

HAD the agitation of 1902 been allowed to pursue its normal course, landlordism, on its own confession, was in no condition to hold out, and the fruit of the agitation would doubtless have been an Act for compulsory sale at inspection prices the following year. For the absence of compulsion, the excessive prices, and all that is bad and dangerous in the Act of 1903, the Land Conference is responsible. This Act is, from the magnitude of its provisions and its character, so important in relation to the whole land question and to Irish solvency, and at the same time so imperfectly understood, that some account of its action as it affects purchasers and ratepayers is appropriate here.

Landlords had found their position becoming more and more untenable. On their behalf a tottering Unionist Government, desirous of doing them the best service in its power, had successfully arranged the Land Conference, and by means of it constructed a royal road by which they could escape with more than the value of their property. The pretence of breaking up the untenanted lands as part of this transaction was used most dishonestly as a bait to facilitate the passage of the zones and bonus provisions.

The two most important characteristics of the Act are, first, that it is the greatest Landlord Relief Act ever passed, the most extensive and successful raid ever made upon the pockets of the Irish people, and its zones relating to tenanted land the greatest instrument of extortion ever invented; and, secondly, that its provisions for restoring evicted tenants and for the breaking up of untenanted and non-residential land for the people, though only enabling in a matter in which compulsion

is necessary, afford a great opportunity for mitigating the evil effects of the Act by recovering those evicted ranch lands, if the people deserve them by supplying the compulsion which Parliament omitted.

In this paradoxical and dangerous Act neither the word "bonus" nor the word "zone" occurs; yet bonuses and zones are its most distinctive characteristics, those in virtue of which it is most felt and will be longest remembered. Bonuses for landlords, zones for tenants, the abolition of inspection, the abolition of limit of price, the abolition of value as a measure of price, and the substitution of a premium instead of a restraint upon dishonesty; these are the salient characteristics of the Act. Though to the unclouded mind they are all in favour of the landlord and adverse to the tenant and to the public, by some extraordinary aberration of reason some of them were accepted on behalf of the tenants, of course without their authority, in lieu of universal compulsory sale! A bonus given to a landlord is surely in his favour. Zones which exclude inspection and inflate both price and bonus for him are also surely in his favour. To accept zones on behalf of the tenants was to accept a rope to hang the tenants. No sane tenants, if honestly informed, would have surrendered their claim to compulsory sale at the value in exchange for zones, compelling them to pay more than the value, and voluntary provisions dependent for their working on landlord generosity—a non-existent entity.

When landlordism was being abolished in Austria, Prussia, and other European States for the purpose of establishing peasant proprietary systems in its stead, eighteen years' purchase of the land was assumed to be the value of the landlords' interest in tenanted land. In view of the length of time the landlords had been exclusive beneficiaries from that land, the consequent misery and discontent, and the benefits which the necessary enfranchisement of the tenants was certain to confer upon the

whole community, it was held and enacted that the landlords should bear most of the cost of the transfer to the tenants. Accordingly the State advanced to the landlords, and made the tenant-purchasers answerable for, not the full value, but two-thirds of the value of the land, that is twelve years' purchase. That net sum was paid to the landlords, and the tax, by means of which the State provided this money, was so arranged that it fell chiefly on the landlords themselves. Thus their net receipts from the sale of their tenanted estates, could not in any case have been more, and was generally less, than ten years' purchase of the rents they had been previously receiving. The expropriated landlords continued to live in the country, and to spend this money in it, so that, as against the general benefit of the change, there was no economic set-off. A large number of Irish landlords do not reside in Ireland, and will not spend in it a penny of the prices they are receiving; and most of those who do reside in Ireland are, according to the plea made on their behalf, deeply in debt to British insurance companies, money-lenders, and other incumbrancers, and consequently the prices in these cases also will go out of Ireland. Still this Act in effect provides that all landlords shall be paid the full value of their own interest in tenanted land *plus* the value of the tenants' interest, which does not belong to them, and that a cash bonus shall be added, called in the debates a financial bridge, to be equally beneficial to seller and buyer by enabling the landlord to accept as price something less than the value of his interest in the holdings. In the working of the Act no landlord has been known to sell at the value of his own interest, nor at the gross value of his own and the tenant's interests, and as for the "bridge," any tenant simple enough to suggest that he ought to benefit in any way by it would be laughed at. Every selling landlord appropriates the entire bonus and, not content with that, increases the prices by means of the zones, and thus inflates the bonus also. An Irish landlord selling his estate may receive the following six bonuses :—

1. The whole of the cash bonus of 12 per cent. calculated upon the inflated price. At present prices this bonus exceeds three years' purchase.

2. Arrears of rents and hanging gales without restriction *plus* 12 per cent. added to their amount. In present practice they are known to range from one to eleven years' arrears. They may be put down moderately at an average of two years' purchase.

3. Freedom from law costs, which all vendors had to pay under previous Purchase Acts, amounting on an average to one year's purchase.

4. The landlord is paid in cash, instead of depreciated Land Stock, being a difference in his favour of at least one year's purchase.

5. By obtaining money at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. under this Act, the landlord is enabled to pay off mortgages at from 5 to 6 per cent. interest. Most Irish estates are heavily mortgaged. In an ordinary case where the interest on mortgages consumes one-third of the rental, the landlord, by paying them off and becoming indebted to the State on easy terms, gains about two years' purchase of the rental. The heavier the charge cleared off, the greater the benefit. The more an estate is in debt, within the limits of solvency, the more beneficial this Act is to the owner.

6. A resident landlord is enabled by the Act to sell his demesne and mansion to himself and continue to enjoy the thing sold and the price of it! The benefit to be derived from this bogus sale must vary with the value of the property. It has been estimated to average two years' purchase.

The two-fold price for his own and the tenant's interest and all these bonuses constitute what may be called the legitimate inducement to the landlord to sell. Compared with the bare twelve years' purchase given in Germany and Austria, it must be allowed that these terms are lavish, and that the landlords

ought to be satisfied. We now proceed to examine whether they are or are not content, and whether they are acting fairly in the spirit of a generous legislature, and a generous country, by meeting the tenants at least honestly in the matter of price.

The most dangerous thing accomplished by this dangerous Act was the withdrawal from the Land Commission, in all so-called "judicial" tenancies, of power to limit the price to the gross value, thus depriving the purchasing tenant of that protection against excessive extortion. This it does by the abolition of inspection, with the consequent abolition of value as a measure of price, and of the limit to the amount that may be advanced—for the nominal limit is so high as to be practically non-existent. For the first time in history Parliament, in this Act, gives the protection of the law, not to buyers, but to dishonest vendors in the dislike, common to all dishonest vendors, of having the thing they are about to sell, inspected as to its quality and value. Any member of Parliament who pleads that he did not know this was mischievous, contradicts himself every time he examines a thing before purchasing it, confesses himself unfit for his position, and raises a strong suspicion that he is more knave than fool. The Act retains the power of inspection, as if in irony, when the price is low, a case in which neither the purchaser nor the State would be in danger. It precludes inspection when the price is high, with the natural, and, of course, anticipated result, that no farms are sold at low prices, and hardly any so low as the gross value. Inspection and the limit of advance having been abolished, and Irish landlordism being what it always has been, prices, instead of being lower on account of the bonus, have gone up from an average of $17\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase of the gross value under previous Purchase Acts, to an average of $23\frac{1}{2}$ under the Act of 1903, being $6\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase in excess of the gross value; $6\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase for which the purchaser gets nothing, not even his own, because that is in-

cluded in the gross value ; $6\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase for the repayment of which, with interest, there is no security in the land, and the ratepayers are the only security to the State.

For ease of calculation, let us take a single farm on an estate, the rent being £100 and the buildings and other improvements made by the tenant and his predecessors and never compensated for by the landlord or his predecessors, constituting one-fifth of the value of the entire farm. The gross value of that farm at $17\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase would be £1,725, of which £1,380 would be the landlord's property, and £345 the tenant's property. In case of a sale to that tenant under the previous Acts, the farm would be inspected, the tenant's property in it would be ignored, the Commissioners would advance the whole £1,725 to the landlord and oblige the tenant to repay that sum with interest. But the extortion would be stopped there ; the farm being worth no more, no more would be advanced. The advance to the landlord would be made in Land Stock of the nominal value of £1,725, but depreciated, say, 8 per cent., or worth £1,587. Out of this he should pay all the legal and other costs of the sale, which would be pretty certain not to be under £100, leaving his net realised price £1,487.

A landlord selling a similar farm under the Act of 1903 is enabled to get, and does in the average case get, $23\frac{1}{2}$ years' purchase of the gross value, being :—

The true value of his own part of the property	£1,380
The true value of the tenant's part of the property	345
Inflation by the zones beyond gross value, $6\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase	625
Arrears and hanging gale, say two years' purchase	200
Bonus of 12 per cent. on £2,550	306
He will receive in cash, free of law costs,	<u>£2,856</u>

This is almost twice what he would receive under previous Purchase Acts and more than twice the value of his property in the holding. But the new Act enables him to sell his entire estate, and by that means to receive in addition the other advantages mentioned, which may be worth three or four years' purchase more to him. It has been estimated that by way of enhanced price alone, apart from the bonuses, the net gain of the landlords under the Act will amount to at least £30,000,000. That will be thirty millions of loot, or, if it be more agreeable, a parting gift of thirty millions to a foul excrescence. That is what the Land Conference has done for the landlord. That is what landlords mean by conciliation. Who will deny that Captain Shawe-Taylor has been the greatest benefactor of his class since Oliver Cromwell? Who will deny that the Act of 1903 is the greatest Landlord Relief Act ever passed?

According to the income tax returns, Ireland's wealth equals one-thirtieth of Great Britain's. Therefore thirty millions would be of as much value to Ireland, where it is so much needed, as nine hundred millions to Great Britain. If applied to the revival of her industries, or to the development of her resources, or to any purpose for her benefit or that of her people, what a change it would effect in business and social conditions, what a number of lives now pinched with penury it would liberate and brighten, what a number of our emigrants it would enable to stay in comfort in Ireland. The loss and consequences might be to some extent mitigated if there were a chance that the money would be spent in Ireland or for Irish purposes, as would be the case in any other country on a transfer of the ownership of land. But in Ireland this will not be the case to any appreciable extent. The majority of the vendors will also, by residing out of the country, escape their share of the public burden imposed by the transaction. Ireland will have made an effort beyond her resources and, differing from every other country in which a big business transaction has been carried out, the money will be wholly lost to her.

Let us now see what the Land Conference has done for the tenants. A tenant paying £100 rent purchasing under the Act of 1896 at $17\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase, the average price under that Act, would pay in principal and interest in the term running its full normal course under that Act £3,635 18s. 0d. All who have local knowledge are aware, and those who have not may learn from Mr. Commissioner Bailey's Report on the condition of purchasers under the Acts previous to 1903, that they cannot afford either luxuries or superfluities, but have to wait for years before they are able to carry out necessary substantial improvements. A tenant paying £100 rent, purchasing under the Act of 1903 at $23\frac{1}{2}$ years' purchase, the average price under this Act, pays in principal and interest in the full normal term under this Act £5,231 13s. 9d., made up as follows:—

The true value of the landlord's property in the farm	...	...	...	£1,380	0	0
The true value of the tenant's own property in the farm	...	...	...	345	0	0
Inflation by zones beyond gross value, $6\frac{1}{4}$ years' purchase	...	...	...	625	0	0
Interest on £2,350 for $68\frac{1}{2}$ years at $2\frac{3}{4}$ percent.				2,881	13	9
Total	...	...	...	£5,231	13	9

It will be observed that owing to the enhanced price and the length of the term of repayment with no change in the amount of the annuity, the tenant, ironically called a purchaser, pays in interest alone more than twice the gross value of the farm, and that, unjust though we have seen the previous Purchase Acts to be, he pays under the new Act £1,595 15s. 9d. more than the Commissioners would have allowed him to pay, that is, more than they would have advanced for the holding under the previous Purchase Acts. In other words, the tenant pays the gross value of his farm, including his own property in it, and £1,595 15s. 9d. in excess of that.

When purchasers under the previous Acts were only just able to pay their way, and unable to undertake any big improvement however necessary for some years, the prospect of purchasers under the new Act is not bright. For the excess, if the purchaser should fail, the State will draw upon the money due in relief of rates, which is tantamount to drawing upon the rates. If this were only an individual case it would be bad, and the ratepayers affected would be entitled to murmur against liability for such a transaction. But it is now the common case occurring all over the country. The official returns show such an enormous mass of cases in which the prices are at or over $23\frac{1}{2}$ years' purchase, that the small number of sales at lower prices cannot be justly said to affect this average. The returns also show that while under former Acts the average price of land was £8 9s. od. per acre, under the Act of 1903 it is about £15 per acre. The Estates Commissioners have expressly stated in one of their reports that the price, with bonus, under the new Act is $68\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. higher than under the old.

Apologists for the Act, Irish as well as English, have a few glib sayings which they use to mislead the public. One is, that only bankrupt estates and inferior lands were sold under the previous Acts. Now this is simply not true. The official lists of the vendors under those Acts are accessible. They include the names of some of the wealthiest members of the aristocracy and the lands sold include some of the best in Ireland. The following are some of the wealthy vendors of good land under the earlier Acts:—All the London Companies except the Mercers Co. sold their estates in Co. Derry, Lord Lansdowne sold in Meath and Dublin counties some of the finest farms in Ireland, Lady Wallace sold 90,000 acres in the garden of Ireland in Co. Antrim, Lady Harberton, Lady Margaret Chatteris, Lords Lurgan, Londonderry, Enniskillen, Lanesborough, Granard, Monck, Castletown, Stanhope, Portsmouth, Egmont, Leconfield, Ormonde, Bath, Sir Arthur Godley, Sir Victor

Brooke, Sir Thomas Lennard, John Vernon. Another saying is that we ought to be glad to get rid of landlordism at almost any price. There is much truth in that argument. But be it noted that it is the language of blackmail and not of justice, reason, or conciliation. It advises other persons to concede what is dishonest and to add a premium to the amount. It publicly elevates dishonesty as the virtue which can be practised successfully at the expense of honest people. A third saying is that owners did not sell to any great extent under previous Purchase Acts. Some did ; some did not, for the reason we have noted in the preceding chapter. Partisan commissioners and valuers appointed to administer the Act of 1881 fixed rents so high on the tenant's property, on the homestead he and his predecessors had created and the improvements they had made, as to provide a landlord with a secure income not his due but more valuable to him than the honest price of his interest in the holding. Some of those who now say there were few sales did little, if anything, to remove the cause, by making the administration of the rent-fixing Acts impartial. Had the staff of the Land Commission from top to bottom been appointed impartially to fix rents according to the statute and according to justice, exonerating the tenant's property and improvements, the landlord would have found the rents fixed by themselves reduced so substantially that they would have applied for and obtained facilities for sale, and all the injustice of the last quarter of a century, including the Act of 1903, would have been avoided. Giving the landlords big undue rents is what prevented sales and what now makes purchase difficult and dangerous.

Apart from individual misfortune, financial embarrassments of tenants are due to two general causes—excessive rents and natural inferiority of soil. While there are some soils which persistent industry can make surprisingly productive, there are others so bad as to defy all industry. Both classes may be on

the same estate. As we have seen, the whole tendency of monopoly has been to clear tenants off the superior soil, allow them to remain on what was not worth clearing because it would not grow grass, and put heavy rent upon that. Wherever there are tenants on good land, the tenants on the inferior land should not be obliged to pay the same number of years' purchase. If so obliged, the capacity of the soil being small, they must suffer.

At the present moment many tenants are in a state of bankruptcy, and many have unexecuted decrees of ejectment and decrees for debt hanging over them. Mark the reason why ejectment decrees are not executed. It is because the execution of them would deprive the unfortunate tenant of his legal status as tenant, which makes him an instrument in the zone mechanism in the landlord's hands for extracting public money. While the man is technically a judicial tenant, though in reality a bankrupt, and merely a tenant on sufferance, the zone law applies, the holding must not be inspected. If he were deprived of that status, he would, in case of sale, be entitled to have his holding inspected, and to have the price limited to the gross value. The landlord having, in the name of rent, sucked the tenant's blood and marrow, uses the exhausted skeleton as a tube to suck the blood and marrow of the people.

Where rents are most unjust the landlord is in no hurry to sell, and has the strongest incentive not to sell. Whenever he consents to sell, the tenants are exhausted and at his mercy, and the prices calculated upon unjust rents must, from that cause alone, be unjust prices. It is not land the creatures will be purchasing, but bondage for themselves, for their children, and for their grand-children, if indeed they are able to cling on to the land even in bondage. A landlord, who has got high rents to work from, is enabled by the Act of 1903 to mock the tenants, mock the State, fix prices "just within the limit of the zones;" and though he and the tenants and the

Commissioners all know that the prices are exorbitant, that the land can never yield them, and that impartial inspection would expose the vendor as a public plunderer, the zone system adopted "unanimously" at the Land Conference enables that landlord to snap his fingers at them all, and to exact this public money as inexorably as any armed bandit ever did from an unarmed victim. This is the relation of a system of rent-fixing to the zone system of sale without inspection. It is the remorseless relation of the usurer, helped by the State, to squeeze the last shilling out of his prey and the offspring of his prey to the third or fourth generation. The Estates Commissioners appointed by the Act to pay the money are precluded by the zones from inquiring into the value of the holding, the amount of arrears of rent due, or anything affecting the security. Public money is being paid for a thing sold, and the Commissioners paying the money are specially precluded from inquiring whether the thing sold is value for the money, whether it can possibly repay the money. The zones are held to be mandatory and to leave the Commissioners no option but to pay the money within zone limits.

We have seen in the preceding chapter that the landlords for whom O'Connor Don spoke—probably a great majority of the landlords—were quite prepared in 1902 to accept an expropriatory Bill, compulsory on both sides. This Act of 1903 is voluntary for the landlord, but in his hands it is completely compulsory against embarrassed tenants. If he desires to sell, the only choice left to them is immediate destruction by eviction, or a slower destruction by purchase, and the easier but worse course is commonly taken. When the Estates Commissioners representing the State are impotent, it would be unfair to blame embarrassed tenants, even if the embarrassment were only financial. But if an embarrassed tenant has a large young family, and no other earthly means of keeping a roof over them but by signing a document, I think he is bound on their

account to sign it, no matter what it contains, and let what may happen afterwards, and that the Government and the landlord are jointly to blame and not he for whatever may be wrong in the transaction. A law which runs honest men so hard is immoral. By no one has the actual situation been more frankly and accurately described than by a landlord who told his tenants, when they murmured against his prices, that they were "biting granite." Under this, as under all Purchase Acts, the poorest tenants are those who agree to the highest prices. This fact, which the official records show, proves the talk about their "shrewdness" and about their "bargaining" to be cant and ghastly mockery. Buyer, seller, and Commissioners know that the tenant's hand is always in the dog's mouth; and that is not a position favourable to free bargaining. The landlord or his agent fixes the price. The tenants have to pay that price or the rent they are unable to pay, or run out of their homes, leaving their property in the hands of the enemy. Under compulsion like that, they must sign. The Estates Commissioners are then told by the highest court in the land that even when they have acquired, whether by accident or design, expert knowledge that the property is not worth the price named in the "agreements," and that by no possibility can the holdings be made to pay those prices, they must, nevertheless, shut their eyes, pay those prices, and ask no questions. In the Weir case they narrowly escaped censure for having hesitated to pay prices which they knew perfectly well were three times the value of the holdings. When declared purchasers at prices based upon rents which they have been unable to pay, and when made answerable for the repayment of those fancy prices, with irrecoverable arrears added to them, and with interest on the entire sum, the tenants will find their purchase annuities larger than any rents they were ever able to pay. They will be hopeless slaves whose labour can never bring them relief from want, not to speak of independence.

How will the State enforce payment of what the land does not yield and what lacks every element of a just debt? These unprotected purchasers are excessively burdened by methods which, if practised in business transactions, would bring the guilty promptly to the dock and to the prison cell. The State, which encourages and rewards those methods, is not entitled to look to these purchasers for the same exemplary honesty displayed by purchasers under the old Acts, whom it protected to some extent. That is the present state of the case. That is what the Land Conference has done for the unfortunate tenants. That is what we have come to in the twentieth century. To call such indefensible transactions "sales" is misleading. They lack all the elements of honest sale, and are more like blackmail. The more land is transferred on dishonest terms the greater will become the danger of a more difficult land problem in the future than in the past. Here is more substantial matter for moralists, statesmen, and journalists to reflect upon than some popular action by which they profess to be disturbed. I respectfully submit that the question whether annuities now being contracted for will or will not in a short time hence be unpayable, is one of the gravest questions of the present day for Irish consideration, and that we should not allow any Englishman, or any English institution, to deter us from considering and dealing with it in whatever way may be open to us. With ever-increasing foreign and colonial production and ever-increasing facilities of transit, the State authority, whether it be English or Irish, charged with the collection of six millions sterling each year in annuities so contracted, will not be to be envied.

Seeing the Estates Commissioners engaged in the extraordinary occupation of purchasing with public money bad debts, and sentencing three generations of Irish peasants to repay these debts with interest, in addition to an extortionate price for their holdings, and knowing from the Commissioners' own

declarations that they are aware the thing is impossible, I have, for the purpose of this writing, asked :—

“What do the Estates Commissioners now consider the limit, or is there any positive limit, to the amount of arrears irrecoverable from tenants—bad debts in relation to land—which, when added to the price of the holdings, the Commissioners are bound to pay out of public money, while having official knowledge that the holdings are not sufficient security ; and is the bonus paid on the gross sum of price and arrears ?”

The following is the official answer :—

“The Commissioners understand that, under the existing Acts as interpreted by the Courts, there is no limit to the amount of arrears, whether irrecoverable or not, which may be added to the price of holdings. If the lands are declared an estate and the prices come within the zones the Commissioners are bound to make the advance whether they consider the holdings to be security or not, and the Commissioners understand that they are not entitled to refuse to declare lands an estate on the ground that they consider agreed prices not secured although within the zones. The bonus is paid on the gross price including arrears added.”

It will be observed that even the administrators of this extraordinary Act do not attempt to defend it. But it is very much worse than indefensible. In a country where the people have always been too willing to pay rent as long as possible for the sake of a home, arrears in 99 cases in every 100 are caused by sheer inability to pay. When to a high zone price those arrears are added and an annuity fixed which, though less than the nominal unpayable rent, is more than ever was paid, some magician should explain how people placed under this yoke can compete successfully with the free peasant proprietors of neighbouring continental countries. There has never been a system put into operation in any country under the sun so exquisitely calculated to intensify and perpetuate agricultural decay and misery and to discredit the idea of peasant proprietary before the world. That is the return the people get for one-sided conciliation.

It may be worth while to examine briefly a few of the sophistical crumbs of comfort with which apologists for this treacherous Act attempt to delude their dupes. Possibly the most dishonest as well as the most unmanly is the false flattery about the "shrewdness of Irish tenants" and "their ability to hold their own in arranging prices with landlords." It reminds one of a mouse arranging terms with a cat. Many of those to whom it is addressed have about as much to do with arranging the price they must pay. It was for the protection of Irish tenants the British Parliament found it necessary in 1881 to establish a new and special tribunal to value farms and fix rents for fifteen years. It was for the relief of Irish tenants that the same legislature found it necessary in 1887 to break the first statutory term and reduce further the judicial rents which had become unpayable before they had run a third of their statutory course. It was for the protection of the tenants the Fry Commission reported in favour of shortening the term to five years. The sarcasm is too cruel to be used for other than an evil purpose which tells people who, in dealing with landlords, are so unfree as to be incapable of safely arranging rents for five years without State protection, that they are competent to arrange with the same landlords without protection annuities for $68\frac{1}{2}$ years. If rents fixed after inspection may become unpayable in any period exceeding five years, and if tenants are not competent to fix rents for that term without inspection and State protection, how can it be maintained that those same tenants are competent, without inspection or protection, to fix annuities that will continue payable for $68\frac{1}{2}$ years. Does the thing look reasonable? All the talk about poor tenants having any effective voice in fixing prices is pure fiction. Their part is to sign documents, frequently without knowing what they contain. If the annuities so fixed become in large numbers unpayable, what then? Why, the State would have to become an evictor on such a gigantic scale as even Ireland never witnessed before.

and revolution or national bankruptcy could be avoided only by a successful act of National Repudiation. That is one of the possibilities of which the Land Conference has sown the seed. It has introduced a system unique in the history of legislation, so unjust, dangerous and indefensible, so calculated to produce general bankruptcy and to justify general repudiation, that a reversal of its action is the most urgent need of the present time.

Another defence of sales without inspection is, that as the rents must be judicial to bring the cases within the zones, and the holdings have been inspected for the fixing of those judicial rents, those rents must be deemed fair and a safe basis of price without further inspection. First, as observed in the preceding chapter, a considerable number of rents called judicial have, for reasons there stated, not been fixed by any court, but have been arranged without inspection by "agreement" between landlord and tenant, registered in court. We know what to expect in such agreements made under moral duress. In sales these are, like true judicial rents, zone cases in which the prices fixed by the landlord, with bonus, must be paid by the Commissioners, without inspection and irrespective of value. When judicial rents duly fixed become in a short time unpayable, and are an unsafe basis of prices, we can imagine what sort the prices must be that are fixed arbitrarily by a landlord upon rents fixed by himself. To perceive its absurdity one has only to contrast it with any legitimate business transaction. But no matter how rents have been fixed, when we remember the passionate attachment of the Irish peasant to his home, for the sake of his wife and children, and possibly of his parents, and because so barely has he been picked by the landlord that this is the only home he can ever hope to have in this world, and he would starve himself and those who are dear to him for the sake of retaining it, and that with all this the rent has not been paid, it is manifest that its payment out of the holding is physi-

cally impossible. Recent cases of this class have shown that in practice from two to eleven years' arrears are added to the highest zone price. When a landlord might have evicted an indebted tenant any day, but knowing that no one would take the land or could make anything of it at the rent, he has kept the bogus tenancy in existence as a means of robbing the public after robbing the tenant ; when it is clear that the holding is uneconomic and that no man could pay anything for it and support a family ; when the landlord fixes a price "just within the zone limit," adds the irrecoverable arrears, bad debts in the worst sense of the word, gets the wretched tenant to sign the thing blasphemously called an "agreement," and presents this document to the Estates Commissioners, they must, without a murmur, pay out of public money the price marked on it, with 12 per cent. added as a premium on the villainy, while fully aware that the whole transaction is utterly dishonest, that the holding can never repay the money, that the so-called purchaser is in a worse plight than a tenant-at-will, and that, his posterity, if they cling to the holding, are doomed to hopeless pauperism and slavery. That is what this particular crumb of comfort amounts to. That is the sort of transaction, multiplied manifold, which some imaginative people call a "land settlement."

