

## Address delivered in League Hall, St Anne Street, Liverpool, on Tuesday, 28rd May, 1882

That the discussion of the Irish question at so critical a stage as that to which it is now advanced is fraught with responsibility to whoever undertakes the task on behalf of the Land League, few will deny. When the Government is believed to be aiming at the prevention of all public discussion in Ireland, and the leaders of the National party are supposed to be at variance upon vital questions of principle and policy, the elements of precaution cannot be eliminated from the duty I am here to perform this evening. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that the time and occasion are opportune for an enunciation of what I believe to be the real objects of this movement, and what I venture to say is asked for and required by the whole Irish race. (*Cheers.*) I venture to assert that the entire Irish question is not, as a rule, judiciously presented to public opinion by many who undertake to define its true character outside of Ireland; and it may also be said against us that we have hitherto been wanting in practical statesmanship by insisting upon heroic remedies for Ireland's social and political wrongs, without pointing out, clearly and candidly, how those remedies could be applied. We have left an impression upon the public mind of this country that an ulterior object lies behind the social reform movement which we have initiated. Doubts are expressed by even friendly Englishmen as to whether the Land League is aiming at the abolition of landlordism or at something else. We are charged with raising the cry of 'The Land for the people,' and not defining its meaning; of demanding the expropriation of the Irish landlords, and falling shy of the question of compensation. My efforts this evening shall be directed to the removal of these doubts by presenting, as well as limited time and limited ability will permit, the Irish question in its entirety, as well as the solution which I believe the whole Irish race demand, and which wise and practical English

statesmanship can safely and with credit to itself undertake to concede. (*Cheers.*)

Ere endeavouring to do this, I think it of the first importance to give a bird's-eye view of the situation in Ireland, in order that Englishmen may the better understand the motives which have actuated the Land Leaguers, and more calmly discuss the means whereby that situation can be changed with profit to Ireland and safety to British interests.

That the disturbed state of public order in Ireland during the past two years is not due to accident, few Englishmen will deny; that it is the logical outcome of short-sighted English statesmanship most public men in this country are now beginning to admit. It will require very little reasoning to convince practical-minded Englishmen that fires are not lit by spontaneous ignition, or great movements started without a basis of solid justification. What has been the general character of English rule in Ireland, looked at from an impartial point of view? That it has not been of a nature to win the people of Ireland to an abandonment of Irish institutions and aspirations, to the acceptance of those of their rulers, seven centuries of a struggle proclaim and the present condition of our country confirms. (*Hear, hear.*) No power on earth claiming to assert its authority over a people of another race can justify a rule whereby all the motives that have the greatest influence over that people's existence are stupidly ignored or wantonly trampled upon. (*Cheers.*) The motives which form the distinctive characteristics of the Irish people are, and always have been, enthusiastic devotion to their religious convictions, unflinching loyalty to the principle of nationality, and a passionate attachment to the soil of their fatherland. Is not the history of England's rule in Ireland a heart-breaking record of systematic oppression upon each and all of these inherent principles of Irish character? It is only within the present generation that a full concession of justice has been made to the first of the motives I have indicated, and that the Irish people have been accorded religious liberty. Was it an unjust concession? Has it been followed by

consequences that can cause Englishmen to regret having made it? This, however, is finally settled, and. Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants are now upon equal footings of religious freedom; and I am sure that neither Irishmen nor Englishmen will ever again pit one faith against another for political motives. The two remaining principles of Irish national character are at this moment contending against the very policy which denied Catholic emancipation until 1829, and withheld religious equality from the Irish people until our own days. Can these principles be stamped out? Will such policy succeed? These are questions which I am anxious to place before English public opinion at a time when, to borrow an expression of Mr Gladstone's, the English mind 'is open' upon them.

