

taught the people, by a most stern lesson, how foolish it was to engage in such an unequal struggle. A few noted Englishmen about this time began to take some interest in the affairs of Ireland. They began to think that there must be something radically wrong in the management of Irish matters. They could not otherwise account for the large number of truly patriotic men who engaged in the Fenian struggle.

From the moment that Irishmen managed to awaken the minds of unprejudiced and disinterested Englishmen to the justice of their cause, a change was noticed. John Bright, an eminent British Liberal, visited Ireland, and was banqueted at Dublin by the leaders of the Repeal movement in that city. Mr. Bright had always been friendly towards Irishmen in Parliament, but now he became more prominent than ever as a champion of their cause. Many of his party, however, had been life-long enemies of the Irish people, and particularly of the Irish Catholics. But they were now in opposition, their ranks were broken, and all their hopes were foiled by intestine dissensions, and they were being made repent their former follies, particularly Russell's Titles Act. Mr. Bright saw in the demands of the Catholics of Ireland an opportunity, not only of doing justice to a much wronged people, but also a hope of becoming most serviceable to his own party by offering them a new plank for their platform—a plank upon which their divided and weakened factions might unite their ranks, and make a hopeful bid for power, by an appeal to the masses. How strictly correct his views were may be easily seen from what followed. His plan was favourably received by a large section of the Liberal party. Bills were then introduced into Parliament for the purpose of abolishing certain objectionable forms of oaths required of Catholics in Ireland in every petty position in the land. To these the Tory Government offered a stern opposition. Other bills and resolutions were brought forward, and finally the Church Establishment itself was attacked. The Lords rejected these bills and resolutions, but this amounted to nought. The Tory Government was defeated at the polls, and Mr. Gladstone was triumphantly re-

turned to power. This great Liberal leader introduced, and carried by a large majority, a bill to disestablish the Irish Church. This was Mr. Gladstone's first great move on behalf of the Irish people. The House of Lords at first murmured, but at last consented to this measure, and finally on July 26th, 1869 the Royal sanction was given. A howl went up from the "Orange North," but it was only a howl, and ere long all was quiet again.

This was the last act required to prepare the way for the great movement. The constitutional experiment had been successfully attempted by O'Connell; this was to form the basis of the movement about to be inaugurated. Next the Fenian struggle by its failure brought the masses into the ranks of the Parliamentary party; and finally the Protestant portion of the population, who, on account of the privileges enjoyed by their church, had kept themselves apart from the majority, now, seeing themselves placed on an equal footing with their fellow-countrymen, and having no longer any motive for thwarting their country's aims, joined hands with their Catholic brothers, and thus helped to swell the ranks of those who struggled for national freedom.

The leaders of the different parties of the Irish people, recognizing the cause of their weakness, decided to make a move towards reconciling all their differences, and forming one compact whole. For this purpose a great meeting was called in Dublin, May 19th, 1870. For a while the various factions, through their representatives here, endeavoured to set forth conflicting plans. At last a voice was heard that electrified all; it was the voice of Isaac Butt. His words were cheered to the echo; his plan was the secret of success. And here was laid down for the first time the Home Ruler's platform. Butt was henceforth the recognized leader, and justly merited this honour, for it was he who first gave permanent unity to the divided factions. The new leader was the son of a Protestant clergyman of the Established Church. He was educated in Trinity College, Dublin, was admitted to the bar in '38, and became a Q.C. in '44. His family, for generations before him, had been Tory in their political views. His heart, we are told, was