Another crumb of comfort thrown to the dupes is the alleged speed with which a sale can be accomplished by omitting inspection. *Facile descensus Averni.* A man doomed to inevitable execution might prefer having it done quickly. But in a matter in which his whole family and posterity must suffer, he should not be so precipitate while there is any possibility of escape. The reason urged for precipitancy is false in practice. Sales go through no quicker without than with inspection. The sale of no holding can be sanctioned under this Act any more than under its predecessors until an official inspector on behalf of the Land Commission, has visited it for identification, rectification of boundaries, and mapping. The inspectors who do

these things are the same who value land, and could value the farm when on it without any perceptible expenditure of time. No time is saved by not valuing ; the completion of the sale is not facilitated ; the plea is baseless. The real reason for abolishing inspection of land on its sale was precisely the same reason which makes any other dishonest vendor dislike inspection of what he has to sell ; that and no other.

Yet another crumb of comfort thrown to the dupes is the mocking observation that the Irish tenants transmuted into owners, secure in the fruits of their labour, will develop wonderful ability, industry, and thrift. Granted. Surely the reward should be left to themselves and their children and not drawn upon in advance to pay over to men who are getting too much without it, who will not be responsible, and who have never practised any industry but rack-renting, evicting, and blighting legitimate industry. The simplest purchaser can see that for him landlordism will not be abolished until his last annuity has been paid, and that an Act which imposed an unjust annuity upon him is not an Act for the abolition of landlordism, but for its continuance for the next seventy years in possibly a worse form than before. Quite apart from justice, is it safe or prudent to overload the class who, while being the foundation of the State, must compete in the open market in a free-trade country with unburdened continental proprietors ? Every practical agriculturist knows that it is only on very good soil that great development, high culture, and abundant produce are possible. For several reasons repeatedly stated, the men signing agreements for highest prices are on the worst land in the country, which no amount of industry can make very productive, and on which purchase at just prices would not enable them to do much more than live. To place an extra burden upon such people for 68½ years, to draw upon their future labour, to hand it now to an idle class, and to mock the plundered people about an impossible prosperity, is adding insult to injury.

The danger of all this is not made less by the present campaign of landlords and conciliators to keep out Canadian store cattle, until all the land has been sold and the people sold with it, and then to let in Canadian stores. If those stores were let in now, the price of land should go down, and justice would get some help. That Canadian and other stores will be allowed in as soon as the load of debt is firmly fixed on the tenants is of course certain. To maintain the present embargo and expedite the sales of land while those cattle are excluded and prices high, are part of the same game. Intelligent country people are taking careful note of all who help the landlords in both these respects.

Sufficient has been shown to establish my proposition that the Land Act of 1903 is the greatest Landlords' Relief Act ever passed, and as against the tenants the most effective instrument of extortion ever invented. It may with absolute correctness be called the Act for the Purchase of Land and Slavery. It is all very well to say that the supersession of one class by another, if not done by revolution, ought to be done generously towards both parties involved. That was the "bridge" theory on which the cash bonus was granted. If carried out in practice, though it would still have cost twice as much as the similar transfer of ownership in Prussia and Austria, people while left able to live might not have murmured. But in practice the Act gives the whole bonus to the landlords and puts into their hands an instrument of such inflating power that they find themselves in the position of a dishonest man at a fair accidentally offered more than his beast is worth. The tenants have been deprived of all protection, and the extravagant generosity to the landlords has been so overdone that their unmeasured cupidity and the receipt of exorbitant rents are now the two operative checks on the sale of all kinds of land.

It used to be said, though not always fully realised, that in

Ireland, owing to the greatness and far-reaching effects of its agriculture, the land question was one of national interest and importance and not merely rural. The Act of 1903 has made it a question of national importance in a new and sinister sense — (1) by simultaneously extending enormously the operations and cost; (2) by transferring the liability from the Three Kingdoms, on which the trivial liability under the previous Acts rested, to Ireland alone; and (3) by depriving the Irish or any other authority of any power of restraint or check, even the power of ascertaining the value of the thing for which the public money is paid and the public liability incurred. This is the only instance in which the State, in the position of a purchaser, has deprived itself of the power to find out the value of the thing it purchases. To show in a single figure the result of this, it is only necessary to recall Mr. Chief Secretary Wyndham's estimate in introducing the Bill and contrast it with the actual working of the Act so far. Mr. Wyndham, after two years' study of the subject, and with all the official and other information at his command, estimated that all the land to which the Bill would apply was, according to the previous standard of prices, worth £100,000,000. If the prices that have prevailed since the Act came into operation are allowed to continue, that same land will, according to the Treasury experts, cost "£160,000,000 or more," and, according to other authorities, £175,000,000. The monstrous anti-Irish institution of landlordism, having been planted and maintained here by England for English purposes as against the Irish people, an English garrison, some members of which are still proud of that name, having become discredited and dangerous as a garrison, and a plague to everybody, England was and is bound, in honour to the landlords, to deliver them at England's expense. If she made a free gift of that whole sum out of her vast resources, and put us again in free possession of the soil of our country, of which she had helped the landlords to deprive us, it would

be no more than restitution. That would be real turning over of a new leaf—what every English representative in Ireland says will be done “next year,” but what is never done. For less than that no thanks would be due to Parliament or Treasury. The willingness of the Irish people to simplify the removal of the garrison by paying the full value of the land of which they have been so long deprived, proves their liberality and desire for a peaceful solution ; and the power that planted landlordism here for its own purposes ought to be ashamed to refuse any further money the disbanding of its garrison may entail. If £100,000,000 be the gross value of the land in question, and we are willing, after all the depredations, to pay that vast sum, the £75,000,000, or any other extra sum which England pleases to give without value, she should give from her own resources, not ours. But that is not England’s way. Let it be noted and always remembered, that this, the most dishonest Act in the statute book provides that all this money, value and excess and interest on the whole, shall be paid exclusively by the Irish people, and that the British Parliament and British Treasury never sanctioned the squandering system that causes this waste while Great Britain shared the liability, never sanctioned it until embodied in a Bill carefully exonerating Great Britain and placing the whole liability securely and exclusively upon Ireland—not upon purchasers alone, but upon Ireland as a whole, town and country. Mr. Wyndham, when introducing the Bill, and repeatedly during its progress, gave the most explicit assurances that not one penny of the financial liability should fall upon Great Britain, that she would, on the contrary, make a profit out of the transaction ; and the Act faithfully redeems this pledge. According to the scheme, the British Treasury will be receiving interest on the whole sum long after a great portion of it has been repaid.

Not content with the extraordinary inflation of prices by the zones, the framers of the Act set up a system of financing it

which a committee of Treasury experts now reports as "radically unsound." Under this "radically unsound" system money is lost through five different channels and all the losses are made good out of Irish funds which we so much need for better purposes. The most serious loss so far revealed is a Depreciation or Discount Loss which at the present rate the Treasury estimates will probably amount to £20,000,000 on the whole transaction. This is monstrous finance. Ireland cannot afford such waste, and should not if she could. But we in Ireland cannot afford to forget that this is not by any means the most dangerous channel of loss. Loss from arrears of annuities payable and irrecoverable has not yet attracted sufficient attention. It is steadily growing. Another bad season would leave many thousands of purchasers unable to pay their annuities. The number of people now sued by the Land Commission is growing ominous. Let public men try to conceal it as they may, this is really the point of greatest financial, social, and political danger.

Owing to the way in which our financial business is managed by aliens behind our backs, not even according to Act of Parliament, our knowledge of what so vitally concerns us is necessarily imperfect. It ought to be known, too, that our inquiries are actually resented in Parliament by the Englishmen who manipulate our money. Considerable losses are sustained, our resources diminished and our abilities crippled, before we can clearly ascertain the causes to which the losses are due. This is one of the blessings of alien rule. Some years ago, on financial provision being made for primary education throughout the "United Kingdom," the share allocated to Ireland was called the Equivalent Grant, alleged to be equivalent to the sum given for the corresponding purpose in the other two countries. From that day to this only a fraction of that Grant has been applied to primary education in Ireland, where it was most needed; primary education has been starved in every way,

and teachers and assistant teachers have been underpaid, cheated out of their money by the British Treasury. The Treasury is fond of using the term "grant," in order to inspire people with proper humiliation as grantees of their own money and with a due appreciation of the liberality of the Treasury. Subsequently the Equivalent Grant was called the "Ireland Development Grant." It amounts to £185,000 of exclusively Irish money. There is nothing corresponding to this in the financial arrangements for England or Scotland. When they require money for any legitimate purpose it is drawn from the ocean of Imperial resources without affecting local burdens. The Ireland Development Grant is a deliberate contrivance for cutting Ireland off from access to those resources. While it is of small amount, charges having nothing to do with education or development are imposed upon it, diminishing or extinguishing the sums available for legitimate local purposes, and when all the funds are illegitimately exhausted the deficiencies are made good stealthily by withholding in whole or in part from Irish local administrative bodies the ordinary grants due in relief of local taxation, which are paid in full to the corresponding bodies in Great Britain. Part of the Development Grant goes to the Congested Districts Board for restorative work which ought to be done on a larger scale and at Imperial expense; part goes to finance the Labourers' Acts, and small portions go to various educational and other purposes. The educational and developing purpose to which the lion's share of it is devoted is no other than to meet losses sustained in connection with land purchase; in other words, to help the landlords to big prices and bonuses. The Act of 1903 allocated to this purpose £50,000 a year for the first four years. £100,000 out of the Development Grant is devoted to this purpose this year, apparently by order of the Treasury without any statutory authority. For the future the Development Grant may be regarded as mortgaged to the landlords and lost to the country,

and for any works of real development the people will have to pay again. Even among our so-called Liberal rulers, the idea of developing Ireland still seems to be—developing the landlord's purse. A stranger going into a man's warehouse and unceremoniously taking over the management of his business would be reasonable compared with this. Any excess payments to landlords, and any flotation or other losses incurred in connection therewith under a system of English contrivance, should in common justice be paid without question out of Imperial funds. If not, and unavoidable, then surely they should be paid out of the Excessive Taxation (Ireland) Account, the income of which now exceeds four millions a year and the capital amount of which must exceed three hundred millions due to Ireland. Probably no such account is kept because it would be in effect a British Peculation Account, a kind of account not usually kept by people who appropriate money that is not their own. The losses could also easily be paid out of the annual Irish contribution to imperial purposes useless to us. In either of those ways the losses could be made good without imposing any further burden upon the people. But instead of resorting to either of those existing sources, the waste falls in the first instance on the income account of the Land Purchase Fund created by the Act of 1903, and then that Fund is replenished from the funds already earmarked for other purposes and too little for them, namely, first from the Development Grant, and afterwards from the Death Duty Grant, the Agricultural Grant, and the Exchequer contribution, which are sums due throughout the "United Kingdom" in relief of local taxation. In Ireland, from the exhaustion of these grants there is less money available for education, real development and local purposes, and the ratepayers must pay higher rates, not for beneficial purposes for which they would cheerfully pay, but to swell prices and bonuses for landlords. There is no new rate struck as a Landlord Outdoor Relief Rate, but every rate-

payer knows that his rates are higher for the purpose of providing that outdoor relief. The notorious unsoundness of the whole system has brought Irish Land Stock into such ill odour as "Bog Stock" that although it has the double guarantee of the British Treasury and of Irish Rates, the public prefer other Government Stock even when less remunerative. The "radically unsound" financial contrivance provides that all these losses shall be paid exclusively by Ireland in addition to the excessive prices and bonuses. This is the answer to the ignorant and dishonest pretence that the "British taxpayer" is making some sacrifice for our benefit. While a small and remote liability rested on the British taxpayer, business methods were practised. It was not until the operations, cost and risk were increased a hundred-fold, and business methods thrown to the winds, that liability was carefully removed from the British taxpayer and firmly fixed upon Ireland alone.

This Act differs from all other Purchase Acts in involving the ratepayers of town and country, not in a mere remote risk as guarantors in a sound financial project constructed and conducted on business principles, but in an utterly reckless scheme deliberately constructed to facilitate collusion and every form of dishonesty, where losses by thousands and millions sterling are actually occurring to the knowledge of the administrators, and where the courts hold that the most dangerous of those losses must continue because the law prevents any interference with them. Let no man who respects his word say that these losses were unforeseen. It would be untrue. They were foreseen and foretold and the public were warned against them in good time while the Bill was in progress. But others at that time had the ear of the public, and those who foretold what is now seen to be true were treated as disturbers. Of all the intelligent men who watched the passage of the Bill and knew what its effects would be, none had better means of knowing than the members of the Land Conference. By entering that

Conference they publicly assumed superiority of knowledge. The public who, on that ground if no other, were entitled to look to them for a searching analysis of the Bill, got no such analysis, but were hoodwinked. Even now they all concur with the Treasury in endeavouring to conceal or divert attention from the local and individual losses which have occupied most of our attention to those which the Treasury accounts disclose. The men who assume this attitude, with the landlords and the Government, form a very strong combination. If they are allowed to have their way, the local and individual losses due to excessive prices will soon become far more dangerous than all the other losses together because, not appearing in any public statistics, they are not appreciated. The British Treasury is happy to remain unconscious of losses in Ireland until purchasers are in actual default. It gives no heed to, and has no place in its accounts for the losses and sufferings and worry which purchasers will bear, struggling to pay annuities, before the depth of default is reached, which will diminish their power of working the land to advantage and of living comfortably, which will keep in poverty themselves and the towns and villages dependent on them, which will stretch away from now into the future the best part of the new century, a silent wasting drain, a permanent cause of general stagnation. The losses ascertained by the Treasury are bad. These local losses sustained by a vast number of people throughout the country are more deadly. Had the ratepayers of Ireland been honestly informed of the unlimited burden the Bill of 1903 was going to put upon them, not for the common good but for the exclusive benefit of a vicious and dying class, their representatives would not have dared to let it become an Act in its present form. These fresh burdens, seen and unseen, coming on a country ill-off already, are in a double sense hard to bear. But they are the price that must be paid throughout the twentieth century for having allowed Land Conference theatricals to be-

come an Act of Parliament. That Act is of such a dangerous character that, from the day it was passed, the destruction of its zones has been, and until accomplished will be, a duty of the Irish people and their representatives surpassing in urgency every other duty. Since it was passed no one can any longer say that he does not care about the Land Question. His rates are higher on account of it, and will continue growing on account of it. His customers or clients are fewer and poorer on account of it. These conditions will continue during the twentieth century on account of it. Paying and suffering for a thing makes the most apathetic take an interest in it. The people of cities and towns who are neither buying nor selling land have, if possible, greater reason than country people to protest against and hasten the amendment of the system which makes them losers by a transaction which, if properly carried out, would be beneficial to them. To think that such a system of extravagant waste could be practised with impunity, and without community and individual feeling it, would be crass folly. Whether directly or indirectly, every penny of the money comes from the resources of the people; and there is nothing more certain than that, barring successful general repudiation, the country will be poorer for all this during the twentieth century. Whether the pressure will produce general bankruptcy, or will stop short at preventing and stunting industries and enterprise and forcing further emigration, that is the only margin of doubt. If the zones are not promptly abolished that margin will be gone, the doubt will be settled. And all this for the benefit of a class whose sole mark in history will be one of cruelty, misery, and shame.

Wherever a peasant proprietary system is set up with a desire that it should succeed, it is entitled to and is given help in one form or another by the Government. One of the most legitimate ways in which this help is rendered in the early period of the system is by way of small government loans on

easy terms to suitable purchasers to equip and work the land advantageously. No one who knows the ease with which the landlords in the past obtained Government loans at low interest, sublent the money to tenants at high interest, and rendered no account, can question the propriety of making small loans either direct or through Land Banks to Irish purchasers. Such loans can be made only on the security of the land. If the full amount for which the land affords security is exhausted in the price, no Government department can advance a loan. The farm of an embarrassed tenant always shows the embarrassment by dilapidation and various works clamant for performance in order to put the farm in a paying condition. The building, draining, and other works have been neglected for want of capital, and cannot be done without capital. But the farm of an embarrassed tenant is sunk so deeply in debt, first by excessive rent and finally by an excessive price; its value as security has been so completely exhausted and more than exhausted, that there is no margin upon which either the Commissioners or the Board of Works can lend money. Even among tenants not actually in debt there are many who on becoming purchasers could make their farms better paying concerns by a more substantial outlay than they can afford from their own resources. It is important to them to know in time that a tenant who buys his farm too dearly destroys his chance of borrowing Government money at a low rate of interest. This extraordinary Act plays unprecedented tricks with finance, but not one of them has for its object giving to the tenant-purchaser a fair start.

Similarly the borrowing power of all local bodies is diminished by the working of this Act and the defective method of financing it. Many of those bodies are now approaching the maximum limit of their borrowing powers for purposes which they deem necessary and beneficial. If zone prices are allowed to continue until land purchase is completed, a further burden of three-quarters of a million a year will be placed upon the ratepayers

for the rest of the twentieth century. Deductions for landlord relief purposes will, to their extent and duration, cripple the powers of local representative bodies. No matter how urgent or potential for good local projects may be, they must wait for the cessation of those deductions ; and the wait will be a long one.

If the liability for indefinite losses on transactions which they have no power to control is galling to ratepayers in towns and cities, and also to purchasers under earlier Acts, who thought their own proper liabilities sufficient, how bitterly galling must it be to unfortunate rackrented tenants whose landlords, because in receipt of excessive rents, will not sell. Getting no chance of escaping from landlordism on any terms, they are still forced to bear their share of the losses connected with those who are escaping at least in some way. To say or assume that a system which produces such an exquisite refinement of cruelty should be allowed to pursue its course undisturbed, is in no respect less cynical and heartless than jesting at victims undergoing the torture of the rack or thumb-screw. It is on becoming acquainted with the circumstances and minds of such unfortunate tenants that one gets to understand their detestation of Land Conferences.

Whoever desires for Ireland such a future as that outlined in the sixth chapter of this book has the special complaint against the Act resulting from the Land Conference that, so far as it is allowed to operate, it is rendering impossible the realisation of any such future.

Rash as it was to concur in the passing of the Land Act of 1903 with its zones and "radically unsound" finance, it would be more dangerous and less excusable now, after the zone trick and the unsoundness have been exposed, to shut our eyes to the prospect of General Bankruptcy or General Repudiation in Ireland which English financiers already perceive. Pressure for sums of money charged regardless of the capacity of the soil,

regardless of competition, regardless of justice, will soon impose upon us the hard choice between, (1) a general strike against this nefarious Act, and (2) an abandonment of our attempt at stopping emigration and reviving Irish industries. No Nationalist could have such reverence for an Act of the British Parliament as would make him hesitate in his choice. Statesmen whose business it is to know the consequences of their measures look very silly now when they plead that they did not expect, though other people did expect, the Act of 1903 to produce the muddle it has produced. They will look worse than silly a few years hence when the decrees for arrears of annuities now increasing by thousands at every quarter sessions, and in the high courts will be doubled, trebled, quadrupled, and will be decrees of ejectment at the suit of the Government. Again I ask, how is it that statesmen are so slow to recognise actualities obvious to common people? Whether their motive be honest or dishonest in assuming that the people can bear any burden placed upon them by any contrivance, I will not allow it to be said when the coming crisis has arrived that the people's advocate concealed the danger, but will here and now look forward to the kind of future which intelligent purchasers know that sales at zone prices are preparing for Ireland. Everyone who has read this chapter with attention will agree that under this nefarious Act we are not settling the Irish land question but merely passing through a phase of it, preparing a crash, with a consequential struggle, possibly more violent, certainly more widespread, simultaneous and uniform, than any previous land agitation. Instead of waiting like Land Conference conciliators to tell people in future years that we did not know what we were doing, let us in time examine the conditions, and measure the forces that will engage in the coming encounter. It seems to me that the Government in collecting exorbitant annuities will have three advantages as compared with landlords collecting exorbitant rackrents prior to 1881.

1. It will appropriate all the grants in relief of local taxation, and this will immediately increase the rates enormously.

2. It will make full use of the plausible pretence that the "contracts" for purchase are voluntary, well knowing the contrary to be the case.

3. A strong effort will be made—and the ground is being prepared for it already—to get the rest of the ratepaying community to put pressure upon the annuitants.

In fighting a rackrenting Government, the so-called purchasers will have the following advantages as compared with tenants prior to 1881:—

1. Neither men nor beasts of burden are facilitated by an increase of burdens already too heavy. This increase, consequent upon the capture of the grants by the Government, being general, simultaneous and uniform, will lay the foundation for a more general, simultaneous, uniform, and consequently more powerful agitation than has ever been provoked by the tyranny of landlords, which always has been more or less isolated and local.

2. The prevalent desire for land, which I have emphasised, is a rational desire. Irrational greed of land is so diminished as to be almost extinct. Prior to 1881, such was the passion for land that a tenant's interest in an average farm held under lease for twenty years would have sold for twenty-three years' purchase, though the tenant might be turned out at the end of the twenty years. For the interest in the same farm now, with fixity of tenure, whether held under the protection of the rent-fixing Acts or subject to a zone annuity, no man intending to live by the land would give more than sixteen years' purchase, and the tendency is still downward.

3. Owing to the prolonged agitation, the growth of enlightened feeling, the diminution of irrational land greed, and the probable ease with which untenanted farms can in future be got for the value, there will be little or no temptation to grab farms

evicted by the Government. To boycott them will be an easy matter ; and the Government now conniving at the frauds which will cause the trouble will be in a worse position for evoking on its own behalf sympathy or scruple than the worst landlord ever occupied.

4. A landlord might try to work an evicted farm if left on his hands. The idea of a Government working simultaneously thousands of evicted and boycotted farms among a hostile peasantry throughout the country is so fantastic that it must be summarily dismissed as impossible. The attempt of any Government to seize the property of the rest of the community in lieu of annuities due per zone out of derelict farms, would consolidate the entire population against Government and add fuel to the fire. In presence of general inability to pay and general repudiation of liability, the Government will have less power for collecting exorbitant annuities than the landlords had for collecting exorbitant rackrents prior to 1881.

5. The farmers of the present day see that men in all positions of life are better compensated for their exertions than farmers, whether rent-payers or annuity-payers ; and few if any of them have the disposition of their predecessors to bend their backs to an exacting, unremunerative, and precarious calling subject to unfair conditions. Men in this frame of mind have little respect for the sort of obligation imposed by the zones, will have little hesitation in evading a burden imposed upon them by sharp practice, and will have no temptation to incur the odium of grabbing boycotted farms and taking upon themselves burdens which have crushed other men.

In all these circumstances, the Government, whether it be alien or Irish, will, in the agitation of which the zones are sowing the seed, be more completely paralysed and helpless against the people than the old landlords ever have been.

Landlords, busy squeezing the tenants and raking in the shekels, are quiet and silent under the immoral Act which has

so improved their fortunes. They leave praise of it to Captain Shawe-Taylor's nominees and to guardians of the poor British Treasury. Public memory being short, the question is constantly asked, Why did the tenants' representatives in Parliament allow such a Bill to pass? Let us go far enough back for an allegorical clue to the secret. One of the most distinctive institutions in ancient Ireland was that of fosterage, and one of its most distinctive effects was to create between the fostered person and the foster-parents and relatives a factitious relationship far surpassing in intensity of feeling and in inviolability of character the affection between natural members of a family. Love of the foster-child was not merely inflexible, but, scorning reason, was jealous of the very wind that played in his locks, was regarded by the neighbours with awe, and is only faintly described by the term, cherished superstition. At least one of Captain Shawe-Taylor's nominees has revived this awful superstition with more than pre-historic intensity. No doubt this is the part the well-advised Captain selected him to play. He entered the Land Conference an advocate of the tenants' claims; he emerged a passionate advocate of zones, the wildest of all landlord contrivances. Pending the production of the Bill, he devoted his rhetoric to preparing the country to accept the Bill. When it appeared, the free and wholesome discussion to which every other Bill of the British Parliament, including that of 1881, was subjected, the discussion to which the work of an alien Parliament always requires to be subjected, was strongly deprecated and as far as possible prohibited in the case of this dangerous Bill. The whole machinery of the National Organisation was for the time reversed and used to prevent that free discussion which it is one of its objects and functions to encourage. Draft resolutions in praise of the Bill, all in one well-known handwriting and with little or no difference in phraseology, were sent for adoption north, south, east, and west, and could be seen in the hands of Ulstermen and

Munstermen alike, all puzzled at being asked to praise what they would rather be allowed to examine and criticise while criticism might be effective. A National Convention was called, nominally to discuss the Bill, but really to magnify and adopt it if its foster-father could so manage. The founder of the Land League and real author of modern agrarian reform was the first to hand in a set of resolutions of fair and impartial criticism. They were entitled, on every ground, to first place on the agenda for the Convention. They and all free resolutions were relegated to an inferior place to make room for those of the foster-father. The Convention, like the public, was solemnly warned against discussing the Bill severely, on the ground that if not accepted by Nationalists it would be dropped like the Bill of the previous year. There was in reality not the slightest danger of that happening. The terms offered to the landlords were so exorbitant that they, knowing that the Bill could not pass without the consent of the Irish Party, could be relied upon to consent to amendments rather than sacrifice all that the Bill brought within their grasp. In spite of all the warnings, nursing and concealment, the Convention adopted amendments which if carried out would have had the effect of eliminating or nullifying the zones. Mr. Davitt then proposed that a second Convention should be held to see that these alterations were really made or the Bill rejected. The whole Convention except the members of Parliament applauded the proposition unmistakably. It was then passionately pleaded that a second Convention hanging over the Parliamentary Party would be a reflection on them and would weaken them in their "fight" against the zones. Mr. Davitt and the Convention spared them the humiliation; with the result that the Bill was allowed to pass through Parliament, zones and all, as we now have it. All in a subordinate position were forbidden to utter anything but praise of the Bill. The League official who, audaciously remembering that he had a conscience and a

country, spoiled this game by scattering the *Freeman* explanatory pamphlet broadcast throughout the organisation, was promptly superseded so far as that was possible without making the scandal public. No Czar ever pranced over his slaves with anything like the arrogance displayed in private in those days towards honest critics of the Bill by men who in public were preaching "conciliation." If anyone ventured to ask what became of the claim for compulsory sale, he was told that inducements had superseded compulsion, that the landlords were to be induced by a bonus and so forth, and that this was the special invention of the Land Conference; as though anybody ever doubted that for money the landlords would sell their God and their country every day in the week if they had the power and got buyers. A free Irish Party, admittedly able to kill the Bill, could easily have beaten the zones out of it and made the parts favourable to the tenants operative like those favourable to the landlords. There is no place for freedom where the spirit of fosterage dominates. Theatrical criticism was indulged in, to satisfy the order of the Convention and to humour the country. Lest this should succeed, it was restricted almost wholly to members of the Land Conference and those subject to them. These were clearly the only men in Parliament not free to discuss the Bill impartially on its merits. They could not seriously fight at Westminster provisions to which they had signed their names "unanimously" in the Dublin Mansion House. The dictionary was ransacked for superlative adjectives of praise to apply to the Bill, and any man who did not adopt this tone became suspect. If the praises were at all correct, there was no room for amendment. To alter the perfect would be to make it imperfect. The prevalent fallacies about "free discussion" and "catching the Speaker's eye" had better be pricked here. It is hard for people in Ireland to realise how difficult it is for an individual member of Parliament, in a foreign assembly, with the knowledge that he

is exposing himself to wilful misrepresentation on all sides, to take any action or express any opinion however well-founded if it be out of harmony with those of the managers of his Party. Their opinion is put forth as that of the Party, a whip tells him the lobby in which he must vote, and "unity" is maintained not by reason but by power. There may be in a Party one man whose exceptional standing with the people enables him to be independent with safety. Independent fidelity to the right is anything but safe for a member in the ranks. If there be a member with sufficient honesty and courage, he knows he is taking in his hands not merely his position but his personal character. The managers are able to prevent him speaking in his Party by either not calling it together or ruling his subject out of order. They are able to silence and efface him in the House of Commons, to subject him to the constant humiliation of rising day after day and not being called to speak, and thus to impair his usefulness to the country and give him a bad name, by simply omitting his name from the list of speakers which the Party whip gives to the Speaker or Chairman of Committee. No matter who rises in the House, unless by some accident, none but those on the Party lists of speakers will be called, and no member can speak unless called. The alleged "freedom of discussion" and "catching the Speaker's eye" are tales invented and told to deceive the public. In the summer of 1903 members of the Irish Party complained bitterly that they were given no opportunity of discussing the Land Bill either in the Party or in the House of Commons. Relatively to the magnitude of its proposals, the Act may be said to have gone through Parliament without debate or division, except *pro forma*. Three powerful considerations restrained British Liberals from criticising its finance as they would otherwise have felt bound to do: (1) the Bill, introduced by Conservatives, purported to be a great measure of reform; (2) the Irish representatives who intervened in debate

almost unanimously accepted it as such ; and (3) it proposed to remove liability for its "radically unsound" finance from Great Britain and to fix it exclusively upon Ireland. If Irishmen were satisfied, it was no business of Englishmen, secured against loss, to worry themselves. Thus the Bill was passed. In the opinion of its foster-father, boiling oil is too cool a bath for anyone who dares to asperse this super-sacred "great measure of reform," "land settlement," "stupendous measure of appeasement : " and to accelerate its mischievous working is the duty of the hour. He was mortally angry with one who publicly called it a "botched Act," but had to suppress his rage when its actual working convinced every honest man that the description erred by mildness. He assures the public that the land question is "in train for settlement." Common sense and arithmetic convince most people that the zones are putting us all collectively and individually in train for bankruptcy, with no escape except through a fresh agitation. The special merit of the zones, we are told, is that they abolish the old vulgar practice of counting the number of years' purchase. The Chairman of the Land Conference also, speaking in the House of Lords in July, 1907, declared that vulgar practice "ill-advised"—"a most absurd idea." What business have common country people counting the number of years' purchase they pay? They should devote all their attention to "conciliation." It is in the recollection of the public that a number of members of the Irish Party went through the country deliberately preaching the same crazy doctrine as long as the people listened to them, and that at a time when keen criticism of the zones and of "conciliation" was ringing in their ears. The same men still, so far as prudence permits, attempt to magnify the villainous Act and promote its speedy working unamended. It is a question worth the consideration of Nationalists whether throwing dust in their eyes in this vital matter is a legitimate use of funds contributed for national pur-

poses. In common honesty and for the sake of people not yet caught in its meshes, the operations of this dishonest Act should be instantly and peremptorily stopped until the zones are abolished, inspection restored, and compulsion applied universally.

