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# The Material for Victory

*The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



# Advance Praise

“Extremely able, though self-effacing, Kettle’s significance to Irish political developments of his day has been underestimated since his death in 1916. As a keen observer of his times, as well as a key participant in many of the events that shaped them, his memoir spans the period from the Famine to the United Irish League. Its reissue, richly enhanced by supplementary scholarship, will provide an invaluable source for anyone seeking insights into late-nineteenth-century Ireland. Niamh Reilly is to be warmly congratulated for her meticulous care in bringing this important book to a new readership.”

– **Dr Carla King**, Michael Davitt biographer, Lecturer in Irish History (retired), Dublin City University

“Andrew Kettle was a central figure in the agrarian struggles of the 1870s and 1880s: his memoirs provide an essential account of the politics of the land and national movements of this era. This new edition, enhanced by an excellent additional biographical essay and scholarly endnotes, will introduce a fresh generation of readers to the memoirs and their intensely vivid evocation of Parnell and his circle. For all who are interested in the social and political history of late-nineteenth-century Ireland, Professor Reilly’s edition is both required and deeply compelling reading.”

– **Alvin Jackson**, Richard Lodge Professor of History, University of Edinburgh

“It is great pleasure to revisit the memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle, especially with the new introduction and additional biographical notes

and illuminating endnotes provided by the editor, a direct descendant of Kettle's, whose empathy for her subject adds to the experience. A reading of Kettle's memoirs provides an important insight to the more nuanced relationship between landlord and tenant in nineteenth-century Ireland, an interpretation which we have now come to expect in Irish historiography. Andrew Kettle is an under-appreciated as opposed to an unknown figure in Irish history. His remarkable eyewitness account of a pivotal period reaching from the Famine to the Land War reveals a great deal about the complex social connections of elites who influenced Irish life and politics either side of independence. The son of a respectable North Dublin farmer, Kettle's memoirs reveal the many paradoxes of the tillage farmer come land agitator. The memoirs are full of nuggets important to the local historian. More broadly, they are a significant primary source that have the capacity to continue to open avenues of future research exploration in the fields of both political and social history."

– **Terence Dooley**, Professor of History, Maynooth University

"This new edition of Andrew J. Kettle's memoirs, *The Material for Victory*, is notable for providing a wealth of information and a much-needed detailed contextualization on an important and neglected protagonist of late-nineteenth-century Irish agrarian and political history. This greatly helps the readers to understand Kettle's crucial role in Ireland's Land War – a mass movement for agrarian reform that provided a major model for action to oppressed tenants and farmers across the Euro-American world."

– **Enrico Dal Lago**, Established Professor of History, University of Galway

The Material for Victory: The Memoirs of Andrew J.  
Kettle



*The land question contains, and the legislative question does not contain, the material from which victory is manufactured.*

- James Fintan Lalor





A. J. Kettle, 1880

# THE MATERIAL FOR VICTORY

## THE MEMOIRS OF ANDREW J. KETTLE

Original edition edited with an Introduction, Biographical  
Note, and Appendix by Laurence J. Kettle

This edition edited with a New Introduction and  
Additional Biographical Note by Niamh Reilly

Annotations by Niamh Reilly and Jane O'Brien

OPEN PRESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

2023



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Open Press at the University of Galway

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# Foreword

MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, UACHTARÁN NA HÉIREANN

It is often a useful exercise, when reflecting on the historiography of a particular episode in history, to consider those figures of the time who have received less attention in the historical accounts and analyses than other, perhaps more well-known, figures. It is useful, too, to consider why this has been the case and for what purpose. In doing so, we may rectify past mistakes and omissions, provide useful alternative viewpoints, shed some new light and insights on important events from our past.

One such figure is Andrew Joseph Kettle. In most accounts of Ireland's Land War (1879–82), A. J. Kettle, as he was usually known, is overshadowed by his compatriots – Charles Stewart Parnell, Michael Davitt, and others – who have received their just place in the history of Ireland. However, as the memoirs published in this revised and updated book show, and historians increasingly confirm, Kettle played a crucial part in the Land War, what historians Moody and Martin described as “the greatest mass movement in modern Ireland.”

It is entirely appropriate, therefore, that Kettle's memoirs receive far greater visibility, helping us, as they do, to understand more comprehensively the story of the Land War.

For decades, A. J. Kettle worked tirelessly and campaigned for ordinary tenant farmers and agricultural labourers of Ireland, and for a just agrarian system across the country. This often negatively impacted his family life, his health, and his farming business. A leading Irish nationalist politician, progressive farmer, and agrarian agitator, A. J. Kettle was one of the founding members of the Irish Tenants movement and a founding member of the Irish National

Land League with Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell, amongst others.

A. J. Kettle is perhaps most remembered for his work mobilising tenant farmers across the country in support of the “Three Fs” (fair rent, fixity of tenure, free sale of interest). However, his role in increasing the number and effectiveness of Home Rule MPs played a major part in land-reform agitation. His influence can be seen as one that facilitated the non-violent, mass, passive resistance of tenants, specifically in the form of a rent strike that would have significant consequences on land reform in Ireland.

Kettle was keenly aware of the need for an institutional means of advancing his aims. He did this by establishing the County Dublin Tenants Defence Association in 1873, followed by the Central Tenants Defence Association, an all-Ireland advocacy network, which he co-founded in 1875-76, and, later, by leading the tenant right movement into the fold of the Irish National Land League in 1879.

He played a key role in his capacity as one of Parnell's most trusted confidants, influencing Parnell's chosen course of action and being pivotal to the execution of the plans and strategies of the Land War. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in Kettle's leading of the delegation that persuaded Parnell to run for parliament.

Kettle, too, played an important part in persuading Parnell and Davitt to commit to a more radical course of action than they originally contemplated – a “policy of concentration” (Home Rule MPs staging a strong vocal protest against coercion in the Westminster parliament) as opposed to a “policy of dispersal” (whereby Parnell and others would go to the United States to mobilise support and raise funds).

This policy would result ultimately in Kettle's downfall, with he and most of the Land League being imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail. After his early release from prison owing to declining health in December 1881, he stepped back from activism, but remained committed to the

cause of land reform, making several interventions which influenced the context of agrarian and parliamentary activism throughout the 1880s and 1890s in small but significant ways.

Historical biographies, factual and historical accounts, and memoir publications are a vital source of the historiography. We must bring them further into the history curriculum, providing, as they do, an engaging first-hand experience, often “from below,” of critical events of historical importance as they occurred, enabling students to relate to true-life accounts and biographies of how historical events affected both ordinary and extraordinary people across time and avoiding the confinement of the study of history to brief passages and statistical lists of dates and times.

With the ongoing debate on whether history should be compulsory up to Junior Certificate level, it is imperative that we strive for history to remain at the forefront of our education system and its curriculum for fear of it being lost forever in the minds of current and future generations. We must as a nation understand where we have come from as a people if we have any hope of transacting our history, coming to terms with it, in order to build a sustainable, peaceful future on our shared island.

That the reception of *The Material for Victory* appears to have been positive and traversed the political spectrum of the day speaks of the quality and importance of these closely observed accounts, memoirs that now form an essential part of Ireland’s political micro-history.

It is my hope that these memoirs are read widely and that Kettle’s important role in Ireland’s long struggle for independence be given its correct place in the historiography that is so clearly merits.

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
March 2023



# Acknowledgements

The publication of this edition of *The Material for Victory* was supported by the University of Galway Hardiman Library Open Educational Resources (OER) Project Grant Scheme.

I am grateful to the first publishers of the memoirs, C. J. Fallon, for kindly relinquishing all claims to the copyright of the text of *The Material for Victory* to me and the extended Kettle family. With thanks to Brian Gilsenan, CEO at C. J. Fallon, and Dr. Fintan Lane for facilitating this.

Special thanks are due to the project's community partner, the Kettles Heritage Society (KHS), Fingal County, which initiated and greatly encouraged this endeavour from the outset, particularly Declan Kettle (a great-great-grandson of A. J. Kettle), Mick Kelly, Eamon Madden, Myles Reilly, and Carmel Caulfield.

As a great-great-granddaughter of Andrew J. Kettle, I was delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Kettles Heritage Society as coordinator of this book project and to get to know many distant relatives united by their enthusiasm to share and learn stories about the Kettles.

The recollections of A. J. Kettle's great-grandchildren were especially helpful in assembling the Additional Biographical Note in this edition, including: Anne Mooney (Sr. Genevieve), Mary (Kettle) Grimes, and Charlie Downey and his wife, Nollaig Rowan. Other members of the KHS and members of the extended Kettle family also shared thoughts and stories that helped to fill gaps, including Declan's wife, Dr. Patricia Healy Kettle, Pat (Kettle) Evans, Carmel Caulfield, and Mary (McCourt) Watson.

I want to particularly thank Dr. Jane O'Brien for her research acumen, attention to detail, and excellent annotation of many of the

chapters in this edition. The multi-year journey from commissioning a typescript of the original book, assembled in 1958 by Laurence J. Kettle, through different stages of research and annotation, to reanimate A. J. Kettle's words for today's readers, has been challenging and rewarding.

A debt of gratitude is owed to Ed Hatton for managing the production of this volume.

*Niamh Reilly*

*October 2023*

# Preface

DECLAN KETTLE

The idea to republish Andrew J. Kettle's memoirs came about as a result of conversations within the Kettles Heritage Society (KHS) about ways to ensure that A. J. Kettle's many contributions to achieving Ireland's self-determination and national development – politically, socially and economically – will receive their rightful place in Irish history. The KHS is committed to achieving this goal by making historical publications available to audiences today, encouraging inclusion of the contributions of A. J. Kettle, as well as Tom and Laurence Kettle, in relevant educational sources, and improving awareness of these contributions among the general public, scholars and academics in the field, and across wider media outlets.

In most accounts of Ireland's Land War (1879–82), A. J. Kettle is overshadowed by his compatriots – Charles Stewart Parnell, Michael Davitt, and others – who indeed receive their just place in the history of Ireland. However, as these memoirs show, and historians increasingly confirm, Kettle played an indispensable part in it, and therefore deserves much greater visibility in telling the story of the Land War, no less than Parnell and Davitt.

With this in mind, I proposed republication of the memoirs and worked on a plan to do this with the Kettles Heritage Society, Prof. Niamh Reilly at the University of Galway (also a Kettle), and other members of the extended Kettle family. The KHS mission is to reintroduce A. J. Kettle into historical consciousness of Ireland's struggles for independence and to give him due recognition alongside Parnell and Davitt and as someone who should be no less familiar to students of Irish history than are Redmond, Pearse, Collins, or De Valera.

For decades, Andrew J. Kettle worked tirelessly and campaigned for

ordinary tenant farmers and agricultural labourers of Ireland, and for a just agrarian system across the country. This often negatively impacted his family life, his health and his farming business. We hope that this new edition of *The Material for Victory* will raise his profile in school and college curriculums and libraries and highlight the fundamental importance of his part in Irish history. Parnell liked to pun that his friend “Kettle” was a household name across the country, and so he should be again.

Finally, we should not forget his influence through his children and the wider Kettle family legacy. Especially Tom and Laurence Kettle, individually and through different institutional roles, played exceptional parts in Irish history. In addition, the story of A. J. and Margaret Kettle’s children, through their lives and experiences, whether in farming or religious orders, or as victims of illness, gives us a unique window on Ireland in the years before and after national independence.

*Declan Kettle for the Kettles Heritage Society*

# New Introduction

NIAMH REILLY

Andrew J. Kettle (1833-1916) wrote his memoirs during the latter years of a very eventful life, bookended by the devastation of the Great Famine, which inspired his land reform activism, and World War I, in which his son Tom Kettle (1880-1916) died. Some forty years later, another son, Laurence Kettle (1878-1960), edited the memoirs, which were published in 1958 by C. J. Fallon under the title *The Material for Victory*. The reception of *The Material for Victory* appears to have been positive and traversed the political spectrum of the day. It was the subject of at least four newspaper or journal reviews and a radio programme hosted by Dennis Gwynn (1893-1973), a writer, veteran of World War I, and UCC history professor. In addition, in September 1958, the *Irish Press* ran a prominent two-week series of daily, article-length extracts from the memoirs titled “Parnell’s Right-hand Man,” illustrated by photographs and sketches of protagonists and places relevant to the accounts.

Andrew J. Kettle was born at Drynam, Swords, Co. Dublin, in 1833. The second of six siblings, his family were relatively well-off tenant farmers of a 30-acre holding. As his memoirs show, Kettle took great pride in family stories of his grandparents Mary (O’Brien) and Billy Kavanagh’s support of the 1798 rebellion in north County Dublin, and in his multigenerational Kettle family roots in the area.<sup>1</sup> Educated at the local national school and self-educated thereafter, Kettle was greatly influenced by his mother, Alice (Kavanagh) Kettle, who encouraged him to take action whenever he could to further social and political justice. Kettle went on to become a nationally known champion of the rights of tenant farmers, land reform, and national self-determination. He was a co-founder of the Irish National Land League with Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Par-

nell, a progressive farmer, and a prolific writer of letters to the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, the leading nationalist newspaper in nineteenth-century Ireland.

Despite Kettle's often noted aversion to speaking in public and being a "front man," Parnell was able to persuade him to run for election on two occasions – once in County Cork in the 1880 election and a second time in Carlow in 1891. Both times Kettle was unsuccessful. However, the significance of these episodes is not political but personal, demonstrating the longevity and depth of the association between Kettle and Parnell, which is captured in *The Material for Victory*. This 16-chapter memoir is a remarkable document of closely observed, political microhistory recounting Kettle's involvement in and thoughts about events, especially leading up to, during, and after the Land War (1879-82).

Laurence Kettle's introduction to the memoirs in 1958 puts them in context for mid-twentieth-century readers. As Laurence noted, most people "may never have heard of A. J. Kettle, although 'Andy' Kettle was known in every Irish home only 60 years ago as the right-hand man of Charles S. Parnell and the tenant's ablest ally in his struggle for justice."<sup>2</sup> The publication also contains two substantial pieces written by Laurence to provide further background – a "Biographical Note" about his father and the Kettle family and an appendix, titled "Irish Land War Legislation." Twelve photographs of principal figures or relevant sites also feature in the book. A reproduction of a private letter from Parnell to Kettle written in 1886 conveys the closeness of the two men's political relationship.

This new edition of *The Material for Victory* retains all of the original sections, chapters, and images contained in the 1958 publication. In addition, new detailed annotation of each of the 16 memoir chapters provides present-day readers with background information about the personalities and events referred to by A. J. Kettle to make the text accessible to contemporary audiences. The present edition also includes a new "Additional Biographical Note," which provides fur-

ther details about the lives and times of Kettle's immediate large family more than a hundred years after Kettle first committed his memoirs to paper.

A. J. Kettle, without doubt, played a vital role in what historians T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin described as “the greatest mass movement in modern Ireland”<sup>3</sup> – a movement which ultimately “convinced British statesmen of both parties that the landlord system as it existed in Ireland was no longer defensible.”<sup>4</sup> In his account of the Land League, Michael Davitt gives the following appraisal of Kettle:

[I]t is no exaggeration to say that he has been one of the most loyal, energetic, and able advocates given by the gentleman farmer class of Ireland to the cause of tenant right and nationalism, from 1848 to the present time. He has been both a friend and lieutenant to every leader of the people in his long life of most useful service to his country, and was honored by each and all of them as his sterling qualities and conspicuous abilities entitled him to be.<sup>5</sup>

A contemporary review of *The Material for Victory* by journalist and former Irish Parliamentary Party activist W. G. Fallon declared that:

Andy Kettle, a farmer from north County Dublin, [...] was an outstanding figure from about 1868 into the first decade of our [twentieth] century. His name must always remain inseparably associated with the protracted Land War: the outcome of which provided the most astonishing revolution in ownership the world has ever known. Indeed, he may be described, to borrow Dillon's epitaph for Matt Harris, as “one of the men who went out to right a wrong or perish.”<sup>6</sup>

Another review in 1959 by historian Kevin B. Nowlan noted:

Kettle was well placed to observe the developments of the period. He was highly respected by Parnell and [...] this

shrewd farmer remained to the end a loyal though at times critical supporter of Parnell.<sup>7</sup>

Kettle's major contribution during the 1870s was to work with Parnell's forerunner, the Irish Home Rule parliamentarian Isaac Butt (1813-79), to develop and promote a three-pronged strategy that would:

- Re-galvanise organisation and mobilisation of tenant farmers across the country in support of the "Three Fs" (fair rent, fixity of tenure, free sale of interest)
- Purposively link land reform agitation to increasing the number and cohesiveness of Home Rule MPs
- Create conditions of readiness to deploy non-violent, mass, passive resistance of tenants, specifically in the form of a "rent strike"

Kettle advanced these goals through the establishment of the County Dublin Tenants' Defence Association in 1873, followed by the Central Tenants' Defence Association (CTDA), an all-Ireland advocacy network, which he co-founded in 1875-76, and, finally, by leading the tenant right movement into the fold of the Irish National Land League in 1879.

Building on this work, *The Material for Victory* records several critical turning points in which A. J. Kettle played a key role in his capacity as Parnell's trusted confidant "on the ground," either in influencing Parnell's chosen course of action or being central to the execution of particular political plans and strategies of the Land War. To begin with, Kettle led the delegation that persuaded Parnell to run for parliament, which Parnell did, initially unsuccessfully as a candidate for Dublin in the 1874 general election. As historian Paul Bew notes: "Parnell made one important long-term friend during this campaign. Andrew Kettle was the first name on Parnell's nomination papers; he was to be a loyal ally to the end."<sup>8</sup> Parnell subsequently ran successfully in a Meath by-election in 1875 and went on



to become one of Ireland's most celebrated nationalist parliamentary leaders of the nineteenth century, along with Daniel O'Connell.

A second critical juncture revealing Kettle's significance relates to the founding of the Irish National Land League. After Davitt approached Parnell in 1879 to propose the establishment of an organisation to combine the forces of Ireland's three most important movements – parliamentary Home Rule, “New Departure” Fenians, and agrarian land reform – Parnell sought out Kettle to discuss with him the merits and risks of the proposal before making a decision.<sup>9</sup> Following the death of Butt in May 1879, Kettle was “next in command” of the “land platform.”<sup>10</sup> He was very concerned that recent bad harvests could lead to another famine and convened a public conference to determine the next steps of the movement. At the conference, Kettle co-wrote and seconded a “rent-strike resolution,” which, ultimately, was considered too radical by the gathering and was not approved. Parnell came to the same conference to find Kettle to get his views on Davitt's Land League proposal. Kettle recounts how after some discussion he fully endorsed the idea and urged Parnell to go to Mayo to speak at Davitt's planned rally the following week, advising him that “you will need to be extreme to make the right impression.”<sup>11</sup> In Mayo, Parnell, himself a landlord, did just that, and famously called on tenant farmers and labourers to resist evictions and to “show the landlords that you intend to hold a firm grip on your households and land.”<sup>12</sup>

The Irish National Land League was formally established at a meeting in Dublin in October 1879. Davitt and Parnell insisted that Kettle should chair the meeting as co-founder, arguing that “the [Fenian] men in America would not have confidence in the new land movement unless the leading Tenant Right men would join” and that Kettle chairing “would be evidence that the country was united on the question.”<sup>13</sup> Historian R. V. Comerford confirms the significance of Kettle's role as “the dominant figure in the umbrella Central Tenants Defence Association” whose agreement “to cooperate with

Davitt” ensured “the way was smooth for the emergence of the Irish National Land League.”<sup>14</sup>

Third, in the context of the anticipated introduction by the authorities of new “coercion” laws and policies in 1881, which were principally intended to suppress the Land League and its leaders, Kettle recounts his role in persuading Parnell and Davitt to commit to a more radical course of action than they originally contemplated. In summary, the adopted version of Kettle’s proposed “policy of concentration” consisted of all the Home Rule MPs staging a strong vocal protest against coercion in the Westminster parliament (without going so far as to get them expelled), followed by them staging a “walk out” and a return to their constituencies in Ireland, where they would await the actions of the government – presumably their arrest. According to the agreed plan, following the first arrest, the Land League would call a rent strike to force a comprehensive settlement of the land question.

Davitt and Parnell’s agreement to this course of action is indicative of the very significant influence of Kettle at this moment. The plan replaced a more moderate initial proposal from Davitt, which Kettle dubbed the “policy of dispersal,” whereby Parnell and some supporters would go to the United States to mobilise support and raise funds, while a smaller group of the Land League executive would remain in Ireland to face the outcome of the coercion laws and policies. As it happened, the authorities acted more quickly than expected, arresting Davitt within two days of the executive adopting its version of Kettle’s plan. In response, the Irish Party members “raised such a storm” that they were expelled from parliament.<sup>15</sup> These events caused disarray among the members of the Land League executive, the majority of whom decamped to Paris, abandoning Kettle’s “policy of concentration.” This outcome was a source of immense disappointment to Kettle.

Eventually, most members of the Land League executive ended up in Kilmainham Jail, including Kettle and Parnell, in July and October

of 1881, respectively. After the arrest of Parnell, Kettle co-signed the No Rent Manifesto along with other imprisoned members of the executive on 18 October 1881. However, he did so without enthusiasm. As Kettle explains in his memoirs, at this late stage, he viewed it as a necessary gesture but a doomed strategy, given that the people, now “without leaders nor the organisation [...] are called upon to start on an indefinite warfare which [...] they can’t wage successfully.”<sup>16</sup> For Kettle, who had a keen understanding of the dynamics and conditions of effective movements, the window of possible success for a “No Rent campaign” had closed six months earlier.

Kettle writes that after his early release from prison due to declining health in December 1881, he stepped back from activism to focus on salvaging his farming business and paying down debts that he had accumulated due to the extent of his involvement in the Land War and the months he spent in prison.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, his memoirs are full of examples of interventions that he continued to make, which influenced the context of agrarian and parliamentary activism throughout the 1880s and 1890s in small but significant ways. For example, after the Phoenix Park murders in May 1882, government repression of Land League leaders intensified. Kettle observed that “Parnell’s popularity [in Ireland] was at a sort of low ebb,” which he attributed to “the failure of the Land League to produce better results.”<sup>18</sup> Kettle was concerned for Parnell’s safety given the level of government antipathy towards him and his movement, and his waning popularity on the ground. In 1882, to bolster Parnell’s standing, Kettle coordinated with E. D. Gray, the editor of the *Freeman’s Journal*, to initiate the Parnell Tribute, a high-profile fundraising tactic that evaded coercion measures, which Gray arranged to be kicked off by a £50 donation from Bishop Croke (albeit not condoned by the Vatican). The Parnell Tribute, of which A. J. Kettle was an honorary secretary, ultimately raised £40,000. This enabled public appreciations of Parnell that re-energised his supporters’ enthusiasm and buoyed his reputation.<sup>19</sup>

A decade later, on 28 August 1892, the Royal Irish Constabulary

Inspector General and County Inspectors' Monthly Confidential Report contained a surveillance entry on A. J. Kettle along with a covertly taken photograph of him walking along what is now Dublin's O'Connell Street. The report noted that Kettle was "a leading INL [Irish National League] organiser and was imprisoned as a suspect under Mr. Forster's Act [the Protection of Person and Property Act, also called the Coercion Act] in 1881. He was rejected by Carlow in 1891 when he sought its representation in the Parnellite interest. He continues to take a prominent part as a speaker and writer on the Parnellite side."<sup>20</sup>

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A. J. KETTLE

Over the last 50 years, recognition of the significance of A. J. Kettle in Irish history has grown. In particular, biographers of Parnell and historians of Ireland's Home Rule and agrarian reform movements frequently cite Kettle's memoirs as an important historical source.<sup>21</sup> Some authors have sounded a note of caution about some of Kettle's accounts because they were "written in old age and [are] therefore to be treated with caution"<sup>22</sup> or because of the 30-year delay in writing them.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, scholars have consistently relied on the memoirs and steadily corroborated and woven accounts of events provided by Kettle into their explanations of critical junctures and developments during this period.

For example, Paul Bew examined the extent of Kettle's influence on Parnell's evolving positions on the "land question."<sup>24</sup> In his memoirs, Kettle recounts a conversation with Parnell in which Kettle posits that the fact of historical over-taxation of Ireland forms the basis of a strong argument for a government-backed land purchase scheme to enable the massive transfer of land ownership from landlords to tenants.<sup>25</sup> Bew quotes from this conversation at length and offers supporting evidence indicating that Parnell was influenced by Kettle and subsequently sought out the experts Kettle cited to follow up on the proposition.<sup>26</sup>

In another example, looking at events as a historical sociologist,

Anne Kane considers the “Land War” as a “discursive process of forging a national identity” in which she argues “the Irish transcended [...] differences of dispersed social identities that had thwarted previous attempts at [...] reform.”<sup>27</sup> Kettle features prominently in Kane’s analysis. She highlights his role as one of the “most radical members of the Land League [...] [who] pushed a proposed strategy of paying no rent,”<sup>28</sup> and in doing so contributed to the forging of an Irish “national identity.” On the Home Rule front, Kane underlines the importance of Kettle’s “revolutionary plan” involving withdrawal of the Irish members from Parliament, their return to Ireland to “face arrest for treason,” and the mobilisation of tenant farmers to engage in a “retaliatory no rent strike.” She concludes that, in the end, “Parnell chose a policy close to Kettle’s proposal.”<sup>29</sup>

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

To date, there has been no detailed study of A. J. Kettle’s earlier collaboration with Isaac Butt and the work of the Central Tenants Defence Association (CTDA) and the Dublin organisation, both of which Kettle co-founded and led. Usually, references to the CTDA cast it as an organisation that represented larger cattle farmers<sup>30</sup> and, therefore, not one concerned with addressing the needs of more precarious smallholders, especially in the west of Ireland. However, this characterisation does not tally with the fact that Kettle was an innovative advocate and practitioner of tillage farming, which he favoured over large-scale livestock farming. In addition, accounts of Kettle as “a tenant-right agitator,”<sup>31</sup> an early proponent of “peasant proprietorship” via government-funded land purchase,<sup>32</sup> and one of “the most radical members of the Land League”<sup>33</sup> are at odds with the idea that the CTDA was just a mouthpiece of prosperous farmers. Nowlan also highlights the uniqueness of Kettle’s perspective as someone who “judged events in terms of the needs of tenant farmers and the often-forgotten agricultural labourers.”<sup>34</sup> Kettle’s repeated calls for a combined platform of “improvements for farmers” and free “land for labourers” challenge

the assumption that the associations he established and led primarily represented the interests of affluent farmers.<sup>35</sup>

More generally, Kettle's memoirs point to other promising lines of inquiry not yet fully explored. For example, while the Kettle-Parnell relationship documented in the memoirs has received significant attention since the book's first publication in 1958, the Kettle-Davitt relationship has only come into focus more recently (such as in the works of Carla King).<sup>36</sup> After Parnell, Davitt, whom Kettle admires greatly, is the single most cited person in the text, which contains numerous characterisations of "Davittism." There is much to be gleaned about Davitt himself as well as about the "battles for ideas" at the time through a close reading of Kettle's own views and his commentary on Davitt and other protagonists in his milieu.

Also, as Nowlan noted, "[i]n many ways these recollections provide a useful addition to the literature on the political and social history of nineteenth century Ireland."<sup>37</sup> In particular, Nowlan described Kettle's vivid account in Chapter 1 of farming life in north County Dublin as a reminder that "a story of uniform misery does not do justice to the pattern of regional differences in pre-famine Ireland."<sup>38</sup> Regarding other aspects of social history, Kettle's relationship with members of the Catholic clergy was often contentious, while his commitment to working across religious denominations and interests in the role of spirituality in public life are notable. Along with this, his repeated statements on the desirability of the separation of church and politics reveal important aspects of a subject that is rarely touched on by historians of this period.<sup>39</sup> Because Kettle was a devout Catholic, his ideas and actions in this regard are important and suggest that a variety of viewpoints existed among Catholic nationalists before independence about the form that church-state relations should take, which were very different from what actually transpired in twentieth-century Ireland. Similarly, A. J. Kettle's favourable view and backing of the Ladies' Land League and Anna Parnell's leadership of it as "Ireland's first political organisation led and run by women"<sup>40</sup> are noteworthy and invite more research. His

attitude in this regard, following Davitt, sets Kettle apart from Parnell and the generally strongly patriarchal Land League executive.

## CONCLUSION

Laurence Kettle was concerned that he had made a mistake by delaying publication of his father's memoirs until after the turbulent political life of a newly independent Ireland had settled down. In his Introduction in 1958, he expressed regret that none of the "thousands of [...] farmers and agricultural labourers, who owed so much to my father, were still alive and would remember and understand the importance of the successful fight for the land." Perhaps, in looking back, he underestimated how publishing the memoirs would enable future readers to reflect on the lives and times of those farmers and labourers and their families who had joined in the fight which, as Laurence Kettle described it, ultimately "freed the country [...] from the state of serfdom which prevailed before my father's time."

In contextualising the memoirs in 1958, Laurence also wished to unsettle dominant national founding narratives and to remind readers that "the Land War was also the War for Independence" – that it was, in Fintan Lalor's words, the material out of which the victory of independence could be forged.

Finally, Laurence sets out two deceptively modest goals for the memoirs – to "serve a useful purpose, by filling some gaps in Irish history" and to give "a view of the real Parnell." Regarding the latter, the extent to which historians of Parnell have relied upon the memoirs demonstrates their enduring value in this respect. Regarding the former, in publishing this new edition of the memoirs, it must be stated that they also aim to foreground A. J. Kettle in his own right, as a man whose lifelong contribution to land reform politics warrants more sustained attention and analysis. More generally, with this newly annotated edition, it is hoped that the value of these memoirs in raising new questions and finding new gaps to fill in Ire-

land's political, social, and economic history will be appreciated and enjoyed by wider audiences.

## Notes

1. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 1.
2. Kettle, A. J. 1958, book flap.
3. Moody and Martin 2011, 250.
4. Moody and Martin 2011, 252.
5. Davitt 1904, 714.
6. Fallon 1958.
7. Nowlan 1959, 343.
8. Bew 2011, 13.
9. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 3.
10. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 3.
11. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 3.
12. *Freeman's Journal*, 9 June 1879.
13. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 3.
14. Comerford 1996a, 35.
15. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 6.
16. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 8.
17. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 9.
18. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 9.
19. See, for example, *The Pilot*, 27 October 1883.
20. RIC Inspector General 1892. With particular thanks to Dr. Declan Brady for kindly sharing details of this file, which he discovered on a research visit to the British National Archives.
21. Lyons 1978; Bew 1980; Kee 1993; Jackson 2003; King 2009, 2016.
22. Lyons 1978, 146.
23. Kee 1993, 329; Nowlan 1959, 344.
24. Bew 2011.
25. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 5.
26. Bew 2011, 107.
27. Kane 2011, 2.
28. Kane 2011, 151.
29. Kane 2011, 177.



30. Bew 1978, 54; Moody 1982, 273; Casey 2016, 61.
31. Thornley 1964, 94.
32. Bew 2011, 67.
33. Kane 2011, 151.
34. Nowlan 1959, 343.
35. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 11; Kettle 1885.
36. King 2009, 2016.
37. Nowlan 1959, 343.
38. Nowlan 1959, 344.
39. For example, Callanan 1996, 37; Travers 2013, chap. 4; Jackson 2003, 32.
40. King 2009, 29.

# Additional Biographical Note

NIAMH REILLY

This additional biographical note provides further personal and family context to A. J. Kettle's memoirs some 65 years after their original publication by Laurence Kettle in 1958, and more than a hundred years after A. J. Kettle first recorded his recollections in handwritten notes. In particular, using currently available online public civil records and newspaper articles, family anecdotes, archival material, and previously published commentary, this note provides additional information about A. J. Kettle's wife, Margaret McCourt Kettle, and their 12 children. It also highlights the close links between A. J. Kettle's family and the family of his brother, P. J. Kettle Sr.

## THE 1958 BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE REVISITED

Apart from Chapter 1 of *The Material for Victory*, in which A. J. Kettle shares some reminiscences of his own childhood and youth, the memoirs focus overwhelmingly on his part in the movement for land reform in Ireland and its leaders, especially foregrounding Parnell's role between 1875 and 1890. To provide some personal context for the memoirs when they were first published in 1958, Laurence Kettle added a Biographical Note in the form of a series of short descriptions of significant events and characters that give insight into A. J. Kettle's personal and business life and what he valued. The original note contains glimpses of Kettle's father-in-law, Laurence McCourt, and his sons, notably his eldest son, Andrew Jr. (also known as Andy) and his youngest son, Charles (known as Charlie), who, in contrast to Laurence and Tom Kettle, were not public figures.

Laurence would have assumed that readers in 1958 were aware of his most famous brother, Tom Kettle (1880-1916), whose photograph

appears in the book. While Laurence does not discuss Tom's life in detail, his younger brother's central significance to their father is made clear. In his Introduction, Laurence notes that A. J. Kettle had left instructions that he wanted Tom to publish the memoirs.<sup>1</sup> He tells us that his father had been especially "fond and proud" of Tom and on hearing that Tom was "listed as missing" following the Battle of Ginchy (9 September 1916), the 83-year-old father had responded that he no longer wished to live if Tom was dead.<sup>2</sup> Also underlining the special relationship between Tom and his father, Laurence closes the Introduction with "Tom's epitaph" written for their father: "None served Ireland better, few served her as well."<sup>3</sup>

In the original Biographical Note, Laurence commends the efforts of his youngest brother, Charles Stewart Kettle (1888-1952). Charles, who was educated at Newbridge and Clongowes Wood colleges, followed in his father's footsteps to become a farmer. He managed substantial parts of A. J. Kettle's farming business during the last decade of his father's life and continued to farm for a few years after that. In his twenties, Charles was a member of the Dublin and District Motor Cycle Club and in 1915 participated in "reliability trials for motorcycles with sidecars."<sup>4</sup> He was also a community activist and served as chair of the County Dublin Farmers' Association in the 1920s, an organisation in which his father and his cousin, P. J. Kettle, were prominent in the 1910s. In this capacity, Charles was one of 121 witnesses interviewed by the Final Commission on Agriculture (1922-1924). He also made a written submission to the body on the decline of tillage farming in County Dublin. The Commission "sat 56 times in public and 38 times in private session in order to 'represent every phase of agricultural thought and activity.'<sup>5</sup> In addition to the transfer of land from landlord to tenant, the period from 1870 to 1910 was defined by an "overall swing from tillage farming [...] to pasture farming."<sup>6</sup> Charles married Bridget (Beda) Dunne in 1911 and they had four children (Charlotte, Thomas, Leslie, and Margaret). While Charles continued to farm during the years after his father's death, wider economic conditions were not conducive to this and

subsequently he became a civil servant, working as an inspector for the Land Commission in Leinster.<sup>7</sup> Charles Kettle died in 1952, aged 63.

Laurence also highlights the talents of his older brother Andrew Kettle Jr. (1874-1917). He recalls that Andrew had managed what had been the McCourt farm at Newtown, St. Margaret's, County Dublin, in the 1890s, which A. J. Kettle bought after the death in 1893 of his father-in-law, Laurence McCourt. Andrew Jr.'s granddaughter (Anne Mooney) was later told by her grandaunt, Jane Kettle, that she also had been despatched to Newtown along with Andrew Jr. in the role of "housekeeper" for a time. Laurence further notes that Andrew Jr. was a nationally recognised cyclist who held a number of all-Ireland speed and distance records.<sup>8</sup> This was a source of great inspiration to his younger brothers, Laurence and Tom, who formed a cycling club at Clongowes Wood College.<sup>9</sup>

There is some evidence that A. J. Kettle fell out with his eldest son, Andrew Jr., but Laurence does not mention this in his 1958 Biographical Note. The main source for this story is a 1964 interview with Tom Kettle's wife, Mary Sheehy Kettle (1884-1967), who recalled that A. J. Kettle had treated his son Andrew "very badly," apparently due to the father's dissatisfaction with his son's marriage to Mary (Reid) Kettle in 1900. However, it is also possible that any rift there was could have stemmed from the father's disappointment that his eldest son was not as dedicated a farmer as he might have wished him to be. *The Material for Victory* documents A. J. Kettle's decades of extraordinary hard work to transform the conditions of Ireland's tenant farmers so that they could become owners and stewards of the land they farmed. Having achieved this aspiration personally, especially with the purchase of the McCourt farm, A. J. Kettle, then 60 years old, presumably looked forward to his eldest son building on what he had established. However, Andrew Jr.'s interests lay elsewhere. As a member of the Wanderers Cycling Club, he secured 46 cycling prizes in 1897 alone (aged 23).<sup>10</sup> This would have required a level of time commitment and focus that was admirable

but inevitably would have diverted attention away from farming. If there was tension between father and son, it is plausible that this was a source of it. The 1901 census indicates that Andrew Jr. was no longer farming and was working for Dublin Corporation as a “rates collector.”

At the same time, it appears that A. J. Kettle actively supported this development. On 28 February 1901, one month after the birth of Andrew Jr.’s first child and A. J. Kettle’s first grandchild (Margaret, known as Genevieve), he wrote to John Redmond, recently elected leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, to ask for his help “if possible” in encouraging support for the candidacy of Andrew Jr. (“one of my sons”) for an appointment in Dublin Corporation that would soon be decided by a vote of the city council.<sup>11</sup>

Mary Sheehy Kettle’s anecdote that Andrew Jr. was cut off by his father or that his mother, Margaret, was prevented from seeing her son until after her husband’s death<sup>12</sup> appears to have been mistaken. Newspaper notices of the funerals of younger Kettle siblings in 1903 and 1915 list Andrew Jr. among the “chief mourners.”<sup>13</sup> In 1913, on the sad occasion of admitting his 25-year-old daughter to the Richmond District Asylum, where she subsequently died in 1914, A. J. Kettle listed his eldest and youngest sons, Andrew Jr. and Charles, as additional close relatives for contact purposes. Further, Andrew Jr. is named as the primary beneficiary and executor of the will of his father, who died in 1916. Tragically, Andrew Jr. died the next year in 1917, also at the Richmond District Asylum, aged 43. The official cause of death given was “general paralysis of the insane.” However, Andrew Jr.’s hospital admission record notes that he had recently suffered from “shingles of the head,” which can be associated with brain infection, causing symptoms and death similar to those of “general paralysis of the insane.” The large gathering of attendees recorded at Andrew Jr.’s funeral, of extended family and members of the political establishment of the day,<sup>14</sup> belies the narrative of a son completely outside the fold. Andrew and Mary (Reid) Kettle had two

children, Margaret and Andrew, who were 16 and 15 years old at the time of their father's death.

#### MARGARET MCCOURT KETTLE AND FAMILY LIFE

Margaret McCourt (1851-1927) was the daughter of Laurence McCourt, a commercial farmer operating significant holdings at St. Margaret's, County Dublin. Contemporary funeral notices indicate that she had at least two brothers: "P. J." and William. A Mary McCourt, one of the witnesses at Margaret's marriage, could have been her sister or mother. Two witnesses at the baptism of Alice, the daughter of Margaret, were John and Ellen McCourt. They are likely to have been a brother and sister (or sister-in-law) of Margaret. Throughout the 1870s, Laurence McCourt's name appears alongside A. J. Kettle's in newspaper coverage of meetings of the Dublin and Central Tenant Defence Associations in which both were activists. In the original Biographical Note, Laurence Kettle mentions that his grandfather was a skilled horseman and a well-known member of the still-existing Ward Union Hunt, which suggests that the McCourt family was well off.

In 1870, Margaret McCourt married Andrew J. Kettle. She was 19 and he was 37 years old. Over the next 24 years, the couple had 12 children: seven girls and five boys. Margaret and Andrew's marriage had key characteristics of post-Famine unions, including a wide age gap and a large number of children. Historian Caitríona Clear cautions against the "gloomy scenario" that historians often paint of such marriages of the time, supposing them to be transactional, loveless, and especially "hard on women."<sup>15</sup> Mary Sheehy Kettle recalled that Tom's mother, Margaret, was "self-effacing" and "kind" and took "refuge in the kitchen." She also recounts how when she visited the Kettle family home "there were always wonderful meals, an enormous spread at high tea and dinner," and that Tom's father would always "pick the flouriest potato for her," considering this to be the best kind of potato.<sup>16</sup> She observed that "all the family were devoted to [their mother]." She further noticed that Tom's sister Jane (known

as Janie), was also “a kind of mother to them all” (which often happens to older daughters in large families), and that Jane’s departure to “enter a convent” was a “great blow to the whole household.” In his biography of Tom Kettle, J. B. Lyons refers to Margaret McCourt Kettle only indirectly, when he imagines Tom, the small child, reciting “prayers learned at the knee of a pious mother,”<sup>17</sup> but this seems to be conjecture.

There are mixed accounts of A. J. Kettle’s disposition as a father. J. B. Lyons sketches him as “a rigid, demanding parent”<sup>18</sup> and quotes from a letter that Tom sent to his younger sister Josephine (c. 1903) in which he laments the “almost complete absence [in their family] of that close and confidential intercourse which makes some homes so delightful.”<sup>19</sup> While A. J. Kettle could have been perceived by his young children as a serious and stern parent, in her own “memoir” of Tom Kettle after her husband’s death, Mary Sheehy Kettle described the close relationship between the father and the adult son:

[Tom] was intensely proud of his father and always loved, in later years, when the old man was confined indoors, to drive out to his country home to thresh out current politics with him. Though apparently they seldom came to agreement, still it was obvious they radiated in each other.<sup>20</sup>

A. J. Kettle’s memoirs contain some clues as to the nature of his and Margaret’s life together. When he was almost 49 years old and in poor health after six months in Kilmainham Jail for his part in the Land War, he recalled: “My wife’s health [had] got even worse than my own with the worry of the business and anxiety of looking after a large family, and she was held to be in a bad way. Still she came to [visit] me every week.”<sup>21</sup> At this juncture, Margaret was 30 years old and the mother of their five surviving children aged eight and under. In a second reference to his domestic arrangements A. J. Kettle mentioned that his family was “pretty large and young” (and therefore required him to focus on his farming and finances), as he made a request to Parnell after leaving prison to be permit-

ted “to retire [from political activism] until further orders.”<sup>22</sup> These statements suggest that A. J. Kettle was conscious that his wife’s role caring for a large and growing family was a demanding one in itself, made more difficult by his political activism and period of imprisonment. They also indicate that their relationship was based on a partnership, albeit one in which each carried large burdens as determined by A. J. Kettle’s dual vocation as a tillage farmer and land reform activist, as well as by the gender, social, and religious conventions of the day.

There is no evidence that Margaret McCourt Kettle was engaged in activities outside of managing the large Kettle household and possibly the “minor [...] farming activity” which, Laurence noted, took place at the family home in Millview (as distinct from the main centre of the farming business at Artane and later at St. Margaret’s). Without doubt, this work would not have left Margaret much time for anything else. The 12 Kettle children in order of age were: Mary (b. 28 December 1871), who died within minutes of being born due to “disability”; Alice (19 January 1873–25 March 1943); Andrew (7 May 1874–7 December 1917); Jane (Sr. Alphonsus) (27 February 1876–29 January 1967); Laurence (27 February 1878–27 August 1960); Thomas (9 February 1880–9 September 1916); Mary Catherine (Sr. Ambrose) (24 October 1882–25 September 1907); William (18 June 1884–23 May 1903); Josephine (23 March 1887–5 September 1914); Charles (21 August 1888–29 June 1952); Margaret (9 July 1891–10 February 1915); and Catherine (Kathy/Kathleen) (17 January 1894–13 September 1967).

After her husband A. J. Kettle died in 1916, Margaret McCourt Kettle moved to 6 Mountainview Road, Ranelagh. This address is close to the Dominican community and school at Muckross Park, where her daughter Jane (Sr. Alphonsus) resided and it is also near to where her son, Laurence, and youngest daughter, Kathy, lived at this time at 6 St. Mary’s Road, Ballsbridge. By 1917, Margaret had outlived seven of her 12 children. She died ten years later, aged 76, having suffered from cancer and heart failure. There are two small



plaques in Beechwood Church, Ranelagh, dedicated to “Mrs. Margaret Kettle,” most likely commissioned by Laurence. One reads “in loving memory” and the second is a prayer for her.<sup>23</sup> These are small reminders that Margaret was warmly regarded in her private life. In newspaper notices at the time, however, she is remembered for being the wife of her once celebrated husband. As one obituary stated: “The passing of Mrs. Kettle recalls one of the links with the old land war days, when the name Kettle was amongst the leading ones which figured during that phase of Ireland’s claim for justice.”<sup>24</sup>

## TUBERCULOSIS

Tragically, three of the Kettle siblings succumbed to tuberculosis (TB) when they were young adults. The prevalence of TB began to rise in Ireland starting in 1880 so that “an average of 12,135 people were lost to it every year between 1899 and 1908.”<sup>25</sup> William died in 1903, aged 18. Anne Mooney (Sr. Genevieve), a grandniece of the siblings, recalls being told later by Jane (Sr. Alphonsus) that William had been a seminarian. It is also noteworthy that in the 1901 census return, A. J. Kettle records that his son William is a scholar who speaks “Irish and English,” the only member of the Kettle household for whom this is recorded. In her biography of Tom Kettle, historian Senia Pašeta notes (citing Mary Sheehy Kettle) that the death of William triggered a bout of depression for Tom, who was sent to Innsbruck in Austria to recover.<sup>26</sup> Before William’s death, Mary Catherine wrote to Tom, “Poor mother must be utterly worn out [taking care of William], having no rest for so long now.”<sup>27</sup>

Sadly, four years later, in 1907, Mary Catherine also died of TB, aged 25, at Sion Hill Dominican Convent, Blackrock. A recently professed nun who had taken the name Sr. Ambrose, she is remembered almost a decade later in an obituary for her father as “a gifted Sister of the Order of St. Dominic” who had predeceased A. J. Kettle along with his “brave and brilliant son Tom.”<sup>28</sup> One year after Mary Catherine’s death, Tom Kettle, then an MP, spoke at Westminster in 1908 criticizing the lack of resources provided to implement the

proposed Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill. He spoke “with the sincerity and seriousness of a person two members of whose own immediate family [...] had died from tuberculosis” and “was bound to say that the Bill was going to scare everybody and cure nobody in Ireland.”<sup>29</sup> The rate of death did begin to fall after 1908, but “very slowly.” While about 12,000 people died of TB in 1908, a decade later that number was about 10,000.<sup>30</sup> Josephine (known as Josie) was the third Kettle sibling to die of TB. She also had a heart defect (“mitral regurgitation”). Josephine died in 1914, aged 27, while a patient at the Richmond District Asylum (more recently St. Brendan’s, Grangeegorman).

## MARRIAGE AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

A great deal has been written about delayed and declining rates of marriage in post-Famine Ireland. Explanations range from the shift that occurred in passing land down to one son only (thereby leaving siblings little to offer a potential spouse), to speculation about domineering widowed mothers standing between their sons and prospective daughters-in-law, to the embrace of celibacy as a way of life, reflecting the influence of the Catholic Church, or the impact of emigration as people postponed marriage due to related uncertainties.<sup>31</sup> Caitríona Clear suggests that the independent choices of the daughters of farmers and the members of the commercial middle class around the turn of the century also played a significant role. This cohort was among the first to avail of educational opportunities and many saw the prospects of paid work, religious life, or a “genteel single life” in the original family home as appealing alternatives to marriage.<sup>32</sup> The latter explanation appears to be most relevant to the Kettle sisters. Just one of A. J. and Margaret Kettle’s six daughters who reached adulthood was married. Two became Dominican nuns: Mary Catherine (Sr. Ambrose), who died young, and Jane Kettle (Sr. Alphonsus), who became a nun and teacher. Anne Mooney (Sr. Genevieve) recalls her grandaunt Sr. Alphonsus having a reputation as a “very good English teacher,” first at Sion Hill and later at Muckcross Park College. Two past pupils who attended

Muckcross Park in the 1930s recalled “poetry sessions with Sr. Alphonsus out under the trees on fine days.”<sup>33</sup> Tom Kettle’s biographer J. B. Lyons noted that she had also taught geography and drama and was warmly remembered by grandnieces and grandnephews for her “Kettle wit” and “kind personality.”<sup>34</sup> Jane Kettle was the longest surviving Kettle sibling. She died in 1967, shortly before her 91st birthday.

The eldest daughter, Alice (1873-1943), named after A. J. Kettle’s mother, was the only one of six Kettle sisters to marry. Mary Sheehy Kettle recalled that Alice “had a very gracious manner; she met you at the hall door to welcome you.”<sup>35</sup> In 1897, Alice, aged 26, married Ralph McGuinness, aged 27, in Dublin’s Pro-Cathedral. The 1901 census shows that the couple were living at 11 Dargle Road in Drumcondra and did not have any children at that time. Ralph, who was educated at Castleknock College, worked in Dublin Corporation from about 1898 in various capacities, including assisting with the city’s regulation of water and petroleum. Tragedy struck in 1908 when Ralph died suddenly after contracting tetanus as a result of a hand injury incurred in a minor cycling accident. An obituary in the *Freeman’s Journal* describes him as a “popular and courteous public official” and as a distinguished athlete and a “leading cyclist.”<sup>36</sup> He and Alice were living at 2 Churchill Terrace, Glasnevin, at the time Ralph died. He had just left his brother-in-law Andrew’s house nearby when the accident occurred. Like Andrew, Ralph had been a member of the Wanderers Cycling Club and the two had excelled in competitions together during the 1890s.<sup>37</sup> Given the close family and professional links between the two men and their shared enthusiasm for cycling, it appears that not only did Alice lose her husband but Andrew lost a close friend.

After the death of Ralph, Alice McGuinness does not appear in the 1911 censuses of Ireland or Britain. Hospital admission records of her two siblings, Josephine (1913) and Andrew Jr. (1917), suggest that Alice also was admitted for a time to the Richmond District Asylum, possibly in the years following her husband’s death. J. B. Lyons

noted in his biography of Tom Kettle that Alice had lived in the Isle of Wight,<sup>38</sup> but no evidence of this was given or has survived. Mrs. Alice McGuinness is named as a beneficiary of her father's will after his death in 1916. She was residing at 25 Belgrave Square, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, at the time of her death some 27 years later in 1943, aged 72. Alice died following treatment for breast cancer over a number of years. There are no public records or family memories to indicate that she had any children.

Josephine Kettle (1887-1914) was single, aged 27, and a trainee nurse when she died prematurely in 1914. In the 1911 census no profession is recorded for her at age 24, in line with the new instruction included on the 1911 form that "no entry should be made in the case of wives, daughters, or other female relatives solely engaged in domestic duties in the home." This suggests that Josephine began to train as a nurse after 1911. It is impossible to say whether Josephine would have remained single if she had lived. The "first wave" feminist movement in this era focused on achieving women's right to vote and for girls and women to have access to education and professions on par with boys and men. While it was not uncommon for working-class married women with children to be in paid work, for example, in textile manufacturing in Derry,<sup>39</sup> to the limited extent that white collar and professional roles opened up for women, these were typically viewed as alternatives to marriage and motherhood.

Margaret Mary Kettle (1891-1915) was the second youngest of the family. She also died prematurely in 1915, aged 24. Like Josephine, no profession or occupation is recorded for Margaret in the 1911 census when she was 19 years old. In the previous census of 1901, all of the Kettle children present (Thomas, William, Josephine, Charles, Margaret, and Kathleen) were recorded as "scholars," indicating that they were "attending a school or receiving regular instruction at home." Notably, A. J. Kettle recorded in 1901 that his 21-year-old son Thomas Kettle was a "Student Undergrad. R.U.I. [Royal University of Ireland]." If any of his daughters were engaged in education or training of any kind in 1911, it is likely that he would have recorded it

in a similarly concise way. Margaret died at home, with her mother present, at Newtown, St. Margaret's, due to the combined effects of "valvular heart disease" and Graves' disease ("exophthalmic goitre"). J. B. Lyons noted that Margaret had "died suddenly when dressing to go out to a dance."<sup>40</sup>

Catherine Agnes Kettle (1894-1967) was the youngest of the family and the seventh daughter. Her great-grandnieces remember her as "Kathy" and she appears on the 1901 census and in newspaper notices of her father's will as "Kathleen."<sup>41</sup> In the 1911 census, Catherine, aged 17, is recorded as a boarding student at St. Mary's College, Muckross Park. Her sister Jane (Sr. Alphonsus) is also listed as resident at Marlborough Road (Muckross Park) at this time, an English teacher by profession, aged 36. For most of her adult life, Catherine (Kathy) Kettle lived with her brother Laurence at St. Mary's Road and 46 Cowper Road, Rathmines. She worked in the civil service and remained single. At the time of her death in 1967, she was living at 43 Park Drive, Rathmines. She died, aged 73, of "primary cirrhosis of the liver (non-alcoholic)."

Of the five Kettle brothers, three were married – Andrew, Tom, and Charles. William, who died at 18 years of age, and Laurence never married. Andrew Jr. had two children, Tom had one child, and Charles had four children, so that A. J. and Margaret Kettle had a total of seven grandchildren

#### TOM KETTLE AND LAURENCE KETTLE

Tom Kettle (1880-1916) was born in Kilmore, Artane, Co. Dublin, the sixth child of A. J. and Margaret Kettle. He became the most famous of the Kettle siblings. In the first decade of the twentieth century he was viewed by many as the brightest star of a new, expectant generation of educated middle-class Catholics, which included Padraic Colum, Oliver St. John Gogarty, James Joyce, and Hanna and Frank Sheehy-Skeffington. With Laurence, Tom first attended O'Connell's Christian Brothers School, North Richmond Street, Dublin, and later Clongowes Wood Jesuit College, Co. Kildare, where both excelled

academically. Tom entered University College Dublin in 1897, completing a BA in Mental and Moral Sciences in 1902. During his lifetime, Tom Kettle was “associated with almost every major political and cultural development” in Ireland.<sup>42</sup> He came to prominence in his twenties as a writer who was a gifted essayist and journalist; a politician who was an emerging leader of “constitutional nationalism” and one of the last, young Irish Parliamentary Party MPs; a public intellectual and orator who was much in demand; a committee member of the Irish Volunteers; and a soldier killed in WWI, aged 36. After his death and Ireland’s decisive turn to “separatist nationalism” in 1916, Tom Kettle was almost forgotten. However, in the context of the centenary of World War I and Ireland’s Decade of Centenaries (2012-2023), he has resurfaced and is increasingly referenced as a figure who reveals the complexity of Irish identity as a high-profile nationalist who fought and died in the Battle of the Somme.

Tom Kettle was a progressive, liberal Catholic intellectual and a vocal advocate for the rights of women and labour. Having co-founded and served as first president of the Young Ireland branch of the United Irish League (UIL), Tom was elected Irish Parliamentary Party MP for East Tyrone in 1906 and re-elected in 1910. He was also a poet, a literary translator, a reluctant barrister (called to the bar in 1906) and, from 1910, Professor of National Economics at University College Dublin. In 1909, Tom Kettle married nationalist, suffragist, and university graduate Mary Sheehy (1874-1967), sister of Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington. Betty (1913-1996) was their only child. As a young man, for health reasons, Tom had spent substantial periods in Europe, during which time he became proficient in French and German. He read widely, especially in political philosophy, literature, sociology, economics, and science, as well as Christian and Catholic theology. Throughout his adult life, he struggled with bouts of depression and later with alcoholism.

Laurence (“Larry”) Kettle (1878-1960) was also born at Kilmore, Artane, the fifth child of the family. After Clongowes Wood College, Laurence went on to study electrical engineering on a Maxwell

scholarship at Faraday House in London and worked in engineering jobs in the UK and Switzerland.<sup>43</sup> He subsequently joined Dublin City Corporation's electrical department in 1906, becoming deputy city electrical engineer in 1912.<sup>44</sup> Laurence earned a bachelor's degree in 1902 and a master's degree in 1906.<sup>45</sup> A committed nationalist, he followed in his father's political footsteps in supporting John Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party and was active in the party's Young Ireland branch, of which Tom was elected president in 1904.<sup>46</sup> After the introduction of the Third Home Rule Bill (1912) and the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), which aimed to resist Home Rule by force, a broad coalition of nationalists established the Irish Volunteers in November 1913. Laurence, representing the Irish Parliamentary Party, became joint secretary of the provisional committee of the Volunteers, which Tom also joined, viewing the body as "the kernel of what might become a genuinely Irish army."<sup>47</sup> Both Laurence and Tom were involved in official Irish Parliamentary Party efforts to import arms for the organisation. Meanwhile, the Home Rule Bill became law in 1914, but its implementation was postponed due to the outbreak of World War I. The vast majority of Irish Volunteers responded to Redmond's call in 1914 to form the National Volunteers and join the allied side in the war. During the 1916 Easter Rising, as a well-known senior public servant, Laurence Kettle was detained for a time by the Irish Citizens Army in the Royal College of Surgeons.<sup>48</sup> Months later, his brother Tom died on 9 September 1916 in the Battle of the Somme and their father died on 22 September 1916, soon after hearing this news.

After the Easter Rising and the eclipse of Home Rule parliamentary politics, Laurence focused his professional talents and energies on contributing to national development. In 1918 he became the city electrical engineer for Dublin and over the next few years formed the Water Power Resources Committee and promoted the use of Irish coal and turf for national electrification schemes. He championed proposals for a Liffey hydroelectric scheme as the national power supply.<sup>49</sup> In the end, an alternative proposal to build a Shan-

non hydroelectric scheme at Ardnacrusha, Co. Limerick, prevailed (it was completed in 1929). In 1927 the semi-state Electricity Supply Board (ESB) was formed to take control of the national supply under the leadership of the Ardnacrusha engineer. Laurence eventually joined the ESB board of management in 1934.<sup>50</sup>

In 1930, Laurence, retired from his position as city electrical engineer after 25 years of service to Dublin Corporation. To mark the event, the staff of the Dublin Electricity Department presented Laurence with his portrait by the artist Seán Keating.<sup>51</sup> A large event, hosted by the independent Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alfie Byrne, supported by a wide circle of Laurence's professional associates and friends, presented him with an illuminated album in the "Gaelic art" style by "well-known artist Alice O'Rourke" and a cheque.<sup>52</sup> The mayor praised Laurence who had "built up a marvellous, undertaking, engineered it without outside assistance, and turned it into one of the most successful of the city's enterprises."<sup>53</sup> In thanking the gathering, Laurence announced his intention to donate the monetary tribute he had received to establish an annual prize in the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland. The L. J. Kettle Premium awards were made annually thereafter until the 1960s.<sup>54</sup>

After Laurence's retirement as city electrical engineer, he worked with Seán Lemass, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, who held this position for most of the years between 1932 and 1959.<sup>55</sup> Laurence is the person who persuaded Lemass to set up the Industrial Research Council in 1934, a highly significant policy innovation.<sup>56</sup> The purpose of the 24-member council, drawn from industry and academia, was to "offer advice on research for the better utilisation of Irish natural resources and for improved technical processes in industry."<sup>57</sup> From 1934 to 1946 Laurence served as the chairman of the Industrial Research Council and also played a leading role in creating and shaping the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards, which was established in 1947. During this time, he was instrumental in driving the development and launch of Ireland's second hydroelectric facility at Poulaphouca on the River Liffey in



County Wicklow.<sup>58</sup> More generally, he was prominent in the engineering profession, including serving as chairman of the Irish Centre of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, a fellow of the Institute of Fuel, a founder member of the World Power Conference, and secretary of its Irish committee. He was also committee member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and many related societies.<sup>59</sup> Laurence finally retired from the ESB in 1950. He died in 1960, aged 82.

#### EXTENDED FAMILY AND COUSINS

In his memoirs, A. J. Kettle describes his childhood household at Drynam just before the Famine as consisting of “[g]randfather and grandmother, father, mother, and six children, carter and ploughman, boy, chap and servant girl indoor, thrasher and all.” He does not name his siblings but a family gravestone at Swords indicates that his older sister, Mary (Kettle) Fitzpatrick, died in 1871, when she was 39 years old. After A. J. Kettle’s death, a notice of “charitable bequests” contained in his will provided for “masses to be celebrated” for his “deceased relatives,” including the “Fitzpatrick family,” suggesting a depth of feeling for his sister many years after her death.<sup>60</sup> Also identified as a brother of A. J. Kettle is Patrick Joseph (P. J.) Kettle Sr., a farmer in the Swords area. He appears to be the main sibling with whom A. J. Kettle and his family retained the closest lifelong connections. Newspaper records show that in the early 1890s P. J. Kettle Sr. was a prominent member of the Balrothery Board of Guardians (precursor of the post-independence County Boards of Health). He also attended meetings of the Central Tenants Defence Committee and the Irish National Land League with A. J. Kettle,<sup>61</sup> but appears to have focused his civic engagement at the local level. P. J. Kettle Sr. died of TB in 1894, aged 55 years, leaving behind his wife, Margaret (Owens) Kettle, and a large family.

One obituary noted: “Although less known to the public than his brother [A. J. Kettle], Mr. P. J. Kettle was no less intensely sympathetic to the Independent Nationalist side.”<sup>62</sup> Indicating the close-

ness of family ties, newspaper notices of funerals of two of A. J. and Margaret's adult children list all of the sons of P. J. Kettle Sr. among the "chief mourners," including P. J. Kettle Jr., Andrew Kettle, John Kettle, Joseph Kettle, and James Kettle.<sup>63</sup>

In a close study of local politics in Fingal, North Dublin, from 1891 to 1914, Declan Brady<sup>64</sup> describes how the Local Government Act of 1898 effected a fundamental shift in power away from a largely unionist and Protestant landed gentry to an ascendant class of educated, Catholic, and nationalist landowners. In this milieu, Brady observes, "[T]hree families would figure prominently in the political life of Fingal over the next 20 years: the O'Neills, the Kettles and the Lawlesses" in which "[A. J.] Kettle's experience and influence permeate[d] the period, in the background, through to his death in 1916."<sup>65</sup> During this time, A. J. Kettle's nephew, P. J. Kettle Jr. (1871-1950), emerged as a leading farmer and an "independent-minded, enthusiastic nationalist."<sup>66</sup> He became president of the Swords branch of the United Irish League (UIL) in 1900 and treasurer of the North Dublin Executive of the UIL in 1902. In 1905, against A. J. Kettle's advice, P. J. Kettle Jr. ran for and secured the Swords seat on the county council, which he held until 1908.<sup>67</sup> In the same year P. J. Kettle Jr. became president of the newly formed North Dublin Farmers' Association and, in this role, also advocated for the rights of farm labourers.<sup>68</sup> Contemporary newspaper notices show P. J. Kettle Jr. attending or chairing meetings of the County Dublin Farmers' Association with his uncle A. J. Kettle and later with his cousin Charles Kettle.<sup>69</sup>

Further, land purchase records indicate that members of the Kettle family were able to benefit from the first land reform acts that ensued from the Land War. Record from 1895 show that Patrick, John, and Margaret Kettle purchased 131 acres from a landlord that P. J. Kettle Sr. had rented from. (The context suggests that these are Margaret, the widow of P. J. Kettle Sr., and two of his sons.)<sup>70</sup> P. J. and his brother John Kettle also acquired 138 acres from an estate in Swords where they had held tenancies in 1908.<sup>71</sup>

## THE KETTLES AND THE 1913 LABOUR UNREST

Family ties among the extended Kettle family of north County Dublin were never more public or linked to controversy than they were in the second half of 1913 during the period of unprecedented labour agitation led by James Larkin. In 1908, the year that Larkin arrived in Dublin, the city's urban poor were among the most impoverished in Europe, with 45 per cent of the working-class population living in tenement houses.<sup>72</sup> Larkin's reputation as a radical and unorthodox organiser with the capacity to quickly generate "turmoil with strikes and lockouts"<sup>73</sup> had been established in the previous year in Belfast. In addition to raising alarm among Dublin's industrial and commercial elites, and middle-class society in general, Larkin's determination to foreground class conflict did not enamour him to the main nationalist political players of the day, whether IRB organisers within the Irish Volunteers or members of the Irish Parliamentary Party<sup>74</sup> or Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin.<sup>75</sup> For nationalists who were concerned about poverty, it was primarily understood to stem from British colonial rule and mismanagement rather than capitalist exploitation.

Larkin's radical "syndicalist" approach, including the tactic of the cascading "sympathetic strike," was also at odds with the moderate Irish Trades Union Congress (ITUC, formed in 1894) and he frequently clashed with other trade unions and fellow organisers, including, on occasion, James Connolly.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless, by 1912, Larkin's Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU, formed in 1909) "had over 18,000 members, and Larkin's allies [...] had seized control of both the ITUC and the Dublin Trades Council."<sup>77</sup> While there is much debate about Larkin's methods and legacy, on average, unskilled workers and labourers who were ITGWU members improved their situation as a result of his "industrial blitzkrieg," achieving raises in pay of 20 to 25 per cent in the first eight months of 1913.<sup>78</sup> The principal locus of the conflict was between the ITGWU and William Martin Murphy (1845-1919), who was the owner of the Dublin Tramways Company and the *Irish Inde-*

pendent and *Sunday Independent* newspapers, as well as a former Irish Parliamentary Party MP. In response to the union's boycott of the *Independent* publications, Murphy moved quickly to dismiss tramway workers who refused to handle his newspapers and requested assistance in the event of a strike from the Dublin Metropolitan Police, which was readily given, along with contingents of the Royal Irish Constabulary.<sup>79</sup> This created volatile conditions where the tenuous right of employees to picket peacefully was often breached.

By August 1913, labourers on Kettle farms across north County Dublin were on strike. At this time, A. J. Kettle, aged 80, was retired from farming. His youngest son, Charles, aged 25, was managing the family farms at Artane and St. Margaret's, while his nephew P. J. Kettle (1871-1950) was also a significant farmer in the Swords area, along with his brothers, Andrew and Joseph. Kettle farmers were prominent in the County Dublin Farmers' Association (DFA) and were known as progressive employers.<sup>80</sup> For example, one DFA farmer "associated with the Swords district," most likely P. J. Kettle, stated that the DFA "favoured [trade unionism] and only asked that it be conducted along reasonable lines." Early in the dispute, the DFA had "agreed to pay their farm labourers 17s a week [...] [which for most] represented an increase of [...] over 20 percent."<sup>81</sup> Despite this concession, ITGWU farm labourers were instructed to remain on strike. The DFA spokesman continued that "it is a common fallacy that the Co. Dublin farmer is a wealthy man" and while "some are," half of them "cannot make ends meet," noting that "in a few weeks more, the rates and rents fall due, and in very many cases there is no ready money to meet this demand."<sup>82</sup> By October, the DFA line had hardened, exemplified in the spokesman's statement that "unless the labourers are prepared [...] to [give] up the Transport Union [...] and any other union with which Larkin may be identified, this fight goes on forever."<sup>83</sup>

A newspaper report that P. J. Kettle had obtained an eviction order to remove a striking labourer, James Ennis, from a cottage on Ket-

tle's property provided for employees, further reveals P. J. Kettle's apparent hardline approach (as it transpired, James Ennis had already vacated the cottage and had been rehoused when the bailiffs arrived).<sup>84</sup> A subsequent newspaper article describes how a different striking labourer, James Flanagan, formerly working on P. J. Kettle's farm, was brought before the "Swords Sessions" and found guilty of intimidating a current employee of Kettle's, Thomas Joyce, who was allegedly verbally abused by Flanagan, including being called a "scab."<sup>85</sup>

Regarding Charles's experience, one newspaper report recounts that "his men marched out without any demand, negotiation or notice. He negotiated with them and he made peace [...] [and] the men came back on their own terms but they were marched out again unless additional terms to those on which Mr. Larkin had sold peace were granted."<sup>86</sup> A further article describes how Charles was "assisted by some farmers from surrounding districts" to take in "sixteen acres of corn."<sup>87</sup> The same source notes that there was "a large body of police on duty [...] but there was no disturbance." In the case of P. J. Kettle and his brothers, the same source reports that "fourteen neighbouring farmers, assisted by some of the returned workers [who had disavowed the ITGWU]," were "busily engaged [...] on the three farms in the Swords district, those of P. J. Kettle, Andrew Kettle and Joseph Kettle."<sup>88</sup> At the Swords monthly fair on 1 October, another article describes how striking labourers were prevented from accessing the community band instruments in what was characterised as "the first exhibition during the present dispute of bad feeling between the farmers and the men on strike."<sup>89</sup>

Although, by 1913, A. J. Kettle was "disabled by rheumatism and was able to get out very little,"<sup>90</sup> his influence in shaping the stance of the Dublin Farmers' Association and the operation of his own farms is evident. He is quoted in the *Irish Independent* as saying: "After five weeks of an unnecessary strike, it was time to take steps to save the remainder of the crops" and he proposed to engage "free labour" from "Cavan, Longford and Leitrim" to do it.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, one

account credits A. J. Kettle with starting the “free labour” movement in Dublin against “the combination among the strikers.”<sup>92</sup> Throughout October and November 1913, there are numerous newspaper reports about the transport and utilisation of “free labour” on A. J. Kettle’s farms and those of his nephews.

For A. J. Kettle, his position was fully justified in response to Larkin’s “violent career of mischief,” which, he argued, had “not bettered the men’s position as much as a fair [...] trade union would.”<sup>93</sup> He declared it was a “waste of time” to seek industrial peace if Larkin “is to be allowed to ride roughshod over everyone who differs with him” and calls for Irish labourers to “organise trades unions of their own.”<sup>94</sup> Significantly, A. J. Kettle attacked the democratic legitimacy of the ITGWU, asserting that “[n]o man of its many members was consulted about starting it or working it. It is all Larkin from top to bottom.”<sup>95</sup> Further, he felt deeply that Larkin’s campaign was inimical to Ireland’s bid for national self-determination and lambasted “English labour leaders [who] are supplying food and money to force a needless labour war in Ireland.”<sup>96</sup> Ultimately, A. J. Kettle viewed Larkin as a dangerous character who was “out to assert personal dictatorship at the expense of men who are trying to extend and establish manufacturers,” which for him was an essential part of achieving national independence.<sup>97</sup>

In some respects, the intensity of A. J. Kettle’s opposition to Larkin’s campaign and the striking labourers could appear to be inconsistent with his lifelong fight against landlordism in Ireland, including his role in promoting the tactic of the “rent strike” during the Land War. A. J. Kettle was a radical voice for land reform and he advocated policies of rent control, redistribution of land, and the developmental state – all of which set him apart from free-market liberals. For him, the transfer of landownership from landlords to the people who worked the land was integral to Irish self-determination. Importantly, while not opposed in principle to private property, A. J. Kettle believed that agricultural land was “the national property” and its nominal owners were stewards of this collective resource.<sup>98</sup> In con-

trast, Larkin's main goal was to dismantle capitalism by seeking to end private property and its privileges. Also, as his memoirs show, A. J. Kettle was deeply committed to democratic means and open debate as the principal methods for bringing about change, and using strike action only as a last resort and under particular conditions. As a veteran organiser who had spent decades building up tenant-right networks and assiduously negotiating alliances and platforms, the first-resort, disruptive tactics of the ITGWU and its perceived top-down modes of engagement were particularly anathema to Kettle.