Let us now see what are the grounds upon which these principles rest a claim for concessions of justice, and what are the forces arrayed behind them for their vindication. That Ireland has a just right to self-government no one can deny—(*Cheers.*)—that our people are unanimous in demanding it is apparent from Irish representative, opinion and the admissions of the public press outside of Ireland. That self-government can be enjoyed by English dependencies, consistent with the integrity of the British Empire, an independent Irish Parliament ninety years ago, and Canadian and Australian Legislatures existing at the present hour, plainly demonstrate. (*Hear.*) That the Act of Union was an infamous transaction and has proved a complete failure, English modern history itself concedes. (*Loud cheers.*) That Dublin Castle rule—(*Groans.*)—is one of the primary factors in the present discontent of Ireland, and has ever been a source of the keenest exasperation to our people, is now beginning to be made clear in this country. Upon these grounds, which no one can deny to be just ones, or can consistently refuse to discuss, we rest our claim for political autonomy. (*Great cheering.*) The grounds upon which we claim a settlement of the Land question are, if possible, more just, more urgent and imperious, than those advanced in behalf of the national question. That Irish landlordism has broken down—that it is discredited and repudiated by our people more thoroughly than any other system that has

ever fallen before a nation's resolve and the march of progressive ideas—the present situation in Ireland declares in unmistakable language. That it has been a ruin and a curse to our people, no sane mind will gainsay. (*Hear, hear.*) Three millions of a population driven from a country in one generation—(*Shame.*)—from a land capable of supporting more than twice its present population—the prevalence of widespread poverty among the unexterminated remainder—increasing disaffection among the masses, consequent upon ruinous exactions and the exercise of social tyranny by the landlords—a reign of terror and violence, giving birth to horrible crimes by calling forth heated and vindictive passions—all threatening a complete social disruption of the country, and all apparently, to the Irish people, sanctioned by English public opinion, and intensified by the blind and vindictive policy of one who had been a popular English statesman ere he left Bradford for Dublin Castle—(*Loud groans.*)—this is our justification for demanding the abolition of landlordism and the substitution of a national system in its place.

I shall now point out the forces that are arrayed behind these two principles of social and political reform, in order that the expediency of dealing justly and promptly with them—as formerly with that of religious equality—may be seen by practical English minds. That there is a new spirit abroad in Ireland—intelligent, resolute, and practical—has been borne testimony to everywhere. (*Loud cheers.*) That such a spirit might by despair or by desperate men be turned into complete subversive action, the history of the French Revolution declares. It was not dreamy speculations upon the origin of society which sent the frenzy of madness through a people's mind. It was the squalor of the ragged peasant in contrast with the luxury and effeminate splendour of the privileged class; the pallid faces and wasted forms of the peasantry who prowled hungry and fever-stricken through the land; the hopeless, helpless degradation of the mass of the French people spurned and ignored by the Government of the day. This was the bitter writing that was traced in characters of maddening portent which the multitude read with flaming eyes, and

sprang wildly to their feet to revenge and efface. (*Cheers.*) That such a spirit should be driven to such deeds in Ireland, God forbid—but that such a spirit is abroad, and can be arrested by just and timely concession, I fearlessly proclaim here to-night. (*Cheers.*) The force that can guide that spirit to safe and moral action, that can shape its ends to beneficial work for Ireland, or that, by letting it drift into headlong passion by simply abandoning it to itself, would be then unable to restrain its excesses, should be one that ought to command the careful consideration of English public opinion. That force consists in the character of the men who are now the leaders of the Irish people. From Mr Parnell—(*Loud cheers.*)—downwards, they are nearly all young men, with full twenty years of political life before them. If they have succeeded in doing so much during the past three years, what are they capable of accomplishing in the next twenty. (*Loud cheers.*) They have given proof of ability, courage, self-devotion, and energy, both outside and inside of Parliament, unparalleled in any previous agitation or reform movement. They stand pledged to the Irish people to work out the social and political regeneration of their country, and I know them too well to believe that calumny, coercion, or imprisonment will ever make them abandon—(*Cheers.*)—what every rational mind must admit to be a just, a moral, and a winning cause. (*Loud cheers.*)

