

he get into the boat? That is the question to be answered. And so, in like manner, it is no answer to the question why silver is exported to the East, to state the channels and appliances by which it is transmitted. What is really required to be known is not the machinery of transfer, but what set that machinery in motion. And, in my opinion, the question presents no difficulty, when two facts are noticed in juxtaposition: one, the great cessation in the demand for silver in countries which employed a double standard;\* the other, the circumstance that the Eastern nations habitually use silver on a large scale, especially in their currency. After this there is nothing to be said except that, when the supply of any article is unusually great compared with the number of consumers, it must find its way in quantities considerably augmented to those who still continue to make use of it—a condition which is fulfilled at present in the case of the article silver, whose principal consumers are the nations of the East.

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III.—*Effects of Emigration; can it be made a means of relieving Distress?*—By Rev. Thomas Jordan.

[Read May 19th, 1856.]

To any one in the habit of visiting among the poor, emigration is a subject which must often present itself. When we are going through the crowded lane and dirty alley, broad fields and an open country suggest themselves by the mere force of contrast. The crowded room in the wretched old house, raised in other times and for a different use, call to our minds the productive farm and the neat cottage of the colonist. This being a part of my daily occupation, I was naturally led to look at the tables of emigration, and to consider at what rate that tide of living beings has been running out from our shores. The circumstances of a country sometimes render this a question of peculiar importance to it.

The labour of a country is of course paralysed without capital to employ it and to make judicious arrangements for it, and these two require a third great instrument of production, viz. land, before these advantages can be gained. If unwise legislation and the state of the country deprive labour of either or both of these, the effect is instantly felt by the labouring classes; they are reduced to a state of suffering. This state of things was seen in our own country some few years ago. The evils pressing on these classes were such as to call for an instant remedy. Time alone could remove the true causes of the misery. The change of laws and of the state of the

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\* A double standard had been *permitted* in India for some years, but it was prohibited by the East India Company not long since. The effect of this prohibition was only to prevent the introduction of gold, which had not previously been employed to any great extent.

country could not be the work of a day, and so emigration presented itself as the immediate remedy.

The principle of emigration may be briefly stated. An individual and his family find that a new country affords a more prosperous field for their industry than their own, and accordingly they choose to sever the ties of home and kindred, and to become exiles for the sake of bettering their condition. The attractions of home institutions and home connexions are so powerful, that a strong motive alone (either in the form of great necessity at home or great prospects abroad) can induce them to such an undertaking. Here, however, as in other parts of economic science, there is a perfect identity of individual and public interest. The emigrant and his family who improve their condition abroad confer a double advantage on the country they have left. It is obvious how great the advantage is to a commercial people like ourselves, to meet in distant parts of the world with men of our own race, of the same language, living under similar institutions, and governed by nearly the same laws. Commerce is much facilitated by being carried on with countries which differ from ours only in soil and climate. The productions of America reach us not only at a cheaper rate, but in a much more convenient manner, by their being procured from British and Irish settlers, than if they were produced and sold to us by persons of a less civilized class. Not only in this way does the emigrant profit his country; but also, by diminishing at home the existing pressure of population against food, his fellow-countrymen have fewer competitors for employment, and find the avenues to the various trades and avocations less choked up by needy applicants. When some of the trees are removed from the crowded forest, those that remain thrive better by having freer air and a more extensive soil. The voluntary exile in a similar manner profits his remaining countrymen. This removal to a more favorable field of industry resembles the abandoning of an old and decaying trade for one more prosperous and thriving. The old statutes of apprenticeship often entailed ruin on the tradesman, by preventing his entering as a competitor into a new employment when the one he had long pursued failed. Modern science has shown the evil as well as injustice of such regulations, and points out the fair as well as profitable course in such a case, viz. to leave him at liberty to seek a new employment. In like manner, when a country or a city does not afford the industrious a fit and proper field for their industry, the just as well as expedient course is, that their industry should be transferred to those lands or towns that do offer such an opening. The intending emigrant (when with determined heart he adopts this course that naturally occurs to him) is following the conclusions of science, and in time will feel his breast warm with noble and kindly feelings:—

“ The pride to rear an independent shed,  
 And give the lips we love unborrowed bread;  
 To see a world from shadowy forests won,  
 In youthful beauty wedded to the sun;  
 To skirt our home with harvests widely sown,  
 And call the blooming landscape all our own.”

