

in 1878. On this occasion, over a hundred thousand people turned out in the city of Dublin to do honor to and welcome him and his fellow-prisoner Mr. McCarthy. This long term of prison-life, though it was little over half of the original sentence, and the cruel treatment there received, completed his stern course in the school of experience. All the while he thought carefully over the affairs of his beloved country, and finally, came to the wise conclusion, that it would be hopeless and foolish for the Irish people, in their present condition, to attempt to battle for freedom by force of arms.

Shortly after being released from prison he came to America and on this side of the Atlantic was warmly received by all classes of Irishmen. The Home Rule movement had now begun to work its way among the Irish people and those who sympathized with them in their struggle. Irishmen were divided into two distinct camps, Home Rule and Fenian. Mr. Davitt however found himself inclined to take a middle course. He would, as we have said, join heart and hand with the Fenian movement if he thought anything was to be gained for his country by so doing. He had, however, already seen how futile were such attempts as these men proposed to make. As for Home Rule it was to say the least, a policy more hopeful of success, but under the circumstances he saw something else that certainly claimed his more immediate attention. The tenant-farmers were the greatest sufferers in the existing state of affairs. Davitt was a child of the people, he felt for the people and now he would live for the people. He had studied their grievances seriously and the result of his study was now to be set forth as a new doctrine, a kind of political eclecticism, the doctrine of the Land League: the people of Ireland were to become owners of the soil.

He hoped in this to unite all under one common banner. It is true he succeeded to do so in the end, but at first he seemed to have been regarded as an enemy by both parties. Many Home Rulers looked upon his policy as one that was doomed to failure itself, but destined to destroy their newly awakened hopes before its own ruin. As for the Fenians, they

declared that whether a failure or a success, Mr. Davitt's policy tended to wean the Irish people from the good old doctrine of the sword, and was therefore deserving of no respect whatever from true Irishmen. Its author, however, heeded not the adverse criticism of the few rash minds that sprung forward at the first moment to denounce him. He consulted many of the leading Irishmen on this side of the water during his stay in the United States, and then returned to his native land to prepare the people for the struggle.

At Irishtown, a place within a few miles of the ruined home of his childhood, on the 28th of April, 1879, he called a great meeting. It was a momentous affair. Strict order reigned throughout. speeches were delivered that thrilled the hearts and raised the dying hopes of that great multitude of wronged people. Among the most notable of those taking part in this first step toward organizing the new movement, were, Messrs. O'Connor Power, M. P., Thomas Brennan, John Louden and J. Ferguson. Other meetings of a similar nature followed and at last the attention of all Ireland was aroused.

The Home Rulers about this time began to grow weary of Mr. Butt's too moderate course in parliament; even among his followers in the house quite a few were anxious to assume a bolder attitude against the government. Mr. Parnell was especially noticable in this regard. Mr. Parnell had watched too with great attention the opening of the Land war by Mr. Davitt. His keen insight into human affairs enabled him to see how important this movement was likely to become. A failure of crops helped to aggravate the situation, and tended to strengthen the determination of Mr. Davitt's followers, and to make them cling fast to their newly awakened hopes. Words of warning uttered by Mr. Parnell and other Irish members were represented in jeering and scornful tones by the British Ministers. This action of the Government brought Mr. Parnell into Mr. Davitt's camp. Mr. Parnell saw now that there was no remedy applicable except that proposed by Mr. Davitt; he determined therefore to unite the cause of the Land agitation with that of Home Rule and wage an unrelenting war to the end.

He returned to Ireland after the session