This is something like an outline of the general situation upon the Anglo-Irish difficulty at present; but there is a more particular or immediate aspect of it, which I will endeavour to bring before Englishmen. Upon what is the English Parliament now engaged? Ireland, almost exclusively—to the almost total neglect of the general business of the empire. The Arrears Bill, while being good in its way, and calculated to arrest crime and outrage to some extent, is a most convincing argument that the Land Act is a failure, and leaves the agrarian war almost where it has hitherto been. In no part of Ireland is the Land Act considered so much of a failure as in Ulster, where leaseholders and every other class of tenants are burdened with rents that were fixed when prices were high and

competition from outside unthought of. In my travels through the West and North, recently, I found everywhere a want of confidence in the Land Courts, and heard from all classes that the landlords, as in every other branch of Irish administration, had succeeded in turning these courts to their own purposes in all but a few instances. (*Hear, hear, and hisses.*) While travelling in the West of Galway I found a state of affairs that have recently been brought before the public by an English correspondent. Evictions are taking place in hundreds, when, on the admission of the authorities that carry them out, the household belongings of 130 families were not worth a single pound all together. I found that a rent of from 15s to £1 per acre is demanded for patches of a stony mountain side, from which it is impossible to extract sufficient food for a year for those who till them. These rents and accumulated arrears are now demanded, when almost every source from which they were paid in the past have ceased to supply them—kelp-burning, fisheries, turf-selling, and remittances from friends in America and England. The soil of Carroroe can no more produce rent than can oranges be made to grow upon the Liverpool race-course—(*Laughter.*)—yet, in defiance of all theories upon rent for land, people are evicted for the non-payment of unjust and impossible rent.

But my object is not to dwell upon scenes of misery to-night. I am anxious to point out how misery, discontent, and crime can be banished from Ireland entirely; and I will therefore proceed with my bird's-eye view of the present situation. There is but one more feature in that situation which I wish to dwell upon before discussing the remedy for the Anglo-Irish difficulty, and it is this:—Mr Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons the other night, proudly termed that assembly 'The Temple of Liberty.' From an English point of view, this may or may not be a true name for England's Parliament; but from an Irish point of view, there can be no difference of opinion on that point at the present hour. (*Applause.*) This 'Temple of Liberty' is asked by the greatest of living statesmen to strike at every single principle that constitutes liberty in any land or among any people. (*Hear, hear.*) Trial by jury is called the palladium of

liberty in every constitutionally governed country as well as in England; yet Mr Gladstone is about to abolish trial by jury in Ireland for three years. (*Groans.*) The right of public meeting is one of the most cherished privileges of a free people; yet Mr Gladstone is about to make public meeting in Ireland dependent upon the will of a single English functionary. The liberty of the press is prized by every civilised nation as the greatest safeguard of its liberty; yet Mr Gladstone is resolved upon gagging the Irish press. (*Groans.*) The inviolability of domestic privacy is one of the proudest boasts of Englishmen; yet Mr Gladstone is about to empower an Irish policeman to intrude upon any Irishman's home at any hour of the night he may please to consider it the object of suspicion. (*Cries of 'Shame.'*) Verily, this 'Temple of Liberty' is at present occupied with anything but a creditable or congenial task.

Having now defined the real nature of the situation, and looking upon the present lull in the Land League movement as a temporary cessation of hostilities during which a parley can be made, I will endeavour to point out the way in which unprejudiced minds on both sides of the Irish Sea can discuss the terms of peace, and end the agrarian war in Ireland for ever. I am about to undertake a task that should have been performed long ago—that is, the definition of 'The Land for the people,' the charter-cry of the Land League, and the bugbear of the landlords and Conservative organs. (*Cheers.*) In doing this, I will lay myself open to the suspicion of differing from Mr Parnell and most of my colleagues in the Land League movement; but the fact is, there is not a particle more of difference of opinion between the member for Cork and myself upon this question, than there was when we first stood together upon a public platform in Westport, three years ago. (*Loud and prolonged cheering.*) Mr Parnell advocates peasant proprietary; I am in favour of the land becoming the national property of Ireland. If peasant proprietary is conceded, either by Lord Salisbury, when he gets into power, or by Mr Gladstone ere he gets out—(*Hisses.*)—I am perfectly satisfied that the purchase-money that must be advanced by the State for carrying out such a scheme will become

the title-deed of the State to the land of Ireland, and that the nationalisation of the land will be the consequence. Believing this to be inevitable from the growing poverty of Irish agriculture, I am almost indifferent as to whether Mr Parnell's plan or my own be adopted; but as I was the first to raise the cry of 'The Land for the people,' I think the time has now come for giving a clear definition of what I mean and propose. (*Applause.*)

