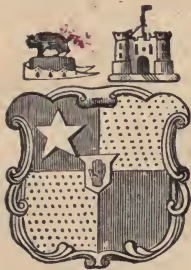


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1915





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*A. De Vere*

ENGLISH MISRULE

AND

IRISH MISDEEDS.

FOUR LETTERS FROM IRELAND,

ADDRESSED TO

AN ENGLISH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

BY

AUBREY DE VERE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1848.

Sather fund  
3049 F

“I know that the interests of the two countries must be taken together, and that a man cannot speak as a true Englishman unless he speaks as a true Irishman, nor as a true Irishman unless he speaks as a true Englishman.”—MR. PITT'S SPEECH ON THE UNION.

“As an Englishman, I owe reparation to Ireland for the wrongs of centuries.”—MR. WILBERFORCE.

Κοινα γαρ φιλων αχη  
Κοινα δ'ει τι πεισεται  
αδε γα  
Φοινισσα χωρα.

EURIP. *Phæniss.*

JA950  
D39  
1848  
MAIN

## CONTENTS.

### LETTER I.

PAGE

Two Englands.—One of these always adverse to Ireland.—  
Subjects treated in this Work.—The Labour Rate Act  
as it worked.—A different Mode of Relief suggested.—  
Progressive Symptoms of English Discontent with Ire-  
land.—Attempts to discover its Cause.—Necessity for  
moderating the Expression of it.—Probable Effects in  
Ireland of recent English Detraction.—Its worse Effect  
in England.—Its incompatibility with Justice and Truth 1

### LETTER II.

The Faults of the Irish.—The continued Existence of So-  
ciety in Ireland accounted for.—The Connection between  
Irish Faults and past Misgovernment.—Brief Sketch of  
Events in Ireland.—Variations of English Policy ac-  
cording to Change of Circumstances.—Outlawry, Legal  
Tyranny, Corruption.—The Irish Constitution.—The  
Union.—Catholic Emancipation.—Agitation.—The  
Penal Laws still operate in Ireland.—English Intoler-  
ance still finds a Mode of expressing itself.—National  
Debt of England to Ireland.—Amendment the Test of  
Repentance.—Imperial Legislation during Forty-seven  
Years.—A Poor Law.—Neither the Responsibilities nor  
the Rights of Property asserted in Time.—The Problem  
of to-day the same as that at the Time of the Union . 48

### LETTER III.

Ireland's Prosperity the only safety for England.—The  
Consequence to England of Irish Ruin.—The Irish  
Revenue and Expenditure.—Irish Property spent by

Englishmen or in England.—Irish and English Trade.— English Charges on Irish Property.—The Rich the losers.—Invasion of England by Irish Labourers.—Eng- lish Plagiarisms of Irish Faults.—An exaggerated Charge which might be brought against England.— Slight Suggestions as to Principles of Legislation for Ireland.—Good Measures only good if applied in Time. —Remedial Measures.—Security to Life and Property. —Colonization, Agricultural Education.—Amendment of the Poor Law.—Useful Public Works and Waste Lands.—The Tenure of Land.—Provisions for enforcing the Rights as well as Duties of Property.—Simplifica- tion of the Law.—Sale of encumbered Estates.—Sana- tory Improvements in Towns.—Schools for the Children of the higher Orders. . . . .	117
--	-----

## LETTER IV.

Necessity of acting on a large Principle.—A Cure worth its Cost.—Self-love one Cause of English Dislike to Ire- land.—England has her Blemishes as well as Ireland.— Mining Districts.—Manufacturing System.—False Civil- ization.—Alienation of Classes.—India.—The Colonies. —English Pauperism.—No Popery.—Covetousness.— Verbal Truth compatible with Hollowness and Pretence. —Some Characteristics of the Irish Peasant.—Position of an Irish Proprietor.—Dangers that lie before Eng- land.—Their connection with her present Policy towards Ireland.—Both Countries now on their Trial.—Safety only in a true Union.—Two Destinies lie before Eng- land, each connected with her present Course.—The Bankruptcy of a great National Company.—The possible Greatness of a united Empire founded on Virtue and on Trade.—Practical Hints as to Principles of Irish Policy. —What has been effected by an approach to Union. . . . .	185
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# ENGLISH MISRULE

AND

# IRISH MISDEEDS.

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## LETTER I.

Two Englands.—One of these always adverse to Ireland.—Subjects treated in this Work.—The Labour Rate Act as it worked.—A different Mode of Relief suggested.—Progressive Symptoms of English Discontent with Ireland.—Attempts to discover its Cause.—Necessity for moderating the Expression of it.—Probable Effects in Ireland of recent English Detraction.—Its worse Effect in England.—Its incompatibility with Justice and Truth.

SIR,

THE great dissatisfaction and distress occasioned of late years to England by the noise of Irish misery, and its yet more formidable infection, blown over to you frequently in the westerly winds, not so much by our fault as by reason of the contiguity of the two islands, is a matter which ought long since to have touched us with some remorse, had we not been selfishly preoccupied with our own troubles. In former times, when the political condition of Ireland was lower than it is now, though the pressure of distress was less urgent, you appear to

have suffered little from this annoyance, perhaps because men complain less loudly of bondage than of starvation. It is a hard thing, Sir, to be assailed by the immediate breath of some person whom we have injured, and who is loathsome to us;—hard to look upon the scar which we had inflicted long ago, and intended to forget. Within the last two years the distress of England on this score appears to have been increasing; and it has been expressed in a tone of acrimony rising through the gradations of animosity up to abhorrence and a sort of contempt, or assumed contempt, at which for some time it has been stationary. This anger has, however, been subject to laws, by a careful induction from which we are enabled to calculate its intensity and foretell its amount at any given period. The more you have had to pay for Ireland, the more you have disliked her. Had it not been for prejudice and antipathy, England would have been conciliated toward Ireland by the endeavour to serve her.

Before proceeding further, Sir, there is one statement which I desire to make, not so much for your sake as for my own, and because there are many countrymen of yours to whom I would not willingly give pain, and whose censure I would not wantonly incur. The class to which I allude are, I hope, neither so unjust nor so unwise as to resent the fact that I do not think the faults of their country past cure, or their country so far enfeebled and degenerate, that she cannot

afford (as sometimes happens to individual men who have no part in true greatness) to dispense with her faults. I have sometimes been tempted to think that, as the mythologists make mention of three Jupiters, so there must be at least two Englands. In her past history, I have observed indications of a compound nature as diverse as her twofold language ; and in recent times they seem to contend for the mastery. It is with one only that I have to do at present.