The new Unionism, compounded of Nationalist surrender, Unionist advantage, one-sided Conciliation, and Devolution or step-by-step, gas-and-water Home Rule, is intelligible when advocated frankly as Unionism. It is simply the Land Conference policy correctly understood and logically extended to other matters. Whatever astonishment and disgust one may feel at a former Nationalist advocating this policy, it is his persistence in still calling himself a Nationalist that irritates people. It is, however, just to remember that it was at the Land Conference, and not in subsequent years, the milk was spilled and the fat thrown in the fire.

I began with the observation that the parts of this Act favourable to the landlords were made operative in the Act itself, while the parts favourable to the tenants, evicted tenants, and landless people were only enabling, and left by the Act to depend for their operation upon the generosity of landlords, a thing which nobody seriously supposes to exist. If anyone did suppose it, he must have expected to see all the evicted tenants reinstated within the first year, since with the will of the landlords there would be nothing to prevent that. Four years passed without the reinstatement of any appreciable number of them, and then Parliament was obliged to pass a further Act applying compulsion to those generous landlords. The provisions for the distribution of untenanted lands, for the enlargement of uneconomic holdings, and the provision of new holdings for people who without them must live in misery or emigrate, still remain practically inoperative, and Parliament in its wisdom has not, even in the fourth year, applied the obvious remedy. In 1898 the landlords blocked the passage of the

Local Government Bill until a gratuity of £350,000 a year to themselves was embodied in it as a bribe for letting us have popular local government. Those who claimed in 1903 that they were able to reject the Land Bill were *a fortiori* able to prevent its passing unless the popular parts were made operative like the unpopular. It would have been a small price for the landlords to pay for the generosity lavished on them, and it would have been in accordance with their own example of five years before. We have waited four years in vain for the landlords' generosity to operate. The fifth year is now running its course, and the young people are still leaving this depleted country at the rate of 40,000 a year. As the evictors and their successors snapped their fingers at the voluntary provision for evicted tenants, and blocked its action until compulsion had to be applied, so the voluntary provisions for the distribution of ranches are and will continue to be blocked by the wholesale evictors and their successors. No intelligent person acquainted with Irish landlordism honestly expected anything else. Those of us who felt for and with the people saw and said that this would be the case. The landlords having got the part of the Act favourable to them, characteristically declined to pay the price of it, and made the part favourable to the people a dead letter. Now everybody admits substantially that this is so. Everybody admits that without compulsion the untenanted land cannot be got for the people to any appreciable extent. In default of Westminster discharging its obvious duty in these circumstances, the people have to choose whether they will voluntarily perish or supply the necessary compulsion. The popular provisions having been rendered inoperative, their chief value in their voluntary and naked helplessness is that they suggest and justify such popular action as will make them operative, such action as will make the landlords as eager to sell as the people are to buy, and that they constitute a statutory notice to owners and ranchers of what is coming.

The most remorseless landlords in Ireland own untenanted land, evidence of the evil work of themselves or their predecessors. As this is invariably their best land, if forced by any cause to sell it, they would have little temptation to keep the tenanted land, with all the trouble inseparable from it. Knowledge of this increases the natural desire of intelligent tenants to help the anti-ranching movement. Where the tenanted and untenanted lands are on the same estate, the tenants are masters of the situation. In a sale direct to themselves, they individually would be no match for the landlord and his trained and skilled professional advisers. There would be no independent or true bargaining, but only a seriatim listening to the landlord's terms, making futile protests and resistance, and afterwards yielding one by one, as is the common occurrence throughout the country. When the sales were thus completed the tenants would find that they had tied a millstone of debt about their necks, and had also tied the hands of the Estates Commissioners. The untenanted portion of the estate would then probably be sold to capitalists to be used as a grazing ranch, and the uneconomic holders and landless people, instead of being nearer to getting the land, would be cut off from it for ever. Even if the Commissioners did consent to buy the untenanted portion, it would be at a price beyond its value, and the previous purchase of their holdings by the tenants would have deprived the Commissioners of all power over the tenanted portion, however desirable the exercise of such power might be. The Commissioners have no power to exchange, rearrange, improve, drain, alter, adjust boundaries, improve or alter farm-roads, or make any grants or loans for any such purposes, unless the sale is to themselves. Hence it is obvious that if the tenants do not purchase directly, but make the continuance of ranching on the untenanted portion impossible—a thing they can easily do without risk—the landlord feeling the want of income from that portion, will quickly and without

other compulsion sell the entire estate to the Estate Commissioners, who will then, as legal owners, have almost unlimited powers of the kind mentioned, either without cost to anyone or at a moderate cost incorporated in the annuities. The landlord will have got the full value with a bonus of 12 per cent. added to it; every sod of the land will be turned to the best human use; and the occupants, old and new, will be started in their new career under such conditions and at such cost as will allow them, with industry, to live comfortably. This is what statesmen in 1903 professed to desire but failed to provide for. The anti-ranching agitation aims at making statesmen's professions operative.

IX.—THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

HAVING considered the condition to which English Government, Dublin Castle, and the landlords have brought Ireland, and the attempts of the British Parliament to repair the mischief, we proceed to consider the Government itself under which Ireland is being financially bled, and what it may yet do.

A government, to be constitutional, must be established or maintained by the freely expressed will of a free people. Their right to create or destroy it is absolute. Its purpose is to promote their general benefit, including the essential and all-pervading benefit of preserving their freedom. Its right to continued existence depends upon how it serves that purpose. Being an instrument created by the people for their own benefit, it has no right as against them. By losing their confidence, it loses its claim to their allegiance and support. By becoming antagonistic to them, it would cease to be constitutional and merit destruction.

By whatever party name the British Government of the time may be known, it is always British, and therefore, so far as regards Ireland, alien ; neither chosen by nor answerable to the Irish people to any extent, and therefore unconstitutional. Subject to a limited alien supervision, Dublin Castle is the permanent *de facto* Government of Ireland. Dublin Castle being foreign in origin, history and spirit, never subject in any way to the Irish people, and never other than inimical to them, is unconstitutional and worse, a bureaucracy of the worst type and most malignant effect, the most costly form of government in the world, in a country rendered by it one of the poorest in the world. Good alien government is an impossibility. When

alien and unconstitutional government, inherently bad, is qualified only by antipathy to the governed, you have got in the abstract what Dublin Castle is in the concrete. It will be said by some who look only at the surface that things have been much improved since Mr. Joseph Chamberlain described Ireland as governed by "boards of foreign officials," that the basis of the Castle has been widened and the country made more easy to govern. That theory was as common, and as deceptive, before Mr. Chamberlain's description as since. It was put in practice conspicuously in the promotion of the late lamented William Keogh to the judicial bench. The efforts of certain members of the National Directory of the United Irish League to popularise Dublin Castle will be about as fruitful in beneficial results for the country as those of half a century ago. A castelised Nationalist is, and will continue to be, an "extinct firebrand" to one side, a mercenary pervert to the other, an object of contempt and aversion to all decent people.

Irish landlords constitute an alien garrison in Ireland, and the country has been ruled largely for them and by them under the inspiration of Dublin Castle as against the Irish nation. Being as a class alien by race or adoption, and thoroughly disloyal to the Irish nation, landlords cannot be correctly called a section of the Irish community ; but they are the only people in Ireland favoured by Dublin Castle. For more than three centuries Ireland has been run almost exclusively for their benefit. Together, the Castle and landlordism go down to history as classic examples of institutions impossible to purify or reform and meet only for destruction.

Such has been and is the Government of Ireland. It is completely devoid of every characteristic note of a native or constitutional government. It hates Ireland's free past with a guilty and rabid hate, alternately denying that we have had such a past, and urging us to forget or ignore it.

In a man selected to rule Ireland as Chief Secretary because he is alien and knows nothing about her, a little temporary intoxication is not wonderful when he is told by many persons who ought to know that he has almost entire disposal of this island as though it were *res nullius* suddenly sprung from the sea. Nor is his irritation unnatural when he discovers that his power has narrow limits after all. These limits he encounters in two directions. He is flattered by his nominal subordinates and by sycophants who pretend to know the people; and though he soon finds both sets to be wholly untrustworthy, his unnatural position condemns him to have no other to rely upon. His subordinates, fawning upon him, smite him, and he must kiss their rod. There are few positions effect a greater transformation in a man than that of Chief Secretary for Ireland.

If he be a real Liberal, his nominal subordinates will, without scruple, make game of him. He has no principle which they will not make him falsify, no liberal purpose which they will not make him betray. Let him attempt any one of those good and generous things which his principles and benevolence suggest, and he will at once find masters in his alleged subordinates, and that his power is limited to attaching his name to any disreputable order they may require executed. Though he might have witnessed for years in the House of Commons the fact that Irish Nationalist members could always be relied upon as friends of progress and of liberty for every land, supporters of the just claims of the industrious and oppressed, even in Great Britain, and that some of the stages of British progress could not have been reached without their help, thus fulfilling the truest definition of Liberalism, he would find from the time he entered Dublin Castle the best of those men necessarily and consistently in opposition to him and he to them, and that he could no longer afford to extend to them the fair play he had been accustomed to extend to all other political opponents.

If on arriving in Ireland and finding about as many people here as in Scotland, and less crime, but twice the number of police, he resolved to confine the police to their legitimate duties, to reduce the force and the cost of it by half, and turn the money thus saved to some reproductive or useful purpose ; he would find that his subordinates would not allow him to discharge a single man, that within six months he would increase the force by 400 men, and would be using them in armed battalions not to prevent or detect crime, but to counteract political agitation, and that within twelve months he would have increased the cost of the forces by £5,000.

If on finding with astonishment that the government of Ireland gives employment to three times the number of officials, and costs five times as much as that of Scotland, he, as a Liberal pledged to retrenchment, resolved to cut it down substantially, he would himself before the end of his first year of office, in obedience to his subordinates, increase the expenditure on almost every department. He would of course be furnished with excuses, and they would convince him as an alien, but no one else in Ireland.

If he came full of the common knowledge that Ireland's disgraceful condition is the joint work of alien government, Dublin Castle, and the landlords, he would soon find himself using the stock official language, implying that the people, the victims of those institutions, are the only persons to be blamed and punished. Perhaps they are ; but if so, it must be for having tolerated alien government, Dublin Castle, and the landlords.

If he came with a lively intention of stopping, or at least checking the fatal drain of emigration, breaking up the ranches from which the people have been driven, and planting them with people again, he would soon, in obedience to his subordinates, be using the military police, not for the protection of the people but for the maintenance of the ranches against the people, and giving the landless people jail instead of land.

Knowing and despising beforehand the pharisaical cant about "law and order," he would adopt it in its most pharisaical meaning, apparently without shame.

If, struck with the notorious character of Irish land laws, made by a selfish class in its own interest against the people, tainted and blood-stained in origin and in history, a radical amendment of those laws appeared to him a duty so urgent that it could brook no delay ; days and weeks and months will pass and the urgency become less apparent to him ; when he does intervene it is as champion of the monopolists against the people ; and he may leave office without having amended the land laws even in a small way.

If he came with a strong intention never, never to resort to coercion, he would soon find himself forced by his subordinates to proclaim six or seven counties, to have large numbers of men sent to jail by his paid officials without trial and without being allowed to produce witnesses to prove their innocence ; and while aware that such things are not done in Great Britain and would not be tolerated there, he would be publicly boasting that he was confining himself to "ordinary law."

If he happened to be an "Impenitent Home Ruler," and as such, recognising and admitting that the whole Government of Ireland was wrong from top to bottom, determined that, pending the setting up of a responsible Irish Government, the people suffering the consequences of misgovernment should have freedom of agitation for reform, he would before he was six months in office find himself, in obedience to his subordinates, mobilising hundreds of armed men to deter people from holding peaceful public meetings, and to protect—what? A plain on which waves long grass uneaten and uncut and on which no beast grazes.

If he honestly believed in "English fair play" and intended that it should not be belied by him officially or otherwise, in less than six months he would have confirmed to that phrase

the discreditable meaning which long experience has forced the Irish people to attach to it. Laws theoretically common to the two countries would, with his concurrence, be administered differently in Ireland, and differently also according to the section of the people to which they applied. For instance, the law of contempt of court would in Ireland be strained beyond the English limit of a *lis pendens* into a coercive partisan weapon and used against the people in the interest of a decaying faction. While allowing this partisan interpretation of the common law, he would veto a popular interpretation of the Labourers' Act.

If he came with a firm resolve that, whatever else might happen, his administration should be clean and pure and free from crimes committed in the traditional manner by secret emissaries of Dublin Castle to be charged against the people, he would soon find that beyond his power, that Dublin Castle regards him only as a bird of passage, has never dispensed with its secret criminals and inventors of bogus crimes, and is not going to dispense with them for him. Before he has occupied the office twelve months he will find himself and Dublin Castle publicly challenged to have an atrocious crime of burning committed immediately after his police patrol had passed the scene of it promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigated if they are not afraid of their own exposure. The Chief Secretary and the Castle officials will read the challenge; but, for reasons sufficient for themselves, shrink from the investigation. Their hands are smeared, and they will not run the risk of attempting to cleanse them. They will pursue the course safer for themselves of getting a partisan county court judge to slander from the security of the bench an innocent population, to fasten upon them the guilt and the cost of a crime committed in all probability in return for secret service money for the purpose of discrediting a popular agitation. Alas for the high ideals of Liberalism, fair play, and the purity of public life!

If he came animated with the finest conceptions of manliness and statesmanship, in little more than a year he would have so far forgotten manliness and have cut himself so far adrift from statesmanship as to jibe and sneer in the House of Commons at a colleague whom he had at the time in prison for political agitation.

Supposing our imaginary Chief Secretary in his first year of office prepared or adopted an Irish Council Bill, got the consent of the Cabinet to introduce it in a form in which the Irish Party might with honour and safety recommend it to a National Convention, promised to introduce it in that form, and dined with the Party in pledge of fidelity, before he went to bed that night, and still more the following day, he would find himself so overborne by one of his Dublin Castle subordinates that in spite of his principles and his pledge he would mutilate in a vital part the greatest Bill of his life, and introduce it in such a condition as to be an insult.

So much for his limitations in one direction. A single instance will serve to illustrate the other. Before the then current month had elapsed this imaginary Chief Secretary would find his mutilated and insulting Bill flung back into his face with absolute unanimity by an Irish National Convention. That is his limitation in the other direction.

The transformation is complete. There was a Liberal, there is a wreck. The comedy has proved a tragedy for the comedian. Come as a reformer, he is forced by his subordinates to play the tyrant on a petty scale, and has proved more injurious to himself than to anyone else. In the dear school of experience he has discovered the two abiding forces in Ireland, naturally and irreconcilably antagonistic, the Irish Nation and Dublin Castle, and that whoever would rule here must do the will of either against the other. The intoxication of absolute power is gone. He has made his choice. His idols are broken, his ambitions forgotten, his ideals and principles betrayed. The per-

manent Unionist subordinates there before him and sure to be there after him will rub their hands with glee at having despoiled him of everything Liberal except his clothes. These they leave him, the better to serve their purposes for the time. A short time it will be. He will long to retire to the House of Lords or the diplomatic service, having failed in every other. In the reflection of subsequent empty years when he reads that the Irish people have by their own strength, courage, and self-reliance carried out the reforms from which he shrank, made themselves masters in their own country, and given Dublin Castle its due, the sting of a lost opportunity will keep before his mind the haunting question, why, when time still was, he did not try this natural and honest solution instead of irritating with sympathy and epigrams people who wanted something real.

Whoever believes in constitutional government must admit that English rule in Ireland, maintained by force for England's sordid purposes, is unconstitutional, devoid of moral and political justification, doubly obnoxious in being alien and in being bad. Egotistical persons who point to the vices and defects which alien rule has bred in our people as a reason for its continuance, conveniently ignore facts obvious to all who have no interest in ignoring them. One is, that when men whom they imprison as political criminals in Ireland go to other countries where they get fair play and nothing more, they sometimes rise to high positions. Another is, that, even if we tried, we could not produce such ghastly and disgraceful results as the alien government of Ireland has produced. When an uninvited alien volunteers to govern us, and takes a big salary of our money and a free residence in our country as a reward for governing us properly; when he knows that Dublin Castle is in permanent hostility, active or quiescent, to the mass of the people, and that either one or the other must be banished; when he admits in the British Parliament that the laws and institutions forced upon us are indefensible, that our objects are desirable, and that he

sympathises with them ; when he wrings his hands and deplures the inability of that Parliament to deal with the numerous Irish problems which he says are urgent and ought to be dealt with ; when the letter of the law gives him power to remedy some of the great admitted evils and the issue of success or failure depends upon whether he has courage to master his legal subordinates, if by failure in that point he betrays the people, what claim has he, what claim has that man, to anything from the people but contempt for himself and his sympathy? Every Chief Secretary admits readily enough that all his predecessors have failed to govern Ireland as it should be governed, but foolishly professes to think that he has discovered the secret of success. Not one of them has yet in practice shown that he realises what is obvious to plain people, that the one only secret of success in alien government is to bring it to an end, and that therefore a beneficent government of Ireland by any alien, whether Liberal or Tory, through the instrumentality of Dublin Castle is in the nature of things impossible. Irresponsible government against the will of the governed is a definition of tyranny. By undertaking it, any Englishman, irrespective of party, violates the principle of constitutional government. That being so, the more Liberal he professes to be the more violently his principles and practice conflict. The only purpose for which an alien constitutionalist could consistently and legitimately take up the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland is to bring alien rule to an end.

Partly to the distinction just noted and partly to the secret desire of the permanent Castle officials to bring Liberals into special discredit in Ireland, is due the undoubted phenomenon that meaner things are done in Ireland under a Liberal than under a Tory Government. For another reason emphasising the distinction, the Tories have the courage of their convictions and would say frankly and brutally "we will coerce you ;" "we will not hesitate to shoot you ;" whereas the sneaking Liberals

boast of their principles, of their sympathy, and of confining themselves to the "ordinary law." Principle is betrayed when, having the power and opportunity, one fails to do that which his principle binds him to do. We helped the Liberals to office and power because of their adhesion to the principle that we were entitled to rule ourselves, because they call themselves "a Home Rule party." When they find themselves in office with a majority pledged and able and willing to give us justice, they betray us and their principles, adopt in practice if not in name a Unionist policy towards Ireland, leave our rights in abeyance, tell us we may get them "some day," and offer us sympathy like alms, and a sermon on how grateful we should be for their sympathy. In that conduct of a Party possessing giant strength it takes some searching to find true Liberalism, Home Rule, consistency, or anything but cowardice and treachery. Real Liberals in the Party must constantly feel the sting of Disraeli's taunt that "while abusing Tories they imitate Tory ways." Instead of discharging a huge debt long due, they throw us a bone to pick, tell us we are dishonest, and allow us to live *ex caritate*. Their sympathy is of no more use to us than the barren sympathy of the Unionists. It is more offensive because the profession of Liberalism makes it more false. Sympathy offered by an omnipotent Liberal Party as a substitute for essential legislation is an outrage. We would deserve no better if we did not fling it back into their faces like the Council Bill. We want many things in Ireland, but offensive Liberal sympathy is not one of them. Away with the sympathy that dares to lecture the scattered and disinherited people and is anxious only about the monopolists' cattle grazing on their evicted lands.

The Liberal "ordinary law" trick carries meanness in government a step further and is weaning the Irish people of any lingering confidence in official Liberals. They get a castle-hack to ransack the records of the dark ages of English legislation

for some musty Act designed to deal with pirates or some class of profligates now extinct ; and though this law is never enforced in England, and has only escaped repeal by being forgotten and practically obsolete, alleged Liberal ministers are not ashamed to put it in force against Nationalists as such, that is against the only true Liberals in Ireland. Under the statute 34, Edward III., a star-chamber law passed in 1361, some innocent men have within the past year been brought before a single paid magistrate of no legal knowledge, and he, having merely read the charge, and without asking them whether they were innocent or guilty, or a solitary question, sent them off to prison. The Act is a monstrous one in that it enables a layman to assume guilt, require sureties for good behaviour, and in default send an accused person to prison, without allowing him to produce a witness, though one is present able to prove an *alibi* or some complete answer to the charge. When the administrator of such an Act is so crude as not to ask an accused person whether he is guilty or not, but has a keen sense of what his employers require and the side on which his bread is buttered, it is not wonderful that he sent to jail last winter a young man who was some miles away at the time the offence in question was committed. The young man never complained, because his brother, who had taken part in the offence and was proud of it, was free. The case none the less proves that this alleged "ordinary law" is out of harmony with modern notions of law, liberty, and justice. When complaint in a case of this kind was made to the Attorney-General for Ireland, he answered that he could not help the innocent prisoners and would not if he could, thereby confirming the paid magistrate's knowledge of what his employers required. The Chief Secretary knows that no such exceptional law would be tolerated in England for a day, and that if attempted, a complaint of a member of Parliament to the Home Secretary would elicit an answer very different from the one given to me by

Mr. Cherry. The Chief Secretary knows that this and other laws put in operation by him in Ireland are ordinary only in the sense that they are not the Coercion Act; that they are more exceptional than that Act in being long obsolete in Great Britain; that under the Coercion Act an accused person was entitled to call witnesses and had to be tried by two resident magistrates, one of whom at least should have had legal training. In short, he knows quite well that the laws he is putting in operation against political opponents are no more "ordinary" than they are "Liberal," and that he is doing more unconstitutional and illiberal things than the Unionists did under the Jubilee Coercion Act. It would be more brutal, but more honest, to frankly abandon the pretence of Liberalism in Ireland and rush a special Coercion Act through all its stages in both Houses of Parliament within twenty-four hours, as has been done. Such is the dirty work to which Dublin Castle puts inconsistent Liberal statesmen. It is always a pity to see a fine character dragged low; and the finer the character the greater the pity. The dragging is done by the permanent officials. For us the duty of hitting an alien who attempts the impossible is imperative, however painful.

Another department of what Liberals incorrectly call "ordinary law" is the whole jurisdiction and practice of the Land Judge's Court. There is no court or institution in Great Britain corresponding to this. But exceptional as its statutory functions are, its assumed functions and practice are still more exceptional. The statutes constituting and empowering this court are not numerous, and it is well worth the while of anyone sufficiently curious to examine them for the purpose of ascertaining the extent to which a judge in our own day has expanded his jurisdiction beyond the statutory limits. The management of a tenanted estate by its actual owner may become a legitimate subject of public criticism, the owner having the ordinary remedy according to circumstances of (*a*) ignoring the criticism, (*b*) de-

fending the management in the press, or (c) seeking legal redress, civil or criminal, if the law has been infringed. In the latter case there would be a trial. A claim or charge should be duly formulated, an opportunity given to meet and answer it, and witnesses could be produced, examined and cross-examined. The Land Judge's Court has been established for the express purpose of selling insolvent estates and without any power of permanent management. Financial difficulties have brought a very large number of estates under this jurisdiction. In many of these cases the judge arbitrarily evades sale, keeps the estates in his court for twenty years or more, appoints permanent land agents under the name of "Receivers" to manage them, and acting himself as a general landlord over them all assumes powers never claimed by any owner over his own property, and for which there is not a shred of statutory authority. The management, though at the public expense, is no longer open to public criticism. It has become sacrosanct, and the remedies with which solvent private owners have to be content no longer suffice. Any person daring to criticise that management, though it be away in the country, without reference to the court and without knowledge that the land is subject to the court, is deprived of the common right of trial and sent to jail, as in my own present case, not for any actual offence, but for constructive contempt of court, without ever having been so much as summoned to offer a word of explanation. Under this developed jurisdiction men have suffered various terms of imprisonment from months to years, in one case so long that the unfortunate prisoner was for a time forgotten, though he had never been convicted, or even tried for any offence. That this occurs in the "United Kingdom" would be incredible if it were not common practice. Yet a Liberal statesman is not ashamed to call it "ordinary law." Of course it is not law at all, but the arbitrary despotism of a partisan official. In English law, and in reason, the fact of an accuser evading a common-law

trial proves the innocence of the accused. The power of this particular judge to deal with contempt is neither more nor less than that of any other judge. The Executive Government could, here as in England, prevent its abuse without legislation. The Attorney-General for Ireland has tacitly admitted this by refusing to open the prison door, not because he was unable, but because it was "inopportune." Introducing a Bill to restrain the Land Judge is quite needless and is done only to win applause on false pretences.