More fundamentally, Kettle's thinking remained strongly oriented to the preeminent value of land. In 1885 he had argued that "every interest in Ireland hinges on the one industry of agriculture."<sup>99</sup> From this perspective, his vision of social justice included the radical idea of "free land for labourers," insisting that "unless Ireland can place her labourers in a satisfactory condition there is little chance of social prosperity."<sup>100</sup> He continued: "[T]o give our labourers a fair start they must get land rent free" and be extended low-cost, long-term loans to build their homes.<sup>101</sup> This was A. J. Kettle's dream – the replacement of landlordism with an ever more egalitarian system, whereby the land would be under the stewardship of the farmers and labourers of Ireland in the service of national development. In addition to directly threatening his own hard-won livelihood and that of his extended family, Larkin's campaign threatened A. J. Kettle's vision of Irish agriculture as a realm of opportunity and innovation, and relative harmony among differently sized farmers and well-provided-for labourers, on the long road to national self-determination.

Tom Kettle was also a prominent contributor to debate and action in response to the labour unrest of 1913. He shared his father's assessment of Larkin's personality and tactics, describing him as "picturesque, eloquent, prophetic, at once dictatorial and intimate," as a man who "organized not so much a trade union as an army."<sup>102</sup> However, in contrast to A. J. Kettle, Tom Kettle's sympathies were

squarely on the side of the workers. He said they had “fought with admirable courage [...] and a great deal of idealism and soldierly sacrifice.”<sup>103</sup> When the dispute had ended, he lamented the fact that “not a single member of the submerged fourth [the quarter of the population that was living in poverty] seems to be any nearer a living or [...] an economic wage.”<sup>104</sup>

On 7 October 1913, in an effort to break the deadlock between employers and workers, Tom Kettle set up the Industrial Peace Committee to campaign for “an immediate truce between the conflicting parties” in order to enable negotiations to take place and to “consider and propose measures tending toward permanent peace between employers and employed in Dublin and toward economic prosperity of the city and the country.”<sup>105</sup> Over a period of five weeks, the Industrial Peace Committee, under Tom Kettle’s chairmanship, coordinated deputations to and from the leading employer and trade union bodies; public engagement via meetings, dissemination of circulars, and gathering of signatures of support; and preparations for a hoped-for peace conference.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately, the employers refused to participate, ensuring the failure of the initiative, even though the striking workers were in favour of it. On 23 October, “8,000 ITGWU members march through Dublin in protest at the employers’ rejection of [the] Industrial Peace Committee’s initiative.”<sup>107</sup> Tom Kettle summed up the outcome as he saw it: “The workers have talked wildly and acted calmly; the employers have talked calmly but acted wildly.”<sup>108</sup> This was possibly the most public airing of differences in view and approach on a major public issue between the respected Land War veteran and his famous son.

Laurence Kettle’s direct role in relation to the 1913 industrial conflicts was relatively minor in his capacity as deputy electrical engineer with Dublin Corporation. On 1 October 1913, ITGWU labourers were ordered not to unload a shipment of coal at the Poolbeg Generating Station (known locally as the “Pigeon House”) where Laurence worked because the company that owned the delivery boat had supplied goods to William Martin Murphy’s Dublin Tramways



Company. A statement by Laurence published in the *Freeman's Journal*, citing witnesses, makes it clear that the ITGWU had no dispute with Dublin Corporation or the terms and conditions of its employees and that Laurence had spoken directly with the mayor and to James Larkin to try to resolve the issue constructively, but to no avail.<sup>109</sup> The following day, after an inquiry into the situation, the Electricity Supply Committee directed Laurence, as the deputy electrical engineer, to “make arrangements for unloading the vessel.”<sup>110</sup>

### DISRUPTION AT THE FOUNDING MEETING OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS IN 1913

Some weeks later, on 25 November 1913, Laurence Kettle and Eoin MacNeill, in the roles of honorary secretaries, presided at a public meeting to formally establish the Irish Volunteers. However, as Laurence stood to read the manifesto of the new organisation, a group of members of the recently formed Irish Citizen Army (ICA) – established by James Connolly and Jack White in response to violence directed against picketing workers – began to “heckle and harass the meeting,” shouting down Laurence and cheering for James Larkin.<sup>111</sup> The headline of the *Irish Times* report on the event declared: “Irish Volunteers. New Nationalist Movement Meeting in Dublin. Larkinite Outburst. Stormy Scenes.” The report noted: “While Mr. Kettle was speaking considerable confusion ensued, but other speakers were quietly heard.”<sup>112</sup> Several thousand were in attendance. In addition to Eoin MacNeill, Michael Davitt Jr. and Patrick Pearse also spoke. Laurence Kettle was singled out as an alleged “active enemy of the working class’s effort to combine for its own benefit.”<sup>113</sup> It is very unlikely that Laurence’s personal role in dealing with the coal hold-up at the Pigeon House the previous month was sufficient provocation for the intervention. But his presence on such a large and prominent public platform presented a tactical opportunity to the ICA to register opposition to the significant involvement of “moderate nationalists” and Irish Parliamentary Party supporters in the leadership of the Irish Volunteers by

protesting the actions of Laurence's relatives, who had engaged "free labour" on their north County Dublin farms.<sup>114</sup>

#### AFTER 1916

A. J. Kettle died in September 1916, aged 83, having lived an extraordinary life of public engagement spanning from the Great Famine to World War I. Following the labour unrest of 1913, the years 1914 to 1918 were marked by growing uncertainty, political upheaval, and the threat of civil war in Ireland. It was an exceptionally cruel period for the family during which four Kettle siblings died prematurely and tragically: Josephine (d. 1914), Margaret (d. 1915), Tom (d. 1916), and Andrew (d. 1917). Within three months of A. J. Kettle's death, the family home at St. Margaret's and the farms that A. J. Kettle had acquired and developed since the mid-1880s were sold at auction. The total value of A. J. Kettle's estate in 1916 was £4,307. (Nominally, this amount would be worth approximately £430,700 in 2022, but it was probably considerably higher if the value of lands and associated buildings are calculated at twenty-first-century market values.) In all, A. J. Kettle's estate included 386 acres of agricultural land. To put this in context, in 1916, there were approximately 10,000 farm holdings in Dublin, 70 per cent of which were still farmed by tenant farmers. The average size of a Dublin farm was 45 acres (18 hectares).<sup>115</sup>

A. J. Kettle's estate included four farms. First, the original McCourt farm bought about 1894 consisted of c. 170 acres of "prime quality" land "suitable for grazing or tillage," which in 1916 was rented out for £162 p.a. and subject to "Board of Works charges" of about £36 p.a. and a Poor Law valuation of c. £181.<sup>116</sup> The "dwelling house," which had been the Kettle family home for about 20 years, was a two-storey house with two reception rooms, five bedrooms, a servant's room, kitchen and pantry, as well as various outbuildings and stables. A second large farm of c. 106 acres at Bonnybrook (in present-day Coolock) had been "bought out in 1912 under Land Acts 1903-6" and was subject to an annual payment to the Land Commission of

about £153. It included eight labourer's cottages and some outbuildings.<sup>117</sup> A third medium-sized farm at Kilmore had been farmed by A. J. Kettle since the 1870s. Kilmore consisted of 69 acres, 17 of which were bought out in 1895 under the Land Acts of 1891-96, a further 35 of which were in the process of being bought under the Land Acts of 1903-9, and 16 held under a "judicial tenancy," whereby the rent had been determined by the courts.<sup>118</sup> One auction notice describes the two-bedroom dwelling house, "Kilmore Cottage," where Jane, Laurence, and Tom were born before the family moved to Millview, Malahide, as "substantial and comfortable" with a "good garden and orchard."<sup>119</sup> Finally, the estate included a fourth average-size farm of 41 acres with some stables, a cattle shed, a gate lodge, and a small dwelling house, "Primrose Cottage," most likely located near Drynam, Swords. The farm had been purchased under the Ashbourne Act of 1885, making it A. J. Kettle's first purchase. It was subject to annuity of £44 p.a. and a Poor Law valuation of £65.<sup>120</sup>

Andrew Kettle Jr. and Laurence Kettle were named as executors and beneficiaries of their father's will. One newspaper notice stated:

The late Mr. A. J. Kettle [...] left his household furniture, plate, etc. to his wife and two daughters, Alice McGuinness and Kathleen Kettle; £200 to another daughter who is a nun; £300 to his son, Charles; and the residue subject to some small bequests, to his wife, son[s] and two daughters, Alice McGuinness and Kathleen Kettle.<sup>121</sup>

Within one year of the auctions of the family farms and properties, only Charles continued to live and farm in the Newtown, St. Margaret's, area, at least until the mid-1920s. The management of the substantial estate of A. J. Kettle ultimately fell to Laurence after Andrew Jr. died. All evidence indicates that for the rest of his life he took this responsibility very seriously and ensured that the needs of his mother and surviving siblings were met and that his nieces and nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews benefitted in small and large ways from the family inheritance.

## REMEMBERING LARRY KETTLE

The paragraphs above describe Laurence Kettle's life as a pioneering engineer and a lifelong public servant who was motivated by an abiding commitment to the economic and social development of Ireland, both pre- and post-independence. On a personal and family level, he is remembered for his consistent kindness and generosity to immediate and extended family members over many years. There is evidence that he provided significant financial assistance to Tom Kettle during 1915, which was a particularly difficult year for his brother as he battled depression and alcoholism, from which he appears to have successfully emerged.<sup>122</sup> After Tom's death, Laurence ensured that Mary Sheehy Kettle and Tom's daughter, Betty, received support. One grandniece (Mary Kettle Grimes) recalls being told that after her grandfather, Andrew Jr., died in 1917, Laurence arranged for his 15-year-old nephew (also called Andrew) to attend the Atlantic College of Wireless & Cable Telegraphy in Kerry, where he completed training to become a radio officer. She remembers that Laurence sent a cheque to her family each Christmas, which was very welcome.

Laurence's grandniece Anne Mooney (Sr. Genevieve) recalls that he supported refurbishment projects for the Dominican community at Muckcross Park, to which his two sisters and grandniece belonged. Anne Mooney also remembers as a child in the late 1930s her mother (Laurence's niece, Genevieve [Kettle] Mooney [1901-1943]) being invited to dinner by "Uncle Larry" at Restaurant Jammet, Dublin's premier restaurant. Laurence's niece, Betty Kettle, had attended University College Dublin and qualified as a solicitor and, in 1943, had married Joseph Dooley. However, she suffered from mental health problems from an early age and a short time after her marriage went to live at Verville Retreat in Clontarf, where she was cared for until her death in 1996. When Laurence died in 1960, he left instructions for the creation of a trust whereby the majority of

the estate he left would be used to support the care of Betty Kettle for her lifetime. The nominal value of Laurence's estate in 1960 was £64,000 (which would be approximately £1 million in 2022).

Finally, Laurence Kettle's undertaking to edit and publish his father's memoirs in 1958, while he himself was 80 years of age, reveals both a depth of commitment to his father's memory, and also to the scholarly value of making the memoirs available to future generations as a unique historical resource that illuminates the telling and retelling of the complex story of the emergence of independent, modern Ireland.



*Laurence J. Kettle, 1939*

# Notes

1. Kettle, L. J. 1958b, ix.
2. Kettle, L. J. 1958a, xxi.
3. Kettle, L. J. 1958a, xxi.
4. *Weekly Irish Times*, 8 May 1915, 'News of the Week.'
5. Department of Agriculture 1923.
6. *Clear* 2007, 5.
7. *Irish Independent*, 30 June 1952.
8. See notices in, for example, the *Drogheda Independent*, 28 August 1897, and the *Irish Times*, 20 April 1908.
9. Lyons 1983, 19.
10. 'Mr A. J. Kettle, Junr, Wanderers CC, Winner of 46 Prizes during 1897 on his R&P Racing Bicycle.' Framed photograph in the possession of the Kettle family.
11. Kettle, A. J. 1901.
12. Pašeta 2008, 7.
13. *Drogheda Independent*, 30 May 1903, 'Funeral of the Late Mr. William Kettle'; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 February 1915, 'Funeral of Miss Margaret Kettle.'
14. *Freeman's Journal*, 11 December 1917.
15. *Clear* 2007, 74.
16. Kettle, M. S. 1964.
17. Lyons 1983, 17.
18. Lyons 1983, 39.
19. Lyons 1983, 39.
20. Kettle, M. S. 1917, 14.
21. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap 8.
22. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap 9.
23. Thanks to Nollaig Rowan, who is married to Margaret's great-grandson, Charlie Downey, for this discovery.
24. *Evening Herald*, 20 June 1927.
25. *Clear* 2007, 96.
26. Pašeta 2008, 15.
27. Lyons 1983, 50.
28. *Drogheda Independent*, 30 September 1916.
29. Breathnach and Moynihan 2012.
30. In 1918 the number was 9,576 (*Clear* 2007, 96).

31. Clear 2007, 77-80.
32. Clear 2007, 79.
33. *A Century of Memories* 2000.
34. Lyons 1983, 318.
35. Kettle, M. S. 1964.
36. *Freeman's Journal*, 15 September 1908, 'Death of Mr. Ralph McGuinness.'
37. E.g., see *Irish Daily Independent*, 30 May 1893.
38. Lyons 1983, 317.
39. Clear 2007, 26.
40. Lyons 1983, 318.
41. *Irish Independent*, 2 December 1916, 'Estate of Late Mr. A. J. Kettle.'
42. Pašeta 2008, 1.
43. DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Laurence J.:'; IME 1907.
44. DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Laurence J.:'; IME 1907.
45. IEE 1921, 34.
46. Pašeta 2008, 34.
47. Pašeta 2008, 79.
48. Pašeta 2008, 89.
49. DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Laurence J.'
50. DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Laurence J.'
51. Keating 1930.
52. *Irish Times*, 15 April 1931, 'An Electrical Success.'
53. *Irish Times*, 15 April 1931, 'An Electrical Success.'
54. The award was accompanied by a medal designed by Alfred G. Power that featured Laurence Kettle's profile (Power 1933).
55. O'Doherty and Fitzgibbon 2014.
56. O'Doherty and Fitzgibbon 2014, 40.
57. O'Doherty and Fitzgibbon 2014, 41.
58. *Irish Press*, 9 August 1935, 'Power and Water Plan: Experts Report on the Liffey Scheme'; *Irish Press*, 24 April 1940, 'Poulaphouca: Dublin's New Source of Water.'
59. DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Laurence J.'
60. *Freeman's Journal*, 16 March 1917.
61. *The Nation*, 24 May 1879; *The Nation*, 14 May 1881.
62. *Irish Daily Independent*, 27 September 1894.
63. *Drogheda Independent*, 30 May 1903, 'Funeral of the Late Mr. William Kettle'; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 February 1915, 'Funeral of Miss Margaret Kettle.'
64. Brady 2017.

65. Brady 2017, 22-23.
66. Brady 2017, 27.
67. Brady 2017, 28.
68. Brady 2017, 28.
69. E.g., *Freeman's Journal*, 2 August 1907, 'County Dublin Farmers' Association'; *Drogheda Independent*, 6 February 1915, 'Dublin Farmers' Association Annual Meeting.'
70. Brady 2017, 20.
71. Brady 2017, 27.
72. Leddin 2019, 19.
73. Lyons 1973, 277.
74. Leddin 2019, 41-42.
75. Lyons 1973, 279.
76. Yeates 2000, xxvii.
77. Yeates 2000, xxvii.
78. Yeates 2000, xxiii.
79. Yeates 2000, 9.
80. See Brady (2017, 28) for a discussion of P. J. Kettle's activism on behalf of farm labourers.
81. Yeates 2000, 9.
82. *Drogheda Independent*, 4 October 1913, 'How the Week Went Over.'
83. *Drogheda Independent*, 4 October 1913, 'How the Week Went Over.'
84. *Irish Independent*, 25 October 1913, 'An Eviction at Swords.'
85. *Irish Independent*, 24 November 1913, 'Terrorism in Swords: Cowardly and Dastardly.'
86. *Freeman's Journal*, 2 October 1913, 'Corporation Coal Held up by Transport Union.'
87. *Evening Herald*, 1 October 1913, 'Farmers Help Each Other.'
88. *Evening Herald*, 1 October 1913, 'Farmers Help Each Other.'
89. *Drogheda Independent*, 4 October 1913, 'How the Week Went Over.'
90. Kettle, L. J. 1958a.
91. *Irish Independent*, 23 October 1913, 'Farmers' Action to Fight Larkinism: Importation of Free Labour.'
92. *Sunday Independent*, 2 November 1913.
93. *Irish Independent*, 6 December 1913, 'Obstacle to Peace. Letter from Mr. A. J. Kettle Sen.'
94. *Irish Independent*, 6 December 1913, 'Obstacle to Peace. Letter from Mr. A. J. Kettle Sen.'
95. *Irish Independent*, 6 December 1913, 'Obstacle to Peace. Letter from Mr. A. J. Kettle Sen.'



96. *Freeman's Journal*, 7 November 1913, 'Mr. A. J. Kettle and the Free Labour Campaign.'
97. *Drogheda Independent*, 29 November 1913, 'Mr. Andy Kettle on Larkin.'
98. Kettle, A. J. 1958, chap. 4.
99. Kettle, A. J. 1885, 3.
100. Kettle, A. J. 1885, 33-34.
101. Kettle, A. J. 1885, 33-34.
102. Kettle, T. M. 1918, 117.
103. Kettle, T. M. 1918, 119.
104. Kettle, T. M. 1918, 120.
105. *Daily Express*, 21 October 1913, 'Dublin Industrial Peace Committee Official Report.'
106. *Daily Express*, 21 October 1913, 'Dublin Industrial Peace Committee Official Report.'
107. Yeates n.d.
108. Kettle, T. M. 1913, 446.
109. *Freeman's Journal*, 2 October 1913, 'Corporation Coal Held up by Transport Union.'
110. *Freeman's Journal*, 3 October 1913, 'Orders for Unloading.'
111. Leddin 2019, 39.
112. *Irish Times*, 26 November 1913, 'Irish Volunteers.'
113. Quotation from the *Irish Worker*, cited in Leddin 2019, 39.
114. Leddin 2019, 42.
115. CSO 2016.
116. *Drogheda Independent*, 2 December 1916.
117. *Irish Independent*, 23 December 1916.
118. *Irish Independent*, 23 December 1916.
119. *Irish Independent*, 23 December 1916.
120. *Drogheda Independent*, 2 December 1916.
121. *Irish Independent*, 2 December 1916, 'Estate of Late Mr. A. J. Kettle.'
122. Kettle, T. M., et al. 1914. T. M. Kettle letters to General Hammond.

# Introduction [1958]

LAURENCE J. KETTLE

*The original introduction by Laurence Kettle to his father's memoirs that appeared in the print version of The Material for Victory, published by C. J. Fallon in 1958.*

My father wrote these Memoirs during the last years of his life, when he was disabled by rheumatism. He left instructions that they were to be published by my brother Tom. Possibly foreseeing that Tom might die before himself, he had told me that, failing Tom, he wished me to take over and publish the Memoirs. He said that, although Tom was obviously the most suitable editor, he was satisfied that he had other sons capable of the work. He never discussed the Memoirs with me, nor, I think with anyone, and I had little idea of what they were like.

After the deaths of my father and Tom in 1916 the manuscript was handed to me. It was written on very small sheets of ordinary notepaper, rolled up and tied in small bundles. I did not examine or even open them, because I realised that at that time little interest would be taken in the Memoirs, and that one would need to wait until national affairs became more settled. This decision may have been a mistaken one, for at that time many thousands of the farmers and agricultural labourers, who owed so much to my father, were still alive and would remember and understand the importance of the successful fight for the land. Nowadays there are very few survivors of the war which transferred the land of Ireland from the landlords to the farmers, and which freed the country generally from the state of serfdom which prevailed before my father's time.

It must be remembered that the Land War was also the War for

Independence. Both Butt and Parnell commenced their political careers as advocates of self-government rather than as land agitators. The land and self-government were always combined as the National objectives. When the Land War was won, the way was made clear for self-government.

The rising of the Young Irelanders in '48 and the Fenian Rising in '67 were unfortunately failures. They did not have the support of the people, because they were not based on the existing realities of life, but on abstract ideals of nationhood. One of the few realists amongst the Young Irelanders was Fintan Lalor. He said that "The land question contains, and the legislative question does *not* contain, the material from which victory is manufactured."

Fintan Lalor grasped the fact that the land fight had to come first, if a strong National organisation was to be built up. The approach to National independence had to be made by first making the farmers independent of the landlords.

The Land War was won, but at a heavy cost, not only of lives lost, but of suffering and of endurance. To achieve this victory, it was necessary to obtain the support of all those of Irish blood, both at home and in America – Fenians and non-Fenians. These were welded together for the first time by Charles Stewart Parnell.

The average Irish citizen of to-day has only a hazy idea as to who Parnell was, and he probably never even heard of A. J. Kettle, although "Andy" Kettle was known in every Irish home only 60 years ago.

These Memoirs were never intended to form a sequential history of the Land War, and the Appendix will assist the reader in understanding the course of events during the period reviewed.

When St. Gauden's [Augustus Saint-Gaudens's] statue of Parnell was on exhibition in the Hibernian Academy, my father spent some time inspecting it. He said that it had not the slightest resemblance

to Parnell from any viewpoint. Similarly, with regard to the various “lives” of Parnell which had been published in his time, he stated that it was evident that the authors knew absolutely nothing of a personal character about Parnell.

These Memoirs will serve a useful purpose, by filling some gaps in Irish history. They give a view of the real Parnell, and correct many misconceptions of his character and his actions. For the information of the present generation, I have added a Biographical note of Andrew J. Kettle.

*I am indebted to Mr. J. J. O'Leary and Mr. T. Gahan for the encouragement and help they gave me in connection with the preparation of this book.*

# Biographical Note [1958]

LAURENCE J. KETTLE

Andrew J. Kettle married Margaret McCourt, daughter of Laurence McCourt, of Newtown, St. Margaret's, Co. Dublin. Laurence McCourt was an agricultural produce factor. He was very fond of hunting and was a member of the Ward Union Hunt. Local tradition still points out jumps of his, beside which Becher's Brook would appear insignificant. When he died the St. Margaret's farm was bought by my father and was farmed for some years by my eldest brother.

Andrew Kettle lived for some time in Drynam House, which was the original home of that well-known old Catholic family – the Russell-Cruises. He farmed the Russell-Cruise demesne lands during the years when Robert Russell-Cruise was living in France. Later he moved to Kilmore, Artane, where he had acquired three holdings. After some years he moved to Millview, Malahide. He returned to Kilmore for some time, and eventually moved to St. Margeret's to the old McCourt home, where he lived until his death.

Millview, Malahide, was the home of the Andrew Kettle family for many years, and most the family were born there, so that they regarded Malahide as their home town. Millview was a long, rambling, two-storey house, in which the one-storey kitchen and the domestic out-offices formed a separate building, joined to the house by a passage-way which divided the upper from the lower stable yards. The house is now divided to form two residences.

## MILLVIEW AS A TEST CASE

The Mill which justified the name of the house was the old windmill on the top of Feltrim Hill, about two miles away. The house stood on

a holding of some ten acres, divided into two fields, one field in front of the house and the other behind it. The holding was rented from Lord Talbot de Malahide, and when the 1881 Land Act, which set up the Land Courts, came into effect one of the first applications for the fixing of a fair rent concerned Millview. As Andrew Kettle was so well known as a leader of the land agitation, and as the holding was regarded as a borderline case, Lord Talbot and the landlords generally were determined to make as big a fight as possible. The landlord's case was that Millview was not an agricultural holding but a gentleman's residence, with just enough land for such a residence, and that it did not come within the scope of the Act. The tenant's case was that the place was an agricultural holding, and that the house, being rather large for the size of the farm, arose from the fact that the Kettle family was a large one, and that it was the family rather than the land which lived in the house.

The landlord side in their anxiety to win the case were not satisfied to engage one valuer for the holding, but engaged two independent valuers – one for the land, and one for the “gentlemen's residence.” At the hearing of the case the land valuer was the first to give evidence. Counsel exchanged a few friendly words with him, and then asked: “In passing from one field to the other did you go near the house?” “Oh, yes, I passed just beside it.” “Did you have a good look at it?” “I did.” “And what did you think of it?” “I thought it was a dilapidated old structure.”

The house valuer was never called, as that answer settled the case; the agricultural status of the holding was established, and a fair rent was fixed.

## THE DAILY ROUND

Although Millview was used for agricultural purposes it was a very minor item of my father's farming activities. Whilst farming the holdings in Artane he lived most of the time in Millview, although

there was a residence on the Artane property. This was long before the motor car era, and the journey from Millview to Artane was by pony trap. My father's business and his political interests brought him frequently to Dublin. The normal round on these occasions was to walk a mile to Malahide railway station and then by rail to Dublin. When he had completed his business there he travelled by tram to the Malahide Road, walked the two miles to the Artane farm, and when he had finished his farming work he completed his round by pony trap to Millview.

Andrew Kettle was a man of unusual mental and physical energy and alertness. Frequently, after a long day of hard work he would say: "I have writing to do, but I will take twenty minutes sleep first." He would lie down on an old horsehair sofa in the living room, and inside two minutes he would be asleep. He would wake up in twenty minutes, perfectly fresh and alert, and would proceed to write, perhaps a pungent letter to the *Freeman's Journal* on some political or agricultural phase. He had Napoleon's gift of being able to sleep and wake as he desired.

## FEATS OF STRENGTH

Stories were told of his physical feats in his younger days. Kinsealy forge was a local meeting place, and one evening he found the locals trying who could lift the anvil. Those who could lift it at all only raised it a foot or so from the ground. He was invited to try what he could do, and having taken a good look behind him he seized the anvil and threw it clean over his head and out through the doorway. Even when he was no longer young, I have seen him do some remarkable feats in the most casual way. In ricking straw or corn it was a usual thing, as the rick got higher, to place men at intervals on a ladder set against the rick and to hand up the forkful of straw or hay from one man to the next. In a busy threshing time, when it became necessary to move the ladder to a new position, I have seen

him seize the ladder, and with the warning: "Hold your holt," carry the ladder, complete with man, to the new position.

#### DR. WILSON OF MERRION SQUARE

He enjoyed good health generally until he was in the seventies, although Kilmainham affected him more than was the case with his less robust colleagues who were not open-air men in ordinary life. He did, however, have a serious attack of inflammation in one of his eyes in early middle age. He consulted Dr. Wilson, who had succeeded Sir William Wilde in his Merrion Square practice as an oculist. Dr. Wilson said he had never seen such a virulent attack, and that he was afraid he could not save the sight of the eye. He prescribed a course of treatment, but said that it was experimental, and that much would depend on the co-operation of the patient who had to record and report his condition and observations day by day. On the basis of these reports the doctor varied the treatment and eventually made a complete cure.

Dr. Wilson furnished no account, and when my father asked him how much he owed him, Wilson said: "You owe me nothing, but I owe you a great deal. I have gained a great reputation amongst doctors from my treatment and cure of your eye. This success would have been impossible if it had not been for your remarkable keenness of observation and your accurate reports."

The only other doctoring I remember until his later years was the removal of an anthrax from his neck, after which he always wore a silk scarf in place of a collar.

#### INVALIDED

For the last seven years of his life he was disabled by rheumatism and was able to get about very little. However, his mind remained as



clear as ever right up to the time of his death, and he lost nothing of his keenness of observation, his interest in public affairs, and his understanding and memory of events.

The Memoirs were written during his later days and are evidence of his mental clearness and his remarkable memory. My brother Charlie ran the farms in Kilmore and Newtown, but his father took a day-to-day interest in all the farming operations, and his advice and suggestions were always of great value.

The tedium of his invalid life was relieved by visits from his faithful old friend, Alderman Flanagan, who drove out to see him nearly every Sunday, with his daughter, now the wife of W. T. Cosgrave. Another visitor in those days was Father Aloysius Corbett of Clarendon Street.

#### INTEREST IN SPORT

My father took a well-informed interest in sport generally, but without attaching any great importance to it. He had a good knowledge of what was going on in horse racing, cycling, and athletics, and he occasionally went to important athletic meetings at Ballsbridge. He had a great admiration for our high jump champion of the nineties, J. M. Ryan, the Tipperary man. This was not so much on account of the height he could jump, which was only about 6 ft. 1 in., but by reason of the wonderful grace and ease of his performance. There was none of the gymnasium contortions which are such a feature of present-day high jumping. "He goes up like a bird," was my father's comment. All this was before the coming of the motor car, and when every village in Ireland had its annual cycling and athletic sports.

My father never rode a bicycle, but my elder brother Andy was no mean performer on the road and on the grass track. He had the unusual cycling distinction of holding at the same time the end-to-end record on the "push" bicycle and on the motor bicycle.

## A FARMING PIONEER

My father was one of the best informed and most progressive farmers in Ireland. He was always one of the first to try out new agricultural machinery and had one of the earliest self-binders in this country. I remember one piece of machinery which took our juvenile fancy, not on account of its performance but by reason of its impressive name. It was a German machine and the name painted on it was “Kunstdungerstreumaschine” all in one word.

Another machine which I remember was a large windmill which we installed for the purpose of pumping a quarry. Although it was impressive on account of its size, it did not produce much in the form of horse-power and was later replaced by a comparatively insignificant looking oil engine.

## OLD DUBLIN FIRMS: MCKENZIE'S AND DRUMMOND'S

I remember that all these machines were got through the medium of Thomas McKenzie and Sons, of what was then Great Brunswick Street. I believe Mr. Cadle, who installed the windmill, is still alive, but Mr. Hall, who was the manager in McKenzie's, died a few years ago. Mr. Hall was always anxious to get the opinion of my father on everything concerning farming, as he regarded him as one of the best authorities in Ireland.

Another famous old firm, also of Scottish origin, with whom we did a good deal of seed corn and potato business, was Drummond's of Dawson Street. Both these firms are still flourishing.

## THE BARLEY BUYERS

We were tillage farmers and grew a good deal of barley, amongst

other crops. This was sold to the brewers and distillers, usually to Guinness's, Jameson's, and Power's. It was generally sold on samples exhibited in the Corn Exchange, and delivery did not take place for some time. In these fifty shilling days it may be of interest to note that at the time in question fifteen shillings as a very high price for barley, even for first quality, saved in good condition.

### CATTLE FATTENING

Although we were tillage farmers, we always had a few cattle, which were raised from the calf stage to the fat bullock without any stall feeding. There was one field on the Bonnybrook farm which was a marvellous place for finishing off the cattle. This field, known as "The Moat," had never been broken up in our time. There was a tradition that to plough it would bring bad luck, and that accidents to men and horses had always followed such attempts. The field was said to have formed part of the Clontarf battlefield, and ancient weapons had been dug up there.

### HORSE BREEDING

My father also did a little in the horse-breeding business, not race horses or hunters, but farm and road horses. He specialised in Clydesdales, which were great, heavy horses, bought mainly by Guinness's. We were regular exhibitors at the R.D.S. Spring Show, long before the horse was supplanted by the internal combustion engine. I have on the sideboard a silver cup for the best horse and farm cart in the show, won in the two successive years – 1888 and 1889.

## FARMERS AND BRAINS

My father often expressed amusement at the widely held belief that farming needed less brains than other occupations, and that if you had a son who was none too bright you should make him a farmer. He stated that to be a reasonably successful farmer one had to have not only a good brain, but also qualities and abilities which were not so necessary in other walks of life. He had to have an intimate knowledge of the workings of God's creation, and the way in which nature performed its miracles. He needed to be particularly observant and foreseeing, and quick to grasp opportunities of weather, men, and markets.

## CHARLES STEWART KETTLE

My brother Charles managed the family farms for the years during which his father was disabled by rheumatism. Charlie was himself a remarkably able, well informed, and enterprising tillage farmer, and he had occasional differences and arguments with his father concerning farming matters and methods. Charlie told me that his later experience showed that "The Governor was always right."

## LITERARY TASTES

My father says in his Memoirs that the chief item of his mother's "fortune" was a large collection of books, bound in calf, and ranging from Homer and Horace to Smollett and Sterne, with a good sprinkling of more modern authors down to Moore, Burns, and Scott. He seems to have read these in his youth, and it was certainly a remarkable literary course. In later life he added a good deal to this library. I seldom heard him quote from any author except Burns, whose works he knew by heart.

He was on friendly terms with our County Dublin poetess – Kather-

ine Tynan – and also with our Northern novelist and poetess, Mrs. M. T. Pender. As boys we always looked forward to the next instalment of Mrs. Pender's serials in the *Shamrock*, a weekly national periodical which also published [William Francis] Lynam's Mick McQuaid [stories]. This journal was owned by Piggott and was afterwards bought by Parnell.

Frank Hugh O'Donnell was a regular correspondent of my father's, and his satirical verses were a great joy to Tom and to me.

My father never kept copies of his correspondence. This would have been of considerable interest today, considering the prominent public men with whom had had close touch. He did leave a few Parnell letters, one of which, written in 1886, is reproduced in these Memoirs. There is also a letter from Mrs. Pender, written in 1881, which may be of interest.

MRS. PENDER

Dear Mr. K.

I have pulled this page out of an old scrapbook. It is a ballad, written without thought on the impulse of the moment, to an old Scots Jacobite air. You will recognise it, I think, but I forget the name of it.

M. T. P.

The ballad was published in the *Boston Pilot*, February 5th, 1881, and the last verse runs thus:

Far o'er the ocean's foam,  
Exiles from hearth and home,  
League for the old land, and shoulder to shoulder,  
Come in their thousands deep,  
Come like the West wind's sweep,

True hearts and strong arms to shield and uphold her.  
Follow thee, Parnell, yes, ages thy name shall bless,  
Long hath old Erin's heart trusted thee fairly,  
Under thy banner high, swear we to win or die,  
Lead us to victory, bonnie Prince Charlie.

## POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES

Although my father was so actively engaged in politics his children were not as interested in the subject as one might expect. The principal reason for this was that they were too young to be taken into his confidence. Anyhow, in those days children or women were not encouraged to take an interest in such matters. The occasional visits of political personages to dine in our house, and the turn-out of the local band to play in front of our hall door, were the principal events which linked us youngsters with the political issues.

The Memoirs cover most of the political questions of my father's time and these need not be reviewed here. One important difficulty of the Land War has, however, not been emphasised. This was the fact that the Irish leaders had not only to combat the enemy but had also to convert their own friends and followers. It was not always easy to convince even the well-educated farmer that the rents which prevailed were unjust, because they were based on the tenant's work and improvements, rather than on anything which the landlord had contributed.

When my father was organising test cases for the Land Courts he interviewed one well-known farmer in order to get him to bring a highly-rented farm of his into the Courts. At the time, agricultural prices were high, and my father's friend said he was making good money on the farm, and that he could not in conscience swear that the land was not worth £8 an acre. My father asked him: "What was the land worth when your family first got it?" Is it something which the landlord has done which has made the land worth £8 an acre,

or is it the sweat and labour of your father and your grandfather?" The question had only one plain and honest answer; and the farmer who could not swear that the land was not worth £8 an acre went into Court and swore that the landlord's property in the farm was not worth half that money. This was a typical case.

## THE CHURCH AND THE LAND WAR

Some Churchmen were rather chary of expressing approval of the tenant's Land War claims as these claims were regarded as an encroachment on the rights of private property. However, the Irish bishops and priests, who understood the rights and wrongs of the case, were as a rule on the Irish side. The lack of approval of the tenants' claims came from people who had been misinformed regarding the real facts. The Parnell Tribute in 1883 showed this clearly, and also showed that the Irish people understood the position. The Vatican expressed disapproval of the Parnell Tribute on May 11th, 1883. The amount contributed at that date was £7,700. On June 19th the amount was £15,000, and on December 11th it was £37,000.

## THE PARNELL TRIBUTE

In connection with the Parnell Tribute I found amongst my father's papers a list of subscribers who had handed their contributions to him personally. This list is of interest, as it is a fairly representative sample of the staunch old County Dublin people of those days.

---

Patrick O'Neill	rJames Stewart
Joseph O'Neill	James O'Neill
William O'Neill	Gerald Rice
Fergus O'Neill	James Kennedy
Mark Quinn	John O'Neill
John Quinn	James Butterley
Thomas Grehan	C. Dunne
James Grehan	E. Malone
W. H. Cobbe	John Kelly (Pill Lane)
Patrick Stanley	Michael Flood
Peter Reilly	C. Byrne
Peter Whelan	Charles Byrne
Robert Smyth	T. Neary
W. Masterson	John Barr
John Fitzsimons	Ambrose Farrell
James O'Reilly	E. McCormack
John Gill	R. Brown
Nicholas Long	Joseph Delany
John Martin	L. McCourt
Michael Flanagan	John Butterly
John Daly	W. Dowling
Thomas Carr	Joseph Lawless

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#### HAD NO PATIENCE WITH INEFFICIENCY

Anything my father did he did thoroughly, and he had little patience with feeble or inefficient handling of any work. As he himself said, he had a “holy horror of amateurs,” and of what he called “weak-wristed people.” On such performers he could be devastating in his comments – “Did Pat Smith do that job right (some farm work)?” “He did.” “Then there must have been only one way of doing it.” He was a keen judge of men, and seldom made a mistake. “My men always win,” was a favourite remark of his; and they generally did.

The men he admired most were Napoleon and Parnell, and they certainly showed no lack of efficiency. My young brother Charlie, who was born about the time of the Parnell crisis, was christened “Charles Stewart” after Parnell, and a sister of mine was named Josephine, after Napoleon’s wife, Josephine Beauharnais.



## RELIGION

During the Parnell controversy people who knew him well expressed surprise at the fact that so religious a man as my father should identify himself so completely with Parnell in his last fight. He, however, was quite satisfied that the agitation against Parnell had little to do with religion, but was of a purely political and personal character, and he recognised the supreme importance of Parnell to the Irish cause.

In ordinary life my father lived his religion, and there was no doubt about the reality to him of the Ten Commandments. He often impressed on me the duty of leaving the world a little better than I found it, even if it were in apparently minor matters. Another of his injunctions was: "If you cannot say anything good about a man say nothing at all about him." Father Ryan, the parish priest of Finglas, who visited him frequently when he was an invalid, said he had never met anyone who had such a strong faith and confidence in the Almighty.

## A FATEFUL MONTH

My father often stated that September was a fateful month for the Kettle family. His father died on September 22nd, his mother on September 24th, and his brother on September 25th. He himself died on September 22nd, 1916. Tom was killed in France on September 9th, 1916. His father was very fond and proud of Tom, even from his early school days, and, when I told him Tom was listed as missing, after the battle of Ginchy, he said: "If Tom is dead, I don't wish to live any longer."

## A BOYHOOD VIEW

During the Famine, and after reading one of the terrible Famine bul-

letins, my father's mother made him promise, solemnly and religiously, that if it were God's will to give him means or influence during his life, he would use them to the utmost to prevent the recurrence of such ignorant criminality.

The reader of these Memoirs will agree that Andrew Kettle redeemed in full measure that boyhood vow, and that his son Tom's epitaph for him was well earned:

“None served Ireland better, few served her as well.”

L. J. KETTLE

# Chapter I: 1836-1850 – Youth and Family Influences

*1836-1850 – My Arrival – Boyhood Years – My Mother and My Grandfather – “The Big Wind” – The Great Famine – The Russell-Cruises*

I was born in September, 1833, at Drynam, Swords, County Dublin. When I arrived there happened to be no one about but my great-grandfather, Thomas Kettle, then blind and in his ninety-third year. My grandmother had gone for the nurse who lived a mile away, but she had only just left the house when I came on the scene of the world unaided. Whether this was an indication of a disposition or weakness I had all through my life of labouring to stand alone, or a mere accident, I am not able to say, but so it fell out anyhow.

The farm I was born on was about thirty acres in extent, in a rather out-of-the-way place, but on an elevation giving a good view of the surrounding country and of the sea at Malahide.<sup>1</sup> Save a couple of herd houses there was no dwelling within a mile, but there were a good many relics of by-gone days about the Hill of Feltrim, with its holy well, windmill, lime kiln, and rabbit warren; also the ruins of a mansion where it was said the king stopped when running from the Boyne. We had a stream at Rathtulk,<sup>2</sup> a fox covert at Marshallstown, a lake at Abbeyville, and the 15th-century house of Russell-Cruise's at Drynam.<sup>3</sup> On the whole it was rather an ideal place for a dreamer to start from. He could plunge into the world of country life, or retire, when it suited his humour. But, though isolated generally, we

were the centre of the rarest visitations in the Province of Leinster. There was no such place to be had for a man-fight, a cock-fight, a football meeting, or a wrestling match as on the neighbouring farms of Rathtulk and Marshallstown. I had only to cross the hedge to witness the sports and pastimes, and to see in all their might and glory the men whom O'Connell justly called the finest peasantry in the world. Our homestead was many a time like the centre of a pattern or fair, with vehicles from city and country, and I witnessed all this holiday-making at a very impressionable time between the age of seven and twelve. Why, I think I can yet see a man about thirty years of age and fifteen stone weight, nicknamed "Bulister Connor," somersaulting seven consecutive times round, making a wrestling ring for ten pairs of competitors at the same time.



*Hill of Feltrim, Swords, Co. Dublin, probably late nineteenth century*

Our farm was approached by a genuine Irish boreen with a couple of fairy bushes on the way, which bushes used to give me a good deal of real concern when returning in the dusk from play in the village. I feel almost ashamed to admit up to what age I kept an eye about me when passing these same early landmarks of the imagination.

Our family although not large was a trifle peculiar. At the first census-taking after I was born there was Thomas Kettle and Andrew Kettle, and again Thomas Kettle and Andrew Kettle on the one paper at the same time – four generations in the one house. The Kettles were an intelligent, industrious, honest, hard-working people who came, Dr. Sigerson<sup>4</sup> says, originally from Denmark.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Lyons,<sup>6</sup> one-time M.P. for Dublin City, used to contend that they came from the midland counties of Ireland and that the name was

originally O'Keathley.<sup>7</sup> Wherever they came from I did not inherit very much from them except their good name. My mother was an O'Kavanagh<sup>8</sup> and her mother, Mary O'Brien, was a very remarkable woman in her time. Her medical skill was so much availed of that her large business premises at Turvey was largely used as a kind of private hospital. She was well known to the Dublin surgeons and many cases pronounced incurable came right under her ministrations. She lived at a time when whiskey, not porter, was the beverage of the people, and she made a private request when dying, that her funeral was to take place a day before the usual time to prevent trouble at the great concourse of people that was likely to assemble round her graveside.

As an Irishwoman she held the right faith and played a brave part in 1798.<sup>9</sup> Her family kept an extensive carman stage at Turvey, and she was the messenger and buyer for the establishment. In this way, she armed the men of North Dublin with guns and pikes. Her procedure was on her weekly visit to Dublin to secure an escort for her mission. She was very good-looking and she put her comethers<sup>10</sup> on the Barony constable, a handsome active fellow named Leggett, whose headquarters were in Swords. This young Government man met her at Santry on her weekly journey from Dublin, and unconsciously sat on the pikes and guns until he saw her and her driver safely past Lissen Hall, through all the turnpike gates and other obstructions. Her sweetheart, Billy Kavanagh, together with Coughlan of Santry, were the two men in command of the Dublin to Swords district of the United Irishmen. They took part in the opening of the fray at Santry, and Billy Kavanagh and Mary O'Brien were to have gone to Tara when ordered by the Dublin Directory, but the Directory was scattered and the order never came. Kavanagh and Coughlan were arrested and barely escaped hanging, but they were both wealthy men and as keepers of carman stages they had opportunities of getting men to get a long day.<sup>11</sup> They were a long time in jail before they were eventually liberated. Mary O'Brien had a little more to do before she settled down to work for humanity. When the Ris-

ing was crushed in Wexford a good many of the scattered remnants of the patriot army found their way to North Dublin. There were a few harboured by the small farmers about Killeek and other places, but the majority found refuge and succour round Turvey Hill. There seemed to be less suspicion of strangers knocking about a carman stage and large farming establishment where there was a business bustle going on. The chief hiding place of the rebels when the Yeos would be scouring the country, was about the estuary at Rogerstown, where horsemen could not follow them. There Mary O'Brien managed to support them until many of them escaped from Ireland.<sup>12</sup>

My mother imbibed all the Irish instincts of her parents and inherited natural abilities of a very high order. The Kavanaghs had one of the largest farming establishments and business centres in the county, but their fortunes were dissipated by a grand but unfortunate marriage of the eldest brother, John Kavanagh. A woman again!<sup>13</sup> As far as I know the chief item of my mother's fortune on her marriage was a large collection of books. They were substantially bound in calf and they ranged from Homer and Horace to Smollett and Sterne, with a good sprinkling of standard modern works thrown in, down to Moore, Burns, and Scott.<sup>14</sup> The pictures in these books were my playthings in childhood, and the contents were a source of abiding interest at intervals ever since.

My paternal grandfather, Andrew Kettle, was a noted athlete in his time, but he was unfortunate enough to get chronic rheumatism and had to move about with handsticks in my early days. This threw the old man and the child greatly together, and although he had only the rudiments of book-learning, consisting of the three Rs, he had a splendid memory and manner, and was considered the best practical farmer, and the best story-teller of his time. He was my first teacher in learning and afterwards in farming. Wherever he got them I had not the sense to enquire, but in addition to all kinds of romances about fairies and witches and robbers and boxers and athletes, he had stories based on many of Shakespeare's plays, and

on the whole he was most instructive, and as lovable a grandfather as any young chap could have in a lonely place like ours.

I was seven years old in 1840 and I had a good view of agricultural Ireland in the pre-Famine time. Our thirty-acre farm was strong land and required four horses to work it, and it may be interesting to take a photograph of the settlement.<sup>15</sup> Grandfather and grandmother, father, mother, and six children, carter and ploughman, boy, chap and servant girl indoor, thrasher and all. We had over 8,000,000 people in Ireland then and our settlement would feel lonely indeed without a lodger or two, and sometimes as many as ten or twelve. Some of these were poor scholars, or pedlars, or deserters, or professional travellers of many kinds, but most commonly they were broken-down agricultural labourers, or labourers in search of employment. So many would turn up sometimes, that a second or third pot of potatoes would have to be boiled to go around the company. The food and clothing of the family was practically all manufactured on the premises. I have often seen in that small community of a winter's night a woman carding wool, a girl spinning yarn, an old woman knitting, the carter mending harness, the thrasher soleing his brogues, the boy platting a straw hat, the grandfather telling stories or getting some of the lodgers to relate their varied and laughable experiences. The Irish, with all their load of rack rent, and tithe support of an alien church, were then a home-manufacturing and self-supporting people.

The first event of notice I remember was the Big Wind<sup>16</sup> on twelfth night<sup>17</sup> 1839. I was six years old<sup>18</sup> and I was sleeping in the room with my sister Mary and a servant named Betty Bracken, and when I awoke I cried out to the servant. "Betty, Betty! Where did the stars come from? Look at the stars!" It was the stars sure enough. The wind had carried away the roof clean off the room. The servant was a great sleeper and never heard the storm until I shook her. When daylight came, I was in a part of the house still intact, but I could not be kept away from the door. I made a charge out to the yard, but was taken off my feet by the storm, and was saved from destruction

by a man catching me flying around the corner of the house. The stacks in our haggard were carried off their stadlings and lodged in the ditches three fields away.<sup>19</sup>

From 1840 to 1845 things seemed to me to be moving very lively all through Ireland. The land was mostly under tillage and there was a very large proportion of the 8,000,000 of a population employed on the land. Potato growing was brought to great perfection and nearly all the farm work was done by manual labour. The people were trained in a very wonderful way. In the County Dublin I know the labouring people, both indoor and outdoor, were trained in the use of implements and tools and home manufacture of every kind in a way that would rather astonish some of Horace Plunkett's<sup>20</sup> experts. The gentlemen were all practical farmers and the farmers were all workers, and the herds were all veterinary experts. The head ploughman and carters were wonderful experts. The hours of labour were long in summer, and the amount of work got through in a day or a week would be a revelation to some of the workmen now. But the circumstances were all so different. The food was nearly all home made: wholemeal bread; oaten meal grown on the farm made into stirabout<sup>21</sup>; potatoes, generally all floury; first quality butter; bacon, raised, killed, and cured on the premises; milk unadulterated *ad libitum* for everyone and everything, and honey bees in almost every garden. I often held the scales for my paternal grandmother to weigh a pound of bacon for each workman's dinner three days a week, with a quarter of fresh butter and four duck eggs on the other days. No tea, not much butcher's meat unless at Christmas or Easter, but plenty of pork steaks at the pig-killing periods, and the best of pig's puddings or sausages. I think the men of the early forties spent more sweat on amusement, dancing, wrestling, weight-throwing, sack-lifting, and boxing without gloves now and again, than they now have to spend on labour and sport. This is a County Dublin picture. From the number of labourers seeking employment at almost all seasons of the year, from several other counties, I must infer that things were different and not so good in other parts of



the island. But even from County Dublin, a number of young fellows went to England to help to build the railways. No wonder O'Connell called them the finest peasantry in the world. I believe they really were in the early forties, but there was a terrible time approaching for them.

The potato blight came on like a thief in the night, in the autumn of 1845.<sup>22</sup> My experience of its appearance was positive and particular. I was only twelve years old at the time, and was not able to take a man's place in cutting the harvest, but I was able to dig fifteen hundredweight of potatoes for market every day by myself in the field adjoining, lovely apple potatoes. When the corn was cut I was wanted at the drawing in, and when that was completed, I went back to the potatoes, but the blight had intervened and I could not get fifteen stone of sound tubers for a day's digging. Consternation, incredulity, dismay, and despair crept slowly over minds and hearts so free from care a short time before. The people, to a large degree, and the livestock of the whole county, lived mainly on the potato crop, so that the failure not alone left the people without food but without the means of procuring food of other kinds. The people of County Dublin got through 1846 without any great upheaval, and the land was cropped much the same as usual, but when the anxiously awaited harvest arrived and the blight set in again, a shriek of despair rang out over the land and everything was paralysed and struck down. Swords was the labour centre for one half of North Dublin, with a considerable extent of commonage on both sides of it on which houses had been built and gardens enclosed by the labourers. The population at this period was something enormous, and when employment ceased on the land, although within a few miles of Dublin, we had all the horrors of a terrible famine all through 1847. There were no wilful murder verdicts brought in by the coroner's juries against the Government and landlords, but the rents had to be paid all the same by the starving inhabitants. The working people were driven to seek charity food of such a description as brought on disease and illness of various kinds. There was

no money to buy fuel or food of any kind. Private charity ceased to a large extent, as every clan seemed to have grown selfish in self-defence. The very nature and character of the people became sterilised. The bacon and butter had to be sold to make the rent, and small quantities of inferior stuff substituted. There was a terrible rush to the rotten emigrant ships. I visited some of these to see some boy acquaintances away, and I shall never forget the frightful insanitary state of those coffin boats. Many died on the passage, many more when they landed, and just a few struggled to found homes in America.

Histories of this awful time have been written by prolific pens. I am only glancing at what I saw. I do not remember hearing of anyone being found dead on the roadside in the County Dublin but, short of that, we had hunger and sickness and cold and nakedness all round the place. But the rents were insisted on, and I even had the experience of an unfortunate eviction scene in connection with my own family that threw a further burden to my share. Five young cousins of mine were on their way to the poorhouse<sup>23</sup> when my mother took the horse by the head and brought them into her own home. I used to be knocking about the workingmen's cabins in the evening at this time and saw the men trying to work on Swede turnips and Indian meal. The small farmers were not altogether so much changed, and in our case it was not so bad, as my mother carried away all the spare food and clothes, and much that could not be spared, to the poor women and children about. I sometimes accompanied her on these nightly visits, and it was about this time that my mind became thoroughly imbued with her philosophy of life. The claims of humanity, and her knowledge of the misgovernment of Ireland, convinced her of her duty to teach her children to labour to overthrow landlordism and English domination. There were no daily papers coming our way at that time, but the weekly accounts of the ravages of the Famine in other parts of Ireland used to drive her into paroxysms of indignation, rage, and despair at the soft-handed, ignorant political leaders, the ignorant tyrannical landlords, and the

ignorant, tyrannical, hostile British Government. She said: “They will all go down to their graves with the blood of the unfortunate people on their heads, and their pusillanimous conduct in this awful crisis is certain to re-act on themselves.”

It was after reading one of these terrible bulletins from the County Cork, that she made me solemnly and religiously promise that if it was God’s will to give me means or influence through my life, I would use them to the utmost to prevent a recurrence of such ignorant criminality. Without spending



*Eviction on the Vandeleur Estate, Co. Clare, late nineteenth century*

much time in religious exercises she was a deeply religious woman. All the occurrences of life seemed to come to her “from God’s right hand,”<sup>24</sup> as Davis has it, but her doctrine of humanity has had more effect on the current of my life than all other influences combined. Some of her maxims were: “Remember that the human race will be judged on the doctrine of humanity: ‘I was hungry and you gave Me to eat. I was naked and you clothed Me.’ The crimes against humanity are seldom forgiven. Never reflect on the fallen or afflicted. Beware of hurting anyone to the heart even though circumstances may appear to justify you.” She was fond of quoting Burns on the doctrine of worth and wit against wealth and station, and Shakespeare and Pope on the various circumstances of life. Altogether, she was a profound judge of human nature and human character. I was not in a position to judge the full extent of her powers of intuitive penetration until I made Mr. Parnell’s acquaintance. I found that there was a strange similarity of views between them on many things. I may say something more on this subject when sketching Mr. Parnell’s character.

My personal work in the forties was attending a National school on and off. I was held by my teachers to be a great learner and a great idler, but the course was brought to a rather strange, abrupt termination. Out of school time I was working at all kinds of practical experiments on the farm. I made a pet of a colt, and when he came to be yoked he proved to be a “hard case.” One day my father and a ploughman were trying to train him to work, but the effort was almost a failure. I was sent in the evening to let my father know that a visitor wanted him. He sent the man to some other job and left me to mind the horses. He was kept about an hour and a half, and when he came back, I had more ploughed in the interval than he and the man had all the forenoon. The colt was satisfied to work at my bidding, so I had to go to plough the next morning, and I never went to school afterwards. I threw myself with great gusto into the study of practical farming, and when about sixteen years old I managed to pull off a first prize from fifty of the best ploughmen in Dublin and Meath. But I got a bad attack of nervous fever about this time, the effect of which lasted for some years.<sup>25</sup> This kept me quiet in the early fifties. Still, I was a keen observer of agriculture and politics, but unless at election times I took no active part.

At a meeting of the tenants on the Russell-Cruise estate, where I was born, I made a public statement as to the line which I thought the tenants should take which brought me into collision with the landlord, but I had the satisfaction of converting the landlord and of laying the foundation of a friendship that lasted while he lived.<sup>26</sup> He laid me under a tremendous obligation on his leaving Ireland in 1860 by giving me the tenancy of a large farm of demesne land, out of which a large proportion of the income of his family should come, although he knew that I had not £5 of my own to work it. But under God’s providence I managed in a few years to repay the compliment by advancing him a considerable sum of money without security to bring his family back to the old home. He was an old ’48 man in politics. His ancestors lost their lands for clinging to the old Faith, and he was personally a genuine Irish gentleman. In this connection, I

might mention here that I believe I might have done a little more public work if I could have given more time to it at certain epochs, but I elected to live by tillage farming, a business that requires constant supervision. I had to get land when it was very dear. I had consequently to pay high rents. I was always at war with landlordism and could expect no mercy, so I had to live working with one hand while trying to do a man's share of public work with the other. That is my position even now.

The politics of the forties was, of course, the Repeal agitation<sup>27</sup> organised and led by O'Connell, and the attempt at an armed revolution in 1848.<sup>28</sup> My father was a Repeal warden and I was a member, but I missed going to the meeting at Tara in 1843, by not being called when the party went from our place in some sort of a vehicle the night before. I was booked as a band boy in the Kinsealy band to attend the meeting at Clontarf and was terribly disappointed when it was stopped by order of the leaders. Unfortunately, I never saw O'Connell. The weekly *Nation*<sup>29</sup> was about all the current literature that came my way in the controversy between O'Connell and the Young Irelanders, but I had a mentor in my mother who grieved that they were both up in the moon – or rather on the platform and in the press, when they should have been organising the people in every parish to seize the food, and stop the whole business of town and country to save the lives of the people, or to force the Government to feed them in the jails and penitentiaries. She used to say that Fintan Lalor was the only man that wrote right, but no one followed his pleadings, and all the movement went down in gloom and death and failure.<sup>30</sup>

The politics of the fifties was the Tenant Right rally in 1852, and the parliamentary petitioning on every conceivable subject. The clergy were held by many to be responsible for the failure of the '48 men in their armed revolution. I think that is a very mistaken view, but I think they acted in a very shortsighted way with the Tenant Right effort in 1852.<sup>31</sup> To be sure, the outbreak of war between Russia and the European powers in the Crimea<sup>32</sup> gave a smart rise to all kinds

of agricultural produce and this must have had a quietening effect on the land agitation. The effects of the Famine and the failure and death of O'Connell, and the dispersion of the '48 men, cast a kind of paralysis over the body politic during this decade. Petitioning at the chapel doors was the only kind of effort the clergy encouraged, and there were no lay leaders of any consequence.

The agriculture of the fifties was a large curtailment of tillage and the commencement of the extensive pasture system. The free importation of corn ran down the price of cereals after the close of the Russian war. Spade labour was abandoned to a great extent and short methods substituted. The ridging system of cropping was greatly in vogue in nearly every part of the country before the Famine. This was found to be too expensive now with the reduced population, and drill husbandry was substituted. This change could only be made on a flat system of cultivation, and to adopt this successfully thorough drainage, or some kind of drainage, had to be started. Many of the leading farms and progressive landlords borrowed money from the Boards of Works for this purpose. On the whole I think there was more produce raised from the land at the close of the decade than perhaps at any time previously.

## Notes

1. The once rural landscape described by Andrew J. Kettle in this paragraph is in the heart of present-day, suburban Fingal County in North Dublin. Signalling the enduring impact of the Kettle family, a local road named Kettles Lane extends about two kilometres from the northeast of Dublin Airport in the direction of Malahide. The Kettles Memorial Park (opened in 2017 in honour of Andrew J. Kettle and his son, Tom Kettle) and the birthplace and original dwelling house of A. J. Kettle are located on Kettles Lane on land once farmed by the Kettles, who were a Catholic tenant farmer family.
2. The contemporary standardised spelling of this townland name is Rahulk.
3. A. J. Kettle was born on the Russell-Cruise estate, which consisted of

Drynam (or Drinan) House near Swords on approximately 450 acres. The Russell-Cruise family traced their lineage back to the original 'old English' and Norman conquests. After the Protestant Reformation, the Russell-Cruises remained Catholic and as such were disadvantaged relative to Protestant landlords. However, the family retained ownership of the Drynam estate, which passed down to successive generations until it was sold in the 1920s (Irish Family History Centre n.d.; Old Yellow Walls n.d.). As noted by Laurence J. Kettle in his original Biographical Note in this volume, A. J. Kettle also lived in Drynam House for a number of years when he was responsible for running a large part of the Russell-Cruise farm in the 1860s, while the Russell-Cruise family lived in France.

4. George Sigerson (1836-1925) was born in Strabane, Co. Tyrone, to a well-off family. The youngest of 11 children of a Catholic father and a Protestant mother, he was educated locally and in France at Saint Joseph's College, Montrouge, where he excelled in European classical and modern languages. Later, Sigerson qualified as a physician but was known mostly as a literary figure and supporter of the Irish language and Gaelic games. J. B. Lyons writes that Sigerson described himself as 'an Ulsterman and of Viking race,' framing the 'Norse' heritage of Ireland as a counter identity to 'Anglo-Saxon' Britain (DIB 2009, 'Sigerson, George').
5. Robert Spencer Dyer Lyons (1826-86) was a physician and Liberal politician, born in Cork to parents William Lyons, a merchant and later mayor and high sheriff of Cork, and Harriet Spencer Dyer of Kinsale. Educated in Hamblin and Porter's Grammar School in Cork and Trinity College, he qualified as a surgeon in 1849 and served as a British army pathologist in the Crimean War (1853-56). He was professor of medicine and pathology at the medical school of the Catholic University of Ireland (later University College Dublin) in Cecilia St., Dublin, and in 1870 served on a commission of inquiry into the treatment of Irish political prisoners, which enhanced his standing among nationalists in Ireland (DIB 2009, 'Lyons, Robert Spencer Dyer').
6. Sigerson's speculation about the Viking roots of the Kettles became part of family lore. J. B. Lyons notes that Tom Kettle's juvenile accounts of his remote ancestors characterised them as Norse conquerors (Lyons 1983, 17). Lyons takes this account from a school contemporary of Tom Kettle, Oliver St. John Gogarty, who recounted it in *It Isn't This Time of Year at All! An Unpremeditated Autobiography* (1954).
7. The basis of Robert Dyer Lyon's proposition of the O'Keathley origins of the Kettle family lineage is unclear but Kettle's mention of it suggests his desire to establish the Kettle family's deep roots and identity in Ireland.
8. This is most likely 'Kavanagh' without the 'O' as Kettle uses 'Kavanagh' in all subsequent references to his mother's family and the civil records available online for the time and area (such as at Irishgenealogy.ie) show no returns for the name 'O'Kavanagh.'
9. The Irish Rebellion of 1798 was an uprising against British rule in Ire-

land organised by the Society of United Irishmen, a republican revolutionary group inspired by the American and French revolutions, which is notable for drawing together Irish people of all denominations in common cause. Notwithstanding its swift suppression, the 1798 rebellion is widely perceived to be a formative event in Irish history, the details and significance of which continue to be examined. Centenary celebrations in 1898 played a role in the development of twentieth-century Irish nationalism, while key figures of the rebellion, such as Wolfe Tone, became symbols of later expressions of Irish republicanism (Wikipedia 2022, 'Irish Rebellion of 1798').

10. A seductive spell or charm. An Irish variant spelling of 'come-hither,' as in 'she had a come-hither look in her eyes.'
11. The expression 'to get a long day' in this context refers to the practice of seeking a reprieve from hanging and requesting a prison sentence instead. Kettle is speculating that due to the relatively privileged status of his grandfather Billy Kavanagh, as a proprietor of a thriving inn (a 'carman stage' serving carriage drivers), Kavanagh and fellow United Irishman member, Coughlan, secured such a reprieve for their parts in the 1798 rebellion and served sentences instead of hanging.
12. Further evidence is needed to support this anecdotal account of the role of Mary O'Brien Kavanagh as a celebrated informal medical care practitioner and an activist in the 1798 rebellion.
13. This patriarchal quip could be a version of the frequently articulated negative view of Katherine O'Shea as instrumental in the demise of Charles Stewart Parnell.
14. This anecdote, and the positive account of all he learned from his grandfather in the next paragraph, underline the informal and self-taught nature of A. J. Kettle's education. It also reveals the cultural influences that shaped his worldview. In addition to the ancient classics (Homer and Horace), the authors recalled are celebrated Scottish writers and poets – Tobias Smollett (1721-71), Robert Burns (1759-96), and Walter Scott (1771-1832) – as well as Irish-born writer Laurence Sterne (1713-68), author of the nine-volume *Tristram Shandy*, and lyricist and United Irishmen supporter Thomas Moore (1779-1852), who wrote the well-known song 'The Minstrel Boy.' Kettle's choices signal a formation in liberal, Romantic movement ideals and a rebuttal of sectarian ideas of Irishness.
15. In a 1959 review of *Material for Victory*, historian Kevin B. Nowlan remarked on the particular value of these passages in Chapter 1 in providing 'an account of farming life in north County Dublin in the years before and after the famine which should make rewarding reading for the student of social history. It helps to emphasise a point, sometimes forgotten, that a story of uniform misery does not do justice to the pattern of regional differences in pre-famine Ireland' (Nowlan 1959, 344).
16. The Night of the Big Wind (Oíche na Gaoithe Móire) was a powerful windstorm that swept across Ireland and Great Britain on 6 January 1839, destroying property and causing hundreds of deaths. Up to a quarter of houses in North Dublin were damaged or destroyed and



over 40 ships were wrecked (Wikipedia 2022, 'Night of the Big Wind'). The press reported: 'Dublin has [...] been visited with decidedly the most awful storm in our recollection, or which perhaps, ever took place in this part of the world' (*Freeman's Journal*, 7 January 1839, 'Awful Storm'). Another newspaper account described how 'windows were smashed, doors burst open and roofs blown down [and] slates, stones, and timber were whirled through the air as straws' (*Connaught Telegraph*, 9 January 1839).

17. 'Twelfth night' refers to the twelfth night after Christmas Day, 6 January, also known as the Epiphany in the Christian calendar.
18. As A. J. Kettle was born in September 1833, he would have been five years old on 6 January 1839.
19. A 'haggard' is a farmyard enclosure where ricks of hay or corn are stored. A 'stadling' is a stand or foundation used to stack agricultural produce.
20. Horace Plunkett (1854-1932) is best known for his pioneering work in developing the cooperative movement in Ireland. Born in England of Norman-Gaelic ancestry, his family settled in Co. Meath in the twelfth century. By the late nineteenth century the family possessed a large estate and castle at Dunsany. Plunkett was educated at Eton and Oxford, where he read history and learned about the British movement for consumer cooperation. Partly to fend off tuberculosis, for a decade from 1879, Plunkett spent several months each year ranching in the state of Wyoming in the western United States. Informed by this experience, and keen to contribute to the development of agriculture in Ireland, he established his first cooperative creamery in Co. Limerick in 1891. Gradually, Plunkett won the trust of Irish farmers and in 1894 established the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, which became the coordinating body of a thriving cooperative movement with hundreds of affiliated societies (DIB 2009, 'Plunkett, Sir Horace Curzon').
21. Stirabout is oat porridge cooked in milk or water.
22. The Great Famine began in 1845 when potato blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) spread rapidly throughout Ireland, destroying half of the crop in 1845-46 and about three-quarters of the crop over the next seven years. In the context of British colonial rule, the beleaguered poor tenant farmers of Ireland relied heavily on the potato as a source of food. Consequently, the blight had a devastating impact on the country and its population, resulting in the death from starvation and related causes of roughly one million and at least another million forced to emigrate mostly to America and Britain (History.com 2022). The shock of the Great Famine set in train a downward trend in the population of Ireland, whereby 4.5 million men and women left the country between 1850 and 1911, for America, Britain, Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, leading to a decline in population during this period from 6.5 to 4.4 million (Hatton and Williamson 1993, 575).
23. The Balrothery Poor Law Union, established in 1839, covered 120 square miles including Swords. The 'poorhouse' that A. J. Kettle's five young cousins were bound for is most likely the Balrothery workhouse

located on 24 acres close to Lusk. It opened in 1841 with a capacity for 400 'inmates' and a burial ground. During the Famine, a 48-bed fever hospital was erected at the site along with additional 'sleeping galleries' (Collins 2005; Higginbotham n.d.).

24. This is a reference to the poem 'A Nation Once Again' ('For Freedom comes from God's right hand') by Thomas Osborne Davis, a founder of the 1840s Young Ireland movement for independence and democracy.
25. Typhoid fever, a water-borne disease characterised by high temperature, red spots on the chest, bowel pain, and sometimes death, was commonly called 'nervous fever' in the nineteenth century. Epidemics regularly occurred in Ireland, where they were exacerbated by the conditions caused by the Great Famine. The biggest killers in nineteenth-century Ireland were typhus, cholera, typhoid, and dysentery (Dorney 2020).
26. The landlord was Robert Russell-Cruise (1827-c. 1905). Robert married Mary Dillon Smith in 1852. Kettle's description of his relationship with the Russell-Cruise family exemplifies the 'more nuanced picture' of landlord-tenant interactions written about by Terence Dooley (e.g., Dooley 2018, 18).
27. The objective of Daniel O'Connell's Repeal campaign of the early 1840s was to re-establish the pre-1800 Irish parliament on more representative lines in the belief that this would enable adoption of measures to improve conditions for all the people of Ireland. A 'Repeal rent' raised funds for the campaign on the model of the 'Catholic rent,' which financed O'Connell's drive for Catholic emancipation two decades earlier. As a Repeal warden, Kettle's father gathered the Repeal rent from subscribers in his locale. The Repeal campaign was remarkable for its signature 'monster meetings' through which O'Connell mobilised tens of thousands of supporters in peaceful, festival-style demonstrations. The authorities grew increasingly anxious by these displays and banned the planned monster meeting on 7 October 1843, which Kettle was looking forward to attending as a ten-year-old boy. In line with his commitment to non-violence, O'Connell complied with the ban, which disappointed many followers. This accelerated the decline of O'Connell's influence as a popular leader (Adelman and Pearce 2005, 42-45). A. J. Kettle's youthful participation and the influence of his father's activism in the Repeal campaign illustrate his early socialisation into civic engagement and political organisation aimed at advancing the democratisation and development of Ireland, which would define his life's purpose.
28. The failure of the Repeal campaign, the death of O'Connell in 1847, and the unfolding devastation of the Great Famine, set the stage for the more assertively nationalist Young Ireland movement to gain in influence. Among its leaders were Thomas Davis (d. 1845), James Blake Dillon, Charles Gavan Duffy, James Fintan Lalor, John Mitchel, and William Smith O'Brien. While these were mainly writers and intellectuals, in May 1847, Mitchel, who advocated most explicitly for armed rebellion, was arrested and transported for 14 years. A poorly organised rebellion

in July 1847 was quickly suppressed. Nonetheless, the Young Ireland movement served to revive the ideal of fighting for an independent Irish republic and, through the writings of Fintan Lalor, in particular, linked the struggle for Irish freedom with the struggle against Ireland's oppressive land system (Adelman and Pearce 2005, 64-65).