I have to entreat that this plain introductory statement may be kept in mind by any one who chooses to read these observations. If he thinks that there exists a certain England, noble, wise, and strong, against which such charges as I make must be as unjust as the charges which I repel, I think the same ; and I believe that this better England not only exists, but has existed for the last thousand years, and has wrought after its kind. It has also, I believe, slept at times, and not known what was done in its name by that more sordid England with which it is strangely bound up. The distinction to which I refer is not one of classes or orders : each of these two Englands is composed of clergy and laity, rich and poor, aristocrats and democrats, agriculturists and manufacturers, Whigs and Tories ; and, a sad and singular fact, the two have occasionally concurred in the same course, influenced by the most opposite motives indeed, but by a common delusion. My

sentiments with regard to my better England, I shall state, before I conclude, with as much sincerity as I state my convictions in the first place concerning *your* England, which we believe also to exist by reason of the wounds which we bear; as, however, books are not always read to the end, especially the dull or the hostile, I have given this warning in time, in order that any person who applies to the whole of his country, what I have said of its baser element, may have only his own inattention to blame. For six centuries the bad England generally kept vigil for Ireland, while for the rest of the world it generally slept. This fact is attested by the just award of European opinion, which reveres your history at large, but regards the Irish part of it with a sentiment of resentment, wonder, and scorn. It is not for me to determine how this mysterious duality exists; all I know is, that England is not one, but two; and that while the loftier influence reigns in her brain, and looks forth from her eye, the more earthly spirit occasionally masters her hand, and miserably simulates her voice. It is the latter England, that is to say, your England, with which I have at present to converse; and if you think my words too harsh, I beg to express my belief that nations are not called upon, like private persons, when smitten on one cheek to turn the other, and that a course of contumelious injury, justified by those who inflict it, and fatal alike to the maligner and the maligned, is less

fitly replied to by a gentle justice than by a just severity.

My intention is in these letters to search out the causes of your dislike to us, by analysing its symptoms, and to suggest to you motives for concealing its intensity, if you cannot absolutely control it. I shall next make some inquiry as to the pretexts by you commonly assigned for your sentiments towards us; and as these are grounded upon your notions of Irish character, I shall suggest a larger conception of that character, and indicate the mode in which its less amiable part was formed. I shall next point out a few reasons which make it the policy of England, though but in self-defence, rather to assist Ireland than to revile her, or at least not to attempt both courses at once; and shall mention a few strictly practical measures by which such aid may be afforded. I shall then touch upon certain reasons, secret even from yourself, which make this course distasteful to you; and since they rest on an estimate of your own character as erroneous as that which you have formed of ours, I shall lead you to a different point of view from which that character may be contemplated. It is the custom of effeminate men, whether rough or polished in deportment, to aggravate their own sufferings by supposing them to be peculiar, if not unprecedented; I shall therefore endeavour to mitigate yours by proving to you that your calamities result from natural laws, which, if you choose to understand



them, you may make your friends. I shall, in conclusion, describe the reward which may accrue to you if you should adopt a right course in time, and on right motives; as well as a career which may yet lie before your country more glorious than you have yourself conceived; and grounded on a character substantially nobler than you have ever cared to impute to her.

I adopt this method of treatment in the belief that it involves the most practical question which can be discussed—I mean that of the temper and spirit in which all secondary questions should be examined. Temporary success sometimes attends a selfish policy; but wisdom accompanies justice; nor can I doubt that England, if once liberated from the prejudices which enslave her, would exercise towards Ireland that sound judgment which characterizes her above most nations, in the management of her own immediate concerns.

In the spring of 1846 your sentiments towards Ireland were only incidentally expressed in debates on more important matters. “It was a shame,” you said, “to make so much of the Irish famine by way of depreciating those laws which protected English agricultural industry.” In the autumn of 1846 you were warned by many a significant voice from this country, that the measures adopted by the Imperial Parliament (hastily, and when honourable members were bent on enjoying a little partridge

shooting) would prove insufficient for the support of the people, and very injurious to their moral interests. The measures to which I refer are the Labour Rate Act, which provided employment for destitute persons by making and mending of roads, and the removal, at a time when the passions of men were most likely to be inflamed, of those restrictions on the possession of arms, previously found necessary in Ireland. The effect of the latter measure has been complete, though unintended\*; yet to its merits all classes, even the lowest in Ireland, continued insensible until assured that it was intended as a compliment due to a high-spirited people who had always had a liking for fire-arms. Pray, Sir, let us have your abuse in future rather than more of such compliments.

As regards your former measure, the remonstrances I have mentioned were listened to at last: but as they came chiefly from persons of the higher orders, your indignation, then more loudly expressed, took the form of invective against Irish landlords; a class whom you do not admire, but with whose services you do not willingly dispense. Month after month passed by, and every day the warnings which had provoked your resentment, instead of rousing you to

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\* The following table illustrates this subject in but a slight degree.

Cases of robbery of arms.

1844 . . . . .	159
1845 . . . . .	551
1846 . . . . .	611
Five months of 1847 . . . . .	948

face in time the difficulties which you could not but meet at last, proved themselves to have been just. Every day increased crowds betook themselves to the roads—at the end of every week the imperial disbursements became heavier, and your indignation hotter. The invective in which the English press then dealt was divided impartially between the higher and middle classes, who served together on the Relief Committees, and the lower orders who were employed on the roads. The Relief Committees had not, when the fountains of the great deep were broken open, suppressed the rising flood of pauperism, or restrained it within the channels laid down on the official charts. This circumstance was amongst those plainly predicted to you. The selection of persons needing employment must at best have been a most difficult, as well as invidious, task. No general rules could be adopted which did not sanction imposition or sentence to starvation. The people saw the public money brought into the market-place; a very dangerous, though sometimes necessary, exhibition. The amount of destitution was in itself bewildering, and the difficulty of dealing with it was greatly increased by the pressure of panic, a separate trial of which you have had some recent experience in your own financial concerns. Applicants who might have held back a little longer rushed forward, lest, when their need came, their place might be pre-occupied. Every day the prices of food rose—rates impended; and many of the small farmers who