Having seen that in certain circumstances emigration is a course

pointed out no less by economic principles than by our natural views of things, we may briefly consider the state of it with regard to our own country.

The first year in which a strikingly large number of emigrants left our shores was 1847. A melancholy reason suggests itself as the explanation—the famine of the previous year. Four years after this (1851) an amazingly large number of exiles appears—no less than 254,537. This number doubles the estimated average emigration of the preceding years. If this state of things had continued for a few years, the old complaint about the excessive subdivision of land would no longer have been heard, and the small cabin and the plot of potato ground would have become an object of curiosity. It did not, however, continue, there being in the next years a gradual decrease in the numbers. In 1852 they are nearly 30,000 less, and in 1854 they are nearly one half less. This great decrease is of course partly owing to the excessive emigration of former years, partly to other causes, such as the great numbers absorbed by recruiting (that for the militia regiments having amounted last year to about 31,000 men) and I may add, it is to be hoped, as another and a great reason, the improved condition of the country at home. A large decrease in the actual emigration has at all events, taken place.

I may now lay before you a different class of statistics, which prove that the *desire* to emigrate is much less now than it was some years ago. This appears from the increasing amount of the remittances from foreign countries, either in the shape of passages prepaid or money actually transmitted by emigrants to their friends and connexions at home. The Emigration Commissioners give the following sums :

In 1851 (the year of the largest emigration) £990,000.

The warm-hearted benevolence of our countrymen on behalf of their distressed relatives at home has been increasing its exertions every year, though the emigration has been falling off in point of numbers, as appears from a comparison of both :—

		Irish Emigrants.	Remittances.
In 1852	--	224,997	£1,404,000
„ 1853	--	119,392	1,439,000

A farther comparison of both will be found to confirm this view and to show that there is a steady increase in the sums sent home, while at the same time there is a decrease in the numbers of emigrants. From this it is evident that the desire to leave home and to try fortune in distant lands, is not so strong now by any means as it was three or four years ago. Under the pressure of famine, the smaller sums took out larger cargoes of passengers, while stronger inducements are required now that such urgent necessity no longer exists.

When the rod has been bent too much in one direction, it may be bent too far in the opposite way, in the effort to make it straight. We have no doubt but that it is so in the case before us, and that emigration is now receiving less attention from the people than it deserves.

That the emigration of the past years has been of the greatest benefit to the laboring classes appears from two obvious circumstances, viz., the decrease of pauperism and the rise of wages.

As regards the first circumstance, a single instance may suffice. In October, 1852, the number of paupers in Ireland receiving relief, external and internal, was 115,810. In the two next years there is a considerable decrease, and in 1855 the country was supporting only 57,731—about half the number it had been maintaining three years before.

As to the other circumstance, the rise of wages, we may refer to the report of the Poor Law Commissioners for 1854. "There is now," say they, "observable a material increase in the money value of agricultural labour, to the extent of about one shilling a week on the average throughout Ireland. It seems, also, that agricultural employment has been more continuous than formerly. It would appear also that in most parts of the country the wages of artizan tradesmen have improved in a still higher ratio than those of the common laborer." Since this report of 1854 a very much larger rise in wages has taken place in every part of the country.\* In the past year this rise on wages was so striking as to be a matter of common remark. That this increase of wages is an advantage cannot be denied by any who reflect at all with care on the subject. The miserable condition of our countrymen has arisen in great part from this very cause; for in other countries, where the wages of labour are very different, our countrymen are found a different class of men; and why should they not be the same at home, if their labour were remunerated in the same manner? Dr. Johnson defines "oats, a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland it supports the people." The bad food of the Scotchman was the effect of his low wages. The superior food of the Englishman was the effect of his better wages. So it is not the Irishman's mud hut, his potato field, his degraded intellectual and moral condition that cause his wages to be low, but all these wretched peculiarities are evidently their effects; and therefore the returns which show an increase of wages must be regarded as an augury of better things, as the spring and the source from which various good results will spread themselves over the country. These matters clearly show the advantage to our country, under such circumstances, of emigration, and we shall now consider its applicability to our own city.