Observe, too, that the purpose for which the present Chief Secretary revives and puts in operation antiquated criminal law, and allows a judge to manufacture and put in practice in the interest of a class a new criminal law, is to enforce land laws known to be tainted with partisanship, blood-stained and deadly in origin, history and administration, so dangerously and notoriously bad that the main purpose of his mission to Ireland is to get them repealed or radically amended. If his professed sympathy with us and his professed desire to overcome the House of Lords had any reality in them, he would at least prevent these travesties of law and justice against men who are doing the rough local work necessary to make his task possible. When his practice runs counter to his principles and professions, when he avails of laws which he knows are not "ordinary" to defeat the people's purpose and to force their continued submission to what he admits to be unjust, what attitude the people will assume towards him must depend upon the amount of manhood left in them. If they are cowards, he may have his way for a time. If they are men, that time will be short.

An alien who says that the primary duty of a Liberal Government is to enforce in Ireland unjust laws which he has come to alter, is neither logical nor liberal. The primary duty of any government, the duty before which all others should give way, is the preservation of the people and the prompt amendment of laws operating for their destruction. Are not all the wrongs

a nation can suffer—and we have endured them all—condensed and embodied in that irremediable wrong, the destruction of the nation itself? Under any government answerable to the governed reforms necessary for the preservation of the people never wait upon anything, but are promptly carried out as soon as the necessity becomes known. No one would think, as landlords do in Ireland, of setting up a right of private property in bar of the safety and welfare of the community. No such attempt as that of a handful of adventurers to monopolise the land and expel the inhabitants would be tolerated. Even in England, demoralised though it has been by excessive commercialism and territorialism, no proposition is more universally admitted than that no class or section can have or acquire any right as against the nation itself or detrimental to it. Every responsible government rightly regards the people as its first care, and, if considered as a treasure, its greatest treasure—compared with other things, its only treasure. The destruction or banishment of the people would be the destruction of the nation itself, a thing which any free nation would before all things take adequate measures to avert. The duty of self-preservation is incumbent and imperative on a nation as on an individual. It is the primary purpose for which a government has been created and is maintained as the special instrument. A government which fails in that duty towards the people forfeits their allegiance. However distasteful the saying may be to real Liberals, it is better they should know the truth, that the policy of alien government in Ireland, under Liberals no less than under Tories, is to solve the Irish difficulty by decimating the Irish people, that it changes in name only and not in substance, and that we may find a way of making it as unwise for them as it is discreditable to maintain in our country a system which they would condemn in any other and would not tolerate in their own. No one who sees at once the depleted condition of Ireland and the people still flying out of it can question

either the proposition or the duty it imposes upon us. An alien government which has forced itself upon an unwilling people and has co-operated and still co-operates in the destruction of that people, is absolutely devoid of moral sanction, rests exclusively upon superior force, that is upon the sword however concealed, and is not entitled to anything from the people but opposition to itself and to its policy. Expedience takes the place of allegiance and determines the quantity and duration of obedience. Every time that such a government complains of the people's efforts to save themselves it confesses its own default. What it deserves from them is hatred, exposure, destruction when they can. The people are maltreated for not obeying what it is their natural duty to overturn. Preaching the sanctity of law, pharisaical at best, becomes specially repulsive to people whom it reminds of the same language used sixty years ago when probably 2,000,000 of our people perished of hunger in the land which had grown, as a result of their labour, more corn than would feed twice the population. The civil law was criminal then in a sense not known in any self-ruled country. To preach its sanctity was and is criminal cant. A people who suffered from such law and respected it would deserve no better. What hypocrisy it is to talk of cattle-scattering as a crime and in the same breath claim respect for the very laws under which the people have been exterminated and scattered by fire and sword and the continued operation of which still forces the people out to the number of forty thousand a year. Now, twenty-seven years after the passing of the best of all the Land Acts, thousands of industrious families are, owing to maladministration as much exposed as they were before that Act to the selfish tyranny of landlords. Five years after the passing of the Act which professed to release the vacant land, the people are still flying away, though the land is still vacant. We suffer from an evil more deadly than war or pestilence, and, forsooth, because some Englishmen have to play golf or attend to Im-

perial affairs, because others are not convinced that we suffer, and because the great mass of Englishmen are entirely indifferent, we must quietly submit to continued extermination. Such is alien Government by Liberals in Ireland.

The Act of 1903 settled the distribution of the bonus for only five years, from the first of November of that year, empowering the Treasury to alter the distribution after that time. It is an unconstitutional practice to give such power to the Treasury outside of Parliament. The intention has, however, been expressed to give Parliament an opportunity of altering the distribution of the bonus this year, and to embody in the Bill for that purpose any other amendments of that Act found to be necessary. The one only way in which the Imperial Parliament can possibly settle the Irish land question is by withdrawing its support from one of the parties to it and leaving us to settle it ourselves. That would be Home Rule, a subject beyond the scope of this volume. People acquainted with the facts in Ireland and readers of this book have no doubt as to the amendments that are necessary. If the cash bonus is to be continued at all, the "bridge" theory upon which it was granted should be enforced by making the bonus vary inversely with the number of years' purchase, giving the largest bonus to the vendor who sells at the lowest price. The other amendments should include immediate compulsory sale of all tenanted land and immediate payment to the landlords of 75 per cent. of their net incomes on second term rents or their equivalents, pending inspection and completion; abolition of the zones, restoration of inspection, equitable segregation of the respective properties of landlord and tenant in each holding; no price to be allowed for tenant-right or improvements; and immediate sale of all untenanted and non-residential land at its net value to the Commissioners for distribution. A short, simple Bill embodying these few provisions could, given certain local conditions, be passed through Parliament as quickly as a Coercion

Act, and would go far to settle the Irish land problem. Do the local Irish conditions essential to its passage at Westminster and to its success when passed exist? Not quite; but it is in our power to create them. Such is the condition of British politics and the complexity of the legislative machine that a Chief Secretary representing an omnipotent majority confesses his inability to get enacted laws which he admits to be of vital urgency to Ireland. Irish conciliators take this English difficulty seriously, regard it as formidable, preach at us about the limitations of the present Government, the limited possibilities of a single session of Parliament, and actually tell us through the public Press that our rights must remain in abeyance until we have converted the English people and reformed the House of Lords. Irish Nationalists remember how different was the language of the Volunteers and of the Land League, and how different the results were. They also remember that when the question was the destruction of our liberties, nothing was said about the difficulty of doing it in a single session. Irish Nationalists have neither right nor obligation nor power nor desire to tamper with the English Constitution. Any busy-body attempting such a thing in their name would be promptly and properly resented by Englishmen as an inconsistent meddler. The whole theory of such doctrine and attempts is a reversal of the traditional national policy. It would lead to the waste of our time and energies in what is in the nature of things impossible for us, and to the further decay of our nation while we pursued the phantom. To confine ourselves within the narrow limits of the land question, if our conciliators had accomplished their self-imposed task of conversion and reform, if Lords and Commons were as certain to concur as they are certain not to concur in passing the small Bill outlined above, Dublin Castle, the judiciary, officialdom, and rabid landlords combined would make it a dead letter without local action. An Englishman may doubt this; no intelligent person ac-

quainted with Irish affairs can. Alike for the introduction, for the passing and for the subsequent working of a Bill that would be of any use to the people, the people's own local action is indispensable and is the determining factor. The Chief Secretary having been given the chance that he and his friends prayed for, if he does not make good his part of the understanding by passing the kind of Bill above outlined, if he imagines that knowledge of his difficulties will to any extent absolve him, he will, before the end of the present year, learn his entire mistake, and that the very local action he deprecates is the one thing that gives him any real chance of keeping legislation abreast of popular necessity. Let individuals with private axes to grind flatter him to the top of his bent, as they do one Chief Secretary after another ; let them even continue to do so in the name of the Irish Party without its authority ; pursuing a course erroneous *au fond*, they merely increase their own difficulties and his.

Knaves and their dupes at present evince great concern about the contents and the fate of the promised Land Bill. Some of them have reasons of their own for their anxiety. No one who knows the unsoundness of the Westminster legislative machine, and the primary forces to which it must answer, shares their anxiety about the Bill. In 1906, one man, without leaving Loughrea, forced the revival and enactment of the Town Tenants Bill, which Parliament had declared dead. Intelligent people most concerned about the land are least anxious about the Bill. They know that a popular settlement would be more equitable and beneficial than a Parliamentary one. At least one member of Parliament shares that opinion, and in fact teaches it. Statesmen's knowledge of its prevalence will do more towards improving the Bill than all the whispering at Westminster. A good Land Act has never been got from Westminster, and can never be got, unless first substantially enacted by the people in Ireland, as in 1881. In strict harmony

with this rule, the next Land Act will be just as good, or just as worthless, as the people of Ireland in the meantime deserve. It is but just to remember that so far as regards the legislature, the inflated and false standard of prices set up by the Act of 1903 creates a great difficulty which Parliament cannot possibly overcome without popular agitation of sufficient vigour. People in earnest about getting ranches broken up take effective action for that purpose, and care little about the Bill or what the Lords do with it, or whether any Bill is passed. In their circumstances and for their purpose the law is sufficient as it stands.

A financial difficulty is the first that will be raised in opposition to such a Bill as I have suggested. Scarcity of money is the last defence that should be urged by or on behalf of England against an Irish claim. We want neither her money nor the money she has taken from other people, but only a portion of what she has taken from ourselves. Is a pickpocket caught in the act entitled to plead that he should not be stripped bare because he has other purposes for the money? If he is, but not otherwise, England may plead scarcity of money. She has been convicted by her own experts on the Financial Relations Commission of over-taxing us to the extent of over $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions a year, since grown to about four millions a year, which is picking our pockets under cover of law. Under such a financial arrangement prosperity in England is intelligible enough, but prosperity in Ireland is impossible. England too has many purposes for this accumulated plunder besides restoring it to its owners. But, according to common honesty, restoration is our plain right and the debtor's plain duty. The whole of the excessive taxation wrung out of Ireland during the nineteenth century would exceed three hundred million pounds, enough to pay for all the land in Ireland three times over, and leave it cost-free and annuity-free in the hands of the new occupants for ever. For this, being simple restitution, no thanks whatever

would be due to England. The justice of such a claim cannot be gainsaid. There are only two arguments against it—(1) its magnitude ; and (2) England's want of practice in making restitution to Ireland even on a small scale. Here is a problem for moralists in want of occupation—Is the victim of a plunderer justified in using any means short of violence in making the plunderer disgorge ? We purpose wiping out landlordism. Ranching is the point at which it is most vulnerable, least defensible, and can be attacked with least risk. The ranching system, once attacked on a large scale, must go. All the combined forces of the British Government, Dublin Castle, and the monopolists can never restore the *status quo ante bellum*. Marking the present time of transition, the air is full of bogies and bugbears, false rumours, and false arguments. Of these there is none so baseless and so skilfully propagated as the alleged difficulty of providing money for an extensive transfer of the ownership of land. The amount of truth in it is this, and no more—if the people ask money for any purpose, even from a Liberal Government, they will find it very hard to get. But if, instead of pressing the Government for either money or a Land Bill, the people and their representatives create here in Ireland a situation in which the pressing will be done by the landlords, who have far more influence with every Government and with the Lords than we have or desire ; if, for example, ranching is peremptorily stopped, and the long grass allowed to grow uneaten and uncut, no crime is committed, no blood is spilled ; but the landlords, getting no income from the land, will become sick of unprofitable long grass, and will, with the full help of the Unionist Party and of the Lords, apply for and get money, which we could never get. If a war in which England was concerned broke out in any part of the world, she would be able, if necessary, to raise many millions within a week ; and would not forget to make us bear our share, though the war in no way concerned us. The simultaneous desire of the

landlords to sell and of the people to buy the same article, while perfectly peaceful, would satisfy all political and economic requirements and create urgency resembling that of war ; and the amount required to take over and distribute all the ranches and settle the entire Irish land, tenanted and untenanted, could be found within twenty-four hours. The landlords would have the most effective incentive for hastening the transaction, not caring who got the land. In other words, there is no financial difficulty.

X.—CONCILIATION

THE British Government, Dublin Castle, and the landlords constitute in relation to Ireland a long firm—whatever applies to one applies, with slight modification, to all, and that irrespective of the political Party in power. It is not the habit of long firms to give honest people their due for the mere asking. Conciliation is such a natural and agreeable policy that no rational people who could recover their own by means of it would adopt a contrary policy. But on the main question of success or failure, people, to be rational, must be open to conviction; and if conciliation by itself invariably fails they must, however reluctantly, adopt another policy. The political curiosities who spring up under one *regime* after another to sound their masters' praises are soon put in their proper places by the general body of Nationalists. Some of them are just now busying themselves telling public meetings and proclaiming through the Press their confidence in the present Chief Secretary's good intentions and desire to concede all we want and all we are entitled to. If that gentleman's good sense is proportionate to his wit, his contempt for those sycophants must be lively. All on either side of the Channel who are free to think know that, at his very best, England is his country, and his main concern first, last, and always; that Ireland occupies not even a secondary position in his mind, but counts merely as a possible advantage or a possible danger to England; that he cannot know our rights, and therefore does not desire to concede them; and that to proclaim any such intention as his, especially when done in the name of the Irish Party, is an impertinent liberty, a giving away of our case, a lowering of our flag, mischievous to our cause among

Englishmen, still more mischievous among Nationalists, whom it either provokes to caustic criticism or disgusts. Unfortunately renegade conciliators have been numerous enough during the nineteenth century, with disastrous results for the country. Many a cup they have dashed from the lip ; many a bright hope they have blasted on the eve of victory ; many a gallant struggle they have nullified. Not one solitary advantage have they ever won, or step in our progress have they ever gained. Their least injurious effect has been to whittle down, or in some way vitiate whatever has been substantially won by other men and other methods. The copper thrown by Dives to the cringing beggar does not alter their relations. The good intentions which never materialise, the fair-mindedness and general kindness attributed by slaves to alien masters, even supposing them real, leave the masters still supreme, the slaves still in bondage, and are in fact part of the means for prolonging those conditions. The fawning and conciliation lectures on the Irish side and the good intentions, sympathy, and vague generalities on the English are, whether consciously or not, parts of the traditional joint game of deception. Alien masters and freedom cannot co-exist in the same land. No real Nationalist who is well informed cares two straws who is Chief Secretary, or has any interest in discriminating between Parties or persons beyond hitting whenever he can the whole alien institution, and whoever represents it in Ireland for the time. None but knaves and their dupes now talk, or would be listened to by Nationalists if they did, about conciliation and the good intentions of any British Government or British Minister. The youngest and simplest know that that is all moonshine. The very Ministers who are now applauded and credited with knowing our rights and desiring to concede them, have themselves, in this eighth year of the twentieth century, asked us to formulate our demand. Our demand is so old, simple, and just that the pretence of not

knowing it cannot be honest. It is our birthright—Land and Liberty. Incidentally it is to get rid of those alien Ministers and their meddling. Men who relied upon conciliating an alien Parliament would not deserve either Land or Liberty, and would certainly live and die without either. That is what the Irish people are making up their minds not to do.

So far as an Irish Parliamentary Party has been connected with success, it has been by the traditional national policy of strong popular agitation in Ireland and independent opposition in Parliament when the agitation began to bear legislative fruit. The only way in which it has ever been found possible in Ireland to extract a good Act from the British Parliament is by substantially enacting it on the ground in Ireland, and afterwards subjecting the Bill produced in Parliament to the closest examination and severest criticism within the bounds of truth and justice. It is as true to-day as it always has been that the value of English legislation for Ireland and the power of the Irish Party in Parliament are in exact proportion to the energy of organised agitation in Ireland. While it is a permanent elementary fact, in harmony with universal experience, that it is only in Ireland Irish questions can be satisfactorily settled, of none is it more emphatically and obviously true than of the land question, because on no material can the people act so directly and irresistibly as the land, and none would be of such immediate value to them. Every Bill that a Dublin Castle lawyer touches requires the most rigorous scrutiny before acceptance by Irish Nationalists. We have on record Mr. Gladstone's confession that the Land Act of 1881, the best Act ever passed by the British Parliament for Ireland, would never have been introduced and could never have been passed but for the Land League agitation—and that was anything but conciliatory. Mr. Parnell and his Party, so far from claiming that Bill as a result of Parliamentary action, criticised it severely and took the strongest action open to them to disclaim

responsibility for it by walking out of the House of Commons on the second reading. To the complete absence of conciliation its value, its passing, its very existence were due. It is to the pursuance of a directly contrary policy we owe the zones, high prices, financial dangers, and retrograde character of the Act of 1903, and the destruction by it of the value of reforms previously won.

Throughout Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary career the consistent policy of himself and his Party was to criticise all Government Bills justly, which meant severely, and to abstain from sitting on, and I believe from giving evidence before, any Commission of Inquiry. Whatever the ostensible purpose may be, the real purpose of all those Commissions is to delay reform and minimise our claim in the matter under review. To accept any responsibility in connection with them is a lowering of the flag, a departure from principle, a recognition of what we repudiate, a donning of foreign livery, a weakening of our position. It being manifest beforehand that a Commission dominated by Englishmen will produce a report and make recommendations which no Nationalist could consistently or honourably sign, holding aloof was, and must always be, the only consistent and strong policy. No man who had signed minimising recommendations would afterwards be free to debate legislation based upon them. Even opponents allow that to stand out from a compromising institution whose title you deny, and to hold your hands free to deal with its offspring on the merits, is consistent, unambiguous, and honest.

The independent Party made one exception ; but the difference was in the occasion itself and not in the Party. Men who would not sit on any Commission in the normal pursuance of British rule in Ireland, could consistently and honourably sit, and indeed were bound to sit, on a Commission to investigate and elucidate the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland with a view to the dissolution of an unfair

partnership. Both sides were clearly entitled to ascertain the nature and extent of the unfairness which was the chief ground for the proposed dissolution. That differs essentially from all the purposes connected with the ordinary course of alien rule. Consequently the National Party was ably represented, and that Commission resulted in information favourable to justice and freedom, but once more proving by the absence of legislative effect that a good cause requires more than justice and reason.

It was on the principle of abstention and independence that, during the "split," the Majority Party refused to take any part in the Recess Committee from which the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction has sprung. They thus retained their freedom, and when the Bill was introduced were free to discuss it effectively. Even then the consequences of the Recess Committee were sufficiently serious. The entry of Nationalists to the Land Conference organised by the landlords was a complete departure from the traditional Nationalist policy. Its effect was to save the Bill of 1903 from independent criticism and saddle us with zones, high prices, and a debt of which no one living will see the end. The traditional rule of the Irish Party seems to be obsolete now. In May, 1906, a member of the Party proposed to ask the appointing of a Commission to inquire into Congestion and Untenanted Land. Most members of the Party disliked the idea. The facts were sufficiently well-known. An elaborate return of all the untenanted land in Ireland was already in preparation, and particulars of the congestion which that land should be used to relieve could be found in *Thom's Directory*. It was pleaded that the inquiry could be completed and the report produced before the end of 1906, with a view to land legislation in 1907, and that no Commission would be accepted on any other terms. We weakly gave way; the Government were delighted at having shelved our land problem; and the Commission has already, as

I write, wasted nearly two years finding out things which probably most of us knew before it sat.

Not by conciliation, but by independent opposition can anything useful to Ireland be got from the British Parliament. Although no one would with a serious face accuse Irish landlords of patriotism, we are logically bound to consider, however briefly, what the possibilities might be if they were to any extent patriotic. They would demonstrate the value of conciliation by selling unoccupied land which they confessedly do not require for their own use for distribution among those who practised conciliation and needed land as a necessary of life in Ireland. To measure the sacrifice this would involve on their part we have only to remember that they would receive in exchange for the untenanted land the full value of it with a bonus of 12 per cent. added to that value. Such terms are not available to an owner of land in any other country in the world. The people strongly desire the land, strongly desire that the conciliatory method should succeed in preference to any other, and would even undertake terms extra-onerous in order that it might succeed. Not only will they not force a door voluntarily opened, but if any form of conciliation can be devised where-with it can be opened they desire to practise that. To them it is no light matter but one of the most serious of their lives, and whatever is within their power they are prepared to do to get the land without loss or worry to anyone. These conditions seem favourable to the practice of the kind of patriotism with which some people credit landlords. In those conditions conciliation is a rational and proper policy, and would succeed if the alleged patriotism existed. It has not succeeded.

Few will deny that it is a laudable thing for steady industrious landless people who desire to stay in the country of their birth and of their race, and can do so only on the condition of getting some land, to ask the owner of surplus land to sell it on

the magnificent terms now available. It would be hard to take exception on any ground to such a legitimate and laudable proposal as that. It affords an ideal opportunity for practising patriotism and reciprocating conciliation. Whoever agrees that the request is laudable and ought to be conceded must logically agree that if it be refused there ought to be a remedy. If the provisions in the 1903 Act for distributing untenanted land for such purposes were not inserted to mock the people to whom the matter is vital, there must be a remedy when the selfish monopolist refuses. The law ought to provide the remedy. That is our contention. The law and the landlords fail. If an Irish assembly had the making of the law it would not fail. Young men told to expect everything from conciliation, and restrained from resorting to any other method, when the deception becomes too obvious and they are forced to emigrate do so with bitterness in their hearts, not alone against landlords and ranchers and the British Government but also against trimming conciliators whose cowardly advice has cost the young people their country. The state of Ireland, the continued emigration and decay, and the history of the last five years show that if the alleged landlord patriotism exists it certainly is not spontaneous, and the way to invoke it successfully has not yet been discovered.

As statements and arguments running counter to those of other public men might be contested if set forth in the abstract, I will in the remainder of this work, at some sacrifice of effect and of personal feeling, restrict myself to the range of my own experiences and what is within my personal knowledge.

I have from time to time got District Councils, individual Councillors, League branches, and bodies of people brought together *ad hoc*, to sign and forward memorials to the Estates Commissioners, urging them, as the body appointed by the law for the purpose and armed with power to purchase and deal with land and with money to pay for it, to ask the owners of

certain specified land to sell it for distribution among eligible people in the district in need of land and able and eager to work it. This procedure produces effects rarely and slowly. In all cases the Commissioners made the inquiries as requested ; but some owners refused to sell, some in effect refused by asking a prohibitive price, and some gave no answer. The Commissioners were thus left powerless. The chief value of the memorials consisted in this : they were an assurance to the Commissioners when that or any other land in the district became available that there would be sufficient eligible people to take it off their hands ; and the preparing of the memorials and getting the people to sign them fostered in their minds the idea of getting the land, and gently encouraged the growth of that spirit which, when conciliation has utterly failed, finds another method, and by making land unprofitable brings it into the market.

I have also on the invitation of groups of people given them similar assistance in trying by direct appeal to induce owners to sell. This procedure would be successful if conciliation were mutual. With my knowledge of landlordism, I never liked it, and in almost every case that came under my notice it had the injurious effect of increasing the stubbornness and avarice of the owner.

Those in a position to know are aware that few other men on the people's side have done more than I have done in the way of conciliation and negotiation on the people's behalf. I purpose continuing those methods wherever there is even a remote possibility of their leading to any useful result. But human life is limited ; even if fruitless negotiations and disappointed hopes were like manna, capable of sustaining the conciliators—which they are not—to settle down and rear families on such sustenance is out of the question. In short, the land is what the people want and cannot do without if they are to stay in Ireland.

A common device of landlords to disarm the people and make popular action appear to be unnecessary, is to announce willingness to sell a ranch, get the Estates' Commissioners to send an inspector over it ostensibly for that purpose, and—proceed no further. There are cases in which that trick was played four years ago, and until cattle-scattering began landlords and ranchers were smiling at the credulity of the people. Among graziers a common trick to prevent a cattle-drive is to promise not to take a particular ranch again. A cattle-drive is what they fear most, because it taints the land, increases the odium and danger of taking it, and frightens the banks and money-lenders. Without violence, it touches the spot. The ranchers' special dislike is a confirmation of its efficacy. If in consequence of promises not to take the ranch again, the cattle are not scattered, the rancher can keep his promise in the letter while breaking it in the spirit and continuing the ranching business. To do this he has only to exchange with another rancher, who has gulled other credulous people with a similar promise. Neither will have re-taken his old ranch, but each may have got one as good. Landlords and graziers also frequently play a joint game to baffle the people. For instance, they jointly whisper the doctrine among scrupulous people that the popular condemnation applies only to the eleven months' system and not to a ranch stocked by its owner. With the help of those who take bribe-grass, this unfounded doctrine gets some believers. In the neighbourhood of ranches consisting of evicted land there are usually descendants of the evicted tenants as well as other people in need of land. Their moral claim could not be ousted by the mere fact that a landlord who does not reside on the land owns the cattle grazing on it, even were that true. But in most cases it is not true but a mere pretence. Cattle are put on the land mysteriously at dead of night. Dependents whisper that they belong to the landlord. In the course of the year from one cause or another

the disguise becomes thin. Eventually the people find that they have been humbugged and that the cattle belonged to graziers. These few examples sufficiently illustrate a policy which varies according to circumstances and is the response to the people's conciliation.

The people taking stock of the various ways in which their conciliation is reciprocated, see that those tricks render futile the statutory provisions for releasing the surplus land for them, that their numbers and power decrease below the minimum limit for a successful effort, and that they themselves must emigrate unless they devise some general ban to solve uniformly all the tricks and difficulties and make the land available in accordance with the law. Countless groups of people have tried resolutions, petitions, memorials, letters, deputations, prayers, notices, and every conceivable form of conciliation within the law, and in the end found that they had been only wasting their time, giving emigration more time to do its work, and exposing themselves to insult and contempt. Monopolists, like the British Government, of which they are the garrison, are as deaf as that institution to reason and to prayer from the Irish people. As a rule, conciliatory methods fail unless supported, actively or potentially, by the driving force which leaves the land derelict. Hence now people who are in earnest in desiring results take care to provide themselves with that force. In the early stages conciliatory methods served some purpose. They made the prevalent want and desire for land as well known to the monopolists as to the people themselves. They have made it impossible for anyone ever to say that conciliatory methods had not been tried exhaustively. They were just, mild, amiable, and for a time honourable; but only for a time. They ceased to be honourable, or manly, or useful, and became distinctly injurious when men acting consciously against the people's interest traded upon their credulity and had the bad taste and imprudence to point the finger of scorn at the landless

people as cowardly beggars. This from a hostile press would have smarted, but could never have wounded so deeply. When that was the response, it was clear that conciliation was only on the people's side and meant abandoning their rights, handing in their arms, and flying from the field to regret in vain an opportunity wasted. After the experience of five years under the Act of 1903, no rational man now believes that conciliatory methods could ever get the land for the people. Their position was that of men whose hands had been tied by themselves. The rewards of conciliation were disappointment and insult. Such audacity on the part of a public enemy was enough to make people's blood boil. There are occasions when it is wholesome to make people's blood boil; and this proved to be one of them. Insult kindled in the people's souls the latent spark of manhood, without which human progress is impossible. They found conciliation to be as deceptive locally as it is de-nationalising generally. They learned that the land cannot be got for the people without a fight by the people. Reason and persuasion and prayer having failed, the people were forced to learn the superior efficacy of a good bit of hazel. They remembered the legend that it was not by parleying but with hazel that Saint Patrick banished the snakes out of Ireland; and that it was an example which no Irishman might be ashamed to follow. The landlords and ranchers by spurning conciliation brought upon themselves the policy of hazel. Here and there some timid people still in the meshes of conciliation and sending notices ask: will the ranchers heed the notices? They will heed the notices. They will be delighted to get the notices, and will proceed with their ranching business as before, knowing perfectly well that people who give notices, at this time of day do not mean business, want some sort of excuse for doing nothing effective, and will not disturb ranch cattle. Notices indeed! The Act of 1903, by which even the British Parliament provided means for

restoring the land to the people, was a statutory notice to every landlord and rancher and grabber ; and any man who, in contempt of that notice, continues to stand another day between the people and the land that ought to be theirs is their deliberate enemy. Beyond that notice, an hour's notice would be too much to give one of them.