The following statistics will be given only as an approximation to the actual figures, because I have been compelled to borrow them from my 'Jail Journal,' and I have not had time since my release from prison to compare them with later official returns:—Putting the average annual value of all the cereal produce of Ireland at £30,000,000, and annual produce of live stock wealth at say half the total return for any given year, we will have about an equal sum of £30,000,000. This will give, say, £60,000,000 as the total annual produce of the land of Ireland. Assuming the present annual rental of the land to be £15,000,000, we have thus one-fourth of the gross produce, or 25 per cent, of the annual wealth of the country seized upon by the Irish landlords. Twenty pounds out of every one hundred that is earned by the labour and enterprise of our entire agricultural class is claimed by a small number of persons who contribute nothing whatever to its production, and who cap the climax of this annual confiscation by taking most of this money out of the country which produced it, and spend it to the benefit of other lands and peoples than ours. (*Hisses.*) I maintain that rent for land that is cultivated by labour alone—or by the joint agencies of capital and labour—independent of landlord assistance, risk, or superintendence, is an unjust and indefensible tax upon a country's industry, that can be more truly described as legal theft than by the conventional terms that designate it a tribute legally due to the prescriptive rights of an unjustly privileged class. If the land became national property—landlordism being abolished, and full State protection and encouragement given to the produce of industry and capital—it would be no exaggerated estimate to put down the yearly value of cereal wealth at double the present amount—that is, £60,000,000. Adding to this the



former estimate of yearly live stock wealth, we would have a total of £90,000,000 annually from the land of Ireland. Allowing 10 per cent, off this for diminution of prices, consequent upon increased production, we would still have £20,000,000 more wealth from the soil every year than we have now under the existing state of things. (*Hear, hear.*) Instead of charging this yearly cereal and live stock wealth with a 20 per cent, rent to the landlords, it would only be taxed, under the national land system, in proportion to the amount of money required for the civil government of the country—administration of law, police, education, hospitals, poor-rate, water-rates, or the various public purposes for which special taxes are now levied upon the country, and duties placed upon the food and comforts of the people.

To see what such a tax would amount to ordinarily, and thereby determine the difference between the rent now paid to the landlord, and the land tax that would then have to be paid to the State, it will be necessary to make an estimate of the probable annual public expenditure of Ireland. We will put down the cost of civil administration, including payment of police, at £4,000,000; education, £1,500,000; poor-rate, £1,000,000; total local rates, £2,000,000; borough and water-rates, £1,000,000—giving in all a total of £9,500,000 annual outlay in carrying on the national business of the country. In order to meet this yearly public charge without levying a penny of it upon the non-agricultural classes—that is, exempting all classes from both the direct and indirect taxation that is now imposed for Imperial and local government purposes—we should only have to abolish landlordism and rent for land, and place such a tax upon all land values as would meet the public expenditure, as just specified. (*Hear, hear.*) Ten per cent, on the gross annual agricultural produce of Ireland—or half what is now paid to the landlords in rent and lost to the country—would, under the national land system, carry on the civil government of Ireland, save the tenant farmer half of what he now pays in rent, remove all the taxes that now fall upon the mercantile, commercial, professional, and industrial classes, and take off those duties from the commodities of daily