expected, even though they escaped the famine, to be ruined by subsequent assessments, were resolved to snatch what they could from an expenditure the repayment of which was ultimately to fall in part on them. Instances of apparent partiality necessarily were to be found where no rules could be of universal application: such cases excited the rivalry of the less fortunate, or the anger of multitudes who had no lights by which to guide their judgment of right or wrong. It was impossible to discriminate between contending claims except by means of private information; and as impossible, in so miscellaneous a body as a Relief Committee, to know what would be kept secret and what be divulged. Lists were to be laboriously scrutinized by men unaccustomed to business, in the midst of crowds whose movements could no more be regulated than those of a shipwrecked crew descending into the only boat. Every error became a precedent that could not be recalled. At the Baronial Presentment Sessions the performance of duty was a task harder still. In spite of the great energy and ability of the gentlemen connected with the Board of Works, it was impossible to prevent delays and disappointments each of which exposed hundreds to the chance of starvation. The magistrates and ratepayers, exhausted by their previous labours at relief committees, generally found themselves assembled at the sessions after the distress had already become severe. They deliberated

in the midst of hungry crowds, who filled the court-house, and clustered on each other at darkened windows and doors, watching every movement of the pen, and guessing whether it gave or withheld. The action, almost the countenance, of any single person was sufficient, in that painful tenseness of suspense, to shoot a sympathetic vibration through the mass; and a single irresponsible will wielded as many arms as were idle in a starving district. A ratepayer, in alarm for himself, had but to fly into a dishonest passion and accuse the rest of delay. A very rapid selection of roads was the consequence, and financial arrangements were calculated in the storm of the battle-field, when the mistake of a figure was certain to produce the delay of a fortnight. On the roads the case was no better. A large proportion of those supplied with work tickets, as the only mode of supporting life, were old men or boys; by their side strong men refused to put forth their strength; and the check clerks were significantly advised not to measure the tasks too closely. The works were often valueless, and the people had wit enough to distinguish between useful labour and an arbitrary test of destitution. Above all, it was found impossible to divest labour, which being a universal institute is based on our moral nature, of those moral relations which constitute a bond of mutual good between the employer and the employed. Unelevated by its ordinary sanction, the original curse of labour remained

unmitigated by a service of mutual good-will; and work became unproductive. In a word, the Labour Rate Act failed, and survives only in its consequences.

Before quitting this part of my subject, I wish to acknowledge that I do not think this relief system was made the best of in Ireland: but no efforts could have made it work well. At the expense of a digression, I will here make a few practical suggestions with regard to a relief system which would probably unite more of good with less of evil. When you have next a famine to deal with in Ireland, or elsewhere, lay your foundations, in the first place, by instituting a large system of mere vulgar alms, given in kind. Political economy does not, I believe, include any canon against calling things by their names; and if men live upon public charity, why should they not know themselves by the name of paupers? As the general basis of your operations, support on rations those whom you must needs support: make the district thus relieved pay at once, and by rate, whatever proportionate part of the expense it can possibly pay, in order to guard against a lavish expenditure: let the gift of the state be called by the name of gift; and be very cautious how you lend money to public bodies, unless they borrow it by a voluntary act, and unless they profess to have the means of repaying it. In the second place, do all that can be done to encourage private employment. Labour becomes pauperised where la-

bour is the only resource of starving millions; but from the moment you have established a cheap and severe system of charity, you render possible a system of free and productive labour. Proprietors and farmers will then be able to make their own resources available; and should those resources be insufficient, it will be the interest of the State to lend to them on their individual responsibility, because the money thus lent will be usefully laid out and honestly repaid. Public works really useful ought, also, to be undertaken in those districts, if possible; but the usefulness of the work should be its obvious sanction, and the relief afforded should be only an incident. None but the able-bodied should be employed; and those who worked ill should be at once discharged, an easy matter where the alternative is not starvation. In public as in private works, it might be useful to require, in the case of young men without families, that a portion of the wages earned should be reserved as a fund to assist emigration at the conclusion of the work. In the third place, where the pressure from without is great, and you find labour, however unproductive, necessary, as the only test of destitution, call it by the name of a test, and give to those who demand it simply the necessaries of life in proportion to the size of their family. The old man will thus continue to sit in his chimney corner, instead of breaking stones in the blasts of February, and dying before March: the man who has ten in family will get his ten rations: the farmer's servant boy



will discover that by deserting his master he can earn no more than twopence a day: the smallest possible number of applications for employment will be made: the largest possible amount of private employment will be given: charity will be of the cheapest and least disturbing sort, and labour will be productive.

To return from this digression, the Labour Rate Act, as I have stated, failed. Irritated by this disappointment, and not willing to account for it on grounds common to human nature, which would have condemned your own legislation, you attributed it to the depravity of Irish nature. Parliament at last met, and it was found expedient to change the whole system of Irish relief. Several other laws were passed, as a compliance with the more innocent of our prejudices. I allude to the suspension of the Navigation Laws, and the measures permitting the free importation of corn, and the use of sugar in the distilleries. The effect of those enactments was such as to prove that if Parliament had been summoned to meet in autumn, as we had ventured to hope it might have been, for the purpose of both passing such measures, and amending the Labour Rate Act, the supply of food would have been greater than it was, the prices lower, and many thousands of lives might have been spared. The sum of £600,000 was subsequently voted as a loan to two or three Irish Railway Companies, and £500,000 under the

“Land Improvement Act” to Irish proprietors. As the latter loan has frequently been estimated at a million and a half, it is necessary to mention that the portion of it to which I have not referred, viz. £1,000,000, was voted on separate grounds, at the conclusion of the preceding session, together with £2,000,000 lent to English and Scotch proprietors. In consequence of some blunders in the wording of the Act (for blunders are not confined to this side of the water) the portion of this loan intended for Irish proprietors was not to be had when most wanted; and those who had applied for loans under the various drainage Acts had found the proceedings too slow to supply so urgent a need. One-half of the money spent upon the roads was then charged upon the imperial purse, instead of upon the lands cut up by them, and in many cases damaged rather than improved; the Minister of the Crown admitting that so vast a disaster as the potato failure was an imperial calamity, and consequently that the whole of the money spent in mitigation of it could not with justice be charged on those districts which, independent of any charge, had felt the visitation most severely. It was, at the same time, intimated to us that from the beginning the calamity had been regarded as an imperial one, and that there had been a latent intention to meet it in that manner which would have been deemed just had it fallen on Yorkshire or Cornwall; but that it was

thought no more than discreet to hide this project from the Irish people, lest, puffed up with exaggerated expectations, they might abuse, to their own ruin, what was intended for their good. But, Sir, you must have perceived that in the ordinary business of life this sort of proceeding is unsuccessful: and, indeed, even on trivial occasions, what has been projected as a pleasant surprise often turns out to have been in bad taste or unseasonable. In Ireland the surprise was anticipated; the justice as well as necessity of the measure had been for some time a matter of notoriety; and your own intentions were prophetically announced to you at a time when your modesty would have concealed them from the world, and even from yourselves. In the meantime, as our assurances on this subject were confidently denied, we considered that the existing law was to this country a great injustice; which circumstance, as well as our grave disapprobation of unproductive labour, on a colossal scale and at the beginning of a famine, and of a very expensive test of destitution which acted as a premium to paupers instead of as a test of pauperism, must, I fear, have damped the ardour of several Relief Committees, infecting some members with a spirit of recklessness, and in others fostering that easy good-nature and dislike to martyrdom, of which you justly complain. I mention this circumstance to account in part for the fact, which ought not to be concealed, that while some Relief

