

and took up the fight with Mr. Davitt. They called a great meeting of the Irish tenant-farmers in Dublin and there organized the Irish National Land League. This became one of the most powerful organizations of its kind ever known in Ireland. All classes rushed into its ranks. The close of this year brought on the horrible sight of the famine-spectre. Messrs. Parnell and Dillon hurried off to America to seek aid for their starving people. But ere that aid could reach the people, the dreaded famine was upon them. What a harvest of death there would have been, had not American generosity been aroused by the cries of a nation in hunger! Mr. Parnell's mission to America brought in a quarter of a million of dollars. And what did the British Government do? What an awful truth! It did nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve its own starving subjects. The Land War was now in full progress. The League was engaged in feeding the famine-stricken people, while the landlords were busy endeavoring to cast them from their homes. Resistance was offered occasionally and sometimes with success. All the time Mr. Davitt was busy with the grave cares that now rested upon his shoulders. Parliament next was dissolved and a new election was sprung upon the country with little or no warning. Here again Mr. Davitt showed his wonderful abilities.

In the new parliament, the Irish Party was much stronger than it had ever hitherto been. The Tories under Lord Beaconsfield suffered a most disastrous defeat at the polls and Mr. Gladstone was triumphantly returned to power. But now the crises had come; the Irish nation was up in its wrath against landlordism. The Landlord Party was aware of the danger in store for them and no pains were spared by them to malign the people of Ireland, especially the League, in England. True, the people, excited and enraged against the landlords, notwithstanding the many warning words spoken to them, by their leaders, especially by Mr. Davitt, often gave way to regrettable excesses. These, were exaggerated a thousand-fold by the time they had gone the rounds of the English Press. The effect of all this was most damaging to Irish interests. The members of the new government first appeared

quite willing to deal justly with the Irish people. They were even charged by the opposition with having dangerous sympathies with Irish Home Rulers. Now, however, they gave away under the pressure of British public opinion, and brought in a new measure to counteract the charges of their opponents: a coercion act for Ireland. It is needless to dwell on this, suffice it to say, it spoiled many of the good effects intended by that great measure of reform successfully passed by Mr. Gladstone, the Irish Land Bill. In the close of the year '80, and the beginning of '81, the Irish leaders were subjected to a most severe trial. One and all, they were cast into prison charged with "having conspired to impoverish landlords by inducing tenants to refuse to pay their lawful debts." Mr. Davitt was among the number. He was released on the 6th of May, 1882, the day on which the worst fruits of the Coercion Act were reaped, the day of the murder of Lord Cavendish and Thos. Burke. Again in '83 Mr. Davitt was called upon to answer for his fidelity to the Irish people and as a consequence once more found himself within the prison-walls of Portland. As a protest against such treatment he was elected to Parliament by the County Meath. The House, however, declared him disqualified, owing to the fact that the full term of his first imprisonment had not yet expired. His disqualification was afterwards removed, but he firmly refused to accept a seat, declaring that he had resolved to enter the British House of Commons, only when the government in power would be ready to grant Ireland her rights, Home Rule. He kept his promise.

He afterwards visited America and brought back with him his partner for life, a handsome bride. His noble stand in that famous trial "The Times vs. Parnell" is too well known to need repetition here. In later years his devotion to the old cause has been no less ardent than it was in the earlier days of the League. He entered Parliament with the first Home Rule Government that ever went into power. He took a foremost part while there. His words of wisdom, spoken on the floor of that historic chamber, were read the world over, and admired by all. He