life that burden the lives of the artisan and labouring classes, and deprive the masses of healthy and sufficient food. (*Applause.*) The State would simply be the steward of the national property. For the use of that property, and the protection that would be given to the farmers and labourers who worked it from the confiscation of their interest in the same, a tax of say 10 per cent, upon the estimated annual produce would be levied. This tax, instead of going into the pockets of an idle class, and being lost to the country, would be expended in the interests of the country, and would augment the national prosperity. The farmer would have absolute security of tenure from the State, subject to the payment of this nominal tax, while the property which his capital and industry would create in the land which he cultivated would be his, to dispose of when he pleased, as tenant-right is now sold or disposed of when farmers so desire. Such tenant-right or property created in the soil by improvements not to be interfered with or taken by the State without a full equivalent compensation being given in return by the same; agricultural labourers to be secured the occupancy of such plots of land by the State as would be sufficient to supply themselves with the independency and comforts that are claimed for them under the peasant proprietary plan; the professional and trading classes would be exempt from direct taxes; the great industrial and labouring classes would be freed from all the tribute that is now levied upon their earnings in the shape of borough and county rates; while those duties, which place nearly all the comforts and luxuries of life beyond the reach of the poorer industrial orders, could be entirely removed to the direct gain of the whole community. (*Hear, hear.*) Thus, the non-agricultural classes would receive a dividend out of the annual produce of the land, equivalent to what they now pay out of their earnings for the carrying on of the general and local government of the country, the education of the people, and the support of the destitute and infirm; while the farmers would possess all the security that a peasant proprietary could offer without having to provide the purchase-money which such a scheme would require them to pay for the fee simple of the land. They, like the

rest of the community, would also be free from the taxes, rates, and duties upon articles of consumption that now fall upon the public generally. (*Cheers.*) This is what I mean by ‘The Land for the people.’ (*Loud applause.*)

The questions that will at once be addressed to the proposer of such a scheme of social reform will be—1st, Upon what grounds can the land be resumed as the property of the State? 2nd, Would such a land system be the best for society and the interests of good government? 3rd, Is it feasible? and what compensation, if any, are the landlords to receive for the expropriation of the property which they claim to have in the soil? I will endeavour to answer those objections in the order in which I have put them. To make the land of Ireland, or of any country, national property, would simply be the resumption of that State ownership of the soil which obtained amongst all nations anterior to the system of land monopoly which class government has established for the aggrandisement of a privileged section in society. This system of land monopoly having failed completely as a land code, as is evidenced in social discontent, prevalence of poverty, and non-fulfilment of the obligations upon the performance of which it could alone rest a claim for existence, it becomes both the duty and the right of the State to call upon ‘the unjust steward to give an account of his stewardship, for he can now be steward no longer.’ (*Loud and prolonged cheering.*) To permit a class to hold the land of a country as its absolute property Involves the giving of an influence over the lives, happiness, and industry of the people of that country inconsistent with the freedom and welfare of mankind, the maintaining of which should be the primary object of every people. The right of all men to participate in the benefits of the soil by the State ownership thereof can be claimed from the fact that land is a natural agent, and that the value of land arises from, and is maintained by, the aggregation of population and the exercise of industry by a people. (*Cheers.*) The value thus imparted belongs to the people, and not to an individual or a class. That a national land system would be the best for society and good government is self-evident. (*Hear,*

*hear.*) By insuring a more equal distribution of wealth, increasing the productiveness of the soil through the breaking up of large estates, and giving a stimulus to agricultural industry, poverty would be diminished, and crime deprived of most of the incentives to its commission; while Government would have on its side the Conservatism that would not fail to result from the removal of all grounds for agrarian crime and social discontent through a just and final settlement of a burning question. (*Applause.*)

The feasibility of such a settlement will be best evidenced by grappling at once with the chief difficulty in the way of any scheme of Land Reform that aims at the abolition of landlordism. (*Hear, hear.*) I will endeavour to show how this difficulty can be successfully met. The; question of compensation is practically the only one now left to discuss in connection with the fate of Irish landlordism. I start with the proposition that, in accordance with strict justice, the landlords of Ireland are not entitled to their fares from Kingston to Holyhead—(*Loud and prolonged applause.*)—for the loss of their criminally-abused proprietary rights; but, as conventional justice or the claims of prescriptive right cannot possibly be repudiated by the English Government, or avoided by Ireland, if a peaceful settlement of the land war is to be arrived at, we must face the question of compensation. (*Hear, hear.*) Well, according to even conventional or political justice, those who, by their enterprise and labour, have given the present value to the land of Ireland, are surely entitled to their share of its market price—(*Hear, hear.*)—in other words, the farmer's property in the soil which he alone has improved by his industry and capital, must be equal in value to that claimed by the landlord in virtue of either purchase or prescriptive right. Leaving this property to the farmer, we will only have to deal with the landlord's share. To determine this, it would be necessary to arrive at an estimate of the intrinsic worth of the land anterior to the increment of its value by the present generation. In the time of Dean Swift, the annual rental of Ireland was but £2,000,000. To-day it is about £15,000,000. Will any one, conversant with the history