Committees struggled to the utmost against the difficulties that beset them, there were also instances of weakness and neglect of duty. In justice also to the relief system, we are bound to remember that at the time when it was passed through Parliament the extent of the subsequent distress could not be fully known; and that, if that distress had been less, the bad results of a system vicious in principle, must have been proportionally diminished, and, indeed, more than proportionally.

The laws of last session, to which I have alluded, were all of them considered in this country well intended, and, in a measure, useful laws: but in England they did not fail to increase the popular indignation. Many prognostications were disproved by them: and much English money, that is to say imperial money, was thrown away, that is to say, bestowed upon the Irish part of the children of the empire; *your* England not being able to tolerate the gift which another England bestowed, and which, munificent as it was, would probably have been made ampler still if the pecuniary need had been greater. Day after day new invectives against the Irish were poured out by the English press: a Thersites never wants subject-matter for his spleen: and in this instance the process of defamation was not a difficult one. It was easy to pick up a particular instance of oppression, or neglect of duty, such as are to be found in every country, and to



generalise from it, making the exception serve as the rule. It was easy to copy out and comment upon a statement in some Irish Repeal newspaper detailing the circumstantial horrors of the last "eviction of sixty families,"—easy to do this without inquiring whether the number was really sixty or six, or whether the "wretches evicted" might not happen to be a few comfortable farmers selected from among the number of those who took advantage of the confusion of the time to head a repudiation of rent, which repudiation, if successful, would have deprived the landlord of the power of meeting his own engagements, and of course of paying either wages or rates. It is easy, Sir, when surrounded by persons whose passions or interests move them to place confidence in men not always listened to with respect, to adventure upon the most extravagant calumnies,—asserting, for example, or more safely implying, that Irish landlords are more willing to feed their hounds than their paupers; it is easy thus to hound on the rabble of a legislative assembly against defenceless men engaged in succouring the defenceless, or devote them to such tender mercies at home as were experienced by the Gallician nobles. For more expert practitioners in the art of calumny, and those less urgently pressed by electioneering necessities, it is easy to assume a tone of candour, to make plausible allowances for enormities that do not exist, to take what is called

a large view of the subject, to wrap up a falsehood and drop it into the hollow of a rounded sentence. All this was easy. More than this was done. Such a course could not surprise those who are aware that men often, by an unconscious but salutary necessity, express sentiments of which they are not the originators, but the exponents. In a deliberative assembly, such men as Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell—to whom the first place as to ability is assigned, and who may be supposed to unite with the higher intellect and responsibility more than the average of purity and patriotism—represent what may be called the mind and moral sense of the nation, and not their own constituencies or their own opinions alone. Another and very different class is necessary also: nor can its interference, whether expressed in venomous speech or in merely animal cries, be considered without its use, if the passions, the malice, or the folly which is always to be found in a large community, muttering or yelling through these mouth-pieces, should give a timely warning of what fatuity may intend, and what wisdom has to guard against.

The Prime Minister and the leaders of opposition gave no sanction to the course adopted. The former made mention, as truth demanded, of occasional abuses for which parties in Ireland were justly chargeable; but he acknowledged also the zeal and self-sacrifice which had been at least in

an equal degree exhibited, and he touched with a decent forbearance upon those exceptional failures, which, in our opinion, at least, were the natural result of the impracticable relief measures adopted. Some of the less important followers of the Government had not, if I remember right, the self-command to follow his example, and, in their indifferent flippancies, reminded us of that proverbial sauciness of servants, from which the Servants' Hall of Downing Street is not exempt.

In a word, it was suggested to us on all occasions, in Parliament, in society, and by the press, that we were a race whom it behoved the wise no longer to encourage; that we had been beggars from the beginning, but that henceforward we must knock at the wall, not the door; that we had been bullies, but had now extorted the last penny; that we had been impostors, but were now impostors found out.

Hard words, Sir, are not agreeable even when accompanied by benevolent deeds. The mercenary will accept abuse if paid for it; but men conscious of no unworthy aim when, trusting to the first law of nature and to the second of religion, they demand assistance in emergency, expect that it should be given, or withholden, with decorum. Those amongst you, however, who had entertained us with their remonstrances, were resolved not to dismiss us without a blessing; and accordingly they bade us extend our hand on parting, and dropped into it

an amended Poor Law. Of that measure, I shall only remark, at present, that I am one of those who believe the principle of a Poor Law to be a sound one in a highly populated country, notwithstanding the great dangers that attend its practical application. Nevertheless, I heartily concur in the objections then raised to the amended measure, in so far as the alterations dispensed, wherever pauperism was excessive, with all tests of destitution, and made no provision for reducing the preposterous size of our unions, and electoral divisions, and increasing the number of our workhouses. On these grounds chiefly the measure was opposed by several Irish members of both Houses, and by such English members as retained their belief in political economy, or their remembrance of the past. On this occasion, again, an increased animosity against us was discovered. No modification of the bill was to be heard of. You assured us, with a vehemence peculiarly your own, that the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill, was our portion, and that it was the last of the boons with which you intended to enrich us. You carried the day, and enacted your panacea for Irish ills. Having succeeded, however the measure might work eventually, whether it was to "bury your dead out of your sight," or to involve us and you in aggravated calamities—in either case, it was to have been expected that for the time your uneasiness would have been mitigated. Our hopes deceived



us. Too soon it became apparent, that though you had passed your amended poor law, and vowed a vow never again to throw millions into the bottomless pit of Irish destitution, you were still dissatisfied with us.