29. *The Nation* was a weekly nationalist newspaper of the non-sectarian Young Ireland movement, established in 1842. It ran until 1848 when it was suppressed and was revived again in 1849. Its founding editors were Charles Gavan Duffy, Thomas Davis, and John Blake Dillon.
30. Here, Kettle again asserts the strong influence of his mother, Alice (Kavanagh) Kettle, as shaping his political commitments, rooted in the ideas of Fintan Lalor (1807-49), a nationalist writer, activist, agrarian reformer, and a leader in the Young Irelander Rebellion of 1848. While broadly sympathetic to the goals of the Repeal campaign and the Young Ireland movement, Kettle signals his agreement with his mother's analysis that both were insufficiently rooted in an understanding of the material conditions that produced immense hardship for the majority and the imperative of transferring ownership of the land to the ordinary people of Ireland.
31. As Ireland emerged from the Famine, approximately 17,000 families were evicted in 1849 and 20,000 in 1850. In 1849, the first Tenant Protection Society was organised in Kilkenny with 20 similar societies established across Ireland by 1850, mainly in Connaught, Leinster, and Munster. These groups were the backbone of the Tenant Right rally that Kettle refers to here. In parallel to the formation of the Tenant League, Charles Gavan Duffy (one of the Young Irelanders) and Frederick Lucas (a convert to Catholicism and founder of *The Tablet* newspaper) organised Irish members of Parliament into a short-lived Independent Irish Party (IIP). The 1852 general election returned 48 IIP members who pledged to support Tenant League demands. This included 'fair rents, security of tenure, so long as the rent was paid, freedom of the tenant to sell his interest and improvements, and relief from the Famine Rent arrears,' as Laurence Kettle characterises it in his Appendix to *The Material for Victory* in 1958. As the Tenant Right movement was gathering momentum, in Westminster, Liberal and Conservative parliamentarians engaged in renewed political clashes around the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which aimed to enforce existing restrictions on the Catholic Church in England and prompted the formation of the Catholic Defence Association in Dublin in 1851. The two sets of issues, Tenant Right and the religious rights of Catholics, became tied together in the agenda of the IIP. In this context, the leader of the Irish hierarchy, Archbishop Paul Cullen, viewed the IIP as a potential threat to the Church's authority in Ireland and took steps to curtail the political activism of local priests across the board, which had the effect of weakening popular support for the Tenant League (Lyons 1973, 114-120). Kettle's critical comment that the clergy 'acted in a short-sighted way with the Tenant Right effort' and that it only encouraged 'petitioning at the chapel doors' (and not in Parliament) reflect his views about this wider political context.

32. The Crimean War (1853-56), in which an alliance including the United Kingdom, France and the Ottoman Empire defeated the Russian Empire.

# Chapter 2: My Coming into Public Life and My Support for Isaac Butt

*My Coming into Public Life – I Join Isaac Butt – The Tenants’ League – “The Three Fs” – Church Disestablishment – Land Act of 1870 – Tenants’ Defence Association – Party of “Nominal Home Rulers”*

I was drawn into public life in a rather strange fashion. At the time the cattle plague<sup>1</sup> threatened to ruin the graziers a very prominent able man in my neighbourhood, John Paul Byrne, J.P., who held many public positions in his time, and who lost his seat in the Dublin Corporation for voting against granting the Freedom of the City to Parnell and Dillon, attended in the Corn Exchange to canvass for support for a rate in aid scheme to compensate the graziers for their apprehended losses, and he got men to listen to him (he was an eloquent talker) on the ground that if cattle failed the graziers would be driven to tillage and would flood the market with cheap produce. I happened to be a listener, and when he had silenced or convinced his audience I quietly tackled him and asked some questions that he found it difficult to answer. So, to get rid of the trouble and to put me aside he laid his hand on my arm in a very patronising way and said: “My dear fellow, I am in a hurry and have no time to listen to you making a speech.” I was so annoyed that I retorted: “Well, if you do not listen to me now you will hear from me in the press.” Before I left Dublin that evening I wrote my first public letter and I have

been scribbling on and off ever since.<sup>2</sup> I had a good many notions on land reform jotted down when Mr. Butt<sup>3</sup> published his *Irish People and Irish Land*,<sup>4</sup> so I laid my own work by and determined to work through him, and I got to his side at the first opportunity.



Isaac Butt

After defending the Fenians in the Law Courts,<sup>5</sup> Mr. Butt evidently turned his mind to consider, and to remedy if possible, the grievances and tyranny that drove such brave, single-minded men into revolt.<sup>6</sup> He published two books, his *Plea for the Celtic Race* and *The Irish People and Irish Land*, which excited a good deal of public attention.<sup>7</sup> He then called a public meeting or conference in

the Rotunda<sup>8</sup> to consider the land question, and he there started a new Tenants' League.<sup>9</sup> A. McKenna,<sup>10</sup> a Northern journalist, was the only public man of note that appeared with Mr. Butt at that meeting. We had some remarkable speeches delivered by Father Quaide of O'Callaghan's Mills, Mr. Byrne, a grazier, and Tom Bracken, a noted Fenian.<sup>11</sup> I joined the League and made Mr. Butt's acquaintance. There was a working committee or council appointed composed of any members who wished to hand in their names with the membership fee of one pound. I handed in mine. Mr. Butt got a free meeting room in Harrington Street from Mr. Tristram Kennedy,<sup>12</sup> an ex-M.P. Some of the members took stock of my public letters, and I was pressed to attend all the weekly meetings, which I did, and Mr. Butt and I were on these occasions thrown together a good deal. I happened to be a more advanced land reformer than he was at that time, and I was driven to find arguments to justify my contentions. He commenced as a lease-holder, and I had some trouble to get him

on to the three Fs.<sup>13</sup> After the Fenian flag was pulled down,<sup>14</sup> Sir John Gray<sup>15</sup> in the *Freeman's Journal* entered on a very active crusade against the anomalies and abuses of the established Church. This was probably inspired by the Government to prepare the way for the Disestablishment which followed in 1869.<sup>16</sup> Gray then took up the agitation of the land question to prepare the way for a coming Land Bill. He called a conference in the Mansion House<sup>17</sup> which was well attended by men from all parts of Ireland. Mr. Butt and a contingent from his League attended, and after a rather animated discussion, a platform was agreed upon. The few Farmers' Clubs in Ireland were requested to hold meetings, but the Fenians attacked the farmers' meeting in Limerick, and, as Sir John Gray stated years after, spoiled the land legislation of 1870.<sup>18</sup>

After the Church Act passed in 1869, the Act of Union was so infringed upon by the Church Disestablishment that many leading Protestants assisted Mr. Butt in founding the Home Government League in 1870.<sup>19</sup> The Land Act of 1870 was a very halting measure, but its chief blot was that the majority of the occupiers could contract themselves out of its provisions.<sup>20</sup> The landlords set to work to grant leases or to extend or to vary the terms of the tenancies, and in every case to force the tenants to contract themselves out of the act. The Duke of Leinster was amongst the first to propound the fateful "Leinster Lease."<sup>21</sup> All the legal ingenuity in the country was requisitioned to make this a model instrument for evading the Land Act. The authorities of Maynooth College led by Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin,<sup>22</sup> were amongst the first to protest against this document. Inspired by Cahill, K.C., and Robertson of Naraghmore,<sup>23</sup> a Scotsman, a Tenants' Defence Association was started in Athy.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Butt's attention was at the time centered on the building up of the Home Rule League organisation, his Tenants' League of 1868 having lapsed on the passage of the Land Act. I put myself at once in communication with the Kildare men and started a branch of the tenants' organisation in Dublin. With the aid of Kelly of Donabate, Reilly of Artane, Grehan of Lahaunstown, and all branches

of the reliable O'Neill family, John Fitzsimons, Tom McCourt and others, I got a fairly good centre started in Dublin. Mr. Butt at my request attended some of our meetings and after a little time it was decided to start a central Tenants' Association for all Ireland and this grew to be a great rallying point for all the leading men of the time.<sup>25</sup> We had annual conferences of many delegates from north and south, east and west. Mr. Butt threw himself into the work of land reform in the most determined way.<sup>26</sup> He drafted land bills and had them discussed, and amended or altered, at the conferences before introducing them to Parliament. He worked the Home Rule question on Grattan's lines but without the military volunteers. He struggled hard to get the natural leaders of the people, which in Ireland meant the landlords and the clergy, to rally round the national centre which he established, but they failed to come and the old man's giant intellectual labours drafting bills and expounding Ireland's grievances were wasted on a demoralised, denationalised, and divided people. He succeeded in so far that he drew the Irish parliamentary representation from under the British whips of English parties, but many of the men who professed to represent Ireland only meant to magnify their own personal importance and had no faith in their own professions. After seven years existence the great body of the members who formed the Butt Party only earned for themselves the soubriquet of "Nominal Home Rulers."

The previous order of Parliamentary politics, as expressed by the Irish Catholic Hierarchy and Sir John Gray in the *Freeman's Journal*, which the Butt movement supplanted, did not come publicly into line with Butt's work until the Home Rule conference of 1873 and even then they were never really incorporated with it. A notable but still only a small section of Protestants, led by Professor Galbraith,<sup>27</sup> joined in Butt's demand for Federalism, and some of them dropped back soon to their old moorings with the Garrison Party.<sup>28</sup> Still, whoever writes the history of that time will find a few outstanding men of deep national instincts who were not only sincere



but uncompromising, staunch Irish nationalists, like Galbraith, the Webbs,<sup>29</sup> McNeil<sup>30</sup> and a few others.

Butt's efforts to lead all the inhabitants of Ireland on the lines of nationhood was unique and herculean, and for a man of his age, stupendous. He appealed to the landlords to rally round him as they did around Grattan in 1782 on the national question. He appealed to the farmers and labourers to rally round on the land question. He appealed to the cities to rally round and claim the rights of free citizens, and he appealed to the Catholic Hierarchy to rally round him on the free education question. He



A. J. Kettle, 1878

He drafted bills and expounded arguments on all these questions for all the people of Ireland, and he did all this work on such an exalted standard that Michael Davitt once exclaimed after going over Butt's work, that it would be simply impossible for any man to find a phase of the Irish question which was not elucidated in a superior manner by Mr. Butt.

But the fates were against him so far as immediate success was concerned. Ireland was quiet, business was booming, and most people seemed to be so busy raising rents and taking lands and leases at inflated prices and making settlements on a universal credit system, that there was no real attention paid to public work. The landlords were opposed to his land agitation work. The people were doubtful about the bona fides of the landlords on the Home Rule question. The Protestant Home Rulers and the Catholic clergy were suspi-

cious of each other, so without some special impetus the Butt movement could scarcely succeed even partially.

I got so close to Mr. Butt that I was invited to many of his private meetings, so I had an opportunity of seeing all the different sections under fire. I was so convinced that he was bound to fall under the weight of such an impossible task that I quietly urged him to retire, but his heart was so much in the work of his mission that he seemed to be incapable of contemplating retirement. The end came rather suddenly. His great brain gave way under the terrible strain of over-work, and his death occurred soon after in 1879.

## Notes

1. Increased cattle imports to Britain from continental Europe had brought an epidemic of cattle plague, or rinderpest, in 1865, which resulted in the death or slaughter of more than 250,000 animals. In Ireland, the protection provided by the Irish Sea and an emphasis on cattle export meant that the herds mainly escaped the plague bar a few isolated outbreaks (Adelman 2015).
2. Kettle continued as a prolific writer of letters to the newspapers of the time (Kettle 1885).
3. Isaac Butt (1813-79) was the son of a Co. Donegal Church of Ireland parson. Educated at the Royal School in Raphoe, Co. Donegal, and Trinity College, he became a journalist, an editor, a distinguished barrister, and a professor of political economy at Trinity College. Butt entered Parliament initially as a Conservative MP, serving for Youghal from 1852 to 1865, and then for Limerick as leader of the Home Rule MPs, from 1871 until his death in 1879. The Great Famine and its aftermath caused Butt to recognise that land reform was essential to create a more equitable relationship between Protestant landlords and the Catholic tenant farmers who comprised the majority of the population. As a highly regarded barrister, Butt gained popular support for his efforts on behalf of Fenian prisoners in the late 1860s. In 1870 Butt formed the Home Government Association, followed by the Home Rule League in 1873 (DIB 2009, 'Butt, Isaac'; Kelley 2020).
4. Isaac Butt, *The Irish People and the Irish Land: A Letter to Lord Lifford* (Dublin: John Falconer, 1867).
5. The planned Fenian uprising of March 1867 had been a failure mainly due to the strength of the British forces and their infiltration of the

Fenians. Butt, a highly regarded barrister, had previously defended prominent Young Irelanders (such as William Smith O'Brien and Gavan Duffy) following the Rebellion of 1848 and he gained further popular support by defending Fenian prisoners in the late 1860s.

6. The Famine had weakened Butt's support for unionism and his embrace of Fenianism in the 1860s was the final stage of his political transformation. He threw himself into the cause of amnesty for the prisoners by founding the Amnesty Association in 1870. He was later quoted as saying: 'Mr. Gladstone said that Fenianism taught him the depth of Irish disaffection. It taught me more. It taught me the depth, the passionateness and sincerity of the love of liberty and of fatherland which misgovernment had turned into disaffection' (Bew 2007, 271; *Cork Examiner*, 19 November 1873).
7. Butt published *Land Tenure in Ireland: A Plea for the Celtic Race* in 1866. This brief book, which argued that Irish farmers should be granted long periods of fixed tenure on their rented land, was criticised by prominent Irish landowners, including Lord Lifford (the Deputy Lieutenant for Donegal and a member of the House of Lords), who called the proposal 'communitistic' and an infringement on the rights of landowners. Butt defended his ideas the next year in his 300-page-long *The Irish People and the Irish Land* (1867), attacking the landlords' power of eviction and accusing them of treating the Irish people as 'belonging to a conquered race' (Butt 1866; Butt 1867; Kerrigan 2020, 89).
8. The Rotunda, on Rutland Square (now Parnell Square) in central Dublin was a venue that hosted public meetings, balls, and concerts.
9. This was established in 1868 and lapsed in 1870 on the passage of the Land Act.
10. Andrew Joseph McKenna (1833-72) was appointed editor of the liberal Catholic newspaper the *Ulster Observer* in 1862. His acclaimed essays and powerful speaking ability brought him public attention, but his liberal outlook annoyed the newspaper's owners. When he was fired in 1868 he launched a new paper, the *Northern Star*. He died prematurely at the age of 38 (DIB 2009, 'McKenna, Andrew Joseph').
11. The Fenian Thomas Bracken came to public attention towards the end of 1869 when he took a prominent part in the collection of money for the defence of Robert Kelly, who had been arrested for the shooting of accused Fenian spy Thomas Talbot. He became part of the finance committee of the Amnesty movement that had been established in 1868. A tailor by occupation, he became a central figure in the Dublin organisation throughout the 1870s and oversaw communication with England and America. He was listed by the Dublin Metropolitan Police as one of the ten most prominent Fenians in Dublin between 1876 and 1879 (Shin-ichi 1992).
12. Tristram Edward Kennedy (1805-85) was a lawyer, land agent, and politician. His early career was concentrated on the reform of law and legal education, but it was his reforming work as a land agent in Co. Monaghan during the Great Famine that won him the admiration of Catholics and the Tenant League. In his work as an independent politi-

cian, he came to represent the interests of poor Catholics in Parliament and his contributions were concerned largely with landlord and tenant matters and national and industrial education (DIB 2009, 'Kennedy, Tristram Edward').

13. First issued by the Tenant Right League in its campaign for land reform in the 1850s, the Three Fs were free sale, fixity of tenure, and fair rent. Fair rent was defined as 'payment to the landlord of a just proportion of all profits which could possibly be made on the farm by an industrious tenant.' Butt had favoured the introduction of leases of 60 years (Casey 2018, 140; *Connaught Telegraph*, 19 January 1878).
14. A reference to the failed Fenian Rising and the capture of the *Fenian flag* at Tallaght on 5 March 1867.
15. Sir John Gray (1816-75) was the owner of the Dublin Catholic newspaper the *Freeman's Journal*. Despite being brought up a Protestant, he made a parliamentary career out of his association with the Catholic hierarchy and advocated for tenant rights. He was an active member of the National Association of Ireland, which had been formed in 1864 under the initiative of the Catholic archbishop of Dublin, Paul Cullen. Its role was to promote Catholic interests and, in particular, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and his arguments for Church disestablishment were seen as one of the main influences in persuading Gladstone to address this issue (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Sir John').
16. The census returns of 1861 had confirmed what had already been widely known, that is, that the Church of Ireland, the established church since the seventeenth century, comprised only 12 per cent of the population. Gladstone's proposals for the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland were carried by the House of Commons (Irish Church Act of 1869), while opposition to it by the Conservative government led to a general election, which Gladstone won (APCK 2019).
17. The Mansion House on Dawson Street, in central Dublin, was the mayor's residence as well as popular meeting venue.
18. The 1870 Land Act was not seen as a settlement of Irish issues and so disturbances and agrarian crime continued to provoke much alarmed commentary.
19. This was the Home Government Association, which was founded on 1 September 1870.
20. The passing of the 1870 Land Act gave Irish tenant farmers the right to be compensated in the event of eviction for improvements they had made to the property during their tenancy. While the act was important and symbolic in that it breached the absolute rights of property holders that had existed, it was still possible for landlords to circumvent the provisions of the legislation by raising rents or introducing new leases with restrictive clauses. In this way landlords were entitled to contract out of the operation of the act, thereby depriving their tenants of its benefits. In addition, even though the act offered limited protection for small tenants from exorbitant rents by allowing them to sue their landlords, most small tenants lacked the resources to do this

until the Land League began to provide them with support starting in 1879.

21. The Duke of Leinster was one of the first Irish landlords to attempt to deprive tenants of their entitlements under the 1870 Land Act. The 'Leinster lease,' as it came to be known, included restrictions that side-stepped the provisions of the Land Act by requiring tenants to forgo compensation for improvements they had made. Local opposition to this development led to the founding of the Tenants' Defence Association in Athy (Casey 2018, 130).
22. William Joseph Walsh (1841-1921) was the Catholic archbishop of Dublin from 1885 until 1921. He had been president of St. Patrick's College Maynooth and had achieved a high profile in the areas of land law and education. His desire to keep the Church in touch with the people led to his later identification with the Land League and radical nationalism (DIB 2009, 'Walsh, William Joseph').
23. Thomas Robertson was a grazier from near Athy, Co. Kildare (Casey 2011, 152).
24. The Athy Tenants' Association was the first in a new wave of tenants' defence associations. It was set up in local opposition to the Leinster lease and held its first meeting on 19 November 1872 (*Leinster Express*, 23 November 1872; *Kildare Nationalist*, 29 January 2021).
25. The aim of the Central Tenants' Defence Association was to link existing tenant defence and farmers' associations across Ireland in order to bring collective pressure to bear on Home Rule MPs to achieve tenant rights and effective land reform. In a letter to the Wicklow Tenants' Defence Association, dated 21 February 1873, Kettle writes: 'I am in communication at present with fourteen clubs and associations and am about to open communication with an equal number in the South, for the purpose of getting a conference of deputies from all the tenant bodies in Ireland to meet in Dublin to decide upon what the platform cry of the agitation of all Ireland should be and to establish a Central Tenant League – this will be altogether apart from the County Dublin Association' (*Leinster Express*, 1 March 1873). Newspaper coverage of communications, meetings, and national conferences relating to tenant right activism during the period 1873-79 attest to the constant presence and coordinating role of Kettle as honorary secretary of both the Dublin and central organisations. A mechanism by which tenant farmers could articulate their disappointment with the 1870 Land Act, the establishment of these associations also reflected increased participation in the democratic process following the Secret Ballot Act of 1872 (Casey 2018, 132).
26. Butt became a prominent supporter of the land reform cause stating in 1876: 'The more I study and reflect on the Irish land question, the more I am convinced that it cannot be settled except by a measure that will provide fixity of tenure and an equitable adjustment of rents' (Bew 2007, 297; *Connaught Telegraph*, 23 September 1876).
27. Joseph Allen Galbraith (1818-90) was a professor of experimental philosophy and a proponent of Home Rule. A friend of Butt, he was a

founding member of the Home Government Association in 1870 and was supposed to have come up with the phrase 'Home Rule' for the emerging movement, which was strongly Protestant at that time (DIB 2009, 'Galbraith, Joseph Allen').

28. This seems to be a contemporary term for supporters of the union.
29. This could refer to Alfred John Webb (1834-1908), a radical reformer and nationalist who never joined the Land League but supported it strongly in his words and actions and served as treasurer of the National League (DIB 2009, 'Webb, Alfred John').
30. This is possibly a reference to John Gordon Swift MacNeill (1849-1926), an Irish Protestant nationalist politician and MP (1887-1918), law professor at the King's Inns, Dublin, and the National University of Ireland, and a well-known author on law and nationalist issues (Wikipedia 2022, 'J. G. Swift MacNeill').

# Chapter 3: The Coming of Parnell and the Mobilisation of Tenant Righters

*The Coming of Parnell – County Dublin Election – Cardinal Cullen – Meath Election, 1875 – The Tenant Righters – Failure of Crops in 1879 – My Position – Parnell and Davitt – Irish National Land League 1879 – Dwyer Gray – Parnell Visits America*

Butt died like O'Connell, just when a great change was coming over the destiny of the country. The very week Butt was buried, a dramatic change occurred in the atmosphere that eventually withered up the crops on the land and would have led to a famine of considerable dimensions, only that a kind Providence intervened and brought the two men together, who were born just under the terrible shadow of the famine of '47 – Parnell and Davitt.

At the General Election of 1873,<sup>1</sup> the County Dublin Tenants' Association<sup>2</sup> of which I was honorary secretary, determined, if possible, to get someone to contest the county<sup>3</sup> against Taylor<sup>4</sup> and Hamilton,<sup>5</sup> the leaders of the "Dublin Six," men who had the reputation of being intolerant religious bigots and bad landlords.<sup>6</sup> The tenants had the protection of the Ballot Act<sup>7</sup> for the first time and, although the Parliamentary Register was in a bad way, we still hoped to give the bigots a fright. Amongst other means of progress, we appointed a deputation to wait on Cardinal Cullen<sup>8</sup> to obtain his sympathy

or to learn at least what he had to say about it. The Cardinal gave us an audience at once. The deputation consisted of James O'Neill, William Kelly, Charles Reilly, and myself.<sup>9</sup> In opening the interview, I pointed out that we were anxious to give the electors an opportunity of testing the Ballot Act to disturb, if not to displace, the men who misrepresented the people. One of the deputation, Mr. Kelly, a sturdy Monaghan man, told the Cardinal that we could not hope to reach the electors of the county in time and in force unless through the clergy, and whether rightly or wrongly his Eminence was held to be opposed to the priests taking any part with the people in politics. "Well," said the Cardinal, "I have never issued any orders against the clergy sympathising with the people under suitable circumstances. At the same time it is well known that I am opposed to clergymen rushing to the front to lead the people as they have been doing on opposite sides in Longford and Galway. I hold that it does not become their sacred calling and is calculated to lessen the respect of the people for their pastors in matters of religion. But to prove to you how much I sympathise with you in your present work, if you can get a man or two men who are up to your standard on the questions of the land and Home Rule, and who are up to my standard on education, let me know and I shall make arrangements that you shall get every facility in this contest. This is Monday morning. Now if you can get candidates, let me know by Thursday and I shall arrange that you hold your meetings next Sunday in all the chapel yards of the county. It would not be seemly to hold the meetings in the chapels unless the weather was very inclement. I hope," he says to Mr. Kelly, "you do not expect me to appear openly in this contest." I made answer and said: "I think, your Eminence, it would be bad enough to be beaten without you, but it would be most unwise and impolitic to have you publicly beaten. For my part I have never yet asked a churchman to do a layman's work, and I hope I never shall. Our chief object in asking for this interview was to enlist the sympathy of the clergy and to prevent probable opposition in some parishes." "Well," he said, "I fully sympathise with you and I promise



to give you every facility in the contest, if you succeed in getting suitable men.”<sup>10</sup>

Getting a suitable candidate at three days' notice presented a difficulty, and very little money was available for election expenses. Someone by a happy thought, suggested young Parnell,<sup>11</sup> who had already made an appearance on a national platform.<sup>12</sup> A deputation went at once to Avondale and obtained Parnell's consent.<sup>13</sup> The fight was known to be hopeless from the beginning. Taylor was returned with 2,122 votes against Parnell's 1,141.<sup>14</sup> However, the election shook the landlord monopoly. The election expenses of over £2,000 were paid by Parnell.



*Charles Stewart Parnell*

A year later John Martin<sup>15</sup> died, creating a vacancy in Meath. Meath wanted Parnell, who had been recommended by the Home Rule League,<sup>16</sup> but some people favoured Gavan Duffy,<sup>17</sup> who had just returned from Australia. The nomination meeting was held in Navan. Father Peter O'Reilly of Kingscourt, and his curate, Dr. Michael Tormey,<sup>18</sup> were great Duffyites, and the latter came

to Navan to propose Gavan Duffy, but, to quote his own words which he repeated years afterwards to some of the men who got up the steam in Navan: “When I came near the town I heard people shouting for Parnell, and when I came into the town I could hear nothing but Parnell, and when I reached the meeting place the people were wild about Parnell, so as I was expected to make some move in the matter, I thought the best thing I could do was to say nothing about Duffy, so I proposed Parnell instead.”

After his election to Parliament, Parnell spent most of his time

studying men and things in England, but he attended all our Tenant Right land meetings, taking little part in the business. Still he sat out to the end of the proceedings. I once remember him coming to me after a great conference adjourned, when the officers were getting ready for the press, to get some error corrected in a resolution in which he seemed greatly interested. I took the matter of the correction so lightly that he wondered, and sat down to talk to me about the whole thing, and I told him that there was little chance of our resolution getting on the Statute Book unless an earthquake of some kind occurred, that I was only trying to keep the claims of the people alive, hoping for something to turn up, that it might be useful from a national standpoint to encourage the Ulster custom men of the North and the tenants at will of the rest of Ireland to unite on the land question.<sup>19</sup> "Farming is paying so well now that you must know as a landlord that rents are being pushed up at a terrible rate, and if hard times come again, the country will be in a bad way unless we can get some recognition for the claims of the people to remain on the land, and use their own improvements, such as the Ulster custom seems to give where it prevails."<sup>20</sup> Years afterwards, when he asked me to merge the Tenant Right movement in Davitt's Land League,<sup>21</sup> he quoted my own opinion in favour of the change.

A large number of able, earnest men connected with agriculture turned up on the Tenants' Right platform.<sup>22</sup> Father Tom O'Shea, one of the Callan curates of the Tenant League of '52, was there and Dr. Tormey of Kingscourt. Then there was Marum of Kilkenny, Cahill of Queen's County,<sup>23</sup> Robertson, a Scotsman from Kildare, Byrne, Rior-dan of Cork, Flaherty and Bolster of Limerick, Sweetman of Meath, Caraher from Louth, Roe of Dundalk, Jordan<sup>24</sup> of Enniskillen, Black of Ballymena, McElroy of Ballymoney, and a host of Presbyterian and Catholic clergymen from all parts of Ireland.<sup>25</sup> Some crying necessity for reform, and some driving power to obtain it was all that was wanting to make the land section of Mr. Butt's work effective. It was on this platform I first met John Dillon.<sup>26</sup> A. M. Sullivan<sup>27</sup> introduced him as the son of his father, and a medical student from the West.

He spoke against a revision of rent if it was once fairly fixed, and said that the farmers of the West would never consent to have it revised on the chance of its being raised. The view seemed peculiar at the time, but it was a sound conservative view coming at the time the policy of action was to be adopted in Parliament. Frank Hugh O'Donnell<sup>28</sup> turned up on this platform with Parnell to get some advanced notions<sup>29</sup> into the programme. He was then trying to start a land agitation in England with some success, but there was a bigger movement coming which was destined to put all the land agitation of the seventies in the shade.

When Butt died and the crops failed in 1879, I knew as a farmer the gravity of the situation and I found myself in a rather responsible position as the next in command on the land platform. I felt bound to act and to call the country together to warn the people and the Government to keep clear of the terrible mistakes of 1847 so far as the Tenant Righters could do it. I went through the famine of 1847 and I meant to take steps to prevent a repetition of such a terrible catastrophe. I called a convention in the European Hotel, Dublin. It was well attended by representatives from all Ireland, and amongst the delegates I found just the man I wanted, Dr. Michael Tormey, C.C., a Meath priest, who stood forward like Dr. Magin<sup>30</sup> in '47 to preach revolutionary action to the people to save their lives. He also published some poetry which deserves to find a place in a national collection. I got a while with the Doctor before the conference began, and we concocted what was virtually a rent-strike resolution. He was to propose and I was to second it. He made a most convincing speech, based chiefly on the famine scenes of '47, when the people gave away their scanty harvest and died with the hunger before another came round. I did the best I knew how to support him, but our audience were very conservative, moral, cautious, and law-abiding, so it became evident that we had no chance of getting the resolutions passed, but the discussion ran on for hours and was exceedingly fruitful in a rather strange way.

When the meeting was in full swing, Mr. Parnell came in rather

unexpectedly. He nodded to someone present, and came up and sat down near the Chairman (D. Riordan of Cork) behind my chair. "I want to speak to you," he says, "when the meeting is over. Davitt and I have been out at Artane and we heard you were here." "All right," I said, "but I must attend to this resolution of Dr. Tormey's to see what we can make of it." The discussion went on for a long time, and when some one of the resolution's defenders sat down, Mr. Parnell whispers to me and says, "If you carry that resolution, I will be starved. My tenants are paying me badly now, but if that goes abroad they will pay me nothing." I said, "There is not much chance of this crowd passing it, so you are safe so far." Father White of Mil-town Malbay proposed a much modified and preliminary kind of a substitute for Dr. Tormey's resolution, and after much hesitation it was passed with an understanding that another conference might be necessary further on.

When the meeting ended Mr. Parnell said, "Davitt wants me to go into a new movement with him, chiefly on the land question, but I told him I would be advised by you in the matter. I said, 'I am after coming from the Landlord Camp, and you from the workers, and Kettle occupies a middle position, and knows more about the land question than anyone I know, so we will see what he says.' Now I want your opinion." I asked Mr. Parnell was it to be a secret oath-bound movement, like the Fenian, or was it to be an open call to all the people. He said there was to be no secrecy or



*Michael Davitt, c. 1878*

oaths, but Davitt thought that Henry George's<sup>31</sup> new work could be utilised in the propaganda. On account of Mr. Davitt's connection with Fenianism, I was rather anxious about the lines of the new start. I said, "I have a holy horror of giving any further work to informers." "Well," he says, "I will have nothing to say to it." "Well," I said, "in that case it is just what Ireland wants at this moment." "Then," he says, "you think I ought to go to the meeting with him in Westport next Sunday." "If you keep in the open," I said, "you can scarcely go too far or be too extreme on the land question. Just now we are threatened with another famine, and you have had the first-hand advantage today of learning from responsible men from all parts of Ireland, the condition of the people. You have heard, not revolutionary leaders like Mr. Davitt, but Catholic priests and law-abiding citizens preach a strike against rent. When Mr. Davitt does his utmost, can he do anything more than Dr. Tormey advocated today, unless he goes in for shooting?" "No," he says, and he allowing that curious smile to creep over his face. "I believe the next thing to shooting a man is to starve him." Then he says, "You ought to come to Westport with me," and he indulged in that expression of humour which I think T. P. O'Connor calls unconscious, but which I felt was the reverse at the time. He was in a most hopeful mood after his experience at the meeting, and my endorsement of the contemplated new start, and by way of persuasion he says, "Your name will become a household word in Ireland." "Thank you for your pun," I said, "but I think it would be very bad taste after defending the Old Leader<sup>32</sup> from some of the henchmen of the New Leader to turn up by the side of the new man so soon after the old man's death." "Well," he says seriously, "you are right, but you think I ought to go?" "Go," I said, "with God's blessing, and remember you will need to be extreme to make the right impression." I always thought that Parnell's experience that day, prepared him better for his after work with Mr. Davitt than months of association on the Davitt platform could have done, because he was always suspicious and instinctively cautious in giving himself away on any platform. The information he got by his presence at our meeting he knew was given with-

out reference to him or his projects. At Westport he plunged into the fight in the most wholehearted manner and preached the "Firm Grip" policy without hesitation.<sup>33</sup>

Mr. Parnell intended to introduce me to Mr. Davitt<sup>34</sup> who he told me remained downstairs in the hotel. When the meeting was over, we went to seek Mr. Davitt, but the proceedings had been so protracted that Mr. Davitt went away and I had no opportunity of meeting him until the day the Land League was started.

When the meeting assembled at which the League<sup>35</sup> was founded, Mr. Parnell introduced me to Mr. Davitt who had come prepared with the programme for the proceedings. The first part was that I was to preside. I fought against the distinction and responsibility on all the grounds I could think of until both men told me that I was so much identified with the Tenant Right agitation that the men in America would not have confidence in the new land movement unless the leading Tenant Right men would join, and that if I presided at the meeting it would be evidence that the country was united on the question.<sup>36</sup>

This was so convincing that I debated the question no further. My name was also used in the position of first Hon. Sec. although I did little of the secretarial work. I attended all the Dublin meetings and heard everyone and saw everything without being under the necessity of working. Mr. Davitt, aided by Tom Brennan<sup>37</sup> and assisted by Pat Egan,<sup>38</sup> did all the work practically for some time.<sup>39</sup> Nothing could exceed Davitt's energy and dash, his masterly arraignment of landlordism, and his masculine denouncement of the evils of the land tyranny. The English Government and Foreign Rule were impeached on principle on the lines of equity and justice in a way unheard of before, and it so paralysed the Government crowd, and even the Nominal Home Rulers, that Davittism held the field undisputed until Forster<sup>40</sup> fell back on Coercion in 1881.<sup>41</sup> Parnellism was, of course, gathering strength at this time and Parnell decided to go to America with John Dillon to enlist the material and moral sup-

port of the Irish there. In the early stages of the movement, William O'Brien<sup>42</sup> was on the staff of the *Freeman's Journal* but seemed to have no idea of the importance of the movement, as E. D. Gray,<sup>43</sup> the owner of the paper, was doubtful of the doctrines of Davitt and opposed to the policy of the League. Mr. Gray was admitted to be the chief agent of the English Liberal Party in Ireland and his journal the Whig mouthpiece at that time. But he was an able man and after holding out against the League until its power became indisputable he became its mouthpiece and a great admirer of Davitt and adherent of Parnell.

## Notes

1. This should be 1874. The 1874 general election in Ireland was a success for the newly formed Home Rule League, returning 59 MPs who pledged to support Home Rule.
2. The County Dublin Tenants' Defence Association was established in January 1873 at a meeting chaired by Andrew J. Kettle in the European Hotel, Bolton Street, Dublin. The purpose of the association was to 'unite the tenants against any encroachments on their rights and to promote by every legal and constitutional means the social interests and independence of the tenant class' (*Leinster Express*, 4 January 1873). After co-founding the Dublin association, Kettle set about mobilising support for the creation of a the Central Tenants' Defence Association. Newspaper coverage of communications, meetings, and national conferences relating to tenant right activism during the period from 1873 to 1879 attest to the constant presence and coordinating role of Kettle as honorary secretary of both the Dublin and central organisations.
3. This refers to a Dublin county by-election later in 1874. Sitting Conservative MP Thomas Edward Taylor had been appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and consequently was required to contest a re-election (Otte and Readman 2013, 74).
4. Thomas Edward Taylor (1811-83) was a British Conservative Party politician. In 1841 he was elected Member of Parliament for Dublin County, a seat he held for the rest of his life. In the 1874 Dublin County by-election he decisively defeated Parnell (Wikipedia 2022, 'Thomas Edward Taylor').
5. Ion Trant Hamilton (1839-98) was a Member of Parliament. He succeeded his father and grandfather as Member of Parliament for County

Dublin in 1863, a seat he held until 1885 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Ion Hamilton, 1st Baron HolmPatrick').

6. Taylor and Hamilton were long-time Conservative Party MPs for County Dublin who were both returned in 1874.
7. The Ballot Act of 1872 established the secret ballot, whereby those who were eligible to vote in Ireland could expect to exercise their vote more freely and without intimidation. The act also decreased the cost of political campaigning (Bew 2011, 13).
8. Paul Cullen (1803-78), Catholic archbishop and cardinal, was born into a family of prosperous tenant farmers with roots in Kildare, Carlow, and Meath. He served as archbishop of Armagh (1849-52) and archbishop of Dublin (1852-70s). Although proudly Irish, Cullen was opposed to the Fenians, the Independent Irish Party, and the Home Rule movement because he believed they could not succeed, and, if they did, the outcome would damage the authority of the Church in Ireland (DIB 2009, 'Cullen, Paul').
9. William Kelly (1806-81), Charles Reilly (c. 1810-86), and James O'Neill (1831-96) were leading farmers in north County Dublin and prominent activists in the County Dublin and Central Tenants' Defence Associations and supporters of the Irish National Land League.
10. At this time, clerical involvement in elections had become a source of embarrassment for the Catholic Church. In by-elections in Mayo (1857) and in Galway (1872) candidates had been disqualified because of allegations of clerical intimidation of voters, while candidates actively supported by bishops in by-elections in Tipperary (1869) and Longford (1870) had done badly in the polls (Moran 2002, 190-91).
11. Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-91) was a politician who succeeded Isaac Butt to become leader of the Home Rule League (1880-82) and the Irish Parliamentary Party (1882-91). Born on 27 June 1846 in Avondale House, Co. Wicklow, he was the seventh of eleven children of John Henry Parnell and Delia (Stewart) Parnell. During his childhood, Parnell's family lived in residences in Dalkey, Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire), and at 14 Upper Temple Steet, Dublin. He was educated mainly at home and later attended Magdalene College, Cambridge, but he did not complete his degree. He returned to Ireland to be landlord at Avondale, the heavily indebted family estate. Parnell first became an MP representing Meath in 1875 and grew in popularity in nationalist circles for his participation in Joseph Biggar's strategy of obstructionism and his sympathetic stance toward Irish republican prisoners. He joined forces with Michael Davitt, supported by A. J. Kettle's tenant right networks, to establish the Irish National Land League in October 1879. Parnell successfully toured America and addressed the House of Representatives in early 1880, mobilising financial and political support for radical agrarian reform in Ireland. He was imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail for his role in these efforts in October 1881 and moderated his position thereafter to focus on pursuing the achievement of Home Rule in Parliament. In 1880, Parnell began a relationship with Katharine O'Shea who was then separated from her husband, Captain William O'Shea, an Irish national-



ist MP for County Clare. Charles and Katharine had three children (Claude Sophie, 1882; Claire, 1883; and Katharine 1884). In 1889, Captain O'Shea initiated divorce proceedings, citing his wife's relationship with Parnell. Parnell was soon rejected by the majority of his party, the British political establishment, and the Catholic hierarchy. As a result, he rapidly lost popular support in Ireland. He died in Brighton on 6 October 1891 (DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Charles Stewart').

12. Parnell had hoped to be a candidate for Wicklow in the 1874 general election but, because he was then a serving High Sheriff, was not eligible.
13. A letter to Parnell's brother, John Howard Parnell, from 'Joseph McCarroll of Wicklow, one of Charley's oldest friends and supporters,' recounts: 'After the founding of Butt's Home Rule, its founders turned to Avondale, and a deputation, headed by Mr A. J. Kettle was sent to enlist Charles Stewart Parnell in the new movement' (Parnell 1914, 290-91). Paul Bew also notes: 'Parnell made an important long-term friend during this [Dublin by-election] campaign. Andrew Kettle was the first name on Parnell's nomination papers; he was to be a loyal ally to the end' (Bew 2011, 13).
14. Walker gives the outcome of this election as 2,183 for Taylor and 1,235 for Parnell (Walker 1978, 120).
15. John Martin (1812-75), from a Presbyterian and farming background in Co. Down, had been a supporter of the Young Irelanders in the 1840s and national organiser of Gavan Duffy's Tenant League in the 1850s. He became the first Home Rule MP for Meath at the end of his career (1871-75) (DIB 2009, 'Martin, John').
16. The Home Rule League was a quasi-political party established by Isaac Butt at the end of 1873 to advance the Home Rule cause in Parliament, replacing the Home Government Association.
17. Charles Gavan Duffy (1816-1903) was from a Catholic background in Monaghan, where his father was a shopkeeper and former United Irishman. He established the *Nation* in 1842, the successful Young Ireland newspaper, and the Tenant League in 1850, a political association that endeavoured to improve the conditions of tenant farmers through legislative reform. After a brief stint as MP in the early 1850s, he emigrated to Australia, where he became a prominent politician (DIB 2009, 'Duffy, Sir Charles Gavan'; Lyons 1973, 116).
18. Michael Tormey (1820-93), a Catholic priest from Meath, was a long-time supporter of the Land League and, later, of Parnell (Clare 2003).
19. A belief in the necessity of a unified approach among tenant farmers North and South was a constant theme in Kettle's activism. At a tenant right conference in April 1873, Kettle seconded a resolution proposed by Philip Callan MP that 'this meeting regards with great satisfaction the union at the conference of the representatives of Ulster tenantry with those representing the rest of Ireland, being deeply convinced that the best hope for the country and the protection of the rights of all Irishmen depends on the cordial union of all classes of their coun-

- trymen. [...] They saw the Catholic and the Protestant standing together on this matter and [Callan] trusted the Irish members would all act in unison' (*Irish Examiner*, 19 April 1873).
20. At this time and until the late 1870s, prices for farm produce were strong (Dooley 2000). Landlords frequently gave this as a reason to increase rents. Here, Kettle is expressing concern that even if rent increases could be met in the short term, a downturn in farm produce prices (as did occur in the late 1870s) would create severe hardship for tenants facing high rents that they would no longer be able to afford.
  21. The Land League of Mayo was founded on 16 August 1879 in a distressing context of crop failure, rising rents, and increasing evictions. In a meeting chaired by James Daly, owner-editor of the *Connaught Telegraph*, Davitt read 'a document embodying the rules and objects of the proposed association' (*Irish Examiner*, 19 August 1879). This followed a series of demonstrations and meetings in Irishtown, Westport, Co. Mayo.
  22. This appears to refer to a general meeting of the Central Tenants' Defence Association in late 1877 (*Irish Times*, 19 December 1877) at which John Dillon first appears listed among attendees with Kettle and a 'land conference' organised by the association in mid-January 1878. One of the main resolutions of the conference was proposed by Father Tom O'Shea and seconded by George Noble Plunkett: '[T]hat the committee be appointed to draw up an address to the electors of Ireland, in view of the next election, recommending that no candidate be elected who will not pledge himself to fixity of tenure, revaluation of rents, and the right of free sale, as embodied in Mr Butt's bill; and the following be the committee – namely, Messrs. Isaac Butt, M.P., Kelly, Caraher, Kettle, Robertson, Marum and John Dillon' (*Freeman's Journal*, 18 January 1878).
  23. The name for Co. Laois until 1922.
  24. Jeremiah Jordan (1829-1911) was a Protestant businessman, land campaigner, and MP from Co. Fermanagh. From late 1879 he had become one of the leading activists in Ulster of the Irish National Land League. As a member of the first Ulster branch of the League, he had secured considerable Protestant support for it, presenting it as a law-abiding, single-issue reform body (DIB 2009, 'Jordan, Jeremiah').
  25. The names listed are representatives of different tenants' defence associations and farmers' clubs across Ireland. The representative and interdenominational character of the gathering was clearly important and a source of pride to Kettle.
  26. John Dillon (1851-1927) was born in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, the son of Young Irelander, John Blake Dillon (1814-66). He was educated at the Catholic University and obtained a degree from the College of Surgeons. Dillon was prominent in the Land League and served as MP for County Tipperary from 1880 to 1883 and for East Mayo from 1885 to 1918. Initially a strong supporter of Parnell, in the context of the Parnell split he allied with William O'Brien and Tim Healy against Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Dillon, John').

27. Alexander Martin Sullivan (1830–84) was a nationalist, journalist, and politician. He was born and educated in Co. Cork, the son of a teacher and a house painter. A supporter of the Young Ireland movement, Sullivan became a successful journalist. In 1855 he joined (and after 1858 was the editor and sole proprietor of) the influential *Nation* newspaper, which, under his leadership, moved to equate nationalism with Catholicism. He was elected Home Rule MP for Louth in 1874 and for Meath in 1880, establishing a reputation as a parliamentary orator. He later trained as a barrister and defended Land League committee member Patrick Egan against conspiracy charges (DIB 2009, 'Sullivan, Alexander Martin').
28. Frank Hugh O'Donnell (1846–1916) was born in England, the son of an army officer, and was educated at St. Ignatius College and Queens College Galway. He was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) for a brief time, and was an accomplished foreign affairs journalist and writer. A supporter of Butt's Home Rule League, after two unsuccessful attempts in Galway, O'Donnell was elected MP for Dungarvan in 1877 until 1885, during which time he participated in obstructionist tactics with Parnell, Biggar and others. His complex and often contradictory views led to his eventual political isolation and earned him the sobriquet 'Crank Hugh' (DIB 2009, 'O'Donnell, Frank Hugh').
29. The phrase 'advanced notions' indicates O'Donnell's association with radical agendas and methods.
30. Edward Maginn (1802–49) was a coadjutor Catholic bishop of Derry. In response to the starvation of the Great Famine, Maginn was an outspoken critic of the relief policy of the government and his statements on related issues received widespread press attention. He brought about the dismissal of the board of guardians at Omagh after hundreds died of disease in the union workhouse (DIB 2009, 'Maginn, Edward').
31. Henry George (1839–97), a printer–editor, political economist, and activist, was the most influential American reform theorist of the late nineteenth century. His *Our Land and Land Policy* (1871), *Poverty and Progress* (1879), and *The Irish Land Question* (1881) elaborated on his central idea that private ownership of land and charging rent were unjust and led to poverty. George was engaged by radical newspapers in the United States to cover the agrarian troubles in Ireland. For a time he had close links with Michael Davitt and the Land League (Wilentz 2017).
32. The leader of the Home Rule League, Isaac Butt, died on 5 May 1879, having faced criticism for some time from the radical 'obstructive' wing of the party associated with Joseph Biggar and Parnell.
33. In Kettle's recollection of this conversation with Parnell at a critical juncture in the decision to enter into an alliance with Davitt, he draws a picture of Parnell, the reforming landlord and parliamentarian, who was worried about what could result from joining forces with the radical wing of nationalism and sought out Kettle to provide the 'middle position' and the farmers' perspective. Additionally, Kettle believes that Parnell's presence at the conference, where radical proposals were

debated by moderate actors, played a significant role in encouraging Parnell to move in a more radical policy direction ahead of the planned meeting with Davitt in Mayo. The Westport meeting with Davitt, referred to in this passage, took place on 8 June 1879. Paul Bew offers an assessment of this turning point which is consistent with Kettle's interpretation. According to Bew, although Parnell had approached it with 'obvious hesitancy' (Bew 2011, 54), on the platform, he spoke unequivocally as a 'land agitator,' saying the long-term goal was land purchase, with fair rents and security of tenure being immediate goals. Parnell urged listeners: 'You must show the landlords that you intend to hold a firm grip of your homesteads and lands. [...] You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed, as you were dispossessed in 1847' (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 June 1879).

34. Michael Davitt (1846-1906) was a radical nationalist and land reform activist. Born in Mayo, Davitt and his family migrated to England after being evicted from their cottage. He lost his right arm in a factory accident at age nine. He joined the IRB in 1865 and was arrested in 1870 and convicted of 'treason felony' for arms trafficking. He was released from prison in 1877 due to Home Rule League pressure on the government to grant amnesty to Irish political prisoners. He was instrumental in developing the 'New Departure,' a strategy to combine the IRB and parliamentary wings of Irish nationalism with a focus on achieving land reform in Ireland. This culminated in the establishment of the Irish National Land League in 1879 under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell, Davitt, and Andrew J. Kettle. The leaders of the Land League, including Davitt, were imprisoned in 1881-82. Davitt served as a Member of Parliament during the 1890s, but after the O'Shea divorce scandal he opposed Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Davitt, Michael'; King 2009).
35. The Irish National Land League, popularly known as the Land League, was founded on 21 October 1879 at a meeting in the Imperial Hotel, Dublin. Andrew Kettle chaired the meeting at which Parnell was elected president, Kettle and Davitt were elected secretaries, and Joseph Biggar MP, Pat Egan, and W. H. Sullivan MP treasurers (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 262). Hickey and Doherty note that the radical nature of the Land League expressed in its constitution evoked the ideas of another Young Irelander, Fintan Lalor (1807-49). It called for 'an equitable distribution' of the land 'among the people who are to live upon the fruits of their labour and its cultivation' (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 262).
36. Kettle understates the significance of his role in building the country-wide network of the Central Tenants' Defence Association, as well as the work of the Dublin County association in forging new links between the radical land reform and Home Rule platforms at this time. By recounting this exchange among the three founders of the Land League, Kettle conveys something of the external recognition of his leadership of the tenant right movement of the 1870s and the extent to which the Land League built upon these efforts. Kettle's account is confirmed by Davitt's later appreciation of Kettle as 'both a friend and lieutenant to every leader of the people in his long life of most useful

service to his country' (Davitt 1904, 714). Another glimpse into Kettle's reputation as an organiser is relayed by Frank Hugh O'Donnell. He received a letter in 1879 from the leader of the newly formed Farmers' Alliance in England, eager to be put in touch with Kettle to ensure 'a large contingent to swell the audience at their inaugural public meeting' at Kilburn Agricultural Show (O'Donnell 1910, 1: 363).

37. Thomas Brennan (1853-1912) was born in Co. Meath. He was a nationalist and an IRB activist who was a leading member of the executive of the Irish National Land League after its establishment in 1879 (along with Egan and Davitt). Noted as an eloquent speaker, his speeches frequently linked the demand for peasant proprietorship and equality with the Fenian demand for complete Irish independence (DIB 2009, 'Brennan, Thomas').
38. Patrick Egan (1841-1919) was born in Longford, the son of a tenant farmer. Educated locally, Egan began work as a clerk at Murtagh Brothers milling company. In the 1860s he joined the IRB. Through his involvement with amnesty campaigns for Fenian prisoners in the late 1860s, he came to support cooperation between radical republican and Home Rule efforts, becoming assistant treasurer of the Home Rule League. In 1876, he was expelled from the IRB after its supreme council decided it would no longer support parliamentary engagement. As treasurer of the Land League in early 1881, fearing the organisation was about to be suppressed, he moved to Paris from where he managed the Land League's funds. Egan subsequently relocated to the United States where he continued to support the Land League and other Irish nationalist efforts and became heavily involved in American politics (DIB 2009, 'Egan, Patrick').
39. Thomas Brennan began work as a clerk in Murtagh Brothers milling company along with his friend Pat Egan, both of whom were to become prominent Land League officials. Before that, the two had been members of the IRB, but they became interested in using parliamentary means to achieve radical republican and nationalist goals. Davitt, Brennan, and Egan 'acted as a hard-working triumvirate that virtually controlled the League's executive, although their power was reduced significantly after the creation of the Irish Parliamentary Party (May 1880)' (DIB 2009, 'Brennan, Thomas').
40. William Forster (1818-86) was born in Dorset, England, the only child of a Quaker minister. Educated in Quaker schools, he entered the woollen industry and became a successful businessman with interests in social welfare and educational and parliamentary reform. He visited Ireland during the Great Famine to distribute relief with his father. Forster was elected Liberal MP for Bradford in 1861, holding the seat for the rest of his life. In his first ministerial post, he was Colonial Under-Secretary (1865-66) during the controversial suppression of revolt in Jamaica. He was responsible for the introduction of the Ballot Act of 1872. Forster was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1880, taking office at the height of Land League agitation and a period of moral panic regarding 'crime and disorder.' Initially not in favour of repression measures, he changed tack and introduced the Protection of Person and Property

Act of 1881, known as the Coercion Act, which gave the authorities extraordinary powers of arrest, detention, and proscription of targeted activities (DIB 2009, 'Forster, William Edward').

41. Coercion refers to a series of acts passed to suppress radical movements and their leaders during this period, in this case the Protection of Person and Property Act of 1881. It permitted 'the detention of persons "reasonably suspected" of involvement in high treason, treason felony, or other crime "being an act of violence, intimidation and tending to interfere with or disturb the maintenance of law and order"' (Simpson 1994, 4). Some 955 persons were detained under the act, including Kettle and Parnell, the first sitting MP to be imprisoned since 1715. The Land League was declared illegal and suppressed under the act (p. 4).
42. William O'Brien (1852-1928) was born in Mallow, Co. Cork, the son of a solicitor's clerk. Although Catholic, O'Brien was educated at the local Church of Ireland school. He was active for a time in the Fenian movement, resigning from it in the mid-1870s. He studied law at Queen's College Cork and then became a journalist with the *Freeman's Journal*. In 1881 Parnell appointed him editor of the Land League newspaper, *United Ireland* (DIB 2009, 'O'Brien, William'). O'Brien was one of the main organisers of the 1886-91 Plan of Campaign, prompted by a depression in the mid-1880s, to reduce rents. It was not supported by Parnell. O'Brien joined the anti-Parnellite side in the split following the O'Shea divorce crisis (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 396).
43. Edmund Dwyer Gray (1845-88) was born in Dublin. He was the son of the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, Sir John Gray, whom he succeeded in this role in 1875. A convert to Catholicism, Gray became a Dublin city councillor (1875-83), and a Home Rule MP for Tipperary (1877-80), Carlow (1880-85), and St. Stephen's Green, Dublin (1885-88). A moderate, he was one of eighteen MPs who voted against Parnell's leadership of the party but subsequently supported him. Under his management, the circulation of the *Freeman's Journal* increased and it became highly profitable (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Edmund William Dwyer').

# Chapter 4: The 1880 Election – Parnell’s Election and My Defeat in County Cork

*The 1880 Election – Fenian Opposition in Enniscorthy –  
Cork City and Cork County – Strong Clerical and Whig  
Opposition – Farmers Already Pledged – Phil Callan –  
Parnell Elected for Cork City, Meath, and Mayo – 35 Seats  
Won*

Parnell and Dillon, with Healy<sup>1</sup> as their secretary, were in America when the 1880 Election came on,<sup>2</sup> and Davitt, Biggar,<sup>3</sup> O’Kelly,<sup>4</sup> James F. Grehan<sup>5</sup> and I, with a good many others, went to Cork to meet Mr. Parnell on his return. Some arrangements had been made about contests and candidates, chiefly by Messrs. Davitt and Biggar. I made Biggar’s acquaintance in Cork. I had Cork County arranged and was in communication with leading Tenant Right men in other parts of the country. Parnell travelled part of the way to Dublin in different carriages in order to learn all about the state of affairs. A meeting was held next day in the League rooms, but there was no money to fight the Election. Mr. Davitt had absolute control of the League treasury,<sup>6</sup> and he contended that the money was not subscribed for Parliamentary uses. I thought at first that he was not serious, but he was more, he was determined not to spend the money of the League on Parliamentary contests. This was Davitt’s view, and Brennan and Egan concurred. “But,” I said, “you are surely not going to allow foes to take up all the high places just for the

fun of pulling them down? You can make a revolutionary use of the Parliamentary machine as well as every other political weapon. Get your men elected and don't let them go to England. Keep them at home and start legislation on your own account." But it was no use. Mr. Davitt and the advanced men were firm and a week was lost which left very hurried and hot work afterwards. The following Sunday, Mr. Parnell and Mr. O'Kelly went to a League meeting at Enniscorthy where the platform was attacked by a powerful body of extreme men, inspired by Father Joe Murphy and O'Clery.<sup>7</sup> Among other casualties, Mr. Parnell got his trousers torn from the boot to the hip. He stitched it roughly and wore it during the Election campaign. O'Clery's bludgeon men were more convincing than my arguments, for Mr. Davitt lent Mr. Parnell £1,000 to fight the Elections. I stopped away at my farming during the drifting week, but when I got Monday's paper I drove to Dublin in haste and met Mr. Davitt and Lysaght Finegan<sup>8</sup> in O'Connell Street. "Well," I said to Mr. Davitt, "what now?" He rejoined: "I have advanced money on loan to fight the Elections. He is over in Morrison's<sup>9</sup> and he wants to see you." "All right," I said. "Where is Finegan going?" "I am going to Ennis," he says. I asked: "Are you going to win?" "Well," he says, "if we don't win we'll burn the town." Of course he did win. When I got to Morrison's I found Parnell and Judge Little in conference. When the judge saw me he exclaimed: "Here is the man for Kildare!" "No," says Parnell, "Kettle helped to get us into the trouble and now he seems not to care how we get out." "Now," I said, "you know that is not true. How much better would the position be if I had my way a week ago." "Oh, I admit you were right then, but what are you going to do now?" "Anything you want me to do." "Well, will you come to Kildare?" "Yes. Kildare or any other place you can order me until the Election is over."





An illuminated address presented to Parnell by the leadership of the Land League to commemorate his speech to the US House of Representatives on 2 February 1880. He was touring the United States in 1879-80 to build awareness of the Land League and raise funds to aid evicted tenant farmers in Ireland. The address was executed by Thomas J. Lynch, a Dublin artist, and was signed by A. J. Kettle, Michael Davitt, and other members of the Land League leadership.

We went to Kildare on a midday train, and had a rare scene with Alderman Harris<sup>10</sup> in the carriage going down. The Alderman was one of the candidates for Kildare, and he begged and prayed Mr. Parnell to get him adopted with a fanatical fervour I shall never forget. When we got to Athy, which was the nomination place, we found that Father Farrelly and young Kavanagh had a candidate ready in the person of Mr. James Leahy<sup>11</sup> who represented it for years afterwards. Mr. Parnell turned to me and said: "This fat man will be no use. He will fall asleep in the house. I must propose you." I never meant to go to Parliament if I could help it, and said: "He will do very well. You may want me somewhere else." He was not half satisfied, and he cross-examined Mr. Leahy as to how he would be able to attend and sit up at night, but the candidate said "Yes" to everything. So, as his friends were insistent, he had to take him. Father Nolan of Kildare Town was holding a Harris Meldon meeting at the Market House when he came out, but Mike Boyton<sup>12</sup> moved somebody else to another chair and started a Leahy meeting on the same platform, so after a little Father Nolan said he would not play second fiddle to anyone, so he bid us good-bye and left. When the meeting in Athy was over there were three candidates from Carlow with cars waiting to get Mr. Parnell to go to Carlow and ask them to retire. There were four altogether, but as there was only one required they wanted to make a merit of necessity and retire at Mr. Parnell's request. We drove to Carlow by a good road on a beautiful evening and there was an Election meeting held at night at the College, at which Mr. Charles Dawson<sup>13</sup> of Dublin and Limerick was adopted for the Borough seat. Father Kavanagh,<sup>14</sup> a great admirer of Parnell, presided. The two county seats were managed by the people of Carlow without reference to Parnell and E. Dwyer Gray<sup>15</sup> and McFarline<sup>16</sup> were returned as Independents. After dining with the retired candidates, of whom Count Plunkett<sup>17</sup> was one, Mr. Parnell and I started late at night for Co. Wicklow to be present in Rathdrum at the selection of candidates next day. We stopped at Tullow and got about three hours' sleep, and started in the grey of the morning to Woodenbridge to catch the early train to Rathdrum. I learned on

that occasion a good deal about Mr. Parnell's experience as a farmer and cattleman. He had done a good deal in the stock line but not much in tillage. One of his comments was that anyone could sell cattle but that it takes a good judge to buy them right. On the run down to Rathdrum I got my first view of Avondale.<sup>18</sup> It looked from the railway carriage more remote and romantic, like something standing apart, than I ever thought it did afterwards viewed from any other point. We did not go near it that day, but visited Father Carberry and kept moving about Rathdrum (it was a Fair day) from Dr. O'Dwyer's to, I think, a Mrs. Comerford's.<sup>19</sup> We had a band and held two or more meetings. The meeting of the clergy was rather late and protracted, but Parnell hung around although I was tired and sick. But as usual he was right. Only he was about his men would not have been adopted. Corbett<sup>20</sup> and a stranger named McKoan<sup>21</sup> were his men, but they later had to fight a Mr. O'Mahony<sup>22</sup> I think and won only by four votes. We held a meeting in the evening in the town of Wicklow at which I first met Mr. Corbett. On our way to Dublin we travelled with Mr. Toomey, the chief Conservative Election agent for Wicklow and an old acquaintance of Mr. Parnell's. He was the man whom Mr. Parnell had removed from the Court House when he was High Sheriff of Wicklow. I never listened to a more interesting discussion on politics between two men, Toomey bantering Parnell for leaving the landlord's lines and ridiculing the new order and the new men, Parnell defending and striking back all round. On our way from the railway to Morrison's Mr. Parnell pressed me to tell him seriously who had the best of the bout.

Parnell had to attend a meeting at Navan the next day where he got a great ovation from his own constituents, so I got a day off for my farming. When I got to Morrison's the following morning, he was at breakfast with Arthur O'Connor<sup>23</sup> whom I met for the first time. He told us about the great meeting at Navan, but I was after reading about a meeting at Cork where the clergy, led by Dean Neville,<sup>24</sup> made a bad attack on the new Party. I asked him if he read the report. "No," he said, "What did they do?" "Well," I said, "they

denounced you and all your works, and someone has nominated you for the City so you will have to go to Cork.” “I cannot go,” he says. I have to go to Maryborough<sup>25</sup> with O’Connor, and Wicklow will be lost unless I visit Baltinglass.” Well, I handed him the newspaper and he read a little of the report, when he exclaimed, “Those priests, will they never keep quiet!” This was the only positive reflection in words I ever heard him utter about the clergy.<sup>26</sup> After a little thinking he says, “Yes, I must go to Cork. I tell you what I’ll do. I will go and fight the City and you must fight the County.” I said, “The County is settled. Shaw<sup>27</sup> and Colthurst<sup>28</sup> have been adopted by the Farmers Club, and all the leading men are pledged to support them. Shaw was pledged to seek a commercial seat in the City if the farmers decided to start a man of their own. Last week they wanted £400 or a man, but they got neither. So the county is settled.”

We went to Maryborough and got Arthur O’Connor started for the Queen’s County.<sup>29</sup> During the lunch after the public meeting a wire was handed to Parnell, when he stood up sharply and waving the telegram called for a cheer for Ennis and Finegan. So Clare was still the Banner County.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Parnell and I started for Cork by the night mail and got there very late, but late and all we were joined at Blarney, I think, by Mr. Riordan, President of the Cork Farmers Club, and some others. They were delighted that Parnell was going to fight the City, but they were shocked at the notion of upsetting the arrangements in the County. In fact they would not hear of it. They told him that if he had sent them a man or £300 the week before they could carry the County but now “we are all pledged to Shaw and Colthurst and we cannot go back on our promise.” He did not push the matter any further, but the very mention of a County contest had a very bad effect on the fight in the City. We arrived in Cork on Friday night and next morning some of the prominent City men called on Parnell, to explain how the matter stood. There were four nominations: Daly, Home Ruler<sup>31</sup>; Murphy, Clerical Whig<sup>32</sup>; Goulding, Conservative<sup>33</sup>; and Parnell. At the beginning there was complete mystery

about Parnell's nomination. The Cork men thought Parnell got himself nominated, and Parnell thought the Nationalists had him nominated, and would consequently have arrangements made for the fight. But instead of that we found all Cork at sixes and sevens about the whole business. We learned a little later in the day on Saturday that it was the Conservatives who advanced the nomination money to an enterprising nephew of Dan Riordan's, to start Mr. Parnell to break the Whig Murphyite Party and give their man a chance.<sup>34</sup> They did not expect that Parnell would turn up in person. There was nothing but doubt and misgivings and distrust expressed by about six sets of deputationists who called on Parnell. No one seemed to have the least idea of what should be done, and no one volunteered to do anything until some time in the afternoon a little man with bright eyes, Alderman O'Dwyer, I believe it was, called by himself and said, "Mr. Parnell, you have got to fight this election. No one in Cork seems to be in a position to help you. Just take my advice and make your own arrangements and hold a meeting this evening in some prominent or populous place in the City, and another tonight here in the hotel, and a meeting in the Park tomorrow." Monday was the polling day. This advice was at once put into operation by a very able Solicitor, Mr. Horgan, who was appointed Parnell's agent, and one only priest, Father O'Mahony, C.C., and I think Tim Healy came on the scene some time on Saturday. There was a small attendance at the evening meeting. There was a great crowd in the street opposite the Victoria Hotel<sup>35</sup> at night, but all the City seemed to be in the Park on Sunday. It was a beautiful, sunny, calm evening, and only on that and on one other occasion did I ever see Parnell put forth what appeared to be his full powers. He elected to speak from the driving seat of a very high brake where he stood alone. He spoke like a man inspired, and his measured and deliberate but passionate tones rang out to the most distant of the 15,000 or 20,000 people in Cork Park. That speech secured his return, but only to second place, as the public mind of Cork was in a terrible state of confusion as to what was right or wrong just then.<sup>36</sup>



*The Royal Victoria Hotel, Cork, nineteenth century*

For all the confusion in the City Mr. Parnell did not give up the notion of fighting in the County. He secured the services of one of the best men in Cork to get a nomination paper filled but so complicated was the case that it took John Heffernan of Blarney four hours going round the markets on Monday morning to get eight men who were not pledged to Shaw and Colthurst. When he got the paper which had to be lodged the same day I fought strongly against standing under the circumstances. Quite a scene took place at my resistance in the presence of Edmund Farrell of Queenstown<sup>37</sup> and Tim Healy. I asked and pressed Mr. Farrell to stand and Mr. Parnell said, "Yes, Mr. Farrell or any suitable man would do." Farrell refused, and Mr. Parnell laid his hand on my arm with such force that I turned sharply round and met his gaze. His next words were spoken in a low tone and were, "Will you let me have my way this time." "Yes," I said, "and the responsibility."<sup>38</sup> My name was put on the paper, but I was so dissatisfied that I turned up at the nomination place only at the very last moment. It was upstairs in a building that was being repaired and it was difficult to get to the stairs,

but Mr. Parnell was there and he took me by the arm and literally carried me up just as the clock stood at the last minute of the time. He arranged about the fight in the County and I pretended I had to go to Dublin. So we both travelled in a sleeping saloon where I got such a cold as prevented me from speaking much during the contest. He went on to Leitrim or some place he was expected next day, Tuesday. The only man available to come with me to Cork was F. H. O'Donnell. He came to the Imperial Hotel<sup>39</sup> in Dublin and was to have joined me at Kingsbridge<sup>40</sup> on Thursday, but when he saw the joint manifesto of the four bishops who exercised spiritual jurisdiction over Cork County, denouncing my candidature, he declined to enter on such a contest. So I had to go alone and I went on to Queenstown, as Mr. Farrell was the only Tenants' Right man in the County who was free to fight. I asked for an interview with the Bishop, but he declined to see me. I returned to Cork that night and met enthusiastic supporters of Parnell in the Wilson family who kept the hotel, and Bill Cahill the famous racing man and a lot of able free lances and Fenians. I was joined next day by that gloriously good dashing Irishman, Lysaght Finegan, who was after winning Ennis. I took no part in the arrangements, but I went by myself to a meeting that had been called in the Farmers' Club head-quarters, but when I got to the door I met a lot of leading farmers coming tumbling out, having been ejected by the free lance politicians and Fenians, and so the County contest was fought with the leading men out of action.<sup>41</sup> I visited a few towns with Finegan but did little of the work, but I fell into a position in Macroom where I had to strike out to save my own skin.

We were met at the railway station by four fine-looking clergymen who spoke out at once and called us Garibaldians. I was unlucky enough to have a rug with red stripes on it.<sup>42</sup> It was a fair day, and we decided to go along by the fair green which was in a valley with the road running on a narrow strip of high ground round it. There seemed to be a strong gathering of Colthurst men about as he was holding a meeting later on in the town. The priests and their party

who were armed with good sticks followed us, and the crowd was augmented as we went along. When they got us in the narrowest part of the road they called on the people to attack and drive us out of the place. We were hustled off the road very sharply down the green a bit but we decided not to retreat. We got round a cart with a good lamb creel<sup>43</sup> on it, and this we mounted and Finegan shouted for fair play. We both commenced speaking at different sides of the cart round which a great crowd had gathered. The priest addressed the same crowd from the high ground at the road some perches<sup>44</sup> away. After about twenty minutes we got the crowd well under control, Finegan talking all the time, and I putting in an odd shot. We told the people not to assault the priests; not to insult them, but to stand together and to push the priests' party on before them down the road to their chapels and their prayers. This the people did in jolly good humour, and thus ended what at one moment seemed to be an ugly fix.<sup>45</sup> There is only one other episode worth noting in the Cork election. Finegan and I slept at the New Railway Hotel at Mallow and were out early walking about before breakfast. The head porter came along and asked us did we see the Chief. "The Chief is away in such a place at present," says Finegan. "Well, you'll find him in No. 6," said the porter, "he came in the night." We bounced into No. 6 and found Parnell wide awake lying on his back and the sun shining on the bed. After the first greeting he says, "Do you know, Kettle, what I have been thinking about for the last few minutes?" "Well, I give it up, so you may as well tell us." "Why, the land does not belong to the landlords at all." I answered, "Is it only now you found that out?" "Yes, just within the last hour." "Why," I said, "I called them the head stewards of the National Property years before I heard of Davitt or Henry George. In addition, they are unjust stewards who want to confiscate what the people put in and on the land." "Yes," he says, "the Irish Land System seems to be bad all through." A. M. Sullivan wrote a brilliant article on my startling pronouncement.



On the polling day the 250 priests in County Cork turned out and kept watch and ward at all the polling stations. I saw them at the places I visited, and a fine body of men they were, but of course they were politically wrong, and they were all round on my line in about twelve months afterwards. When T. M. Healy's wire reached me in Dublin announcing that I was beaten by 154 I silently thanked Heaven that I was out of the Parliamentary groove for the time being.



*Alexander Martin Sullivan*

One other matter occurred during the general election that gave Parnell some trouble in after years and threw out another man who had the ability to play many a useful part as a follower of Parnell, but who drifted by being thrown out of the current at this election. Philip Callan<sup>46</sup> was member for Dundalk and a great follower of Mr. Butt's. He made enemies by his outspoken and aggressive advocacy of that great old man. Some of these enemies urged Parnell to favour Charles Russell's candidature against Callan. I had great opportunities through the Tenant Right organisation of getting authentic information on many things throughout Ireland. I advised Mr. Parnell to let Callan alone. "You may put him out of Dundalk, but if you do, he will be returned for Louth in spite of you." In the midst of the Cork election in a crowded room he held a telegram up the other side of the room announcing that Callan was returned for Louth.