Of course any one will allow that the new countries are more immediately adapted to our country population, and that the latter are more generally suited to the foreign lands than those who live in our towns. The great business of a new country is agriculture, and therefore the agricultural population of our country must be best adapted to it. But the advantages of emigration do not appear to be confined to these; for when you go into the lanes and alleys of our city you find hundreds starving, who are the very classes described as desirable for the colonies. In a publication printed in

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\* For these observations on the rise of wages I am indebted to a valuable Essay on Ireland's Recovery, by Mr. Locke, Fellow of the Statistical Society of London.

1853, by order of the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, under the head of "Demand for Labour" almost all the trades are mentioned that suggest themselves to us here. There is said to be, from a combination of various causes, a most urgent necessity for working people of all kinds, both male and female. "The pressing occasion," says the writer of this publication, "for domestic servants of all kinds, both male and female, must be particularly adverted to. Large numbers of these persons would obtain immediate and very advantageous employment in every part of the colony. It is scarcely possible to express too strongly the great want which exists of servants of all kinds, both male and female."\*

In the old and decayed parts of this city you will meet with numbers of tradespeople of the various kinds described in the *Colonization Circular*. It is, no doubt, true that many of what may be called the dregs of the population are to be found in such parts of our city, and of all cities; but it is as true that there are many there of a very different class, many who having struggled much to better their condition, and having failed, have sunk into a state of apathy, and have given themselves up to a silent endurance of their misery. The difficulty of such an effort in a large city has been a subject of common remark in all ages.

"Haud facile emergunt quorum virtutibus obstat  
Res angusta domi; sed Romæ durior illis  
Conatus."

I may take an example of this from the north side of our city. There is a street within a stone's throw of the Four Courts, where I could go to a hundred individuals such as those described in the *Circular* in an hour. In this street there are at least eight rooms in each house, and in a room there are from four to eight and often more persons living; from thirty to fifty beings in one house. There are other streets in the same neighbourhood with about the same number of inmates living in them, but with their houses in still worse repair. The very dwellings alone tend to crush energy, life and spirit. Health, vigour and cheerfulness must sooner or later be banished, and be followed by disease, listlessness and gloom. To the inhabitants of such places I at all events see the applicability of the words, "Past hope, past cure, past help." Here no class is more generally met with than the one to which the genius of the poet has called attention—the distressed needlewomen. Though benevolence has given them some help and more sympathy, yet at this moment as a class they are suffering indescribable misery. I am unable to give even a probable estimate of their number in our city,

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\* "The most urgent demand is for housemaids, cooks, nursery-maids, needlewomen, laundresses, and general servants. Large numbers of such women could at once find employment at high wages, and in situations at least as comfortable as those usually obtained in England."—*Colonization Circular*, 1855. To connect this state of things more immediately with the present time, it may be added that *The Daily Express* (August 15th, 1856), in the foreign intelligence mentions the following, among other classes of laborers, as commanding the annexed rates of wages:— "Thorough female servants (in great demand) £30 to £40; housemaids, £20 to £28; laundresses, £30 to £35; nursemaids, £15 to £20."

but from my own observation I can most safely say that there are twice as many at this work as can be properly maintained at it.\*

To any one who considers the circumstances and condition of such persons, a variety of plans will suggest themselves. In conclusion, we mention the following as one of the many that readily occur, and I trust before we leave this place a much better may be suggested. If we consider emigration as a desirable thing for them, they are not able of themselves to accomplish it. However fair or however rich a distant land may be, they are unable to reach it without help. Like the ghosts described by the poet on the banks of the fabled stream with the plains of Elysium in view, they may stretch out their hands in entreaty, praying a passage across, but effect it themselves they cannot. Besides, a very large deportation of such people by the Government does not seem very desirable. Unless very much more were done for them than merely to convey them to another country, there would neither be an act of mercy done to the emigrants, nor of justice to the foreign country.