XI.—AGITATION

CONCILIATION being ineffective and vain, the British Government and Irish landlords being deaf to reason and to entreaty, another policy must be tried if progress is to be made. The Irish people naturally dislike agitation. Almost every Irish man and woman knows that, and feels the dislike. Other persons who have long been accustomed to adopt inventions regarding us, instead of forming opinions upon knowledge, may be surprised at this assertion. Actual acquaintance is the best cure for ignorance, but for many that may be out of reach. Our alleged love of agitation for its own sake is the most baseless of myths.

Agitation, like war, has no inherent value ; it can never be an end in itself, but only a means to one, should never be resorted to without adequate cause, and should never extend in time or space beyond that cause. It is vulgar and bad, wasteful of time and of energy, and demoralising. On the other hand, none but a fanatic or hireling of the existing system would suggest that either war or agitation is always criminal or vicious. As war, to which all the faults belong in the highest degree, nevertheless sometimes becomes a duty, so also, and more frequently, does agitation. If the sufferings of the people are not sufficient to justify war ; or if by agitation war can be averted ; or if, though the sufferings are sufficient, the people are unable to wage war successfully, agitation becomes a duty, and for the consequences the wrong-doers are to blame and not the agitators. In circumstances such as these, agitation is the shield of the just, the arm of the weak, a social purifier. It is evidence of a wrong generally felt, which should have been prevented and ought to be redressed ; and it is inspired and

sustained by the unselfish idea of obtaining general redress in preference to personal or sectional revenge upon wrong-doers. When an Englishman asks impatiently why cannot agitation cease in Ireland, he may very properly be referred for an answer to the Hague Conference. He may profitably reflect, too, that so long as the cause justifying agitation is not removed, the alternative to agitation might not be so agreeable to him. As there can be no general and persistent agitation without just cause, it follows that those who inspire and incite to agitation are public benefactors. Persistent popular agitation invariably evidences a general and continuous wrong and represents a real popular will. This is precisely what a true constitutional government represents. To prevent general wrong and redress it, if it has been allowed to grow, is the duty of government. Hence a government, to be constitutional and to be wise, would not be hostile to general and persistent agitation, but only anxious to ascertain its cause and respond to it with the utmost promptitude. There is no instance in history in which responsible constitutional government, chosen by the people and answerable to them, has not produced industry, thrift, improved methods and habits, prosperity, diminution of waste, of poverty and of crime, self-reliance, self-respect, contentment, peace, cessation of agitation, and the stability of the State. These, and such as these, are the things we aim at. Had Ireland constitutional government, that is, the making and administration of her own laws and the free control and disposition of her own resources, one of her first steps would be to end acute agitation by removing its cause, by throwing open every natural and legitimate field of industry and securing the reward to the industrious. This would be a blessing which Ireland has not experienced for centuries except to a very small extent, and for a very short time at the close of the eighteenth century. Though continuous bad government has marred the Irish character in many respects, and left us, in the task of

overtaking our contemporaries, much hard work to do whenever we become free to begin it, still the residue of our people have such a reserve of civic virtue and such recuperative powers that if placed under reasonably fair conditions they might approach in a single generation the highest popular standard in Europe. The absence of constitutional government responsive to the public interest and to matured public opinion fully accounts for the prevalence and persistence of agitation in Ireland without calling in any imaginary national vices. What our necessities demand, what justice demands, even when admitted to be reasonable, is never conceded to reason. It, or so much of it as we can get, has to be extorted by agitation verging upon violence. The reform is then too late either to excite gratitude or effect its purpose. Irreparable harm has been done no less to the character than to the interests of the people. We dislike this intensely, but it is the inevitable consequence of our position.

Ruled as this country is, in the interest of a faction and of officials slightly subject to an alien legislature too remote, too ill-informed and too busy to do more than order the existing law to be enforced, the people have no choice but to submit to injustice and destruction under that law at the hands of that faction and of those officials, or to agitate for change. The necessary change will not come spontaneously, nor for the mere asking, landlords and officials being always prompt to say that no change is necessary except to strengthen their hands. So far from being constitutionally responsive to our necessities, the Government of the day never, even for a change, adopted the only means of proving us wanton agitators, namely, by promptly conceding a demand admittedly just and necessary, and then watching to see if we would still agitate. We have no love of agitation; quite the contrary. Better work awaits us than wasting our lives and energies in strife, if it could be avoided. We earnestly desire, for the best of reasons, to bring agitation to an end, that we may be free to turn whatever talents and

energies we possess to what ought to be normal human effort. This is precisely our reason for resorting to the only way left open to us for at once exposing the slander that we are agitators by choice, and bringing agitation to the speediest possible end by intensifying it and precipitating a crisis. Our experience has been so constantly confirmed as to become an axiom that to keep quiet is to submit to wrong, that merely to appeal and conciliate is to court disappointment, that for us agitation is the price of reform, and no reform can ever be got until that price has been paid. It is surely not our fault that a fight is necessary. But whenever a fight is necessary, whoever fights gently betrays his own cause. Some of the rules of war apply to agitation. Namby pamby procedure is more destructive in the long run than a fierce fight. Given a just cause for agitation, it should be as hot and fierce as the people and their representatives can make it, in order that it may soon be over and done with, that the object of it may be attained, and that the country may settle into a normal condition. Our claim being just, the existence of wrong being our only spur, the desire to have wrong redressed our only motive, and that also being the duty of government, our agitation should never subside but should intensify until its purpose has been accomplished. This purpose is to recover the power essential to progress, the power to choose and set up a government answerable to us and having absolute and exclusive control of Irish laws, resources and affairs. On the agrarian side our purpose, and the only possible end of agrarian agitation in Ireland, is the abolition of landlordism in all its branches, making the land on fair terms the property of the people who want to work it and live by it. When an institution or a system is of such a character as to blight an entire community, to remove it is an urgent common duty of the people in default of government.

As in most prolonged struggles of the poor and weak against the wealthy and strong, in Ireland's struggle humiliating and

embarrassing difficulties spring up ; and not infrequently more harm is done by men in our ranks than by our natural opponents. We have reviewed in the legislation of 1903 a glaring instance of this. A continuing difficulty of a kindred character is the undeniably demoralising effect of Westminster upon some Irishmen who go there and seem to forget the primary and permanent purpose of their mission. I think this purpose is not to make Westminster a home but rather to bring its power over Ireland to an end, and to take such action as is best calculated to produce that result. As advocates of a distinct nationality unjustly submerged and seeking a separate autonomy, our entire attitude in an institution which we repudiate should differ radically from that of British members who have no vital interest at stake, but merely support or oppose from trivial motives minor reforms in a legislature with which they are satisfied and of which they are all proud. What British members call legitimate parliamentary action, and what is correct for them because it is adequate, is not of itself worth a rush for such a purpose as ours. To lapse into it is to forget, let our opponents forget, and to that extent betray, the purpose of our mission. So long as Westminster attempts to legislate for Ireland, we may usefully correct its infinite capacity for mischief and help to fit its efforts to our needs and to the due recognition of facts accomplished in Ireland by agitation. Apart from beneficial legislation, our attitude and policy, to be logical and to be useful, should be invariably those of men in a hostile camp. This would mean permanent and irreconcilable opposition ; real, not sham independence ; inexhaustibleness of resource, sleepless vigilance, prompt and remorseless action measuring its usefulness by the damage it inflicted, the discredit it brought upon the institution, the chaos it created ; thorough disregard of British parliamentary conventions ; learning the absurd rules and ceremonies, if at all, only to play the game of obstruction and trouble more effectively and make the incompetence of the

institution to legislate promptly and well for any country more manifest than it is. This attitude and policy would be real parliamentary agitation and would be recognised as logical by the mass of British members who at present have but a faint idea that we represent a separate nationality; and by intensifying and exposing the incompetence of a conglomerate Parliament to deal with matters personal, local, imperial and universal, it would hasten the dissolution of the partnership and the liberating of each country to legislate for itself. To become in parliamentary attitude and action indistinguishable from British members; to learn rules, as is now done, for the purpose of respecting them; to help, as we have actually done, in making them more efficient for British purposes; to talk and write with reverential air arrant twaddle about British institutions, personages, customs and precedents; to busy ourselves more about reforming the British House of Lords and regulating Dublin Castle patronage than about Irish nationality or the condition of our own people; to concede to ministers—our natural opponents—more knowledge of and influence over our purposes and plans than lifelong Nationalists in our own Party possess; to exaggerate the value of reforms of doubtful merit and transfer credit for them from the people who won them to the British Parliament; to look askance at a colleague who dislikes all this and whose distrust of the British Parliament is unchangeable; to perpetually inculcate among the Irish people hope and confidence in what that Parliament will do “next session” and again and again “next session”; to magnify “virtual promises” and vague generalities of British Ministers as meaning all that we mean; to make it a sort of treason in Ireland itself to cough except by parliamentary methods; all this pagan idolatry of institutions and rules that are foreign and in effect hostile is what I refer to as demoralization, and is clearly not parliamentary agitation in any real sense. Put forward as the political faith and practice of an individual or two, this West British cult might be let pass

with no attention except contempt. It is the presumption of putting it forward, without a particle of legitimate authority, as the faith and practice of the whole Irish Party, and by various subtle innuendos and the help of a subsidised press making blind support of it a test of loyalty to Ireland, that alters its character, causes the mischief in England and in Ireland, amounts to a tacit abandonment of our true national attitude, diminishes our power at Westminster to the point of impotence, accounts for our disappointments and the continued sufferings of our country and people, and exposes us to just, caustic and damaging criticism.

It is not without significance that some of the most assiduous admirers of Westminster are of least use to Ireland there, give no help to agitation in Ireland, and most dogmatically resent any suggestion that they should either withdraw from Westminster or change their tactics in it. To be a Nationalist, one must regard alien rule as a species of slavery, a wrong and an insult, manifest restless impatience of it, test the value of all political action by its bearing on the cause of legislative independence, and regard the proposition of withdrawal from Westminster as a legitimate matter for free discussion. Withdrawal of an individual could have no political effect. Withdrawal of the whole or a portion of the Party *en masse* for active agitation in Ireland in pursuance of a decision of the Party or of a Convention, which we would be bound to obey, would be consistent with an independent National attitude. Half the members of the Party as active as they could be in Ireland, even twenty members devoting themselves with full vigour and without remorse to the consistent and necessary work of making alien rule difficult and contemptible, would have more success in six months than all the incense of adulation that could be burned at Westminster from now until doom's day. Who will deny that Lords and Commons would infinitely prefer having us at Westminster burning incense to

themselves and their institutions? No one. In any such arrangement, it is not the incense-burners who should be left at Westminster. They should rather be sent abroad for change of air to Ireland, where the Nationalist body would have a useful opportunity of studying them at short range. But in my opinion no power capable of being at any time turned to our advantage or to the disadvantage of our opponents, should be surrendered. We should retain, pending legislative independence, our power of returning to Westminster at such times and in such numbers as a consistent policy of independent opposition should dictate. It is possible for Irish Nationalists, but not for West British politicians, to render true and useful service to Ireland at Westminster, both in ordinary times and during the passage of a Bill which agitation in Ireland has substantially won.

For earnest men, the possibilities of conciliation at Westminster have been long since exhausted. We have tried there the force of reason and appeal, the recognised constitutional methods of getting wrongs redressed and reforms made. We have tried them so often that no one can ever accuse us of not having tried them often enough. We have tried them until British members, bored with our perpetual grievances, walked out of the House and left us addressing to empty benches the urgent complaints of our dying nation. It is difficult to understand a man who has had this humiliating experience asking the Irish people to still have confidence in Westminster, and telling them dogmatically, as has been done in the public press, that for legislative independence, and even minor substantial reforms, they must wait until he, and such as he, have converted the English and reformed the House of Lords! A Nationalist, remembering the different language of the Volunteers and of the Land League, is rather inclined to ask, how long do British Ministers expect us to continue whining in vain, and how long will the Irish people submit to the ignominy

and injury of misrepresentation. We must not forget—we should be false to our trust if we fail to remember—in dealing with a nation which has never kept its plighted word to us, that any confidence whatever in England or in English institutions or personages always relaxes our energy and diminishes our strength, that if a British Minister meant what we mean, legislative independence, he could say it as easily as we do; that to accept, instead of the substance, “virtual promises,” which he will in due time repudiate, is to surrender our arms and our cause and disappoint our people; and that the failure of British official Liberals when in power to practise their own principles and redress admitted wrongs, must be credited to want of will, and more than justifies the Irish people in turning away in disgust, taking their own business so far as possible into their own hands, and discharging for themselves, by any means within their power and within morality, that primary duty of self-preservation which the neglect of a so-called constitutional government imposes upon them.

When a free people having a Parliament of their own sometimes find it necessary to agitate strongly, for a people having no such home legislature, popular agitation is the breath of their nostrils, essential if they are to live. The accomplishing of facts by agitation in Ireland is as essential to beneficial legislation as the catching of a hare is to cooking it. It is primarily in Ireland, and in Parliament only in a secondary sense, that the battle for legislative independence and for every other reform has to be fought and won. The numerous admissions of statesmen to this effect, and the verdict of history, confirm our constant and unvarying experience. The measure of liberty won in 1782 was unquestionably due to the Volunteers; Catholic Emancipation to Wellington's fear of O'Connell and revolution; the abolition of direct tithes to the Tithe War; the disestablishment of the Church to Fenianism; the Land Act of 1881 to the Land League; that of 1887 to the Plan of Cam-

paign. Every step in our slow progress has been preceded by and measured by the intensity of agitation in Ireland ; followed, it may be, by independent assertion of nationhood and of manhood at Westminster, but retarded and minimised—certainly never helped—by superstitious respect for English institutions and rules.

Whoever may question the necessity for popular agitation on other subjects, very few will venture to do so in relation to land which is our present concern. This is also the subject on which agitation can most easily be made irresistible. To the minds of Englishmen the Irish land problem is insoluble. Twenty enthusiastic and determined members of Parliament rousing and guiding the people in Ireland would solve it in less than twelve months. They might, of course, bring coercion upon the country, or “ordinary law,” just as unconstitutional ; but this is in Ireland one of the recognised forms of legislative parturition. Official Liberals being too cowardly to hang us for political action, their coercion is preferable to the wrongs we want ended, would be more discreditable to them than injurious to us, and would be borne lightly as a cheap prelude to victory.

Not the learned alone, but simple people occasionally ask fundamental questions. Was Ireland made for the Irish people or only for a handful of ingrate monopolists? In 1903 the British Parliament gave a tardy and inoperative answer in favour of the people. The section of the agrarian agitation known as the anti-ranching movement has, in addition to its inherent moral strength, this legal justification—that its object is largely to make the existing law operate. We are not concerned with the secret motives of statesmen in enacting provisions for distributing untenanted land among people in need of it, and then secretly preventing the operation of those provisions. Those provisions may have served the statesmen’s purpose in helping the passage of the operative provisions

favourable to the monopolists. The people want to make their ostensible purpose their real one by making them operate. As the people have been put off those lands with a strong hand, so they must be put back with as strong a hand as may be necessary to accomplish that blessed work of restoration. If the Government apply a strong hand in this sense, as is their duty to do, well and good. If they fail in that duty, the work must be done nevertheless. That land is worth an effort if ever land was. Freedom is worth an effort. No people can be free unless they possess the land. Moral heirs of the disinherited who would fly from that land without an effort would certainly be unworthy of it and of freedom, and would never get either. Owners and ranchers who are breaking the spirit of the law would do well to remember in time that the docility of the Irish people may decrease with their numbers. They have been expelled in millions that bullocks might browse over the ruins of their homes. Whether those who remain will allow themselves to be sacrificed, is tantamount to asking whether the instincts of manhood and self-preservation are wholly dead within them. They feel, and with good reason, that for most of them personally, as for the Irish nation, their last hour has come. Driven to their last ditch, left no alternative but to stop the blighting system or succumb to its blight, they start from the craven submission to wrong which lifelong familiarity has bred and which conciliators would prolong indefinitely. Their conscience asks them, while they still have power, will they not turn and rend the demon that destroys them? Knowing that they have power to settle the land question at least without any foreign help, that it will never be settled satisfactorily except by themselves, that if they do not settle it they need never talk of settling anything, and that it is emphatically the greatest question for them, and one of the greatest for the entire country; they give the answer which, to be men, they should give. The general industrial community

will bless and help the agitation, because (1) the existence of the law justifies it ; (2) it aims at the most vulnerable and indefensible part of landlordism, where richest fruit awaits smallest effort ; and (3) the wrenching of these lands from the spoiler would precipitate the complete destruction of the system and give town and country an opportunity of starting free upon a new career.

This agitation is impersonal, against the system rather than against individuals. Those advising it have all along tried to spare the smaller men who have been seduced by circumstances into the slothful ranching business and to give them every opportunity of getting out of it without loss, on the understanding that they would help the movement and thus incidentally qualify for some of the spoil. A considerable number of them, seeing that the success of this movement would be their salvation, have adopted the advice and thrown up the eleven months' grass. As this encourages others to do the same, it is valuable help in bringing the doomed system speedily to an end, and is the most effective step those men can take towards getting adequate farms permanently for themselves. But one of the most salutary results of this agitation is to put the real ranchers or gamblers in large areas, and their abettors, completely outside the pale of Nationalism, in the same category with evictors, grabbers, bailiffs, informers, and other inveterate enemies of the people. They see nothing in this movement but a spoiling of their game, and they hate it and all engaged in it accordingly. Some of them of the shoneen class are stupid enough to make themselves personally obnoxious by sending their poor neighbours to jail and seeking vindictive compensation, while other ranchers, hit just as hard, take the wiser course of withdrawing their cattle quietly. Except as a result of special provocation, the agitation has been so far wholly impersonal.

XII.—ORGANISATION

ISOLATED individual action is worse than impotent as a means of effecting reform. An individual sufferer either takes no action or acts without guidance or restraint, and frequently sacrifices himself. For a general common purpose, common, united and persistent action is essential. When a number of people have combined to effect a change, well-chosen individual cases in which to put forth their united strength may be of the utmost value. Continuous combination can be had only by organisation. The landlords are always organised ; and, what is more important, they always have at their back the machinery of government, the greatest organisation of all, maintained at the public expense. Since the people's enemies are organised, why not the people themselves? The man is unfit to take part in government who has not learned that it is irrational and dangerous to attempt to suppress organised agitation, or, as the phrase is, to "drive it beneath the surface." Where continuous palpable wrong is being suffered, a government remote and hostile or at best indifferent, and no public organisation to inspire hope of redress by joint action, there is a natural danger of secret societies and of individual action of such a character as the people in public organisation would not sanction. It is no matter of theory but of common experience in Ireland that when and where the people are best organised there is least ordinary isolated crime, and that when and where they are not organised there is most crime. Partisans by calling the acts of a popular organisation crimes, and the organisation itself a continuing crime, can easily make the balance appear the other way ; but even they must admit, because statistics put it beyond ques-

tion, that apart from the particular class of acts which the organisation sanctions and which the people hold to be morally defensible, acts of recognised criminality diminish almost to vanishing point. An effective organisation possesses more than the aggregate power of its individual members, with little of their vices or weaknesses. Since it must be obvious that large numbers of people residing far apart do not at the same time undertake the same troublesome task without some common and adequate cause, to assume without investigation that they are all criminals, as is the Castle and anti-Irish practice, is not statesmanship but criminal despotism. Statesmen have no business forgetting that human endurance has limits in Ireland as well as in England. The first duty in such circumstances is to ascertain from the organisation itself its cause and object, and have the question whether the object is just, impartially examined.

The ideal political organisation would be one comprehensive national body for all political purposes, national and local; because, given harmony, power increases with numbers, and the peculiar virtues and instruments of each added group could be combined for one common object or, according to circumstances, concentrated on any particular item in the joint programme. To this end, the organisation should make a double appeal—patriotic and social—in order to attract different classes of men. It should promote actively the national movement for legislative independence and also whatever minor or local reforms are most urgently needed by the persons expected to become members. By some—and they are not all of narrow view either—its honesty in large affairs will be judged by its earnestness and activity in small affairs. Some who join primarily for the small affairs, will, when once in, co-operate as eagerly as any other in the larger projects and in those not directly affecting themselves. If a local branch of an organisation engages in practical action on any matter of local interest

involving public principle, the people, seeing that it means business, join it and give it vitality and force for that business and for the whole range of national effort. A branch made strong by successful local effort attracts new members, gains prestige, and is best able to render help to the national movement.

The constitution and programme of the United Irish League are designed, however imperfectly, to engage the activities of the entire Irish Nationalist population in promoting the common national and the respective minor and local purposes concurrently and by the help of each other. The Irish Parliamentary Party is its theoretical instrument for action in the legislature, and according to some in Ireland also. As the constitution of the League is so elastic that branches may legitimately specialise and devote their attention largely to whatever item on the programme concerns most of their respective members, being, for example, a land league in one place, a labour league in another, and a town tenants' league in a third, provided only they are faithful to the national cause, a genuine branch ought to exist in every rural parish and city ward, and every Nationalist ought to be a member. Since for many reasons, good, bad and indifferent, this ideal is rarely attained, any organisation working honestly to promote the national movement and to ameliorate the condition of any section of the industrial community deserves the support of every man claiming to be a Nationalist.

The first essential to the success of an organisation is that those conducting it should inspire public confidence in their honesty. Conversely, of all the forces that turn people away from an organisation and defeat its purpose by sowing distrust, apathy, cynicism, rival organisations, and secret societies, insincerity of those conducting it is the most prolific.

Confining ourselves to the local and rural parts of an organisation : in the country the working farmers, both purchasers and tenants, their sons, labourers, cottagers, and any

mechanics that remain, are the people whose condition most needs amelioration and who on that account should work the local branch and form the bulk of its members. They should hold regular meetings weekly or fortnightly to discuss national and local affairs that concern them, collect and deal with facts relating to their condition, take prompt action whenever a blow can be struck in their interest, and send reports of their meetings to as many newspapers as will publish them, in order to stimulate the people of other districts, spread the organisation, and make it an instrument efficient and powerful, respected and trusted by the people and feared by their enemies. That is what I mean by a genuine branch. As soon as it has given proof of its sincerity by some actual work, all the men of public spirit in the parish, old and young, will like to join it. Such a branch never has to dun people for money for any purpose. Even the poorest regard it as a point of honour to give contributions voluntarily for any purpose for which such a branch requires money.

Whether a branch is to be genuine or sham, useful and creditable or injurious and shameful, depends upon the officers appointed to work it. The mass of the people everywhere are perfectly sound when properly treated. It is because they are sound and decent they refuse to join an organisation managed by persons neither sound nor decent. If officers of a branch have a private axe to grind, a secret interest in maintaining a local wrong which it is the legitimate business and duty of a branch to attack ; still more, if to ward off such an attack was the very purpose for which they formed or captured the branch ; then the best material for a genuine branch will not join this one, or if already members will walk out *en masse* in disgust as I have known them to do, leaving the thing calling itself a branch nothing but a contemptible instrument of corruption, misrepresentation, and weakness to the national forces. From the time a public organisation is first founded wily persons

whose interest it may affect are on the alert to keep it off if they can, and failing that, to join it when it comes into their parish, to get some creatures of theirs to join it for their purposes ; and in some cases they introduce it themselves in order that they may more effectually neutralize it from within and guard their own interests. By simply putting themselves forward as promoters before the branch has taken organic form they may get themselves or their creatures appointed as officers, or by similar contrivances they may capture an existing branch. Their interests are thus secured. For the legitimate purpose of the organisation, for the use of the people, it were better if that kind of branch did not exist.

To form a good branch and maintain its genuine character and its efficiency, the essential condition is that honest men who really desire the reforms at which the organisation aims and have no conflicting interest should be appointed on the formation of the branch as officers to work the branch and delegates to represent it, and that either the same or other men of the same stamp should be appointed to those positions at each succeeding reorganisation. In simple cases in which men of that stamp are the only men available, it matters little to the branch itself how they are appointed. But for the sake of maintaining a common rule it matters considerably ; and the common rule is, to elect officers and delegates *by ballot*. There is danger of interested persons appointing themselves or getting nominees appointed, and then, by making it appear bad taste to unseat them, getting them re-appointed "unanimously" year after year, ostensibly in proof of "unity," but really because they have kept and mean to continue keeping the branch inert and useless. Open selection subject to personal influence is no election at all. On principle, no branch should practice such a method, no matter how invariably good its own men may be ; and no decent man should accept a position in any branch of an organisation unless elected to it by the ballot vote of his

fellow members, which is the only free vote. Accepting a position in any other way shows that a man has not confidence that under the protection of the ballot, his fellow members would elect him. The way to form a genuine branch or to make any branch genuine is, before electing officers, to call with due notice a full meeting of the members and of all eligible people who are willing to join, to enrol them and see that no one is present but those qualified to vote, to appoint scrutineers of known integrity to count the votes, to supply each member with a slip of blank paper, and to call for nominations for one office at a time. If more than one candidate is proposed for any position let each member write his favourite's name on the slip of paper, fold it and drop it in the hat or box for the purpose. When all have voted let the scrutineers count and report the result to the chairman ; he will then announce the figures and declare the recipient of the majority of votes elected. Branch officers and the delegates to the Divisional Executive—who need not be the same persons—should be elected at the same time and in the same manner, and not at any subsequent snatched or packed meeting, as is too frequently the case. Election by ballot at a full meeting duly announced for that purpose is the only guarantee that the men in whom the members have confidence will be appointed, the only protection against personal influence, and also against subsequent complaints either as to the manner of electing or the working of the branch ; and it is a method so fair and impartial that whoever has a private objection to it will have some difficulty in inventing a plausible pretext for opposing it. There never is a good reason why elections by ballot should be dispensed with. Election by ballot is the system consistently advised from the head-quarters of the League whenever advice was asked during the first six years of the League's existence. It is the constitutional system and has to be resorted to when any serious division in a branch arises for determination. Neglect of this method deprives an election

of all interest, because of all reality. Such neglect becoming general, represents the decay of the organisation.