## Notes

1. Timothy Michael Healy (1855-1931) was an agrarian nationalist politician, journalist, author, and barrister who was returned as MP for Wexford in 1881 and attained parliamentary prominence with a reputation as an extraordinary speaker. Although an accomplished publicist of Parnellism, there was some mistrust between Healy and Parnell and he sided against Parnell during the later split. He influenced the political direction of Irish nationalism to an agrarianism of the right and his political career continued into the 1920s, when he became the first Governor-General of the Irish Free State (DIB 2009, 'Healy, Timothy Michael').
2. Parnell had travelled to the United States in December 1879 in order to obtain financial support for the new movement. While there he spoke in 62 cities to largely Irish-American audiences, met with President Rutherford B. Hayes, and on 2 February 1880 he addressed the US House of Representatives. This trip ended abruptly when he was in Montreal with Dillon and Healy and they learned that Parliament had been dissolved and new elections were to be held in April 1880. Parnell and Healy hurried back, only reaching Ireland in mid-campaign and the party had to work vigorously to secure candidates allied to Parnell (Bew 2007, 316-17).
3. Joseph Gillis Biggar (1828-90) was an Irish nationalist politician from Belfast. Born into a Presbyterian family, he later converted to Catholicism. He served as an MP as a member of the Home Rule League and later the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1874 to 1890. He was a popular figure in Ireland and well-known for turning obstruction of Parliament into an art form by reading official documents for hours to delay business. Although a close friend of Healy, he was not an intimate of Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Biggar, Joseph Gillis').
4. James Joseph O'Kelly (1845-1916) was an Irish nationalist journalist, politician, and MP representing Roscommon as a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1880 to 1916. When the party split in 1890 over Parnell's leadership, O'Kelly supported Parnell (DIB 2009, 'O'Kelly, James Joseph').
5. James F. Grehan (1836-96) of Lehaunstown, Cabinteely, Co. Dublin, was a friend of Davitt, a member of the Land League committee, and a prominent farmer in Cabinteely (King 2009; WikiTree n.d.; Clancy 1889, 148).
6. The trip to the United States raised £70,000 for the cause.
7. Patrick Keyes O'Clery (1849-1913) was a barrister and Home Rule MP for Co. Wexford from 1874 to 1880. In the 1880 election, although backed by the Catholic clergy, he was defeated by the Parnellite candidate. The outbreak of violence at this meeting in Enniscorthy on Easter Sunday (28 March 1880) resulted in Parnell being attacked and injured. In 1903,

he was created a Count by Pope Leo XIII (Wikipedia 2023, 'Keyes O'Clery').

8. James Lysaght Finegan (1844-1900) was an Irish barrister, soldier, merchant, and politician who supported the nationalist cause. He served as an MP from 1879 to 1882. He was regarded as anti-clericalist due to his open acknowledgment of close contact with the French anti-clerical Henri Rochefort – a fact that would have contributed to clashes with bishops and clergy in Ireland (Lyons 1977).
9. Morrison's Hotel on Dawson Street in central Dublin was a base for Parnell and his lieutenants and was where he conducted much of his political business in Ireland.
10. Matthew Harris (1825-90) was a self-educated agrarian activist. He had strongly supported the Repeal and Young Ireland movements and was known as an enthusiastic democrat and nationalist. He was a leading figure in the IRB as the representative for Connaught. He helped to establish the Mayo Land League in 1879 and played a leading role in establishing branches of the League across the west of Ireland. He was elected MP for Galway East from 1885 to 1890 (DIB 2009, 'Harris, Matthew').
11. James Leahy (1822-96) was a tenant farmer and nationalist politician who was a MP for constituencies in Co. Kildare from 1880 to 1892 (Wikipedia 2022, 'James Leahy').
12. Michael P. Boyton (1846-1906) was one of the official Land League organizers. Born in Kildare, he emigrated to the United States with his family as a child. Boyton returned to Ireland in 1879 and joined the Land League. He was arrested with the other organizers and sent to Kilmainham Jail in 1881, but was then released after claiming American citizenship. He subsequently spent time in England before moving to South Africa (Ancestry.com n.d., 'Michael Peter Boyton, 1846-1906'; Kee 1993, pp. 268, 395).
13. Charles Dawson (1842-1917) was a Home Rule MP for Carlow from 1880 to 1884, and he often spoke at Land League and National League meetings around the country. He also became lord mayor of Dublin (1882-83), which reinforced his prominence within the Irish Parliamentary Party and allowed him to use that office as a platform for his nationalist politics (DIB 2009, 'Dawson, Charles').
14. James Blake Kavanagh (1822-86) was a priest, a nationalist, and a philosophical and scientific writer who, as a member of the Land League, acted as an intermediary between landlords and tenants. He died while saying mass in October 1886 in his parish church when a marble figure of an angel fell from the canopy above the altar (which he himself had designed) and struck him, causing him to fall and strike his head fatally on the alter steps (DIB 2009, 'Kavanagh, James Blake').
15. Edmund Dwyer Gray (1845-88) was born in Dublin. He was the son of the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, Sir John Gray, whom he succeeded in this role in 1875. A convert to Catholicism, Gray became a Dublin city councillor (1875-83), and a Home Rule MP for Tipperary

- (1877-80), Carlow (1880-85), and St. Stephen's Green, Dublin (1885-88). A moderate, he was one of eighteen MPs who voted against Parnell's leadership of the party but subsequently supported him. Under his management, the circulation of the *Freeman's Journal* increased and it became highly profitable (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Edmund William Dwyer').
16. Donald Horne Macfarlane (1830-1904) was a Scottish merchant who served as a Home Rule Member of Parliament for Carlow from 1880 to 1885. He subsequently served several times as a Crofters Party MP for a constituency in Scotland between 1886 and 1895 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Donald Horne Macfarlane').
  17. George Noble Plunkett (1851-1948) was a nationalist politician, scholar, and museum director. In 1884, he was created a Papal Count by the Pope. Despite his close association with the Church, he supported Parnell against the Catholic hierarchy in 1890. He was a Member of Parliament from 1917 to 1922 and a Teachta Dála (TD) from 1918 to 1927. He was the minister for fine arts and the minister for foreign affairs in the Irish government between 1919 and 1922 (DIB 2009, 'Plunkett, Count George Noble').
  18. Avondale had been described as a 'square, very ordinary-looking building' but was placed in beautiful surroundings close to the Vale of Avoca (Bew 1980, 6).
  19. Philip Carberry (1833-1902) was the parish priest of Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, and a supporter of Parnell, whose home, Avondale, was in his parish (Ancestry.com n.d., 'Fr. Philip Carberry'). Medical and professional directories of the time list a Dr. Michael C. Dwyer with an office in Rathdrum. Eva Mary Comerford (1860-1949) was the wife of James Charles Comerford (1842-1907) of Ardavon House, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, the owner of Rathdrum Mill and a friend of Charles Stewart Parnell (Comerford 2016).
  20. William Joseph Corbet (1824-1909) was a civil servant and Home Rule MP for constituencies in County Wicklow from 1880 to 1892 and 1895 to 1900. He was a close political colleague of Parnell and he organized the care of Parnell's farm at Avondale during his detention for Land League activities (DIB 2009, 'Corbet, William Joseph').
  21. James Carlile McCoan (1829-1904) was barrister, journalist, and author who was elected as a Home Rule MP for Wicklow in 1880. He had a falling out with his colleagues in Parliament and served out the term as a Liberal independent (DIB 2009, 'McCoan, James Carlile').
  22. David Mahony was the (unsuccessful) Liberal candidate in the 1880 general election for the Wicklow seat (Wikipedia 2023, 'Wicklow (UK Parliament constituency)').
  23. Arthur O'Connor (1844-1923) was an Irish nationalist politician and Member of Parliament from 1880 to 1900. He was a member of the anti-Parnellite group from 1892 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Arthur O'Connor (politician, born 1844)').
  24. Henry F. Neville (1822-89) was a Catholic parish priest and dean of the Cork diocese. He opposed Parnell when he stood (successfully) in the

city constituency in the parliamentary elections in March-April 1880 (DIB 2009, 'Neville, Henry F').

25. The name of Portlaoise, County Laois, from 1557 to 1929.
26. During this campaign the Church was to be one of the most formidable of Parnell's opponents. If the clergy had been able to come to a consensus, this may have decided the outcome. However, the bishops could not always be sure of their own clergy and even within the Church hierarchy there were differences of opinion which made united action difficult. Some clergy believed that Parnell 'raised hopes in the minds of his hearers that could never be realized' and awoke 'a spirit of discontent' (Lyons 1977, 111).
27. William Shaw (1823-95) was an Irish Protestant nationalist politician and one of the founders of the Home Rule movement. He held his seat at the 1880 election but lost an election for the party chairmanship to Parnell (Falkiner & O'Day 2004).
28. David la Touche Colthurst (1828-1907) was a Home Rule League politician who was elected MP for Co. Cork between 1879 and 1885 (Wikipedia 2022, 'David la Touche Colthurst').
29. The name for Co. Laois until 1922.
30. The election lasted for most of April 1880, during which Parnell continued to campaign while vigorously 'selecting candidates, speaking in their favour, defending his House of Commons record, propagating the doctrines of the League, and circulating dizzily between [the] three constituencies [of] Cork city, Meath and Mayo' (Lyons 1977, 110).
31. John Daly (1834-88) was a moderate Home Ruler (Wikipedia 2021, 'John Daly (Irish Member of Parliament)').
32. Nicholas Daniel Murphy (1811-89) entered politics as a Liberal candidate for Cork city in 1865. Although his family had a tradition of nationalism, Murphy was an old-style Whig who favoured the union and insisted that Home Rule did not mean separation but federation within the empire (DIB 2009, 'Murphy, Nicholas Daniel').
33. William Goulding (1817-84) was a successful businessman and conservative Tory politician, winning a seat in 1876 as the first conservative elected in Cork city for 30 years until he lost to Parnell in the 1880 election (DIB 2009, 'Goulding, William').
34. It transpired that the Tory camp had paid him £250 to nominate an 'extreme' candidate, with the intent of splitting up the nationalist vote and getting the Tory William Goulding in. On discovery of this the remaining £200 was reluctantly handed over and used to cover Parnell's election expenses (Lyons 1977, 110).
35. The Royal Victoria Hotel was located on the corner of St Patrick's Street and Cook Street in the center of Cork (McCarthy n.d.).
36. Parnell was to hold his seat in Cork for the rest of his career.
37. Cobh, known from 1849 until 1920 as Queenstown, is a town on the south coast of County Cork.
38. Kettle was acutely aware that the local Tenant Right movement had

already prepared their own candidates for the election. In addition, his association with Parnell had antagonised the Catholic hierarchy in Munster and the election campaigning had created the persistent impression that Kettle was anti-clerical in politics, which resulted in the clergy issuing a condemnation of his candidacy (DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Andrew Joseph').

39. The Imperial Hotel was a hotel in Dublin's principal thoroughfare, Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street).
40. Kingsbridge Station is the original name of Heuston Station, one of Dublin's largest railway stations.
41. An ejection of the leading farmer class would have affected his potential support base and Kettle was eventually defeated by 151 votes (DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Andrew Joseph').
42. This was in reference to Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-82), the popular Italian revolutionary, who was intensely anti-Catholic and anti-papal. His followers, the *garibaldini*, wore grey woollen trousers with a red stripe (Parks 2021).
43. A large, strong wicker basket.
44. A perch is a distance of several metres.
45. Kettle's recollections demonstrate how elections in this period could be bitterly fought and sometimes potentially violent, and that the mood of a crowd could be volatile and easily influenced by the personalities involved and their oratory skills.
46. Philip Callan (1837-1902) was a Liberal Home Rule politician and lawyer. He was an MP (for Dundalk and then Louth) from 1868 to 1885. He was a follower of and adviser to Isaac Butt and was prominent in Butt's Home Government Association. He was not a supporter of the Land League and chafed under the leadership of Parnell, whose opposition led to Callan losing his seat in Parliament in 1885 (DIB 2009, 'Callan, Philip').

# Chapter 5: My Solution to the Land Problem Presented to Parnell

*The Bishop and the Man for Mayo – Visit with Parnell to Bishop McCormick – Relief Fund – Parnell Comments on Himself and Others – Mrs. Deane – I Give Parnell My Solution of the Land Problem – Canon Daniel – The Man for Mayo*

The General Election was over but I was in it still. Parnell was elected for Cork, Meath, and Mayo. He elected to sit for Cork, and A. M. Sullivan was named for Meath (I believe he declined to sit with Philip Callan in Louth), and Mayo was reserved for me.<sup>1</sup> But I got out of line with the clergy so badly in Cork by a rejoinder I made to a letter published by a Rev. Canon who took part in the row in Mac-room, Parnell was advised that the clergy in Mayo would not take me without a contest.<sup>2</sup> As the world knows he was not easily put off, so he arranged with me to go to Ballaghaderreen and see the Bishop, Dr. McCormick. This visit gave me a whole day with Parnell. It was a quiet day on the Midland and very few people joined the train, so we travelled over men and things in the past, present, and future to our full bent. I told him all the circumstances about how we first met, and how I looked upon him as a man who seemed at least to have a mission of some kind. But, he said: "I am not gifted with the power of expression of some other men." "Don't mind that," I said. "The orators use too many adjectives. You are going to found

a talking school of your own with ideas instead of words.” He told me that his attempts at talking and other experiences at the County Dublin election were nearly killing him, that he was laid up in bed for six weeks after he went home with some kind of a nervous attack.<sup>3</sup> He reviewed the principal men he came in contact with since he got into the strife on the people’s side. He talked and smiled at the fads and fancies and the strong points and the weak of everybody as they came into the discussion. I told him my experiences of Ireland as I knew it, of the forces that English statesmen put in operation in my own time to crush Ireland into a dependency. I learned that he hated the English character for its innate assumption of superiority, and its hypocritical pretensions to honesty and godliness. We reviewed the whole social system then existing in Ireland. He regretted having to take men away from their business and put them into public position to do work for which they had no training or experience. He was always very hopeless about the older landlords ever throwing in their lot with the people in Ireland, but he expected that the young men would, if the land question were settled by purchase. I always held it would be an insult to common sense to imagine that England would ever delegate the governing powers of Ireland into the hands of such men as Parnell was gathering round him, unless the English Radicals overturned their own classes and got on to a Democratic line in England. He would have to either go on to abolish the classes in Ireland or fall back and press them into the work of their own country. But we always agreed that to nationalise landlords and mortgagees and men with capital in Ireland it would be essential to push the land agitation to a final settlement as soon as possible.

The bishop’s carriage met us at the station and we drove a short run to the palace. We had only a short time to spend to get back on the next train, and Parnell spent most of the time discussing the distress and particularly the relief funds. There were four relief funds started to meet the distress the previous year, the Land League, the Vice-Regal, the Mansion House, and the bishops,<sup>4</sup> and it seemed as if the bishops and Parnell were trying to reserve as large a balance



as possible when the pressing necessity for spending was over. So the Land League agents were urging the people to apply to the bishops, and the bishops' men were calling on the League fund. Parnell spent most of our short visiting time in seeking information about the whole subject, but I thought he did not get much. The business about the election was settled privately between them in a very short time. The outcome was that owing to my pronouncement on the conduct of the priests at Macroom the bishop either would not or could not take me without a contest. He would take A. M. Sullivan, who was not placed in Meath at the time, or any other colourless politician, but not me.



*John Dillon*

On our way to the railway station Parnell called on Mrs. Deane, John Dillon's friend, and I enjoyed the visit very much as I had an opportunity of knowing a rather remarkable woman who seemed to be quite at home at the head of a business that looked like the centre not of a town like Ballaghaderreen, but of a province.<sup>5</sup>

Parnell felt sleepy after, as he said, bolting the bishop's chops, and we travelled back in a second-class carriage. When we got started, he stretched himself on a back cushion, got a rug over him and slept for three-quarters of an hour. When he got up, he expressed himself as being dissatisfied with the bishop's estimate about the balance of the relief fund, but did not feel at all disappointed about the bishop rejecting his candidate.

We made very close enquiry on our way home into the real condition of things connected with the League and where the whole movement might end. I always had a tendency in my own business to make up my mind on reliable data, to adopt plans of action

regardless of precedent, or difficulty, or labour or expense. I might mention here that we both agreed from the beginning of our acquaintance that all men and all things were to be used in the most impersonal manner to work out the desired end. The burden of our enquiry that day was, what would be the probable end, and how best to reach it. I told him that the agricultural depression was so acute that no normal remedy would be able to meet it. In my own case the receipts from the produce of one hundred and fifty Irish acres fell fifteen hundred pounds in the previous year, 1879, and if that state of things continued there would be no earthly chance of the tenants being able to pay a price for the land that the landlords or mortgagees would be likely to accept, and that the war would have to go on to the bitter end. But I said that I thought we could find a way out of the difficulty. "Of course," I said, "my plan will at first sight look far-fetched and impracticable, but it may prove to be otherwise." I said, "I have been a close student of O'Neill Daunt<sup>6</sup> and Sir Joseph McKenna,<sup>7</sup> and according to their contentions we have been overtaxed to an enormous amount, at least £100,000,000 sterling. Now we must claim as much of that money as will let the landlords out and the tenants in on workable terms. By this course you will settle the Land Question and draw the landlords to our side on the national question." He listened very attentively to this new view of the situation. "McKenna," he says, "has been pressing his case about the overtaxation of Ireland on me, but I never felt the importance of the question so much before. I must go through the matter with him the first chance I get. Yours would be a complete course of procedure if we could follow it." I said I thought six years purchase of whatever rental would be dealt with would be necessary for my plan, three years for the landlords, and three years for the tenants. "Of course," I said, "great and persistent pressure will be necessary to justify an English Government's proposed settlement like mine, but the way Davitt and our League people are driving it looks as if we will have enough, if not overmuch and compromising, pressure soon." I told him that, of course, I never mentioned such a heretical notion to Davitt or the League people, but that I talked it over with

E. D. Gray, who jokingly asked me if I wanted only 200 million, that I might as well ask for three or four hundred, so that I might have some left to subsidise the newspapers. I was talking to Gray about it again after the chat with Parnell, under the pillars of the General Post Office, when we were joined by our mutual friend, Canon Daniel.<sup>8</sup> “Here is Kettle,” says Gray, “talking about millions of money as if they were the most ordinary things on earth. He wants England to give us only 200 millions to buy out the landlords.” Well,” says the Canon, “if you don’t ask you can’t expect, and in dealing with England you better ask enough as you are certain to get less.”

Thus ended our day in the West, but it did not end my parliamentary experiences. Some time after this I was at my hay harvest when word was sent me that there were visitors wanting me at my house at Artane. I was told that they were not very grand looking, so I went in my shirt sleeves, and whom did I find but Joe Biggar and a Mr. Clarke from Glasgow. I shouted out welcome and got out some refreshments. Biggar seemed, I



*Joseph Gillis Biggar*

thought, to hesitate in opening his statement about why he came. “You know the Rev. Isaac Nelson,”<sup>9</sup> he says. I nodded. “Well, a lot of his friends, amongst them Ferguson,<sup>10</sup> think it would be a good stroke of policy to send him to Parliament. As there was only one vacancy now in Ireland we went to Avondale to see Mr. Parnell about the seat in Mayo, and he told us that he was out of that transaction altogether as the seat belongs to you, and that if we came to you, he was convinced you would do the right thing.” I stood up and said, “Now gentlemen, before I decide you must take another drink. You can have the seat for your friend with céad míle fáilte.” So Dr.

McCormick, the bishop who refused to take a Catholic who had got his election ethics from Cardinal Cullen, was forced to swallow the old eccentric Presbyterian Minister. Thus ended my connection with the General Election of 1880.<sup>11</sup>

## Notes

1. Sullivan had been returned unopposed to fill the vacancy in Meath at the by-election in May 1880. Callan was a Liberal Home Rule politician and lawyer who did not share Parnell's views and had previously been defeated in Dundalk, mainly due to the actions of Parnell and the obstructionist wing of the Home Rule Party. The subsequent Louth election between Callan and Sullivan, two opposing ideological Home Rulers, was not unique to the party and other such contests had also occurred in Mayo and Roscommon. Callan's win in Louth and Sullivan's subsequent resignation represented the fragmentation and dissension within the opposition ranks that still existed despite the growing centralisation of the Home Rule movement (Moran 1992).
2. This was the incident recounted by Kettle in Chapter 4 where he and Lysaght Finegan encountered hostility from local priests and supporters of the opposing election candidate in Macroom, County Cork. The letter, dated 20 April 1880 and published in the *Freeman's Journal* and *The Nation*, asked Canon Cullinane whether he had been sent to the meeting to act as a 'bludgeon-man' (Kettle 1880).
3. In 1887, T. P. O'Connor contended that '[i]t is one of the strongest and most curious peculiarities of Mr. Parnell not merely that he rarely, if ever, speaks of himself but that he rarely, if ever gives any indication of having studied himself' (Bew 2011, 17; O'Connor 1887, 254). In contrast, Kettle's description of this personal exchange suggests a degree of closeness in the relationship between the two men.
4. These funds were started to help alleviate the distress caused by the successive failures of the harvests of 1877-79 and the near famine conditions that had resulted. The Land League funds had been collected by Parnell and Dillon during their trip to the United States in 1879. The Vice-Regal Fund was founded by the Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in December 1879. The Lord Mayor of Dublin had set up the Dublin Mansion House Relief Fund in January 1880 and the Catholic bishops of America also held collections in their dioceses.
5. Anne Deane (c. 1834-1905) was a businesswoman, philanthropist, and nationalist from Ballaghadereen, Co. Roscommon. She was the niece of the Young Irelander John Blake Dillon. As a widow, she owned and

managed the general store in Ballaghadereen, which became one of the largest and most successful businesses in the west of Ireland. Although she had no children herself, she played a key role in bringing up the young family of her uncle and aunt after their death. John Dillon, who divided his time between Ballaghadereen and Dublin, came to regard her as a second mother. She was a keen supporter of Home Rule and her house was a regular meeting place for nationalists. In 1881 she became one of the founding members of the Ladies' Land League and was chosen as honorary president (DIB 2009, 'Deane, Anne (Duff)'; O'Brien 1937).

6. William Joseph O'Neill Daunt (1807-94) was a politician and writer and had been a partisan of Daniel O'Connell. He played a prominent part in the Home Rule movement although he had little sympathy for the agrarian reform agitation. One issue of importance to him was that of financial relations between Ireland and Great Britain, in which he considered Ireland had been unfairly treated (DIB 2009, 'Daunt (Moriarty), William Joseph O'Neill ("Denis Ignatius")'). His publications included a public letter concerning the taxation of Ireland published as a pamphlet: *England's Greediness Ireland's True Grievance* (1875).
7. Sir Joseph Neale McKenna (1819-1906) was a banker and politician who was MP for Youghal and South Monaghan. He was an able financier and chairman of the National Bank of Ireland and played a leading role in forming nationalist thinking on the overtaxation of Ireland. He wrote *Imperial Taxation: The Case of Ireland Plainly Stated* (1883) (Wikipedia 2022, 'Joseph Neale McKenna'). Kettle's idea was that land purchase could be facilitated by the recovery of tax allegedly charged in excess on Ireland by the British government since the Act of Union.
8. The Very Rev. James Canon Daniel (c. 1830-95) was born in Dublin, educated at Maynooth College, and ordained in 1857. He was appointed to be the parish priest of St. Nicholas's Church on Francis Street, Dublin, in 1879. A friend of Sir John Gray, he was a frequent contributor to the *Freeman's Journal* (*Weekly Freeman*, 13 April 1895).
9. Isaac Nelson (1809-88) was a Presbyterian minister and politician from Belfast. He had been a champion of liberal causes and his criticism of his Presbyterian colleagues had resulted in him falling out of sympathy with many of them. His support for Home Rule and the Land League in the 1870s put him even more out of step with his colleagues and congregation, but it attracted the attention of Biggar and Parnell. He drew widespread support, although the *Freeman's Journal* termed him a 'clergyman of rather crazy political proclivities' (Bew 1978, 98; DIB 2009, 'Nelson, Isaac').
10. John Ferguson (1836-1906) was a publisher, Home Ruler, and land reformer originally from Ulster. He developed an interest in agrarian reform as a young man and, following a move to Glasgow, became an Irish nationalist and established the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain in the early 1870s. A radical intellectual, he was also active in the Land League activities in Ireland and frequently returned to Ireland, where he gave moral and practical support to Butt and later to Parnell

(DIB 2009, 'Ferguson, John').

11. Overall, the election resulted in a triumph for Gladstone's Liberal Party over the Conservative government. Parnell had achieved the personal triumph of being returned for three seats in Cork, Mayo, and Meath, and chose to take the Cork seat. The province of Connaught returned the most notable successes for Parnell's supporters, demonstrating that his influence in other relatively more prosperous areas at this time was still limited. On 17 May he was elected leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, but only by 23 votes to 18 out of 59 nominal Home Rule MPs (Bew 2007, 317-18).

# Chapter 6: Post-Election Activities – The Origins of the No Rent Plan

*Post-Election Activities – Davitt’s Plan – My Counter-proposals – The London Meetings – My Plan Adopted by the Party – Dwyer Gray Consulted – Plan Betrayed and Davitt Arrested – Dublin Meetings – Long John Clancy – The Leaders Retreat to Paris – Paris Meeting – I Am Defeated*

During the election and immediately afterwards Davitt, Dillon, Brennan, Boyton, Harris, and all the men who the new Chief Secretary Forster made traversers<sup>1</sup> in a trial for conspiracy, were unceasingly on the warpath against the landlords.<sup>2</sup> The current of the agitation was moving very rapidly.<sup>3</sup> I attended very few meetings, and chiefly in the North, but I was constantly in Dublin, particularly on Saturdays, to discuss the points to be pushed at the Sunday meetings. I had the reputation of being, which I was and am, a very indifferent public speaker. I remember Richard Lawlor, M.P., writing to Brennan, the Secretary of the League, to send a speaker to some meeting in the Queen’s County.<sup>4</sup> In a P. S. he said: “Don’t send Kettle – he can organise, but he can’t talk.” Thus I was like the hurler on the ditch somewhat. I was watching the fight very closely without losing my way in the crowd. But I went to new ground occasionally. I went to Carrickmacross with T. M. Healy, where Canon John Hoey<sup>5</sup> made the best Land League speech I heard up to that time. I went to

Brookeborough and Enniskillen with O'Kelly, where we had a pretty hot time, shared by that grand old Democrat, Jordan, and a dashing recruit, Trimble,<sup>6</sup> of the *Enniskillen Observer*.<sup>7</sup>

When Forster issued his writs, a circumstance I regretted occurred. James Plunkett,<sup>8</sup> the man who lost the fifty pounds sooner than lose his right to vote, was thrown over for V. B. Dillon.<sup>9</sup> It was held to be too big a job for Plunkett, but I think he would have managed it just as well. However, Mr. Dillon did very well and finished up on the Irish line in after years. I was not amongst the accused, and I did not interfere in their policy in the courts, but when the trial ended<sup>10</sup> I was brought on the scene in the usual accidental providential way. After the jury disagreed I was passing from the luncheon bar in the Four Courts to the hall when I met Parnell and Davitt. Parnell said, "I am anxious to see you. Come back. I am going to have a chop. And Davitt has proposals to make which I want to have your opinion on." We sat in one of the four-seated stalls that were then in the place and Parnell asked Davitt to read his proposals. Their purport was that Mr. Parnell and a party of three or four leading men were to proceed to America to collect funds and to be out of the way of arrest. I suppose T. P. O'Connor<sup>11</sup> and all the men acquainted with the English section of the work were to stump England, and Davitt and Dillon with Brennan and the League staff were to remain in Ireland to face Forster, who had announced his intention of asking for a drastic Coercion Act if he failed to get a verdict by the ordinary law.<sup>12</sup> "Well," I said, "that's an astounding programme. I call that a policy of dispersion when, in my opinion, it should be a policy of concentration. I believe the whole party should come to Ireland and face coercion, and take the consequences, and strike back by calling for a suspension of the payment of all rent until Parliament would deal with the land question."<sup>13</sup> Davitt never imagined that I was after thinking out the whole question and we got disputing about it<sup>14</sup> when Parnell said, "You will have to come to London. A meeting of the Executive will be held tomorrow evening and



you should come.” “Yes,” I said, “I will go any length to see this thing through, for I believe this is a turning point in the whole movement.”

The meeting was held in a kind of informal way in the House of Commons. There was no Chairman, but the whole discussion turned on my programme. Parnell came in a little late and sat in the second row of seats from a table round which the meeting was grouped on chairs carried over as the members came in. I was examined and cross-examined by Egan and Sexton<sup>15</sup> chiefly. Parnell took no part in the discussion, but he interfered twice when I was being plied with questions from different points together. The trouble about the whole thing seemed to be that the revolutionary men felt that the revolutionary policy of the Land League Movement was being pushed by an outsider.<sup>16</sup> After a good long discussion they adjourned to the Westminster Palace Hotel<sup>17</sup> next day at 1 o'clock.



Thomas Sexton, 1880

When the meeting was breaking up Mr. Davitt beckoned me over to where he and Mr. Dillon were standing. He says, “I am not satisfied about this business. Dillon and I are meeting in the Charing Cross Hotel tomorrow at 12 o'clock. Will you join us until we discuss my plan in detail?” “Certainly,” I said. The three of us spent some time before the meeting discussing his policy of dispersion. “Mr. Davitt,” I said, “you seem to be well posted in Irish-American matters, and Mr. Parnell is in English public work, but I really

cannot wrong my conscience and subdoctrinate my judgement in matters concerning Ireland to any public man I am acquainted with. As you know I have had great opportunities of studying the land

question and I feel bound to push this matter of policy through if I can." He said, "Your motion will come first before the meeting and if it is adopted I shall not move mine at all." I said, "Nothing could be better than that. Let the meeting decide." About twelve members of the Executive attended the meeting. Mr. Parnell came in late and excused himself when taking the chair as president. He commenced by saying, on considering the discussion last night he drew up a sketch of how he thought they ought to proceed and "I think it might shorten the proceedings if I read it," and turning to me he said, "I think it will carry out our proposal." The purport of the paper was, the Party were to attend in the House in force and fight the Coercion Bill fiercely but not so fractiously as to get expelled. When the last stage would be reached he was to stand up and make the bitterest possible protest against suspending the liberties of a people instead of enquiring into their just grievances, and wind up by impeaching the right of England to govern Ireland at all, and take his hat and march out of the House with the whole Party, make arrangements to post away to Euston, cross to Dublin, and have arrangements made to hold the largest possible public Convention or meeting, and then to solemnly delegate every Member of Parliament to go to his own constituency and stay there and hold meetings in all the towns and villages on the public questions of the time. He as chairman would announce before the world that the first arrest under the new Coercion Act would be the signal for the suspension of the payment of all rent until the Legislature would take an account of the equities of the Irish land question and transfer the land on just terms to the people.<sup>18</sup>

While he was reading the paper the people present did not seem to breathe, so tense was their attention. Justin McCarthy<sup>19</sup> was the first man to stand up and speak. It was the first time I saw him. He thanked God that he lived to hear such a proposition made to grapple manfully with the enemies of his country, and he thanked Heaven for sending the Irish people a leader who proposed to lead on such lines. The contents of the paper was adopted with acclamation, and Mr.



Justin McCarthy, 1891

Davitt and myself were deputed to cross to Ireland and make arrangements at once for the famous convention. T. P. O'Connor then intervened and said it would be a great point if we could get the support of the *Freeman* in carrying out this policy. He was the London correspondent of the *Freeman* at that time. He said he thought Mr. Gray was in the hotel, and after some discussion it was decided to send for him. Mr. E. D. Gray came in quite soon. I think he must have heard that the meeting was being held.<sup>20</sup> Mr. Parnell explained how matters stood and asked him for his opinion, and if he agreed his support in the *Freeman*. "Well," says Gray, "I am not going to jail and I do not think it fair to ask my opinion. Of course if you carry out that policy the Government must put you all in prison." "Well," says Parnell, "you are in that position that your opinion cannot alter our decision. We have unanimously decided to carry this policy through, but, at the same time we would be glad to have your opinion and to secure your support in the *Freeman*." "Then," says Gray, "that alters matters." He looked round the room which was a small one and he asked, "What does Kettle say?" "Oh," says Parnell, "Kettle is the head and front of the whole business." Gray says to me,

“Can this thing be done?” “What be done?” I says. “Get the tenants to keep their rents in their pockets for a few months? I think it will come rather natural to them.” I then took up the running and went over the arguments of the previous night that evidently convinced Parnell. I asked, “Will the character of the settlement depend upon the pressure we give the Government?” Gray said, “Yes,” “Are the government going to deal with the land question?” Gray said, “Yes.” “Well then,” I said, “this is February, and one gale<sup>21</sup> of rent will only accrue in March or May until the question is dealt with. No one will be hit or hurt until the wrangle is closed up and the knot cut out on the lines of the Land League.<sup>22</sup> If the battle is fought out on open broad daylight lines there will be no temptation to commit outrages and we shall escape the dangers arising from an irresponsible combination. If the present bitterness is augmented by coercion many things will be done that may compromise the leaders very much more than the bold, manly, stand-up battle I recommend. Believe me, it will be a mercy to everyone concerned and I think it will be effective.” I said other things but when I was done Gray burst out with this remarkable expression of opinion. “Well, Parnell, if you have the courage to put that policy in force I will undertake that you will settle the land question in six months on better lines than it ever could be by any other means. I am every day meeting leading public men and I know the feeling that prevails among them, and I solemnly tell you that they are prepared to pay even more than Kettle’s price for peace in Ireland.” (My price was a bonus of six years purchase on the rental – three for the landlords, and three for the tenants.) While Gray was speaking I was looking at the door and was on the point of standing up and putting my back against it until we would pledge everyone present to secrecy on the next move until it would be accomplished. I hesitated, and lost my opportunity, and our secret got around somehow. I should mention that Egan or Brennan were not present at the meeting in the Westminster Palace Hotel. They left for Paris the night before the meeting in the House of Commons to lodge the first instalment of the Land League funds.

Davitt and myself came to Dublin by the next boat to make arrangements for the great meeting. We drove to Amiens Street where he was stopping and I brought the car on to Artane. I did not see him for a good twelve months afterwards. I was late coming back, and when I reached the League rooms I heard that he had gone back to London with John Ferguson,<sup>23</sup> to get his friend Charles Bradlaugh<sup>24</sup> to get John Bright<sup>25</sup> to induce Gladstone to withdraw the Coercion Act.<sup>26</sup> Davitt and Brennan on his return from Paris met in London and came across to Dublin where Davitt was arrested before I had time to see him and sent to Portland Prison.<sup>27</sup>



*John Clancy, 1911*

The Irish Party led by Mr. Dillon raised such a storm on Davitt's arrest that they were expelled and there was a kind of Irish panic or disturbance feared by the London Press.<sup>28</sup> It was rumoured that there was a danger of Mr. Parnell and others being assassinated. Feeling must have been rushing at hurricane speed for Mr. Dillon came to Dublin after being expelled and got the Land League Executive to publicly and formally ask Mr. Parnell and

others to go to America. This was part of Mr. Davitt's plan. Dillon, Brennan, Harris and myself were the only Executive members in Dublin, and Mr. Dillon got Messrs. Brennan and Harris to sanction a resolution in his own house to the effect stated above. I, of course, dissented, and when the question was coming before the public meeting called for the purpose I threatened to retire, but Mr. Dillon begged me to take the chair, which would put me in a neutral position. I took the chair as I intended all through to see the thing out. When the motion was proposed a very tall, good-looking young man

who stood a head over the crowd in the doorway at a very crowded meeting, interposed with the remark that this seemed to be an extraordinary proposition to ask the general to run away when the enemy was advancing. He went on and spoke a bit extravagantly. Someone stood up to a point of order, but I ruled in his favour with such goodwill that the meeting went wild, and the motion was not passed. This young man was John Clancy,<sup>29</sup> the present sub-sheriff. I never saw him before, but I've known him ever since. This was the only time in my life that I felt completely alone in Irish politics. Davitt was gone to prison and all the other Land League leaders were gone from Ireland. After some days I learned that they were all in Paris. I got a letter urging me to go there, but I refused and threatened to expose the whole breakdown. In a couple of days after I got a letter from Tom Brennan, who was the youngest but perhaps the most reliable of all the leaders, and with whom I was confidentially acquainted through his uncle James Rourke, as well as on his own account. I decided to go to Paris.

It seemed as if Mr. Parnell and I were not to be separated until the end. On my way to Paris he came on board the packet<sup>30</sup> at Dover and we travelled in a terribly crowded train from Calais to Paris. We got to Egan's hotel some time in the night, and when I woke in the morning Tim Healy came rushing into my bedroom to know where the blazes did I find him. I told him I had found him and that was enough. He said: "We were going to get detectives to look for him. We thought he was done away with."<sup>31</sup> With the exception of T. P. O'Connor and Justin McCarthy I think all the other members of the League Executive were in Paris. It was Sunday and John Dillon and I went to Mass in the Madeleine<sup>32</sup> and went for a walk afterwards. He told me there was a meeting to be held about 2 o'clock and that it seemed to him that I was the only one who had a grip on the situation, and that he would back me up in anything I might propose. "Oh," I said, "there would be no use in proposing anything here. If the people here meant to fight they would not be here. I sim-

ply came over at my own expense to hear what they had to say for themselves.”

When the meeting assembled (Healy was not a member and was not present) Parnell took the chair, smoking a cigar, but kept his body down and looked at no one. We sat there, and sat there, until the silence became terrible. In desperation as it were, Mr. O’Kelly who was in great form blurted out looking at me: “Well, what have you got to say now?” I said I thought he should address the chairman, but as the meeting seemed to be at a loss how to begin I had no hesitation in giving my views. What had happened since the meeting in London? One man had been arrested. Should that circumstance prevent the other fourteen from carrying through the policy unanimously and solemnly decided upon? Why, if the fourteen were arrested and only one left I thought that he would be in honour bound to go on with the struggle. The people in Ireland are very anxiously waiting at this moment to know if the leaders are going to fight the Coercion Act, and the gentlemen present should remember that in Irish movements the leaders have always failed, the people never. When I sat down Mr. Sexton, who was after making one of his wonderful speeches in Parliament, said that he thought the people should not be asked to do anything in Ireland that would compromise their position in the House of Commons. I got on my feet again and damned the House of Common and its great talkers as being the greatest obstacle to Irish freedom. Sexton and I were getting angry when Parnell intervened with: “Gentlemen, if we get into personal wrangles we cannot get on with the business. Under the altered circumstances since our last meeting I have put my views on paper,” and he pulling some pages out of his pocket, “which if you permit me to read may show a way out of the present crux.” He commenced reading a very ably-written paper of considerable length dealing with the whole circumstances and ably glossing over the abandonment of the prison policy that Dwyer Gray swore would have settled the land question. There was a pause or delay in turning over the pages of the paper and in one of these intervals Dillon

whispered to me saying: “It was Kitty wrote that. Parnell never wrote a line of it.” This was the first I ever heard of that unfortunate, unlucky political adventuress, and English governmental agent.<sup>33</sup> Parnell’s paper was adopted by the meeting, Dillon, Brennan, and myself dissenting. Thus ended one of the most disastrous retreats ever recorded in the unfortunate history of this unfortunate country.<sup>34</sup> I am willing to admit that this policy of mine came on some members of the Executive like a blizzard for which they were not prepared, and I thought that the extreme men like Egan and Harris and others would have pushed it better if it emanated from some extreme man or leader. I was only a silent partner in the concern up to this point, and had been all my public life working through other men owing to my defective education and want of talking powers.<sup>35</sup> I early found that I could do more effective work for Ireland by helping Sir John Gray and Butt and Parnell. This was the first time that I felt under the necessity of standing alone, and I failed owing to the want of caution or treachery of someone in getting Davitt arrested. Had he remained I would have won easily.

## Notes

1. A ‘traverser’ was person who formally challenges or disputes an allegation in a legal context, hence, the defendant in a trial.
2. The Land League had struggled to gain support in the more prosperous regions of Leinster and Munster. However, in August 1880 the House of Lords rejected the very moderate Compensation for Disturbance Bill which shattered the government’s authority in rural Ireland. The Land League was suddenly transformed into a nationwide movement and the rate of increase in ‘agrarian outrages’ during 1880 led Dublin Castle to feel that the movement was out of control. Charges of seditious conspiracy (conspiring to prevent the payment of rents and the taking of farms from which tenants had been evicted, for resisting the process of being ejected and creating ill-will among her Majesty’s subjects) were laid by the Irish Attorney-General against Parnell and the Land League executive in November 1880, and their trial began in Dublin in December 1880 (Bew 1980, 49-50; Bew 2011, 69; Comerford 1996a, 41).



3. There were 2,590 'agrarian outrages' listed for 1880 with nearly 1,700 of these being committed between October and December. However, much of the agitation did not represent actual danger to life and between October and December there were only two actual agrarian murders (Bew 2007, 323).
4. The name for Co. Laois until 1922.
5. Rev. Canon John Hoey was the parish priest of the parish of Muckno in Co. Monaghan from 1882 to 1895 (Carville 2011).
6. William Copeland Trimble (1851-1941) was a newspaper editor and eldest son of the newspaper proprietor William Trimble. He joined the Land League in 1880 and was in charge of the liberal newspaper the *Impartial Reporter*, which was critical in support for the Parnellite demand for self-government, while continuing to advocate for tenant protection and relief (DIB 2009, 'Trimble, William Copeland').
7. There is no record of a newspaper with this title. Kettle probably meant to say the *Impartial Reporter*.
8. This is likely to be James Plunkett (c. 1817-99), a Dublin solicitor who acted as 'sub-agent' for Parnell in his first County Dublin election in 1874 (*Evening Herald*, 29 May 1899, 'Death of Mr. James Plunkett'). No information can be found relating to the anecdote about the lost 50 pounds.
9. Valentine Blake Dillon (1847-1904) was a lawyer and politician who was the nephew of John Blake Dillon (one of the founding members of the Young Ireland movement) and the cousin of John Dillon. He had qualified as a solicitor in 1870 and took part in many trials related to the Land War (Wikipedia 2022, 'Valentine Blake Dillon').
10. After a hearing of nineteen days, the jury had failed to agree on a verdict and the case was dismissed.
11. T. P (Timothy Power) O'Connor (1848-1929) was born in Athlone and educated at Queen's College Galway. He moved to England in 1870 and became an accomplished and popular journalist, writing for the *Daily Telegraph* and as London correspondent for the *New York Herald*. He was the only Home Rule MP to sit for an English constituency, representing Liverpool from 1880 to 1929. A strong supporter of the Land League and Parnell, he later opposed Parnell during the leadership crisis following the O'Shea divorce scandal (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 360).
12. The failure of the trial would allow Forster to convince the Cabinet of the need for coercion and in January 1881 the government proceeded to bring in a 'Coercion Bill,' which allowed for the mass internment of some 1,000 suspects.
13. Kettle's argument for an Irish withdrawal from Parliament favoured a rapid solution to the land problem. He was perhaps the most convinced advocate of secession in this period (Bew 1980, 51).
14. The more realistic 'neo-Fenians,' although perhaps too confident in their control of the movement, appeared to be more moderate in their proposed actions than Kettle. Bew speculates that their greater experi-

ence in such matters may have taught them to be more cautious in inviting government oppression (Bew 2007, 325).

15. Thomas Sexton (1847-1932) was a journalist and politician. Encouraged to run for Parliament by Parnell, he was first elected as MP for Co. Sligo in the 1880 general election. He was considered to be one of Parnell's principal lieutenants although he later opposed him in the split. He was regarded as one of the finest orators of the Irish Parliamentary Party, hence his sobriquet 'silver-tongued Sexton' (DIB 2009, 'Sexton, Thomas').
16. As Bew notes, 'Kettle had emerged from the world of land reform politics rather than Fenian conspiracy. It seems that his arguments carried little weight' with the 'neo-Fenians' (Bew 2007, 325).
17. The Westminster Palace Hotel was a luxury hotel in London, located on Victoria Street, directly opposite Westminster Abbey and close to the Palace of Westminster, the meeting place for the Parliament.
18. This proposed general strike against rent sounded very radical, and it did unify all the factions involved, but it stopped short of a withdrawal from Parliament. Parnell would wish to avoid such an extreme move and his political calculations were influenced by his close knowledge of the balance of forces within the Liberal government, which was keen for a settlement of the Irish land question (Bew 2007, 325).
19. Justin McCarthy (1830-1912) was a journalist, historian, novelist, and politician who was an MP from 1879 to 1900. He joined the Westminster Home Rule Association in 1877, was elected MP for Co. Longford in the 1879 by-election, and served as vice-chairman of the Home Rule Party from 1880 to 1890. He acted as a conduit between British leaders and Parnell. After the party divided in 1890, McCarthy became chairman of the anti-Parnellite group (DIB 2009, 'McCarthy, Justin').
20. As editor and proprietor of the influential *Freeman's Journal*, Gray was a moderate who had been initially opposed to Parnell and had voted against him in the contest for leadership of the party after the 1880 general election. Afterwards, however, he accepted Parnell's leadership, his support and loyalty partly influenced by the establishment by Parnell in 1881 of the *United Ireland* newspaper, which threaten to rival Gray's *Freeman's Journal* (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Edmund William Dwyer').
21. Gale day was the day the rent was due dependent on the agreement made between farmers and landlords. It was usually twice yearly and after the harvest.
22. Here Kettle is emphasising how the long and complicated dispute over the land will be solved by the prompt decisive action of the withholding of rent.
23. John Ferguson (1836-1906) was a publisher, Home Ruler, and land reformer originally from Ulster. He developed an interest in agrarian reform as a young man and, following a move to Glasgow, became an Irish nationalist and established the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain in the early 1870s. A radical intellectual, he was also active in the Land League activities in Ireland and frequently returned to Ireland,

where he gave moral and practical support to Butt and later to Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Ferguson, John').

24. Charles Bradlaugh (1833-91) was a prominent English freethinking political activist and atheist. His youthful experiences while serving in the British army in Ireland had influenced his political development and he was a supporter of Irish Home Rule. Admired as an orator and incorruptible public figure, he led many unpopular causes including advocating for birth control (Berresford 2004).
25. John Bright (1811-89) was a Quaker and an influential British Radical and Liberal statesman. After the Great Famine, he had expressed sympathy and support for land reform in Ireland, although he later opposed Gladstone's 1886 Home Rule proposal, and he regarded Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party as 'the rebel party' (Wikipedia 2022, 'John Bright').
26. The passionate debates that took place in Parliament at this time (February 1881) against the Coercive legislation had effectively transformed the Irish Parliamentary Party into a specifically Parnellite party. The Irish MPs united in their defence of the constitutional liberties of their countrymen, and those who refused to support Parnell were denounced as traitors to the national cause. The tactic of obstruction of Parliament also reached new heights (Bew 2007, 323-24).
27. On 3 February the government revoked Davitt's ticket of leave, which had been granted on his release from prison in 1877. He was arrested in Dublin and returned to jail in England (Bew 2007, 323-24).
28. News of Davitt's arrest sparked chaotic scenes at Parliament, which led to 36 Irish MPs, led by Parnell and Dillon, being suspended from the House (Bew 2007, 323-24).
29. John Clancy (1844-1915) was a local government official who began work as a printer with the *Irish Times* and joined the IRB. He was arrested in 1866 for making seditious speeches and was imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail for several months. By the mid-1870s he had become a well-known figure in Dublin republican circles and a strong supporter of the Land League. He was also imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail in early 1882 for supporting the No Rent Manifesto. A strong supporter of Parnell, he had played a critical role in organising support for him after the party split. He established the 'Parnell Leadership Committee' at the National Club to form an alliance of all Parnellite town and city councillors in the country. He had a lengthy career in Dublin city hall, playing a significant role in Dublin municipal politics (DIB 2009, 'Clancy, John').
30. A type of boat used for scheduled mail or passenger service.
31. A couple of days after Davitt's arrest the Land League executive had assembled in Paris to plan their response. However, for a whole week Parnell did not appear and his colleagues feared that he was dead (Bew 2011, 79).
32. La Madeleine is the Church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine, a Catholic parish church on Place de la Madeleine in the 8th arrondissement of

Paris.

33. Katharine Parnell (Katharine O'Shea) (1846-1921) was born Katherine Page Wood on 30 January 1846, the 13th child of Sir John Page Wood. In her biography of Charles Stewart Parnell, Katharine recounts that as a child she was musically gifted and educated by her father, being particularly inspired by his work as a long-serving chairman of the Board of Guardians. In 1867 Katharine married William O'Shea (1840-1905), a member of the Home Rule Party and MP for County Clare. The couple had three children, but after some years they began to live separately. Katharine moved into a residence on the estate of her wealthy aunt, Mrs. Benjamin Wood, at Eltham, Kent. She commenced a relationship with Charles Stewart Parnell in 1880 and they had three children (Claude Sophie, 1882; Claire, 1883; and Katharine, 1884). Throughout the 1880s, facilitated by the status and connections of her family, Katharine acted as the intermediary for correspondence between Parnell and Gladstone on the Irish question. The O'Shea family had remained financially dependent on Mrs. Wood, who left her niece a substantial inheritance after her death in 1889. In the same year, Captain O'Shea initiated divorce proceedings, citing his wife's relationship with Parnell. During the ensuing scandal Parnell was rejected by the majority of his party, the British political establishment, and the Catholic hierarchy, and he lost popular support in Ireland. On 25 June 1891, now divorced, Katharine married Parnell in Brighton, four months before he died. She published a two-volume biography of Parnell in 1914. Katharine Parnell died on 5 February 1921 (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2010; O'Shea 1914, vol. 1, pp. 15-18; Wikipedia 2023, 'Katharine O'Shea').
34. In rejecting the secession option, Parnell had acted in accordance with his deepest convictions of the value of parliamentary work. While it was a view approved by most of his followers and was greeted with relief by his lieutenants, Kettle was bitterly disappointed. In effect, it rejected the chance of a rapid solution to the land problem and instead surrendered the initiative to Gladstone. Two weeks before Parnell died in 1891, Kettle records Parnell lamenting not taking his advice at this time: 'How much better would it have been had we taken your advice in '81. It would have been all over and won long ago' (Bew 2011, 79).
35. Kettle was always a forceful writer although he appeared to lack confidence in his own education and ability to speak in public. Although he displayed a love of learning and books in his youth, he records (in Chapter 1) that he left school at an early age in order to work on the family farm. He was self-educated thereafter.

# Chapter 7: The Ladies' Land League and My Imprisonment in Kilmainham Jail

*I Entreat Parnell to Come to Ireland – The Clara Meeting – Andrew Bermingham – The Ladies' Land League – Anna Parnell – Coercion – Brennan Arrested – My Arrest – “The Kilmainham Party” – The 1881 Land Bill – The Tyrone Election – A Jail Visit from Parnell – My Labour and Industrial Programme*

On the evening of the Paris meeting, William O'Brien<sup>1</sup> joined the party in Paris on his way from Egypt,<sup>2</sup> and Parnell soon after put him to work to cover the retreat.<sup>3</sup> When Parnell left the meeting room, I followed him to his bedroom and asked him to close the door as I had a few words to say to him. “Mr. Parnell,” I said, “I never remember kneeling to anyone but Almighty God and my own mother, but if necessary, I will now kneel to ask you to come and show yourself in Ireland, to enable you to retain the confidence of the people.” He seemed taken aback a little at my earnestness, and after a pause he said, “When do you want me to go?” “Next Sunday to a meeting in Clara, in the King’s County.”<sup>4</sup> I shall meet you at the Broadstone<sup>5</sup> and go with you.” “Yes, I’ll go,” he said, and I said: “God bless you,” and left him. Dillon and Harris, myself and some others left for Dublin the next day, and I scarcely know how the week passed I was so disappointed, but I went to the railway station on the next Sunday morning, and true to his word, Parnell turned up with Dr. Joe

Kenny,<sup>6</sup> but the doctor did not come to the meeting. We travelled to Moate, and had to drive to Clara. On our way down we reviewed the situation. There were a lot of evictions pending on several estates at the time, and I said that I thought that where the people were going out they should be advised to plough and tatter about some of their land to prevent the landlords from utilising it in a hurry. Someone Parnell knew joined the train before we had time to discuss the pros and cons of the ploughing idea, and we had no opportunity of referring to it again. This turned out to be the only faulty idea I ever remember putting in Parnell's way. He publicly recommended this procedure in his speech at the meeting, and brought himself within the scope of the Whiteboy Act of which, not being a lawyer, I was unaware.<sup>7</sup> Pat Martin, M.P.,<sup>8</sup> drew Parnell's attention to this mistake, and Parnell withdrew the advice to the people publicly in the House of Commons a few days afterwards, and he and I were at cross purposes for several months following. But we had one interesting day before the coldness. When we got to Moate there was a splendid pair of cobs hitched to a kind of very long low, phaeton<sup>9</sup> belonging to Mr. Andrew Bermingham,<sup>10</sup> a great Tenant Righter, and well known to Mr. Parnell and myself, waiting for us. Mr. Parnell and I sat in front, and Mr. Bermingham and another friend behind. It was such a convenient yoke for talking – and Bermingham was a great slow talker – that one or other of them kept him in conversation nearly all the journey. When we got out of the town we were joined and surrounded by about 200 mounted men of a bodyguard which Parnell was simply charmed with. I never heard him indulge in so many exclamations of satisfaction as he did on the six miles drive to Clara. I think Mr. Parnell would have shone as a military man, or as a lawyer, equally as a statesman. The day was splendid, and the Clara meeting was a record affair, and Mr. Parnell seemed to enjoy it more than usual. When we started to drive back, the phaeton was manned like the morning, but the crowd was so dense in the street that the driver could not get on with the cobs, which were becoming excited. Everyone in the place wanted to touch Parnell's hand, and so many people held on to the phaeton that when the cobs got near

the edge of the crowd they made a dash forward with the result that the unfortunate phaeton snapped in two, and poor Bermingham and his friend went back heels over head like a shot from a mortar. The cobs were simply flying at a full gallop, and Mr. Parnell turned nearly round in his seat and broke into the only fit of hearty laughter I ever saw him indulge in. "Poor Bermingham!" he exclaimed more than once on the drive, "how disappointed he must be." Our stopping for the owner of the phaeton was simply out of the question as we were racing for the train and besides, if we got him we had, as the witty driver said, no place to put him.

About the last thing Mr. Davitt did before his arrest was to start the Ladies' Land League. He and Miss Anna Parnell<sup>11</sup> gathered around the ladies' centre in a short space, a surprising number of really talented women. At the same time I was somewhat dubious about the wisdom of the move in such a rough and tumble business as an agrarian combination necessarily must be when run on business revolutionary lines. I was not alone in that view, as most of the Executive were opposed to it, but Mr. Davitt was the leading spirit in the movement up to this, and no one thought of opposing him, especially as they had nothing better to propose.

When I had an opportunity of making Miss Anna Parnell's acquaintance, I became even more enthusiastic about the move than Mr. Davitt. I found she had a better knowledge of the lights and shades of Irish peasant life, of the real economic conditions of the country, and of the social and political forces which had to be acted upon to work out the freedom of Ireland than any person, man or woman, I have ever met. It was a knowledge that reminded me very much of that of my own mother. It was simple, masterful, and profound.<sup>12</sup> Ignorance of the ethics of the real condition of Ireland has, in my opinion, been the chief cause of the failure of all our movements and our leaders in their efforts to work out the redemption of the country. Anna Parnell would have worked the Land League revolution to a much better conclusion than her great brother.<sup>13</sup> On our drive back to Moate, I introduced the subject and told him about my

doubts and what removed them. "Oh, yes," he said, "my sister knows all about Irish politics. She is never at a loss and never is mistaken in her judgement. It was she who hung on to Power and myself and the other people, and gave us no peace until we had to move to get Davitt liberated. She saw some of Davitt's work, his plans and projects for the future of the Irish national movement, and she determined if possible, to get a man who could think and plan under such circumstances restored to the sphere of action. You see how true her conceptions were." We had some time to spare at the railway station and the people were as usual, anxious for oratory. Mr. Parnell pressed me as he never did before to address a few words to the crowd, but I declined to speak either at Clara or Moate. My mind was seething with the effects of the breakdown at Paris, and I was afraid I might collide with Parnell or seem to endorse his present policy. A lot of people travelled up to the next two stations to get autographs from Parnell. I never saw him indulge in such a weakness before. When we reached Dublin, he dined in Dr. Kenny's, and left by the night mail for London. The doctor was savage because I did not turn in to dinner, but the fact was I did not care to talk, even privately then, as it was always my business not to decry but to utilise Parnell's and every other man's genius to work out the redemption of the race. I was satisfied when I silenced the quidnuncs<sup>14</sup> running away from Coercion. The unlucky Whiteboy business about ploughing the land was nearly putting him in the way of becoming the first "suspect." I lost Mass that Sunday morning, and the remembrance troubled me all day. The nucleus of what was afterwards called the "Kilmainham Party," was formed at the meeting in Paris. The minority there became the centre of the new party.





*Office of the Ladies' Land League, 1881*

The Coercion was soon in full swing. Dillon and Boyton and Father Sheehy<sup>15</sup> were amongst the first batch of leaders.<sup>16</sup> Brennan and myself lost patience with the effects of the breakdown policy and we commenced to preach a general rent strike on our own account. Brennan was arrested in May, and was the last of the first set of officials who gave their whole time to the business and

were, of course, paid a salary. Someone had to be appointed in Dillon's and Brennan's places, and a meeting of the Executive was called in London, to which I was invited by Pat Egan. Parnell presided at the meeting, but never looked in my direction. The proposal was that Kettle and Sexton were to be appointed, but Mr. Parnell moved that Sexton should represent the Paris policy, and I should represent the London policy.

He was beaten on a division, and I was sent to Ireland in full command of the organisation. But of course Mr. Sexton was instructed to work in unison with his own House of Commons policy. I held my salaried appointment for about a fortnight, when I raised the No Rent cry and was sent to prison, for the notorious satisfaction of some of the Paris men.<sup>17</sup> But the end was not yet.

I reached Naas jail after a rather exciting experience. I was fairly well known to the Naas people, and I had been up in the forenoon at the prison on a visit to Brennan and Father Sheehy. I was "pulled" on my return at Kingsbridge.<sup>18</sup> I met my new-made friend John Clancy in Naas, and we came back together and he was present at my arrest. He came with me to the Castle Yard, and got me some luncheon and an overcoat and came back to Naas with me. John Mallon<sup>19</sup> and another officer were my escort. We had to drive from Sallins to Naas

and Mr. Mallon selected the mail car. When we reached the town the car pulled up at the post office just as the work people, who seemed to be in great numbers, were returning from their work. It ran round like wildfire that the detectives were taking me to prison, and someone cried out, "We won't let them." Mr. Mallon asked me to get down and walk, and that it was only a short distance. The people rushed around us and knocked the hat off Mr. Mallon, and kicked and mauled both detectives, but the crux came when we got on the bridge over the canal with the low parapet. Someone called out to throw them in and drown them. By tremendous exertions they rushed for the prison door which was ready to admit them, and got in hatless and almost headless with their clothes rather badly torn, and bleeding from a good many wounds. Mr. Mallon and his man had to remain in the jail all night, as the crowd stoned the doors and kept up ructions for a long time. Late in the evening the band came out and played round the place in spite of the police.<sup>20</sup> I spent only a fortnight in Naas. I applied to be transferred to Dublin to give me a chance to manage in some way my big farming business, and James Grehan got Lord Monk,<sup>21</sup> whose acquaintance I had made at the ploughing match thirty years before, to get Mr. Forster to let me come to Kilmainham.

I found Dillon and Boyton there, and we were joined soon after by Brennan and Father Sheehy. We were the "Kilmainham Party," William O'Brien was so puzzled about when he came into the conflict.

It must be plain to even the casual reader that I had views of my own on every phase of the struggle, quite apart from the views of the men I was working with. This was the chief reason why Mr. Parnell and I understood each other so well. Although I missed getting a purchase transfer by the failure of the Party,<sup>22</sup> I felt the advisability of making the best of the 1881 bill (based on Butt's work in the Tenant Right movement) which Gladstone had to fall back on when the League leaders failed to give him pressure to pass their programme.<sup>23</sup> It seems to be a fundamental weakness amongst Irish

leaders of every movement to expect statesmen to legislate on their lines without pressure. This is simplicity of the first order. When I looked through the Land Bill I wrote to Tim Healy to dash on and amend the bill by securing as much exemption from rent on the tenant's improvements as possible. Parnell and the Party refused to accept any responsibility for such a lame settlement as the Land Bill offered,<sup>24</sup> but I expected that Healy could be counted on to ignore the Party and display his ability in the discussion on the bill. In his reply he said he felt greatly strengthened by having my support in the course he meant to adopt. The clause known as the "Healy Clause" in the Land Act of 1881, was the result.<sup>25</sup> As a matter of fact it was Hugh Law, the Attorney-General, who drafted the clause in the form in which it passed, but it was under Healy's pressure. Law refused to take Healy's work which was only present and prospective, and in Law's form it had 40 years of a retrospect. Mr. Sexton was doing the League work in Dublin, and James Grehan was doing most of the Sheriff's sales and county work at this time. Nearly all the other leading men were put in prison.

I should here mention that, for all our differences at this time, it was Parnell who questioned Forster in the usual way about my arrest. Joe Cowan, M.P.,<sup>26</sup> whose acquaintance I made at the Richmond Commission, spoke on the subject also. I was so obnoxious to the "Home" Party at the time that no one but Parnell would touch me. After the Land Bill passed, the Party had no excuse for remaining in Parliament and had to come to Ireland. The constitutional work of fighting the seat in Tyrone made vacant by



*Timothy Michael Healy, 1898*

the appointment of the new Land Commissioner, Mr. Litton, was seized upon to keep them employed. I was fairly well posted in Ulster politics, through my Tenant Right connections, that Dickson could not be beaten just then. I sent word to Mr. Parnell not to risk the rebuff of a defeat as it would have a bad effect on his popularity and prestige, and it was, amongst a large circle, low enough at this time. But he was in the toils and committed to the fight before he got my message, so it went on and his man was beaten. The Rev. H. Rylott was an able, but a new man and not a good candidate just then.<sup>27</sup> I was so disgusted at this setback that I allowed my own name to go forward for Monaghan a few days afterwards as I was informed through Dan McAleese<sup>28</sup> and others that my connection with the land agitation would tell to great advantage in Monaghan. I was anxious to save Parnell's prestige, and to bring all the parties together, now that the Land Bill was through and that the breakdown could not be recalled. It happened that the last run I took through the country before my arrest was attending a meeting with Healy at Carrickmacross, with O'Kelly at Brookboro, with Jordan at Enniskillen and Clones, and with Dillon in the town of Monaghan. I always thought afterwards that the defeat in Tyrone, of which the English press made so much, drove Parnell to favour the wild demonstrations that followed.<sup>29</sup> The Monaghan election did not come off as the seat was not vacated. But my consent to stand brought Mr. Parnell on a visit to Kilmainham a few days afterwards.

Father Sheehy, Brennan, Boyton, and I were at some game in the ball court when he entered by a corner door; and so strained were the feelings of the Party at the time, that none of the men moved one inch to meet him.<sup>30</sup> He had to walk the full way to where we were standing. The greeting was courteous enough on both sides, and when it was over he says, "Kettle, I want to speak to you." "All right," I said, "My quarters are here." So we stepped in and when the first half-hour was up, he sent to the governor for an extension of the visit and when the next was up, he got a further extension. "Well, Kettle," he says, "what are we going to do now?" "I suppose,"

he said, “you have nothing to do unless to carry through the second section of the original programme. The first is drifted for the present, and there is no use in grieving about it.” I was sorry about Tyrone,” he replied. “I did not get your message in time, so it had to go on.” I was expecting the visit and I had a written sketch of what I thought should be the next move, and I read it for him. I told him that I offered land for labourers on the Tenant Right platform, and that the future of the country would depend upon the housing and placing of the labour power, that legislation would be required for this, but in the meantime the farmers should be urged to give the labourers a decent way of living on fair terms. But the great work before the Land League organisation was the industrial question. I told him I remembered before the Famine when the people were fed and clothed on Irish manufacture, and I saw no reason why the present powerful combination should not be used to put Swift’s advice into operation to a large extent. “To burn everything that comes from England but the coal.”<sup>31</sup> The written sketch was, that the League should establish a great Central Bureau in Dublin with as many committee rooms as might be required for the use of Irish manufactures; that they should publicly canvass and invite everyone who manufactured anything in Ireland to come and form committees; and that the League would undertake to secure the home market to the utmost for Irish goods; and, as he said a few days later in Cork, when the Irish supply would be exhausted to fall back on the American in preference to the British. I said I saw no reason why he should not go on quietly and govern Ireland by combination until the time came for legislation.

## Notes

1. William O’Brien (1852-1928) was born in Mallow, Co. Cork, the son of a solicitor’s clerk. Although Catholic, O’Brien was educated at the local Church of Ireland school. He was active for a time in the Fenian movement, resigning from it in the mid-1870s. He studied law at Queen’s

College Cork and then became a journalist with the *Freeman's Journal*. In 1881 Parnell appointed him editor of the Land League newspaper, *United Ireland* (DIB 2009, 'O'Brien, William'). O'Brien was one of the main organisers of the 1886-91 Plan of Campaign, prompted by a depression in the mid-1880s, to reduce rents. It was not supported by Parnell. O'Brien joined the anti-Parnellite side in the split following the O'Shea divorce crisis (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 396).

2. O'Brien may have been reporting on the situation there in advance of the Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882.
3. William O'Brien was one of Parnell's most capable lieutenants and had previously been a reporter with the *Freeman's Journal*. When Parnell found that the newspaper was not giving enough support to his Land League policies, he established his own weekly paper, *United Ireland*, and appointed O'Brien to be the editor (Dungan 2014).
4. The former name for Co. Offaly.
5. Broadstone railway station was the Dublin terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway, located in the Dublin suburb of Broadstone.
6. Joseph Edward Kenny (1845-1900) was a physician and served as a nationalist MP for South Cork from 1885 to 1892. He was elected to the executive committee of the Land League in 1880 and subsequently served as treasurer of the National League, the Mansion House Evicted Tenants Committee, and the Tenants' Defence Association. He was a close friend and medical advisor to both Parnell and Davitt and acted as the doctor for his political colleagues while imprisoned with them in Kilmainham Jail in 1881 (DIB 2009, 'Kenny, Joseph Edward'; Lyons 1991).
7. The Whiteboy Acts refers to legislation passed by Parliament in the eighteenth century to empower the authorities to combat Whiteboyism. The Whiteboys were a secret Irish agrarian organisation that had begun in the eighteenth century with the aim of defending the land rights of tenant farmers. Over time, Whiteboyism became a general term for rural violence associated with secret societies.
8. Patrick Leopold Martin (1830-95) was an MP for Co. Kilkenny from 1874 to 1885 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Patrick Martin (Irish politician)').
9. A phaeton was a type of open carriage usually drawn by one or two cobs (a draft type pony used for driving carts) and featuring a lightly sprung body on top of four large wheels.
10. Andrew Birmingham (1830-91) was the landlord at the time of a large estate in Kilfoylan (Kilfylan) in Co. Offaly, with lands also in Roscommon. Originally a Protestant, he had converted to Catholicism in order to marry. He was a popular man locally, having reduced the rents on his estate and was a supporter of Parnell and tenant rights (King 1937-39; Ancestry.com n.d., 'Andrew William Birmingham').
11. Anna Parnell (1852-1911) was a nationalist and land activist and younger sister of Charles Stewart Parnell. After her brother was elected MP for Meath in 1875, she became increasingly political. She and her sister, Fanny, had worked in New York for the Famine Relief Fund. There she collaborated with Michael Davitt, who recognised her administrative

and intellectual capabilities. Fanny had also set up a Ladies' Land League Committee in New York in order to raise funds for the Irish National Land League. By late 1880 Davitt believed that the leadership of the Land League would soon be imprisoned and suggested that a Ladies' Land League be set up to carry on the work after their imprisonment. He proposed that Anna take charge of the new Ladies' Land League, which was established in Dublin in January 1881. Anna travelled throughout Ireland promoting the message of the Land League and encouraging women to take an active role in Land League activities. Following the suppression of the Land League, as planned, the Ladies' Land League took over responsibility for the continuation of the campaign. Over 500 branches of the Ladies' Land League were formed and funds were raised for the League and for the support of prisoners and their families. Attempts to close down the Ladies' Land League following the release of the male Land League leaders under the Kilmainham Treaty led to bitter negotiations between the women of the Ladies' Land League and the male leadership and, against Anna's wishes, the Ladies' Land League was disbanded in 1882 (DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Anna Mercer (Catherine Maria)'; Ward 2021).

12. Anna Parnell's account of the Ladies' Land League, *The Tale of a Great Sham*, was written in 1907 but it was not published until 1986 (Parnell 2020).
13. The Ladies' Land League took the No Rent Manifesto seriously and Anna Parnell attempted to encourage a genuine resistance to land-lordism. Anna was more radical than her brother Charles, disagreeing with him on many Land League directives. Like Kettle, she wanted more than simply a 'solution' to the land question and she was highly critical of Parnell's agreement with the government that land agitation would end following the Kilmainham Treaty (DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Anna Mercer').
14. A 'quidnunc' is an inquisitive or gossipy person. Here, Kettle is probably referring to his condemnation of the Land League executives during their retreat to Paris following the introduction of coercion and the arrest of Davitt in February 1881.
15. Eugene Sheehy (1841-1917) was a priest and nationalist from Co. Limerick. He was president of the local branch of the National Land League at Kilmallock. In May 1881, despite Dublin Castle's prohibition of the event, he spoke at a League rally in Limerick city and so was imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail. The notoriety he achieved from this earned him the sobriquet 'the Land League priest' (DIB 2009, 'Sheehy, Eugene'). He was the uncle of the feminists Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington (1877-1946) and Mary Sheehy (1884-1967), who married Tom Kettle (1882-1916).
16. Part of the campaign of coercion was to paralyse local League organisations by arresting branch committee members.
17. Kettle was arrested in June 1881 for calling for a collective refusal of rent. His stance – that the Parliamentary Party should have withdrawn from Westminster, moved to Ireland, and called for a general rent

strike – had made him unpopular with many on the League executive. They were embarrassed by Kettle's calls to action, which were motivated by his radical outlook on agrarian reform (DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Andrew Joseph').

18. Kingsbridge Station is the original name of Heuston Station, one of Dublin's largest railway stations.
19. John Mallon (1839-1915) was a policeman, originally from Armagh, who had moved up the ranks of the Dublin Metropolitan Police to become superintendent of the force by 1874. His knowledge of the Irish situation meant that he was frequently asked to handle political matters, including the delicate task of the arrest of Parnell in October 1881 (DIB 2009, 'Mallon, John').
20. Kettle's experience of his arrest demonstrates not just the support of the crowd for him and the Land War but also the hostile environment that existed for the Irish administration and its agents at this time. During 1880-82 policemen frequently faced physical resistance by defiant crowds and were often heavily dependent on military backing and support (Comerford 1996a, 46).
21. Charles Stanley Monck (1819-94), 4th Viscount Monck of Ballytrammion, was born in Tipperary and owned estates in Wicklow and Wexford. He was elected to Parliament in 1852 and, after losing his seat, he was appointed Governor of British North America in 1861. When Canada became independent in 1867, he became its first Governor General. He returned to Ireland in 1868 and served as Lord Lieutenant of County Dublin from 1874 to 1892 (Harris 2020).
22. Here Kettle is referring to his previous proposal that land purchase could be facilitated by the recovery of tax allegedly charged in excess on Ireland by the British government since the Act of Union.
23. On 7 April 1881 Gladstone had introduced a major Irish land bill that became law on 22 August. It provided for the Three Fs along with the establishment of land courts that were empowered to fix a judicial rent upon application by a landlord or tenant. This granted tenants a form of co-ownership of their holdings. Gladstone's fear of social dissolution in Ireland, and the effect this could have on British policy, had persuaded him to introduce such major reform. While it did not meet the declared objectives of the Land League to achieve full peasant proprietorship and an end of the landlord system, many larger tenant farmers saw the act as a very substantial gain. In effect, Gladstone had split the agitation by buying off a significant section of its supporters (Bew 1980, 52; Comerford 1996a, 47).
24. On introduction of the bill, Parnell had recognised privately that he believed Gladstone had done enough and before it entered law in August he had raised a few problems in dealing with it (Bew 1980, 52).
25. The debates and adoption of this clause introduced by the then 27-year-old Healy gained him parliamentary prominence at this time. He had been advised by his brother Maurice, a solicitor's apprentice in Ireland, and the resulting clause was intended to ensure that no



increase in judicial rent could be allowed in respect of improvements made by the tenant. Its introduction brought him to the attention of Gladstone and transformed his political standing (DIB 2009, 'Healy, Timothy Michael').