No sooner did you carry your great measure than doubts seem to have stolen upon your mind with respect to its complete success. I was in England at that time, and I remember being asked by several intelligent English gentlemen favourable to the amended law, how the people were to live in those districts in which, supposing the potato not to return, no sufficient rate could be raised though no rent were demanded? I replied that I did not feel convinced that they were to live, unless something else beside the Poor Law were provided for them. Becoming a questioner in my turn, I asked "What is to be the end?" On this subject opinions were vague, but impressions were strong; and I was informed that the end would probably be this: that many of the landlords would break, many of the farmers emigrate, and many of the labourers die; a conclusion which appeared to me unsatisfactory, just as flinging millions into a bottomless pit appears to you. On the whole, however, I was assured that the measure would work well; and in this fashion—that rents would be lowered in proportion as rates were increased, and that the money heretofore paid to the landlord

would in future become the poor man's estate. There is a treatise, Sir, by Edmund Burke, entitled "Thoughts on Scarcity," of which a cheap edition was printed last year for the benefit of Irish country gentlemen who did not possess in their libraries the works of their illustrious countryman, or who, assenting probably to his principles, wished to render them practically useful by applying them in a manner different from that which suggested itself to their indulgent instructors. He remarks in it that despite of prejudices, which he attributes only to the lower orders, if all the rich men in England were to be deprived of their possessions, the property thus confiscated would not add a meal of bread and cheese to the portion of the poor. How did it happen that this passage was passed over so carelessly, or how can you be sure but that this philosophy may apply to Ireland as well as to England? You will observe that in many respects the same laws of nature prevail in the one country as in the other. Why, then, should you doubt that the same general laws of political philosophy will produce the same results? Be assured, Sir, that this is one of the matters which you will have to reconsider. If you were to confiscate the whole labour fund of Ireland to the gratuitous support of the poor, the result would not be that a new labour fund would immediately spring into existence to reward good nature, and justify "fast"

legislation. If you were to abolish utterly, and by law, that security for property which has long been so imperfect by reason of the weakness of law, the effect would not be that every Irish proprietor and farmer would devote himself with redoubled ardour to improvement; while the English capitalist would meet yet additional obstacles to the investment of his money. You ought not to dislike us on this account; neither should you resent our coldness towards your plagiarised scheme for robbing the rich in order to give to the poor. But so it is. Passion and prejudice blind even the wisest; you would rather knock your head against a flint than believe that Irish flints are hard: you fancy that you can keep wages on the public works twopence a day under the market price: with this impression you toss up the whole labour market on your shoulder, and walk off with it. What wonder, then, that rather than believe that Irish grievances can proceed from any but Irish folly, you should cease to believe in political economy?—that rather than govern Ireland as you have found it necessary to govern England, you should govern her by the laws of Robin Hood? Let me observe, however, that as our opinions against out-door relief for the able-bodied were chiefly drawn from your own history, and the philosophy of your political writers, they can hardly afford a full justification of that increased resentment of which I seek in vain the cause.

Let me make one other attempt to discover the cause of your resentment. I have already alluded to the probable end of our present difficulties as contemplated by some intelligent persons in England. The theory was compendious, distinct, and coherent, as might be expected from practical men; and on more than one occasion, during the debates on the Irish Poor Law, it was expressed with a frankness, not without value because a little unceremonious. The landlords are to become bankrupts, and the lands are to become the property of persons possessed of greater capital. The advocates of this theory (which may be referred to the class called *speculative*) abstained from adding that, the more rapidly matters were pushed to a conclusion, the greater would be the quantity of land forced at once upon the market, the lower would be the rate of purchase, and consequently the larger that proportion of capital which would remain to be spent upon its improvement, and indeed on that of all classes in Ireland. It was significantly said in Parliament and in the press, "If bankrupt landlords cannot pay their rates and improve their lands at the same time, let them break like bankrupt shopkeepers: if their places know them no more, they will know other and better men." It is but fair to add that those who spoke were probably not, in their own opinion, speaking for themselves. A large investment of English capital in Irish land would have



been thought advisable by them on those ordinary principles of business which would turn all commodities to the best account, and care little for personal rights or sentiments, not understanding the great public interests interwoven with these. Such an investment could not but have proved indirectly beneficial to the class that promoted it; but I do not venture to affirm that the individuals to whose clamours I have alluded had either the courage or inclination to take the lead in the enterprise. And your sagacity will not fail to suggest to you what I would wish earnestly to impress upon the attention of all English gentlemen, a class not likely to concur in such courses, that in this country an inference may be drawn from such a method of viewing a great question, as to the principles upon which English legislation is conducted. A mercantile nation is tempted to seek its principles in the counting-house. As a mere matter of policy this counting-house speculation was not without its showy side. The confiscation would have been the least bloody that ever took place in Ireland. The new undertakers would, before the lapse of half a century, have acquired a knowledge of the country, sufficient, at least, for their own protection; and English agriculturists would have known how to drain our clay lands. The proposed confiscation has however not yet taken place. Can this have roused your spleen? A new calamity, the existing

monetary convulsion, has been added to that of the potato failure; but it has fallen first upon you, not on us. The Irish proprietors will, very probably, follow in their turn; but ruin turns first upon a nobler prey. Do not be incensed against us, Sir, upon this account; for it is not we, but nature, that will have her way. The lords of land strike root and have something more like fixity of tenure than the lords of water, or the lords of air. Trees, though with thunder too long acquainted, will sometimes fling their imperfect shadows over the graves of ten generations of prophets. High-pressure engines will sometimes burst. This is no fault of ours. If your merchants and bankers have overspeculated; if they have preserved too little of their capital "floating," and, therefore, have sunk themselves, they have themselves to blame. Far from exulting in their calamity, we share in it, and shall suffer yet more from it by and by. In the meantime, Sir, you, the representative of that lower England of which I speak, must have patience. The transference of Irish estates must be postponed for awhile. You will be ready for your dinner by the time it is dressed. Annuitants die at last, though they live proverbially long: and all Irish proprietors are your annuitants; for, though they will not give up what they cannot use, yet their estates belong, *de jure*, to those who have the capital necessary for their "improvement." You

may indulge a hope that the longer they hold out the more sudden will be their fall: and if all their estates should thus be thrown at once upon the market, they will probably sell for five years' purchase.