Knowledge of the rocks is as essential to a pilot as knowledge of the deep channel. To people who want an organisation for real work it is as essential to know what to avoid as what to do. The metaphorical rocks are quite as ugly and as dangerous in their way as those of the pilot. Their ugliness has a use if it helps people to dislike and avoid them.

Naturally the men most dangerous to a popular organisation and to the reforms it should promote are those who, obtaining a good living with little exertion, have no personal need of those reforms, who discouraged and opposed popular organisation until they found it growing strong in spite of them ; until they felt its power ; above all, until they learned that its power and their own could be used more effectually from within the League than from outside to defeat the purposes of the League and of the people ; and who then, without changing their principles or opinions one iota, came into the League whose growth they had failed to prevent, and by virtue of influence conferred upon them for a different purpose, seized control of many branches and of some executives, and now work them to deceive and baffle the poor people. No one in Ireland has any doubt that this is done or by whom. The instances of it are too numerous and too notorious. To anyone else entitled to ask, names and particulars *ad libitum* can be given. A few specimens will illustrate the procedure over a large part of the country.

One of those interested converts first scoffed at the League and did all in his power to prevent the formation of a branch. Failing in that, he afterwards got control of that branch and of two others, and bent his energies towards diverting their attention from the legitimate work of the League. He publicly ridiculed the anti-ranching movement and staked his money on the ranchers' bullocks against the people ; but without telling

the people that he had at the time a number of beasts grazing free on the ranches as a reward for diverting the people's attention from them. He went from house to house sowing the seeds of dissension among the women, because the men refused to listen to him. In his effort to make the three branches factious he only succeeded in paralysing them.

Another who also was, and still is, in receipt of bribe-grass for some beasts on ranches in a place wherein he happened to have temporary influence, naturally wanted no League there. He, of course, was not and is not a Nationalist at all. That did not prevent him, but rather impelled him, on hearing that a genuine branch was about to be formed in the district, to hastily form and affiliate a true ranchers' branch. He still keeps this branch affiliated as the only method of earning the bribe-grass by defending the ranches and defeating the purpose of the League and of the people.

Another went uninvited to a branch that was more active than he wished, entered the room in which a meeting was in progress, and when the actual chairman, with the other members, rose, in token of respect, forced himself into the chair, and there and then, in spite of protests against his indecent conduct, after the young men had walked away in disgust, got himself elected president of the branch, of which he was not even a member. He soon tamed the branch and stopped the good and urgent work for which it had been formed. The man, whoever he may be, whose conduct drives young men out of an open political organisation, is a dangerous kind of man and utterly unfit to be allowed to touch a popular organisation. He is not ashamed now to shed crocodile tears at the danger of the young men whom his conduct drove away joining secret societies. If they do, no one will be astray as to who caused it. To prevent men doing their legitimate work legitimately is to force them to do it illegitimately.

Another, at the request of a landlord, backed by the usual consideration, put himself at the head of a historic branch and soon reduced it to an ignominious condition. He got the people to withdraw from a ranch which they had rendered derelict, and which, but for him, would have been distributed among them before now. The land has since been sold to a rancher, and a sod of it the poor people will never get.

Another condescended to come into the League, not to listen to the people's wants, but to domineer and abuse them for having a League, and to tell them to their faces that all the decent young people emigrate, and that only the cowards and rascals stay in Ireland. As was observed by one of those so addressed, he did not exempt even himself from the latter category. Doubtless that was an oversight. Since he used that gross expression he has got some proof that they are not all cowards who cling to their native land.

Another by desperate plotting got himself elected president of a branch. The first day he occupied the chair he made an attack upon well-known public men, so foul and notoriously false that all the decent men present walked away and have not since returned to the branch. Six or seven sycophants who remained still meet under his presidency, call themselves a branch, and make public parade of their shame and his malice in sending to the newspapers the most mischievous things he can invent. There being in the district urgent work for a real branch to do, a number of young men recently proposed to join, and fully one hundred would join any day, on the condition of being allowed to work the branch according to the will of the majority. It was for no such purpose as theirs the branch had been captured. Some of their subscriptions were accepted, but themselves were all rejected. While it is the elementary duty of a branch to boycott a grabber of a single evicted farm, the bogus branch publicly defends a grabber of forty evicted farms who has not even the poor excuse of

requiring the land for a home, because he uses it as a ranch and resides in a castle twenty miles away from it.

The constitution of the League, as now officially construed, does not allow a second branch to be formed in a parish in which a branch already exists, no matter how bogus the existing branch may be. This construction is very convenient for the ranchers. They find their most effective support in these debauched branches. It is well worth their while to keep such branches in existence and keep them debauched by giving bribe-grass to the most influential men they find willing to take it. By occupying the ground, they prevent the formation of a genuine branch and thus keep trouble away. Last year there was hardly a ranch, probably not one, in Connaught or Leinster on which bribe-grass was not given to somebody for purposes of corruption. But the most sinister purpose of those who debauch branches is, by depriving decent men of a constitutional medium of action, to make them distrust all prominent men in the movement, lose confidence in constitutional agitation, and drift into secret societies or possibly individual acts without collective guidance or restraint. This is a danger of the most serious character. Whoever by his conduct produces such a result incurs a terrible responsibility to God and to his country. Not to him, certainly not to him, is due the absence of crime, but to the better instincts of those whom his petty despotism excludes from what ought to be the people's organisation.

The few members in a bogus branch periodically report themselves as having gone through the solemn farce of electing each other to office "unanimously." Unanimity is their strong point; the secret of it being that there is only one free mind present, the people keeping carefully aloof. So completely eradicated are all notions of freedom and honesty that unvarying unanimity year after year in the stale farce, a sure sign of the extinction of liberty and the unquestioned supremacy of one

man or clique, is actually paraded as a virtue, if not an idol. Bogus branches are also prodigal of votes of confidence and of censure, without producing any noticeable effect or getting any heed. By constantly passing votes of "confidence in the Irish Party" *a propos* of nothing, they have brought that phrase to the level of a byword, and they do their little best to create the impression that the Party is permanently on the defensive and *in articulo mortis*. Of course with their powerful help we become invincible. They are also strong advocates of "unity among leaders;" but will on no account permit unity of the people in their own districts—except outside the branches. Having forfeited all claim to the people's shillings, they endeavour to maintain their status at headquarters by collecting from ranchers and Unionists for the Parliamentary Fund.

The common purpose of those who debauch branches is to check and discredit the national movement and all democratic progress. The special purpose varies with the part of the country. In the ranching districts it is always to promote the interests of the ranchers, who are themselves now utterly discredited and silenced. The ranchers are not defended openly. A few creatures in a room might listen, but the outside public would use their reason. The plan is to assail, ostensibly on other grounds, it does not matter how false the grounds are, whoever is most active in the anti-ranching movement, and to assume an air of high political orthodoxy and inspiration from headquarters. This left unrepudiated spreads distrust like a disease. There is usually no Nationalist in such a branch; and those who sustain and use it for their purposes will do so only while their purposes can be served in that way.

Another function of bogus branches is to circulate, with a false appearance of Nationalist approval, every tricky invention of the ranchers, evictors, and Dublin Castle; such as the wonderful potency of conciliation, the eagerness of owners to sell, and of graziers to surrender if the people would only keep

quiet ; the unwisdom of cattle-driving ; the vindictive damages and cost of extra police, and, above all, the difficulties of the British Treasury. Their hearts melt with sympathy for the poor British Treasury. There is nothing too false, too absurd, or too mischievous for bogus branches to do. They never explain why those good landlords and ranchers did not sell or surrender during the long years of conciliation. They never explain that the true way to bring vindictive damages to an end and make extra police unnecessary is to restore the land to the people. They never explain that if the British Treasury suffers from anything, it must be gluttony, since we are now paying into it about four million pounds a year more than fair taxation and that all the land in Ireland could be paid for three times over out of the accumulated plunder without exhausting it.

While utterly powerless for good, these bogus branches are capable of much mischief. Every one of them has six delegates, appointed by the president, present at every Executive meeting to do whatever may be the work required in the ranching interest and to thwart delegates from genuine branches. No Executives in Ireland are so lavishly bepraised as those constituted in this manner. They are called democratic and representative by the very men for whose personal benefit they are corrupted and made utterly undemocratic and unrepresentative. The Annual Grand Muster of delegates from bogus branches takes place at the meeting for election of Executive officers. Care is taken to have this meeting held in the ranchers' stronghold, with a consequent certainty of having a full attendance of stalwarts to secure that none but friends of the ranchers shall be elected. So exclusive are they on this point, so determined not to be balked by constitution or shame, or any such nonsense, that though there may be twenty branches of the League in the parliamentary division, all the Executive offices are carefully given year after year to members of one branch, and that the chief ranchers' branch, the affiliation fee of which

is commonly paid by one man who is not a Nationalist. If this man happens to have financial control of a local newspaper, he is not alone able to bring about this result, but when accomplished to extol it as a triumph of patriotism, an edifying example of unanimity ; and for the rest of the year the people's organisation is his pliant tool.

A still greater occasion for bogus branches and a bogus Executive, the greatest in the whole range of their activity, is the Electoral Convention for the selection of a parliamentary candidate. So great is this occasion recognised to be that branches are specially formed for it, so much more bogus than any yet described that they have no existence apart from a parliamentary election. The Electoral Convention, ostensibly invented in the popular interest, and for which a democratic and representative character is claimed, has become the most brazen imposture of modern times. It is constituted largely of non-Nationalists who from one parliamentary election to another never make any pretence of being Nationalists or of helping the people in any way, but who at an Electoral Convention, fittingly take charge of delegates from bogus branches and of weak delegates whom they have induced other branches to appoint *ad hoc*, and at the head of this force decide which of the rival candidates is to become a member of the Irish Party and of the British Parliament. At the last general election, in an instance within my personal knowledge, there was a brilliant illustration of the true character of those "Nationalist" Conventions, and of the complete ignorance of, and indifference to National feeling and popular right. A "delegate" entered the hall, ignored the constitutional president there present, took the chair himself without having been invited or voted to it, and called upon the delegates to elect his favourite "as a member of the Liberal Party"! He repeated this expression three times, in spite of a prompter at his shoulder. His favourite was accordingly "elected," and, as became "a member of the Liberal Party,"

hurried off to London to resume his place in the National Liberal Club. It has become quite a common thing on such occasions for the whole people of a parish to favour one candidate, while their six delegates at the Convention vote for and secure the election of his rival, and this result applauded in a so-called Nationalist Press as a triumph of popular organisation, unity and discipline, while local men are smarting under what they know to be a triumph of corruption and trickery. Does anyone seriously imagine that this is the way to strengthen the organisation or the Irish Party, or to inspire the people with confidence? The scandal has become so notorious that in a couple of instances the wire-pullers have had to acknowledge their guilt by withdrawing their nominee after his selection by a bogus Convention. The issue as a rule being less satisfactory, these Conventions as now constituted are so much discredited that unless radically reformed they will be practically abolished by decent men refusing to submit to them. Since a Convention dominated by delegates from bogus branches, led by anti-Nationalists is manifestly corrupt and not National, to be the favourite candidate of such delegates is *prima facie* evidence of a candidate's corruption and non-Nationalism. A candidate who goes further still and pays money for affiliation of bogus branches or other purposes in order to increase his forces at the Electoral Convention, and wins a seat in Parliament by such means, will not hesitate to take any pledge offered to him. The taking of the present Party pledge, which does not apply any test of nationality by either principle or practice, is quite consistent with any degree of corruption and with any degree of secret antagonism to Irish nationality. On taking that pledge the man so chosen becomes entitled to enter the Irish Party, cannot be excluded from it; as a matter of fact assumes more airs and influence in it than life-long Nationalists do, and on the first opportunity he is promoted to membership of the National Directory of the United Irish League. The presence

of such men in the Party and at the head of the League adequately explains much that would otherwise be inexplicable. Here, I think, we have arrived at the seat of the disease from which Party and Organisation suffer and the real cause of that criticism of which we hear and read such piteous complaints. A pure, and consequently vigorous Organisation and Party, rooted in the confidence and affections of the people by genuine good work on their behalf, would not, czar-like, fear criticism, but would welcome what was fair, despise what was unfair, and go ahead smashing our shackles and doing good for the country.

Such are specimens of the rocks to be encountered in Ireland by reformers seeking to reform by the constitutional method of open popular organisation. To change the metaphor, such is the seamy side of organisation polluted and made anti-popular. Every bogus institution assuming and desecrating a popular name is a standing argument against our liberty. The state of things described raises the haunting question before the conscience of every thinking Nationalist, whether a people not yet able to enfranchise themselves locally; not yet able to keep their organisation pure; and therefore not able to give constitutional methods a fair trial, are capable of winning or holding Liberty or Land by strictly constitutional methods. It is natural for those whose purposes the corruption serves to deny its existence and answer criticism with abuse. Whoever denies the existence of that of which the people are aware is acting wrongly and unwisely, and cannot be surprised when the people withdraw their confidence from him. Men deceive only themselves in asking, why do not the people themselves remedy those things? Even in a city that is difficult. In the open country it is impossible without external help. This help the people expect, and are entitled to expect, from the headquarters of the organisation. Except in a few districts, the disease has not yet reached the point of incurability. But it is spreading, as is the habit of disease, and if

left unremedied will inevitably bring to discredit and ruin the United Irish League, and possibly with it the whole constitutional movement. One remedy is obvious, constitutional, easy, so unassailably fair and so certain to produce far-reaching beneficial results that there is no valid reason for not enforcing it always and universally. That is, the election of all officers and delegates by ballot at a full meeting of each branch duly convened. All I have written proves the necessity of this. All I could write would prove it still more. Election by ballot may not do everything ; but it will do more than all other remedies together, and without it nothing effective is done.

XIII.—THE DOWNS MEETING

TOWARDS the close of 1903, as soon as the Irish public began to see through the fog of praise and desire plain reason regarding the new Act, I began through correspondence and in other small ways then open to me to create and foster an appetite for ranch land, to explain what the Act made possible, how beneficial a distribution of such land would be, that an effort to put it in operation was legitimate and would cost nothing, and so on. Notwithstanding the way the people were pinched in the country and crushed out of it for want of land, so long had they been inured to oppression and to seeing nothing but evictions from good land, it was hard to get them to realise that planting the people back again upon it had really become possible. I spoke on the subject at the small number of meetings my business permitted me to attend. No doubt the interest of some individuals was excited; but the general body of the people looked upon the prospect of getting the good land broken up for them once more as a thing too good to be true. What was worse, some of those who until then had been recognised as popular guides and still claimed that character, had become so enamoured of zones and conciliation that they frowned upon anything that might be distasteful to landlords, as a popular demand for the ranches was certain to be. They never hinted that the Act gave any power in the matter, never alluded to such a thing at all, talked and wrote only about conciliating landlords, while Ireland's best blood and brain and muscle continued to emigrate. One of them frankly told me it was a shame for me to be putting such things into the people's heads. At first it was my project he declared to be beyond the range of possibility. Finding that position no

longer safe, it was only to my method he objected. Later, he has found it necessary to swallow his own words of condemnation, applaud my method, and even seek some credit for having encouraged it, declaring it to have been his own idea all along.

Owing to such causes, a year elapsed before any appreciable number of people could be got to realise that the ranches were within their power. In deference to the doctrine of conciliation, another year had to be wasted preparing and presenting memorials and petitions and exhausting every device that could be suggested under that dispensation. Mainly to this doctrine of one-sided conciliation invented at the Land Conference is due the emigration of the last five years. My constant reflection during that time was, how much we Irish have lost in many periods of our history by excessive quietness, the most potent and destructive of our vices. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when there were nearly ten million people in this land, more than a million and a half of them starved to death, while the corn they had sown and reaped was leaving the country in ship-loads. It is doubtful if any other nation in the world ever committed such an act of national suicide. It is doubtful if it can be matched in history as an act of slavish quietness. Was a great opportunity at the opening of the twentieth century also to be wasted through this fatal vice of quietness? The very same class of people, who in 1847 applauded starving peasants for paying their rents and letting their wives and children die of hunger, were in 1903—4—5—6 loud in praise of conciliation, while emigrant ships were carrying away the best of our people.

In the spring of 1906, I moved for and got Parliament to order the preparation of a Return of all the Untenanted Land in Ireland to enable all public men to see what material existed throughout the country for the relief of congestion, enlarging uneconomic holdings, and checking emigration by offering new holdings to people who without them should emigrate. This was

published later in the form of a blue book. With it and *Thom's Directory* any person can make himself acquainted with the part of the land problem comprised in monopoly and landlessness. In May, while this return was in preparation, the Irish Party was induced, as already explained, to ask for the appointment of the wholly unnecessary Commission of Inquiry on this subject, a request to which the Government gladly acceded for the purpose of delaying reform, as it has ever since succeeded in doing.

Spending August, 1906, in Westmeath, and seeing there, after three years of the "greatest Land Act ever passed," ranchers' cattle still grazing over evicted lands, and young people still emigrating from the neighbouring uneconomic bog holdings for want of land to live upon, while the parts of that Act purporting to have provided for them remained a dead letter, I thought this fact disgraceful to public men, and that something ought to be done. It needed no subtlety to conceive the idea that if ranching could be stopped on a huge tract in the centre of that county, and the land in consequence distributed, a great amount of permanent good would be done and the example would be irresistible. It was, however, plain to anyone aware of the big financial interest involved, supported stealthily by forces alluded to in the preceding chapter, that the enterprise was a dangerous one, and that any single public man undertaking it exposed himself to the most fierce, skilful and unscrupulous opposition, and should count upon the possibility of his going down in that struggle. Now, after this movement has discredited the ranchers and their backers, it is hard to realise the power they then wielded over local Councils, League Executive, local Press, and through these over the general public. They still retain much of the mechanism and wires ; but, unveiled, these are innocuous.

No one embarking in a risky enterprise goes and consults those who are certain to oppose it. Reformers cannot afford

to lay aside common sense. In this particular enterprise there was no chance of success except by getting face to face with a large mass of country people and speaking plainly to them. The more country people could be got together for this purpose the better. I was entitled to invite the people of my own constituency to hear anything I had to say. The business seemed sufficiently important for a county meeting ; of more importance than some for which county meetings have been held. In accordance with the practice of the Irish Party, now not observed towards myself, I went to Dublin on the 31st August, 1906, to ask the co-operation of the late Mr. Donal Sullivan, then member for South Westmeath. On the way I drafted in pencil a circular letter which I proposed should be signed and issued by us both jointly to all branches of the League within about fifteen miles of a central point called the Downs, to which we both agreed, it being near the line dividing our constituencies and also near the ranch already mentioned. Mr. Sullivan took up the idea warmly, made a slight verbal alteration in the circular, and signed it. I then got the circular typed and issued. In it we declared our design on the ranches and invited the branches to send two delegates each to meet us at the Downs, on Sunday, 9th September, to consult as to the best action to take, whether by a great public demonstration or otherwise. All this was in discharge of our public duty, clearly within our public right, and was in a regular manner ; and as the event proved had the approval of the public. Naturally it had not the approval of the ranchers. On the day preceding this preliminary meeting their organ contained severe criticism of my action, but spared Mr. Sullivan.

On Sunday, 9th September, I attended at the Downs with a letter from Mr. Sullivan regretting that the state of his health did not permit him to attend. Delegates were present from most of the branches invited, and a considerable crowd of neighbouring people besides. I spoke briefly, but as strongly

as I have since done on the same subject. The success of the proposed public meeting depended upon the presence of young men in large numbers at it, and their presence would depend upon the note struck at this preliminary meeting. I reminded the people that three years had passed by without result for them since the boasted Act of 1903 was enacted; that the people were still leaving the country while the bullocks roamed over lands which were morally theirs; that the Government instead of doing anything practical had appointed a Commission, nominally to inquire into things everybody knew, but really to delay reform; that if they continued quiet the only change in prospect for Leinster was a change for the worse; that I proposed, with their help, to force the pace; that the evidence I would ask them to furnish to the Commission and to all concerned was evidence which could not be ignored, namely, bullockless ranches and long grass, withered and bleached, uneaten and uncut; and that if they did not put in practice some policy of that sort they might give up the idea of getting the land. My question, whether a great public demonstration at the Downs on Sunday, 14th October, to inaugurate such a policy had their approval, elicited such emphatic approval from the whole crowd as there was no mistaking. Then the accredited delegates from the branches willing to contribute in men and money to the success of the demonstration withdrew with me from the rest of the crowd, and in regular manner appointed an organising committee consisting of two delegates from each branch willing to co-operate, with a treasurer and secretaries, and arranged some of the initial details. Such was the origin of the Downs meeting.

Irishmen who have the happiness of being too young to remember 1879 should read Michael Davitt's charming volume, "The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland." It is a history of the Land League, comprising an account of the celebrated Irish-town meeting in County Mayo, at which the League was

started. The holding of that meeting was bitterly resented and severely condemned by an influential local set, ostensibly on the ground that it was "irregularly convened," but really because it was convened at all, and especially because it proved successful. In proportion as they chuckled with glee while they thought it was going to be a fiasco, their mortification was intense when the people made it historic and the starting point of a semi-revolution which swept the whole country, gave landlordism its first fatal shake, won the Act of 1881, and planted ineradicably in the hearts of the people the idea of the land for the people. A local magnate who thought nothing should be done at Irishtown without his permission, was not consulted, for the simple reason that if consulted he would have forbidden the meeting. For the same reason he was not invited to attend the meeting, nor were those known to share his views. It had to be convened "irregularly" or not convened at all. No one who knows anything of the spirit it evoked and the agitation and reforms to which it led will have any difficulty in condoning whatever technical "irregularity" may have been in the convening.

It is more than a remarkable coincidence; it is a repetition of historical fact, that the principal objection urged against the Downs meeting, at which the anti-ranching movement was inaugurated was that it had been "irregularly convened." In humble and local, no less than in high state affairs, one is constantly struck with the recurring family resemblance between opponents of progress in every generation. In Westmeath it was made clearer than in Mayo, put beyond doubt by the fault-finders themselves, that had they been consulted they would have insisted upon having their own way, in which case there would have been no Downs meeting. But as in the case of Mayo, and as showing the resemblance, whether the Downs meeting was regularly convened or not is not of the smallest practical consequence. It was convened for a good purpose

and was highly successful. For those who wanted the land for the people this was sufficient justification. Those who wanted the land to remain with the monopolists, and the people to continue on the drift, were naturally not satisfied, and they have not yet ceased to complain of the Downs meeting having been held in spite of them.

It has been noted in an earlier chapter how the landlords who criticised the Act of 1881 most severely were the most importunate in getting their friends appointed to administer that Act when passed. It was the only thing that remained open to them to do, and the most effectual mode of defeating the purpose of the Act and preventing the flow of justice to the people. In precisely the same way, the ranchers recognised in the tone of the speech delivered at the preliminary meeting at the Downs, and in the popular temper it generated, a guarantee that the proposed public demonstration, if allowed to be held, would be a very serious affair for them. No project ever irritated themselves and their supporters so much. So completely did they lose their heads that they actually got one of their pet bogus branches to pass and send to the Directory of the League a resolution that I should not be allowed to hold a public meeting in my own constituency without their permission! They moved all their friends who could still pose as Nationalists to leave no stone unturned—first to kill the Downs project and prevent any demonstration; if that failed, to have it held, not in the country near a ranch, but in the Old Jail of Mullingar; if that also failed, to divert the attention of the meeting from the ranches to something else, no matter what; and in any event to minimise the importance of the proposed demonstration.

With a view to killing the project, a gentleman went forthwith to Athlone to endeavour if possible to organise a rival public meeting there on Sunday, 14th October (of the 365 days in the year that was the only one would do), and thence to Dublin,

to enlist the co-operation of the Standing Committee of the United Irish League in organising and magnifying the Athlone meeting and getting Mr. John Redmond to attend it ; the obvious purpose being to so completely overshadow the Downs meeting both in point of numbers and in the Press reports that it would be nowhere, and the ranchers might continue to mock the people. Unfortunately for the ranchers, Mr. Redmond had already been announced for another place on the 14th October, and could not be got to change his arrangement. The next best thing for their purpose was to hold on the 7th the Athlone meeting, for which previously no day would do but the 14th. Accordingly a good deal of money was illegitimately spent and every effort made to bring as many as possible of the Westmeath people to Athlone on the 7th, with a view to diminishing the numbers attending at the Downs on the 14th. It is doubtful if the results at Athlone proved worth the money.

Their second trick—to change the *locus in quo*—though ably played, was easily disposed of. Their elaborate and clever reasoning, that the county town, being also centrally situated, the place to which people were accustomed to come, to which most people would come, in which there was accommodation for horses and for people, was the proper site for a county demonstration—presented an apparently strong case. I answered quietly that they were quite free to hold a meeting where and when they pleased, and to address whoever attended it on any subject they pleased, but that the landless people and I were going to hold an anti-ranching meeting at the Downs on the 14th October, as the delegates had decided. Those of them who had brains knew what this meant. They knew that any counter-meeting in Mullingar would only succeed in exposing their real purpose.

Their third trick was to spoil the Downs meeting which they could not prevent, To this end all means were to be tried ; it did not matter which succeeded. To reverse its purpose and

make it a demonstration in support of ranching is what would have pleased them best, but that was clearly impossible. Seeing the project taken up by the people in a manner indicating that the anti-ranching movement threatened to become a reality and to pass beyond their control, they forced themselves uninvited into meetings of our organising committee and asserted themselves there with the manners congenial to reluctant converts. They sneered in public with unconcealed glee at the prospect of those who insisted upon holding a public meeting in an out-of-the-way place burning their fingers financially. The answer came in cash from twenty-six branches of the League, so that when all the expenses had been duly paid a surplus remained on hands.

They managed to get the organising committee to appoint one of their friends to preside over the public meeting, with the hope of managing it, and to prepare the usual string of inane resolutions for submission. These were of the class never meant to produce any effect. They did not contain a word against the ranching system which was destroying the country and to deal with which the meeting had been called. Confident that the people I wanted to reach were perfectly sound, I gave no more heed to these tricks than the public did ; probably less.

It rained heavily on the days preceding the 14th October, and that day itself was foggy and drizzling throughout, a most discouraging day for travelling in the country. When I reached the Downs shortly before the time of meeting, the crowd looked small, as many were standing in shelter of trees and bushes. So pleased was the gentleman who had been appointed to take the chair at the prospect of the meeting over which he was about to preside failing in point of numbers ; so full of glee at what he hoped would be the people's failure and the ranchers' triumph, and so devoid of both manners and prudence, that he showed the real state of his mind on the ranching question by offensively bidding me look at what I called a county meeting.