26. Joseph Cowan (1829-1900) was an MP for Newcastle-upon-Tyne between 1874 and 1886. He was an activist, politician, journalist, and printer with a reputation for being radical, liberal, and independent-minded (Wikipedia 2022, 'Joseph Cowen').
27. This by-election took place on 7 September 1881, where the Gladstonian Ulster Liberal, T. A. Dickson, received 3,168 votes, the Conservative candidate 3,081, and Parnell's candidate, the Rev. Harold Rylett, who was an Ulster-based Unitarian minister who had been active in the Land League, only 907. Bew has noted how this fortuitous Liberal by-election victory led Gladstone to believe that it demonstrated a decline in support for the Land League and that an Irish 'middle way' was still possible. The defeat contributed towards Parnell's arrest a week later (Bew 2007, 329).
28. Daniel McAleese (1833-1900) was a journalist, poet, newspaper proprietor, and politician. He had worked with different newspapers but had moved to Monaghan and in February 1876 launched the *People's Advocate*, a cheap, nationalist weekly sympathetic to Catholic interests. He became an influential figure in local politics and played a significant role in the Tenant Right, Land League, and Home Rule movements (DIB 2009, 'McAleese, Daniel').
29. Bew notes how continued stoking of agitation risked imprisonment for Parnell as well as the loss of 'moderate' support. However, refusal to maintain the agitation would have led to alienation of Irish-American feeling and the more radical side of the Land League. Parnell also harboured fears that the act would not settle the land question, but he attempted to steer a middle course in order to prevent the breakdown of the movement. He persuaded the Land League to adopt the programme of 'testing the act,' leading to open confrontation with Gladstone (Bew 2011, 80-82).
30. Many on the Land League executive were opposed to acceptance of the 1881 Land Act, leading to a straining of relationships between Parnell and his lieutenants. Although there was a satisfied majority of farmers who saw substantial gains to be had from implementation of the act, many of the smaller and poorer farmers (up to 20 per cent) were too deeply in arrears to clear their debts (as required by the act) and enter the new order (Comerford 1996a, 47).
31. This is a paraphrase of words in Jonathan Swift's 1720 essay 'A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture': 'Ireland would never be happy, till a law were made for burning every thing that came from England, except their people and their coals.'

# Chapter 8: The Arrest of Parnell and the No Rent Manifesto

*The Irish Manufacture and Labour Programme – Arrest of Parnell – Mass and Sermon in Kilmainham – House of Commons Orators Caged – The No Rent Manifesto – I Lose My Health and Am Released – Sheriff’s Sales – I Visit London and Paris – Release of Parnell – Chamberlain’s Role*

Mr. Parnell attended a League meeting the next day and announced the enlarged programme, taking in the labourers and almost threatening the farmers. Also he started the project of taking the largest house in Rutland Square<sup>1</sup> for the Industrial Bureau, and when he went to Cork a few days afterwards he let himself loose on the boycotting of British manufacturers. William O’Brien in his fascinating but surface view of this period attempts to glorify everyone about the Tyrone election. It was the exultation of the British press and people over his defeat in Tyrone that drove Mr. Parnell to exhibit his power over every other part of Ireland. It was his declared determination to test, and, if necessary of course, block the working of the Government rent-fixing Land Act, and his call on the people at Cork to boycott British manufacturers that moved every section of Gladstone’s Cabinet to agree upon his arrest, and upon the suppression of the Land League.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Parnell during those few weeks was leading the movement in Ireland on revolutionary lines, perhaps

without being fully aware of it, to make up somewhat for the failure to do some months before, and the people simply went wild with delight.<sup>3</sup> The result was the same – imprisonment – but the sequel was very different. The February sacrifice, according to Gray and Parnell himself many times afterwards, would have settled the land question, and have forced all classes together on the national question, but the October sacrifice led to the tragedies that followed and settled nothing.



Thomas Brennan, 1880

Brennan and I were talking in the yard when our attendant told us that Mr. Parnell was arrested. We asked him how did he know. “Why,” he says, “he is in Boyton’s room.” I walked in like a man in a dream. Strange how I never expected his arrest. I wanted everyone else arrested, but not him. He was sitting on the side of Boyton’s bed when we took a good look at each other. “Well, Kettle,” he says, “see where you have landed me now. If you left me at home at Avondale minding my own business I would have

escaped this.” “Never mind,” I said, “it might be worse.” We got talking together soon afterwards and I said: “This is simply horrible. How are you going to get out unless you sneak out?” “I expect,” he says, “we will have plenty of time to discuss the going out. Tell me something about how you spend your time here.” I gave him a sketch of our easy, lazy prison procedure, and amongst other things he asked me had we devotions on Sunday. I said: “Yes. We have Mass at nine o’clock and a sermon.” “Well,” he says, “I am delighted to hear it although somehow I am not surprised. I had,” I said, “a very serious

conversation with poor Butt a short time before he died, and he seemed to have a decided leaning towards the Catholic religion." "Yes," he says, "I believe the Catholic religion is the only spiritual religion in the world. It seems to connect the world and the next in a more positive way than the doctrines of any other Church."<sup>4</sup> When I had to go to my own quarters I said: "Now don't forget about Sunday." But unfortunately before Sunday came the place was packed with all the leaders, and it was on the Sunday next that William O'Brien produced and we signed the No Rent Manifesto.<sup>5</sup> O'Kelly was the only one who at once realised like myself that Parnell was floored, for the present at least. O'Kelly said: "You may as well make terms and go out as soon as you can, as you can never get out any other way." But O'Kelly was laughed at for his expression of cowardly common sense, as Parnell called O'Kelly's way of looking at things many years after. Brennan and myself looked like dancing round the yard when he heard that O'Kelly and Sexton and the "Paris Paper" House of Commons men were caged.<sup>6</sup> I had a great opportunity of travelling over the minds of all sorts of men in Kilmainham, and I enjoyed it immensely. The only impossible men I met there with whom I could never compare notes were William O'Brien and a sombre Fenian from the West named Walsh. It was impossible to say anything that would please Walsh, and when O'Brien would be done rushing or gushing you would not have time to say anything. Dwyer Gray and Parnell were the two best listeners I met, and O'Brien is by long odds the worst. He never gives himself a chance to learn anything to change his first impressions. If they happen to be right he will drive them home with tremendous force, but if they are mistaken, his state is hopeless.

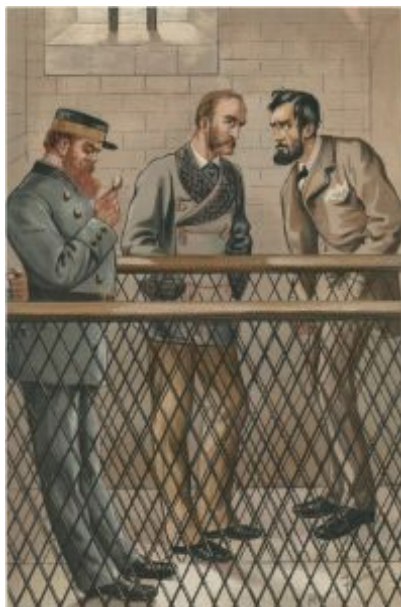
The No Rent Manifesto was, of course, my lever in February to lift landlordism off the necks of the people and to justify Gladstone in adopting the Land League purchase programme for the settlement of the Irish land question. Gray said that with the Parliamentary Party in prison Gladstone could propose any kind of settlement and that the proposal to bring in six years' purchase of the rental to bridge the difference between what the tenant could pay and the landlords could sell at would induce the landlords to



Michael P. Boynton, 1880

help on the settlement. Gray was to take charge of the question in the House in the absence of the Party. He was not a member of the Party and, as he said, was not going to jail. When the question came up in Kilmainham while O'Brien was labouring to persuade Dillon to sign the manifesto, I had a few earnest words with Parnell. I said: "This is a very serious thing to now ask the people to do what very many honest men cannot do. When I proposed this I had a definite object in view, namely a six months' fight and a definite land settlement. Now when Parliament has dealt with the land question without settling it, and when the people have neither the leaders nor the organisation, they are called upon to start on an indefinite warfare which I know in many cases they can't wage successfully, and this is to go on until they succeed in beating the British Government. I shall never taunt you, Mr. Parnell, even in private, but I must ask you not to blame the people if they fail to carry out this policy now to the extent that was feasible for the six months' effort. But," I said, "I suppose there is nothing else to be done and we must strike back." I remember well that it took O'Brien all he knew to induce John Dillon

to sign it, but he succeeded, perhaps for the same underlying reason that something had to be done. When Mr. Parnell had signed it, he left down the pen and straightened himself and looked at me. I signed it in silence, and never explained my real view of the matter until now.<sup>7</sup>



*“Force no Remedy,” illustration of Charles Stewart Parnell, John Dillon, and an unknown policeman, by Harry Furniss, from Vanity Fair, 7 December 1881*

I was only about seven weeks in Kilmainham with Mr. Parnell, and while there we had no particular intercourse. He knew that I was perhaps the most disappointed man in Ireland, and we had nothing but failure to talk about. We settled the labourers’ question one day at exercise, or rather the lines upon which it could be settled with houses and land, and worked by the Boards of Guardians, the details to be left to circumstances. We dined together every day, and Mr. O’Brien in his recollections gives, I think, a very fair sketch of the prison life after he came there.<sup>8</sup> The old Kilmainham

Party consisted of Dillon, Brennan, Boyton, Father Sheehy, and myself in the medical department, with many visits from John O’Connor, John Clancy, Paddy Murphy, and a few others, but we could and did visit all the exercise grounds, and on the whole, spent a very pleasant time as prisoners. Notwithstanding the unremitting attention and skill of the genial, manly, high-spirited, self-sacrificing Dr. Joe Kenny, I lost my health. Curious how all the sedentary city and towns fellows felt Kilmainham as a holiday, but the robust, open-air, country people generally went physically wrong. My wife’s

health got even worse than my own with the worry of the business and anxiety of looking after a large family, and she was held to be in a bad way. Still she came every week to see me, and on one occasion she brought me a most pathetic account of poor Mrs. O'Brien, William's dying mother.<sup>9</sup> Forster sent a couple of specialists to see me early in December, and before the end of the month I was examined by Dr. Carte,<sup>10</sup> the decent prison doctor, at the request of Dr. Kenny, and I was liberated on his report about Christmas. The order came late in the evening and the Party were assembled in Parnell's room and when I was saying good-bye Parnell held my hand a little, saying: "I am very glad you are going out, Kettle. If you remained here much longer you would lose your health permanently. I shall always regret not having taken your advice last February. Had we done so the fight would have been over now, and over better than it ever can be."<sup>11</sup> "No use," I said, "crying over spilled milk. What am I to do when I go out? I know a friendly rate collector I could kick up a row with, and strike against taxes as well as rent." "No," he says, "do nothing until you hear from us. Go away and recruit your health somewhere, and if we want anything done we will let you know." "Well," I said, "anything in the way of extreme action outside will react on you here, so I shall let you make the running this time and wait for your orders absolutely." I got no orders, and I took no part in the work outside. I went to London and to Paris to visit Egan and all our friends all over the place. We had a couple of sheriff's sales about rent, but the landlords got their rent and the lawyers their costs, for unless we burned the place we could not prevent them as we always had rolling stock to double the value of the rent lying about that could not be dispensed with unless we threw a large number of people idle and allowed the landlords to punish everyone and to get their rent into the bargain. This was some of the difficulty I warned Mr. Parnell about before signing the No Rent agreement.

It was Mr. Chamberlain<sup>12</sup> who negotiated Mr. Parnell's release from Kilmainham, and who got Gladstone to throw over Forster.<sup>13</sup> As the leader and mouthpiece of the English Radicals he seemed to con-

template a junction of Irish democracy under Parnell and his own Radical following in Great Britain to bring him to the Premiership. It was notorious that it was his association with the Irish Party of Action, Parnell and O'Donnell, that induced Gladstone to include him and the Republican preacher, Sir Charles Dilke,<sup>14</sup> in his Cabinet. I believe that the Page-Woods (Mrs. O'Shea) and the Chamberlains were on very intimate terms socially, and I expect that Mrs. O'Shea wanted Parnell liberated.<sup>15</sup> It seemed a likely enough consideration on Chamberlain's part if he could have used Parnell and his great democratic forces for his own purposes that he would be willing to concede Ireland's demands if it did not tend to break up the alliance. Of course, Parnell's was purely and necessarily a democratic and not an Irish national movement, and his lieutenants and "items," as Biggar called them, were all labour men of one kind or another. But Parnell was not a democrat. He generally held very different views from the men around him. Still he seemed never to forget the value of every man who joined him in the struggle.<sup>16</sup>

## Notes

1. This is now Parnell Square in Dublin.
2. Kettle was probably correct in his view of the contribution of the Tyrone defeat to the subsequent arrest of Parnell. However, to allay the fears of the left, Parnell had decided on the face-saving formula that the act was to be 'tested' and he attended several large Land League demonstrations in opposition to it. His failure or reluctance to wind down agitation and the resulting open confrontation with Gladstone finally led to his arrest on 13 October 1881. As Bew notes, although he probably did not deliberately seek arrest, it may have been welcome to him when it came. He wrote to Mrs. O'Shea that day: 'Politically it is a fortunate thing for me that I have been arrested, as the movement is breaking fast, and all will be quiet in a few months, when I shall be released' (Bew 2011, 82-86; Comerford 1996a, 48).
3. While some saw the 1881 Land Act as a substantial gain, up to 20 per cent of the smaller and poorer farmers (over 100,000 of them) remained too deeply in arrears to clear their debts and take advantage of the new system. They, along with many Land League activists, had



supported continued agitation. Crime continued to increase (there were 22 agrarian murders recorded in 1881 alone) and the government held that Parnell and his associates supported these actions (Comerford 1996a, 47; O'Brien 1976, 19).

4. Bew explains this casual comment to Kettle as indicative of Parnell's own lack of serious religiosity and also as an explanation for his lack of empathy with the religious element that existed in Ulster unionism (Bew 2011, 195-96).
5. During his imprisonment, O'Brien drafted the famous No Rent Manifesto. It outlined a scheme for the withholding of rent until the government abandoned its policy of coercion, which resulted in an escalation of the conflict between the Land League and Gladstone's government. After the land bill had become law the tenants, urged on by their clergy, had flocked to the courts to have their rents fixed. It was perhaps unrealistic to expect hard-pressed tenants to turn their backs on legislation which went a long way towards conceding to their basic demands. The No Rent Manifesto further weakened clerical support for the League and was also repudiated by the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Nation* (Bew 2007, 329; Comerford 1996a, 48; O'Brien 1976, 19).
6. Kettle had previously had wrangles with the querulous Sexton during the meeting of the Land League executive in Paris in 1880, when he had accused Sexton's oration in the House of Commons as being one of the greatest obstacles to Irish freedom.
7. Kettle's disappointment in signing the manifesto was well founded. As Bew notes, 'the apparent radicalisation of the "no rent" manifesto was, in effect, an organised retreat from an unsustainable policy. "No rent" was never designed to succeed, it was designed to create a context in which Land League failures could be blamed on government repression; not bad leadership or flawed tactics, still less the nature of the Irish agrarian movement itself' (Bew 2011, 90). The movement was on the verge of collapse and as Parnell's sister Anna Parnell claimed, the No Rent Manifesto was the 'only cover under which they could withdraw from the impossible position they had created for themselves, and at the same time keep up some semblance of a continuous policy' (Hearne 1986, 104).
8. Among William O'Brien's writings are his autobiographical volumes *Recollections* (1905) and *Evening Memories* (1920). He also published *An Olive Branch in Ireland* (1910).
9. After O'Brien's father died, he had, at the age of sixteen, become the sole supporter of his mother and three of his siblings. Ten years later (in 1878) he suffered deep personal tragedy when, within a few hours of each other, both his brothers died of tuberculosis. Three weeks later his only sister also died of the same disease. He was to later explain in *Recollections* how 'this tragic episode coloured my whole life and character, and explains the recklessness (for it was not calm courage) with which I was afterwards accustomed to encounter personal danger, and which perhaps, alone made me in any degree a formidable element in a semi-revolutionary movement.' After serving six months of his imprison-

onment in Kilmainham, he was released on compassionate grounds when, in April 1882, tragedy again struck the family and his mother also died of tuberculosis soon after he reached her side (O'Brien 1976, 2-22).

10. Dr. William Carte (1829-99) became the staff surgeon of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham in 1858 and worked there until his death (WikiTree n.d., 'William Carte (1829-1899)').
11. Kettle's recollections here are important as they indicate Parnell's regret at not following through with the initial rent strike contemplated by the Land League, and pushed for by Kettle, after coercion was introduced in 1881. It seems to confirm his belief that cohesive and prompt action at that time could have forced the hand of the British government to settle the Irish land question more comprehensively.
12. Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914) was a businessman, a social reformer, and a radical politician who entered Parliament in 1876. He was a leader of the left wing of the Liberal Party. Chamberlain favoured Irish reform and opposed the use of excessive force in suppressing Irish agitation, but he later opposed Gladstone's attempts to introduce Home Rule for Ireland (Poole 2022).
13. Members of the Liberal Cabinet – in particular, Joseph Chamberlain – had doubts about the effectiveness of continued coercion and internment in Ireland and there had been growing isolation of Chief Secretary Forster and his policy of repression. There was a realisation that the No Rent Manifesto had failed and that the continuing rise in agrarian violence during 1882 was more revolutionary in character and were being committed as a response to coercion (Bew 2007, 331-32).
14. Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843-1911) was an English Liberal and Radical politician. A republican in the early 1870s, he later became a leader in the radical challenge to Whig control of the Liberal Party (Jenkins 2008).
15. Katharine O'Shea (1846-1921) was the daughter of Sir John Page-Wood. During Parnell's incarceration in Kilmainham, she gave birth to his child Claude Sophie, but the condition of mother and child was poor. On being released on temporary parole in April 1882, Parnell visited Katharine, who placed the dying infant in his arms (Bew 2011, 92).
16. Parnell's months of incarceration had added an aura of martyrdom to his great popularity, but had also led him to a more moderate path. Meanwhile, the policy of coercion in Ireland was not working and was becoming increasingly distasteful to the Liberal Party. In April 1882, Parnell had indicated to Gladstone that he was eager to make peace with the government. Using Captain O'Shea as an intermediary, a mutual understanding was reached whereby Parnell and his lieutenants would be released, additional relief measures were to be introduced for small tenants in arrears, and Parnell would use his influence to end the disorder in the country and cooperate with the Liberal Party. This so-called 'Kilmainham Treaty' led to the resignation of Chief Secretary Forster, who understood that it recognised the Parnellites as the 'representatives of Ireland' (Comerford 1996a, 49; Bew 2007, 334).

# Chapter 9: My Personal Finances, the Phoenix Park Murders, and the Parnell Tribute

*My Personal Finances – The Park Murders – Interview with Parnell in London – Land War Truce – Land for Labourers – Coercion Rampant – I Start Parnell Tribute – £40,000 – Dispersal of Party – Carnarvon Proposals – Parnell’s Trust in Providence – White Heather*

I must again remark that from my first start in active agitation with Butt I was running a large tillage concern of good but highly rented land, that I got no mercy from my landlords, and that with one hand I had to make a living for a large family, and work my politics with the other.<sup>1</sup> Soon after the release from Kilmainham and Portland, and the Phoenix Park Tragedy,<sup>2</sup> I paid a visit to London. I found Mr. Davitt, and had a chat with him about the condition of things generally, and he told me he was expecting a visit from Parnell. In a short time Parnell and Dillon came in, and in the conversation that followed I learned what I wanted to know in a rather positive fashion. Mr. Davitt stated that he meant to renew the land agitation where he stopped it before going to prison, but Parnell got so heated and excited that he spoke in a way that was quite new to me. He told Davitt that no such thing could be done, and that he should not attempt it unless he wanted to be sent back to jail. I sought Parnell

the next night in the House of Commons and he took me out on the terrace. I told him that I came over to know was the fight to go on or was it over during the reign of the present Government. He told me all about the terms of the Kilmainham affair,<sup>3</sup> and that the fight was over so far as he was concerned for the present, but that the Parliamentary work would go on as usual and that he would like me to come to Parliament to organise the labourers and to go on with the industrial movement. I said, "I have neither talents nor time for Parliamentary work. My own business is in a rather bad way. I have drifted into debt and now that the fight, as I understand it, is over, I feel bound to try and get out of it. I am farming a rather big lot of dear land which the present Land Act does not touch and I cannot expect quarter from the landlords. My family is pretty large and young,<sup>4</sup> so upon the whole I think you might extend the order you gave me when leaving prison and permit me to retire until further orders." He says, "I think you should let me know more about your debts." I said, "No, not until I must, if that time ever comes, which I hope it never will." "Now about the future," I said. "If there is anything which I think would be of service to the cause and useful for you to know, can I find you?" "Yes. Any time or under any circumstances. I shall be at home<sup>5</sup> for you because you never want to see me about your own interests. In any correspondence that may arise out of this arrangement I shall write, but shall never expect an answer unless you think it necessary." We parted with his usual regret at not having taken the other road at the beginning. I went back to Ireland and spent some years hard labour, trying to hold my own against the landlords, and battling to maintain my independence. But at the same time I kept in touch with everything that was going on and with Parnell. I was present at the founding of the National League<sup>6</sup> and other meetings, but took no part in the proceedings, nor did I become a member until Parnell proposed me years afterwards.



Millview, the Kettle family home in Malahide, Co. Dublin

But although I dropped out of the running in public I pushed the labourer's question through Parnell,<sup>7</sup> and I paid a visit to London to see Sir George Trevelyan<sup>8</sup> with Parnell on this question. I wanted free money, or at least free land, for a labourers' settlement then as I want it now.

Ireland was dragooned at a terrible rate during the following years and William O'Brien with "United Ireland"<sup>9</sup> did great work. He covered the retreat and the failure of the Party to put the London policy of a six months fight in force, in an extraordinarily able manner. It might have been done by other men, but not in the same style. He narrowly escaped two years imprisonment as he tells us in his recollections.<sup>10</sup> The Forster section of the British Government, and I think every section of the British people after the revelation and conviction of the Invincibles,<sup>11</sup> seemed to be determined to crush the Parnell movement, and to ride roughshod over the liberty and the lives of everyone. Gray of the *Freeman's Journal*, the High Sheriff, was snuffed out and sent to prison.<sup>12</sup> Davitt, Healy, and Quinn,<sup>13</sup> for hinting at a renewal of the land agitation, were locked up. At no time do I remember a gloomier outlook in Irish politics, particularly for Mr. Parnell. The secret inquisitions that were established by the Government were working so successfully that the people of England seemed to be looking forward to a day near at hand when Parnell, and Egan, and Brennan, and all the other leaders, would be sent to the scaffold after Joe Brady<sup>14</sup> and his comrades. In taking stock of the situation I became horribly impressed with the necessity of a rally of some kind to shake off the attack of the bloodhounds that were howling round the country.

Even in Ireland from one cause or another, from perhaps the attitude of Mr. Davitt and myself and others on the failure of the Land

League to produce better results, Mr. Parnell's popularity was at a sort of low ebb at that time. I could only think of one thing that could be done and I wrote a short public letter to the *Freeman* and I called to see Gray who was after coming out of prison. He was in London, but he came next day and I asked him were my fears correct about Parnell. "Well, Kettle," he says, "it is impossible to spend one hour in London at this moment without becoming horribly impressed with the feeling that you have given expression to." "Well," I said, "something must be done to rally round him." "But what can be done? You dare not do anything just now." I said, "I admit you can't speak, and you can't write, but you can pay or subscribe, and that argument will convince John Bull better than any other. Read that," I said, throwing my letter to the *Freeman*, with a ten-pound note, over to him. "But," he says, "I hope you don't want me to take it up in the *Freeman*?" "Not just at present," I said, "but if it grows of course you will." We talked a bit and I stood up to leave when he jumped up and slapped me on the back and says, "I have it!" "What have you?" I said. "I'll write to Croke (the Archbishop)<sup>15</sup> and get him to send £50, and there and then I feel the thing is done." Poor Father Kavanagh,<sup>16</sup> who was afterwards accidentally killed at the altar in Kildare, was moved by the same spirit that moved me and a short letter with £3 appeared in the *Freeman* on the same subject. Some nine bishops and 260 priests rallied round the Primate's standard in a short time and succeeded in driving off Forster's stalk-hounds. In four months the "Parnell Tribute" grew to £40,000, in spite of the fact that the Vatican had frowned on it.<sup>17</sup>

After Dr. Croke denounced the No Rent Manifesto the clergy generally took a lower line in the agitation created by the Land League, and this just suited Mr. Parnell in his arrangements with Gladstone and the Liberal Party. The ordinary political registration and representative business of the country was carried out by Mr. T. M. Harrington,<sup>18</sup> generally through the priests. In the National League, all the Parliamentary Party assisted Mr. William O'Brien and, as he tells us, Mr. T. M. Healy<sup>19</sup> defended the country very ably against

Coercion in all its grades and forms. It is curious that all the Cork men were always strong on the defensive, but not at all reliable when called upon to initiate a lead. Ever since his liberation from prison, Mr. Davitt's position was a most unsatisfactory one.<sup>20</sup> The old Kilmainham Party were all more or less dissatisfied with the turn things had taken and the failure of the Party to force the fighting when it could have been effective, before the Land Bill was drafted. Dillon had left the country, I was paying my debts working day and night at uphill farming, Brennan and Egan were gone also, and Davitt was left practically alone. He spent his time in various ways writing labour articles for the *Freeman* and addressing labour meetings in various places. He went to America, and when he came back he took a turn in the Dublin Corporation. He was, in fact, like a fish out of water, but his loyalty to Parnell under all the disappointment was something I remember. I often thought it far and away exceeded my own. Of course he had the allegiance of the nation and the unalterable loyalty of a few fast friends and followers like James Rourke,<sup>21</sup> James F. Grehan, John F. Taylor,<sup>22</sup> P. J. O'Neill,<sup>23</sup> and a host of men not in public life, but he tired of such poor work as there was to be done in Ireland, or for Ireland, and he announced his intention publicly in the press of going to Australia for two years. Nothing was gained during '82, '83, or '84 after the Kilmainham Treaty, except an Arrears Act to let the Act of '81 work, and the Labourers Act.<sup>24</sup> I was loathe to let Davitt go, and I published a series of letters on the Irish question in which I criticised and blamed and praised everyone on the stage of public life at the time.<sup>25</sup> This had some effect in moderating the feelings of hostility that existed at that time between Mr. Davitt and the Parliamentary Party. Parnell had always too much good sense to complain of Davitt's restless criticism. Mr. Davitt did not leave Ireland, and the summer of 1885 was got through somehow. In August I got a letter from Parnell inviting me down to Aughavanagh for the week-end.<sup>26</sup>

I went to Aughavanagh and we discussed Davitt, and all hands, and it was the only time I ever heard him complain of anyone. He praised O'Brien, and very justly, for the great defence he was making against the Government in Ireland. Amongst other things he said, "Does Davitt not know that I have to work with the tools that come to my hand? I have no choice. The men I would like to have won't come, so I have to use the men who will."<sup>27</sup> It is no



*Archbishop Croke, c. 1880*

sinicure, I can tell him, to be spending our lives and our health in the House of Commons, watching the enemies of Ireland without being able to strike effectively." "Well," I said, "we had better close the discussion in this way: quietly turn over in your mind the services of all the men you have met since you took up your mission, and if on examination you find that Davitt has not rendered Ireland and you more real service than any of the other men around you you can drop him. Mr. Davitt is no more to me than you are, only for what he may be worth to Ireland. Even his amiable criticism, not of you, but of some of your followers, may help to keep them up to their work." "Well," he says, "I will make time to meet him somewhere soon."<sup>28</sup> I said, "A lot of your men seem to be qualifying for the bar just now." "Yes," he says, "I have been advising them to do so. You know in the early days we could not get legal advice on any terms." "That's true," I said, "but take care they do not grow too big when they find they know more than the master." He alluded to this point years afterwards. "You were at Arklow yesterday," I said, "opening the quarry and selling the stones to the Corporation but what was the meaning of your strange



speech on protection and Irish industries? Are you going to break with the Free Traders?" "Yes," he said, "we have a rather big project on hands." He then explained the meeting with Lord Carnarvon<sup>29</sup> and the project of the Aristocratic Home Rule,<sup>30</sup> with the colonial right to protect our industries against English manufacture.<sup>31</sup> I seemed to be knocked dumb, as I really was, by the unexpected news, and he went on to explain that it was not from a motive of justice or generosity that the Conservative Party were making the proposals. Inspired chiefly by Lord Randolph Churchill,<sup>32</sup> the classes in Britain were afraid that if the Irish democratic propaganda were to continue, in conjunction with the English Radicals, class rule might be overturned altogether. So, to save themselves, they are going to set up a class conservative government in Ireland, with the aid and consent of the Irish democracy, or in other words with our assistance, having no connection with England but the link of the Crown and an Imperial contribution to be regulated by circumstances. I said, "This is the most important news I ever heard from England, but it seems to be too good to be true." "No," he says. "If we help them to get a majority at the coming election they are going to carry through this policy."<sup>33</sup>

"The world will be surprised and astounded when this becomes known," I said, "but do you know what I always thought on this subject? England could not afford to delegate the governing powers of Ireland into the hands of any class other than that ruling in England at the time. Here was I thinking that we would have to wait for Home Rule until the English Radicals and the Irish Democrats would become powerful enough to rule the Empire, and now it is coming from the top instead of from the bottom. It is simply astounding, but I fear it will not come to pass. You will not be able to get the Tories a majority to do this. The Irish in Britain will not vote for them, and besides I fear that the Irish landlords, owing to their crimes in the past, are not destined to be placed so easily at the head of the people's affairs in Ireland. But all the same I am intensely interested, and I shall do the little I can to help you with the experiment." He says,

“I want you to keep Davitt quiet and advise him not to denounce us while this policy is being tried.” “It will be a big job,” I said, “but I will do my best.” And so I did, and I hope Mr. Davitt will forgive me for getting him to hold his hand several times during the Election of 1885.

Parnell told me all this before breakfast – he was fond of late French breakfast, where nearly all the dinner dishes are produced. He did not go out with the shooting party he had there at the time. James J. O’Kelly and Peter McDonald<sup>34</sup> of the Dublin Corporation were there, and a good many others.

He came out with me on the low-lying moors near the barracks to train a young dog, and the talk turned out to be rather interesting. While he was schooling the dog I picked up a sprig of white heather, and when he turned round he said: “Oh, where did you get that?” in a very interested manner. I told him where I got it growing. “Oh,” he says, “that is an emblem of good luck. As long as I am rambling about here I never chanced on it, and here you are only a short time about and you find it.” “Well,” I said, “I am delighted to know that good luck is coming as I seldom wanted it worse.” This find seemed to throw him into a serious moralising mood and he went on: “Well, Kettle, how little we know about the when or the wherefore. Human effort is after all a very small quantity. The best we can do is to act in the best manner we are inspired to and leave the result to be decided by a higher power.” Now, Parnell and my own mother were the only two people I ever met who seemed to be always referring the results of their work to be decided by a higher power. With all his human frailties he seemed to be the most spiritual-minded man I ever knew. On this day of surprises I had another before the end. “By the way,” I said, “I hear the young men in many parts of the country are falling back into line with the extreme movement notwithstanding all the glamour of your Parliamentary work.” He carried a large walking stick with a crooked end and he laid his two hands on the crook and turned round facing me and said: “Why should they not? All our plans and projects may fail, and all our management may

prove at fault, and through some turn of misfortune England may grow savage and trample down every right of Ireland, and God only knows but the quarrel may have to be settled that way yet." Here was a man who during the three previous years had been nursing one English party, and now was going into an experimental alliance with the other, occupying, as he then did, a position as a statesman and Parliamentary second to no man in any country, quietly contemplating the miscarriage of all his projects and leaving the results to be decided by a higher power. The reach of his mind and the depth of his nature and his terrible power to absolutely ignore his actual surroundings at all times was never so strikingly displayed in all our intercourse as on this occasion. It was a positive and living exhibition of that mystic element which undoubtedly formed a large portion of Parnell's character. There also seemed to be an element of mysticism about other members of the Parnell family. On this point, too, I might take a look at another great Irish mind, Isaac Butt. It was a well-known fact that Butt was always greatly upset and disturbed if he happened when dressing to forget to put round his neck the medals and other religious emblems of Catholic devotion. I believe he more than once sent a message from the Courts to his house for them. I know I one day called to see him when he was in Eccles Street, and I found him pacing the hall in a great state of excitement. When we shook hands he says: "Oh, Kettle, I fear there is no chance for the success of the Home Rule cause in my time." "Why," I said, "what makes you say so?" He says: "You must have noticed a large picture of the Irish Parliament hanging there," turning to the side of the hall, "and when I was just going out today it fell with a crash and was broken in a hundred pieces." Here was a genuine revelation of the mysticism in Butt's mind. I was often told by friends that no one else could get so near Butt or Parnell as I did. Well, I believe myself to be a very ordinary man with a particularly ordinary education, and I know that I never went one hair's breadth out my usual movements to attract their confidences, but I sometimes thought I had a rather large element of mysticism in my own character, and that this may have been the attraction. I left Mr. Parnell early in the evening

to catch the train for Dublin, and I never recollect making a journey in a greater state of a kind of mental intoxication than after that day with Parnell at Aughavanagh.

## Notes

1. Millview, Malahide, was the home of the Andrew Kettle family for many years. The 10-acre holding was rented from Lord Talbot de Malahide, and when the 1881 Land Act, which set up the Land Courts, came into effect, Kettle was one of the first to apply to the new Land Court for the fixing of a fair rent. Lord Talbot fought the application but the case was eventually settled and a fair rent established (Kettle, A. J. 1958a, xi). At this time Kettle also rented a larger holding at Kilmore, Artane.
2. Parnell, Dillon, and O'Kelly were released on 2 May 1882 and Davitt on 6 May. That evening came the news of the assassination in Dublin's Phoenix Park of the newly appointed Chief Secretary, Lord Fredrick Cavendish, and the Permanent Under-Secretary, Thomas Henry Burke, by a group called the Invincibles. Although five members of this group were eventually hanged for the murders, all the people involved were never identified. There may have been an overlap with the upper (non-parliamentary) level of the Land League and possibly the involvement of Irish-American radicals. The murders horrified Parnell and compelled him to moderate his political activity. They also prompted Gladstone to introduce new drastic coercion measures. The Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Act became law on 12 July and introduced substantial powers against crime and agitation, including provision for the trial of certain cases by a commission of three judges in place of a jury (Comerford 1996a, 49-50).
3. Part of the terms were that additional relief measures were to be introduced for small tenants in arrears whose situation had been a source of great popular grievance. The Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act was subsequently introduced on 18 August 1882, which deemed those tenants of holdings less than £30 were only liable for one year's arrears of rent. With the resolution of this issue, Parnell was free to fulfil the other terms of the agreement and use his influence to stop the land agitation activities in Ireland (Comerford 1996a, 50).
4. At this point Kettle and his wife, Margaret, had six surviving children, the eldest of which was eight years old and the youngest was the infant Tom. They subsequently had five more children.
5. To 'be at home' for someone is a nineteenth-century expression meaning to be available to the person.
6. Following the prominence that Parnell and his parliamentary associates

had won during the years of the Land War, a new nationalist political party, the Irish National League, was founded on 17 October 1882. As the successor to the Land League, the National League was the main base of support for the Irish Parliamentary Party and combined more moderate agrarianism with a Home Rule programme under Parnell's authority. Also of great importance was the alliance between the new, tightly disciplined National League and the Catholic Church.

7. Problems relating to agricultural labourers were the most problematic to resolve. Although in general they had supported the Land League, the rights of the farmers within the economic order were frequently prioritised over the interests of farm labourers. Parnell was sensitive to the concerns and welfare of the labourers and his advocacy of the Labourers (Ireland) Act of 1883 resulted in the introduction by local authorities of decent housing for the families of rural workers (Comerford 1996b, 55).
8. Sir George Otto Trevelyan (1838-1928), 2nd Baronet, was a British statesman and author. As a Liberal member of Parliament, he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1882 after the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish in the Phoenix Park murders. He broke with Gladstone over the 1886 Irish Home Rule Bill but later re-joined the Liberal Party following modifications to the bill (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2022).
9. The *United Ireland* newspaper had been established under the editorship of William O'Brien in 1881 and continued as an organ of the Parnellite party machine. It promoted Parnell and his policies and guided the tenants in the implementation of the new Land Act and the moderation of agrarian violence, as well as continuing to attack the enemies of the nationalist cause, especially the administration, which brought in legislation such as the Crimes Act of 1882 (O'Brien 1976, 18).
10. O'Brien 1905.
11. The Invincibles was a splinter group of the Irish Republican Brotherhood active from 1881 to 1883. Members of the group carried out the Phoenix Park murders, the fatal stabbings of Chief Secretary for Ireland Frederick Cavendish and Permanent Under-Secretary Thomas Burke in the Phoenix Park in Dublin on 6 May 1882. Members of the group were arrested and tried for the crime. Several were executed or given long prison sentences (Wikipedia 2023, 'Irish National Invincibles').
12. While holding the office of high sheriff, Gray was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and fined £500 in August 1882 for having published adverse comments on the composition and conduct of the jury in the trial of a Francis Hynes for murder in his newspaper the *Free-man's Journal*. Following a widespread outcry over his imprisonment, Gray was set free after six weeks in Richmond Jail in Dublin and his fine was paid by public subscription (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Edmund William Dwyer').
13. Joseph Patrick Quinn (1854-1916) was a nationalist and former secretary of the Land League. Following his incarceration during 1881 and 1882, he was appointed assistant secretary of the Irish National League. Two

months later he was put on trial alongside Davitt and Healy, charged with making seditious speeches. In February 1883 all three men were sentenced to four months' imprisonment, which they served in Kilmainham and Richmond jails. On his release, Quinn resumed his work as assistant secretary of the National League (DIB 2009, 'Quinn, Joseph Patrick').

14. Joe Brady (c. 1857-83) was a Dublin-born Fenian and one of five men hanged for the Phoenix Park murders. He was a member of the Irish National Invincibles, a small secret society committed to political assassination. He was tried for the murder of Under-Secretary Thomas Henry Burke in April 1883 and was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging on 14 May in Kilmainham Jail (DIB 2009, 'Brady, Joe').
15. Thomas William Croke (1823-1902) was the Catholic archbishop of Cashel. He actively pursued an interest in politics and nationalist interests and encouraged his clergy to do likewise. On making a £50 donation to Parnell's testimonial fund, he declared that the amount anyone gave was a measure of their patriotism. In 1884 he moved the crucial resolution entrusting Parnell's Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons with the promotion of the Catholic Church's claims 'in all branches of the education question,' thus forging a formal alliance between episcopate and party which lasted until the Parnell split in December 1890 (DIB 2009, 'Croke, Thomas William').
16. This is James Blake Kavanagh (1822-86).
17. The extent of Parnell's popularity was demonstrated by the success of this collection in aid of his personal finances. He had amassed debts amounting to £18,000, which were forcing him to sell his properties in Co. Wicklow, but the subscriptions collected from home and abroad eventually amounted to £37,000. The testimonial raised in 1883 did not lift Parnell out of debt, however, and he continued over the following years to lose large amounts on mining and quarrying enterprises in Co. Wicklow. He remained financially dependent on Katharine O'Shea and the cash she received from her aunt, Mrs. Benjamin Wood (Comerford 1996b, 53, 57).
18. Timothy Charles Harrington (1851-1910, not to be confused with his contemporary, the unrelated journalist Timothy Richard Harrington) was a barrister, journalist, and nationalist politician. He served as the MP for Westmeath and subsequently Dublin Harbour from 1883 to 1910. He had been a provincial organiser for the Land League in Munster and was imprisoned in late 1881 before being released under the Kilmainham Treaty. He was appointed joint secretary of the Land League and after its replacement by the National League in 1882, he became the principal secretary of the new organisation. He helped ensure loyalty to Parnell by controlling the network of National League branches (1,513 by 1887) that were connected to the central apparatus. He had devised the strategy for the anti-landlord Plan of Campaign and served as defence counsel in some of the prominent Plan trials, including those of William O'Brien and John Dillon. Despite his importance to the Parnell machine, he has been frequently overshadowed by more promi-

nent figures and remains one of the least well known of Parnell's lieutenants (DIB 2009, 'Harrington, Timothy Charles').

19. Returning from America in 1882, Healy had not been privy to the dealings that led to the Kilmainham Treaty. Following the Phoenix Park murders he furiously denounced the government's Coercion Bill and attempted to mitigate its severity by negotiating with Chamberlain through the radical Henry Labouchere (DIB 2009, 'Healy, Timothy Michael').
20. Although Davitt recognised the political advantages of the constitutional movement that succeeded the Land League, the period following the Kilmainham Treaty resulted in increased antipathy between himself and Parnell as he began to assume a more isolated position as a freelance radical (Marley 2010, 47).
21. This could be James Rourke (1844-1921), the uncle of Thomas Brennan, and a prominent Land League official (DIB 2009, 'Brennan, Thomas').
22. John Francis Taylor (1853-1902) was a lawyer, orator, and writer. Although a member of the Land League he believed that Irish nationalism had been restricted by a reliance on agrarian populism (DIB 2009, 'Taylor, John Francis').
23. This could be Patrick O'Neill, who was the vice-president of the Athy branch of the Land League.
24. The Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act of 1882 followed the Kilmainham Treaty and extended the provisions of the 1881 Land Act to include tenants in arrears. Tenants were liable for one year's rent, while the government undertook to pay half of the balance with the landlords suffering the remaining loss. Through this the government paid the landlords £800,000 in back rent owed by 130,000 tenant farmers. The Labourers (Ireland) Act of 1883 resulted in the introduction by local authorities of housing for the families of rural workers. It authorised the payment of grants to local authorities for the building of cottages for landless labourers, with about 15,000 provided over the following 20 years (O'Hara 2010).
25. Kettle 1885.
26. This is in reference to Aughavanagh Barracks in the Wicklow Mountains. A remote and Spartan building about ten miles from Parnell's family home in Avondale, it had been abandoned by the military in the latter half of the nineteenth century and had come into the hands of the Parnell family. A keen shooter, Parnell loved to spend weekends at the lodge in Aughavanagh shooting partridge in the Wicklow hills (Fewer 2006).
27. Bew notes how this declaration by Parnell provides insight into the fact that Parnell's first choice for a ruling class was the Irish Protestant ascendancy. However, his failure to win over the landlords meant that he had to work instead with the new domestic Irish Catholic bourgeoisie and their democratic representatives (Bew 2011, 194).
28. Marley has noted how it can not be doubted that Davitt had a grudging appreciation for Parnell and his attributes as a leader, but the rift

between Parnell and Davitt was deepening and from the end of 1882 Davitt 'acted as the unofficial opposition in nationalist politics.' Although he had joined the National League, he was highly critical of many of their policies and was 'the bane of Parnellism' during these years (Marley 2010, 77-78).

29. Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert (1831-90), 4th Earl of Carnarvon, was a British politician and a leading member of the Conservative Party. He held the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1885 and 1886, during which time he was involved in negotiations with Parnell regarding Home Rule. Carnarvon was known to be sympathetic to the notion of Home Rule (DIB 2009, Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux'; Bew 1980, 72; Bew 2007, 343).
30. 'Aristocratic Home Rule' was a term popularised by the historian Edmund Curtis (1881-1943) to refer to the period of relatively weak royal government under the English crown in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, when the lordship of Ireland was left increasingly to its own devices under a native dynasty (Connolly 2007).
31. A secret meeting had been arranged between Parnell and Carnarvon with the consent of the new Conservative premier Lord Salisbury and although most Tories were not prepared to go as far as Carnarvon, they were anxious to keep Parnell on their side for opportunistic reasons. This sudden appearance of the topic of protectionism in Parnell's speech in Wicklow in November 1885 had arisen from this meeting where Parnell had discussed a very conservative version of the concept of Home Rule and had also argued the case of trade protection for native industries (DIB 2009, Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux'; Bew 1980, 72; Bew 2007, 343).
32. Lord Randolph Churchill (1849-1895) was a leading Conservative MP and fierce opponent of Home Rule (Wikipedia 2022, 'Lord Randolph Churchill').
33. The Parnellites held the balance of power at Westminster for the 1885 election and although a majority of neither Liberals nor Conservatives accepted the principle of a Dublin parliament, Parnell took the step of advising Irish voters in Britain to vote against the Liberals. He appeared to overly rely on the sympathetic views of Carnarvon and Churchill and, in addition, as Bew has noted, it was his aspirations of a respectable 'class conservative government' in Ireland that inspired him. It appeared that Parnell was 'ideologically predisposed in favour of a conservative deal' (Bew 1980, 73-74; Bew 2007, 344).
34. Peter McDonald (1836-91) was a teacher, businessman, and politician. He was elected as commissioner for Kingstown and afterwards represented the Mountjoy Ward in the municipal council and was elected senior councillor to the position of alderman. In 1885 he won the North Sligo constituency as a nationalist candidate for the Irish Parliamentary Party (Cantwell n.d.).



# Chapter 10: The 1885 Election – The Transfer of Power from the Tory to the Liberal Party

*The 1885 Election – Phil. Callan Again – Parnell's Cambridge Reminiscences – Failure of Tory Understanding – Change Over to the Liberals – A Day with Davitt at Avondale in 1886 – The 1886 Breakdown – Parnell's Health and Despondency – I Review the Progress Made and Cheer Him Up*

The collision between Parnell and Callan in Louth was a regrettable business altogether.<sup>1</sup> Callan was so loyal to Butt that he often said ugly things about Parnell and his Party. When Parnell helped Russell to put Callan out of Dundalk, Callan got returned for Louth in spite of him, and although he acted always with the Party he owed no allegiance to Parnell. Callan somehow made himself disagreeable to many of the Parliamentarians by his brusque manner, and his assumption of being better posted than many of them.

When it came to the placing of the men at the General Election Parnell seemed to make it a test of allegiance to the Party that the candidates should represent not their own connections in certain constituencies but the cause and the people generally. Jordan of Enniskillen, although he could have been returned for Fermanagh almost independent of Parnell, was sent to County Clare. At a meeting of the Election Committee of the Party I heard it was decided

not to give Callan a nomination,<sup>2</sup> but at the instance of E. D. Gray, who was a great friend of Callan's, Parnell offered Callan a seat if he would consent to contest a constituency further north than Louth. But Callan, as he admitted to me, refused and hung on to Louth, and so according to the new rules provoked a contest from one cause to another. There were none of the Parliamentary Party prepared to appear in Louth against Callan, and Parnell had to carry through the fight himself, and a rather bitter contest it proved to be. Callan told me that he could have had Parnell killed in Dundalk if he held up his hand, and Parnell admitted that it was probably true. During the contest, I had an appointment with Parnell in Morrison's<sup>3</sup> late at night, and travelling in from Malahide there were two superior second-class passengers in the compartment when the following conversation took place. One says: "I often heard that Mr. Parnell was a cold, unemotional man, but I can tell you he is nothing of the kind. I heard him speak whilst the train was stopped in Drogheda, about the battle in Louth, and he spoke with such concentrated passion and scorn that the words 'Philip Callan' seem to be still sticking in my face."

Parnell also had an appointment that night with Mr. Sexton and Mr. McGough, a League solicitor, about Louth, and after my interview they were called in, and Sexton being in quizzical mood, drew Parnell out to retail some of his experiences. He says: "I never was so near losing my temper as I was today, first with a fellow who was shouting at me from a brake near the one I was speaking from. Only the people around stopped me, I would have rushed at him, and when I was coming to the train this evening, a fellow shouted just at my ear: 'To hell with Parnell!' I don't know how I refrained from striking him down." "If you did," said Sexton, "you might have left him like the way you left the Englishmen in your school days. Do, Parnell, tell us that story." After some pressing, Parnell said: "When I was at Cambridge reading for my degree, I was set upon by two swell students, with one of whom I had a dispute in the dusk of the evening near the railway. I was hit and dragged about at first, and when I

got clear, I made a drive at one of them. He ducked and my arm went across his shoulders, and he, in the encounter, hit me a peg in the eye. The blow stung me a bit, and I drew back and then sprung at him and caught him on the jaw, and he went down like a log. I then hit the other a blow or two and he also fell. I then went on to my train. The fellows were mean enough to summon me for assault before the magistrates, and although they were two to one, and were the attacking party, the magistrates fined me £20." I expressed surprise at such a ruling on the case. "Oh, but," says Sexton (who evidently had heard the story before), "the two fellows were broken up in bits. Weren't they, Parnell?" "Well," he says, "one fellow had his jaw bone broken and the other, one of his arms, but I think they had plasters and bandages on where there were no great wounds. Then," he says, "I appealed to the college authorities against the decision of the magistrates and they confirmed the sentence. I was so exasperated at the animus against me because I was an Irishman that I packed up my traps at once and left the college, and never returned there again."<sup>4</sup>

Sexton and McGough promised to go to Louth the next morning, but I felt so dubious about being in time for the train that I told Parnell that if he intended to beat Callan he must go and do it himself, and so he did. Sexton did not go.



*Avondale House in County Wicklow*

Unfortunately, as I think, the Tory Party did not get through the Election of 1885 in a position (even with the constant attention of the Irish Party) to carry through the understanding of Lord Carnarvon<sup>5</sup> with Parnell. I always thought that Mr. Parnell might have held on

a little longer than he did to what I might call the Tory alliance. By throwing them over so soon he seemed to justify the hostile attitude afterwards assumed by Lord Randolph Churchill, who was the chief

inspirer of the Tory negotiations with Parnell.<sup>6</sup> I confess that I felt then, and still feel, a greater leaning towards the British Tory Party than I ever could have towards the so-called Liberals, and I felt in no way elated when I learned from Parnell soon after the Election of 1885 that Gladstone had opened negotiations with him through his Chief Whip – Lord Richard Grosvenor<sup>7</sup> – as to what he wanted for Ireland on the land and national questions. When he was going into the Tory alliance he asked me to keep Mr. Davitt if I could from denouncing him, and now when he contemplated an alliance with the Liberals and Radicals he sent me a telegram, which I showed to Mr. Davitt, inviting us to Avondale, on a certain Sunday in the spring of 1886. When Mr. Davitt, after reading the wire, asked me was I not going to preserve the telegram which he saw me shoving into my pocket, I said I did not mind about hoarding my correspondence – where was the use. “Oh,” he says, “these things may be of interest some day.” So I did keep the telegram and some other things afterwards.

We went to Avondale and spent a rather interesting day with Parnell. There was some snow on the ground, but all the same Parnell took us for a good long walk, and got us into his sawmills. He was so anxious to show us what he was doing that he took off his coat and started some of the machinery to start up a new turbine he had erected. And this on a Sunday.<sup>8</sup> After dinner I spent a very interesting time listening to Parnell and Davitt travelling over the fields of Irish-American politics, and the chief actors therein, and Irish-England politics and their ramifications and possibilities. I made it a rule early in my political life never to assume a knowledge I had no means of acquiring, and as I had no actual knowledge of America or England, I always became a listener while men who knew them were talking. But when Irish Ireland was taken up, I generally took a hand in the game. A general outline of the Irish claim on the new alliance was arrived at, and of course Davitt was very much pleased to find himself on active service in harness with Parnell again. On our way to Rathdrum, Mr. Davitt exclaimed: “Well, that man’s mind is as clear

as crystal." When we were leaving, Mr. Parnell said: "Now I think it would be better not to make this interview public at present," and he gave us a most amusing account of the way he used to keep clear of the press men in his own party.

The riding down policy adopted by the Liberals prevented Parnell and Chamberlain<sup>9</sup> from coming together, and I expect that Chamberlain felt deadly hurt at Parnell's Tory policy of 1885. By refusing to stand by the Tories in their helpless position in 1885, he had the misfortune to turn two of the very ablest men in England, Churchill and Chamberlain, against him. It was the power displayed by Parnell over the Irish in England, by getting them to vote with their traditional enemies – the Tories – against their natural allies – the Liberals – that induced Gladstone to offer him an alliance on Home Rule. When Chamberlain failed to use Parnell and his democrats to get him to the front in England, he broke up the Liberal Party rather than let Parnell win without him.

I met Mr. Parnell by appointment in Morrison's Hotel some time after the Home Rule failure of 1886, and I never saw him so cut up. His appearance reminded me of what he told me he went through with the nervous attack after the contest in the County Dublin. I was waiting for him in his room and when he took off his overcoat, he threw himself on a lounge and exclaimed: "Well, Kettle, I have gone the whole round of English parties during the last few months and I have failed all along the line, and now the fight is gone back to Davitt's line and yours, and go and make your best of it." I somehow instinctively felt that he was in a bad way, he spoke so seriously, and I said: "I do not think you are justified in flying in God's face like that. You are feeling for what you have failed to do, but you seem to forget what you have done. You gave an exhibition of power sufficient to convert nearly all the great men of England to endorse your claims for Ireland, and you seem to look upon that as nothing. I think you have great reason to thank Heaven that you did not succeed in carrying the land and Home Rule settlements on the lines laid down in Gladstone's scheme. You were giving too much for the

land and three millions a year too much for the country. Had Gladstone's bills been passed into law Ireland would have fallen under the burden and you might go out of public life, disgraced and broken-hearted, so I think you should not despond but rejoice." You seem," he says "to be able to take a hopeful, philosophic view of things always." I said: "I am rather naturally inclined to leave a large margin for contingencies in every business. I am never sanguine. No matter how well I do a thing I always feel it could be done better, but in the present situation I see no honest cause for regret." After a long general conversation on men and things, I left him in good enough form. But from whatever cause, his health broke down soon after that and I did not see him for a good long spell, as he spent most of his time in England. I heard he got a wetting when out hunting, of which pastime he was really fond, and that a kind of rheumatic attack followed.<sup>10</sup> When the Irish Party settled down to the Liberal Alliance after 1886, Mr. Davitt went to America and brought home Mrs. Davitt.<sup>11</sup> At a farewell dinner given him by a few friends at Bray, I heard that William O'Brien declared a few days before that he would prove Gladstone's words to be a prophecy. The declaration made by Gladstone was that the Tories would have to govern either by Home Rule or Coercion.

## Notes

1. This was in 1880, when Callan was defeated by Charles Russell in the Dundalk election. He was also running in the Louth election at the same time, and was returned in that race.
2. This was in advance of the approaching 1885 elections when Callan was rejected as a candidate for the new constituency of North Louth by Parnell's party members. Parnell's strong objection to Callan was probably because he had spread word of the leader having an affair with Katharine O'Shea. Callan, however, was undeterred and stood as an independent with Parnell campaigning personally against him. Callan was defeated by Parnell's candidate, Joseph Nolan (DIB 2009, 'Callan, Philip').
3. Morrison's Hotel on Dawson Street in central Dublin was a base for

Parnell and his lieutenants and was where he conducted much of his political business in Ireland.

4. For a discussion of Parnell's student years at Magdalene College, Cambridge, see Martin 1992, 37-41; Bew 2011, 11.
5. Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert (1831-90), 4th Earl of Carnarvon, was a British politician and a leading member of the Conservative Party. He held the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1885 and 1886, during which time he was involved in negotiations with Parnell in regard to Home Rule. Carnarvon was known to be sympathetic to the notion of Home Rule (DIB 2009, Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux'; Bew 1980, 72; Bew 2007, 343).
6. Parnell had urged the Irish voters in Britain to vote against the Liberals and he had achieved the expected nationalist electoral success in Ireland as well. This put him in an exceptionally strong position and the result of the election meant that the nationalists were close to holding the balance of power between the Liberals and the Conservatives. Both British parties allowed the Irish Parliamentary Party to envisage the possibility of a substantial constitutional development towards Home Rule in the next Parliament. The Tories possessed the great advantage that any measure they might put through the Commons was likely to be accepted by the Lords. Ultimately, however, the Ulster Tories would have revolted in the event of a Tory/Parnell alliance. This reality caused the Conservatives to quickly turn against the Irish and reveal their plans to return to using coercion in Ireland. The Liberals moved towards the Irish with Gladstone indicating his favourable attitude towards Home Rule and, by working with the Liberals, Parnell threw the Conservatives out of office (Bew 2007, 344; Comerford 1996b, 60).
7. Lord Richard Grosvenor (1837-1912), 1st Baron Stalbridge, was a Liberal Party MP. He served under Gladstone as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (chief whip) from 1880 to 1885, but he disagreed with Gladstone over Home Rule and resigned his seat in protest in 1886 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Richard Grosvenor, 1st Baron Stalbridge').
8. In addition to his love of countryside activities as a means of relaxation, Parnell was interested in science and mechanics and frequently worked on schemes for the development of the mines on his property (Bew 2011, 19). He operated sawmills and developed quarries, employing about 25 men by 1885. His entrepreneurial activities in the building trade as one of the main suppliers of sawn timber in Co. Wicklow was also central to his political motivations (Martin 1992; Martin n.d.).
9. Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914) was a businessman, a social reformer, and a radical politician who entered Parliament in 1876. He was a leader of the left wing of the Liberal Party. Chamberlain favoured Irish reform and opposed the use of excessive force in suppressing Irish agitation, but he later opposed Gladstone's attempts to introduce Home Rule for Ireland (Poole 2022).
10. As a young boy, Parnell had contracted a severe bout of typhoid fever, which had led to a phase of emotional or nervous instability, and he later contracted scarlet fever. Although unconfirmed, there was specu-

lation that his health had suffered during his time in Kilmainham Jail. In November 1886, accompanied by Katharine O'Shea, he attended London's leading urologist, Sir Henry Thompson, which lends credence to the suggestion that he suffered from Bright's disease, an ill-defined progressive kidney disease, or perhaps chronic pyelitis (a low-grade renal infection), although Mrs. O'Shea attributed his ill-health to a nervous breakdown brought on by overwork (Lyons 1991, 171-73).

11. Davitt's frenetic political activity since his release from Dartmoor prison nine years previously had left little time for personal relationships. However, at the age of 40 he was married in California to a young Irish-American woman, Mary Yore, whom he had first met during a visit to America six years earlier. After the marriage the couple were presented, as a tribute from the people, with a house, 'Land League Cottage,' in Ballybrack, Co. Dublin, and Davitt returned home in February 1887 with his new bride (Marley 2007, 91).



# Chapter II: William O'Brien and the “Plan of Campaign”

*William O'Brien – “Plan of Campaign” – My Programme: Improvements for the Farmers and Land for the Labourers – Agitation on Lord Dillon’s Estate – Land League’s Ignorance of Land Conditions – O’Brien, Smith Barry, and New Tipperary – I Meet Parnell’s Mother and Review Parnell’s Public Work for Her*

A little later I saw Mr. William O'Brien and he asked me what would be the best cry in a new agitation in which he hoped I would join him. I told him that the “Improvements for the Farmers” and “Free Land for the Labourers,” was my platform upon the land question. The policy of a strike against rent was still lingering in the public mind, but the years of '83 and '84 were fairly good farming years, but in '85 and '86 things were going down again, and there was the pinch of distress over the west of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> I asked Mr. O'Brien if he had consulted Mr. Parnell about renewing the land agitation. He said he had not, but that something should be done to help the Home Rule Party, and he believed Parnell would not object. I saw it announced in that morning's paper that Lord Dillon's<sup>2</sup> tenants were calling for a reduction in rent, and that John Dillon was going to Ballaghaderreen to confer with the tenants about the reductions. The priest there was clamouring for them. Mr. Dillon came on the scene during my interview with Mr. O'Brien and I said: “Here is just the man who can explain what I want to know about this new cry about rent.” I said to him: “I see you are going to the West and I just want to know

how much of the property on the Dillon estate belongs to the people and how much to Lord Dillon." "Well," he says, "eighty per cent at least belong to the tenants. More, I am sure, but at least that." "And are you going to deliberately advise the people to forgo their just claims to their own, and give away all that lies between 35 and 80? If you are, I call it a very doubtful business, and I could not sanction it. Why not claim the full rights of the people and then let them settle on any line they like; but to start by surrendering property that belong to the tenants without even claiming it, is most unwise and is certain to make trouble."<sup>3</sup> Mr. O'Brien said that to make anything like an extreme demand would be misunderstood in England, and the priests would not sanction it, and besides the people themselves should be the best judges of what they want. I said: "I don't know about England, and I would not mind them in a matter of this kind, but I know that the poor people in Ireland and some of their priests are so thankful for small mercies that they would compromise their interests on any terms of relief. Davitt claimed the land for the people, and although he did not get it yet, he shook the landlord's down from their blasphemous claim to 'absolute ownership.'<sup>4</sup> If you claim the property created by the people for the people, you may not get it all, but you will corner and confuse the people who will deny their right to it. Besides, in the case of Ireland, the property and improvements created by the people silently strengthens their claim to remain on the land and condemns as a useless encumbrance the landlords, who unlike the English landlords, never made any improvements to any property." But Mr. O'Brien seemed to be in a hurry to start some kind of agitation, and he would not look closely into the subject, so we parted, and he plunged into the Plan of Campaign rent strike which kept the country well agitated until the Parnell crisis.<sup>5</sup>



*William O'Brien, 1908*

When Mr. Parnell came out of prison<sup>6</sup> he said if the farmers wanted another or a further rent strike they would have to fight the landlords with their own money and not with the funds of the League or Party, much of which was collected in America or abroad. Mr. Harrington took up this idea and drafted what was known as the “Plan of Campaign.” When the tenants on a certain estate decided not to pay their rents unless they got certain reductions, there were treasurers or

trustees appointed to take charge of the war chest, which was to be an agreed proportion of the rent which they offered to pay the landlords. When the usual proceedings of the Land War took place, i.e., legal proceedings, seizures of cattle and goods, sheriffs’ sale of good and effects, and lastly, the sale of the interest of the farms – followed by eviction; then houses and subsistence had to be provided for the evicted. There was a powerful wealthy Land Corporation established by the landlords and backed up by the Government with all the resources of British civilisation to crush this effort of the farmers to secure fair rents. The most remarkable thing about the land agitation in Ireland since the Land League was founded was that there were very few people in the inner ring of Irish land politics who knew anything about land or about the condition of the agricultural population at all. This has been notoriously the case from the first Land League Executive nominated by Mr. Davitt down to the Land Conference Executive nominated by Captain Shaw Taylor.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Parnell, Richard Lawlor,<sup>8</sup> and myself were the only members of the Land League Executive who knew anything about land.

The duty of advising the Land League tenants as to their best mode of procedure in a rent strike was thrown upon me. On consultation with James Grehan, James McKenna, the O'Neills, and some other leading old Tenant Right men, the following advice was generally given: "When it comes to the sale of the interest of the holding, buy in the farms where the landlord could get more than his rent, and let all the holdings go where there is no chance of making the rent. Bind the tenants who buy in to accommodate the people who go out. Garrison the estate by making it difficult and expensive to turn the evicted farms into profit." Quiet settlements were the order of the day under this procedure, and there were comparatively few evictions for rent.<sup>9</sup> Of course there were evictions where the landlords went in for clearing off the people, like Bodyke and a few other places.<sup>10</sup> The weak point in the "campaign" rent strike was that the reductions demanded were in some cases absurdly inadequate and this afterwards hampered the Land Commissioners when fixing fair rents on adjoining lands, but the crowning, terrible defect was in actually ordering, and in some cases paying or bribing, some of the tenants to allow their interests in valuable holdings to go to the Land Corporation at confiscation terms. Instead of garrisoning the estates and giving the unfortunate people a chance within the law, and without the law, of keeping a grip of their holdings, in spite of the emergency men and all comers, they were advised to clear away to the roadside. No wonder poor Kinsella at Coolgreaney allowed himself to be shot sooner than clear off.<sup>11</sup> No greater evidence was ever given of the power of personal influence than the way the unfortunate tenants gave up everything at the call of William O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien would make a great advocate at the bar, or a wonderful performer personally on the stage, or a powerful romanticist in literature, but as a leader of men in the actual affairs of ordinary business, he is a rather dangerous personality. This "campaign" land war had no definite effect except the subjugation of the landlords who were attacked, and as some of these were influential and wealthy, it looked like running on to the bitter end or until either of the combatants annihilated the other. The cost of this

campaign was something very large. It exhausted the funds of the National League, and when the Parnell crisis came in 1890, a large deputation of our most influential men were in America collecting funds to carry it on after a run of three years. Had this rent strike been run on right lines it would have effected great good. As it was, it helped to secure rent reductions for many who would not touch it. It helped to hurry the Leaseholders Act in 1887,<sup>12</sup> but it ruined everyone who joined in it. The work undertaken by Mr. O'Brien and his personal sacrifices were astounding, and they seemed to actually fascinate the Irish people. His raids to Canada to beat Lord Lansdowne<sup>13</sup> at Luggacurren,<sup>14</sup> his contention with Balfour<sup>15</sup> about his clothes in Tullamore prison,<sup>16</sup> and his extraordinary work in Tipperary to beat Smith Barry<sup>17</sup> in Cork are amongst some of the episodes in which his personality shone out, but in which the public really had no concern unless admiration for his reckless daring and his power to persuade people to follow and believe in him. John Dillon was associated with Mr. O'Brien in this rent strike, something like Parnell and Biggar in the Parliamentary obstruction strike, but Mr. O'Brien was the ruling if not the guiding spirit.

I spent a day with Mr. Parnell at Avondale, when this campaign war was in full swing and when his health was at its worst. He said O'Brien's work was getting big reductions for the farmers who were not fighting themselves, but that it was very doubtful as to how it would end, as no one could ever tell when O'Brien or Davitt, or Dillon, would pull up, once they got started at anything. He was low-spirited and dissatisfied, cross-like, when reviewing the outlook just then. This was the first time I met his mother.<sup>18</sup> I had heard nothing about her being in Ireland at the time, and when I entered the room where she was standing, I was genuinely surprised at the living likeness between the mother and son. After the introductions she relapsed into silence and he and I went on talking in the usual fashion we naturally dropped into when alone, reviewing as much of the political horizon as I was acquainted with, or was qualified to talk on. I never saw him so sad-like before, and his clothes all

seemed to hang loosely about his worn limbs. He was in very bad health.<sup>19</sup> For the first time in our acquaintance, my visit promised to be either a short or an uninteresting one, but it turned out the reverse. After listening until Mr. Parnell and I seemed to have no more to say, Mrs. Parnell intervened, saying: "My son, Mr. Kettle, is in very poor health, as you can see. He has given his life so far to the service of the Irish people, and I am very doubtful whether it was worth his while making such a sacrifice. I gather from your conversation that you have given deep consideration to what people call the Irish Question and now I would like to ask you what do you think would have happened if my son had not appeared in Irish Politics?"

"That seems," I said, "a rather peculiar question, and yet, after all, it is a natural enough enquiry for you to make. I wish the answering of it was in better hands than mine. However, I shall try and answer it in my own way. I might mention that some time ago I was asked by an American newspaper correspondent to answer a series of written questions, and some of the answers are fresh in my



*Delia Stewart Parnell*

mind now, so I am not going to answer your question as it were, without thought, or on the spur of the moment. I was actively engaged in agitating the Land and Home Rule questions with Mr. Butt. Previous to that I had studied the Fenian question, and I had a practical acquaintance with many of the leading men in all the movements, and my business as a rather extensive tillage farmer, using all the Dublin markets, brought me into communication with many of the leading business men in all parts of Ireland. Besides, I always had a fancy for getting information at first hand, particularly since I commenced about twenty years ago to write on public mat-

ters. Consequently, few or none of my contentions have ever been questioned. On the whole, I believe I knew Ireland fairly well when Mr. Parnell entered public life. The chief change he imported into public life and public work was the spirit or soul of reality. We had a land agitation, and a Parliamentary Party agitating for the rights of Ireland, but it was all carried on in an academic, make-believe kind of way, contenting itself with the exposure of the wrongs without taking any practical steps to secure the rights. Mr. Parnell changed all this. In the House of Commons he quickly put Britain on its defence, and so astounded the managers of the great British Empire that his name has lain like a nightmare on the daily life of the British people from that day to the present. In their frantic efforts to shake him off they have attracted the attention of a large portion of the civilized world, and just now, Parnellism stands for the active claims of oppressed people in many lands. The press of England, in trying to beat off Parnellism, has succeeded in propagating it. Now what does Parnellism stand for? I hope Mr. Parnell will pardon me for rambling on with my answer to your question, regardless of his presence." He nodded and I went on. "What is Parnellism? Parnell is an aristocrat advocating the rights of the democracy, a Protestant demanding the rights of the Catholics, a landlord claiming the emancipation of the tenants, and an employer standing for employment with fair wages, fair time, and fair play for the workers. Established without clamour or eloquence, without armies or navies, without taxes or revenue, without allies on land or sea, and with only the rally of a remnant of a despised and exiled race, this thing called Parnellism has compelled the Parliament of England to bow the knee, and to seek an alliance with your son. I can afford to be just and even generous, and to give a full meed<sup>20</sup> of praise to the other personalities who have played their part in the movement inspired or created by Mr. Parnell, but without him their performances would pass without particular notice. Messrs. O'Donnell, Biggar, or Power could never have started or carried through the obstruction policy in the House of Commons without Mr. Parnell. They had great abilities and O'Donnell, perhaps Biggar, had special

qualifications for the work they engaged in, but it was the inexorable pressure of the personality of Mr. Parnell that first raised the standard of revolt in unmistakable rebellion against England's pretensions to superiority in all things, and gave effect to their work. I know that Mr. Davitt never could have founded or pushed the Land League organisation much beyond the influence of the remnants of Fenianism, but for the co-operation of Mr. Parnell. Like the other men in the House of Commons, Mr. Davitt had very special qualifications for making war on the Landlord Garrison in Ireland. Fortified with the new-discovered doctrines of Henry George,<sup>21</sup> Messrs. Davitt and Brennan discredited and put 'absolute ownership' landlordism on its defence, but it was the presence and personality of Parnell that gave effect to their words and paralysed opposition. I should mention here that Messrs. Davitt and Brennan voiced the extreme democracy, but John Dillon inspired the revolt of the general population of Ireland.