of Irish landlordism since that date, hesitate to say whether this increased value is due to the landlords or to the people of Ireland. Taking the farmers' and the landlords' interest to be equal, the latter's share of the market price of the land of Ireland now would be twenty years' purchase of half the present annual rental, or £140,000,000. This sum I would propose to raise by either public loan or the issue of Government bonds bearing 3 per cent, interest, principal and interest to be chargeable to Ireland's contribution to the Imperial revenue. Thus: Annual revenue of Ireland, say £7,000,000; interest on £140,000,000 at 3 per cent, per annum, £4,200,000; leaving annual balance of £2,800,000 for sinking fund with which to pay off the principal. This it will do in a period of about fifty years—the land tax of, say, 10 per cent, upon all land values supplying the expenditure of civil administration now met by such revenue. By this plan of settlement Ireland itself would get rid of landlordism without touching the pockets of the English taxpayer; a compensation would be given to the landlords to which, in strict justice, they are not entitled—(*Hear, hear.*)—all incentives to social discontent would be removed; agrarian outrage would of necessity disappear from the absence of landlord tyranny and conflicting agrarian interests; while the whole country would not fail to commence a new life of peace, contentment, and prosperity. (*Loud cheers.*)

To this plan of settlement, even if granted to be feasible, there will be two objections made, representing both extremes of the Anglo-Irish difficulty. The English Government may say that the people of Ireland would refuse to pay a land tax for the support of alien rule—that similar difficulties would arise in the collection of such a tax as are now encountered in the exaction of rent. I will dispose of these objections before discussing the more serious one that will be offered from the other extreme. There could be no more difficulty in collecting such a tax than has to be met in collecting the ordinary direct revenue of the country at present. The fact that a land tax that would probably never exceed half the amount that is now paid in rent was to be expended for the good of the country and would

constitute the farmers' title to security in his holding, would make such an annual tribute a willing contribution. His property in the soil would also be a reliable security against repudiation of fiscal obligation.

The other objection is a more serious one than that just answered, as it will stand upon the strong ground of Irish national sentiment, and appeal to the fears which jealously guard the highest aspirations of our race. To propose that the English Government should become the owner, steward, or guardian of the soil of Ireland, will, at first sight, appear an anti-national settlement of the land question, and one which involves a principle of renunciation that cannot be sanctioned by Irishmen who belong to the extreme or Nationalist party. I am convinced, however, that a calm consideration of the question will dissipate the idea that the nationalisation of the land of Ireland is any more of a recognition of England's right to rule us than is involved in the payment of taxes or in calling upon its Government to advance the necessary funds for the carrying out of a scheme of peasant proprietary. (*Applause.*) While I yield to no Irishman alive in my allegiance to the principle of Ireland's right to govern itself—(*Applause.*)—I would infinitely prefer to deal directly with an English Government than with its exacting and unscrupulous mercenaries—the Irish landlords. (*Hear, hear, and applause.*) Better to have the land of our country administered by even Executive English authority, than see it made the instrument of social slavery and degradation—of tyranny and exaction—by the merciless and polluted hands of Irish landlordism. (*Loud cheers.*)

There is, of course, the probability that such a land code would appeal to the Conservative instincts of an agricultural people, and cause them to look with favour upon and pay with allegiance the power that would secure them in the enjoyment of social peace and prosperity. This result may be reasonably expected from any settlement of the land question whatever that may be won from the Government of England, as the great majority of mankind are rationally actuated by that excusable selfishness

which impels them, as in the ordinary affairs of business life, to seek the best bargain from society in the matter of human comfort and security. (*Hear, hear.*) When contending forces are aiming for the approval and support of the people who are to be benefited by the outcome of the contest, it is only natural to expect that whoever gives to or secures most for the people will gain most in their regard. Admitting, what no one can deny, that England must be a factor in any settlement of the land question that takes place, so long as England's authority is dominant in Ireland, the selection of land systems must be determined by their relative merits as such, and their respective adaptability to the genius and requirements of our people. I contend, therefore, that the nationalisation of the land under the existing political relationship of the two countries would be no more of an abandonment of national right or national honour than is involved in any transaction of the every-day political life of our country; while I claim for such a settlement more solid social advantages, both for agricultural and non-agricultural classes alike, than can be obtained under an improvement of the existing system, or by the substitution of a peasant proprietary. (*Loud cheers.*)