But the people, who had been delayed by the state of the roads, came pouring from all directions, and in less than half an hour he was presiding over the largest public meeting held in Westmeath for a generation, larger than any ever held in Mullingar, and consisting of an unprecedented number of young men. The meeting was, in magnitude and spirit, a giant blow to the ranchers and a public rebuke to their backers.

The chairman made a clever speech, part of which might be construed to mean all that I meant or the contrary, as events might prove expedient. The long string of resolutions was read amid cries of "what about the ranches?" There were speeches of the kind usual up to that time. One unlucky orator began what he intended to be a long speech embodying "four reasons why we should get Home Rule"; his ambition being to kill time, and with the help of the mist and approaching night to tire the people out that there might be few to listen to anything I had to say. The poor man soon found he had made a mistake, that it was no longer his pet bogus branch he was addressing but a body of earnest men who had not come there to be humbugged. The voices calling for something about the ranches became so loud and persistent that he was not allowed to develop even the first of his four great reasons, but had to retire crestfallen and it is to be hoped a wiser man. The game of the trimmers was too flagrant to be played successfully before such a vast gathering. It was sternly stopped and it ignominiously failed.

The chairman announced that I would address the meeting. I proposed a plain anti-ranching resolution. The people and I had reached our real business at last. For obvious reasons, I leave to others to tell what I said and how it was taken; and will content myself with saying that I pronounced a death sentence upon the ranching system and announced a plan for its execution which will be the subject of the next chapter.

Whenever a bold policy involving risk is advised, it is easy,

by playing upon the credulity, caution, scruples and other weaknesses of the people, to keep them inactive. Men can do this who have no power to do anything good, and who would not do anything good if they had the power. It has been done, and is being done, under the guise of "unity," "confidence in the Party," and any other virtue that can be simulated to blind the people—just as the devil quotes Scripture for his purpose. Its real purpose is to spare the graziers a little longer, while at the same time preventing unity in the fighting line, where alone earnest Nationalists will or ought to unite. No one who knows the facts or has read this account of the Downs meeting will be surprised to hear that the new policy encountered opposition stronger, more varied, more unscrupulous, and more persistent in the county in which it was proclaimed than in any other ranching county. Elsewhere it had a chance of being put in practice and winning a victory, and consequent prestige to carry it further, without any pre-arranged set being made in advance upon it and its advocate. In Westmeath, men at that time called Nationalists professed themselves favourable to the breaking up of the ranches in order to get hearers, and then assailed the practical policy and its author. Had they really desired to get the ranches broken up, it was open to them to propose an alternative policy and leave mine, for which they were not responsible, to succeed or fail on its merits. Week after week they talked and wrote of a "foolish policy," a "one-man policy," "the policy of an individual," with matter appropriate to these texts. In the result it was fortunate they were unable to afford fair play, because honest country people tore aside the veil and saw in every opponent of the Downs policy an opponent of the people and defender of ranchers. When in October 1907 the Killulagh cattle-drive aroused such enthusiasm as to put it beyond question that the Downs policy was the policy of all real Nationalists, the opponents of the Downs meeting and policy made a grotesque effort to swallow their

previous denunciations and actually to claim credit to themselves for what they had opposed with such persistency.

At length, on the evening of the 19th November, 1906, I obtained in the House of Commons the first available copy of the long - delayed Return of Untenanted Land. Believing that if all the members of the Irish Party, in whose constituencies this return showed untenanted land to exist, met for consultation and then went to Ireland to rouse the people to a sense of their opportunity and duty, the Government would have been forced to pass a good Land Act in 1907, I at once suggested that a special meeting of the Party should be called for this purpose. All the members were then in London and could have been brought together without expense. No meeting was summoned, no general agitation started, the winter was wasted, and in consequence we got no Land Act in 1907.

XIV.—THE DOWNS POLICY—CATTLE-SCATTERING

TO those who, like my present jailor, say, “surely you won’t attempt to advocate or defend cattle-driving,” I answer, Not I. With the people of Ireland it needs no defence, it is more than justified ; and they are the people who ought to know and are entitled to determine. I deny that the people of any other country have either the requisite knowledge or any right to determine. It is the ranching system that stands in need of defence ; but no one with knowledge would undertake that task before an Irish audience.

The idea of scattering things, like that of boycotting, is not original. It is copied from the practice of the evictors. They, with the help of soldiers and police and all the atrocious machinery which class legislation placed in their hands, and with fire and sword, scattered the people in all directions without caring whither they went or what became of them. They were the real authors of cattle-scattering. Humanitarians, distressed at the imaginary sufferings of cattle, are conveniently blind, deaf and dumb to the real sufferings of men, women and children. It is hard for us to understand why, when the landlords were thus scattering the people, the latter did not seem to perceive that scattering was a game at which both sides could play.

I use the word “scattering,” because it was the first epithet applied ; and it correctly conveys the first idea, as it also does the present practice. To drive cattle to their owner’s home was an amiable concession to the scruples of people with tender consciences ; but as might have been expected, it soon became utterly impracticable. As the term “drive” implies order and destination, it is no longer applicable. The general practice

Is the original Downs policy of putting the cattle off a ranch and scattering them as far and in as many directions as possible, not cruelly, as the evictors scattered the people off the same lands, but without any violence whatever to man or beast.

Let whoever questions the morality of the second scattering entitle himself to an answer by showing how the morality of the first can be defended. It may be pleaded that two wrongs do not make a right. There are no two wrongs that can be mentioned in the same breath as such. The wanton evictions carried out by the Irish landlords are the blackest crimes in history. Scattering cattle is less injurious than driving them to a fair; less injurious than many a practical joke. The greatest evil in the Irish social system has got to be removed as quickly as is humanly possible. This ought to be done by law, but is not. It is the duty of government to apply a remedy promptly in such a case. That is the primary purpose for which a government exists. We have no government. Those who take our money for governing us properly know the facts but heed them not. An alien Government acts the part not of doctor but of coroner towards us. Its findings are all late and all wrong. We must die as a nation or act for ourselves. Has a nation, or has it not, the right to save itself from extinction? That is a question which cannot brook delay but must be answered practically. Failure to answer it is national death. Parliament having failed to answer, the people answer. The facts before their eyes leave no room for doubt as to what awaits them. If they are not content to wait for the last of them to be wiped off the face of their own country, one at least of the ways to prevent that is to turn and wipe the cattle off the ranches and keep them off. Those who object to this policy have nothing better to recommend than continued conciliation. How long, pray? Conciliatory methods have had far too long a run and made no impression. By what law are we bound to practise them indefinitely to the extinction of our race?

Human life is limited, and not to succeed in our own time is to fail. Not to discharge our own duty is to be in default. Both our rulers and the monopolists know perfectly well that the continuance of their system furnishes more than justification for actual war to stop it; that war has seldom had a stronger justification; and that the suffering people are extremely moderate when instead of war they only give such gentle exercise to ranch cattle as prevents rheumatism. They apply the homeopathic remedy when they would have been justified in applying the lance. To our case more than to any in the world that recent proposition of Prince von Bulow applies; "neither in peace nor in war can a nation which is fighting for its existence pursue ordinary rules of conduct." We are here dealing not with the ordinary relations of individuals in a settled country subject to its own laws, but with the life-struggle of a nation under deadly laws of alien and irresponsible origin made and administered maliciously in the interest of the Garrison against the Nation. We are dealing with the latest effort of a wrecked nation, after revolution and counter-revolution to recover a foothold in its own territory. We are dealing with a state of things that makes armed revolution always justifiable, given the conditions for success. Englishmen of all parties freely admit that this has been the case in Ireland. How few of them have the honesty and courage to admit that it is the case at present. How consistently the official attitude is maintained of ignoring, denying, refusing until irreparable harm is done and laws in conflict with justice and with human nature have to be broken before they are repealed or amended. The tide of Ireland's lifeblood is ebbing fast. A drastic and immediate remedy is imperatively necessary. A government whose duty it is to find and apply a remedy, ignore the gravity of the disease, want to inquire, want somebody conciliated who is indifferent or perhaps profits by the disease, want to put down agitation, and is probably preparing compliments to pour

upon quiet people in the neighbourhood of ranches who have not taken my advice. All these are patent means of delaying and weakening us with a view to our utter extinction. To deprive people of the hope which this crimeless policy affords, to leave them no prospect of reform in their own country but "the wild justice of revenge" or the crooked ways of secret societies, would bode no good to anybody. The Government having failed, various popular policies are possible. Let those who cry out against this policy take care is there any other so gentle. Before striking the hazel out of the young man's hand, it might be prudent to consider what weapon may take its place. Should the disease be cured by the surgeon's lance or homeopathic exercise? Either may be disagreeable, as cures have a habit of being. The cure is disagreeable to only an insignificant number. The disease is wasting a whole people. A real cure is essentially temporary. The disease has proved a permanent national affliction which increases in malignancy until cured. The disease in this case being voluntary, it is to be hoped, in every good interest, that it will not by wanton persistence make a prolongation of this cure, or the adoption of a more drastic one, necessary. A cure essential to national life must not be rejected for being merely disagreeable to an exceptional few. Observe that this policy is merely disagreeable, and neither injurious nor unjust. Wise landlords are far from feeling all the anger they profess, but are rather grateful that the policy is so much milder than their class deserve, proposing as it does to remove an immeasurable evil by what is little more than tickling. They know that to get the full value of the land, with a *solatium bonum* of twelve per cent. added, is more than they ever expected until the Land Conference, and is a kind of martyrdom which landlords in any other country in the world in which they are would be delighted to suffer. The sufferings of the monopolists and of the cattle are alike purely imaginary.

It is truly wonderful how sensitive the nerves and consciences of some folk become whenever the poor try to get a share of God's bounty to man. These humanitarians have not a word to say of the manner in which the people have been scourged and scattered, but they shrink from homeopathic exercise of beasts, and say we should wait for Parliament to deal with the problem. But for cattle-scattering, those same people would deny that there was any problem. At the very least, cattle-scattering has forced them to acknowledge that there is a problem—the problem of saving the Irish nation. Persons so devoid of humanity as not to be shocked at the evictions of the past and at young people being still driven out of this depleted country to desolation, are not entitled to have their nerves considered when they choose to pretend shock at the harmless scattering of cattle. If their humanity were real, emigration should interest them. But it does not. We know from experience that if cattle-scattering ceased they would again deny there was a problem ; so that, in a sense, they are themselves a cause of cattle-driving. This being so, there is good reason to hope they will survive their nervous shock. A mild case of nerves may be cured by the reflection that there is more violence in an ordinary hare-hunt than in a cattle-drive. Such as that information does not cure may be asked how they would regard, in the exigency of an adequate public crisis, a man's horses taken forcibly from his ploughs and carts and put to much harder work for the public good, and his cattle roasted and eaten on his lawn by the populace. Such things have happened, and have been rightly applauded ; not in Ireland, I regret to say. The conduct of our critics in such an emergency would probably be determined by the side on which they found themselves. Their nervous attacks are due far more to their beloved anti-Irish Press than to anything occurring in Ireland. In letterpress and caricature our Christian neighbours seem to revel in malicious inventions, which they choose to describe as

our doings. For example, we have been represented as abusing milch cows. There is no authentic case of a milch cow having been abused as part of this agitation. The libel will continue to be repeated nevertheless. I have never asked cattle-drivers not to meddle with milch cows or with any kind of dairy cattle, nor do I intend it on returning to the country, for the sufficient reason that it would be an insult to the people who would scorn to commit an offence of that kind. It would certainly be more shocking to them than to the inventors of the libels or their nervous readers. It is stupid on the part of educated men to reveal their own hearts so much by ascribing base crimes to innocent people and apparently wishing that they were guilty. We regret the persistence in the twentieth century of that foul spirit of self-righteousness which stops at nothing calculated to harm a neighbouring people for no better reason than blind political antipathy. These strictures do not apply to Unionist journalists exclusively by any means. Some so-called Liberal journalists of the highest pretensions have manifested the vilest spirit in this matter. The people have neither temptation nor inclination to commit violence or crime, but a strong natural repugnance and strong reasons against any such action. They know their cause to be so just and so generally favoured as to be irresistible if kept crimeless, and that crime alone could thwart or delay it. This natural disposition has all along been strengthened and the people encouraged, on every ground and for every reason, to keep this movement pure. It is to their great credit that in a movement so closely bordering upon violence they have kept it remarkably pure from the blood of man or beast, and that no appreciable wilful injury has been inflicted upon person or property in connection with this agitation. It is extremely doubtful if a popular agitation of this particular kind could be carried on in any other country in such a humane and harmless manner. Some graziers, it is true, have been given punitive damages against the

ratepayers. That was obviously done in the spirit of partisan revenge, which there was not even a decent attempt made to conceal. That spirit has been the curse of Ireland.

The ugliest things done during this agitation are no part of it but have been done to smirch and damage it. Dublin Castle has never been without its secret staff of outrage-mongers, and we did not expect that this movement would escape their attention. Hence from the beginning the people have been warned against this danger. Dublin Castle never has a difficulty in dealing with political opponents. It can pour by special trains at the public expense hundreds of armed men into a peaceful district to terrorise the people and take notes of a public speech. But when an atrocious crime is committed in shelter of a police patrol, as was done last winter in my constituency, and Dublin Castle is publicly challenged to hold an immediate inquiry to clear itself if it can, oh, it has no means of instituting such an inquiry. It is more convenient to asperse the character of innocent people and impose the cost on them. All the Castle-hacks on the judicial bench could not clear Dublin Castle of the guilt.

Few in Ireland are now deceived by official sympathy and compliments. Most people despise them while bearing them with outward composure. What the landless country people watch particularly is—how soon they are going to get the land. Less than that will not do; and they cannot afford to wait either, but must get it at once or move towards the emigrant ship. Why should they sacrifice themselves for the convenience of noble lords and gentlemen who are indifferent and to whom they are under no obligation? The people believe that the **only** way to make it convenient for those grand personages to act is by keeping the ranch cattle in perpetual motion. They know that if they do this, if the grass on the ranches be allowed to grow and ripen and fade on the shank uneaten and uncut, **no** crime is committed, **no** blood is spilled; but the owner,

receiving no income from that land, will be glad to sell it for distribution in order that he may get the price and bonus. A derelict ranch yields no income. Want of income is the crimeless compulsion that will make an owner sell for the value. Want of income is what will bring the land into the market. Long grass without income from it soon sickens an owner. No one can doubt the ability of the people to bring that land into that condition. With skill, ranching can be made quite impossible with little or no risk. Even if men are arrested on the land, no dire consequences can follow, such as eviction. The worst that can happen is a few months' imprisonment—nothing compared with the terrors of the rent office over tenants.

A silly threat has been issued, that no one who takes part in cattle-scattering will be given any portion of the ranch when it comes to be distributed. Many of them want none. Some of the most enthusiastic cattle-drivers, in Leinster as in Connaught, are purchasers of good farms under the Ashbourne Act, and want no land for themselves or for any relative, but are proud to help in repairing the havoc wrought by the monopolists. As a rule, no land will be distributed but that off which the cattle are scattered. Does anyone think cowardly blacklegs would take land released by brave men? No; the offer of a police barrack on every ranch would not make them do it. The Estates Commissioners are an administrative, and not a judicial, body. They have no criminal jurisdiction whatever, cannot even administer an oath, and could not possibly institute or carry out an inquiry as to whether cattle had been scattered or who scattered them. When invoked to protect tenants against rent office duress, they either profess not to understand or refer the victim to the ordinary legal tribunals. A certain landlord whose ranch had been cleared and rendered useless by the people around it, decided to sell it. An officious person raised the objection that the people had driven the cattle off.

This the landlord denied. The land being such as the Act directs the Commissioners to deal with, they had no option but to buy and distribute it. The vendor has got his price and bonus, the people have got the land, the law has been carried out, and nobody is injured. The threat is on every ground perfectly idle. In the best of circumstances, one of the most serious dangers incidental to an extensive sale of land is a land boom. Cattle-driving mitigates this danger and keeps the price of land somewhere near the value.

When Parliament has provided a great opportunity for reversing the policy of eviction and devastation, and when the people are supplying the driving power to give practical effect to the intentions of Parliament, local Councils representing the ratepayers who have to bear part of the cost of land to whomsoever sold, ought to claim and acquire and exercise some effective control over the distribution of untenanted land in their respective districts.

Until quite recently self-styled statesmen talked with their heads in the clouds about breaking up ranches and relieving congestion "in the West," ignoring the ranches in Leinster and the people in need of them. Why? They had official knowledge accessible to everybody that there are ranches in Leinster and people in need of them. The Return of Untenanted Land shows an abundance of it in the best parts of Leinster. According to *Thom's Directory* for 1908, the uneconomic holdings in Connaught at or under £4 valuation number 100,248; and those over £4 and less than £12 number 57,438; being a total of 157,686 uneconomic holdings requiring enlargement in Connaught. According to the same authority, the uneconomic holdings in Leinster under £4 valuation number 107,940; and those over £4 and less than £12 number 48,139; being a total of 156,079 uneconomic holdings needing enlargement in Leinster. If impartial justice, the relief of urgent necessity, and the general good of the country were

objects of statesmen, why were these latter to be overlooked? Then, as regards eligible people wholly landless and needing new farms, there are obviously more of them in Leinster than in Connaught. Why was nothing to be done for these people? In parts of Munster, too, a similar state of things exists. Why then have some Nationalists, with knowledge of these facts common to East and West, publicly asked, and English statesmen promised, a Bill only for "the West"? Why should relief generally wanted and equally feasible be restricted to a province and not made applicable to every part of the country where there is a ranch and people in need of its distribution? If the next Land Act extends to the entire country, thanks will in no sense be due to statesmen, to justice, to reason, or to conciliation, but to the fact that the agitation has extended. That, and that alone, makes statesmen modify their plans. Indeed agitation is what makes enlargement of plans possible. The people of Leinster were to be punished for no reason but their quietness. The people of Connaught were to be rewarded because they were active. They had been agitating vigorously while the people of Leinster were only passing resolutions. That is the sole reason why the former were to be relieved while the latter were to be ignored. The people of Connaught began clearing the ranches in April, 1907. The people of Leinster continued passing resolutions and practising conciliation for four months longer. During those four months also, statesmen could see nothing but the "ranches in the West" and "the Western problem." Unfortunate landless people in Leinster trying to live within sight of ranches from which their ancestors had been evicted were contemptuously ignored because they were quiet. A country ghastly to look at, a disgrace to any government pretending to be civilised, with thousands of acres of good land without a human being, while people are huddled together on bogs and swamps, and hilltops; this was to be left in this condition for no better reason than because the people were obeying

the law and doing nothing more serious than passing resolutions. That is the thing called statesmanship in practice in Ireland.

Last August a Meathman told me that it would be impossible to rouse the quiet people of Meath to attack the ranches. Before the end of that month no man in Meath was of that opinion. British statesmen have convenient memories. Forgetting the loss of life, of money, and of prestige inflicted upon them a few years ago by a rural population in South Africa, they thought the landless people of Leinster were too cowardly even to give the bullocks a run, and that such cowards would be unworthy of such land. Activity being clearly the virtue to be rewarded, and quietness the vice to be punished by being ignored, a duty devolved upon the people of Leinster to cease to be quiet and not to allow themselves to be ignored. Their quietness being the only pretext for ignoring them, since they removed it by ceasing to be quiet we hear less about "the Western problem," and more about the distribution of ranches without limitation. It is to be hoped that statesmen, for their own reputation, feel that they have got enough to convince them the problem is a general one and that the present quietness of Leinster is strictly conditional upon a prompt and general solution. The people of Leinster do not fail to observe that although most explicit promises have been made to the Connaught people, those people know so well what it is that makes British promises fructify, they still continue their active policy. The Leinster people know that, if they had continued quiet, statesmen would continue to ignore them; and that for the wider scope of the coming Act thanks are due, not in the least to statesmen but, to the men who cleared the ranches and who are denounced as criminals for so doing. In short, statesmen have been found out.

In justice to statesmen, however, let it be remembered that it would be impossible for them to get a Bill passed through the British Parliament doing more than promoting the distribution of ranches on which the people have stopped ranching, and

leaving untouched every ranch the people have left untouched. The people know that beyond those limits Parliament will not go, and that extending the limits rests with themselves. There is a certain measure of justice in this. People who have courage to assert themselves will get the land. People devoid of that courage do not deserve the land. Should no good Act be passed during the present session, no one need express sympathy in Parliament or in the Press with alleged disheartened country people, for there will be no such people in the country. Politicians may have their reasons for regret; the people will have none. They have discovered a method whereby they can stop ranching and make the ranches fall asunder in a better way than Westminster would consent to do it; and that, too, whether Westminster likes it or not. Let publicists threaten coercion and Edward III. and all the Edwards and Victorias in their armoury; that will only amuse the people, so well taught are they that it is in Ireland the fight for the land, as for most other things, has to be fought and that an outburst of tyranny is the infallible prelude to statutory ratification of popular action. If they dislike this doctrine, they may blame themselves for having taught it so persistently. When we asked other things, this is the lesson they taught us. They must reap what they have sown. We know from experience that in a fight for the land the public will cheerfully supply as much funds as may be necessary, not to waste in legal encounters with the enemy in his own courts, but to sustain the sufferers and indemnify their families.

Some persons at a safe distance say this is a tame policy not requiring any courage, and that it is doubtful if the people are really in earnest in this agitation. Why need doubts exist in a matter in which they can be so easily set at rest? The modest people engaged do not wear paint or feathers and are not dangerous. None of them claim to be heroes or to be other than their simple selves. So far from vieing with the battle-field, it

is not of courage they are thinking. Still, if we remember the combination of animal incentives to fight, which are deliberately brought into play on the battle-field, and their entire absence from a ranch, we may allow that the moral courage of the cattle-drivers is not inconsiderable. It would not prove much courage or sagacity in a critic to doubt the courage and earnestness of the people when you can get forty men in a thinly-populated rural district in quiet Leinster to rise out from their work in cold blood on a week-day and deliberately drive cattle off a ranch in broad day-light with a certainty of consequences. No one who witnessed and took part in such an action, as I have done, could doubt that, with a higher and more inspiring cause and occasion, and apt leaders, just as much courage and determination as might be necessary would be available. No cause of failure would be in those people. Are the guilty ranchers likely to continue their nefarious trade in face of the spirit which such an act proves to prevail? As well might they attempt to withstand the ocean tide. Such an act of insurrection at a time of peace gives hope for Ireland, not alone against the ranching system, but for wider purposes, and would give pause to rulers who had time and courage to be wise. The allegation of selfishness as a motive comes from ignorance or malice. It has no application to cattle-drivers. As already stated, the most enthusiastic drivers, in Leinster as in Connaught, are men who do not want land for themselves or any relative, but deem it a privilege to have an opportunity of helping a movement so unquestionably for the common good. With many of them, too, strong as is the desire to get the land broken up, there is behind it the stronger incentive of striking a blow at alien rule and alien monopoly in Ireland, if indeed these are separable. Comfortable Englishmen occasionally ask, Why this eternal hatred of British rule? They will have a complete answer if they just ask themselves how they would like to be subject to Irish rule? British rule is hateful for

being alien ; doubly hateful for being bad ; trebly hateful for falsely pretending to be Liberal. The zest of striking it increases accordingly.

In such a rough connection one naturally speaks of the bravery of men. But as no account of the Land League movement would be complete or just without recognition of the Ladies' Land League, so no account of the anti-ranching movement would be complete or just which did not acknowledge the services of the women. The greater part of these services being of the ordinary domestic kind, manifesting itself in inspiration, encouragement and hope within the secluded sphere in which feminine influence operates, can never be known, and any appreciation must therefore fall short of a due tribute. In all my experience of public meetings in the country I never knew any watched as the anti-ranching meetings have been with passionate interest by women and girls. They rushed from their houses to the roads and brought children with them to see the people gather for the holy purpose of rescuing the land for the people from the heartless grazier. They waved their hands and handkerchiefs and ribbons to the speakers as they passed. Who with a heart could be indifferent to the tears of mingled hope and anxiety that stood in their eyes, the broken words that gulped in their throats, indicative of hearts bursting with conflicting emotions? A man comfortable in the receipt of five thousand pounds a year of our money may, if he finds it congenial, make of this a subject of sneer and jibe, epigram and mockery, and call his conduct statesmanship. I am not ashamed to regard with reverence those people's modest visions of domestic happiness. They asked themselves, in their own native poetic way, which no outsider can approach, after long travail and bitter sorrow, was this indeed the dawn of an era of justice? Was such a thing still too much to hope for, to rescue the sacred soil of Ireland from the dominance of the beast for human use? Would their men be brave and

constant, their leaders true? Would that they themselves, poor women, could do it all, or something commensurate with their feelings. They read the newspaper reports of anti-ranching proceedings more eagerly if possible than men do. Even servant girls, who never before took any interest in public affairs, have been known to buy newspapers containing this matter and read them at night and on Sundays. Doubt their earnestness! Mock their feelings! What an unknown world peasant life must be to the doubters and mockers. Such is the spirit of the women that in many cases, if the cattle had not been scattered, husbands, sons and brothers would scarcely have been allowed into their own houses, and young men would certainly have lost their sweethearts. Nor did they all confine their action to the domestic circle. I have seen them at what happened at the time to be the most difficult part of a drive, and doing it bravely. For the good which we hope this movement will accomplish a large share of the credit must go to the women. It is said that numerous couples of boys and girls who had been laying their plans for emigration, finding an inspiration in the hazel switch, have postponed their departure indefinitely. And yet it is asked, would I attempt to defend cattle-driving? Not I. Its defence is in every uncorrupted human heart. It is the most truly philanthropic movement of our generation. With all their journalistic backing, the ranchers have failed to get anyone in Ireland to regard cattle-driving as criminal. The first man tilled the soil. The first murderer was a rancher.

XV.—THE RESERVE FORCES

TO doubt that this movement will destroy the ranching system would be to doubt the justice of God and the sanity of the people. In spite of the “sneers” of an Englishman who as I write these words is, at a salary of £5,000 a year of Irish money, holding me and the landless people up to the ridicule of his countrymen, while he has me locked within the walls of a jail—in spite of that apparently crushing combination of facts, it is impossible for me to take other than a confident view at a time when, as recently shown under the public gaze, three thousand men flock to listen to me on any day I appoint in a country so thinly populated that some of them have to travel fifteen miles to my meeting and the same distance home again without train or tram. That enables me to bear salaried sneers complacently. What is more, my meetings consist, to a greater extent than any other public meetings, of young men, many of whom would not travel fifteen yards to hear a cabinet minister. No doubt the cabinet minister will find it more convenient to treat this as a piece of egotism than to test its accuracy in the country he pretends to rule.