"Amongst the material changes that would have occurred, if Mr. Parnell had not come, I might mention the following: The population of Ireland would now be about one million people less than it is, and those left would be much poorer than they are. The situation was something like this: For the previous twenty years, but particularly in the seventies, everything connected with land became so inflated in value that when the crops failed in 1879, with a wave of general agricultural depression, everyone, landlords, mortgagees, tenants, labourers, banks, and business people, were all caught in the storm. The landlords had made family arrangements based on the high rents obtainable; money investors took second and third mortgages on land in preference to other securities; tenants competed for any land that came on to the market at the most extreme rates; where leases were offered or old leases extended extravagant rents were given; labourers' wages were increased twenty per cent; banks extended accommodation, without question almost, to landlords and tenants, particularly on grasslands; business people competed for custom on the keenest competition lines, working largely



through the long credit given by English and Scotch manufacturers. This was the condition of Ireland, when Mr. Davitt and Mr. Parnell came to Artane asking me to join them in founding the Land League. Only the Land League was founded the landlords and moneylenders would have exhausted the whole resources of industrial Ireland by their legal powers to exact the payments of impossible rents, and the country would have been reduced to ruin something like what it was after the crop failure of 1847. I do not mean to contend that the failure in 1879 was anything like as extensive or acute as in 1847, but seeing how every class was prepared for everything except for what happened, collapse on a very extensive scale was simply inevitable and national misery would have prevailed only your son came to the rescue. As a matter of necessity, the small landlords, and needy mortgagees, and some of the embarrassed tenants suffered by the visitation of crop failure and low prices of agricultural produce, but the amount of suffering was comparatively trifling. Only a section of the tenants got relief in 1881, while the remainder only got relief last year, and those had to struggle on, trying to pay the rents fixed in the good times. The delay gave all parties time to make arrangements to suit the altered circumstances. The money value of the produce from tillage land fell in ten years in my own case as much as £9 an Irish acre, or about 160 per cent, while the rent reduction after six years waiting amounted to only 38 per cent. It was not only the tenants the Land League saved – it saved every interest in the whole country.<sup>22</sup> That was just the material effect of Parnellism. Its moral effect was even more important. The Barons when they abolished despotism on the Throne of England, succeeded in establishing a despotism on every estate. The British Landlord Garrison in Ireland were armed with a double dose of despotic powers to keep down the Irish, and to yoke them to make taxes for England, and as much rent for themselves as they could judiciously extract from the labour of the people. The spirit of dependence and demoralisation that prevailed in Ireland before the Land League was the worst mixture of hypocrisy and slavery that could be imagined. Mr. Parnell in his own person, standing up alone in the House of Commons

to challenge England to give fair play to Ireland, seemed to quietly inspire the Irish people to stand up before England's Garrison Landlords to demand fair play for themselves. The emancipation of the people from the fear of the landlords was a wonderful business.

"The lion's share of the organising and denouncing was, of course, inspired and engineered by Mr. Davitt, but without your son and his revolt in England, the Irish revolt would not have been successfully accomplished.

"The political transformation was just as remarkable. Since the Union, with the exception of an odd man now and again turning up in the Parliamentary representation of Ireland, all went down more or less under the greatness, the glamour, or the policy of British statesmen. Even that political giant, the great O'Connell, admitted that travelling through England to the House of Commons rubbed some of the Irishism off Irish M.P.s. Mr. Parnell not alone in his own person scorned the power and pretensions of the British, but he called from the four winds of Heaven as it were, a Parliamentary Party into being, whose existence as political 'items,' as Biggar called them, depended on abstention from association with the enemies of Ireland. He taught them, and compelled them to beware in the enemy's country until the enemy learned to treat them as friends and equals, and to recognise their right to run a free Parliament in their own country.

"I must apologise for trespassing so far on your patience. Now, Mrs. Parnell, I have just only glanced at the great work done by your son in its material, moral, and political aspects, and I think if you are not satisfied with the labour and the sacrifice, at least his countrymen have a right to be."

"Ah, Mr. Kettle," she says, "you will have to stay with us tonight. I will send a wire to Henry Campbell<sup>23</sup> to stop in Morrison's." I had business arrangements made and had to go home, but I stayed on till the last train and spent a lively enough evening. The only remark Mr. Parnell made on my review was: "I think, Kettle, you may be right

in thinking that our work has attracted some attention outside Ireland.”

## Notes

1. In the summer of 1885 reports of serious crop failures and destitution in the west of Ireland started to appear. The Relief of Distress Act (1886) was introduced to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief, which resulted in the number of people receiving relief in the distressed union jumping from under 2,000 to over 96,000 with over £36,000 being spent on outdoor relief by the late spring and early summer of 1886 (Crossman 2006, 120).
2. Charles Dillon (1810–65), 14th Viscount Dillon, and his family had been landowners in the counties of Mayo, Roscommon, and Westmeath since the seventeenth century. (Wikipedia 2022, ‘Charles Dillon, 14th Viscount Dillon’).
3. Kettle’s argument, in line with that of Michael Davitt, was that the starting point in any negotiations between politicians, landlords, tenants, and farm labourers should be the assertion that the land should be fully owned by the people, not the landlords. Rent reduction should be a secondary, not a primary aim.
4. In addition, from 1882 onwards, Davitt had begun to advocate that land nationalisation rather than peasant proprietorship was the way forward for Ireland. This socialist-inspired idea was not embraced by his peers and eventually led to his political marginalisation (Marley 2010).
5. The Plan of Campaign was the name given to the strategy adopted between 1886 and 1891 which saw the renewal of the Land War for the benefit of tenant farmers. The Plan of Campaign was organised by William O’Brien, John Dillon, and Timothy Harrington, the secretary of the Irish National League. Its aim was to secure a reduction of rent for tenants following a succession of poor harvests. If a landlord refused to accept what was offered, then the rent was to be withheld by the tenant and given to the National League to be used to assist tenants who were evicted because they withheld their rent. The Plan of Campaign was also designed to unsettle the Tory and Unionist government that had been returned to power in the general election of July 1886. Although it was vigorously promoted by O’Brien, Dillon, and about a dozen other MPs, Parnell himself pursued a more moderate policy and opposed any ideas which might jeopardise the Home Rule movement’s newfound respectability. In his view, the political objective of Home Rule was far more important than agrarian considerations and intensive anti-rent agitation would place a strain on the Liberal-nationalist alliance (Geary 1986, 151–78).

6. Parnell was released from Kilmainham Jail in May 1882 after agreeing to the Kilmainham Treaty, in which he promised to use his authority to halt violent protest activities and to cooperate with the Liberal Party toward achieving reform.
7. Captain John Shawe-Taylor (1866-1911) was a reforming landlord who was sympathetic to his tenants during the land agitation of 1902. He energetically organised a land conference executive which was eventually attended by the majority of landlords. Endorsed by Chief Secretary for Ireland George Wyndham (1863-1913), it implied the provision of unlimited British credit for a scheme of buying out landlords and resulted in the basis for the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 (DIB 2009, 'Taylor, John Shawe-').
8. Richard Lalor (1823-93), a younger brother of James Fintan Lalor, was a nationalist MP for Queen's County (later Co. Laois) from 1880 to 1892 (DIB 2009, 'Lalor, Patrick ('Patt')').
9. It has been calculated that over a period of three years the plan was adopted on just over 200 Irish estates ranging in size from less than 100 acres to more than 100,000. Some landlords settled at once; others carried through evictions and then settled; while others evicted their tenants and in some cases brought in new tenants, mainly from Ulster. According to Comerford, 'the estates where the plan was enforced were not necessarily those where the landlords were most grasping or the tenants hardest pressed. The organisers were waging a war against an institution rather than seeking justice for individuals' (Comerford 1996b, 70).
10. The disturbances that took place on Colonel John O'Callaghan's estate in Bodyke, Co. Clare, culminated in the notorious evictions of June 1887 and became one of the most dramatic episodes of the Land War. Here the Plan of Campaign had been adopted by the tenants and O'Callaghan was offered a reduced rent. He refused to negotiate, stating that he had already agreed to a reduction in rents and any further reduction would lead to his financial ruin. When the eviction party finally arrived, they were met with fierce resistance, which led to the eventual arrest of 26 people, 22 of them women, charged with assaulting and obstructing the forces of the law (Clare County Library n.d.).
11. John Kinsella (c. 1823-87) of Co. Wexford was a 64-year-old widower and evicted tenant who was shot and killed by George Freeman, an enforcer of the landlords' Property Defence Association, on 26 September 1887. The Property Defence Association had been formed in 1880 and defended landlord rights by serving writs, combating boycotts, and provided caretakers for evicted farms. The association also hired civilian emergency men, formidable characters who used crowbars and battering rams to secure evictions. When the case of John Kinsella came to trial, Freeman was acquitted of the murder (O'Brien 1976, 72).
12. This was the Land Law (Ireland) Act (1887). Introduced at the end of the Plan of Campaign by Arthur Balfour, it provided £33,000,000 for land purchase. It substituted peasant proprietorship for dual ownership as the principle of land tenure. The complication of its legal clauses

meant that it was not fully put into effect until it was amended five years later.

13. Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice (1845-1927), 5th Marquess of Lansdowne, was a British statesman who served in senior positions in Liberal and Conservative Party governments during his career, which included being Governor General of Canada (1883-88) and Viceroy and Governor-General of India (1888-94) (DIB 2009, 'Fitzmaurice, Henry Charles Keith Petty-').
14. A dispute arose on the estate of Lord Lansdowne of Luggacurren in Co. Laois where, championed by William O'Brien and under the leadership of one of Lansdowne's larger tenant farmers, Denis Kilbride (1848-1924), the Luggacurren tenants had demanded reductions in rent. Lord Lansdowne had previously reduced rents on his Kerry estate where tenant farmers, on smallholdings of poor-quality land, were in distress. The Luggacurren tenants demanded the same reductions, although they were substantial graziers on superior land and were well able to meet their rents but chose not to out of principle. As evictions followed, O'Brien and Kilbride took their case to Canada where Lansdowne was Governor General. They intended to portray him there as 'a most cruel and wanton man,' but their plan backfired, and they were met with a hostile reception (DIB 2009, 'Kilbride, Denis').
15. Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1887 to 1891. As Chief Secretary he suppressed agrarian unrest and took measures against absentee landlords. He was later Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905. His brother, Gerald William Balfour (1853-1945), also served as Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1895 to 1900 (DIB 2009, 'Balfour, Arthur James').
16. O'Brien was a colourful member of Parliament, partly because of his expressive and at times extravagant use of language, but also because of his theatrics. This 'Tullamore Tweed' incident occurred in 1888 when William O'Brien was imprisoned at Tullamore Jail for activities associated with the Plan of Campaign. O'Brien declared himself a political prisoner and refused to wear the official prison uniform. It is said that a suit of Blarney Tweed, a soft hat and an emerald green tie was somehow smuggled into the jail for O'Brien to wear in defiance of the authorities. No further attempts were made to put him in the prison uniform. Afterwards, the *United Ireland* newspaper carried advertisements for the 'O'Brien suit,' which was viewed as a symbolic victory of the victim of coercion over Chief Secretary for Ireland Arthur Balfour's prison rules (DIB 2009, 'O'Brien, William'; O'Brien 1976, 57).
17. Arthur Hugh Smith Barry (1843-1925), 1st Baron Barrymore, was a landlord and politician who served as a Liberal MP and whose family lands encompassed 22,000 acres in Co. Cork and Co. Tipperary. He was a determined defender of Irish landlordism who assisted in mounting organised resistance to boycotts, the most significant of which concerned the estate of C. W. T. Ponsonby in Co. Cork during the Plan of Campaign. In 1891, during a rent strike on Smith Barry's Tipperary estates, William O'Brien consequently encouraged tenants to set up a

town – ‘New Tipperary’ – to try and outflank him economically. It failed, at a cost of £40,000 (DIB 2009, ‘Barry, Arthur Hugh Smith’; Liberal Union of Ireland 1890).

18. Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell (1816–98) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the daughter of Commodore Charles Stewart, a US naval officer who had played an important role in the War of 1812 fought between the United States and Great Britain. She married John Henry Parnell, an Irish landlord and the grandson of Sir John Parnell, an Irish parliamentary leader in the 18th century. Her home became the Parnell estate at Avondale, but she spent most of her her time with relatives in France and America. She had eleven children. Although primarily known as the mother of Parnell, she was a pioneering feminist and political activist who served as the president of the Ladies’ Land League and actively spoke on behalf of Home Rule (Schneller 2010).
19. Parnell suffered from kidney disease, rheumatism, and possible heart disease and he was growing increasingly frail. However, despite this observation by Kettle, he was by all accounts doing well during the winter of 1890–91, and his death on 6 October 1891 was sudden and apparently unexpected (Lyons 1991, 175).
20. ‘Meed’ is an old term meaning a person’s deserved share of something (such as praise, honour, etc.).
21. Henry George (1839–97) was an American political economist and journalist whose ideas were very popular in nineteenth-century America. His economic philosophy, known as the ‘single-tax’ movement (later termed ‘Georgism’), was the belief that the economic value of land, natural resources, and opportunities should be shared equally by all members of society. This principle was sometimes associated with movements for land nationalisation, especially in Ireland. His most famous work was *Progress and Poverty* (1879) (Wikipedia 2022, ‘Henry George’).
22. A major source of change in Parnell’s time from the 1870s was the upheaval in agricultural and industrial prices, and in consumer demand, on both the British and western European food markets. Increased availability of supplies from North America and elsewhere along with new innovations in processing and manufacturing meant that farmers were forced to respond by becoming more productive and competitive (Comerford 1996b, 80).
23. Henry Campbell (1856–1924) was the private secretary to Parnell from 1880 to 1891. He was a nationalist MP for South Fermanagh from 1885 to 1892 and was appointed town clerk of Dublin from 1893 to 1920 (DIB 2009, ‘Campbell, Sir Henry’).

# Chapter 12: The *Times* Commission of 1889 and the Role of Davitt

*The Times Commission of 1889 – Davitt’s Great Work and Heavy Expenses – I Interview Parnell about Davitt’s Costs – Parnell’s Visit to Hawarden – Gladstone’s Position – Danger of “Caves” – History of Obstruction Policy – O’Connor Power*

In the “*Times Commission*” I took no part and Mr. Davitt bore the brunt of the battle and conducted the defence in connection with Mr. Parnell in the ablest possible manner. As history tells, the trial closed in 1889 in a very sensational and triumphant manner for the Irish leaders and the Irish cause.<sup>1</sup> Like the early Land League days when Parnell and Davitt worked together, everything was done in a very superior way. I was greatly gratified that the force of circumstance threw these two men together as it always appeared to me as if one was the complement of the other – Davitt with his outspoken mission to the mental and physical workers of the world, and Parnell with his revelation of silence, and power, and tolerance, and statesmanship to the world in general, but especially to the men who claimed to be the rulers, always seem to me to cover the whole ground of Ireland’s agitation for freedom. Remembering the interview I had with Mr. Parnell about Mr. Davitt’s worth and work in 1885,<sup>2</sup> I was personally pleased that events verified my contention. But although I was not mixed up with the work of the Commis-

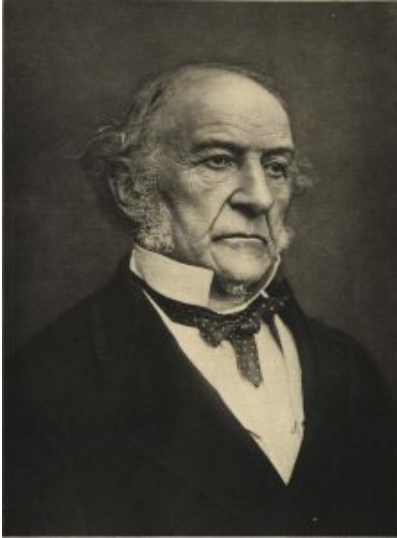
sion, it was still my destiny to learn all about that and many other things at first hand from Mr. Parnell. In conducting the defence, Mr. Davitt spent a large amount of his own money, and as he was placed in a different position from all others in the case, he decided not to send his accounts in to the solicitors for the defence, Messrs. Lewis, and they having spent the entire of the special fund collected for the purpose, there was no money to pay Mr. Davitt's outlay.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Davitt's family and friends very justly complained of the position he was placed in, and the grumbling against Mr. Parnell for not seeing Mr. Davitt paid became so acute that I quietly determined to see Mr. Parnell about it. I saw that he had an invitation to visit Liverpool to receive a good sum of money collected for Irish work, but held over until the *Times* case was decided, and that he was to pay Mr. Gladstone a visit at Hawarden on the route.<sup>4</sup> He spent a night at Hawarden with Mr. Gladstone, and went the next night to the Liverpool meeting, and I saw him the day following at Mr. Evans' at Birkenhead. He was giving an interview to "Dr." Byrne<sup>5</sup> of the *Freeman's Journal* when I called. His explanation about the delay in refunding Mr. Davitt his money was that the Irish Exchequer had run low owing to the Plan of Campaign expenses in Ireland, but that he would send on some of the Liverpool money when he would get to London.<sup>6</sup> He was in good spirits, but quiet and reticent-like, the same as I often saw him with other people when he would seem to be measuring how much of his mind he would disclose to the present party or on the present occasion. But I was always fairly successful in getting him to talk.

When we finished talking about the unfortunate Pigott's<sup>7</sup> performances, I said: "You seem to be getting on well down here." "Yes," he says, "things are moving in a fair way." "I suppose you want all the time the Tories will give you?" I said. "Oh, yes," he says, "nothing could upset our plans but that the Liberals should come to office with a small majority, and they are not at all ready with candidates, or funds at present. If they took office with a small majority, they would be at the mercy of every fellow who could form a



cave<sup>8</sup> by taking away a few followers, and one fellow would want one thing whittled down and another fellow something else, and they might keep whittling down our bill until we would not know whether to take it or leave it.” “Is there then,” I said, “so much danger of caves in the Party?” “Why,” he says, “there are not three men in the Party prepared to toe Gladstone’s line on the question. Morley<sup>9</sup> and Spencer<sup>10</sup> are the only two we are certain of. The rest are thoroughly unsound on the subject. Unless we get a good majority we will have no chance of carrying a good measure through the Lords.” “Then,” I said, “I infer from all this that you consider the old fellow himself all right on the question.” “Well,” he says, and he instinctively pulled himself up a bit, as he always did when dealing with an Englishman, “he is in this way. Nothing could justify Gladstone in doing what he proposed to do, and what England has refused to do for a century except that it should prove to be a great imperial success, and he is now just as anxious to give us as much Home Rule as will make it a great imperial success as we are to take it.” “Then you will have the measuring of it largely in your own hands, but the Liberal Party may play you out again.” “Now,” he says, and he laughing, “don’t be speculating or prophesying. I always get restless. Enough for the day is the evil thereof. We will do it better next time.”

The information I received at this interview, coming at first-hand, fresh from the fountain head, gave me the key to the position when the great crisis came in about eleven months afterwards.<sup>11</sup>



William Gladstone, c. 1892

From the public meeting between Parnell and Gladstone until the Divorce Court proceedings was something less than a year. Mr. Davitt was in America when Mr. O'Brien started and he and Mr. Dillon over-ran Ireland with the Plan of Campaign rent strike, and when Mr. Davitt returned, he took no part in the agitation. The *Times* Commission brought him to Parnell's side, and when that terminated he moved to London and started the *Labour World* newspaper.<sup>12</sup>

Had he remained in Ireland many of his old friends believed he would have taken a different stand from the one he took towards Parnell. He meant well, but he lost his temper when the Leader hesitated to be guided by his advice until he could leave things right for his successors.<sup>13</sup> Home Rule seemed to be safe after the understanding between Parnell and Gladstone. The Parliamentary Party were in daily and nightly intercourse with the leaders and members of the Liberal Party. Evidence of this was the statement made by Mr. John O'Connor, M.P.,<sup>14</sup> about the pressure Sir W. Harcourt<sup>15</sup> put on him to desert Parnell and the Irish flag, which, like a man, he refused to do. As before stated, the rent strike in Ireland was started on such extraordinary lines that it had to be fought to a finish by the League, and had to be tolerated by Parnell and the whole Party. Like the late Land Conference business, no one liked to repudiate men who, the world knew, meant well and some of whom made great sacrifices. But in declaring war against Lord Lansdowne,<sup>16</sup> Barrymore,<sup>17</sup> Massarene,<sup>18</sup> and other noted landlords, backed up by a powerful and wealthy Land Corporation, the leaders of the campaign left little hope for compromise. By clearing the people off the land, they left

them helpless and a burden on the funds, and the clearance policy tempted the landlords to employ some able graziers to help them to make rent out of evicted lands, which they did successfully in many cases. The cattle trade favoured the evictors so far one season that they made several rents out of some of the grasslands. The funds of the League ran so low in carrying on this struggle, which had to be continued until the advent of the Gladstone Government to power, that to make the best of a bad job, a very strong deputation of representative men were sent to America to collect the sinews of war.

This was something like the situation when the melancholy crisis came, a crisis that put every man of the race on his trial, churchman, layman, the dissolute and the virtuous, the learned and the ignorant, the friends and the opponents of Mr. Parnell.<sup>19</sup> It seemed so simple to manage the difficulty sensibly at some points that I fear posterity will wonder why something different was not done. I can only set down here my own experience of the whole upheaval.

Like most people, I was under a kind of impression that Mr. Parnell would manage, in his usual inevitable way, to get through every difficulty that might arise in his path. I spent part of a day with him in Avondale, a few months before the storm, and Mr. Kerr, his manager, seemed to be troubled about the rumours that were going around about the Divorce Court, but I laughed off his fears saying: "The Chief is sure to get through all right." It was on this visit which I made without notice, on chance like, that I met Mr. Parnell and Mrs. Dickinson<sup>20</sup> riding from Avondale, and I must say they both looked to advantage on horseback. We met midway in the avenue, and when we came within talking distance he, smiling said, "I knew you as far as I could see you. I told my sister here, Mrs. Dickinson, that if Kettle is alive, this is he. I am very glad to see you, but I am in the doctor's hands and I must take an hour or two every day on horseback. Will you go to the house and wait until we return, or will you look up Kerr and view our farming?" "Oh, the latter by all means. I am very anxious to see how Mr. Doherty rigged up your cattle yard."

It was during this visit I learned all about how the policy of obstruction in Parliament was started. The question came up for discussion in this way. Mr. Davitt being located in London, renewed his intercourse with Mr. O'Connor Power and at our last meeting he wished that Power could get an English seat in Parliament, with the assistance of the Irish vote, and rejoin the Irish Party. On mentioning this to Mr. Parnell he said, "I have nothing against Power except that he failed to go the whole way with us when



*John O'Connor Power*

starting the policy of obstruction. O'Donnell and Power and Biggar and myself arranged about Biggar reading the Blue Books, and all the other tactics.<sup>21</sup> It seems to be generally thought that Biggar did that of his own motion, but he did not – it was arranged by the Party. You saw what O'Donnell did on the Army Bill,<sup>22</sup> and he acted as well on the other bills, but when it came to Power's turn he failed to go on, but he acted well enough all through since, from a constitutional point of view, and now with the Liberals coming back to power, I would have no objections to him getting a seat in England. He is a very able man."

## Notes

1. Parnell's apparent moderation and lack of activity during the Plan of Campaign made the Tories all the more determined to link him to criminal activity associated with agrarian activism. *The Times* of London published a series of articles entitled 'Parnellism and Crime'

between March and December 1887 and included a letter purporting to have been written by Parnell conveying that his condemnation of the Phoenix Park murders had not been sincere. The government established the Special Commission on Parnellism and Crime to inquire into the allegations. It sat 128 times between October and November 1889 and resulted in a detailed investigation into the association of the Home Rule movement and land agitation with agrarian and political criminal activity since 1879. It failed to establish any tangible link between Parnell and serious criminal activity, however it uncovered, through cross examination and forensic examination of handwriting, that the journalist Richard Pigott had forged the incriminating letters allegedly written by Parnell. The result of the Special Commission only served to enhance Parnell's reputation both in Britain and Ireland. This also benefitted the Liberals and strengthened the Parnell-Liberal Alliance, symbolised by Parnell publicly shaking hands on 8 March 1889 with Lord Spencer, who was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the time of the Phoenix Park murders (Comerford 1996b, 75; Bew 2007, 357).

2. See Chapter 9 where Kettle tells of his efforts to persuade Parnell of Davitt's worth despite Davitt's criticism of Parnell and his followers during this time. He advised Parnell to '[q]uietly turn over in your mind the services of all the men you have met since you took up your mission, and if on examination you find that Davitt has not rendered Ireland and you more real service than any of the other men around you can drop him.'
3. Davitt had chosen to defend himself before the Special Commission instead of being represented by counsel like most of the accused. This resulted in him appearing both as principal in conducting his own case and as a witness, during which his whole public career from 1867 onwards was subjected to public scrutiny. He attended frequently in court throughout the sittings of the commission, determined to defend not just himself but also 'the name and character and cause of the peasantry of Ireland' (Moody 1945, 234).
4. Hawarden Castle in Wales was the estate of William Gladstone. After Parnell's vindication by the Special Commission, Parnell and Gladstone held talks to work out the details of the Second Home Rule Bill (which was eventually introduced in 1893). The trip that Kettle refers to here took place on 18-19 December 1889 after which Gladstone noted that Parnell was 'certainly one of the best people to deal with that I have ever known.' The contents of these talks became crucial some months later during the party split when Parnell broke the confidentiality surrounding them and denounced what he alleged were the limitations of Liberal plans for Home Rule (Bew 2007, 357; Comerford 1996b, 77).
5. Edward 'Doc' Byrne (1847-99) was a journalist and newspaper editor who was an advisor and friend of Parnell. He was editor of the *Free-man's Journal* in the 1880s when it played a major role in maintaining Parnell's political ascendancy. He supported Parnell throughout his lifetime (DIB 2009, 'Byrne, Edward Joseph').
6. The Plan of Campaign expenses were a serious drain on available funds.

The failed venture of 'New Tipperary,' for example, where shopkeepers were persuaded to leave their premises and set up in new facilities nearby, had cost £40,000 (Comerford 1996b, 72).

7. Richard Pigott (1828–89) was a journalist and newspaper owner who was revealed to be the forger of letters that ostensibly proved Parnell had been a supporter of the Phoenix Park murders. Originally an important figure in nationalist politics, Pigott began to vilify his former associates from 1884 and produced articles which presented the Irish nationalist project as a criminal conspiracy. The Special Commission revealed the fact that he had forged the letters. After admitting the forgeries, Pigott fled to Spain, where he committed suicide (DIB 2009, 'Pigott, Richard').
8. A 'cave' is a nineteenth-century political term meaning the secession of a small dissident group of politicians from their party.
9. John Morley (1838–1923) was an English politician, writer, and Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1886 and again from 1892 to 1895. A previous opponent of coercion in Ireland, he was a firm believer of the necessity for Home Rule, and as a Liberal MP he was adamant that Ireland should be a priority for the Liberal Party (DIB 2009, 'Morley, John').
10. John Poyntz Spencer (1835–1910), 5th Earl Spencer, had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1868 and again in 1882. Known as 'the Red Earl' because of his enormous red beard, he was a strong enforcer of a harsh law-and-order policy in Ireland, but a strong supporter of Gladstone's Home Rule policy. After the 1885 general election this support played a significant role in Gladstone's ability to carry the majority of the Liberal Party and form his third government, in which Spencer was Lord President of the council. During the period of Liberal opposition (1886 to 1892), Spencer was one of the most outspoken campaigners for Home Rule (DIB 2009, 'Spencer, John Poyntz').
11. The 'great crisis' refers to the difficulties that arose in November and December 1890 as a result of the revelation of Parnell's involvement in the O'Shea divorce proceedings and the subsequent split of the Irish Parliamentary Party. While Parnell managed to keep control over the party for a while, it soon became clear that many of Gladstone's supporters would no longer accept the Liberal Party alliance with the Irish Parliamentary Party if Parnell was its leader. The prospect of being forced out of politics led Parnell to embarrass Gladstone by revealing details about his meeting with Gladstone, despite having publicly expressed his satisfaction with the negotiations at the time. It seems that Parnell was attempting to lead the Irish Parliamentary Party back towards independence from the Liberals while consolidating his leadership of the party. The 'key to the position' that Kettle refers to here is Parnell's belief that the Liberal Party was wavering in its support for Home Rule and that Parnell's strategy was to force the Liberal Party to take a clear position in favour of Home Rule before he stepped down from the leadership (Comerford 1996b, 77).
12. Davitt had launched the newspaper *Labour World* in London on 26 September 1890 as a sequel to the halfpenny weekly *Democrat*, which

he had published in London from 1884. *Labour World* was a pioneering penny weekly which assembled labour news worldwide, and its second issue sold 60,000 copies (DIB 2009, 'Davitt, Michael').

13. Following the Parnell split, *Labour World* became a strongly anti-Parnellite newspaper. Davitt, who was a devout Catholic, had broken with Parnell over his relationship with Katherine O'Shea. Davitt published an editorial advising Parnell to retire (temporarily) but Parnell did not take his advice (DIB 2009, 'Davitt, Michael').
14. John O'Connor (1850-1928) was a Fenian and politician who became a prominent member of the Irish Party. He served as MP for Tipperary South (1885-92) and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Plan of Campaign (1886-89). He was devoted to Parnell and sided with him in the split, defending Parnell strongly and attempting to persuade the party to issue a statement criticising Gladstone's interference in party matters (DIB 2009, 'O'Connor, John').
15. Sir William Harcourt (1827-1904) was a British lawyer, journalist, Liberal politician, and cabinet member who served under Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1886 and again between 1892 and 1894. On Gladstone's retirement in 1894 he was a leading but unsuccessful candidate to succeed him as prime minister (Stansky 2004).
16. This is Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice (1845-1927), 5th Marquess of Lansdowne.
17. This is Arthur Hugh Smith Barry (1843-1925), 1st Baron Barrymore.
18. Clotworthy John Eyre Skeffington (1842-1905), 11th Viscount Massereene, was an Anglo-Irish peer who served as Lord Lieutenant of Louth from 1879 to 1898 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Clotworthy Skeffington, 11th Viscount Massereene').
19. At the time of the O'Shea divorce case, Parnell was so powerful that no Irish group spoke out against him. However, the issue of his continued leadership soon led to the 'melancholy crisis' of a split in the party (Comerford 1996b, 79).
20. Emily Monroe Dickinson (1841-1918) was an older sister of Parnell. In 1905 she published *A Patriot's Mistake: Being Personal Recollections of the Parnell Family*.
21. Progress on bills was prevented by continuing debate on them for as long as possible, thus preventing the plans of government for introducing legislation. The campaign of obstruction reached its height in the opposition to the Irish Coercion Bill in early 1881, which allowed imprisonment without trial for those linked to agitation between landlords and tenants. The campaign of obstruction kept the House of Commons sitting for 41 hours before it was finally ended by the Speaker of the House (Thornley 1960).
22. Army Discipline and Regulation Bill of 1879.

# Chapter 13: Parnell Divorce Court Proceedings

*Divorce Court Proceedings – League Meeting – Leinster Hall Meeting – McCartan, Grehan, Jordan, Justin McCarthy – Enthusiastic Support for Parnell – The Church Keeps Out – I Find Parnell in London – His Promise to Retire – Room 15 – The Party Turns Tail – Gladstone’s Position and Policy – Canon Daniel – Merchant’s Quay Franciscans*

When I saw the report of the undisputed proceedings in the Divorce Court I was astounded and troubled as I seldom have been.<sup>1</sup> My heart seemed to stand still – something like the way I felt when I heard of his arrest in Kilmainham. I wandered away to Dublin in the evening to learn the effect of the news. I heard with dismay that the League people held a meeting and decided to stand by Parnell under all circumstances,<sup>2</sup> and that a meeting advertised for some other purpose for the following evening in the Leinster Hall<sup>3</sup> was to be turned into a Parnell confidence meeting. I spent a bad time at home and got to Dublin next evening early. At the Imperial Hotel I found Michael McCartan<sup>4</sup> just after coming from Meath where a public meeting had decided to stand by Parnell. (McCartan and I were such old friends that I remembered declining to see Archbishop Croke in Kilmainham sooner than forgo an appointment I had with him.) He asked me ought he go to the *Freeman* and get the news from Meath wired to London. I told him that I thought the people were all wrong, that was a day of mourning that should be called for when



Church and State should come together and devise means to meet the horrible situation. We were soon joined by men from all parts, and amongst them Jordan, M.P., of Enniskillen, and J. F. Grehan of Cabinteely, who had to lift me literally off the chair to get me to go to the Leinster Hall meeting. I went as I said to take notes, not to take part in the proceedings. I never felt such foreboding about any meeting I ever attended, particularly when I heard Justin McCarthy<sup>5</sup> make such another speech as he made ten years before when the policy of combat to settle the land question was decided upon in the Westminster Palace Hotel. At the Leinster Hall meeting Mr. Davitt's *Labour World* retirement proposal was sneered at, and Parnell was called upon not to desert the men who had burned their boats and who were prepared to defy England and to stand by Ireland and the institution of Parnellism, come what would.<sup>6</sup>

Then followed the enthusiastic election of Parnell as Chairman of the Party, my old friend of the Imperial Hotel and many another place, Jordan of Enniskillen, alone demurring.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Parnell was thus challenged to stand by the Irish flag in Dublin, and was pushed into a position to do so in London. Men pledged as patriots in Ireland and as gentlemen in England. No wonder Mr. Gladstone thought he could safely issue his challenge for an Irish revolt to whip up to his own lines, Harcourt<sup>8</sup> and the Party who I learned were thoroughly unsound on the Irish question.<sup>9</sup> The Irish Church, led by the Archbishop of Dublin,<sup>10</sup> kept out of the wrangle until the very last moment.<sup>11</sup> When I saw what I instinctively dreaded, the announcement that the Irish Parliamentary Party were going to turn tail, I literally rushed to London, and when I got there it was rumoured that Mr. Parnell had gone to Ireland. But when I called at the *Labour World* office, Mr. Davitt told me that I would find Mr. Parnell at the Westminster Palace Hotel. I met him on the main stairs coming down with some papers in his hand. I got a good grip of his other hand to try to gauge the state of his health, as I was in the habit of doing since he got ill. His first word was: "Well, Kettle, these men are in a great hurry to get rid of me." "Well," I said, and we walking down,

“you are not gone yet, but I have come over to tell you that there is an uneasy feeling rising and spreading in Ireland that you should devise some means of retiring before this storm, but I cannot advise you, nor do I know who can, and even now under the avalanche of misfortune that has fallen across your path you must look for guidance to a higher power.” “Well,” he says, “I have my mind made up to retire, and want the Party to get those guarantees that we are now after drafting,” and which he read for me, “from the Liberal Party to safeguard the work of my life. If I get that done the Liberals will have to preach Irish Home Rule in England, and I can quietly retire.”<sup>12</sup> There is a meeting of the Party to be held at twelve o’clock in the House. It is nearly that now and I must soon go.” I said: “I will go over and see everyone and help you to convince them to take your advice, but I warn you to be prepared for the worst. They will not revolt against the Liberal Party because that is what your proposition amounts to. Since the failure of some of these men to stand by the Land League fighting policy ten years ago, I have a very humble opinion of their stability. God grant I may be wrong. They will not stand on the Leinster Hall line. If they meant to, they would not be calling such a meeting for today.” “But,” he says, “it is their interest to do so. It will give them an opportunity of taking up my position at the head of the Liberal Party instead of at their tail.” “They won’t see it,” I said, “but I hope I may be wrong.”<sup>13</sup>

He went to Room 15 and I went to the House and saw everyone and hung about there, day and night, until after the secession.<sup>14</sup> Only two circumstances occurred during that memorable discussion in which I was concerned and which were not publicly recorded. The first was my interview with Mr. Sexton. It was earnest at first but ended angrily. I told him that Parnell told me that he meant to retire, and that it was the interest of the leaders of the Party, and particularly himself, to press the Liberals for the necessary guarantees before making themselves responsible for the guidance of the movement. But he worked himself into a rage about Parnell, reflecting on their honour by saying their independence was sapped, and

said he was not justified in treating the Irish Party and the Liberal Party in the way he had done. I urged him to try an independent attitude towards the Liberals for a week or a month, that the sky was not likely to fall or the end of the world to come in the meantime, and that the alliance could be renewed if the effects of the move were not satisfactory. But he wanted no arguments, and he grew impatient and commenced to abuse Parnell when I turned sharply on my heel saying: "You are lost and gone." I have had no conversation with him since. Mr. Sexton was the ablest of the Irish Parliamentarians, and it was thought he ambioned to become the chief Parliamentary medium between the two countries on the establishment of Home Rule, a position for which he was well qualified. But he was a poor kind of statesman and could not understand Parnell. It was given out at the time that there was not ability enough in the Party to break it up but for Sexton's talking powers. The other circumstance occurred on the night of the third sitting in Room 15. There were very few people about the House, and I was so long waiting that I dozed asleep on a side bench and was awakened by the noise made by the Party leaving the room. I had been getting reports of what was taking place at the meeting from several members, but chiefly from Mr. Jordan. He came out this night and when I expressed astonishment at how long they sat and asked what happened and who spoke: "Oh, the misery of it," he rejoined, "the misery of it that I have to oppose a man like that!" "What happened?" I said, "What did he say?" "Well," he says, "we are in there now so many hours, and I can only tell you that Mr. Parnell at the head of that table is physically and mentally acting like a lion shaking his mane over a lot of small dogs."



*Timothy Michael Healy, Justin McCarthy, and Thomas Sexton, drawing by Harry Furniss, c. 1891*

History tells how the secession occurred and, whether rightly or wrongly I always thought that if the men in London were standing on the Leinster Hall lines Mr. Healy would not have urged them to leave it. I say this, although I never exchanged an opinion with Mr. Healy in my life. I found when he was secretary to Mr. Parnell that he could not depend on his own judgment or temperament, so I determined never to trust him. Mr. Parnell admired Mr.

Healy's ability, but nothing could induce him to take him seriously.

After the secession, I left London without seeing Mr. Parnell. I took no responsibility for his policy or leadership until his visit to Boulogne, because I feared his health would break down.<sup>15</sup> But I watched his every word and motion at a distance.

This may be the most convenient place to state my convictions about Mr. Gladstone's tactics at this crisis. Mr. Gladstone and his henchmen knew more about Mrs. O'Shea and her doings than most people. We all know now what I learned from Mr. Parnell after the visit at Hawarden that the Liberal Party were thoroughly unsound on the Home Rule question. An Irish revolt was just what was required to drive the Party into a corner and to compel them to preach Home Rule and to popularise it. The Tories at the time had a large majority over the Liberals and had the Irish revolted as Parnell asked them to do the Liberals would have had no choice but to make terms with them. I know Mr. Parnell wanted to make his retirement of eminent service to Ireland. It must always stand in judgment against the seceders that Parnell offered to retire if they sought the necessary guarantees to safeguard the cause just then. He first

asked that the guarantees should be publicly given, and then that they might be privately given to satisfy not him but the men who ambited to lead in his place. None of the men who seceded knew how the matter stood between Gladstone and Parnell. Was it not their plain, common-sense duty to enquire? They even admitted the logic of Parnell's request and went to Gladstone to seek for information. As a matter of course, they did not get it. Then instead of standing on their own honour and manhood they succumbed to Sir William Harcourt and the unsound Liberals and threw away everything they possessed, except their tongues. An Irish revolt would have enabled Mr. Parnell to retire on his own motion. What would an Irish revolt have done for Gladstone? It would have enabled him to say to his own unsound Party: "Gentlemen, our Party is now in such a miserable minority that we can have no hope of coming to power for a long time, and I must retire unless we can make terms with the Irish leaders. Perhaps what they ask is not unreasonable as Home Rule might not work well without the things they seek." The Harcourts and the humbugs would have had no choice but to make terms and to preach Home Rule. Mr. Davitt writes rather bitterly about Parnell's pride and selfishness, but I know that unfortunately Davitt's pride and vanity of opinion had more to do with the catastrophe of 1891, that he seems to be cognisant of. The Parliamentary men who called on Parnell to stand, and whose independence had been sapped as Parnell divined, took shelter for their recreancy under Davitt's hasty, ill-considered attitude, and no man threw more bitterness into the general campaign of maligning and hounding down Parnell, than Davitt did. Of course no man repents like Mr. Davitt and I hope he has been forgiven. He and they have been punished with failure and disappointment since Parnell died. Any concessions that have been given to Ireland since, came from the Tories, and not one iota from the men whose word, and honour, and good faith, were preferred to Parnell's by his own countrymen. He led them well, and would have placed them in a position of real power on his retirement, had they believed his word and taken his advice.<sup>16</sup>

Some time after the secession, I paid a visit, when passing, to the parish church in Francis Street, Dublin, and was kneeling when a hand was laid on my shoulder, and when I looked up I met the gaze of Canon Daniel, the parish priest, one of the few Irish clergymen who had a political training as editor of the Church columns of the *Freeman's Journal* for years. I stood up and he commented in Mr. Jordan's words, "Oh, the misery of it! Why did not these



*Katherine O'Shea*

men accept Mr. Parnell's word, and take the advice of the only man who understood the English? If they stood back from the Liberal Alliance, as he begged of them to do, the Liberals would have had no choice but to give them their terms, and he could have retired, as he offered to do, and the Church would not be called on to act at all, and all this misery would have been avoided. Oh, the poor, mistaken men! They have, I fear, a hard future before them." "God bless you, Canon," I said. "You are the first priest I have met who has taken the plain, common-sense political view of what looks like a complete national collapse." "Yes," he says, "we trust the honour and word of the foreigner, but refuse to trust one another. We are not fit for freedom. Oh, the misery of it!" I found afterwards that some of the large-minded Franciscans of Merchant's Quay took the very same view of the cause of all the misery. Why did not those men take Parnell's advice for a week or a month even? What did they really know about Mr. Parnell's interviews with Carnarvon or Gladstone? What have they achieved since and where are they now? They seem to be beating the air and to have muddled everything they have touched from that day to this.

## Notes

1. On 15 November 1890 the divorce case between Katherine and Captain William O'Shea began. It included a detailed, biased, and unflattering account of the liaison between Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea. No defence was entered and the trial lasted just two days.
2. This meeting occurred on 18 November 1890, the day after the granting of the divorce, when the Dublin branch of the National League passed a resolution upholding Parnell's leadership.
3. Leinster Hall was a lecture, meeting, and exhibition space located at 35 Molesworth Street in the centre of Dublin.
4. Michael McCartan (1851-1902) was an Irish nationalist politician. He was born in County Down, was educated in Belfast, and became a solicitor in 1882. He served as an MP from County Down from 1886 to 1902. McCartan was a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party until the split in 1890, when he joined the anti-Parnellite Irish National Federation. When the two sides reunited in 1900, he rejoined the Irish Parliamentary Party (Wikipedia 2022, 'Michael McCartan').
5. Justin McCarthy (1830-1912) was a journalist, historian, novelist, and politician who was an MP from 1879 to 1900. He joined the Westminster Home Rule Association in 1877, was elected MP for Co. Longford in the 1879 by-election, and served as vice-chairman of the Home Rule Party from 1880 to 1890. He acted as a conduit between British leaders and Parnell. After the party divided in 1890, McCarthy became chairman of the anti-Parnellite group (DIB 2009, 'McCarthy, Justin').
6. Parnell's lieutenants and supporters were slow to disown him. Davitt was the first to say that Parnell should go, and in his newspaper *Labour World* on 22 November he advised Parnell to retire temporarily. The Leinster Hall meeting on 20 November 1890, and the subsequent election of Parnell as party chairman on 25 November, was held before the members of the party were aware of Gladstone's assessment of the situation, many of whom would not support an alliance if the Irish Party continued to be led by Parnell. Gladstone conveyed, through Justin McCarthy, that Parnell's continued leadership would mean the loss of the next election and the shelving of Home Rule (Bew 2007, 359).
7. Jordan understood the political importance of the revelation of Parnell's relationship with Katherine O'Shea and he appealed to Parnell to step down 'even if only for a month' in order to maintain the support for Home Rule. While expressing moral outrage at the revelations in the divorce court, he also defended the alliance with the Liberals as Parnell's greatest achievement and felt that its loss would be greater than losing Parnell's leadership (DIB 2009, 'Jordan, Jeremiah').
8. This is Sir William Harcourt (1827-1904).
9. Kettle believed that an Irish Parliamentary Party threat to withdraw its support for the Liberal Party in Parliament would force the members of

the Liberal Party to support the Home Rule cause.

10. This is William Joseph Walsh (1841-1921).
11. Initially, the bishops either said nothing about the matter or held that it was purely political. On 3 December, however, they issued a statement declaring that Parnell was unfit on both moral and political grounds to be the leader of the party (Comerford 1996b, 78).
12. Parnell had published a manifesto entitled 'To the People of Ireland' on 29 November 1890 in which he had attempted to make damaging revelations about his visit to Gladstone in Hawarden the previous year. These included unfavourable Home Rule proposals which he claimed the next Liberal administration were proposing to introduce. Such an open breach with the Liberal Party, which was contradicted in devastating detail by Gladstone, was severely damaging to the cause of Home Rule. During the subsequent party meetings, Parnell sought guarantees from Gladstone regarding Home Rule. If granted, Parnell would then retire (Bew 2011, 171).
13. The 'Lenister Hall line' refers to the initial meeting on 20 November 1890 when all members of the party had stood by Parnell before the Liberal stance had become known. Parnell's proposed strategy was that the party should remain united and thus exert enough pressure on the Liberals to make satisfactory Home Rule concessions.
14. Parnell's leadership was debated by the Irish Party in Committee Room 15 of the House of Commons in Westminster from 1 to 6 December 1890. Parnell insisted that the independence of the Irish Party could not be compromised either by Gladstone or by the Catholic Church. The party tried desperately to reach a compromise. Guarantees were sought from Gladstone of an acceptable Home Rule measure on condition that Parnell would retire, but Gladstone either refused or found it impossible to offer anything. With no definite outcome to the deliberations in sight, the anti-Parnellites led by Justin McCarthy, 45 in all, withdrew on 6 December, leaving Parnell with 28 followers (Bew 2011, 172; Callanan 1992).
15. Throughout January and February 1891, a group of MPs led by William O'Brien and John Dillon attempted to heal the party divisions at talks with Parnell in Boulogne, France, but without success.
16. Kettle was a strong defender of Parnell (although privately telling him that his conduct that led to the divorce scandal was sinful). Many, however, believed that Parnell had put his own ambition before the cause of the Liberal Alliance, party unity, or, indeed, Home Rule. Since he no longer had a future with the Liberals, and there were no guarantees of his resignation, many feared that he was reverting to a policy of independence and consolidating his leadership of the party. Despite Kettle's defence of Parnell, according to Comerford, 'the fact that in refusing to surrender his post he defied the cardinal principle of representative democracy, namely that when votes go against them leaders give way, no matter how mistaken or misguided they may believe the voters to be' (DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Andrew Joseph'; Comerford 1996b, 77-79).



# Chapter 14: I Join the Fight – 1891 Carlow By-election

*Kilkenny Election – Castlecomer – I Reason out My Obligations – I Put My Views before Parnell – I Join in the Fight – Staunch Men in Carlow – Parnell and the Catholic Clergy – The Cabinteely Meeting*

I saw Parnell at Kingsbridge<sup>1</sup> when he was going to Cork, but only for a moment, to warn him about his health.<sup>2</sup> He pressed me to go with him, but I put him off, laughing, telling him he got me beaten the last time he had me in Cork (the Election of 1880).<sup>3</sup> I went with J. F. Grehan to Kilkenny during the Election and we spent our time in the hottest spot about Castlecomer and Crettyard.<sup>4</sup> One night in the hotel during the contest, Mr. Parnell came over and challenged Mr. Grehan (who was a great Davittite) and myself, to know what Davitt meant by attacking him the way someone told him he did at a meeting that day. I said I heard nothing about the attack, but that Davitt had lost touch with the Dublin men since he went to London. “The devil he has,” he says. “London is where we all go wrong.” When I saw that he meant to go on with the fight after the Kilkenny defeat, notwithstanding his poor health, I made up my mind to put my views before him.

I confess that I spent a peculiar two hours (the last hour of one year and the first of the next) in working out my political prospectus.<sup>5</sup> I first inquired why I should interfere at all. Then I reasoned out the obligations every human being contracts by the very fact of his

existence, towards the Creator, his neighbour, and his native land. I glanced back at my early surroundings and asked myself why did these things happen to me who had started as a small farmer's son, without education or money. I was still a farmer, pure and simple, living absolutely by my profession, yet why was I brought into contact with all the living issues of Irish public life? I did not go out of my way to seek the friendship of all the great men of my time, yet I was brought into close contact with them.

I had opportunities of testing my opinions with many men, and the sequels proved that I was very often right. It never occurred to me to subordinate my judgment to any other mind on matters that I had opportunities of looking through and through. Without trying, my estimates of men and things were instinctively fairly true. I inherited a deeply religious mind, and I have been all my life, and am now, always trying to dispose myself to leave the results of all my endeavours, as Parnell said, to a Higher Power. I had my own private views of the probable outcome of the Parnell movement, which Mr. Parnell understood. I always smiled at the idea of England ever delegating the governing powers of Ireland into the hands of a class different from that ruling in England for the time being. The English classes might arrange with the Irish classes, as Randolph Churchill meant to work out in 1885, but I had no hope that such men as Parnell led before the split, would be made rulers in Ireland until the labourers would be ruling in England. In the years '88 and '89, when the Liberal Alliance was running, Mr. Parnell used to get uneasy like, when I would allow my tongue to run on, speculating on the improbabilities of the situation, repeating "What will happen the next time?" He would rejoin, "What better can we do for the present?"<sup>6</sup>

Harking back on my own old lines, that all men and all things were to be used to work out the redemption of Ireland, I made up my mind that perhaps even the secession misfortune might be turned to account. Having made a sketch of my conclusions, I determined to put them before Mr. Parnell. I sought and found him in Dr. Kenny's dining with John Redmond,<sup>7</sup> E. Leamy,<sup>8</sup> Val Dillon,<sup>9</sup> Mr. E. D. Gray,

and a few others. The *Freeman's Journal* was Parnell's organ then.<sup>10</sup> When I got an opportunity I told him I wanted to have a talk with him. "Well," he says, "I am going over to Morrison's now, and the doctor and I have arranged to go to Avondale on the night train. Come with me over in the cab and we can talk on the way."



*Morrison's Hotel*

When we got started I said, "I see you have been at Boulogne."<sup>11</sup> "Yes," he says. "I suppose you know," I said, "that O'Brien is deeper and more diplomatic than any of the men who have declared against you." "Oh," he says, "I have O'Brien's measure taken long ago, and I found him what you say." He talked about some of the propositions discussed then, and when we got to Morrison's I said, "I have deliberately kept away from you since you entered on this struggle. I was afraid to encourage you, lest your health would break down,

but I have come now to put my views of the situation before you, and you can make what use you wish of them. The chief points are, you can never expect to overcome the Catholic clergy in a contention like the present, and if I thought you could, I believe I would help them. We will have a clerical party for a good long while now in Irish politics, perhaps always, or until England becomes Catholic. But I think you will be able to found an independent Irish party in alliance with the property classes in Ireland, which will in all likelihood exercise a deeper influence on the people of England and the British Conservative Party than all the representations which can be made regarding the danger of Home Rule." I asked him to give no

opinion on my views, but I told him why I sought the interview, but that I was still afraid that his health would break down. He made no answer to either point then, and we got on to discuss the men and things of the new situation so intently that he seemed to forget all about Avondale, and when the doctor came, dressed in winter travelling costume, he put off the visit altogether, and he said he would pay a visit to Meade,<sup>12</sup> the Lord Mayor, instead. We sat on for a long talk after the doctor left, and, in reviewing the situation, I could not, and I did not, conscientiously spare him in the least. I told him he sinned very deeply from my standpoint, that he disqualified himself from leading a Catholic people, but that he seemed to be determined to suffer, in having his faults flung in his face at every turn of the road, and the mud of the street thrown in his eyes as a punishment, that I hoped he would offer those things as a penance for having transgressed so grievously, and for tempting God so long.<sup>13</sup> “Ah,” he says, “that scandal will be forgotten as time goes by.” When he got up to brush down his hair before proceeding to the Mansion House, he says, “Well, Kettle, this conversation has been of great service to me. I have a lot of poor weak men around me. In fact I have more trouble with them than with the other fellows.”<sup>14</sup> “With the exception,” I said, “of one or two (whom I named) I suppose they are tired of the fight.” “Oh,” says he, “so far as one of those is concerned he is gifted with enough cowardly common sense to ruin any cause. He is the worst of the lot.”<sup>15</sup> Then he let his mind glance over the change, the upheaval would bring on the fortunes of some of the Party, and we indulged in some cynical smiling, I fear, about the dashing of the ambitions and the pretensions of a few.

I attended all his principal meetings, after this, and I laboured to keep the political issue fairly before the people in short speeches and in public letters. At a meeting of the League in Dublin, at which Mr. Parnell, and, I think, the well-known writer Katherine Tynan,<sup>16</sup> and her father were present, I inquired what could any Irishman do but stand where we were standing in this contention. "The poor panic-stricken men who called upon Mr. Parnell to stand by the Irish centre and the Irish flag have



*Katharine Tynan, c. 1880-1887*

fled to the tail of an English party at the call of an Englishman. Do they expect the men and women of Ireland to fly there, too? Now my standpoint is that if it pleased God to take Mr. Parnell to Heaven tomorrow the men and women of Ireland would have to stand where they are standing. Not alone that, but if Ireland had her freedom today, and if all her aspirations were realised, the men and women of Ireland would still have to rally round the Irish centre where we are standing to guard and perpetuate her rights." After the meeting, Mr. Parnell said quietly to me, "Kettle, why don't you speak oftener? You are the only one who treats this controversy on its merits." At some meeting soon after he used the same idea in his sad and memorable words, "If I were dead and gone tomorrow."<sup>17</sup>

At a meeting he attended in Kells, Co. Meath, Parnell told me he was fast asleep sitting on the platform when he was called on to speak. Isaac Butt in one of his last cases was found asleep in court when it came his turn to speak, and poor James Grehan was found asleep in the chair at a meeting, discussing Balfour's Land Bill of 1896,<sup>18</sup>

shortly before his death. Three master minds, each in his own way, faded alike and died in harness.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Parnell was not in Ireland when the Carlow vacancy occurred.<sup>20</sup> I think it was about that time he got married.<sup>21</sup> I was busy with my farming, and just paid a chance visit to the League rooms when Dr. Joe Kenny came in, in a state of distress about the impossibility of finding a candidate. He said that he was afraid there would be no contest. "Oh," I said, "that is out of the question. Parnell might give up the fight, but we could not without dishonour. The seat will have to be fought." "Well," he says, "will you fight it?" "Well," I said, "if no one else can be found, I will, on certain conditions." "What are the conditions?" he says. "That it is not to cost me a penny stamp, and that I am to be free to go or stay from Parliament as I wish. I can take a man's part and pay a man's share, but I have such large responsibilities that I cannot honestly spend money on an election of any sort." "Well," he says, "I agree to the terms. Will you come to Carlow in the morning?" We went to Carlow and found as staunch a body of men as Ireland could produce. It would be invidious to name names, but they were all up to the highest possible standard at the start and at the finish.<sup>22</sup> Poor Parnell's sudden death<sup>23</sup> left me legally liable for a large sum of expenses, but John Redmond and the faithful few redeemed Dr. Kenny's promise, and this was facilitated by the leading Carlow men drawing their pens across most of the accounts. Thus ended my connection with Parnell's last battle.

An incident occurred during this contest that shows Mr. Parnell's views of religion, morality, and the Catholic clergy. A Protestant clergyman, a Rev. McCree, called at Parnell's hotel and asked for an interview. Mr. McCree laid siege to Parnell and pressed him to retire from the contest. Mr. Parnell said, "Mr. McCree, I must deny your right to interfere in this matter at all. When I was at college I had opportunities of seeing men of your Church and of your cloth, preparing for their profession, and I must say they were no better than they should be, morally or otherwise. But it is altogether different with the Catholic clergy. A Catholic clergyman has to undergo a

most severe and searching course of discipline. He has to take a vow of celibacy, and deny himself gratifications that are freely indulged in by Protestant clergymen. I do not blame the Catholic clergy for the part they are taking in this disagreeable dispute, but I altogether deny your right to interfere. Good day, Mr. McCree.”

He rebuked me at this election for some remarks I made about some of the bishops who seemed to be lowering the tone of the controversy, and he always seemed particularly pleased if any clergyman referred to him in fair language.<sup>24</sup>

I lunched with Mr. Parnell at Morrison’s the day of the Cabinteely meeting, and amongst many things he said, “How is it, Kettle, that you have always been fighting in the minority, and when the tide turns you drop out?” “Well,” I said, “you know I have no taste for public work, but when I believe that certain things should be done for the benefit of the cause I try and get others to do them. I seem to have no personal ambition.” “How much better would it have been,” he said, “had we taken your advice in ’81. It would have been all over and won long ago.”<sup>25</sup> “Not much use in looking back,” I said, “unless to gather wisdom. I suppose if the land question had been settled then you would have most of the property people in your movement before this, but you must only try and get them now.” “Kettle, you men are terribly handicapped in this conflict by my misfortune, but I suppose I must only try and atone for it some way.” “Well,” I said, “so far as the fight is concerned it must and will go on so long as these seceders from the flag persist in their cowardly policy of hanging on to the tail of an English party. Those men must either come back to the flag, or bring Home Rule to Ireland, before the strong men of the country will tolerate them.”<sup>26</sup>

## Notes

1. Kingsbridge Station is the original name of Heuston Station, one of

Dublin's largest railway stations.

2. This was 11 December 1890. Cork (like Dublin) remained loyal to Parnell and welcomed him with great enthusiasm. However, Bew notes how at this time Parnell was beginning to show signs of stress with an increasingly dishevelled and frail appearance (Bew 2011, 174).
3. See Chapter 4 for Kettle's recounting of the 1880 election.
4. This was the first by-election after the split and initially it was expected that Parnell's candidate would win the election. Kilkenny North was considered representative and was described by Healy, who was the bane of the Parnellites, as one of the most difficult Irish constituencies for the anti-Parnellites. Davitt was also a formidable opponent in Kilkenny North and he succeeded in rallying the miners of Castlecomer against Parnell. It was a brutal and at times violent campaign. Parnell was hit with a bag of lime in Castlecomer, some of which got into his eyes, causing extreme discomfort. The result of the election on 22 December was a catastrophe for Parnell with his candidate being defeated, 2,527 to 1,326. Healy declared: 'There we have beaten him, and will hunt him wherever he shows his head.' Parnell retained strong support in the towns and among the voteless poor and Fenians, but the priests and many of the smaller and middling farmers were against him (Callanan 1992, 83; DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Charles Stewart'; Bew 2011, 175).
5. Kettle's political prospectus encouraged the establishment of a new 'centre' party independent of extreme Catholic and Protestant interests (DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Andrew Joseph').
6. See Chapter 12 for more on this. Even if the party could get a good majority of the Liberal government on its side, there was still the difficulty of carrying measures through the House of Lords.
7. John Redmond (1856-1918) was a nationalist politician, barrister, and MP. As a Parnellite MP from 1881 to 1891 he was recognised as a skilful orator and had raised large sums of money for the party during fundraising trips to Australia, New Zealand, and America. He supported the Plan of Campaign led by John Dillon and William O'Brien and had spent some weeks in jail in 1888 after being accused of using intimidating language. Although not part of Parnell's inner circle, he was prominent among the second rank of Home Rule MPs. He became a leading figure among the minority who remained loyal to Parnell after the split in 1890-91 and after Parnell's death he was elected as leader of the minority faction. He is best known as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1900 until his death in 1918. He was also the leader of the paramilitary organisation the Irish National Volunteers (DIB 2009, 'Redmond, John Edward').
8. Edmund Leamy (1848-1904) was an Irish journalist, barrister, author, and nationalist politician. A leading supporter of Parnell, he held a number of different Irish seats in Parliament from 1880 until his death. Parnell made him the editor of the *United Ireland* newspaper in 1891. He was also a talented folklorist and poet (Wikipedia 2022, 'Edmund Leamy').



9. This is Valentine Blake Dillon (1847-1904).
10. Six months after the marriage of Parnell and Katharine O'Shea, the Catholic *Freeman's Journal* abandoned Parnell. From the start of the Parnell split the newspaper had favoured Parnell. However, once the anti-Parnellites launched their own daily newspaper, the *National Press*, in March 1891, the *Freeman's Journal* began to lose circulation and revenue and the owners of the newspaper decided to abandon Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Edmund William Dwyer').
11. Boulogne, France, had been the location of an attempt at a negotiated settlement. On 30 December Parnell met William O'Brien, who was joined by John Dillon in mid-January. The Liberal leadership had provided some assurances on Home Rule, but Parnell refused to resign the leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party. He knew that such a withdrawal would not be temporary, and so the negotiations foundered (DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Charles Stewart').
12. Joseph Meade (1839-1900) was elected Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1891. He was also the wealthy head of a large building firm and owned many Dublin properties, including a large number of tenement buildings. He was a strong nationalist who contributed financially to the Home Rule Party and after the Parnellite split he remained fiercely loyal to Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Meade, Joseph Michael').
13. Bew notes how this final phase of Parnell's career was to be the most bitter struggle of his life with intense and frequent verbal cruelty and physical violence on both sides (Bew 2011, 177).
14. Following the split, Parnell gained the support of men who had been formally opposed to him. Many of the Fenians, such as John O'Leary, James Stephens, and John Devoy, who had begrudged the importance given to the Land War and the rise of the Irish Parliamentary Party, now declared their support for Parnell (Comerford 1996b, 79; Callanan 1991, 159).
15. Kettle and Parnell seem to be referring to James Joseph O'Kelly (1845-1916), an Irish nationalist journalist, politician, and MP he describes as having 'cowardly common sense' in Chapter 8.
16. Katharine Tynan (1859-1931) was a novelist, poet, and journalist who was also an ardent nationalist and Parnellite. Her father, Andrew Cullen Tynan (1829-1905), was a prosperous farmer and cattle trader who was elected to Dublin Corporation as a Parnellite in 1891. He was a major influence in her life and as a young woman she spent much of her time with him attending plays and political meetings, while she also worked briefly for the Ladies' Land League. She became a successful poet and was a well-known figure among Dublin's literati (DIB 2009, 'Hickson (née Tynan), Katharine').
17. This declaration was made by Parnell at a speech in Listowel on 13 September: '[I]f I were dead and gone tomorrow, the men who are fighting against English influence in Irish public life would fight on still. They would still be independent nationalists' (quoted in Callanan 1992, 252).
18. Gerald William Balfour (1853-1945), Chief Secretary for Ireland from

1895 to 1900. He was the brother of the previous Chief Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, who held office from 1887 to 1891 (DIB 2009, 'Balfour, Gerald William').

19. This expression draws a comparison between a person at work and a horse in harness drawing a plough or cart. It means to die while still actively working or still of the age or physical condition to do so.
20. The County Carlow by-election was held on 7 July 1891 as a result of the death of the sitting member James Patrick Mahon. Following the first defeat in Kilkenny North, Parnell had also lost the by-election of Sligo North in early April 1891. A third loss in Carlow, which was one of the strongest Parnellite seats, would represent a crushing blow to Parnell's supporters.
21. On 25 June 1891, two days before his 45th birthday, Parnell had married Katharine O'Shea at a registry office in Steyning, near Brighton. In Ireland, this was viewed as an aggravation of his moral offence.
22. Despite Kettle's pessimistic recollections, it appears the Parnellites expected to win the Carlow by-election, with Bagenalstown being considered a Parnellite stronghold. Much was made by the anti-Parnellites of Kettle's name during the campaign. He was described as 'a utensil' for Parnell and meetings in the county were disrupted by the din of tin kettles being bashed in an attempt to drown out the speeches of the Parnellites. However, despite their hopes, the Parnellites were soundly beaten. The anti-Parnellite candidate John Hammond received 3,747 votes and Kettle just 1,532. The margin was, as the *Freemans's Journal* described it, 'far and away larger than anyone could have anticipated' (Callanan 1992, 139-60; DIB 2009, 'Kettle, Andrew Joseph').
23. Parnell died just three months later, on 6 October 1891.
24. The leaders of the Church initially said nothing during the election campaign. However, the Parnellites suffered a major setback in Carlow when all the archbishops and bishops (except Bishop of Limerick Edward Thomas O'Dwyer) issued a letter stating that Parnell had 'utterly disqualified himself to be the political leader' of the Irish people and calling on them to reject him. Despite this disapproval, Kettle was able to demonstrate Parnell's admiration of the Catholic clergy. Indeed, Parnell was good friends with many Catholic churchmen. Even at the most intense time of the split and the ensuing criticism from the Church, Parnell continued to treat the Catholic clergy respectfully (Travers 2013, 66).
25. This is in reference to the rent strike contemplated by the Land League, and pushed for by Kettle, after coercion was introduced in 1881 (see Chapter 6). Kettle strongly believed that more cohesive and prompt action at that time could have forced the hand of the British government to settle the Irish land question comprehensively.
26. According to Comerford, Parnell's 'appeal to the country was nothing if not sophisticated' and his supporters saw themselves 'as upholders of an ideal and defiers of self-serving politicians and oppressing churchmen' (Comerford 1996b, 79).

# Chapter 15: Parnell's Death and the Fate of the Seceders

*Parnell's Death – The Fate of the Seceders – At the English Liberal Tail – Gladstone and Morley – Davitt's Magistrates – The English Tory Tail – In 1899 Redmondism, Healyism, and Davittism Were All Bankrupt – Coalescence*

There was naturally a very great outburst of feeling when Mr. Parnell died so awfully sudden at Brighton,<sup>1</sup> saying in his last message, "Give my love to my colleagues and to the Irish people."<sup>2</sup> Everyone was for a time paralysed with regret, remorse, or shame. I know that his bitterest opponents, if they could, would have shut out the remembrance of their wild rush of inhuman unwisdom at almost any sacrifice. His friends well-nigh lost their reason when they realised that he was gone, and they subsequently acted, in the hounding down of his leading opponents, very much in the same way as those opponents had acted in hounding down Parnell.<sup>3</sup> A terribly troubled time those men must have had for years afterwards. Everything seemed to go wrong with them, and failure and dissension seemed to dog their footsteps, at home and abroad, at every turn. The clergy of course were all right, they had the moral question to stand on, but the politicians got little consolation from their policy until, after many years wandering in the English desert, they were forced to return to the flag from which they fled, in order to get the better of Parnell.<sup>4</sup> They were, of course, all that weary time, very busy doing nothing or doing mischief. The masculine men of the Irish race gen-

erally refused to desert the flag or to leave the Irish centre on any British pretences, and although by the influence of the clergy, the Irish Parliamentary Party were reduced to a small number, yet they wore down the majority rule men by the pure logic of right and consistency. Every parish and every constituency in Ireland had its outstanding section of strong men, although they were not numerous enough to return members to Parliament, yet they were able to assert their principles and preserve their independence.<sup>5</sup>

When the seceders recovered somewhat after the shock of Parnell's death, their first move was to adopt Mr. Healy's sweeping-brush policy at the general election of 1892.<sup>6</sup> They, of course, with the aid of the clergy, carried the Liberal Alliance ticket triumphantly in many constituencies, but their policy of combat against Ireland only exasperated the people. They got their Liberal Party to power in such a position that the hero of the Westminster Hotel and the Leinster Hall, Mr. McCarthy, said they had them in the hollow of their hands.<sup>7</sup> Yet, after holding them there for three years, the Liberals slipped through their fingers and, while passing some useful things for England, they never put a line or letter on the Statute Book for Ireland.<sup>8</sup>

Only the subject was so serious it was almost farcical to follow the fate of the independent seceders who resented the great Parnell's "dictatorship," as they called his policy. When they fled to the tail of the Liberal Party, they had to remain there in England, and when they crossed to Ireland they found themselves perforce in the arms of the clergy, whether they liked it or not. It was intensely amusing to anyone in the know, to see Tim Healy of the "Idiotic circular from Rome," on his knees at the Cardinal's palace.<sup>9</sup> Mr. O'Brien had to kowtow to Monsignor McGrudden. Mr. Dillon never liked clerical dictation, yet had to swallow it with the best grace he could. But he did not suffer so much from the Parnellites, as it was thought he did not sin so deeply, but he got a meritorious share of leading and driving from his Christian friend, Mr. Healy. Parnell's dictatorship was a very mild form compared to Mr. Healy's. Mr. Davitt, the secular

educationist, was attracted into the fold with Dr. Nulty,<sup>10</sup> where we must admit, he got a loving squeeze. He was bankrupt in Meath, and badly beaten in Waterford, as many of the Parnellites held him to be largely responsible for the split. They exultingly cried out that it served him right.<sup>11</sup>



*John Morley, Chief Secretary for Ireland, by Harry Furniss, 1880s-1890s*

When the Liberals came to power in 1892, they had no choice but to draft a Home Rule Bill, which they did, and as it was certain never to reach the Statute Book, they got it through the House of Commons. This was, I suppose, mostly Gladstone's work. John Morley was sent to Ireland as Chief Secretary,<sup>12</sup> and I must admit that he proved himself to be one of the most dangerous Englishmen who ever came over.<sup>13</sup> He told the seceders and, I suppose, he told the clergy, that there never would be any more need for agitation in Ireland, that everyone with a grievance had only to report it, and he would at once embody it in a bill and get his government to deal with this. This was the

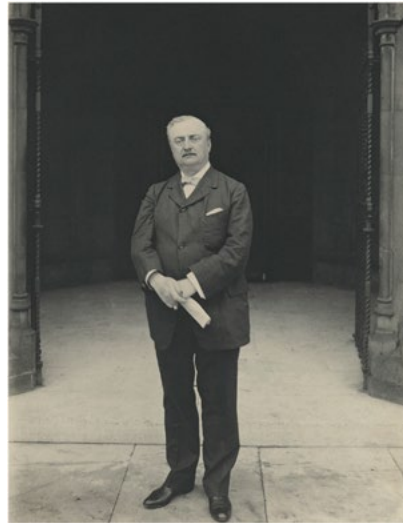
spirit in which he dealt with the Irish land question. After his land inquiry he put a Land Bill on the stocks and every morning, while he had it there, he asked the seceders were they sure that he had everything and everyone included in its benefits. It was, of course, a rent-fixing bill, not a purchase proposal. But Mr. Morley dealt, very plausibly, only with embryo legislation and with things he knew right well he could not do. But he never attempted to do what he could do - viz., improve the administration of English Rule in Ireland. He did not attempt to liberate the political prisoners,<sup>14</sup> or to recommend the repeal of coercion. However, if he did not improve

the tenor of the laws, he did something to extend the law givers. In the flourish of trumpets at the Tory defeat, and the return of the English Home Rule party to power, there was jubilation amongst the seceders, and, as usual, Mr. Davitt rushed to define, in his own infallible way, what should be done by the Irish people. There was of course, no need to wait until the Home Rule Bill would be passed – that might be taken for granted – a very usual proceeding with Irish politicians. No time should be lost in changing the misrule of centuries, and Mr. Davitt recommended Mr. Morley to make a beginning, by putting Irishmen to swear allegiance to the Queen, by way of good faith to Her Gracious Majesty, and by putting them on the bench as magistrates, to give some information to the old landlord fellows how they ought to dispense the law.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Morley was quite agreeable, and he at once asked for lists of suitable men in every locality, whom he would at once take from the head of the people, where they often were, and might again be, a bother to the government, and swear them in and place them at the tail of the gentry, where they would soon become harmless respectables. Mr. Morley even carried this policy a step further by appointing some of the more prominent graziers at the head of the magistrates of the counties. Mr. Morley did even more than that – he laid siege to the Parnellite members, and asked them as a favour to get some of their friends smuggled on the bench, and by chance I fortunately blocked that section of the work and saved the reputation of some good fellows. But I failed to keep the Parnellites off the Privy Council. By an error of judgment, or a confusion of principle, Mr. Harrington advised Lord Mayor Meade, an able businessman and a good Parnellite, to take Morley's bait and accept a seat in Dublin Castle,<sup>16</sup> and this was a source of annoyance to the Parnellite Council and to Mr. Meade as long as he lived. The moderating or abandonment of the agrarian agitation, the temptation held out to the local leaders to become J.P.'s,<sup>17</sup> and the official consent by the seceders to the reduction of the Parliamentary representation from 103 to 80 members,<sup>18</sup> are the only works I can remember to put to the credit of the men who refused to take Parnell's advice in 1890.

