

and crime, to accomplish a great, but only partial and unsatisfactory redress of the killing land system. It took nearer four generations, with all the dreadful accompaniments to which I have alluded, to convince a great man (who, after all, failed to convert the whole of his political party) of the fundamental justice and indestructible vitality of the Irish claim for self-government. And even now, after his heroic efforts, great and lasting as have been their effect, a majority in Britain as yet remains unconvinced, and pronounces against the allowance of that claim. I have told you how we stand legislatively as to higher education, taxation, and the land. Where, then, upon this survey of a long century, where in the legislative department, does there shine one ray of real freedom, of that freedom which engenders loyalty to the constitution as it stands, which should justify the abandonment of our claim for Home Rule?

There shines no such ray! On the contrary, the brightest gleam of hope from legislative action springs out of the great movement of Parnell and Gladstone, which gave us two governments and one House of Commons favorable to Home Rule; and a by-product of which was the grant of county and rural government to Ireland, a tremendous gain, the reluctant result of pledges made by the Tories to avert that worse thing, national government.

That splendid gleam lightens still the vista which those leaders cleared: it reveals a great and cheering element of sympathy, acknowledgment and resolution at last evoked in the mind of a large proportion of the British democracy; and it makes plain the true direction of our Parliamentary efforts, encouraging us, so long as we are firmly backed by the Irish people, in whom is our strength, to continue our exposure of misgovernment and our demand for freedom.

I believe that, though for a while overcast that gleam is brightening now, and will in due time shine more and more unto the perfect day.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW.

I have dealt so far with the making of the laws; and now what as to their administration? The whole Executive system in Ireland is excessively centralised, and worked without any responsibility to Ireland, by the Chief Secretary, acting through his office, and through various boards, and largely by the agency of the Royal Irish Constabulary, an army in the guise of a police force, playing an arbitrary part, and exercising a despotic authority over Ireland, wholly inconsistent with the dignity and freedom of the people. Too often the constable's baton is the only law for the peasant. I add that the laws, made as I have described, have been administered in the spirit of their makers by officers of those English statesmen who impose them—officers mainly drawn from the ranks of the Irish minority.

Now, in a country truly free, where the laws are the expression of the