Lest, as often happens, I should be guilty of the injustice which I condemn, I must stop to observe that your utmost indignation and invective availed not (though perseveringly directed to that end) to repress that private generosity which visited this island with a good-will that astonished us, though not inexperienced before in the munificence of English charity. Nothing can prove more incontestably the separate existence of your England and a better England, than the fact that while thousands, who never gave Ireland a farthing, were lavishing abuse, without measure, upon her; thousands, including many of the class not rich, were denying themselves habitual comforts to minister to the necessities of men whom perhaps they had never heard spoken of, save with scorn. On this subject I will not enlarge, for my praise could add nothing to actions which speak for themselves, in spite of the modesty of our benefactors, many of whom chose to remain anonymous. You will, perhaps, ask me why you have heard less of our gratitude for these favours than of invective and clamour from the anti-English section of Ireland. I regret you should ever have heard what can truly be called clamour. I have

always observed that a voice, though not loud, if pitched at the right key, and distinctly articulated, is heard as far, and remembered as long, as a wise speaker would desire. If you ask me why you have heard less of our thanks, I answer that the low murmurs of gratitude, like the sighs of affliction, do not penetrate so far as the war shouts of defiance. If you had sat in the gloom and chill of an Irish hovel, which had never seemed gloomy or cold to its occupant till the last potato was gone, perhaps you might have heard, as I have often done, a touching, though low-toned tribute of gratitude bestowed on those friends, unknown and invisible as the ministering angels of God, but whose presence in the spirit was ardently realised by the affections of the sufferers, and who received from them neither praise nor thanks unaccompanied by a benediction. On many public occasions ample acknowledgments have been made for the private charity of England; but the full gratitude of a people, whose gratitude (notwithstanding occasional instances to the contrary) too often reminds us mournfully of the shortcomings of our best endeavours, can, of course, be known only by those who leave the market-place and go to the hovel.

Again this autumn a Queen's letter has been issued, stirring up her people to charitable deeds; and in justification of such charity two most impressive reports have been published by Sir John Bur-



goyne and Mr. Trevelyan, both of whom had already contributed to Ireland far more than any amount of money. Again a vigilant opposition has been organized by the press. It is to be hoped that no Englishman will bestow on the Irish the money which cannot be spared by those who have a more immediate claim on him than persons at a greater distance, even though in greater distress. It is also to be hoped that no man will allow himself to be defrauded of one of his chief privileges by the officious interference of some anonymous meddler who has not his client's true interest at heart.

Some letters, professing to be written by clergymen, have attracted an undesirable notoriety on this occasion. One reverend gentleman states that, as the Archbishop has commanded it, he will, of course, move his congregation to charity; but that he will advise them to give grudgingly, and that he and his curate are prepared to give grudgingly, the one five shillings and the other half-a-crown. Another says that he will of course preach his charity sermon, in favour of the Irish; but that he will take occasion to record in it all that he has ever heard against that wicked and ungrateful people. Another clergyman has resolved to bring his charitable flock to a standstill by means of two charity-boxes, one for the English, the other for the Irish poor, placed at an exactly equal distance, but at opposite sides. Another says, "I own that, instead of feeling any com-

miseration for, or any disposition to assist, the people of Ireland, I would rather help them to another Cromwell, who might rule them in the only way they deserve to be ruled, viz., with a rod of iron. Besides, we have poor enough at home." A mere layman admonishes us not "to thwart the Providence of God." On clerical aberrations I desire to make no comment. We partake the shame of those whom we ought to revere. The picture is a sad one, and presents us at best with but contracted views of Christian charity and an indifferent notion of church discipline. Let it be passed and forgotten, and let nothing be remembered but that ample, and often self-denying generosity, which, on a former occasion, refused to be limited within restriction of nation or of church. If any well-disposed person should, on this occasion, have withheld his contribution, neither on account of poverty nor insensibility, but from misrepresentation, his error is a venial one. For the private charity received from England, the Irish feel an unqualified, for the charity of the State, a qualified gratitude. The latter they believe to have been an aid which it was the duty of the empire to extend to a particular part of the empire suffering under a sudden visitation. They believe, also, that a great act of duty, well done, deserves gratitude; and that by no state has such an act ever been carried out on so munificent a scale as recently by the British. In the

meantime, do not imagine that, until we are really as degraded as you would represent us, we shall ever, while you choose to rain a mingled shower of halfpence and calumnies upon us, stoop our heads with unmingled humility to pick up the common treasure out of the dirt. If you intended your charity for a bribe, you should have told us so.

I am resolved, Sir, to proceed no further in my inquiry into the causes of your dislike to us, since I have hitherto been so unsuccessful; but shall commit myself at once to fortune, and try what a guess may effect. What, if you have in reality not so much a reasoned objection to us as a resolute distaste? What, if the cause of that distaste be our poverty? In that case, I have nothing to say. I have a dog who cannot abide beggars; in other respects he is well behaved. This is an antipathy. Ireland is certainly very unlike England. Perhaps we cannot approve our own opposites without being untrue to ourselves; and, amongst your class, truth to ourselves is a form which truth is singularly apt to take. Perhaps you have disagreeable recollections connected with the causes of our poverty; perhaps you have disagreeable anticipations of its consequences: in either case perhaps you are not far astray. But, without too curious inquiries, let me console you as well as I can by assuring you that the loss you have sustained from Ireland during this last year is much less than you imagine.

Day after day clever newspaper articles appear on the subject of the present monetary pressure in England; the result, it is said, of her gift to Ireland of £10,000,000. The loan of £600,000 to Irish railroads is also paraded before your eyes the more to bewilder and incense you. I would not diminish the dignity of a man who "hath had losses," but I must inform you that this statement is an instance of that common form of "Irish exaggeration," of which the meaning is, exaggeration about Ireland. The empire, not you, gave us about £4,000,000, not ten, and lent us something like the same sum, of which £2,000,000 remain unspent. The last report of the Relief Commissioners states that, during the five months preceding the harvest, the sum they had expended in rations was about £1,400,000. If Parliament had deliberated longer in 1846, or met again sooner, and adopted in time that very imperfect but very much improved relief system to which at last it was driven, my belief is that not much more than half the sum spent would have been found sufficient for the emergency. If you had not blundered in your drainage Bill, it is not too much to suppose that £1,000,000 would have been applied through the proprietors to the relief of the people, and the improvement of the land, on which all classes must ultimately depend. Another portion of the money spent might have been rendered reproductive if some really useful public works had been undertaken, and