Some speak of young men with bitterness as apathetic, cynical, suspicious, and non-National. I always regret to hear such injurious expressions. These same terms are applied, and I believe with equal injustice, to the large number of young men in towns and cities, sons of Nationalist parents, who hold aloof from the present national movement. This extensive estrangement between some leaders, National and local, and the young men whom they are supposed to lead and who will be the Irish nation of to-morrow, would be an interesting study quite apart from its political importance. Local leaders may or may not be indifferent; but for the politician who would achieve any-

thing worth recording there is no fact in Irish life to-day which he can less afford to ignore. In a world in which we see parents, churchmen, moralists, and rival statesmen bending their energies to have the education of youth directed in their own respective ways, there could be little future for a politician who would disregard that source of power or seek only the faults of youth and chide them acrimoniously. The youth of a nation are beyond all question its greatest treasure. It would be stupid to hold that a feeling varying from estrangement to distrust and antipathy has become widespread and deep-seated without cause. Even if the causes were shown to be imaginary or inadequate, that would not dispose of them. Any causes which affect large numbers of the community are political factors, irrespective of their correctness or adequacy. In this case, as in most other cases, there may be some fault on both sides, but there is far more misunderstanding. The existence of a misunderstanding, whether well or ill-founded, creates a duty of dealing with it. Having succeeded within my own range in completely dispelling misunderstanding and evoking the enthusiasm of youth, I am entitled and bound to hold strongly that the same thing is possible in cities and towns as in the country, that the young Ireland growing into manhood and womanhood, though at present standing aloof and in a large measure lost to the national movement, is neither narrow-minded nor selfish, as offensively alleged, but is as patriotic, as sound, and as ready to make efforts and sacrifices as any generation in the past, and that by removing the causes which now seal up their hearts all this latent power and enthusiasm can be made available, not for selfish or local purposes only, but for the whole range of national effort and the highest conception of national duty. There are persons whom a full study of the causes of estrangement and the way in which young men regard things would well repay. A briefer review will suffice for the present purpose.

I do not here refer to any young men who have publicly adopted a political party different from that of the United Irish League. They have to be approached in a manner beyond the scope of the present work. Those to whom I refer are the much larger number, the vast majority of young Irishmen, who are still unattached politically, neither factious, nor mutinous, nor captious, but who spurn leading-strings until satisfied that the leading is honest and in the right direction, and will co-operate harmoniously only on the proper condition of being allowed to think and act in their own way.

A very common criticism of young men is, that they differ from their fathers. Are they necessarily worse for being different? Does no duty lie upon public men to accommodate themselves to the difference? Is it right to assume, and expect them to acknowledge, that they should fit public men, instead of public men fitting them? Again, they are blamed alternately for their silence and for their keen comments. If taciturnity be the fault, may it not be that they think the more? Their keen comments when they do speak suggest that. Though silent, their minds are not stagnant nor are their hearts inert. Notwithstanding their alleged silence, one has little difficulty in knowing when their confidence is won. It is seen in their eyes, noticeable in their whole bearing, proved by their acts. They may lack the exuberance of their fathers. Even if this were not compensated for by other characteristics, who would have a right to complain? If their quiet wishes are respected, they may be confidently relied upon to evince qualities at least as effectively operative as exuberance. They question others, and probably themselves, in a way their fathers may not have done. Their silence is not natural but the result of environment and of the treatment of rulers on one side and leaders on the other. Dealing with youth, whose first idea of national politics is a pure and sacred thing, frankness is the truest wisdom and trust begets trust. They dislike concealment, but their abhorrence

of cant is absolute. It is strong evidence of their worth that the key to their confidence and support is no other than genuine earnestness in matters that concern them. The chief thing that repels them from ordinary political meetings is a positive loathing for such clap-trap as "fighting on the floor of the House" and "steering the barque of Home Rule into College Green." Such vapour, if ever pure, is now tainted beyond endurance. Such buffoonery shows neither thought nor care for the realities of the situation. No bad actor ever was damned so emphatically as the unlucky politician who played that stale part before the young men of the twentieth century. Their disposition is, not to attack the insulter of their intelligence, but to turn away from him and his kind in disgust. Most thinking men will say, thanks be to God! It surely is not desirable that young men should begin life by acting a false part and lying to their own consciences, as they would be doing if they joined a bogus branch and concurred in applauding cant and humbug. When these are the only response to their yearning for lofty ideals, one cannot wonder that their hearts are chilled and that estrangement ensues. Insincerity has done immeasurable mischief and inflicted immeasurable loss upon the national movement by destroying respect and confidence and breeding the distrust which is now extensively in possession. Before we can make much progress, that distrust has got to be removed and confidence re-established—a thing more difficult than to inspire it originally, a thing impossible unless preceded by a courageous and unwavering assertion of truth and a relentless process of purification.

We hear it said, "if those young men had the right spirit in them, the demand for Home Rule would move them." Men who talk so probably have homes. The very phrase, Home Rule, mocks the ears of those who call Ireland their country, but are denied a home in it, and are forced to seek a home and a living in some other country and clime, leaving what

ought to be their homes in the hands of the enemy. Who with a heart capable of appreciating the advantages and happiness of home will withhold sympathy from those who have no home and desire one in their native land? Ireland is their home only until they get means of leaving it. One has only to realise that position to understand the bitterness with which stale clap-trap is resented. Looking upon emigration as their inevitable fate, many of them have hitherto felt precluded as outcasts from taking any practical interest in the land of their birth and love. Their dreams and aspirations for their country have been stifled in their hearts, rudely blasted as soon as conceived, by the bitter reflection that they have been born aliens in their native land, and have no country. They should be either more or less than human if that unnatural position did not generate moroseness and a spirit of criticism and suspicion; but it is intensified when, as days and years pass, Parliament still gabbles, when "tried and true" representatives still proclaim in various forms that all is well or will be made so "next session," and when bogus branches, like so many barrel-organs, turn off for public edification the stock resolutions of confidence, and prevent any practical action of general benefit. No thinking young men who care for independence, manliness or purity stay in such branches or could be asked to join them. And yet their existence, by preventing the formation of genuine branches, neutralises the best men, and leaves them, so far as official Nationalism is concerned, impotent in presence of the dissolution of their race and nation and their own personal destruction. More is scarcely necessary to show why so many of the best Nationalists in Ireland to-day are outside the present Home Rule movement.

Within the last few years, however, they have been in certain parts listening with avidity to a different gospel. Coming more and more to realise that they are entitled to a home and a livelihood in Ireland, and that whoever is not for them in

that reasonable and laudable object is against them, in Ireland they are for the most part going to stay. They have witnessed enough of those pathetic scenes called "emigrant wakes"—farewell gatherings of friends and neighbours the night before persons start for the emigrant ship. They do not want to be waked, in that or any other manner, just yet. Seeing close to their birthplace land from which their predecessors were ruthlessly evicted, with nobody now living on it or working it, they want as much of that land as will enable them to live by honest industry. While knowing that what they ask is their absolute right by many titles, they are still willing to pay the full value of the land. That simplifies the demand and makes it such as a rational government, whatever its Party name, would concede. The young men who make it are not the kind a responsible government would crush out of a country. A government that will not enable them to stay in a depleted country in which they are wanted and in which they want to stay, which maintains in operation the laws and forces that crush them out and offers them no alternative but jail or exile, is not fit to be a government. It puts them on their mettle, and rouses human nature to come to the assistance of ancestral right. Imperialists who, with no right at all, set the example of seizing in South Africa and elsewhere other people's lands, are not entitled to judge the young people of Ireland for trying in the most peaceful way open to them to recover their own. No one now doubts that they have the power to win the land and hold it. Have they not also the right? Is it not also their duty, sacred and bounden? They are spurred to discharge this duty by the knowledge that Imperialists who ridicule the idea of Irishmen fighting for Irish land would be glad to get them to fight for Imperial purposes, including the grabbing of land and the crushing of liberty, and that without land in Ireland this lowest of all degradations may be the fate of some of them.

With all this natural desire, moral right, power, and opportunity, the anti-ranching movement has not been quite spontaneous. A history made up of disappointments, and an atmosphere full of sham confidence in things as they are, are not favourable to the quick growth of the spirit which promptly takes advantage of opportunities as they arise. Untenanted and non-residential land being evicted land for the re-distribution of which the youth of Ireland have the strongest moral claim, the duty of enforcing that claim devolves specially upon the young men. They are the people whose need calls loudest for an anti-ranching movement, whose need that movement specially answers; and they are the people best qualified to make such a movement successful. Vividly recognising this and the special opportunity which the Act of 1903 afforded for successful popular action, I began at the close of that year to suggest an anti-ranching campaign, and to call specially upon the young men; and they have had my special attention ever since. Just four years ago a rather prominent politician asked, what was the meaning of my frequent references to young men. At first and for a couple of years, in consequence of the capture of some branches of the League in the ranching interest, young men were disgusted and hard to reach, because they did not attend League meetings, did not read reports of them, were sceptical and hopeless about Parliamentary action, and did not suppose that I would advise any other action. To overcome their repugnance was the most difficult part of the undertaking. Yet all depended upon success in this. Without the young men a successful campaign was hardly possible; with them it would be an easy matter. Great though the subject appeared to me to be, I was left to advocate it alone, very much like a voice crying in the wilderness. A few public men expressed their sympathy, but not one openly identified himself with the movement; and I had not then the *status parliamentarii*. The fact of being left alone to advocate a cause so plainly feasible and

so urgent, though it was enfeebling in the early stages, helped by its peculiarity to attract to me the attention of young men and disposed them to give consideration to one who seemed to differ from other Parliamentarians. That point attained, I no longer felt weak. No one doubts to-day that this singularity constitutes my peculiar strength. Gradually the young element increased in my meetings, until, as we have seen, a strident note attracted so many of them to the Downs in October, 1906. Since that time they have formed the majority of my meetings and have been the most attentive listeners. Once convinced that the attack on the ranches was seriously meant, estrangement vanished like snow before the sun.

The Gaelic Athletes, as individuals, without infringing the non-political character of their organisation, soon gave practical proof of the sincerity of their friendship, at first separately, afterwards collectively by arranging and playing a football match to raise money for an anti-ranching fund. The moral significance of this spontaneous act was of more value to us and more deterring to the ranchers than any amount of money that could possibly be raised. When it is remembered that the Athletes are one of the few organised bodies that raise money for other good purposes besides their own, and that the anti-ranching movement is the only political purpose for which they have done this for many years, the warmth of appreciation expressed on that occasion will be understood: may they have many a pleasant day and many a glorious triumph in a pure and stainless cause; and may Ireland always have, for any purpose for which she may need them, limbs as strong and hearts as true as those of the Gaelic Athletes. Not one in ten thousand of them would hesitate an instant to risk his heart's best blood if Irish Liberty could be secured, or even promoted, by the sacrifice.

It must be clear to the reader, as it is to all personally acquainted with the reserve forces whom my description fits that

they are far from being uncouth clowns or feather-heads whom leaders can safely ignore. Some are members of the Gaelic Athletic Association, some of the Gaelic League, some of both. The non-political character of those organisations cannot prevent their beneficial effects extending beyond their immediate purposes. They perform a function of inestimable value in training the youth of Ireland to realise vividly that they have a country. Their effect in developing, elevating, and strengthening our national individuality of character—an essential ingredient of freedom—is a service of far-reaching and high value. The discipline, *esprit de corps*, and power of concerted action which they impart also help to correct the balance of advantage which has hitherto been against the democracy. The reserve forces so permeated are just such material as would delight the heart of a constructive statesman in a country requiring reforms likely to be resisted, material without which his political organisation would be very weak, and to enlist which under his banner he would make short work of those by whose conduct this material is lost to him. Organised and under a leader warmly sharing their views, they would be Ireland's strongest arm for recovering and maintaining her Liberty. Organised to win and hold the Land, they would be irresistible; in spite of them no one else could hold it. The work of making Ireland mistress of her own destinies and her soil the property of her own children is the work the young men want to help in doing, comparatively easy with them, impossible without them. They want it done, not in some remote and indefinite future, but now; and they deny that any Englishman, or set of Englishmen, has a right to say them nay. They want to change the present political crawl for that striding pace which quickens the pulse, rouses the perception of lofty aims and of rights withheld, creates and reveals means of attaining them, and weakens the foe. They desire no favour whatever. Being in earnest, they would prefer to work as an integral part of one great national

organisation under experienced and honest guides aiming at the same goal. If they are willing to enter an existing organisation in sufficient numbers to form a majority of the members of certain branches on condition that the officers shall be elected by ballot and that the will of the majority shall always prevail, that is their absolute constitutional right which no one has any right whatever to withhold. A democratic organisation constitutionally governed would cut off and dissolve a branch guilty of such conduct. The perfect good faith of the young men is proved by the readiness with which they join, and the harmony and efficiency with which they work, free branches. The present time is so full of opportunities for doing practical work beneficial to the people that branches free to do it are fully and usefully occupied and have no time or inclination for such fulsome and injurious matter as bogus branches send to the Press. They discuss the wants and opportunities of the people, consider what is best to be done, arrange and do it, and publish nothing except what is calculated to help that business. This is soon recognised by the public, with the result that the reports of genuine branches are the first part of a local newspaper read by both friend and foe. Earnestness is the chief quality that distinguishes these young men from the managers of bogus branches. Managers who degrade an organisation, divert it from its legitimate purpose, drive men out of it by denying them the rights of manhood except on terms of corruption, procure the omission of their names from the register of electors in which they are intitled to be included, and sow the seeds of estrangement and distrust, are reactionary factionists of the worst description and more adverse to Ireland's progress than Dublin Castle and the landlords combined are now capable of being. These young men are not the kind to whine and wring their hands. Others may have occasion to do both. Whether the United Irish League will be purified and made worthy of them, or whether they will be forced to form a separate organisation, are matters worth the consideration of the Directory of the League.

For the immediate purpose of the anti-ranching movement, the success of the Tithe War without leaders is encouraging. No one with knowledge of the young men will deny that if, instead of continuing to oblige statesmen by emigrating, they peremptorily order the discontinuance of ranching, all the forces of the British Crown will not be able to induce ranchers to take the forbidden land ; and it is not the young men, but the so-called owners, who will be pressing the Government to relieve them of derelict land. To men who run the risk of keeping it derelict until distributed, it will be an easy matter to secure its distribution among deserving persons, and to prevent any of it going to cowards, sneaks, and ashy-pets who would not clear a ranch. To take land from men who confessedly do not want it, and restore it to those who want it, have a strong moral claim to it, and are still willing to pay its full value, is a reform so just and reasonable that it ought to be effected without unpleasantness. This is what the young men desire. The knowledge that this fair and fertile country is theirs by many titles, that they have no other, and that no other has the smallest claim upon their loyalty ; that every sod of it has been owned and worked and endeared for countless centuries by the men and women of our race, consecrated by their joys and sorrows, tears and sacrifices, life and death, under all their forms ; the knowledge that the richest parts of it have in modern times been cleared of people and reserved for the brute ; the knowledge that its recovery is not only just, but a duty, and within their power ; the knowledge that all the sacred memorials of the past, all the living human interests of the present, all the hopes of the future for themselves and for others, concentrate upon them and depend upon whether they, in their own day and district, act a manly or a craven part, rouses within them that spirit which compensates for numerical weakness and gives them an incalculable and dangerous force, which wise men do not like to provoke or encounter.

XVI.—RECAPITULATION

THIS contribution to the discussion of our rural problem must appear small and contemptible, like the problem itself, to our imperially-minded neighbours—yet never too small for them to take the wrong side when they do intervene. In ancient Ireland the clan and the various divisions or constituent parts of the clan had in time of war the military uses of which we read most. In normal times of peace, of which least is recorded, they were like so many associations for joint agriculture and insurance, and for securing to each individual free access to a portion of the soil of his country.

Landlord monopoly, planted and maintained here by England, is an anti-human institution like a miasmatic vapour, spreading over the best parts of Ireland and cutting off the people as surely as plague or sword. Originating in conquest and robbery, no one can claim that its history has cleansed or strengthened that immoral title. It has been maintained by force, and the true owners of Ireland have been sacrificed, and are still being sacrificed to it. For three centuries this vampire has sucked the life-blood of the Irish nation, with never an honest symptom of assimilating with or becoming part of its victim. It is probably the most blighting influence that has ever afflicted any country. It has been the cause of woe unspeakable to millions of innocent people, and is the continuing cause of the decay still in progress. Land monopoly and an industrial population cannot co-exist in this land. One or the other must be removed. That is the remedy, simple in both theory and practice, no longer problematical, but triumphantly proved by its success in the nearest continental countries—our competitors in the English markets. There is no instance of a

peasant proprietary having failed in a self-ruled country. Name any self-ruled land in which the people who till the soil are owners thereof, and you name a land of enlightenment, prosperity and peace.

On the British Parliament, Dublin Castle, and the landlords, the joint destroyers, devolves the duty of reparation ; and if the professions of British statesmen were a tenth part genuine the reparation would have been carried out long ago. They, however, work jointly only for evil ; and the conviction that all three must be cleared out of this country is the result of their practical teaching. When, but not until, the Irish people had throttled the landlord vampire, the British Parliament began spasmodic efforts to save the monster under the guise of sympathy with the sufferers, but at their expense. The latest of these efforts enables the vampire that has sucked the life-blood of Ireland in the past to suck it far into the future. Not satisfied, the landlord cry is for more blood ; and the British Parliament is willing, if allowed, to construct the necessary machinery. On every malfeasance and misfeasance of government we are asked not to blame the Chief Secretary, because, forsooth, his intentions are good, and he does not know the extent to which he is being used by his subordinates to mock the hopes and blast the lives of the rising generation. It is his duty to know. He has, without any invitation from us, taken up a position imposing that duty upon him, and he accepts Irish money in remuneration for its due discharge. For neglect of duties which he has voluntarily undertaken and for which he receives reward, ignorance can be no excuse. Nor can his best intentions, even if genuine, be any satisfaction to the young people for whom he fails to open the career in their own country to which they are entitled. To get them lectured on technical agriculture while withholding from them land on which to practise their knowledge, is like teaching the art of swimming without water. We are told that the British army and the

British navy protect us, God bless them. It is as true to-day as it was when Edmund Burke said it, that they protect us from others to make us the more easy prey for themselves.

Familiarity with ill-usage has developed in the people a spirit of submission and patient endurance to which a harsher name might be applied. One witnessing their wrongs for the first time, or returning after years of absence in happier lands, realises the magnitude of the evil and feels more embittered about it than the actual sufferers do. At last the actual sufferers have been reached and roused to such an extent that the oldest inhabitant in quiet Leinster never witnessed such enthusiasm as the attack on land monopoly now evokes. The people, hard driven, hunted to death, are at last disposed to practise that virtue which they are taunted with lacking—self-reliance. If Ireland is, as all admit, sick unto death, who have a better right to relieve her condition than her own sons who share that sickness? In common with other lands, her children are her greatest treasure. They are the nation itself. Whence comes a right to any other nation, or to an alien garrison, to drive them away?

Purist critics make public exposure of their want of logic by taunting us with "land hunger" and with inculcating gross and material notions instead of lofty ideals. If the desire for land be a vice, it must be greatest in the land gluttony of the monopolist. With reasonable men the desire of fifty families for moderate portions of their native land to work and live by, is laudable, and would outweigh the greed of one person for the whole, apart from the difference that the fifty would create and sustain human interests and industries while the one would create a wilderness. Evidently the purists admire grossness if it be only gross enough. To desire homes in which to live honest, industrious lives is to them gross because not on a large scale and not involving the destruction of neighbours. One who demolishes homes, banishes the people, and monopolises

their land excites the admiration of the purists. Does any one now, or will anyone ever, think less of the Boers for their splendid fight for Liberty because it was also for Land? Land is such a substantial and useful thing, with it we may hope to cultivate lofty ideals. Without it, we have no country, and must go down to posterity as ineffective slaves or outcasts, too much occupied with the bare struggle for existence to have any time for cultivating ideals, and too cramped to realise any that spring up. This particular struggle is one at once for our individual benefit and for our national self-preservation—a purpose so vital that other purposes must wait upon it.

With such a history as ours, what should men of spirit want more than power and a good opportunity? The Land Act of 1903, with all its serious faults, affords an opportunity for smashing the ranches. Believing as I do implicitly that this is the most urgent, as it would be the most beneficial, of all minor reforms, to advocate it is my clear duty. Whoever in any way opposes this movement opposes the best interests of Ireland. One of the most insidious methods of opposing and delaying the reform is, to suggest that the British Parliament will spontaneously do what is necessary. That suggestion is no longer worth discussing. It is believed by no intelligent person, least of all by members of Parliament. So far as they have any more knowledge than other people, it goes to confirm the monotonous lesson that reform useful to Ireland has to be substantially won in Ireland; that Parliament has neither eyes nor ears for the native Irish until facts have been accomplished by agitation, and has neither heart nor conscience for them even then. Organise your biggest demonstration for Home Rule and adopt the strongest resolutions on that subject with your loudest cheers, and English and West Anglians alike will smile at your amiable credulity and possibly grace your platform with their aristocratic presence. Clear a ranch and keep it derelict until distributed among the poor people: it is sound Irish Nationalists that will

then smile, while English and West Anglians alike will rage, because you will have given some of your fellow-countrymen a home and a living, you will have given a wholesome example to others, and you will have dealt a deadly blow at monopoly and alien domination. Two things—one great, the other comparatively small—are as clear as noon-day: first, that the British Parliament will never spontaneously set up in Ireland such a state of things as that suggested in the sixth chapter of this book; and secondly, that the Irish people by not allowing a beast to graze on any ranch until they are all broken up would at once be taking the longest stride towards the popular acquisition of those lands, and giving alien pretensions generally in this country a stunning blow. People taking the first essential step to break land monopoly in its most brittle part are more than justified by their consciences; are encouraged by every consideration, past, present, and future; have the sympathy and support of the entire industrial population in town and country, and are loosening the alien grip upon our land, national as well as local. To loosen and beat back the alien grip upon our land is surely to loosen and beat back the alien grip upon our liberties. In the future, as in the past, those who own the land will have a potent voice in ruling the country: our purpose is to secure that they shall be numerous and Irish through and through. People made owners of the land on proper terms will soon with plough and spade transform the face of the country and make it rival the best and fairest and richest parts of Europe. Quickly realising that their property and the conditions essential to its development and maintenance can be secured only by the exclusive guardianship of an Irish legislature and government whose interests would be Ireland's interests, the new proprietors will have an enormously increased incentive to strive more strenuously than ever before for national autonomy, and increased power of striving successfully. Faith in this prospect is my own incentive for the advice I give.

In Ireland's abnormal condition there is most want of employment in the ranching counties, where there is most work to be done. By giving the people free access to a moderate amount of land to work and live by, and increasing largely the number of agricultural labourers with plots of several acres each, tillage would be made possible, dearth of employment brought to an end, and the conditions of rural life changed.

While this is a movement directly and immediately on behalf of the landless, it is scarcely less obviously in the best interests of the whole industrial community. To get public support for it, no special call is needed but the note of sincerity. One has only to know the people's circumstances, to see what they have been looking at all their lives, to feel what they feel, and to say in the plainest terms what they have long been thinking. The sound of their own thoughts, hitherto inarticulate, fills them with animation, courage, and hope. The simplest statement of the case touches with the sacred fire of righteous passion hearts beyond number in Ireland and beyond the seas; and this in spite of the shabby attempt made—not by Dublin Castle either—to prevent intelligence of this struggle reaching our exiled kindred. Meagre as have been the accounts allowed by the unnatural censorship to leak through, they have evoked in the breasts of exiles, as in those of the people at home, a warmer enthusiasm than any other portion of the present national movement. Helped by this welcome force, helped by economic causes; by statute, and by the waning power of the enemy, we are marching with confidence to execute the doom of the ranching system pronounced at the Downs and long before desired, dreamt of, prayed for, and decreed in scalded human hearts. In spite of law "ordinary" and exceptional, in spite of unwilling statesmen, bribe-grass, bogus branches, and all the combined arts of opponents open and secret, natural and unnatural, the doom of the system is as inevitable east as west of the Shannon. Neither by open

coercion nor by meaner things under the "ordinary law" can the system now be saved. Shame upon any man who upon any pretext would stand between the disinherited Irish people and their birth-right.

Wherever there are ranches and people in need of land, if the cattle are kept in perpetual motion, the owner of the land getting no income from it will quickly sell it to the Commissioners and expedite its distribution in order to get its full value with a bonus added ; all concerned will benefit, and no injustice whatever will have been done to anyone. Men who would not incur the trifling risk for land in Ireland in perpetuity would be unworthy of forefathers who made real sacrifices without any hope of reward, would be unworthy of the land, and would probably never get it. Rulers, alien, unconstitutional, ignorant, and confessedly unable to accomplish what they declare to be necessary, being themselves exceptional, abnormal, and indefensible, are ill entitled to question the propriety of a nation fighting for its life to practise the policy herein advised. Many of the landless now know by heart a number of useful maxims.

The duty of self-preservation is as incumbent on a nation as on an individual.

No class or section can have or acquire any right against the nation itself.

A nation confronted with the choice of its own destruction or that of its destroyer would be unworthy of continued existence if it doubted, hesitated, or delayed.

Let us not please our worst enemies by committing national suicide.

Free ownership of the soil of Ireland is essential to the existence of an Irish nation in Ireland.

For many of our youth the only career open is the emigrant ship.

A government is tyrannical and immoral whose policy forces the natives out of a depleted country.

No people in the country means no business in the towns.

Bullocks are bad customers for shop-keepers and mechanics.

People who wait idly for Parliament to make land available for them must live and die without land.

Excessive quietness has been the most potent and destructive of our vices.

Not at Westminster, but in Ireland, must the land problem be solved.

Landlords, having got what they wanted, are crying out to "save the Act of 1903."

Tenants and landless people ought to think about saving themselves.

Five years of fruitless conciliation ought to be enough.

Opportunities are given to avail of them, or regret in vain when too late.

The present opportunity must be availed of now or never.

God will help those who help themselves to undo the work of wicked men.

Resolutions not followed by action are like English sympathy not followed by legislation.

Statutory compulsion is a mere bait without popular compulsion.

Nothing sickens owners so soon as unprofitable long grass.

If we squeeze the landlords, they will squeeze the British Treasury.

Desire to sell or surrender is frequently feigned to disarm the people.

Those who disregarded the policy of conciliation have brought upon themselves the policy of hazel.

The land cannot be got for the people without a fight by the people.

When agitation is for a just object, the way to bring it to a speedy end is to make it speedily successful.

It was not by parleying, but with hazel, that Saint Patrick banished the snakes.

If the people do not settle the land question, now within their power, they need never talk of settling anything.

Men who lay down the hazel may lay down their hopes of and.

The hazel touches the spot.

Scatter the cattle as far and wide as the people were scattered by the evictors.

Leave the ranches as bare of cattle and sheep as they are of human beings.

Off the cattle must go, and off they must be kept.

Men worthy of land are proud to scatter cattle and go to jail for it.

Do no violence to man or beast.

Leave crime and unmanly acts to the enemy.

Peaceful redress of admitted wrong is no crime.

Essential reform is a duty and a public benefit.

To enable mankind to "increase and multiply" is following the Scriptural command.

No people can be free unless they own the land.

No people can be secure in person or property without freedom.

The Irish people want their Land and their Liberty to use and enjoy.

Who has a right to gainsay the will of a nation within its own borders?

Worthy men in their own country require no more than power and opportunity to seize and hold

LAND AND LIBERTY.

END.

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