This was the only fruit of the nine years they were compelled to wander in the desert of the English Liberal Alliance, which proved to be a veritable Sahara for Ireland. As a matter of course they said and proposed many things, and did so eloquently and ably, like getting together what was called the Irish Race Convention<sup>19</sup> and other make-believe fruitless efforts to prove that Parnell was wrong and that they were right all the time. But it was no use. The world got tired listening even to their eloquence, and they were forced to come back to the flag of Irish Independence. The poor, weak men that Parnell had round him struggled bravely on for some years after the split, and they were ably assisted by the men of Dublin City and County who attended all the meetings of the National League at its centre. Men like myself, who felt there was no great necessity for pronounced agitation so long as Parnell was guarding the Irish watch tower, now emerged from seclusion to the disgust and astonishment of the seceders, particularly Mr. Healy. They called us very bad names, so bad in fact that we had to strike back and pour some red hot shot into their ranks, occasionally. While the Liberals were in power there was little difficulty in keeping the Parnell flag flying at the mast, but when the Tories came to office in 1895, there came a change. Mr. Balfour proposed to kill Home Rule with kindness,<sup>20</sup> and Mr. Redmond and some of his party agreed to sit at a round table conference with some government men to devise the best means of doing what Mr. Redmond very fairly said was impossible. While saying this he evidently thought that his Party might make kudos or capital out of a Tory Alliance, as his opponents the anti-Parnellites were trying to do out of the unlucky Liberal Alliance. There was considerable dissent amongst the Parnellites as to the wisdom of this move and this soon after led to a kind of disintegration in the Party.<sup>21</sup> When the Tory Land Bill of 1896<sup>22</sup> appeared, the County Dublin farmers called a conference in the Rotunda to consider its improvement. To this conference all the members of Parliament were invited, but no one paid any attention to our invitation except Messrs. Harrington and Clancy. It turned out, in the discussion of the amendments proposed, that those gentlemen attended

only to tell the farmers that they knew nothing about land politics, and that the members of Parliament would adopt their own views on the subject, and not the views of the meeting. The farmers would have publicly called for Mr. Clancy's resignation but for my intervention. Some time after this, a meeting was called in the National Club<sup>23</sup> to raise the usual funds for Mr. Clancy. At that meeting, I told Mr. Harrington that the County Dublin men were done subscribing for such service as Mr. Clancy's. Mr. Harrington then announced that if they were to be thrown over by their own men, they had better make up with the Dillonites. I said it might not matter very much what he did. From what Mr. Davitt writes on this epoch, Mr. Harrington commenced to make overtures to the Antis from this period.<sup>24</sup> But he did not induce Mr. Redmond to follow his lead. It just occurs to me that in this connection I had the pleasure of dubbing Mr. Redmond leader of the Parnellite Party, to the disgust of some of the nine.

After the Land Bill of 1896 passed, Mr. Redmond publicly and privately announced that the land question was settled, and that it was worse than nonsense to try to renew a land agitation. The farmers who were feeling the pinch of the times knew better, and a kind of apathy sprung up amongst the rank and file about the soundness of Redmond's leadership, and his connection with, or sanction of, the Round Table Conference<sup>25</sup> Government



*John Redmond, 1905*

connection. About this time, too, he and Mr. Harrington differed so much that he called a meeting in the Mansion House to throw over Mr. Harrington and his League for the good of the cause. I took no



part and [had] little interest in this move, but I was present at the meeting, and when it was proposed to put me on the new council or board, I drew a pen across my name, saying in the hearing of Lord Mayor Meade that I would never again act with a Dublin Castle Councillor. Things amongst the Redmondites went from bad to worse, but still I always found Mr. J. E. Redmond honest, consistent, and gentlemanly. When I urged him to keep on [putting] independent pressure on both English parties no matter what they conceded, short of the right kind of Home Rule, he at once admitted that he did not feel strong enough to adopt that line, that it would take a man like Parnell to carry out such a policy, that he could only lead on his own lines and that if that did not do, he was prepared to step down and out.<sup>26</sup> He always so compelled my respect that I could never fairly criticise his policy in public. When I refused to join his new organisation I had no party, as the County Dublin people got mixed up over the Local Government elections. I interested myself in getting the Dublin Councils properly officered by the best men who were farmers, but some of the labourers took part with the publicans and graziers and between liquor, lies, and ignorance, they gave us a hot time of it. But I struck back with very good results.<sup>27</sup> The labourers ran amok with their new freedom and knocked effective agitation on the head, as A. J. Balfour predicted they would, until they found the level of men and things a bit. So the Parnellites were at loggerheads with Mr. Redmond in one League and with Mr. Harrington in another. Mr. Redmond had been trying to make capital out of the Tory legislation for Ireland since 1896, but now Mr. Balfour<sup>28</sup> had got to the end of his list, and Mr. Redmond had nothing to promise anyone, for the first time since the split. I met him about this time and he said he was prepared to admit that his Round Table policy was a failure, and that he was prepared to take any sensible advice.

Bad as the Parnellites were, the Antis or Dillonites were much worse. The differences in their camp were bitter and disgraceful. Healy struck out against O'Brienism and Dillonism in a terrible

fashion. When I saw O'Brien and Healy trying to shout each other down at the Louth election I got a notion of how much they differed. Then the vim with which Father James Clancy spoke at Healy's expulsion from the Party was also a revelation.<sup>29</sup> In 1899 Irish politics were in a strange, helpless condition. Redmondism, Dillonism, and Healyism were practically bankrupt, without policy, programme, or money. So the leaders named, aided by Mr. Davitt and William O'Brien, did the only thing that could possibly save them from extinction – they united under Parnell's lieutenant J. E. Redmond.<sup>30</sup>

## Notes

1. Parnell had spoken at a meeting in County Galway on 27 September 1891, and then, after spending some days in Dr. Kenny's house in Dublin, he sailed for England, arriving home to Katharine in Brighton on 1 October. He was by this time clearly unwell, and he died shortly before midnight on 6 October (Bew 2011, 187).
2. These purported last words appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* on 9 October 1891, a few days after Parnell's death. However, Katherine's first-hand account of his death give his last words as 'Kiss me, sweet wife, and I will try to sleep a little' (Lyons 1960, 306-7).
3. Although many initially believed that the death of Parnell would lead to a reconciliation within the Irish Parliamentary Party, this did not happen. The day before he was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery on 11 October, *United Ireland* printed that not only had Parnell been 'sacrificed by Irishmen on the altar of English liberalism' but that he had also been 'murdered [...] as certainly as if the gang of conspirators had surrounded him and hacked him to pieces' (Lyons 1996a, 82).
4. In the period from Parnell's death until the end of the century, the relationships between Irish MPs was characterised by bitterness and strife. The most damaging aspect of this situation was not between the Parnellites and the anti-Parnellites, but the in-fighting between the two sides within the group of anti-Parnellite MPs, namely, those loyal to John Dillon or to Tim Healy. A settlement in 1900 finally merged the various factions under a new united Irish Parliamentary Party.
5. Following the divorce scandal in 1890 both the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) and the Irish National League (INL) had split, with those in the League who opposed Parnell breaking away to form the anti-Parnellite Irish National Federation (INF) under John Dillon. The minority

pro-Parnellite INL remained under the leadership of John Redmond and although it operated on the fringes of Irish political life, the INF survived within the House of Commons. Despite the split, the combined factions still retained the nationalist pro-Home Rule vote with the strength of the anti-Parnellites at nine seats in the 1892 election, which increased to eleven after the general election of 1895 (Lyons 1996a, 82).

6. The previous failure of negotiations with Parnell before his death, and the incarceration at that time of Dillon and O'Brien, had the political consequence of strengthening Healy's dominance within the opposition to Parnell and intensified the rift between Healy and Dillon/O'Brien. Healy was returned for Louth North at the general election of July 1892, whereupon he immediately fell out with the new Chief Secretary, John Morley. He demanded the use of executive action to remove unionist resident magistrates and did not fully engage with Morley on the provisions of the Second Home Rule Bill (DIB 2009, 'Healy, Timothy Michael'; DIB 2009, 'Dillon, John').
7. After the party split, McCarthy led the majority (the anti-Parnellites) and under his chairmanship the party won 72 seats in the 1892 general election. In 1892 and 1893 McCarthy was pivotal in the negotiations over the second attempt to pass Home Rule legislation and he retained the role of chairman until his resignation in 1896 (DIB 2009, 'McCarthy, Justin').
8. Following the 1892 general election Gladstone and the Liberals were again in government, with the Home Rulers holding the balance of power. Gladstone brought in his Second Home Rule Bill in 1893 and although passed by the House of Commons, it was rejected by the House of Lords.
9. Healy had previously made this comment in reference to a propaganda circular from the Pope, but the involvement of the clergy was to play a key part in the direction of the anti-Parnellites.
10. Thomas Nulty (1818-98) was a Catholic bishop of Meath and an agrarian reformer. He was active in both local and national politics and was the first bishop to support Parnell during his election in Meath in 1875, while also being the only Catholic bishop to give his approval to the No Rent Manifesto. Nulty lost some of his popularity after the split when he strongly supported the anti-Parnellites and used intimidation tactics to effect voting in the 1892 election (DIB 2009, 'Nulty, Thomas').
11. Michael Davitt had narrowly lost a bitter Waterford City by-election against John Redmond in December of 1891 and then in July 1892 was unseated after winning the Meath North election after costly court proceedings found clerical interference by Bishop Nulty (DIB 2009, 'Davitt, Michael').
12. Signalling his new policy for Ireland, Gladstone had appointed Morley as Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1886 and he acted as an intermediary between Parnell and Gladstone. He lost his office six months later after the defeat of the Liberal government, but he continued to support Home Rule and stated that the Liberal Party should fight to win justice

- for Ireland 'at whatever cost to ourselves' (DIB 2009, 'Morley, John').
13. This was Morley's second appointment as Chief Secretary for Ireland, from 1892 to 1895. He remained dedicated to securing Home Rule for Ireland although this saw him become increasingly isolated within the Liberal Party. He used his term as Chief Secretary to appoint more officeholders at Dublin Castle with liberal and nationalist backgrounds or sympathies. He worked on the Second Home Rule Bill of 1893, which although passing in the House of Commons was subsequently rejected by the Lords (DIB 2009, 'Morley, John').
  14. In July 1894 John Clancy had requested Dublin corporation to present a petition for the release of IRB prisoners to Chief Secretary Morley, but he refused to receive it and, consequently, was denounced by many nationalists (DIB 2009, 'Clancy, John').
  15. This period saw the beginning of the 'greening' of Dublin Castle. Whereas in 1892 only three department heads in the Irish bureaucratic elite were Catholics, by 1922 the fifty or so department headships were divided equally among Catholics and Protestants, with similar changes happening in the judiciary, civil service, and magistracy. While there was a nationalist taboo against accepting these kinds of government appointments, this trend ended the Protestant monopoly of the executive and judicial functions at Dublin Castle (McBride 1991).
  16. Dublin Castle is complex of government buildings in central Dublin. Its name comes from the castle that was built on the site by the first English Lord of Ireland in the twelfth century. It was the seat of English, then British, government administration in Ireland from then until 1922.
  17. Justices of the peace.
  18. In the 1892 election, the 103 Irish seats had been distributed as Parnellites 9, anti-Parnellites 71, unionists 23.
  19. The Irish Race Conventions were a series of conventions organised by Irish nationalists. They had previously been held in Chicago (1881) and Philadelphia (1883) but in 1896 a convention, with the support of the clergy and Pope Leo XIII, was held in Dublin with the purpose of trying to reunite the Redmond and Dillon factions of the divided Irish Parliamentary Party (Wikipedia 2022, 'Irish Race Conventions').
  20. After he took up office in July 1895, Balfour announced in a speech that the government 'should be glad enough, no doubt, to kill home rule with kindness if we could, but whatever may be the result of our efforts, our intention is to do our utmost to promote the interests of the material prosperity of Ireland' (*Times*, 17 October 1895, quoted in DIB 2009, 'Balfour, Gerald William'). His clumsy remark was used by nationalists as proof of Tory duplicity. In general, he was much liked in Dublin Castle and respected for his hard work and the many measures he introduced.
  21. After the 1895 general election the Conservative and Liberal Unionist coalition had returned to power and remained there until 1905. Instead of Home Rule, and with a unionist majority in the Commons, Balfour's

'constructive unionism' approach attempted to enact many reforms introduced by the divided Irish members. However, the reduction in agrarian agitation, the bitter divide between the nationalists, and the receding prospect of Home Rule had led to an apathy among the members of the public towards politics as well as a reduction in financial assistance from supporters in the United States.

22. In 1896 Gerald William Balfour introduced a new land bill that simplified and widened the purchase provisions of the 1891 act. It advanced £36 million for purchase at lower interest rates and with longer repayment periods and also increased legal protections for tenants. These provisions were much criticised by Irish landlords and severely attacked in the Commons, but the bill was passed in August 1896 (DIB 2009, 'Balfour, Gerald William').
23. The National Club, located at 11 Rutland Square (now Parnell Square), was founded in June 1887 as a non-sectarian political debating and social club. It was staunchly supportive of Charles Stewart Parnell and the Dublin Parnell Leadership Committee was based at the club in the 1890s (Parnell Square Cultural Quarter 2016).
24. As time passed after the split, Harrington had begun to detach himself from the official Parnellite group and its leadership under John Redmond, and after 1895 he was the first leading Parnellite to call for the party to reunite. He retained control of the National League organisation and the *United Ireland* newspaper, and he commenced to establish an independent electoral base. At the same time the followers of Redmond set up their own organisation, the Independent Irish League. Harrington grew closer to Dillon and O'Brien by supporting the United Irish League (UIL), which was launched in January 1898 with the motto 'The Land for the People.' Its campaigns for land division were supported by many rural Parnellites in Connacht and helped to push Redmond and the Parnellites closer to a reunion with the anti-Parnellites, which finally took place in 1900 (DIB 2009, 'Harrington, Timothy Charles').
25. The 'Round Table Conference' refers to Redmond's negotiations with the Conservative government during this time.
26. Unlike Parnell, Redmond had remained hostile to the Liberals and cautious of an alignment with British radicals. Redmond believed that since the Liberals would never regain power without Irish support, there was little or no need to reconcile with them, and that since the veto power of the House of Lords over any Home Rule Bill could not be overcome, the Irish Parliamentary Party would have to strike a deal with the Conservatives, who controlled the House of Lords (DIB 2009, 'Redmond, John Edward').
27. Kettle remained intermittently involved in County Dublin politics in the 1890s and into the 1900s.
28. Gerald William Balfour.
29. In November 1895 Healy was expelled from the National Federation and the committee of the anti-Parnellite party.

30. In January 1900 the Home Rule movement was reunited. The move was influenced by public frustration with the constant political wrangling and by widespread hostility in Ireland to the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). Another incentive to end the disputes between the Parnellites and anti-Parnellites was the growth in popularity of William O'Brien's new United Irish League. It was designed to impose unity on the Home Rule movement by establishing a new grassroots organisation around a programme of agrarian agitation, political reform, settlement of the land question, and the pursuit of Home Rule. The divisions among the anti-Parnellites led them to consent to Redmond being the chairman of the reunified party (DIB 2009, 'Redmond, John Edward').

# Chapter 16: United Irish League and Continuing Land Reform

*United Irish League – I Join to Improve the Programme – Shaw Taylor Land Conference of 1902 – O'Brien's Ignorance and Self-Sufficient Blundering Lets Down the Farmers – Wyndham's Land Act of 1903 – Does Not Check Decay – Birrell's 1909 Act*

Personally, I took little interest in the proceedings, but I kept an eye on William O'Brien's movements in Connacht. The flint and steel accidentally came together and the spark was fanned into flame after a lot of labour and money expended by Mr. O'Brien.<sup>1</sup> I had failed to persuade Mr. Redmond that there was still an Irish land question to settle, and as I felt the vital importance of a transfer of the land to the people to reverse the engines of Irish decay, I joined Mr. O'Brien, notwithstanding his failure, as I believed in the past, hoping to help him to effect a proper settlement. I took an honorary position in his new League in order to be near him. I kept on improving the platform of the League at the Annual Conventions in regard to the tenants' improvements and on the claim of the Irish for financial aid to effect a settlement. But I always thought that unlike Parnell, O'Brien never paid sufficient attention to the future, and I never could get him to discuss the practical details of any section of the settlement. He took things for granted and gave himself no time to balance the pros or cons of anything. He had no plan of action when

he went into the 1902 Shaw Taylor Land Conference,<sup>2</sup> and no programme except the platform of the League, but the outcome proves that he made no use at all of that which was the Tenants' Charter. It is questionable if he even alluded to the only brief he held for the tenants. It is clear now that the landlords and their friends had thought the whole subject out, and it is also certain that A. J. Balfour was prepared to finance whatever arrangements would be agreed upon. Mr. O'Brien, it seems consulted neither friends nor farmers until he had committed them to a one-sided transaction which has not stopped the decay of the country.<sup>3</sup> By his ambitious blundering impetuosity he defrauded the farmers and labourers, he debarred the landlords from taking their proper place in the future public life of Ireland, and he misled and defeated a Government that voluntarily conceded more substantial aid and restitution to Ireland than any Government for the past century. This seems a poor recompense for the labour and money Mr. O'Brien has spent in the movement, but from my standpoint I can deliver no other verdict honestly. I purposely mention no other member of the Land Conference, as my experience is that Mr. O'Brien dominates everybody and everything around and beneath him. I never saw him under fire with those on an elevation. The world knows that he is prepared to fight them no matter where they are, but fighting is not everything in statesmanship.<sup>4</sup>

The Birrell Land Act of 1909<sup>5</sup> was not put forward in the interests of the tenants, nor in any Irish interest, but as merely for the relief of the British Treasury.<sup>6</sup> It was accepted by the party leaders as, of course, Redmond did not consider there had been any Irish land question after 1896.

Some useful Irish Acts were passed through Westminster in the years which followed, but nothing of importance in connection with the land.<sup>7</sup> Most of these measures were not on the initiative of the Irish Party. Since Parnell's death, they always seemed to be at the tail of an English party, who promised them some concession if they behaved themselves – "Don't embarrass the Government, or waste



the time of the House, or you will lose your bill.” Morley and Balfour adopted the same adroit procedure, which disfranchised Ireland for years together. There was this radical difference, however: that all Balfour’s bills eventually passed into law but none of Morley’s.



A. J. Kettle, 1908, at age 75

Having reviewed what the Parnellites did and tried to do, and what the anti-Parnellites tried to do and failed to do, I must return to the Boulogne negotiations and my conversation with Mr. Parnell in Morrison’s Hotel.<sup>8</sup> After Mr. Parnell’s tragic death I was sometimes troubled as to the responsibility I may have assumed by putting my views before him on that occasion. He did not break off the negotiations for weeks after – still he may have been somewhat influenced to carry on the conflict to work out my policy.

If I had anything to do with prolonging the contention, or of shortening his life, I humbly pray that Heaven may forgive me. I know my views were honestly tendered in the interest of Ireland, and the political history of the period proves that my forecast was fairly correct.

## Notes

1. William O’Brien had founded the United Irish League (UIL) in 1898. Initially popular in Connaught, it gained momentum and by 1900 had established itself as an elaborate and hierarchical organisation linked to a National Directory with the aim of achieving land reform through

agrarian agitation. O'Brien argued that the parliamentary politicians were out of touch with popular opinion and that the party should be subordinate to the League. The movement was backed by O'Brien's new newspaper, *The Irish People*, which he used to assert that the aim of the League was to serve the needs of the people, not of politicians. The reality, however, was that it did not long remain independent of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which soon came to dominate the councils of the League and its administrative machine (Lyons 1996a, 94).

2. Chief Secretary for Ireland George Wyndham, who was in office from 1900 to 1905, favoured reform over coercion on the land issue. In 1902 he attempted to introduce a land purchase bill which had failed. In September 1902 a letter had been published in the newspapers from a Galway landlord, Captain John Shawe-Taylor, containing an invitation, endorsed by Wyndham, to certain named representatives of the landlords and tenants to meet in conference and attempt to reach a final settlement of the land question. On 20 December 1902 the representatives of the landlords were met by the representatives of the tenants: William O'Brien, John Redmond, Tim Harrington, and T. W. Russell (1841-1920), the key representative of Ulster farmers (Lyons 1996a, 95).
3. After six sittings, the conference published a report in January 1903. It proposed a massive scheme of voluntary land purchase. The report was well received by the public and the Irish Parliamentary Party, which passed a unanimous resolution supporting it. However, some felt that the proposals were too favourable to the landlords. Wyndham followed the conference report with a new land bill in 1903 which proposed that landlords sell entire estates (if three-quarters of the tenants on the estate approved) and included a 12 per cent bonus to incentivise landlords to sell. In the end, the conference and report provided the basis for the most important land reform ever introduced in Ireland: the Land Purchase (Ireland) Act 1903 (O'Brien 1976, 146-47; Lyons 1996a, 95-96).
4. There is little reason to doubt O'Brien's sincerity in his attempts to address the land question, nor in his view of this as the first step in the attainment of Home Rule. However, it transpired that, similar to Kettle, many others did not share O'Brien's outlook. Following the passage of the 1903 Land Purchase (Ireland) Act there was an all-out attack on O'Brien and the terms of the settlement. This was led by Davitt, Dillon, Sexton, and the *Freeman's Journal*. It ensured that John Redmond, who had been one of the principal architects of the act, also fell in line with the critics. There was criticism of the financial clauses around the land purchase mechanism which, in retrospect, were justified when difficulties arose within a few years over the system of buying out the landlords. However, the main criticism was against the excessive benefits that landlords were alleged to be reaping from their sales. This view was exploited to undermine what those like Davitt and Sexton saw as the conciliatory approach used in negotiations with landlords. In addition, it masked a fear that such an approach could also, in reality, be used to 'kill Home Rule with kindness' (O'Brien 1976, 148; Lyons 1996a, 97-98).

5. Augustine Birrell (1850-1933) was Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1907 to 1916 (DIB 2009, 'Birrell, Augustine').
6. From 1907 Birrell was confronted with renewed agrarian agitation because of the slowing pace of land reform arising from a shortage of funds. The complicated Birrell Land Act had to be passed as a matter of urgency in 1909 in an attempt to put right the serious financial grievances around buying out the landlords that had arisen for the government out of the Wyndham Act. Birrell secured cross-party support for the funds and powers of compulsory purchase necessary to accelerate the transfer of land to tenants and reduce agrarian strife. However, it also led to a renewed split among the constitutional nationalists (Lyons 1996b, 125).
7. Birrell was supportive towards nationalist Ireland, his ultimate objective being Home Rule. During his time as Chief Secretary he had a total of 56 pieces of largely beneficial legislation enacted, including acts for the establishment of the National University of Ireland and Queen's University Belfast.
8. See Chapter 14. During the Boulogne negotiations of early 1891, Kettle had confronted Parnell and encouraged him to establish a new party: 'I think you will be able to found an independent Irish party in alliance with the property classes in Ireland, which will in all likelihood exercise a deeper influence on the people of England and the British Conservative Party than all the representations which can be made regarding the danger of Home Rule.'

# Appendix: Irish Land War Legislation [1958]

LAURENCE J. KETTLE

The present generation of Irishmen has little, if any, knowledge of the revolutionary changes which took place on the land in Ireland during the nineteenth century. As this was a most important and vital period in Irish history, a brief view of the events and of the land legislation of that era will form an appropriate Appendix to the Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle.

## INVASIONS AND PLANTATIONS

When Henry II, in the guise of a religious crusader, invaded Ireland with his Anglo-Norman barons they substituted, so far as they were able, their own feudal system of land tenure for the old Irish Brehon system. The old system did not altogether disappear until the reign of James I. In the sixteenth century Catholic Queen Mary started the "Plantation" policy of confiscating Irish land, and substituting Englishmen for the original inhabitants. She "planted" Leix and Offaly and they were renamed "King's" and "Queen's" Counties. Elizabeth followed, and confiscated Desmond Munster. In 1608 James I confiscated two-thirds of Ulster and brought over English and Scottish people to replace the original owners. Later on Cromwell confiscated 11,000,000 acres from Irish and Anglo-Irish estates, and planted on them his troopers and others to whom he owed money.

The Northern plantation was the most thorough and lasting. Elsewhere the "planters" became absorbed in the original population but in the North the newcomers retained their own characteristics as farmers, craftsmen and industrialists. The imported Scots were

mostly Presbyterians, and they thus created a religious as well as an economic problem. Most of these Northern planters were thrifty, hard-working people who improved farming methods, started industries, and built houses, mills and chapels. They established the “Ulster Custom” of land tenure, and generally formed a way of working of their own.

The result of the various confiscations and plantations was that the planters became the “landlords” of later times, and the original owners became the tenants or labourers, or were pushed west to form the “Congested Districts.” The planters filled a double role, being from a political viewpoint England’s “garrison,” and from the economic point of view the owners of the land of Ireland.

#### IRISH LAND “SYSTEM”

The Land system which in 1800 had evolved from the confiscations, “plantations” and Penal Laws was not properly a system of land tenure, but rather a system of legalised robbery and oppression, which stands self-condemned under any code, Christian or barbarian. It is interesting to read the comments on this Land System of a few contemporary, well-known, and impartial people, nearly all of them being Englishmen.

JOHN STUART MILL, the famous economist, who knew Irish conditions and who took a friendly interest in the country, writing before the Famine, says: “A situation more devoid of motives to labour or self-command imagination itself cannot conceive. The inducements of free human being are taken away, and those of a slave are not substituted.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT, (in his Diary, Nov. 20th, 1825) says of the Irish tenants: “Their poverty is not exaggerated – it is on the extreme verge of human misery. Their cottages would scarce serve as pigsties –even in Scotland.”

ARTHUR YOUNG (*Tour in Ireland*) says: “The landlord of an Irish estate tenanted by Roman Catholics is a despot who yields obedience to no law but that of his will.”

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Prime Minister of Great Britain) says: “I do not think the records of any country, civilised or barbarous, presented such scenes of horror.”

JONATHAN SWIFT says: “The rise of our rents is squeezed out of the very blood and vitals and clothes and dwellings of the tenants who live worse than English beggars.”

W. E. GLADSTONE (Prime Minister of Great Britain) stated in 1881, when landlords were evicting tenants by the hundred, that every eviction amounted to a sentence of death.

A. J. BALFOUR (Prime Minister of Great Britain) stated in the House of Commons: “I can imagine no fault attaching to any land system which does not attach to the Irish system.”

The Penal Laws forbade Catholics to buy land. They were allowed to lease land for a period up to 30 years, at a rent not less than two-thirds of the value of the produce. This particular disability continued until 1782. There were few lease-holders, and the vast bulk of the farmers were yearly tenants on oral agreements, terminable at six months' notice. As the rents were subject to yearly revision, and as the tenants' improvements automatically became the property of the landlord, there was no inducement to the tenant to improve his holding.

## ENGLISH SUPPRESSION OF IRISH INDUSTRIES

The rents were invariably much too high. The main cause of this was the competition between the farmers for land. Agriculture was then the only way of making a living. There were no industries to balance out the country's economy, because England had suppressed

any industries which were likely to compete with her own. Consequently it was a matter of life or death to get some land, however dear. There were cases in which the rent offered exceeded the entire value of the year's produce. The landlords knew how easy it was to get new tenants, and they exploited the position to the full.

## IRISH AND ENGLISH LANDLORDS

The Irish landlord did not himself spend a shilling on improving his estate. All the draining, manuring, building, fencing, and making access roads, was done by the tenants, and this automatically became the property of the landlord, and became a reason for raising the rent. On their English estates the landlords did most of the improving, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was estimated that the English landlords had spent £700,000,000 on improving the farmers' holdings on their estates.

From a national economic viewpoint it would be difficult to imagine a worse system than that which prevailed in Ireland, and from the personal point of view it would be difficult to devise a more inequitable arrangement. When the landlord had raised the rent to such a pitch that the tenant could not pay it the farmer could be evicted, without compensation for any improvements he might have effected. The only tenants who had any protection against this robbery were those who were working under the "Ulster Custom," or some variation of it.

### "THE ULSTER CUSTOM"

This "Custom," although it was usual in the North, prevailed to a very limited extent in the rest of the country.

The "Ulster Custom" included the following "Rights" of landlord and tenant:

1. The right of the yearly tenant to continue undisturbed so long as he paid the agreed rent and behaved properly otherwise.
2. The right of the yearly tenant to sell his interest if he did not wish to stay on, or if he could not pay the rent.
3. The right of the yearly tenant to assign his interest, subject to the landlord's approval.
4. The right of the tenant to hold at a "fair rent," and the right of the landlord to get a "fair rent"

The "fair rent" was fixed on the basis of a revaluation by a competent and accepted valuer who valued the land only, and did not include the buildings, nor the improvements made by the tenant.

It is evident that under this system of land tenure there would be inducements to the tenant to improve his holdings, and it was understandable that the farming in the North was in general better than in the rest of the country, although the original soil was poorer. There was no basis in law for the "Ulster Custom," but both the landlord and the tenant found it was in their interest to maintain it.

#### EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY USE OF LAND IN IRELAND

During the greater part of the eighteenth-century tillage in Ireland had declined and no inducement was given to the small farmer to rent land. The landlords let their land in large holdings to men who had capital. These people turned the land into pasture, as there was a good market in Great Britain for beef. The graziers were prosperous, but the people generally were not. The population had increased from some 1,500,000 to 4,500,000 in the eighteenth century and grazing gave little employment.



## FOSTER ACT, 1784

In 1784, “Grattan’s Parliament” passed the Foster Act. This Act gave a bounty of three-quarters of a barrel on exported wheat, so long as the home price did not exceed 27/- a barrel; and it imposed a duty of 10/- a barrel on imported wheat, when the price was less than 30/-. Parliament also granted bounties on exports of flour, barley, oats and rye.

## CORN GROWING IN IRELAND

The Foster Act had an immediate effect and, combined with the European wars, caused an increase of 700 per cent in the export of corn to industrial England. Tillage became more profitable than grazing, and small men were encouraged to take land at high rents. These rentings usually took place through the medium of middlemen or jobbers, so that the small farmer had to carry a middleman as well as a landlord.

For those who were in a position to benefit by it Grattan’s Parliament marked a period of great prosperity, the trading classes built up a great carrying industry, and farmers who had favourable leases made money. However, there was fierce competition between the small men for land, as there was not enough to supply the demand. Rents were increased to such a degree that there was a great deal of discontent and trouble and outrages and Coercion Acts, some 20 of which were enacted during this period. The population had increased from an estimated 5,000,000 in 1800 to 6,750,000 in 1821.

When the Continental wars ended there was a great change in conditions on the land. The demand for Irish grain for England ceased, and grain prices collapsed. The landlords did not make any corresponding reductions of the inflated rents, and there was great want and misery. Even large and well-to-do farmers became insolvent, and the middleman was starved out.

## BACK TO GRASS

The landowners started to change back to grazing as there was still a good market for cattle in Great Britain. Other inducements to turn to grass were the fact that grassland was not subject to ecclesiastical tithes, and that the landlord had to pay the poor rate only on holdings valued at £4 or less. The political landlords had lost their interest in keeping the small tenants as they now had no votes. Under the Act of Union votes had been given to 4/- “freeholders” and the landlords had made the small tenant a nominal “freeholder.” The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 raised the franchise qualification from 40/- to £10, so that the small man would have no vote. There were 230,000 freeholders in 1829 and only 14,000 in 1830. The population had increased so much and the number of small holders was so great that implementing the grass policy meant wholesale evictions. The population reached a peak of 8,196,000 in 1841. There were only about 100,000 farmers who were reasonably well-to-do, and 90 per cent of the rural population was only just existing in a miserable fashion, with potatoes as their ordinary, or indeed only, food.

## WHOLESALE EVICTIONS

Between 1815 and 1845 evictions took place on a huge scale, and the only restraining influence was “Moonlighters” and other terrorist reprisal societies. England’s only contribution towards solving the land problem was coercion for the small holders and assistance to the landlords in getting rid of them.

The British people were well aware of the poverty in Ireland. Between 1800 and 1833, 114 commissions and 60 select committees investigated the state of Ireland.

The Devon Commission, appointed by the Government to inquire

into the state of poverty and unrest in Ireland, reported in 1845. Lord Devon was a large landowner, and his main recommendation was to apply the Ulster Custom to all Ireland, but the Government made no effort to implement Lord Devon's recommendation.

## THE GREAT FAMINE

In September 1845 the potato blight made its appearance and continued for three seasons. This failure of the potato crop resulted in the Great Famine, the like of which had never been known in Europe. It was estimated 1,000,000 people died of starvation and disease, and a huge exodus took place, mainly to America.

At the time of the Famine there was plenty of food other than potatoes grown in the country, but this was exported, and the Famine was entirely man-made and artificial.

The Government employed belated and inadequate measures. The Corn Laws were repealed in 1847, and cheap Indian meal was brought in from America. This was distributed or sold to the starving people. Relief works were started on which those who were still strong enough to lift a shovel could earn nine pence a day to buy some Indian meal for their families.

The population dropped from 8,000,000 in 1841 to 6,500,000 in 1851, and continued to decline. Sir Robert Kane was of opinion that the country could support a population of 25,000,000, but assuredly it could not with the type of land tenure and farming which ruled in 1841.

The Famine did not put an end to the evicting of the tenants. In the period 1849-52, 58,000 families aggregating some 300,000 souls were evicted. The Irish economist, Mulhall, calculated that in eleven years, from 1849, 373,000 families were evicted. The census people reported that 355,000 mud cabins had disappeared. This was 70 per cent of the total, and each cabin had been the home of a family.

## INHUMAN EVICTIONS

The evictions were carried out in the most inhuman and callous manner. Old people and young children, the sick and the infirm, were thrown out on the road in any weather. The hovels were then burned or levelled to the ground, so that the evicted could not return. Neighbours were forbidden to give the unfortunate people shelter under the penalty of being evicted themselves. It was no wonder that Gladstone stated in the House of Commons that every Irish eviction was a sentence of death. All this inhuman work was carried out under the protection of armed police and the soldiers of the Queen. The inevitable result of these evictions was constant turmoil and trouble, the formation of secret reprisal societies, the shooting of evicting landlords and their agents, and further coercion legislation which only fomented further trouble.

## ENCUMBERED ESTATES ACT, 1849

As a result of the Famine, many landowners were in financial difficulties, and about a third of them were ruined. Most of these old estates were tied up with entails and mortgages, and could not be sold. In 1849 the “Encumbered Estates Court” was set up by Act of Parliament. It was given power to cut the legal knots and to sell these entailed estates, to give the purchasers a clear title, to pay off the encumbrances, and to pay the residue (if any) to the original owners. By 1857 this court had sold more than 3,000 of these estates for prices less than half the original valuation. The new landlords were 90 per cent Irish, and proved to be much worse than the old landlords, amongst whom there were some decent men.

## SIR JOHN GRAY'S CONFERENCE 1850. TENANT RIGHT LEAGUE

In 1850, Sir John Gray, who was the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, and was an Anglican, Samuel Greer, an Ulster Presbyterian and Frederick Lucas, the Roman Catholic owner of *The Tablet*, called a Conference of Tenants' Societies. The conference met in Dublin in August 1850 and founded the "Irish Tenant Right League." They adopted as their programme what was practically the "Ulster Custom," i.e. fair rents, security of tenure, so long as the rent was paid, freedom of the tenant to sell his interest and improvements, and relief from the Famine rent arrears.

When in February 1852 Sir John Russell's Whig Government went out of office, fifty "Tenant Right" candidates were returned to Parliament at the General Election. They were pledged not to accept any office, and to oppose any Government which refused their demands. Ten members of the Tenant Right Party deserted in consequence of Russell's Tithe Bill. The party of 40 had the Parliamentary balance of power, and entered into negotiations with the Derby Government, which let them down. They then wrecked the Government but, a couple of years later, they were themselves wrecked by the Keogh-Sadlier place hunters.

## THE DEASY ACT, 1860

All the Irish land legislation up to 1870 was passed by Parliaments in which the landlord influence was predominant. The "Deasy" Landlord and Tenant Act of 1860 purported to regularise legally the relations between landlord and tenant. Even where the full "Ulster Custom" did not prevail there were sometimes immemorial customs and understandings between some of the older landlords and their tenants. These were a protection for the tenant, but were abolished by the "Deasy Act," and the tenant became only a contract signer, as in any other business. If one year's rent was in arrears the landlord could evict the tenant and confiscate his improvements, and

most tenants did owe one year's rent. This Act was supposed to settle the land question, but left it still more unsettled, and evictions and reprisal outrages were the order of the day.

In 1860 the tenants were in a bad way and there were 160,000 seeking poor relief. By 1870 the number had increased to 289,000. In the ten years from 1860 to 1870 the cultivated land had decreased by 400,000 acres and 15,000 tenancies had been extinguished.

#### ABSENTEE LANDLORDS

About 1870 some 13,000 landlords owned 15,000,000 acres of rural Ireland. Thirty per cent of them were not resident in Ireland, and many of them had never even seen Ireland. Three hundred of these landlords had estates exceeding 10,000 acres each. On the tenants' side there were some 135,000 leaseholders, who had long-period leases, and there were over 400,000 yearly tenants who held by oral agreement, and who could be evicted on six months' notice. Some of those tenants held under the "Ulster Custom" or other old "customs," but most of them had no such protection. A large number of the holdings were of an uneconomic size.

#### GLADSTONE'S 1870 LAND ACT

In 1868 Gladstone came to office and recognised the necessity of doing something to allay the unrest in Ireland. He disestablished the Irish Church and passed the 1870 Land Act. This Act was intended to legalise the "Ulster Custom" and to provide similar protection for tenants who did not come under that Custom. The Act provided compensation for improvements, and for disturbance if unfairly evicted. It also made provision for tenant purchase of estates in the possession of the Encumbered Estates Court, two-thirds of the purchase money being advanced to the tenant at 5 per cent, repayable in 35 years.

The 1870 Act was a failure because no machinery had been provided for the fixing of a fair rent. The landlord simply pushed the rent up to a figure which the tenant could not pay, and then, under threat of eviction, forced the tenant to contract himself out of the Act by accepting a lease with new conditions. The purchase clauses were ineffective because the tenant could not put up one-third of the price, and also because the annuity payment worked out at more than the rent. Only 877 tenants availed of the purchase provision, the average price being 23 and a half years' purchase of the rent.

#### ISAAC BUTT

Isaac Butt was a Protestant Tory, born in Glenfin in County Donegal, in 1813. He was an able lawyer and a good writer. He was educated in Trinity College, and came into prominence by his defence of the Young Irelanders. He was very interested in Home Rule, and also in the land question, on which subject he had written a great deal. He devoted his life and his fortune to the service of Ireland, and he did an enormous amount of work in an unsuccessful endeavour to rally the natural leaders of the people to the National Standard. In 1870 he founded the Home Rule League, and at the General Election of 1874 he was returned to Westminster as Chairman of a Party of fifty-nine "Nominal" Home Rulers. These had originally been hangers-on of the English parties, but were not pledged to keep clear of all party entanglements. The Party survived for seven years, but effected very little. Butt's gentlemanly manners and methods suited his party of "Nominal" Home Rulers, but got no results at Westminster.

#### PARNELL

Parnell was elected in 1874, as a member of Butt's Party. He knew

how to deal effectively with Parliament, and he displaced Butt as Leader in 1878. Butt died in 1879, broken in health and in fortune.

For some years before 1877 agricultural prices were good, and there was not so much want and unrest amongst the agricultural community. But in 1877 the crops started to fail, and the potato crop, which in 1876 was valued at £12,000,000, was in 1879 valued at £3,500,000. Rents could not be paid, and evictions increased from 980 in 1877 to 2,110 in 1880. Agrarian outrages also increased – from 236 in 1877 to 2,590 in 1880. It became urgently necessary to organise the country to prevent another famine.

#### A. J. KETTLE

When Butt died in 1879 Kettle found himself in a responsible position as leader of the Tenant Righters. Davitt had held his big Irish-town meeting in April 1879 and had organised a second meeting at Westport, and had invited Parnell to speak at it. Kettle strongly advised Parnell to go on to the Davitt platform. Subsequently, he rallied the Tenant Righters to the meeting in the Imperial Hotel in Dublin in October 1879, at which the Irish National Land League was founded.

#### IRISH NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE

Kettle presided at this meeting, and the new organisation had Parnell as President; Davitt, Kettle and Brennan as Hon. Secretaries; and Biggar, O'Sullivan and Egan as Hon. Treasurers. Four of the seven officers were Fenians. Branches of the League were formed all over the country. The authorities arrested Davitt, Brennan, Daly and Killen for violent speeches but released them when they realised that no jury in Ireland would find them guilty.

In the West, famine seemed very near as winter approached. The



Government did little to avert disaster. They delayed relief measures until they were useless, and then passed a Relief Act which relieved the landlords rather than the tenants.

#### PARNELL IN AMERICA

The October Convention had asked Parnell to visit America, and in December 1879 he and Dillon sailed for New York to appeal for funds to save the western people from famine and to strengthen the union between the Irish in America and the Irish at home. They toured sixty-two cities in two months and collected £40,000. Parnell was invited to address Congress. His progress was a triumphal procession. He was honoured by great and small, civil and military, governors of states and public bodies, Fenians and non-Fenians. Parnell had to come home for the 1880 General Election and was seen off by the 69th Regiment. Before leaving America Parnell had formed an American Land League, and had left Dillon and Davitt to carry on the organisation work. By June 1881 they had formed 1,200 branches, and had sent £100,000 to the home organisation.

#### 1880 GENERAL ELECTION

In 1880 a General Election was sprung on the country and Parnell hurried home. He persuaded the League to advance him £2,000, and without this he could not have won sixty seats for pledge-bound Nationalists.

After the election Parnell, Kettle, Egan, Healy and Davitt formulated a land policy. They proposed the setting up of a Land Department to transfer the land to the tenants. When there was voluntary agreement between tenant and landlord, the Department was to advance the necessary money to the tenant, repayable over thirty-five years. If the tenant offered twenty years' purchase the transfer was to take place compulsorily. Meantime for a period of two years there were

to be no evictions for non-payment of rent. Davitt disagreed with the programme because he considered twenty years' purchase too high a price.

In June, 1880, Chief Secretary Forster brought in his "Compensation for Disturbance" Bill, in order to halt the evictions. In the 1870 Act no compensation was given to any evicted tenant if he owed a year's rent, as most tenants did. The Forster Bill passed the Commons and was thrown out by the Lords. Then the disturbances and outrages in Ireland re-doubled, riots took place at evictions, "Emergency Men" who took evicted land were assaulted, their ricks were burned and their cattle maimed.

#### CAPTAIN BOYCOTT

In September 1880, Parnell at a meeting in Ennis laid down a line of action. Outrages were discountenanced but the tenants were to stand firmly together and to hold on to their farms. If anyone was evicted the community must support him and no man was to take an evicted farm. Anyone who broke this rule was to be shunned and avoided. Captain Boycott, Lord Erne's agent, was treated in this way and such action was afterwards known as "boycotting." This added a new word to the English language.

#### ABORTIVE PROSECUTIONS, 1880

In November, 1880, the Government decided to prosecute fourteen League leaders for conspiring to prevent payment of rent, to resist eviction, and to prevent the taking of evicted farms. The defendants included Parnell, Biggar, Egan and Brennan. The trial took place in December, and the jury disagreed, there being ten for acquittal and two against. The Government had merely strengthened Parnell's position both at home and in America.

Forster then advised Gladstone that a Coercion Act would enable him to put down outrages. Gladstone decided to pass a Coercion Act, followed by a Land Act. The Coercion Bill was introduced in January 1881 and was opposed tooth and nail by Parnell, becoming law only in March.

#### GLADSTONE'S 1881 LAND ACT

On April 7th, 1881, Gladstone brought in his Land Bill. The bill conceded the Three Fs, or the "Ulster Custom." The tenant could sell his interest, subject to certain conditions. Tenants under the Ulster Custom could sell their interest under the Custom or under the Act, and the landlord could buy. Every tenant could secure a fifteen year tenure at a fair rent, subject to certain reasonable conditions. If the landlord and the tenant signed an agreement fixing a fair rent the tenant became a statutory tenant for fifteen years. If they failed to agree to a fair rent the courts fixed it on the application of either party. The courts could also annul any existing unfair lease or condition.

This Act also provided that if any tenant arranged to buy his holding the Land Commission, which was set up under this Act, could advance 75 per cent of the price, repayable at 5 per cent in thirty-five years. The Land Commission could also purchase whole estates and resell them to the tenants.

Parnell decided that he could not vote for the bill, because if he did the Government would think they were giving away too much and this would influence the Commissioners to fix the rents too high. Besides, his American allies did not want the bill passed, and Parnell did not wish to lose their support. On the other hand, he could not reject the bill because it marked a considerable step forward, and the tenants wanted it. Parnell decided not to vote either for the bill or against, and a Convention held in Dublin supported him. The Home Rulers were left free to vote as they pleased, but Parnell

and about half the Irish Party walked out on the second and third reading divisions. The Land Bill received the Royal assent on August 22nd, 1881.

#### UNITED IRELAND NEWSPAPER

While the Land Act was going through, Parnell decided that it was necessary to have a newspaper under his control. Gray owned the *Freeman's Journal*; *The Nation* and the *Irish News* belonged to the Sullivans, and Pigott owned *The Irishman*, *The Shamrock* and *The Flag of Ireland*. Parnell formed a company, bought out Pigott, and turned *The Flag of Ireland* into *United Ireland* and made William O'Brien editor.

#### KILMAINHAM JAIL

After the Land Act had become law Parnell decided to advise the tenants not to avail themselves of the Act, pending the result of test cases which he would arrange. This procedure should secure better terms for the tenants from the Land Commissioners. The Government, however, regarded it as conspiracy to prevent the Act being worked, and decided to arrest the Land League leaders under the Coercion Act. Parnell was arrested on October 13th, 1881, and lodged in Kilmainham Jail.

#### "NO RENT MANIFESTO"

The reply of the imprisoned Leaguers to the Government was the issue of the No Rent Manifesto signed by Parnell, Kettle, Davitt (per Brennan as Davitt had been sent back to Portland Prison), Brennan, Dillon, Sexton and Egan. Parnell, Kettle and Dillon were not satisfied that the manifesto would do any good. The Irish National Land

League was suppressed, but its place was taken by the Ladies' Land League, which was financed from Paris by Egan. According to Parnell, who later dissolved the Ladies' League, it did much harm and some good.

When Parnell's arrest seemed imminent some of his followers asked him who would take his place. His reply was, "Captain Moonlight will take my place." And this is exactly what happened. When the restraining influence of the Land League was removed the extremists ran riot, and the number of agrarian outrages multiplied. In March 1882 there were in Ireland 20,000 police and 35,000 regular troops. In December 1881 Gladstone appealed to Rome for help, but did not get it. Criticism of the Coercion regime came from unexpected quarters in England. The Irish Land Commission issued an official publication, advocating peasant proprietorship, and paying tribute to the power of the Land League. The author, George Fottrell, Secretary to the Commission, as asked to resign. Gladstone decided to abandon Coercion, and Chief Secretary Forster resigned.

#### RELEASE OF PARNELL

Parnell was released on May 2nd, 1882, after certain pourparlers with Gladstone. Parnell had suggested that if the small farmers' arrears question were settled the agrarian outrages could be got under control. In Kilmainham a new Land Bill had been drafted, and the No Rent Manifesto had been practically withdrawn. Most of the tenants who could pay their rent had paid it, and had got good reductions under the 1881 Act, but there were some 100,000 small tenants who could not pay, and who owed arrears of rent and were threatened with eviction. If these evictions were to take place they would be the cause of great misery and a great increase in crime.

## PHOENIX PARK MURDERS, NEW COERCION ACT

Whilst these matters were being discussed Lord Frederick Cavendish, the new Chief Secretary, and Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, were murdered in the Phoenix Park by the “Invincibles” on May 6th, 1882, and everything was again thrown into confusion.

A manifesto, written by Davitt, who had just been released from Dartmoor, and signed by Parnell, Dillon and Davitt, was immediately issued “to the Irish people,” condemning the murders. On May 11th Gladstone brought in a new Coercion Bill, abolishing trial by jury. This bill was strongly resisted by the Irish Party.

## 1882 LAND ACT (ARREARS)

Later in 1882, Gladstone passed an Amending Land Act, giving the Land Commission powers to cancel the arrears of rent due by tenants of less than £30 rent, under certain conditions. The chief conditions were that the tenant should pay the 1881 rent, that of the further arrears the tenant and the State should pay equal amounts, but not more than a total of two years. The landlords were compelled to accept this settlement, and to forego the right to evict. The State money for these transactions was taken from the Church Surplus Fund. It was estimated that £2,000,000 arrears were written off under this Act.

## IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE

In accordance with the Kilmainham “Treaty” Parnell slowed down the land agitation and concentrated more on Home Rule. This led to criticism from many quarters, the most important being the Irish in America. Davitt went to America and pulled things together again. As there was now no Irish organisation Davitt persuaded Parnell to become President of a new “Irish National League,” founded at a

Convention held on October 17th, 1882. The programme of the new body, as stated by Parnell, was Home Rule first, and peasant proprietorship.

#### LAND LEAGUE FUNDS

In handing over the funds of the old organisation to the new body Egan presented a report showing that £244,820 had been disbursed, including £50,000 to relief of distress in 1879-80, £15,000 to state trials and £148,000 in support of the Land War.

Egan and Brennan, who had disagreed with Parnell's slowdown policy, left the country, but in the following year (1882) Egan became President of the Irish National League of America, which replaced the American Land League and which endorsed Parnell's Home Rule policy.

#### RESULTS OF 1881 LAND ACT

The 1881 Act was revolutionary, inasmuch as it admitted that the tenant had a joint ownership with the landlord. Its immediate value was that every tenant could have a fair rent fixed, either by agreement with the landlord, or by application to the new Land Commission, or to the Civil Bill Courts. The tenant then became a statutory tenant for a period of fifteen years at the fixed "fair" rent. At the end of each fifteen-year period the rent could be revised for a further fifteen years. During the currency of the 1881 Act the applications for the fixing of a fair rent were so numerous that the Land Commission was regularly 10,000 in arrears. In forty years from 1881 there were 383,000 first term cases, and an original rent roll of £7,487,000 was reduced to £5,936,000, the average overall reduction being 20.7 per cent. Second term cases numbered 144,000 and involved a reduction from £2,523,000 to £2,031,000, or an average

reduction of 19.5 per cent. The comparatively few third term cases gave an average reduction of 9 per cent.

To deal with the numerous applications the Commission appointed sub-Commissioners, and there being no fixed standard there were numerous complaints of lack of uniform decisions. The landlords alleged that the Commission gave all applicants a reduction of from 15 to 20 per cent, without regard to the individual merits, and the tenants said that the reductions were quite inadequate on account of the fall of agricultural prices.

As a land purchase instrument the 1881 Act was a failure as only 731 purchases took place. There was no inducement to buy, as the repayment annuity would be higher than the rent, and the tenant would have to pay one-fourth of the price in cash.

In March 1883, Parnell introduced a bill, proposing, amongst other things, a land purchase scheme in which the State would advance the entire purchase price, repayable in fifty-two years. The Liberals rejected this bill and favoured mass emigration as the solution of the Irish land problem.

#### “ASHBOURNE” ACT, 1885

The Tories came to power in 1885, removed Coercion and passed the first real Land Purchase Act, known as the “Ashbourne” Act. Under this act the State was to advance the total purchase price, to be repaid in forty-nine annuities of 4 per cent. As the Act was more or less experimental, only £5,000,000 had to be provided. This sum was exhausted by 1888 and a second £5,000,000 had to be provided.

Under the Ashbourne Act 25,400 tenants purchased their holdings. The area amounted to 942,600 acres and the money advanced was £10,000,000. The average holding was some thirty-seven acres, and the average price was seventeen and a half years purchase.



## PLAN OF CAMPAIGN, 1886

In 1885-86 agricultural produce prices had receded by some 30 per cent and the price of cattle by 20 per cent. In consequence some landlords gave rent reductions, but many of them stood firm on the 1881 settlement, although there had been 20,000 evictions since 1881.

In view of this position William O'Brien started his "Plan of Campaign" in 1886. Under this plan tenants on rack-rented estates were to organise and were to make a collective offer to the landlord. If this offer was refused they were to retain the money as a fighting fund. Evicted tenants were to be supported from this fund, supplemented where necessary by the National League.

Parnell was not very enthusiastic about this new move, and the Vatican condemned it as "contrary to natural justice and Christian charity." The Pope had apparently been misled by the report of his envoy. Archbishop Walsh and the clergy generally were not against the plan.

## ARTHUR BALFOUR COERCION ACT

The Irish Chief Secretary, Hicks-Beach, could not cope with the agrarian unrest and resigned. He was succeeded by Arthur Balfour, whose main aim was to establish law and order. He passed a Coercion Act and instructed the armed police not to hesitate to shoot. He arrested William O'Brien and John Dillon for conspiring to prevent payment of rent. Whilst they were out on bail they went to America.

## BALFOUR LAND ACTS, 1891 AND 1896

When the funds provided under the Ashbourne Acts were exhausted Arthur Balfour had a new Land Act passed providing £33,000,000 for land purchase. The Act was on lines very similar to those of the Ashbourne Act, but there were so many safeguards inserted to prevent any conceivable loss by the British Treasury that the Act was never very popular. It slowed down purchase transactions very much, and Gerald Balfour, who succeeded his brother as Chief Secretary, passed a further Act in 1896, removing most of the safeguards, introducing decadal reduction of the annuity and empowering the Land Court to sell to the tenants 1,500 bankrupt estates for which they had not been able to find other purchasers.

Under the Balfour Acts of 1891 and 1896, 47,000 tenants purchased their holdings for £13,000,000 or about £9 an acre.

The great importance of the 1891 Act was that it substituted peasant proprietorship for dual ownership as the principle of land tenure.

## CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD, 1891

The Cowper Commission (1887) and the other authorities which favoured land purchase made an exception in the case of what came to be called the "Congested Districts." In these districts the holdings were too small and too poor to support a family. In most of them the men folk emigrated seasonally to Scotland, England and the east and midlands of Ireland, to work at the hay, corn and potato harvests. In this way they earned and brought home the few pounds to pay the rent, and to keep their families from starving.

The original Congested Districts were the electoral divisions of Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and West Cork, in which the total rateable value, divided by the number of the population, gave a figure less than 30/-.

A. J. Balfour decided that those people should be kept where they were, but that their holdings should be enlarged by dividing up any large tracts which could be purchased in their districts.

The Congested Districts Board was set up under the 1891 Act and had very varied activities, including the purchase, sub-division, and sale of land, industrial development, instruction in agriculture, care of cattle and poultry, fish canning, and home industries. The Board also had charge of the construction of new roads and other public works, and assisted migration and emigration.

The money at first provided for the Congested Districts Board was the interest on £1,500,000 of the Church Surplus Fund, but this provision was increased by the 1896 Act. In all the Board dealt with 937 estates, aggregating 2,265,000 acres, at a cost of £9,437,000.

The Congested Districts Board was a very respected and reputable body and did much excellent work. It was abolished by the Free State Government in 1923.

#### UNITED IRISH LEAGUE, 1898

The 1891-96 legislation did not give any general satisfaction, and evictions on the De Freyne estate led to the founding of the United Irish League by William O'Brien in 1898. Its main objectives were the restoration of the evicted tenants, the extension of land purchase, and the dividing up of large, tenantless grazing holdings. At the 1900 General Election the League won nearly all the 103 Parliamentary seats, and had nearly 1,000 branches. Boycotting and agitation was rife, not only on the De Freyne estate but also in many other places. George Wyndham, who became Chief Secretary in 1900, was urged to start coercion again. He did prosecute some of the leaders, but he did not believe that coercion would produce good results. He had drafted a new Land Bill, but this was held up ending the outcome of the Land Conference.

## SHAW TAYLOR LAND CONFERENCE, 1902

In a Landowners' Convention in 1902, Colonel Talbot-Crosby proposed a joint conference with the tenants, but got little support. Later in 1902 Captain Shaw Taylor, the son of a Galway landlord, issued invitations in his own name to representatives of the landlords and the tenants to meet in conference, but the big landowners and Mr. J. E. Redmond rejected this proposal of an unknown man. Some of the southern landlords favoured the idea, and Lord Monteagle formed a committee with Lord Dunraven as chairman, which circularised all the landowners and found 75 per cent of them in favour of a conference with the tenants. The committee then invited the Irish Party to confer with the landlords, and William O'Brien, John Redmond and Tim Harrington were nominated. The Landowners Convention declined to nominate representatives, and Dunraven's committee appointed Dunraven, Mayo, Colonel Hutchinson-Poe, and Colonel Everard. T. W. Russell represented the Ulster tenants.

The Conference met five times, and on January 3rd, 1903, they issued a unanimous report. It was evident from the report that the landlords had been much better briefed than the tenants' representatives, and that they understood the position much better. Nearly all the recommendations in the report were calculated to make the landlords' position safer.

The report declared definitely in favour of peasant proprietorship, and the sale of the land to the tenants. The main recommendation was that the landlord should receive not less than his then net income – this being generally the second term judicial rent, and that the tenant should obtain a 15 to 20 per cent reduction on the second term rent. This would leave an obvious gap between the buying and the selling price, and that gap was to be bridged by a free Government grant. The grant which would be needed was estimated at some £25,000,000.

## WYNDHAM LACT ACT, 1903

In March 1903 Wyndham brought in his Land Bill which was based on the Land Conference Report, and which approached the subject from a landlord point of view. The bill stipulated that individual purchases would not be permissible, and that the landlord should sell large areas, including non-tenanted as well as tenanted land.

The landlord was to get a 12 per cent bonus, in addition to the price agreed with the tenants. The landlord could sell his demesne lands to the Estates Commissioners, and buy them back on the same annuity terms as the tenants. The landlords were to be paid in cash, and not in land stock, but the money was raised by the issue of 2¾ per cent guaranteed land stock. The maximum expenditure authorised was £150,000,000.

The tenant was to pay a price which would result in annuities 10 to 30 per cent lower than the second term rent and 20 to 40 per cent lower than the first term rent. This mean that the second term tenant would be paying 21½ to 27¾ years' purchase of the second term rent – a price which was very much in favour of the landlord. The annuity was calculated at 3¼ per cent (2¾ per cent interest. plus ½ per cent sinking fund) for 68½ years. Provision was made against subdividing and mortgaging.

An Irish Convention approved Wyndham's bill, in spite of the opposition of Davitt, Dillon, Sexton and the *Freeman's Journal*.

Under the Wyndham Act so many applications for purchase grants were received that in 1908 arrears of sales amounted to £56,000,000, and £28,000,000 had been advanced. The £84,000,000 covered 7,000,000 acres, giving an average of £12 per acre. Up to 1903 advances by the State for land purchase amounted to £24,000,000 covering 1,500,000 acres. In 1909, 9,000,000 acres remained to be dealt with.

## BIRRELL LAND ACT, 1909

By 1909, £33,000,000 land stock had been issued and the stock had fallen to 87. Financing the outstanding £56,000,000 would have involved a loss of over £8,000,000 to the British Treasury. The Government decided to ignore its obligations, and passed a new Act providing that in future selling landlords would be paid in 3½ per cent stock. Birrell also altered the basis of the landlord's "bonus" and fixed a scale varying from 3 per cent to 18 per cent according to the purchase price. If the price was less than sixteen years' purchase of second term rents the bonus was 18 per cent; if the price was twenty-three years' purchase the bonus was 3 per cent.

Under the Wyndham-Birrell Acts 256,000 holdings were purchased for £82,000,000. Under the Evicted Tenants' Act of 1907, 735 evicted tenants were reinstated at a cost of £390,000.

## AFTER PARTITION

### *Northern Ireland*

After Partition the area and population of the two sections of the country were as follows:

	<b>Area (Statute Acres)</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Density of Population</b>
S. Ireland	17,024,485	2,949,713	111
N. Ireland	3,352,251	1,279,745	244

Both the Irish Free State (1923) and Northern Ireland (1925) passed Acts for the compulsory expropriation of the remaining landlords. In Northern Ireland in 1935 the purchase position was that under all the Land Acts 122,054 holdings with an area of 2,715,727 acres had

been purchased by the tenants. This constituted some 90 per cent of the original land. It was decided to wind up the Land Commission and this was done by the Northern Ireland Land Purchase (Winding Up) Act of 1935.

### *Irish Free State*

When the Irish Free State took over the Government, the land purchase position was that under all the British legislation 316,000 holdings, aggregating 11,000,000 acres had been purchased by the tenants. A further 750,000 had been given to 35,000 allottees, most of this being in the Congested Districts.

There were 100,000 holdings to be dealt with, with an area of 3,000,000 acres.

### LAND LAW ACT, 1923

Under the Land Law Act of 1923 the Congested Districts Board and the Estates Commission were abolished, and the Land Commission was reconstituted.

### LAND ACT, 1923 (THE HOGAN ACT)

The 1923 Act (known as the Hogan Act) made compulsory the sale and purchase of all the land not yet dealt with. Rents fixed before 1911 were reduced by 35 per cent, and rents fixed later by 30 per cent. The annuities were based on  $4\frac{3}{4}$  per cent payable for  $66\frac{1}{2}$  years. The vendors were to receive approximately fourteen years' purchase of the rent originally paid. As this price was much lower than the prices received by the landlord under the 1903-9 Acts the State added 10 per cent, and made provision for the landlord's legal and other expenses. Under the arrangements set out an original

rent of £38, reduced in 1911 to £30, would under the 1923 Act be reduced by 35 per cent to £19 10s. This was later on cut in half by the 1933 Act, and became £9 15s and this payment was terminable.

It was also provided that all arrears due up to 1920 would be forgotten, and that arrears subsequent to 1920 would be reduced by 25 per cent.

#### LAND LAW ACT, 1927

The post-war depression and the general lawless atmosphere in the Irish Free State resulted in serious arrears of rent, annuities and rates. A number of the tenants did not pay, and hoped to avoid payment of arrears as they had already done in 1923. The Land Commission could not collect the arrears, and in 1927 a Land Law Act was passed. The arrears were funded and added to the annuities, and sub-tenants illegally in possession were confirmed in possession, but sub-letting was again prohibited.

#### LAND ACT, 1933

Industrious and conscientious farmers had been paying their commitments, but others had been taking advantage of the disturbed political conditions, and in 1930 the default on annuities amounted to 10 per cent of the total. The annuity arrears in 1933 were £4,611,381. The Government in 1933 passed a Land Act, forgiving all arrears up to 1930, and funding subsequent arrears. They also reduced annuity payments by half on account of the economic war which followed on the refusal of the Irish Free State Government to continue paying the land purchase annuities to Great Britain.

The 1933 Act also gave the Land Commission power to acquire land compulsorily for distribution to people who had no land, or who had land and wanted more. The Land Commission was actually given



power to take back land which they themselves had already vested in the tenant.

The granting of this power of re-acquisition did away with the fixity of tenure – one of the “Three Fs” which the farmers had won from the British. The farmer in the Republic is not now assured of undisturbed possession, but holds his land subject to the sanction of a Government department. This could be a step towards the nationalisation of the land, and although “nationalisation” was Davitt’s original objective, it does not seem to work too well in countries which have tried it.

#### SUMMARY OF LAND TRANSFER UNDER ALL LEGISLATION FROM 1870 TO 1953

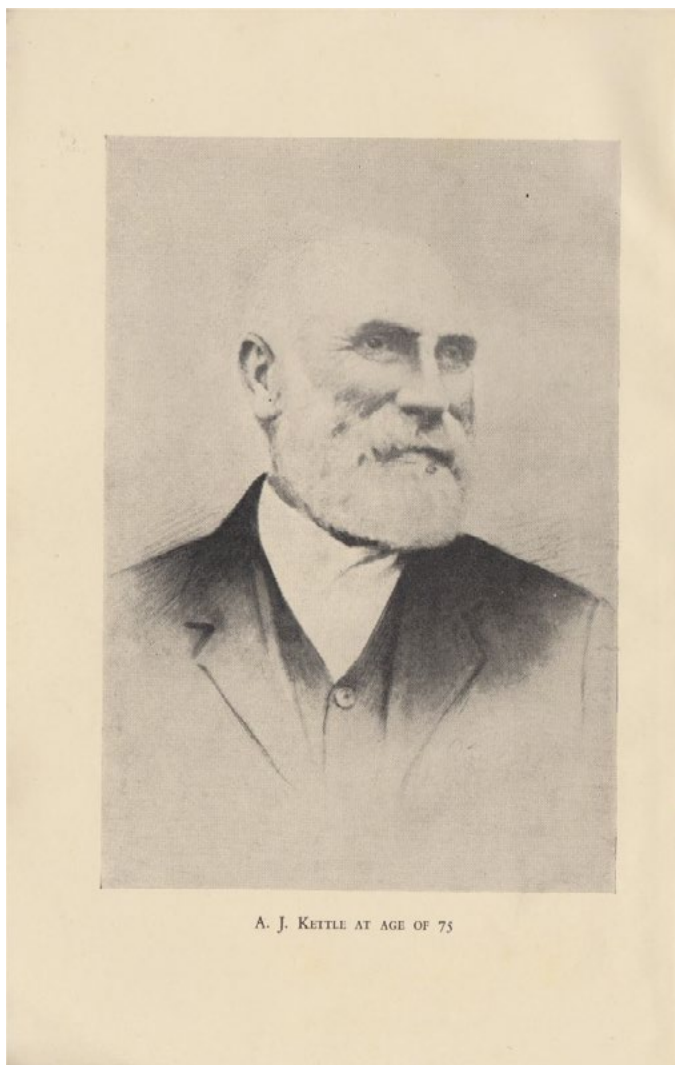
Under all the land legislation from 1870 to 1953 some 450,000 holdings had been transferred from the landlord to the tenant in the Twenty-Six Counties. This comprised 15,000,000 acres out of a total acreage of 17,000,000. The money involved amounted to £130,000,000, or an average of £8 13s. 4d. per acre. The current repayments by the tenants amounted to some £2,500,000 per annum in 1953.

#### THE COST OF THE LAND WAR

The cost of the Irish Land War during the nineteenth century has to be measured in suffering and loss of life rather than in terms of money. In whatever way it is reckoned, it is difficult to put the cost into figures. However, it is safe to say that the number of lives which it cost Ireland was much greater than the total loss of life in all the European wars – or indeed, in all the world’s wars – during the nineteenth century.