a moderate number only of able-bodied labourers employed on them. On the whole, then, my belief is, that an expenditure of £4,000,000, consisting of a free gift of £1,000,000, together with the loans to proprietors now successfully made, and loans for public improvements, each class amounting to £1,500,000, would have carried us through the ten months of our past distress. Still there is a difference between a gift of £4,000,000 and £10,000,000. Instead, then, of repeating, on all occasions—in the Houses of Parliament, in the market-place, and at church—that one deplorable wail about the money you have lost by us, remember, I beseech you, that if your vows were at once crowned, and your “daughter (or sister) lay dead at your feet, with the ducats in her ear,” it is four millions only you could expect to find there, and not ten. You were for a long time spending almost a million a week on your own railroads. Between the years 1840 and 1847, no smaller sum than £257,800,000 was sanctioned by Parliament for railroad purposes, of which £91,380,000 has already been spent. Of the former sum not less than £124,500,000 was sanctioned in 1846, the year of the Irish potato failure and the Labour Rate Act. That expenditure, be assured, together with the deficient supply of cotton, has some connection with the present pressure on the money market. I would not have you, Sir, despair about these £4,000,000, or be incensed with French

newspapers because, after their frivolous fashion, they affirm that your position as regards Ireland is not, as you would make out, a tragic one, but, on the contrary, a comic one, or, at most, a tragi-comic one. I have seen a calculation made by an eminent political economist, which demonstrated (and his treatise was written many years since) that your whole property, agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing, including all your capital invested, your machinery, &c., could not then have been worth less than seven hundred thousand millions;—in other words, England would sell for that sum if she chose at any time to call an auction. Now £4,000,000 is only the hundred and seventy-five thousandth part of seven hundred thousand millions, being about the one hundred and eighty-fourth part of a farthing in the pound on this sum. Can even your England grudge us this fraction of the widow's mite? If she be troubled by such a loss (which, in spite of your assertion, I doubt), there is a better England which is troubled only by not knowing how to spend money in Ireland without doing harm as well as good there. Try if you cannot belong to this other England.

Any man who ruminates too much on the past becomes of a dreary countenance, so that mankind immediately suppose that his internal being (I do not mean his stomach, but his pocket) must needs be so as it ought not to be (I forbear to speak plainly), whereby his credit fails on 'Change. I therefore

advise you, Sir, to take comfort, especially from two principal considerations, which are these, viz., that one-half of the £8,000,000 has only been lent, so that you may one day behold it when you least expect it; and again, that the other half, being utterly given away, may be accounted amongst the things for which no man sorrows, because tears must be in vain. David rose up and wept no more when his child was dead. You have the like consolation, for your £4,000,000 are dead and gone also; but with this difference in your case, which I admit is to your disadvantage, viz., that as your treasure can never come to you again, so neither can you ever go to it, for it is gone into the bellies of all the beggars in Ireland.

Having thus endeavoured, however unsuccessfully, to discover the cause of your uneasiness, I will now, according to my promise, suggest to you some reasons, founded on justice and expediency, which should induce you to conceal the extent of the disorder.

To dispose first of the least important consideration, I would suggest, that it is not for the interest of England that those feelings of animosity which have for a long time existed towards Ireland, which have increased of late, and which have found so unscrupulous an utterance in the English Press, should longer continue to embarrass the mutual relations of the two countries. It is impossible that the east wind of your invective, fanged and venomed with

the extremes of cold and bitterness, should blow thus perseveringly upon the bleeding carcase of this land, without exasperating certain old wounds, a few of which have been skinned over, but none of which have had time to heal. My countrymen have many peculiarities, and amongst others this one, that the more you revile them, the less they like you. You may lead an Irishman, but you cannot drive him. They are often very wrong-headed: and if you resolved that every alternate law passed with respect to Ireland should have her good for its object, and every alternate one might work as it liked, they would very probably make the two classes of measures produce, respectively, results exactly the opposite of those which you had anticipated. If you sentence them to poverty, they will stifle you with their rags. Consider the effect of passive resistance alone amongst a people so savage or so saintly that if you give them but a pipe to smoke they have the impudence to be happy, with nothing to make them so but a digestion the better from never being overloaded, an oriental conviction that "what will be, will be," and an Epicurean Platonism, with a dash of the Cynic in it, which enables them to find comfort in the warmth of the wet straw on which they lie in the sunshine, and in some visions of a future world, different both from England and Ireland, which float before the half-closed eye. They will not better their condition merely to please you, and in your way. If the



whole nation were to lie down and die, you would be delivered from a great trouble; but if it were only to lie down, and not die, your best intended legislation would be turned a good deal out of its course.

I will not enlarge, Sir, on a subject which may excite angry passions, but I must tell you plainly that if by an industrious perseverance in contumely you do what you can to excite the hatred of Ireland, you will succeed at last, and that Ireland is quite strong enough in this case to do you a mischief. You will, perhaps, ask whether Irish animosity against England can become stronger than it has been for some years past. I answer, a great deal stronger. Hitherto it has been entertained by one section of the people only: it has been also, in part, unjust, and expressed with an unbecoming vehemence. It has been neither as grave nor as deep as has been deserved, I will not say by England, but by that England of which you are the representative. There is a gaseous passion, and a solid passion; a passion chiefly known by its light, and a passion felt by its heat. If you change the seat of Irish resentment from the imagination to the heart, and convert it from a sentiment to a principle, it will become a more formidable thing than it has heretofore been; and you will hear proportionably less about it. Do not despise little things. A child can carry a pitcher of water on her head; but a strong and wise man may be reduced to a lamentable state by a single drop of water lodged within a single



cavity in the brain, merely because that drop is out of its place and not easily got at. Has not experience taught you how national dislikes may impede the commerce which is the breath of your nostrils? Is there any doubt that the long-desired commercial treaty between England and France would have been carried into effect before now had not the ancient antipathies between the two countries been exasperated and prolonged by late appeals to national prejudices in France? But I will say no more on this matter, because I hope hereafter to demonstrate that Ireland, if reduced to utter pauperism, must inflict on you greater calamities, not from choice, but from necessity, than you might expect from her most deserved hostility.

You will, perhaps, Sir, think it a hardship that you should have been so long made the object of Irish invective, and yet not be allowed to abuse Ireland in your turn; but in this opinion I cannot by any means concur. Professional invective should always be taken in good part, and as it was our duty to put a charitable construction on the expression of a law lord who, some years since, called us "aliens," so should you regard with indulgence those persons (and doubtless in the number of our agitators there are such) who abuse England indiscriminately and unjustly, but who, if they did not make this their business, would be exposed to all the temptations of idleness. In good society I have

always heard you spoken of kindly, until quite of late; and even of late never with rancour. From the pulpit I have never heard so much as an insinuation against you. Moreover, in the matter of injury to Ireland, your motto was, till lately, "Deeds, not words." Now that you have changed your system, what could you expect, supposing you had succeeded in convincing us that we are a nation of villains, but that we should act like villains? Let me add one consideration more. The more the Irish are reviled by England, the more they will flatter themselves, and be flattered, at home; and it is for their interest that they should know themselves to be just what they are.