But my proposal or plan of pacification does not rest here; the social difficulty is not the only factor in the Anglo-Irish question. An older difficulty and equally disturbing element in the politico-social life of our country is its present system of government. That Dublin Castle rule—(*Hisses.*)—is as monstrous a failure as Irish landlordism, is a proposition which few will be found courageous enough to deny. (*Cheers.*) It is simply a systematised rule of national exasperation; a mode of administration as little understood by the English people, and as unrepresentative of constitutional government, as if the ill-omened edifice that stands upon Cork Hill were situated on the banks of Yang-tse-Kiang, instead of being within a few hours' sail of Liverpool. (*Loud cheers.*) It is at last becoming as evident to enlightened English opinion that Ireland must be granted some form of self-government, as that Irish landlordism is repudiated by our people and 'has proved a complete and disastrous failure. It is no

extravagant proposition, therefore, to couple the settlement of the national with that of the land question, and to insist that rational demands upon both must be considered by English public opinion. The present is the most opportune time that has presented itself for the solution of the Anglo-Irish difficulty since the passage of the Act of Union, and the only effectual remedy, in my opinion, is self-government for Ireland and the nationalisation of the land under the administration of an Irish Parliament. (*Loud cheers.*)

That this will be considered an extreme programme by most of the English press I am prepared to admit; but I am confident, that, if Englishmen will approach the discussion of it with calm and unprejudiced minds, it will be found to contain the basis upon which Ireland's peace and happiness may be built with safety and credit to the enlightened statesmanship that may have courage and foresight enough to offer timely justice to a people who are no longer a power to be despised or a nation willing to submit to continued insult and injustice. (*Loud and prolonged cheers.*) I would ask Englishmen to remember that there is not a single newspaper in England, or scarcely a public man representing English public feeling, that does not now admit that England's rule of Ireland has been unjust, illogical, and indefensible in the past. (*Cheers.*) What has convinced them of this? Movements like that which the Government is now desirous of suppressing—men who are now undergoing the same punishment and encountering the same calumny and abuse that were heaped upon Irish public men connected with former agitations. Time will again vindicate the course I am advocating here to-night, and show that the Land League leaders, who are now stigmatised in every possible language of abuse and misrepresentation, are advocating the true remedy for admitted wrongs, and pointing out the means by which that remedy can be applied, and which, if rejected, as other remedies have been rejected in the past, an English generation will yet live to mourn and deplore. (*Loud cheering.*)



I have now defined what I mean by 'The Land for the people.' I have endeavoured to point out how that can be accomplished without drawing upon the pockets of Englishmen, and with a certainty of ending the agrarian war in Ireland. (*Hear, hear.*) I have promulgated my full programme, and I have only to say that from this night forth, so long as I have life to devote to the cause of Ireland, that life shall be devoted to furthering this programme in the interests of my countrymen. (*Applause.*) I have only to ask from the Irishmen and Irish ladies of Liverpool that sympathetic assistance and consideration which has already been extended to that movement which I had a hand in initiating. (*Applause.*) I cannot conclude my speech here this evening without tendering, as an Irishman and Land Leaguer, my thanks to the Irish ladies of Liverpool for their magnificent assistance to the people of Ireland during the recent crisis, and I cannot at the same time sit down without giving expression to my pride of living in an age when the women of Ireland, not only in Ireland, but in England and America, have been aroused to show that patriotism and courage which once characterised our countrywomen on the walls of Limerick. (*Loud and prolonged cheering, the entire audience rising and waving their hats and handkerchiefs.*)