

Home Rule might enable me to give some help in constructing and expounding a scheme of Home Rule. I felt a deep love and sympathy for the Irish race and an honest pride in the Empire to which I belong, and I believed from my soul that Home Rule was essential to the well-being of both. (Continued applause.)

Some have professed to read my mind, and have attributed to me as motives expectations of a lead in the Irish party, of a place in Mr. Gladstone's Government, of a judgeship, or of some titular honor. I might, I think, pretty safely appeal to my public career amongst you as the best evidence that I have never wished either lead, or office or honors. (Loud and continued cheering.) I have refused them as often as I could; I have accepted them as seldom as I could; and I have resigned them as soon as I could. (Laughter and applause.) But the idea of stepping into the Irish lead over the heads of able and devoted men, familiar with the ground, who had fought the battle, had suffered the loss, and had all but won the victory, is too preposterous for serious discussion. The idea of political office is even more absurd. The very foundation of that Irish party which I was asked to join was absolute independence, until Home Rule were won, of all English political parties, and refusal of all political office. (Hear, hear.) Judicial office was equally absurd, for I was not even a member of the Bar. As to honors, you know by voice and action my views on these. None of these things were attainable by me in England if I desired them; nor, had they been attainable, were they desired. It was too late for me to begin a new career in such a sphere. I might indeed easily lose, I was certainly risking an acquired reputation of which I thought I had some right to be proud. But I could not hope, at my time of life, and under these new circumstances, to gain a fresh one. And had all these things been otherwise with me, my ties to

home and country were too numerous and too strong for me to dream of severance. I have enlisted, indeed, for a campaign, but its most joyful day for me will be that which releases me to return to my own fireside. (Cheers.)

But there was, I will admit, another feeling animating me, which I have not yet stated. I make no profession, God forbid that I should, to be in any sense the delegate or representative of any Canadian interest or party, even of any single man, still less of this great country, I claim no title to speak in your name or in your behalf abroad. But I did think and hope that I was going to further a cause dear to the hearts of the great body of the Canadian people—a cause which had stirred their noblest feelings, and which it would be pleasing to them that one of their own sons should, however slightly, promote. (Cheers.)

And now, forsooth, because you have been good enough to greet me on my return amongst you for a few weeks, and to express your favor for Home Rule, I am told that I have done wrong in accepting this kindness at your hands, and that I am responsible for bringing strife and division among you. I am told that Canada has nothing to do with Home Rule; that Canada does not, in truth, favor Home Rule; that I am connected with a disgraced and falling cause; and that some counter demonstration must be held at once to wipe out the stain of this reception, and to signify to Britain the true opinion of Toronto and of Canada as to Home Rule.

Sir, I think we may afford to treat this action with great good humor. (Applause.) We may differ indeed as to its taste, but apart from the question of taste it is not of very much import. I know, as I have told you, that Canada is not literally unanimous for Home Rule. I know that in this great city, where certain elements are so strong, it is the easiest thing in the world to gather a meeting against it.