The Emigration Commissioners, we learn from the Colonization Circular, are enabled to grant passages for the present to New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, to persons strictly of the labouring class, who may be considered eligible emigrants. The sum to be paid in advance in England, if the intending emigrant be one of the most desirable class, is about £1, and in addition to this he must provide himself with an outfit of clothing. There is also aid to emigrants under the Poor Law Board in special circumstances. "It appears from the annual report of the Poor Law Commissioners (for England) for 1854, that in the previous year 327 persons received assistance out of the rates to emigrate, of whom 68 went to Canada and 259 to Australia. The Commissioners observe, however, that they have declined, for some time past, to sanction any expenditure from the poor rate in aid of emigration to the Australian colonies (except in cases presenting special circumstances), on the ground that the condition of those colonies appears to them, at present, to be such as of itself to attract largely voluntary and independent emi-

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\* It has been naturally objected that emigration would be rather a dangerous remedy in the case of this class, as it might expose them to worse evils than their present poverty. The following statement of the Emigration Commissioners shows that every possible precaution is taken against this danger:—"For the protection and advantageous settlement of female immigrants, not under the charge of relatives, the Colonial Government has made the most careful provision. The ship is, on its arrival, immediately visited by the immigration officer, by whom the capabilities and wishes of each woman, with regard to employment, are ascertained. The women are then landed in Government boats, and admitted to a large and commodious building, where beds, provisions, and other advantages are provided for them. Here they remain for some days to wash their clothes and make preparations for service, in the charge of an experienced matron, under the direction of the immigration officer. Persons who wish to obtain their services are requested to make written application, on which printed 'authorities' are transmitted to approved applicants, who, on presenting them at the *dépôt*, are at liberty to make arrangements with the immigrants by mutual consent, the women receiving such advice and information as they may require. No person is permitted to hire any female from the '*dépôt*' without the 'authority' above-mentioned; and as this is only sent to those who are known to be suitable employers, no young woman can fall into improper hands on first arrival in this colony. These must be seen to be very important advantages."

gration." It may be questioned whether there is not as much aid as can safely be given from the public funds, and whether to increase it might not be doing evil. A large government emigration might, like the bleeding of the human body, produce only a temporary effect, and in doing so might induce recklessness, and destroy vigilance, activity and prudence. It is not to such aid we would look. Without increasing the amount of what is given by government or individuals, much might be done by a more judicious direction of the latter. Such a system would tend to better the condition of the labouring classes, and therefore deserves the notice of this Society.

Many, for instance, we all know, are now occasionally assisted in our towns by benevolent individuals or associations. How much more effective might not this relief be, if instead of being given in small sums, it were bestowed at once and with the special view of enabling its objects to take advantage of the offer of the Emigration Commissioners.\* One case relieved in this manner would be equivalent to several on any other principle. Mendicancy would not be encouraged. The intending emigrant would be put into the way of realising the glorious privilege of being independent; and, as we showed before, his fellow-countrymen, though not relieved *directly* by the same individual or association, would be so *indirectly*. In this manner there could be a thorough investigation into the eligibility of each person—an investigation much more efficient than can possibly be made by the Emigration Commissioners, whose transactions must necessarily be on a large scale.

Another object, too, could be accomplished by this plan, which the Emigration Commissioners profess themselves unable at present to effect. Their object, they say, is not to consider how distress may be best relieved here, but how the most suitable persons for the colony may be procured. But by the system of benevolence now suggested, the other object also would be secured—a proper selection would be made for the colony, at the same time that pauperism would effectually be removed. Thus many of the charities of our city would accomplish much more of their real intention. To grant occasional relief resembles, in too many cases, the eternal revolutions of Ixion's wheel, or the operation of Sisyphus, in the poetical description of the lost. Such a mode as this might make the wheel cease to revolve, and place the stone on the top of the hill. It is not so much new laws that are required, not so much more extensive charities, as a more judicious application of the old.

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\* Since writing the above, I have met with a somewhat similar view by Mr. J. S. Mill. In showing the impracticability of emigration being efficiently carried out by a private company, this writer suggests the following course:—"The only other resource is the voluntary contributions of parishes or individuals, to rid themselves of surplus labourers, who are already, or who are likely to become, locally chargeable on the poor-rate. Were this speculation to become general, it might produce a sufficient amount of emigration to clear off the existing unemployed population, but not to raise the wages of the employed: and the same thing would require to be done over again in less than another generation."—*Elements of Pol. Ec. book 5, ch. xi., s. 14.* It may be remarked that, as the poor must be assisted in some way, the difficulty suggested in the conclusion of this passage offers no serious objection to the view put forward in the text.