# Appendix: Illustrations [1958]

*Illustrations included in the 1958 edition.*



*Frontispiece: A. J. Kettle at age of 75*



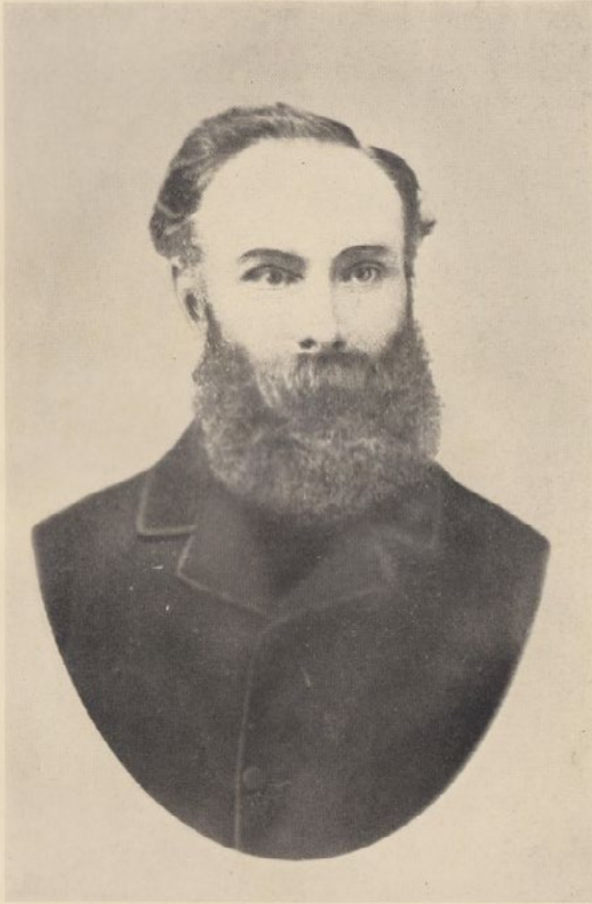
MILLVIEW, MALAHIDE

*Facing page xii: Millview, Malahide*



T. M. KETTLE

*Facing page xx: T. M. Kettle*



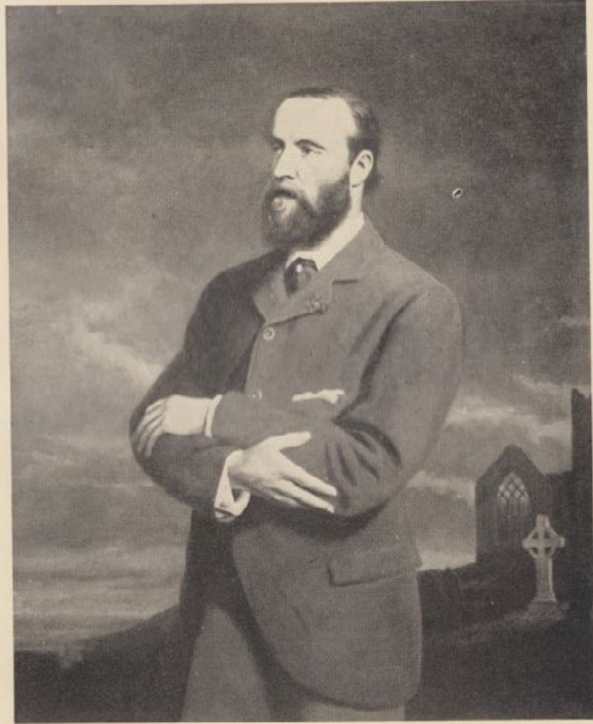
A. J. KETTLE AT AGE OF 45

*Facing page 10: A. J. Kettle at age of 45*



Isaac Butt

Facing page 16: Isaac Butt



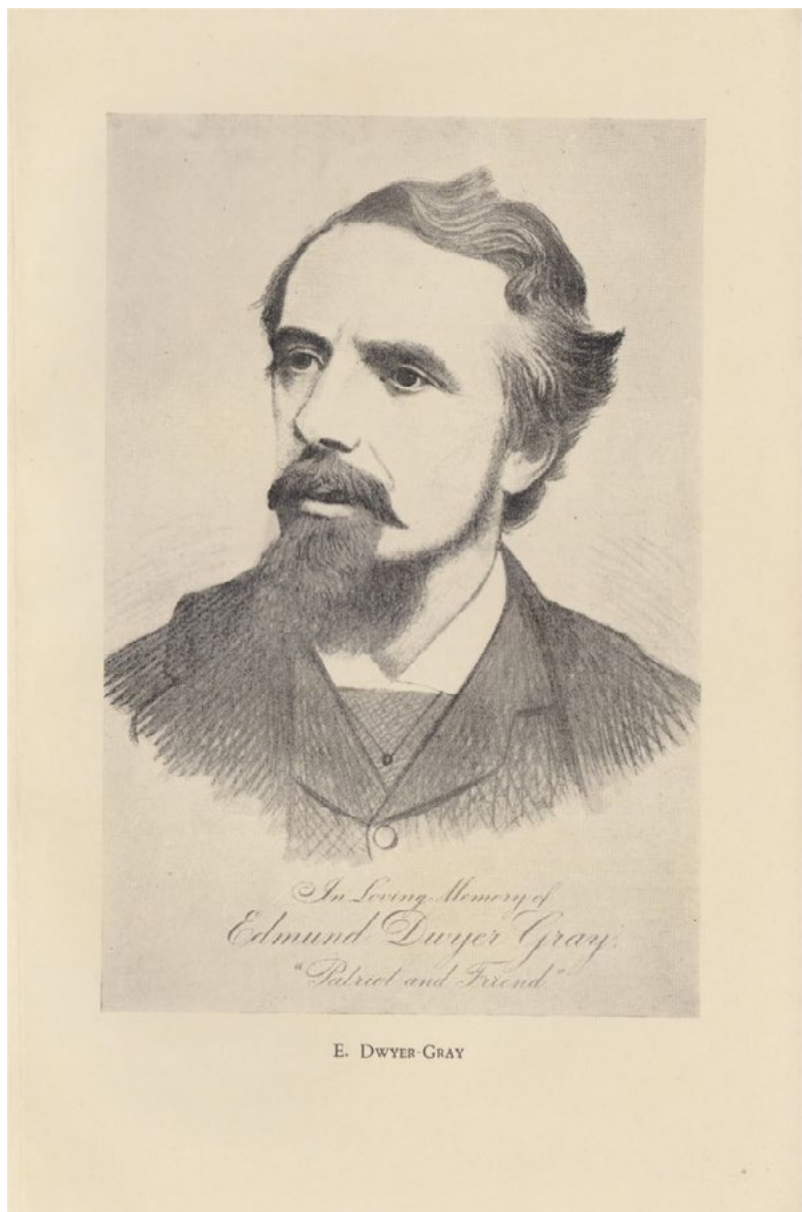
C. S. Parnell

Facing page 24: C. S. Parnell



*Facing page 32: Avondale*





Facing page 44: E. Dwyer-Gray

**I**rish **P**arliamentary **O**ffices.

Palace Chambers.

9. Bridge Street.

Private

London, <sup>S.W.</sup> March 21<sup>st</sup> 1886

My dear Kettle

I did not hear anything about  
the Glasgow business until it was  
too late to take any effective action.

The Executive of I. N. L. of Great Britain  
had met several days previously  
and had resolved upon a certain  
course & communicated it to

Glasgow so things could not be  
I will however have regard to the future <sup>pass</sup>  
~~changed~~ - you will see that

FACSIMILE OF PARNELL LETTER

most of the meetings on St. Patrick's  
day were stopped as you suggested  
I have only today opened your letter  
of 22<sup>nd</sup> ult, covering cheques for £100  
I had put it away in my pocket,  
and had forgotten it.

Things are looking very hopeful  
here. I have every confidence  
that Gladstone's proposals will  
be very large and that we shall  
be able to accept them freely, &  
build up the nation by their means.  
Chamberlain is turning out very  
badly, as I have guessed he would  
for several years past, but I do

not believe his opposition will succeed in postponing  
the passage of the settlement for even six months.

Egan made very unreasonable demands of me  
amongst others, that I should refuse to receive  
money from Eugene Kelly's New York Committee.  
The latter have collected & sent us from N. Y. city  
alone within three months just £11,000, & there  
is another £1000 still to come - The N. L. organiza-  
tion could have collected little or none of this.  
Egan I believe to be exceedingly honest, &  
straight and to mean very well, but he is too  
narrow-minded.

However, I hope the Nation will ~~not~~ have full power  
over its own course & proceedings, in a short while  
and that then a good deal of responsibility will have  
been taken off my shoulders.

I have seen Davitt twice since he came over,  
his spirit continues excellent.

Yours very truly  
Thos. D. Arnell



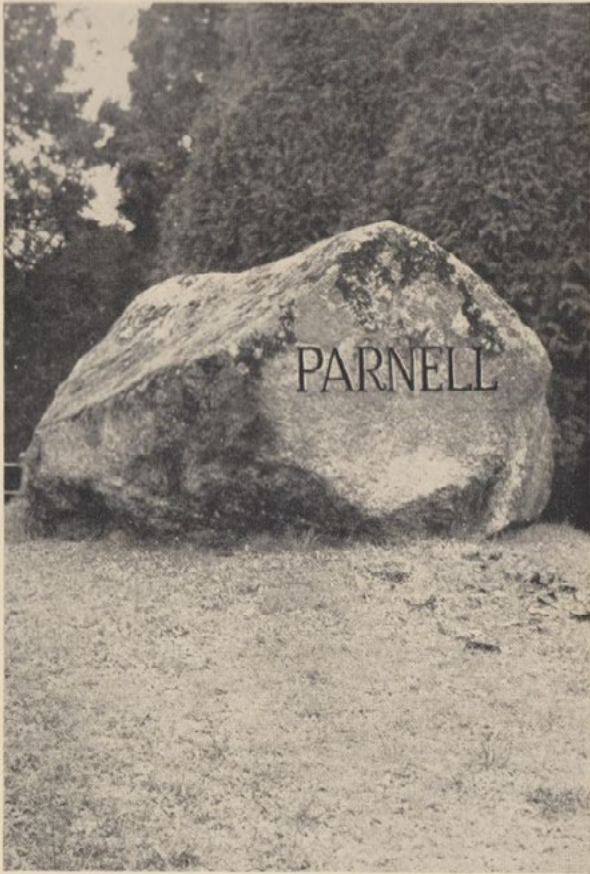
AUGHAVANAGH

*Facing page 64: Aughavanagh*[/caption]



MORRISON'S HOTEL

Facing page 94: Morrison's Hotel



PARNELL'S GRAVE IN GLASNEVIN

*Facing page 100: Parnell's grave in Glasnevin*

# Character Biographies

**Arthur James Balfour** (1848-1930), Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1887 to 1891. As Chief Secretary he suppressed agrarian unrest and took measures against absentee landlords. He was later Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905. His brother, Gerald William Balfour (1853-1945), also served as Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1895 to 1900 (DIB 2009, 'Balfour, Arthur James').

**Gerald William Balfour** (1853-1945), Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1895 to 1900. He was the brother of the previous Chief Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, who held office from 1887 to 1891 (DIB 2009, 'Balfour, Gerald William').

**Joseph Gillis Biggar** (1828-90) was an Irish nationalist politician from Belfast. Born into a Presbyterian family, he later converted to Catholicism. He served as an MP as a member of the Home Rule League and later the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1874 to 1890. He was a popular figure in Ireland and well-known for turning obstruction of Parliament into an art form by reading official documents for hours to delay business. Although a close friend of Healy, he was not an intimate of Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Biggar, Joseph Gillis').

**Andrew Birmingham** (1830-91) was the landlord at the time of a large estate in Kilfoylan (Kilfylan) in Co. Offaly, with lands also in Roscommon. Originally a Protestant, he had converted to Catholicism in order to marry. He was a popular man locally, having reduced the rents on his estate and was a supporter of Parnell and tenant rights (King 1937-39; Ancestry.com n.d., 'Andrew William Birmingham').

**Augustine Birrell** (1850-1933) was Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1907 to 1916 (DIB 2009, 'Birrell, Augustine').

**Michael P. Boyton** (1846-1906) was one of the official Land League



organizers. Born in Kildare, he emigrated to the United States with his family as a child. Boyton returned to Ireland in 1879 and joined the Land League. He was arrested with the other organizers and sent to Kilmainham Jail in 1881, but was then released after claiming American citizenship. He subsequently spent time in England before moving to South Africa (Ancestry.com n.d., 'Michael Peter Boyton, 1846-1906'; Kee 1993, pp. 268, 395).

**Charles Bradlaugh** (1833-91) was a prominent English freethinking political activist and atheist. His youthful experiences while serving in the British army in Ireland had influenced his political development and he was a supporter of Irish Home Rule. Admired as an orator and incorruptible public figure, he led many unpopular causes including advocating for birth control (Berresford 2004).

**Joe Brady** (c. 1857-83) was a Dublin-born Fenian and one of five men hanged for the Phoenix Park murders. He was a member of the Irish National Invincibles, a small secret society committed to political assassination. He was tried for the murder of Under-Secretary Thomas Henry Burke in April 1883 and was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging on 14 May in Kilmainham Jail (DIB 2009, 'Brady, Joe').

**Thomas Brennan** (1853-1912) was born in Co. Meath. He was a nationalist and an IRB activist who was a leading member of the executive of the Irish National Land League after its establishment in 1879 (along with Egan and Davitt). Noted as an eloquent speaker, his speeches frequently linked the demand for peasant proprietorship and equality with the Fenian demand for complete Irish independence (DIB 2009, 'Brennan, Thomas').

**John Bright** (1811-89) was a Quaker and an influential British Radical and Liberal statesman. After the Great Famine, he had expressed sympathy and support for land reform in Ireland, although he later opposed Gladstone's 1886 Home Rule proposal, and he regarded Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party as 'the rebel party' (Wikipedia 2022, 'John Bright').

**Isaac Butt** (1813-79) was the son of a Co. Donegal Church of Ireland parson. Educated at the Royal School in Raphoe, Co. Donegal, and Trinity College, he became a journalist, an editor, a distinguished barrister, and a professor of political economy at Trinity College. Butt entered Parliament initially as a Conservative MP, serving for Youghal from 1852 to 1865, and then for Limerick as leader of the Home Rule MPs, from 1871 until his death in 1879. The Great Famine and its aftermath caused Butt to recognise that land reform was essential to create a more equitable relationship between Protestant landlords and the Catholic tenant farmers who comprised the majority of the population. As a highly regarded barrister, Butt gained popular support for his efforts on behalf of Fenian prisoners in the late 1860s. In 1870 Butt formed the Home Government Association, followed by the Home Rule League in 1873 (DIB 2009, 'Butt, Isaac').

**Edward 'Doc' Byrne** (1847-99) was a journalist and newspaper editor who was an advisor and friend of Parnell. He was editor of the *Freeman's Journal* in the 1880s when it played a major role in maintaining Parnell's political ascendancy. He supported Parnell throughout his lifetime (DIB 2009, 'Byrne, Edward Joseph').

**Philip Callan** (1837-1902) was a Liberal Home Rule politician and lawyer. He was an MP (for Dundalk and then Louth) from 1868 to 1885. He was a follower of and adviser to Isaac Butt and was prominent in Butt's Home Government Association. He was not a supporter of the Land League and chafed under the leadership of Parnell, whose opposition led to Callan losing his seat in Parliament in 1885 (DIB 2009, 'Callan, Philip').

**Philip Carberry** (1833-1902) was the parish priest of Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, and a supporter of Parnell, whose home, Avondale, was in his parish (Ancestry.com n.d., 'Fr. Philip Carberry').

**Joseph Chamberlain** (1836-1914) was a businessman, a social reformer, and a radical politician who entered Parliament in 1876. He was a leader of the left wing of the Liberal Party. Chamberlain

favoured Irish reform and opposed the use of excessive force in suppressing Irish agitation, but he later opposed Gladstone's attempts to introduce Home Rule for Ireland (Poole 2022).

**Lord Randolph Churchill** (1849-1895) was a leading Conservative MP and fierce opponent of Home Rule (Wikipedia 2022, 'Lord Randolph Churchill').

**John Clancy** (1844-1915) was a local government official who began work as a printer with the *Irish Times* and joined the IRB. He was arrested in 1866 for making seditious speeches and was imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail for several months. By the mid-1870s he had become a well-known figure in Dublin republican circles and a strong supporter of the Land League. He was also imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail in early 1882 for supporting the No Rent Manifesto. A strong supporter of Parnell, he had played a critical role in organising support for him after the party split. He established the 'Parnell Leadership Committee' at the National Club to form an alliance of all Parnellite town and city councillors in the country. He had a lengthy career in Dublin city hall, playing a significant role in Dublin municipal politics (DIB 2009, 'Clancy, John').

**Henry Campbell** (1856-1924) was the private secretary to Parnell from 1880 to 1891. He was a nationalist MP for South Fermanagh from 1885 to 1892 and was appointed town clerk of Dublin from 1893 to 1920 (DIB 2009, 'Campbell, Sir Henry').

**Dr. William Carte** (1829-99) became the staff surgeon of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham in 1858 and worked there until his death (WikiTree n.d., 'William Carte (1829-1899)').

**David la Touche Colthurst** (1828-1907) was a Home Rule League politician who was elected MP for Co. Cork between 1879 and 1885 (Wikipedia 2022, 'David la Touche Colthurst').

**Eva Mary Comerford** (1860-1949) was the wife of James Charles Comerford (1842-1907) of Ardavon House, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow,

the owner of Rathdrum Mill and a friend of Charles Stewart Parnell (Comerford 2016).

**William Joseph Corbet** (1824-1909) was a civil servant and home rule MP for constituencies in County Wicklow from 1880 to 1892 and 1895 to 1900. He was a close political colleague of Parnell and he organized the care of Parnell's farm at Avondale during his detention for Land League activities (DIB 2009, 'Corbet, William Joseph').

**Joseph Cowan** (1829-1900) was an MP for Newcastle-upon-Tyne between 1874 and 1886. He was an activist, politician, journalist, and printer with a reputation for being radical, liberal, and independent-minded (Wikipedia 2022, 'Joseph Cowen').

**Thomas William Croke** (1823-1902) was the Catholic archbishop of Cashel. He actively pursued an interest in politics and nationalist interests and encouraged his clergy to do likewise. On making a £50 donation to Parnell's testimonial fund, he declared that the amount anyone gave was a measure of their patriotism. In 1884 he moved the crucial resolution entrusting Parnell's Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons with the promotion of the Catholic Church's claims 'in all branches of the education question,' thus forging a formal alliance between episcopate and party which lasted until the Parnell split in December 1890 (DIB 2009, 'Croke, Thomas William').

**Paul Cullen** (1803-78), Catholic archbishop and cardinal, was born into a family of prosperous tenant farmers with roots in Kildare, Carlow, and Meath. He served as archbishop of Armagh (1849-52) and archbishop of Dublin (1852-70s). Although proudly Irish, Cullen was opposed to the Fenians, the Independent Irish Party, and the Home Rule movement because he believed they could not succeed, and, if they did, the outcome would damage the authority of the Church in Ireland (DIB 2009, 'Cullen, Paul').

**John Daly** (1834-88) was a moderate Home Ruler (Wikipedia 2021, 'John Daly (Irish Member of Parliament)').

**The Very Rev. James Canon Daniel** (c. 1830-95) was born in Dublin, educated at Maynooth College, and ordained in 1857. He was appointed to be the parish priest of St. Nicholas's Church on Francis Street, Dublin, in 1879. A friend of Sir John Gray, he was a frequent contributor to the *Freeman's Journal* (*Weekly Freeman*, 13 April 1895).

**William Joseph O'Neill Daunt** (1807-94) was a politician and writer and had been a partisan of Daniel O'Connell. He played a prominent part in the Home Rule movement although he had little sympathy for the agrarian reform agitation. One issue of importance to him was that of financial relations between Ireland and Great Britain, in which he considered Ireland had been unfairly treated (DIB 2009, 'Daunt (Moriarty), William Joseph O'Neill ("Denis Ignatius")'). His publications included a public letter concerning the taxation of Ireland published as a pamphlet: *England's Greediness Ireland's True Grievance* (1875).

**Michael Davitt** (1846-1906) was a radical nationalist and land reform activist. Born in Mayo, Davitt and his family migrated to England after being evicted from their cottage. He lost his right arm in a factory accident at age nine. He joined the IRB in 1865 and was arrested in 1870 and convicted of 'treason felony' for arms trafficking. He was released from prison in 1877 due to Home Rule League pressure on the government to grant amnesty to Irish political prisoners. He went to the United States and was instrumental in developing the 'New Departure', a strategy to combine the IRB and parliamentary wings of Irish nationalism with a focus on achieving land reform in Ireland. This culminated in the establishment of the Irish National Land League in 1879 under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell, Davitt, and Andrew J. Kettle. The leaders of the Land League, including Davitt, were imprisoned in 1881-82. Davitt served as a Member of Parliament during the 1890s, but when the Irish Parliamentary Party split over the O'Shea divorce scandal in 1891, Davitt opposed Parnell. In his final years Davitt travelled around the world, delivering lectures and supporting himself through journalism (DIB 2009, 'Davitt, Michael'; King 2009).

**Charles Dawson** (1842-1917) was a Home Rule MP for Carlow from 1880 to 1884, and he often spoke at Land League and National League meetings around the country. He also became lord mayor of Dublin (1882-83), which reinforced his prominence within the Irish Parliamentary Party and allowed him to use that office as a platform for his nationalist politics (DIB 2009, 'Dawson, Charles').

**Anne Deane** (c. 1834-1905) was a businesswoman, philanthropist, and nationalist from Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. She was the niece of the Young Irelander John Blake Dillon. As a widow, she owned and managed the general store in Ballaghaderreen, which became one of the largest and most successful businesses in the west of Ireland. Although she had no children herself, she played a key role in bringing up the young family of her uncle and aunt after their death. John Dillon, who divided his time between Ballaghaderreen and Dublin, came to regard her as a second mother. She was a keen supporter of Home Rule and her house was a regular meeting place for nationalists. In 1881 she became one of the founding members of the Ladies' Land League and was chosen as honorary president (DIB 2009, 'Deane, Anne (Duff)'; O'Brien 1937).

**Emily Monroe Dickinson** (1841-1918) was an older sister of Parnell. In 1905 she published *A Patriot's Mistake: Being Personal Recollections of the Parnell Family*.

**Charles Wentworth Dilke** (1843-1911) was an English Liberal and Radical politician. A republican in the early 1870s, he later became a leader in the radical challenge to Whig control of the Liberal Party (Jenkins 2008).

**Charles Dillon** (1810-65), 14th Viscount Dillon, and his family had been landowners in the counties of Mayo, Roscommon, and Westmeath since the seventeenth century. (Wikipedia 2022, 'Charles Dillon, 14th Viscount Dillon').

**John Dillon** (1851-1927) was born in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, the son of Young Irelander, John Blake Dillon (1814-66). He was educated at

the Catholic University and obtained a degree from the College of Surgeons. Dillon was prominent in the Land League and served as MP for County Tipperary from 1880 to 1883 and for East Mayo from 1885 to 1918. Initially a strong supporter of Parnell, in the context of the Parnell split he allied with William O'Brien and Tim Healy against Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Dillon, John').

**Valentine Blake Dillon** (1847-1904) was a lawyer and politician who was the nephew of John Blake Dillon (one of the founding members of the Young Ireland movement) and the cousin of John Dillon. He had qualified as a solicitor in 1870 and took part in many trials related to the Land War (Wikipedia 2022, 'Valentine Blake Dillon').

**Charles Gavan Duffy** (1816-1903) was from a Catholic background in Monaghan, where his father was a shopkeeper and former United Irishman. He established *The Nation* in 1842, the successful Young Ireland newspaper, and the Tenant League in 1850, a political association that endeavoured to improve the conditions of tenant farmers through legislative reform. After a brief stint as MP in the early 1850s, he emigrated to Australia, where he became a prominent politician (DIB 2009, 'Duffy, Sir Charles Gavan'; Lyons 1973, 116).

**Patrick Egan** (1841-1919) was born in Longford, the son of a tenant farmer. Educated locally, Egan began work as a clerk at Murtagh Brothers milling company. In the 1860s he joined the IRB. Through his involvement with amnesty campaigns for Fenian prisoners in the late 1860s, he came to support cooperation between radical republican and Home Rule efforts, becoming assistant treasurer of the Home Rule League. In 1876, he was expelled from the IRB after its supreme council decided it would no longer support parliamentary engagement. As treasurer of the Land League in early 1881, fearing the organisation was about to be suppressed, he moved to Paris from where he managed the Land League's funds. Egan subsequently relocated to the United States where he continued to support the Land League and other Irish nationalist efforts and became heavily involved in American politics (DIB 2009, 'Egan, Patrick').

**John Ferguson** (1836-1906) was a publisher, Home Ruler, and land reformer originally from Ulster. He developed an interest in agrarian reform as a young man and, following a move to Glasgow, became an Irish nationalist and established the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain in the early 1870s. A radical intellectual, he was also active in the Land League activities in Ireland and frequently returned to Ireland, where he gave moral and practical support to Butt and later to Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Ferguson, John').

**James Lysaght Finegan** (1844-1900) was an Irish barrister, soldier, merchant, and politician who supported the nationalist cause. He served as an MP from 1879 to 1882. He was regarded as anti-clericalist due to his open acknowledgment of close contact with the French anti-clerical Henri Rochefort – a fact that would have contributed to clashes with bishops and clergy in Ireland (Lyons 1977).

**William Forster** (1818-86) was born in Dorset, England, the only child of a Quaker minister. Educated in Quaker schools, he entered the woollen industry and became a successful businessman with interests in social welfare and educational and parliamentary reform. He visited Ireland during the Great Famine to distribute relief with his father. Forster was elected Liberal MP for Bradford in 1861, holding the seat for the rest of his life. In his first ministerial post, he was Colonial Under-Secretary (1865-66) during the controversial suppression of revolt in Jamaica. He was responsible for the introduction of the Ballot Act of 1872. Forster was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1880, taking office at the height of Land League agitation and a period of moral panic regarding 'crime and disorder.' Initially not in favour of repression measures, he changed tack and introduced the Protection of Person and Property Act of 1881, known as the Coercion Act, which gave the authorities extraordinary powers of arrest, detention, and proscription of targeted activities (DIB 2009, 'Forster, William Edward').

**Joseph Allen Galbraith** (1818-90) was a professor of experimental philosophy and a proponent of Home Rule. A friend of Butt, he was



a founding member of the Home Government Association in 1870 and was supposed to have come up with the phrase 'Home Rule' for the emerging movement, which was strongly Protestant at that time (DIB 2009, 'Galbraith, Joseph Allen').

**Henry George** (1839-97) was an American political economist and journalist whose ideas were very popular in nineteenth-century America. His economic philosophy, known as the 'single tax' movement (later termed 'Georgism'), was the belief that the economic value of land, natural resources, and opportunities should be shared equally by all members of society. This principle was sometimes associated with movements for land nationalisation, especially in Ireland. His most famous work was *Progress and Poverty* (1879) (Wikipedia 2022, 'Henry George').

**William Goulding** (1817-84) was a successful businessman and conservative Tory politician, winning a seat in 1876 as the first conservative elected in Cork city for 30 years until he lost to Parnell in the 1880 election (DIB 2009, 'Goulding, William').

**Edmund Dwyer Gray** (1845-88) was born in Dublin. He was the son of the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, Sir John Gray, whom he succeeded in this role in 1875. A convert to Catholicism, Gray became a Dublin city councillor (1875-83), and a Home Rule MP for Tipperary (1877-80), Carlow (1880-85), and St. Stephen's Green, Dublin (1885-88). A moderate, he was one of eighteen MPs who voted against Parnell's leadership of the party but subsequently supported him. Under his management, the circulation of the *Freeman's Journal* increased and it became highly profitable (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Edmund William Dwyer').

**Sir John Gray** (1816-75) was the owner of the Dublin Catholic newspaper the *Freeman's Journal*. Despite being brought up a Protestant, he made a parliamentary career out of his association with the Catholic hierarchy and advocated for tenant rights. He was an active member of the National Association of Ireland, which had been formed in 1864 under the initiative of the Catholic archbishop of

Dublin, Paul Cullen. Its role was to promote Catholic interests and, in particular, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and his arguments for Church disestablishment were seen as one of the main influences in persuading Gladstone to address this issue (DIB 2009, 'Gray, Sir John').

**James F. Grehan** (1836–96) of Lehaunstown, Cabinteely, Co. Dublin, was a friend of Davitt, a member of the Land League committee, and a prominent farmer in Cabinteely (King 2009; WikiTree n.d.; Clancy 1889, 148).

**Lord Richard Grosvenor** (1837–1912), 1st Baron Stalbridge, was a Liberal Party MP. He served under Gladstone as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (chief whip) from 1880 to 1885, but he disagreed with Gladstone over Home Rule and resigned his seat in protest in 1886 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Richard Grosvenor, 1st Baron Stalbridge').

**Ion Trant Hamilton** (1839–98) was a Member of Parliament. He succeeded his father and grandfather as Member of Parliament for County Dublin in 1863, a seat he held until 1885 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Ion Hamilton, 1st Baron HolmPatrick').

**Sir William Harcourt** (1827–1904) was a British lawyer, journalist, Liberal politician, and cabinet member who served under Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1886 and again between 1892 and 1894. On Gladstone's retirement in 1894 he was a leading but unsuccessful candidate to succeed him as prime minister (Stansky 2004).

**Timothy Charles Harrington** (1851–1910, not to be confused with his contemporary, the unrelated journalist Timothy Richard Harrington) was a barrister, journalist, and nationalist politician. He served as the MP for Westmeath and subsequently Dublin Harbour from 1883 to 1910. He had been a provincial organiser for the Land League in Munster and was imprisoned in late 1881 before being released under the Kilmainham Treaty. He was appointed joint secretary of the Land League and after its replacement by the National League

in 1882, he became the principal secretary of the new organisation. He helped ensure loyalty to Parnell by controlling the network of National League branches (1,513 by 1887) that were connected to the central apparatus. He had devised the strategy for the anti-landlord Plan of Campaign and served as defence counsel in some of the prominent Plan trials, including those of William O'Brien and John Dillon. Despite his importance to the Parnell machine, he has been frequently overshadowed by more prominent figures and remains one of the least well known of Parnell's lieutenants (DIB 2009, 'Harrington, Timothy Charles').

**Matthew Harris** (1825-90) was a self-educated agrarian activist. He had strongly supported the Repeal and Young Ireland movements and was known as an enthusiastic democrat and nationalist. He was a leading figure in the IRB as the representative for Connaught. He helped to establish the Mayo Land League in 1879 and played a leading role in establishing branches of the League across the west of Ireland. He was elected MP for Galway East from 1885 to 1890 (DIB 2009, 'Harris, Matthew').

**Timothy Michael Healy** (1855-1931) was an agrarian nationalist politician, journalist, author, and barrister who was returned as MP for Wexford in 1881 and attained parliamentary prominence with a reputation as an extraordinary speaker. Although an accomplished publicist of Parnellism, there was some mistrust between Healy and Parnell and he sided against Parnell during the later split. He influenced the political direction of Irish nationalism to an agrarianism of the right and his political career continued into the 1920s, when he became the first Governor-General of the Irish Free State (DIB 2009, 'Healy, Timothy Michael').

**Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert** (1831-90), 4th Earl of Carnarvon, was a British politician and a leading member of the Conservative Party. He held the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1885 and 1886, during which time he was involved in negotiations with Parnell regarding Home Rule. Carnarvon was known to be sym-

pathetic to the notion of Home Rule (DIB 2009, Herbert, Henry Howard Molyneux'; Bew 1980, 72; Bew 2007, 343).

**Rev. Canon John Hoey** was the parish priest of the parish of Muckno in Co. Monaghan from 1882 to 1895 (Carville 2011).

**Jeremiah Jordan** (1829-1911) was a Protestant businessman, land campaigner, and MP from Co. Fermanagh. From late 1879 he had become one of the leading activists in Ulster of the Irish National Land League. As a member of the first Ulster branch of the League, he had secured considerable Protestant support for it, presenting it as a law-abiding, single-issue reform body (DIB 2009, 'Jordan, Jeremiah').

**James Blake Kavanagh** (1822-86) was a priest, a nationalist, and a philosophical and scientific writer who, as a member of the Land League, acted as an intermediary between landlords and tenants. He died while saying mass in October 1886 in his parish church when a marble figure of an angel fell from the canopy above the altar (which he himself had designed) and struck him, causing him to fall and strike his head fatally on the alter steps (DIB 2009, 'Kavanagh, James Blake').

**Tristram Edward Kennedy** (1805-85) was a lawyer, land agent, and politician. His early career was concentrated on the reform of law and legal education, but it was his reforming work as a land agent in Co. Monaghan during the Great Famine that won him the admiration of Catholics and the Tenant League. In his work as an independent politician, he came to represent the interests of poor Catholics in Parliament and his contributions were concerned largely with landlord and tenant matters and national and industrial education (DIB 2009, 'Kennedy, Tristram Edward').

**Joseph Edward Kenny** (1845-1900) was a physician and served as a nationalist MP for South Cork from 1885 to 1892. He was elected to the executive committee of the Land League in 1880 and subsequently served as treasurer of the National League, the Mansion

House Evicted Tenants Committee, and the Tenants' Defence Association. He was a close friend and medical advisor to both Parnell and Davitt and acted as the doctor for his political colleagues while imprisoned with them in Kilmainham Jail in 1881 (DIB 2009, 'Kenny, Joseph Edward'; Lyons 1991).

**John Kinsella** (c. 1823–87) of Co. Wexford was a 64-year-old widower and evicted tenant who was shot and killed by George Freeman, an enforcer of the landlords' Property Defence Association, on 26 September 1887. The Property Defence Association had been formed in 1880 and defended landlord rights by serving writs, combating boycotts, and provided caretakers for evicted farms. The association also hired civilian emergency men, formidable characters who used crowbars and battering rams to secure evictions. When the case of John Kinsella came to trial, Freeman was acquitted of the murder (O'Brien 1976, 72).

**Richard Lalor** (1823–93), a younger brother of James Fintan Lalor, was a nationalist MP for Queen's County (later Co. Laois) from 1880 to 1892 (DIB 2009, 'Lalor, Patrick ('Pat')').

**James Leahy** (1822–96) was a tenant farmer and nationalist politician who was a MP for constituencies in Co. Kildare from 1880 to 1892 (Wikipedia 2022, 'James Leahy').

**Edmund Leamy** (1848–1904) was an Irish journalist, barrister, author, and nationalist politician. A leading supporter of Parnell, he held a number of different Irish seats in Parliament from 1880 until his death. Parnell made him the editor of the *United Ireland* newspaper in 1891. He was also a talented folklorist and poet (Wikipedia 2022, 'Edmund Leamy').

**Robert Spencer Dyer Lyons** (1826–86) was a physician and Liberal politician, born in Cork to parents William Lyons, a merchant and later mayor and high sheriff of Cork, and Harriet Spencer Dyer of Kinsale. Educated in Hamblin and Porter's Grammar School in Cork and Trinity College, he qualified as a surgeon in 1849 and served

as a British army pathologist in the Crimean War (1853–56). He was professor of medicine and pathology at the medical school of the Catholic University of Ireland (later University College Dublin) in Cecilia Street, Dublin, and in 1870 served on a commission of inquiry into the treatment of Irish political prisoners, which enhanced his standing among nationalists in Ireland (DIB 2009, ‘Lyons, Robert Spencer Dyer’).

**Donald Horne Macfarlane** (1830–1904) was a Scottish merchant who served as a Home Rule Member of Parliament for Carlow from 1880 to 1885. He subsequently served several times as a Crofters Party MP for a constituency in Scotland between 1886 and 1895 (Wikipedia 2022, ‘Donald Horne Macfarlane’).

**John Gordon Swift MacNeill** (1849–1926) was an Irish Protestant nationalist politician and MP (1887–1918), law professor at the King’s Inns, Dublin, and the National University of Ireland, and a well-known author on law and nationalist issues (Wikipedia 2022, ‘J. G. Swift MacNeill’).

**Edward Maginn** (1802–49) was a coadjutor Catholic bishop of Derry. In response to the starvation of the Great Famine, Maginn was an outspoken critic of the relief policy of the government and his statements on related issues received widespread press attention. He brought about the dismissal of the board of guardians at Omagh after hundreds died of disease in the union workhouse (DIB 2009, ‘Maginn, Edward’).

**David Mahony** was the (unsuccessful) Liberal candidate in the 1880 general election for the Wicklow seat (Wikipedia 2023, ‘Wicklow (UK Parliament constituency)’).

**John Mallon** (1839–1915) was a policeman, originally from Armagh, who had moved up the ranks of the Dublin Metropolitan Police to become superintendent of the force by 1874. His knowledge of the Irish situation meant that he was frequently asked to handle polit-

ical matters, including the delicate task of the arrest of Parnell in October 1881 (DIB 2009, 'Mallon, John').

**John Martin** (1812-75), from a Presbyterian and farming background in Co. Down, had been a supporter of the Young Irelanders in the 1840s and national organiser of Gavan Duffy's Tenant League in the 1850s. He became the first Home Rule MP for Meath at the end of his of career (1871-75) (DIB 2009, 'Martin, John').

**Patrick Leopold Martin** (1830-95) was an MP for Co. Kilkenny from 1874 to 1885 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Patrick Martin (Irish politician)').

**Daniel McAleese** (1833-1900) was a journalist, poet, newspaper proprietor, and politician. He had worked with different newspapers but had moved to Monaghan and in February 1876 launched the *People's Advocate*, a cheap, nationalist weekly sympathetic to Catholic interests. He became an influential figure in local politics and played a significant role in the Tenant Right, Land League and Home Rule movements (DIB 2009, 'McAleese, Daniel').

**Michael McCartan** (1851-1902) was an Irish nationalist politician. He was born in County Down, was educated in Belfast, and became a solicitor in 1882. He served as an MP from County Down from 1886 to 1902. McCartan was a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party until the split in 1890, when he joined the anti-Parnellite Irish National Federation. When the two sides reunited in 1900, he rejoined the Irish Parliamentary Party (Wikipedia 2022, 'Michael McCartan').

**Justin McCarthy** (1830-1912) was a journalist, historian, novelist, and politician who was an MP from 1879 to 1900. He joined the Westminster Home Rule Association in 1877, was elected MP for Co. Longford in the 1879 by-election, and served as vice-chairman of the Home Rule Party from 1880 to 1890. He acted as a conduit between British leaders and Parnell. After the party divided in 1890, McCarthy became chairman of the anti-Parnellite group (DIB 2009, 'McCarthy, Justin').

**James Carlile McCoan** (1829-1904) was barrister, journalist, and author who was elected as a Home Rule MP for Wicklow in 1880. He had a falling out with his colleagues in Parliament and served out the term as a Liberal independent (DIB 2009, 'McCoan, James Carlile').

**Peter McDonald** (1836-91) was a teacher, businessman, and politician. He was elected as commissioner for Kingstown and afterwards represented the Mountjoy Ward in the municipal council and was elected senior councillor to the position of alderman. In 1885 he won the North Sligo constituency as a nationalist candidate for the Irish Parliamentary Party (Cantwell n.d.).

**Andrew Joseph McKenna** (1833-72) was appointed editor of the liberal Catholic newspaper the *Ulster Observer* in 1862. His acclaimed essays and powerful speaking ability brought him public attention, but his liberal outlook annoyed the newspaper's owners. When he was fired in 1868 he launched a new paper, the *Northern Star*. He died prematurely at the age of 38 (DIB 2009, 'McKenna, Andrew Joseph').

**Sir Joseph Neale McKenna** (1819-1906) was a banker and politician who was MP for Youghal and South Monaghan. He was an able financier and chairman of the National Bank of Ireland and played a leading role in forming nationalist thinking on the overtaxation of Ireland. He wrote *Imperial Taxation: The Case of Ireland Plainly Stated* (1883) (Wikipedia 2022, 'Joseph Neale McKenna'). Kettle's idea was that land purchase could be facilitated by the recovery of tax allegedly charged in excess on Ireland by the British government since the Act of Union.

**Joseph Meade** (1839-1900) was elected Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1891. He was also the wealthy head of a large building firm and owned many Dublin properties, including a large number of tenement buildings. He was a strong nationalist who contributed financially to the Home Rule Party and after the Parnellite split he remained fiercely loyal to Parnell (DIB 2009, 'Meade, Joseph Michael').



**Charles Stanley Monck** (1819–94), 4th Viscount Monck of Ballytramon, was born in Tipperary and owned estates in Wicklow and Wexford. He was elected to Parliament in 1852 and, after losing his seat, he was appointed governor of British North America in 1861. When Canada became independent in 1867, he became its first governor general. He returned to Ireland in 1868 and served as Lord Lieutenant of County Dublin from 1874 to 1892 (Harris 2020).

**John Morley** (1838–1923) was an English politician, writer, and Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1886 and again from 1892 to 1895. A previous opponent of coercion in Ireland, he was a firm believer of the necessity for Home Rule, and as a Liberal MP he was adamant that Ireland should be a priority for the Liberal Party (DIB 2009, ‘Morley, John’).

**Nicholas Daniel Murphy** (1811–89) entered politics as a Liberal candidate for Cork city in 1865. Although his family had a tradition of nationalism, Murphy was an old-style Whig who favoured the union and insisted that Home Rule did not mean separation but federation within the empire (DIB 2009, ‘Murphy, Nicholas Daniel’).

**Isaac Nelson** (1809–88) was a Presbyterian minister and politician from Belfast. He had been a champion of liberal causes and his criticism of his Presbyterian colleagues had resulted in him falling out of sympathy with many of them. His support for Home Rule and the Land League in the 1870s put him even more out of step with his colleagues and congregation, but it attracted the attention of Biggar and Parnell. He drew widespread support, although the *Freeman’s Journal* termed him a ‘clergyman of rather crazy political proclivities’ (Bew 1978, 98; DIB 2009, ‘Nelson, Isaac’).

**Henry F. Neville** (1822–89) was a Catholic parish priest and dean of the Cork diocese. He opposed Parnell when he stood (successfully) in the city constituency in the parliamentary elections in March–April 1880 (DIB 2009, ‘Neville, Henry F.’).

**Thomas Nulty** (1818–98) was a Catholic bishop of Meath and an agrarian reformer. He was active in both local and national politics

and was the first bishop to support Parnell during his election in Meath in 1875, while also being the only Catholic bishop to give his approval to the No Rent Manifesto. Nulty lost some of his popularity after the split when he strongly supported the anti-Parnellites and used intimidation tactics to effect voting in the 1892 election (DIB 2009, 'Nulty, Thomas').

**William O'Brien** (1852-1928) was born in Mallow, Co. Cork, the son of a solicitor's clerk. Although Catholic, O'Brien was educated at the local Church of Ireland school. He was active for a time in the Fenian movement, resigning from it in the mid-1870s. He studied law at Queen's College Cork and then became a journalist with the *Freeman's Journal*. In 1881 Parnell appointed him editor of the Land League newspaper, *United Ireland* (DIB 2009, 'O'Brien, William'). O'Brien was one of the main organisers of the 1886-91 Plan of Campaign, prompted by a depression in the mid-1880s, to reduce rents. It was not supported by Parnell. O'Brien joined the anti-Parnellite side in the split following the O'Shea divorce crisis (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 396).

**Patrick Keyes O'Clery** (1849-1913) was a barrister and Home Rule MP for Co. Wexford from 1874 to 1880. In the 1880 election, although backed by the Catholic clergy, he was defeated by the Parnellite candidate. The outbreak of violence at this meeting in Enniscorthy on Easter Sunday (28 March 1880) resulted in Parnell being attacked and injured. In 1903, he was created a Count by Pope Leo XIII (Wikipedia 2023, 'Keyes O'Clery').

**Arthur O'Connor** (1844-1923) was an Irish nationalist politician and Member of Parliament from 1880 to 1900. He was a member of the anti-Parnellite group from 1892 (Wikipedia 2022, 'Arthur O'Connor (politician, born 1844)').

**John O'Connor** (1850-1928) was a Fenian and politician who became a prominent member of the Irish Party. He served as MP for Tipperary South (1885-92) and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Plan of Campaign (1886-89). He was devoted to Parnell and sided with him

in the split, defending Parnell strongly and attempting to persuade the party to issue a statement criticising Gladstone's interference in party matters (DIB 2009, 'O'Connor, John').

**T. P. (Timothy Power) O'Connor** (1848-1929) was born in Athlone and educated at Queen's College Galway. He moved to England in 1870 and became an accomplished and popular journalist, writing for the *Daily Telegraph* and as London correspondent for the *New York Herald*. He was the only Home Rule MP to sit for an English constituency, representing Liverpool from 1880 to 1929. A strong supporter of the Land League and Parnell, he later opposed Parnell during the leadership crisis following the O'Shea divorce scandal (Hickey & Doherty 2003, 360).

**Frank Hugh O'Donnell** (1846-1916) was born in England, the son of an army officer, and was educated at St. Ignatius College and Queens College Galway. He was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) for a brief time, and was an accomplished foreign affairs journalist and writer. A supporter of Butt's Home Rule League, after two unsuccessful attempts in Galway, O'Donnell was elected MP for Dungarvan in 1877 until 1885, during which time he participated in obstructionist tactics with Parnell, Biggar and others. His complex and often contradictory views led to his eventual political isolation and earned him the sobriquet 'Crank Hugh' (DIB 2009, 'O'Donnell, Frank Hugh').

**James Joseph O'Kelly** (1845-1916) was an Irish nationalist journalist, politician, and MP representing Roscommon as a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1880 to 1916. When the party split in 1890 over Parnell's leadership, O'Kelly supported Parnell (DIB 2009, 'O'Kelly, James Joseph').

**Patrick O'Neill** was the vice-president of the Athy branch of the Land League.

**Anna Parnell** (1852-1911) was a nationalist and land activist and younger sister of Charles Stewart Parnell. After her brother was

elected MP for Meath in 1875, she became increasingly political. She and her sister, Fanny, had worked in New York for the Famine Relief Fund. There she collaborated with Michael Davitt, who recognised her administrative and intellectual capabilities. Fanny had also set up a Ladies' Land League Committee in New York in order to raise funds for the Irish National Land League. By late 1880 Davitt believed that the leadership of the Land League would soon be imprisoned and suggested that a Ladies' Land League be set up to carry on the work after their imprisonment. He proposed that Anna take charge of the new Ladies' Land League, which was established in Dublin in January 1881. Anna travelled throughout Ireland promoting the message of the Land League and encouraging women to take an active role in Land League activities. Following the suppression of the Land League, as planned, the Ladies' Land League took over responsibility for the continuation of the campaign. Over 500 branches of the Ladies' Land League were formed and funds were raised for the League and for the support of prisoners and their families. Attempts to close down the Ladies' Land League following the release of the male Land League leaders under the Kilmainham Treaty led to bitter negotiations between the women of the Ladies' Land League and the male leadership and, against Anna's wishes, the Ladies' Land League was disbanded in 1882 (DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Anna Mercer (Catherine Maria)'; Ward 2021).

**Charles Stewart Parnell** (1846-91) was a politician who succeeded Isaac Butt to become leader of the Home Rule League (1880-82) and the Irish Parliamentary Party (1882-91). Born on 27 June 1846 in Avondale House, Co. Wicklow, he was the seventh of eleven children of John Henry Parnell and Delia (Stewart) Parnell. During his childhood, Parnell's family lived in residences in Dalkey, Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire), and at 14 Upper Temple Steet, Dublin. He was educated mainly at home and later attended Magdalene College, Cambridge, but he did not complete his degree. He returned to Ireland to be landlord at Avondale, the heavily indebted family estate. Parnell first became an MP representing Meath in 1875 and grew in popularity

in nationalist circles for his participation in Joseph Biggar's strategy of obstructionism and his sympathetic stance toward Irish republican prisoners. He joined forces with Michael Davitt, supported by A. J. Kettle's tenant right networks, to establish the Irish National Land League in October 1879. Parnell successfully toured America and addressed the House of Representatives in early 1880, mobilising financial and political support for radical agrarian reform in Ireland. He was imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail for his role in these efforts in October 1881 and moderated his position thereafter to focus on pursuing the achievement of Home Rule in Parliament. In 1880, Parnell began a relationship with Katharine O'Shea who was then separated from her husband, Captain William O'Shea, an Irish nationalist MP for County Clare. Charles and Katharine had three children (Claude Sophie, 1882; Claire, 1883; and Katharine 1884). In 1889, Captain O'Shea initiated divorce proceedings, citing his wife's relationship with Parnell. Parnell was soon rejected by the majority of his party, the British political establishment, and the Catholic hierarchy. As a result, he rapidly lost popular support in Ireland. He died in Brighton on 6 October 1891 (DIB 2009, 'Parnell, Charles Stewart').

**Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell** (1816–98) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the daughter of Commodore Charles Stewart, a US naval officer who had played an important role in the War of 1812 fought between the United States and Great Britain. She married John Henry Parnell, an Irish landlord and the grandson of Sir John Parnell, an Irish parliamentary leader in the 18th century. Her home became the Parnell estate at Avondale, but she spent most of her her time with relatives in France and America. She had eleven children. Although primarily known as the mother of Parnell, she was a pioneering feminist and political activist who served as the president of the Ladies' Land League and actively spoke on behalf of Home Rule (Schneller 2010).

**Katharine Parnell (Katharine O'Shea)** (1846–1921) was born Katherine Page Wood on 30 January 1846, the 13th child of Sir John Page

Wood. In her biography of Charles Stewart Parnell, Katharine recounts that as a child she was musically gifted and educated by her father, being particularly inspired by his work as a long-serving chairman of the Board of Guardians. In 1867 Katharine married William O'Shea (1840-1905), a member of the Home Rule Party and MP for County Clare. The couple had three children, but after some years they began to live separately. Katharine moved into a residence on the estate of her wealthy aunt, Mrs. Benjamin Wood, at Eltham, Kent. She commenced a relationship with Charles Stewart Parnell in 1880 and they had three children (Claude Sophie, 1882; Claire, 1883; and Katharine, 1884). Throughout the 1880s, facilitated by the status and connections of her family, Katharine acted as the intermediary for correspondence between Parnell and Gladstone on the Irish question. The O'Shea family had remained financially dependent on Mrs. Wood, who left her niece a substantial inheritance after her death in 1889. In the same year, Captain O'Shea initiated divorce proceedings, citing his wife's relationship with Parnell. During the ensuing scandal Parnell was rejected by the majority of his party, the British political establishment, and the Catholic hierarchy, and he lost popular support in Ireland. On 25 June 1891, now divorced, Katharine married Parnell in Brighton, four months before he died. She published a two-volume biography of Parnell in 1914. Katharine Parnell died on 5 February 1921 (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2010; O'Shea 1914, vol. 1, pp. 15-18; Wikipedia 2023, 'Katharine O'Shea').

**Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice** (1845-1927), 5th Marquess of Lansdowne, was a British statesman who served in senior positions in Liberal and Conservative Party governments during his career, which included being Governor General of Canada (1883-88) and Viceroy and Governor-General of India (1888-94) (DIB 2009, 'Fitzmaurice, Henry Charles Keith Petty-').

**Richard Pigott** (1828-89) was a journalist and newspaper owner who was revealed to be the forger of letters that ostensibly proved Parnell had been a supporter of the Phoenix Park murders. Originally

an important figure in nationalist politics, Pigott began to vilify his former associates from 1884 and produced articles which presented the Irish nationalist project as a criminal conspiracy. The Special Commission revealed the fact that he had forged the letters. After admitting the forgeries, Pigott fled to Spain, where he committed suicide (DIB 2009, 'Pigott, Richard').

**George Noble Plunkett** (1851-1948) was a nationalist politician, scholar, and museum director. In 1884, he was created a Papal Count by the Pope. Despite his close association with the Church, he supported Parnell against the Catholic hierarchy in 1890. He was a Member of Parliament from 1917 to 1922 and a Teachta Dála (TD) from 1918 to 1927. He was the minister for fine arts and the minister for foreign affairs in the Irish government between 1919 and 1922 (DIB 2009, 'Plunkett, Count George Noble').

**Horace Plunkett** (1854-1932) is best known for his pioneering work in developing the cooperative movement in Ireland. Born in England of Norman-Gaelic ancestry, his family settled in Co. Meath in the twelfth century. By the late nineteenth century the family possessed a large estate and castle at Dunsany. Plunkett was educated at Eton and Oxford, where he read history and learned about the British movement for consumer cooperation. Partly to fend off tuberculosis, for a decade from 1879, Plunkett spent several months each year ranching in the state of Wyoming in the western United States. Informed by this experience, and keen to contribute to the development of agriculture in Ireland, he established his first cooperative creamery in Co. Limerick in 1891. Gradually, Plunkett won the trust of Irish farmers and in 1894 established the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, which became the coordinating body of a thriving cooperative movement with hundreds of affiliated societies (DIB 2009, 'Plunkett, Sir Horace Curzon').

**James Plunkett** (c. 1817-99) was a Dublin solicitor who acted as 'sub-agent' for Parnell in his first County Dublin election in 1874 (*Evening Herald*, 29 May 1899).

**John O'Connor Power** (1846-1919) was a politician who represented Mayo from 1874 to 1885. Power, together with Biggar, was credited with pioneering the new policy of obstructionism. Joined by Parnell after his election in 1875, they obstructed House of Commons business by making long speeches in Parliament and manipulating its procedures (DIB 2009, 'Power, John O'Connor').

**Joseph Patrick Quinn** (1854-1916) was a nationalist and former secretary of the Land League. Following his incarceration during 1881 and 1882, he was appointed assistant secretary of the Irish National League. Two months later he was put on trial alongside Davitt and Healy, charged with making seditious speeches. In February 1883 all three men were sentenced to four months' imprisonment, which they served in Kilmainham and Richmond jails. On his release, Quinn resumed his work as assistant secretary of the National League (DIB 2009, 'Quinn, Joseph Patrick').

**John Redmond** (1856-1918) was a nationalist politician, barrister, and MP. As a Parnellite MP from 1881 to 1891 he was recognised as a skillful orator and had raised large sums of money for the party during fundraising trips to Australia, New Zealand, and America. He supported the Plan of Campaign led by John Dillon and William O'Brien and had spent some weeks in jail in 1888 after being accused of using intimidating language. Although not part of Parnell's inner circle, he was prominent among the second rank of Home Rule MPs. He became a leading figure among the minority who remained loyal to Parnell after the split in 1890-91 and after Parnell's death he was elected as leader of the minority faction. He is best known as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1900 until his death in 1918. He was also the leader of the paramilitary organisation the Irish National Volunteers (DIB 2009, 'Redmond, John Edward').

**Thomas Robertson** was a grazier from near Athy, Co. Kildare (Casey 2011, 152).

**James Rourke** (1844-1921) was the uncle of Thomas Brennan and a prominent Land League official (DIB 2009, 'Brennan, Thomas').



**Thomas Sexton** (1847-1932) was a journalist and politician. Encouraged to run for Parliament by Parnell, he was first elected as MP for Co. Sligo in the 1880 general election. He was considered to be one of Parnell's principal lieutenants although he later opposed him in the split. He was regarded as one of the finest orators of the Irish Parliamentary Party, hence his sobriquet 'silver-tongued Sexton' (DIB 2009, 'Sexton, Thomas').

**William Shaw** (1823-95) was an Irish Protestant nationalist politician and one of the founders of the Home Rule movement. He held his seat at the 1880 election but lost an election for the party chairmanship to Parnell (Falkiner & O'Day 2004).

**Captain John Shawe-Taylor** (1866-1911) was a reforming landlord who was sympathetic to his tenants during the land agitation of 1902. He energetically organised a land conference executive which was eventually attended by the majority of landlords. Endorsed by Chief Secretary for Ireland George Wyndham (1863-1913), it implied the provision of unlimited British credit for a scheme of buying out landlords and resulted in the basis for the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 (DIB 2009, 'Taylor, John Shawe-').

**Eugene Sheehy** (1841-1917) was a priest and nationalist from Co. Limerick. He was president of the local branch of the National Land League at Kilmallock. In May 1881, despite Dublin Castle's prohibition of the event, he spoke at a League rally in Limerick city and so was imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail. The notoriety he achieved from this earned him the sobriquet 'the Land League priest' (DIB 2009, 'Sheehy, Eugene'). He was the uncle of the feminists Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington (1877-1946) and Mary Sheehy (1884-1967), who married Tom Kettle (1882-1916).

**George Sigerson** (1836-1925) was born in Strabane, Co. Tyrone, to a well-off family. The youngest of 11 children of a Catholic father and a Protestant mother, he was educated locally and in France at Saint Joseph's College, Montrouge, where he excelled in European classical and modern languages. Later, Sigerson qualified as a physi-

cian but was known mostly as a literary figure and supporter of the Irish language and Gaelic games. J. B. Lyons writes that Sigerson described himself as ‘an Ulsterman and of Viking race,’ framing the ‘Norse’ heritage of Ireland as a counter identity to ‘Anglo-Saxon’ Britain (DIB 2009, ‘Sigerson, George’).

**Clotworthy John Eyre Skeffington** (1842-1905), 11th Viscount Massereene, was an Anglo-Irish peer who served as Lord Lieutenant of Louth from 1879 to 1898 (Wikipedia 2022, ‘Clotworthy Skeffington, 11th Viscount Massereene’).

**Arthur Hugh Smith Barry** (1843-1925), 1st Baron Barrymore, was a landlord and politician who served as a Liberal MP and whose family lands encompassed 22,000 acres in Co. Cork and Co. Tipperary. He was a determined defender of Irish landlordism who assisted in mounting organised resistance to boycotts, the most significant of which concerned the estate of C. W. T. Ponsonby in Co. Cork during the Plan of Campaign. In 1891 during a rent strike on Smith Barry’s Tipperary estates, William O’Brien consequently encouraged tenants to set up a town – ‘New Tipperary’ – to try and outflank him economically. It failed, at a cost of £40,000 (DIB 2009, ‘Barry, Arthur Hugh Smith’; Liberal Union of Ireland 1890).

**Alexander Martin Sullivan** (1830-84) was a nationalist, journalist, and politician. He was born and educated in Co. Cork, the son of a teacher and a house painter. A supporter of the Young Ireland movement, Sullivan became a successful journalist. In 1855 he joined (and after 1858 was the editor and sole proprietor of) the influential *Nation* newspaper, which, under his leadership, moved to equate nationalism with Catholicism. He was elected Home Rule MP for Louth in 1874 and for Meath in 1880, establishing a reputation as a parliamentary orator. He later trained as a barrister and defended Land League committee member Patrick Egan against conspiracy charges (DIB 2009, ‘Sullivan, Alexander Martin’).

**John Francis Taylor** (1853-1902) was a lawyer, orator, and writer. Although a member of the Land League he believed that Irish

nationalism had been restricted by a reliance on agrarian populism (DIB 2009, 'Taylor, John Francis').

**Thomas Edward Taylor** (1811-83) was a British Conservative Party politician. In 1841 he was elected Member of Parliament for Dublin County, a seat he held for the rest of his life. In the 1874 Dublin County by-election he decisively defeated Parnell (Wikipedia 2022, 'Thomas Edward Taylor').

**Michael Tormey** (1820-93), a Catholic priest from Meath, was a long-time supporter of the Land League and, later, of Parnell (Clare 2003).

**Sir George Otto Trevelyan** (1838-1928), 2nd Baronet, was a British statesman and author. As a Liberal member of Parliament, he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1882 after the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish in the Phoenix Park murders. He broke with Gladstone over the 1886 Irish Home Rule Bill but later re-joined the Liberal Party following modifications to the bill (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2022).

**William Copeland Trimble** (1851-1941) was a newspaper editor and eldest son of the newspaper proprietor William Trimble. He joined the Land League in 1880 and was in charge of the liberal newspaper the *Impartial Reporter*, which was critical in support for the Parnellite demand for self-government, while continuing to advocate for tenant protection and relief (DIB 2009, 'Trimble, William Copeland').

**Katharine Tynan** (1859-1931) was a novelist, poet, and journalist who was also an ardent nationalist and Parnellite. Her father, Andrew Cullen Tynan (1829-1905), was a prosperous farmer and cattle trader who was elected to Dublin Corporation as a Parnellite in 1891. He was a major influence in her life and as a young woman she spent much of her time with him attending plays and political meetings, while she also worked briefly for the Ladies' Land League. She became a successful poet and was a well-known figure among Dublin's literati (DIB 2009, 'Hickson (née Tynan), Katharine').

**William Joseph Walsh** (1841-1921) was the Catholic archbishop of Dublin from 1885 until 1921. He had been president of St. Patrick's College Maynooth and had achieved a high profile in the areas of land law and education. His desire to keep the Church in touch with the people led to his later identification with the Land League and radical nationalism (DIB 2009, 'Walsh, William Joseph').

**Alfred John Webb** (1834-1908) was a radical reformer and nationalist who never joined the Land League but supported it strongly in his words and actions (DIB 2009, 'Webb, Alfred John').

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# Picture Credits

## Cover

Detail from ‘The North Kilkenny Election – Mr. Parnell Mobbed Whilst Leaving Castlecomer.’ In *The Graphic*, 27 December 1890, p. 723.

## Portrait of A. J. Kettle

A. J. Kettle, 1880.

Source: Detail from ‘The Irish National Land League 1880: Souvenir Photograph with Portraits of Members of the Irish National Land League.’ Photographer: William Lawrence. Library of Trinity College Dublin, Digital Collections, TCD MS 9649/25. <https://doi.org/10.48495/79407x24n>.

## Additional Biographical Note by Niamh Reilly

Laurence J. Kettle, 1939.

Source: ‘Presentation Portrait of Laurence J. Kettle M.I.C.E.I. City Electrical Engineer.’ Artist: Seán Keating. Oil on canvas. Hugh Lane Gallery. Portrait reproduced here with the permission of gallery. Collection and image © Hugh Lane Gallery.

## Chapter 1

*Hill of Feltrim, Swords, Co. Dublin, probably late nineteenth century.*

Source: ‘Feltrim Hill, Swords, Co. Dublin.’ Photographer: Robert French. Photograph taken c. 1865-1914. National Library of Ireland, Lawrence Photograph Collection, L\_ROY\_07917. © National Library of Ireland. <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000319598>.

*Eviction on the Vandeleur Estate, Co. Clare, late nineteenth century.*

Source: ‘On the Road for Eviction.’ Photographer: Robert French. Photograph taken c. 1880-1900. The eviction took place on the Van-

deleur Estate, Co. Clare. National Library of Ireland, Lawrence Photograph Collection, L\_ROY\_01766. © National Library of Ireland. <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000191672>

## **Chapter 2**

Isaac Butt.

Source: 'Isaac Butt.' In Andrew J. Kettle, *The Material for Victory: The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*, ed. L. J. Kettle (Dublin: Fallon, 1958), opposite p. 16.

A. J. Kettle, 1878.

Source: 'Andrew J. Kettle at 45.' In Andrew J. Kettle, *The Material for Victory: The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*, ed. L. J. Kettle (Dublin: Fallon, 1958), opposite p. 10.

## **Chapter 3**

Charles Stewart Parnell.

Source: Detail from 'Charles Stewart Parnell.' Cigarette card. Published by Ogden's, c. 1894-1907. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG x197005. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Michael Davitt, c. 1878.

Source: 'Michael Davitt.' Photographer: Gregg. Cabinet card. Taken during a lecture tour of the United States, c. 1878. National Library of Ireland, Irish Political Figures Photographic Collection, NPA POLF69. © National Library of Ireland. <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000642482/HierarchyTree?recordID=vtls000642482>

## **Chapter 4**

*An illuminated address presented to Parnell by the leadership of the Land League to commemorate his speech to the US House of Representatives on 2 February 1880. He was touring the United States in 1879-80 to build awareness of the Land League and raise funds to aid evicted tenant farmers in Ireland. The address was executed*



by Thomas J. Lynch, a Dublin artist, and was signed by A. J. Kettle, Michael Davitt, and other members of the Land League leadership.

Source: 'Illuminated address presented to Charles Stewart Parnell by the Land League on his return from the United States, March 1880.' Artist: Thomas J. Lynch. National Library of Ireland, MS L 355. © National Library of Ireland. <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000579892>.

*The Royal Victoria Hotel, Cork, nineteenth century.*

Source: Cork City Libraries via Facebook.

*Alexander Martin Sullivan.*

Source: Detail from 'Alexander Martin Sullivan.' National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG Ax27878. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

## **Chapter 5**

*John Dillon.*

Source: '[John Dillon, Head and Shoulders Profile Portrait].' Photographer: James Russell & Sons. Cabinet card. Photograph taken c. 1880-1910. National Library of Ireland, Irish Personalities Photographic Collection. © National Library of Ireland. <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000638532/>.

*Joseph Gillis Biggar.*

Source: Detail from 'Alexander Martin Sullivan.' Glass lantern slide, 1890s. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG Ax27878. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

## **Chapter 6**

*Thomas Sexton, 1880.*

Source: Detail from 'The Irish National Land League 1880: Souvenir Photograph with Portraits of Members of the Irish National Land League.' Photographer: William Lawrence. Library of Trinity College Dublin, Digital Collections, TCD MS 9649/25. <https://doi.org/10.48495/79407x24n>.

*Justin McCarthy.*

Source: Detail from 'Justin McCarthy.' Photograph by Herbert Rose Barraud, published by Eglington & Co., 1891. Carbon print. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG Ax5542. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

*John Clancy, 1911.*

Source: Detail from 'John Joseph Clancy.' Photograph by Benjamin Stone, March 1911. Platinum print. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG x9261. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

## **Chapter 7**

*Office of the Ladies' Land League, 1881.*

Source: 'Oficina de la "Liga de las Mujeres,"' *La Ilustración española y americana*, 22 November 1881, p. 300.

*Timothy Michael Healy, 1898.*

Source: Detail from 'Timothy Michael Healy.' Photograph by Benjamin Stone, July 1898. Platinum print. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG x20376. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

## **Chapter 8**

*Thomas Brennan, 1880.*

Source: Detail from 'The Irish National Land League 1880: Souvenir Photograph with Portraits of Members of the Irish National Land League.' Photographer: William Lawrence. Library of Trinity College Dublin, Digital Collections, TCD MS 9649/25. <https://doi.org/10.48495/79407x24n>.

*Michael P. Boyton, 1880.*

Source: Detail from 'The Irish National Land League 1880: Souvenir Photograph with Portraits of Members of the Irish National Land League.' Photographer: William Lawrence. Library of Trinity College

Dublin, Digital Collections, TCD MS 9649/25. <https://doi.org/10.48495/79407x24n>.

'Force no Remedy,' illustration of Charles Stewart Parnell, John Dillon, and an unknown policeman, by Harry Furniss, from *Vanity Fair*, 7 December 1881.

Source: "'Force no Remedy" (Charles Stewart Parnell; John Dillon and an unknown policeman):' Chromolithograph by Harry Furniss, published in *Vanity Fair*, 7 December 1881. National Portrait Gallery, Reference Collection, NPG D44043. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

## **Chapter 9**

*Millview, the Kettle family home in Malahide, Co. Dublin.*

Source: 'Millview, Malahide.' In Andrew J. Kettle, *The Material for Victory: The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*, ed. L. J. Kettle (Dublin: Fallon, 1958), opposite p. xii.

*Archbishop Croke, c. 1880.*

Source: 'Archbishop Croke.' Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=131586810>.

## **Chapter 10**

*Avondale House in County Wicklow.*

Source: 'Avondale.' In Andrew J. Kettle, *The Material for Victory: The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*, ed. L. J. Kettle (Dublin: Fallon, 1958), opposite p. 32.

## **Chapter 11**

*William O'Brien, 1908.*

Source: Detail from 'William O'Brien.' Photograph by Benjamin Stone, July 1908. Platinum print. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG x33728. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

*Delia Stewart Parnell.*

Source: 'Delia Stewart Parnell.' Uploaded to WikiTree by Cliff Parnell. <https://www.wikitree.com/photo/jpg/Stewart-13886>.

## **Chapter 12**

*William Gladstone, c. 1892.*

Source: 'Gladstone.' Photographer: Samuel Alexander Walker. Photogravure. Printed in *The Photographic Times* 22/537, 1 January 1892, p. 1. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/photohistorytimeline/29865879296>

*John O'Connor Power.*

Source: Portrait style photograph of John O'Connor Power. Shared online in Eoin Purcell, 'The Member for Mayo,' *The Irish Story*, 4 November 2011, <https://www.theirishstory.com/2011/11/04/the-member-from-mayo/>.

## **Chapter 13**

*Timothy Michael Healy, Justin McCarthy, and Thomas Sexton, drawing by Harry Furniss, c. 1891.*

Source: 'Timothy Michael Healy; Justin McCarthy; Thomas Sexton.' Pen, ink, and wash drawing by Harry Furniss, before 1891. National Portrait Gallery, Primary Collection, NPG 3620. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

*Katherine O'Shea.*

Source: 'Mrs. Charles Stewart Parnell, from a miniature.' In Katherine O'Shea, *Charles Stewart Parnell: His Love Story and Political Life*, 2 vols. (London: Cassell and Company, 1914), frontispiece to volume 2.

## **Chapter 14**

*Morrison's Hotel.*

Source: 'Morrison's Hotel.' In Andrew J. Kettle, *The Material for Vic-*

tory: *The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*, ed. L. J. Kettle (Dublin: Fallon, 1958), opposite p. 94.

*Katharine Tynan*, c. 1880-1887.

Source: 'Katharine Tynan.' Photographer: Chancellor. Cabinet card. Photograph taken c. 1880-1887. National Library of Ireland, Irish Personalities Photographic Collection, NPA PERS77. © National Library of Ireland. <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000641311>.

## **Chapter 15**

*John Morley, Chief Secretary for Ireland*, by Harry Furniss, 1880s-1890s

Source: 'John Morley, 1st Viscount Morley of Blackburn.' Pen and ink drawing by Harry Furniss, before 1880s-1890s. National Portrait Gallery, Primary Collection, NPG 3593. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

*John Redmond*, 1905.

Source: Detail from 'John Edward Redmond.' Photograph by Benjamin Stone, 1905. Platinum print. National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection, NPG x35015. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

## **Chapter 16**

A.J. Kettle, 1908, at age 75.

Source: 'A. J. Kettle at Age of 75.' In Andrew J. Kettle, *The Material for Victory: The Memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle*, ed. L. J. Kettle (Dublin: Fallon, 1958), frontispiece.

# Contributors

**Niamh Reilly** is Established Professor in Political Science and Sociology at the University of Galway. She has published widely on human rights and related policy issues and, in the context of Ireland's Decade of Centenaries, on the social and political thought and activism of Tom Kettle (1880-1916) and Mary Sheehy Kettle (1884-1967). She is a great-great-granddaughter of A. J. Kettle.

**Jane O'Brien** is a social historian. She earned a PhD from the University of Galway in 2022 for her doctoral thesis entitled "Care and Control: The Experience of the Sisters of Mercy-Run Irish Industrial School System, 1868-1936." She is the owner/operator of an award-winning historical walking tour company, Ennis Walking Tours.







A well-known champion of tenant farmers' rights and land reform, Andrew J. Kettle (1833-1916) was a co-founder of the Land League with Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell, an advocate of Irish Home Rule, a progressive farmer, and a prolific writer of letters to the editor of *The Freeman's Journal*. *The Material for Victory* is a remarkable document of closely observed, political microhistory recounting Kettle's involvement in and observations about events leading up to and during the Land War of 1879-1882 and the decade that followed. The memoirs were edited by his son Laurence J. Kettle (1878-1960) and published for the first time in 1958 by C. J. Fallon. This new edition is fully annotated and is presented with a new introduction and an additional biographical essay by Niamh Reilly, Established Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Galway, and a Foreword by Michael D. Higgins, Uachtarán na hÉireann.

*"As a keen observer of his times, as well as a key participant in many of the events that shaped them, [A. J. Kettle's] memoir spans the period from the Famine to the United Irish League. Its reissue, richly enhanced by supplementary scholarship, will provide an invaluable source for anyone seeking insights into late-nineteenth-century Ireland."*

– **Dr Carla King**, Michael Davitt biographer, formerly Lecturer in Modern History, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin City University.

*"Andrew Kettle was a central figure in the agrarian struggles of the 1870s and 1880s: his memoirs provide an essential account of the politics of the land and national movements of this era ... and [an] intensely vivid evocation of Parnell and his circle. For all who are interested in the social and political history of late-nineteenth-century Ireland, [this] edition is both required and deeply compelling reading."*

– **Alvin Jackson**, Richard Lodge Professor of History, University of Edinburgh

*"Andrew Kettle's remarkable eyewitness account of a pivotal period reaching from the Famine to the Land War reveals a great deal about the complex social connections of elites who influenced Irish life and politics either side of independence.... The memoirs are full of nuggets important to the local historian ... [and] a significant primary source ... to open avenues of future research exploration in the fields of both political and social history."*

– **Terence Dooley**, Professor of History, Maynooth University

*"This new edition of Andrew J. Kettle's memoirs, The Material for Victory,... greatly helps the readers to understand Kettle's crucial role in Ireland's Land War – a mass movement for agrarian reform that provided a major model for action to oppressed tenants and farmers across the Euro-American world."*

– **Enrico Dal Lago**, Established Professor of History, University of Galway