I deem the detraction in which you indulge inexpedient also, by reason of its effect on yourselves. I fear lest by this vile and vulgar habit of foul-mouthed abuse, which you have contracted, you may vitiate your own judgment to such an extent as to lose the power of distinguishing good from evil. There is great danger that you may end by believing us to be that which you have long called us. Bad words, at first but the expression of a peevish fancy, become insensibly the language of habitual passion, and at last the representatives of opinion, or that which must with you stand in the place of opinion. You cannot for sport see every thing in a false light, and yet retain the power of seeing things at will with an unprejudiced eye; neither can you run mad about Ireland,

and yet remain in your senses on all other subjects. Your ear once formed, and expecting certain sounds, you will think every one who speaks of Ireland in a gentler tone a designing knave or a good-natured dupe. Moreover, Sir, there already exists a sort of quasi union between the two countries, and notwithstanding the strong Repeal sentiment of many at this side of the water, as well as the not doubtful tendencies of the new English Repealers at your side, who already murmur, "England was glad at their departing, for they were afraid of them," a real union would be much preferred by me, not only for the consolidation of the empire at large, but to promote the welfare, honour, and power of this country, for which I think there are destinies reserved larger than those yet dreamed of by her friends or foes. Should the kingdoms become one, vitally as well as nominally, it is expedient that England should retain the power of understanding Ireland. I do think, Sir, that it is an error on your part to put out your own eyes. You will yet have to use them. There are two subjects which should be studied by any one who would legislate for Ireland: the one, what is euphuistically called the history of the country; the other, the character of the people. You cannot, without a great sacrifice of your self-respect, become acquainted with the former; but you should endeavour to understand the Irish character well, both in its good qualities and in its bad. You constantly acknowledge your

ignorance in this matter, expressing your astonishment at every new trait of Irish character that reaches you, as though you had been reading the last book of travels in New Zealand. Why should not those members of Parliament who are recent from the universities—men who have not yet bound up their opinions in fagots, and who therefore would not, in losing one, loosen all—men full of youthful aspirations and activities, and ignorant enough to be aware of their ignorance—why should not these senators make up their autumnal shooting-parties in Conne-mara instead of Scotland, and pick up a real knowledge of the Irish peasant, instead of studying blue books, and learning to swim on dry land? It is not desirable only, but necessary, that your ignorance of Irish character should cease. To that end the first requisite is that you should shake yourselves free from your present conception of it, that grim and portentous phantom which sits so heavy on your imagination. I would counsel you, at least, not to nail yourselves, by reiterated statements, to opinions that will not support you at the end.

A wise man wears his follies like his clothes, not like his skin, knowing that he must change them from time to time. Those persons who are truly disposed to help the Irish nation will not be intolerant of this caution. Let such ask themselves whether they have ever known a man succeed in aiding those whom he unjustly despised. The thing



does not happen ; whether because the effort is not made sincerely, or because it is not made with discretion (unjust contempt implying a want of self-knowledge and sense); or perhaps because the proposed recipient of aid refuses to permit that person to become his benefactor whom he deems unworthy of being his friend.

With the impartiality of ignorance you abuse, not only proprietors and peasants, but also our clergy of both churches. The clergy of the Establishment you consider to be drones. I can assure you that these drones have been working hard for some time past, and that many a famishing family is grateful to them for their exertions. I regret to add that many of them will not, I fear, be able in future to receive English travellers with their accustomed hospitality, because there is often a scant supply left in their kitchen, and rather thread-bare covering upon children who have been as delicately brought up and as carefully instructed as those in any English parsonage. The objection which you have of late brought against the Roman Catholic priests is, that they are either Whiteboys or the instigators of Whiteboys. From this statement we, the Irish gentlemen who live at home and are not at ease, must dissent. In so large a body as the Irish priesthood there must be exceptions ; but if the number of priests were much larger, and more nearly proportioned to the needs of their flocks, the number of Whiteboy offences, as well



as those of other kinds, would probably diminish. Should you be content with converting the Roman Catholic priests, you will, perhaps, do well to hold your disputations in private; for those priests are a very "Jesuitical" race, and when you have propounded a question out of your little theological catechism, will give you an answer wholly different from that set down under it in print; and, perhaps, instead of waiting for the next question, ask you one in turn. Should you prefer the Cromwellian method of dealing with them, I beg that it may not be in my time. I respect them for their office as well as on account of the solicitude which they feel for the welfare of their flocks, both spiritual and temporal; but I must own that I have a selfish interest in this matter likewise: I reside in the country, and am of those who think that we could not reside there with comfort, if you were madly to demolish the chief barrier which at present exists between us and anarchy.

Having said thus much with reference to expediency, let me now, according to my engagement, consider the matter with reference to justice and truth. I object to the reiteration of your charges against us, because they are for the most part opposed to truth and to justice. These are qualities with which you cannot dispense. That high Providence which apportions in various degrees, to the several nations, both physical and moral gifts, has bestowed on England the virtues of justice and

of truth in no ordinary degree. It has also largely rewarded your use of these talents; and, more merciful in judgment than even in bounty, it has visited your occasional neglect of them with summary retribution. Should you think it a just judgment if we were to form our notion of England at large by a generalization from the police reports? Is any one ignorant that the eventful periods of history are those of aggression and suffering; and that, in the circumstances of a contemporaneous country, the worst part is the noisiest, and the best escapes fame? The charges made against Ireland, it is true, derive a certain verisimilitude from the stories in circulation amongst you; but you cannot be ignorant that for such tales the supply, according to the ordinary laws of trade, will always be proportionate to the demand. Abate your appetite for them, and you will be deluded by them no more. Believe, if you will, that we are base, cruel, and faithless—men without natural affections and without gratitude, without conscience and without shame—reprobates, idolaters, un-English persons, and beggars. On all these charges but the last I shall say nothing, because, though they were true, we might be prosperous notwithstanding, and the England which *you* represent might be as well content with us as you could be with the Chinese, if that people, well satiated with opium, were to decorate their sleepy heads with cotton nightcaps of your manufacture. In the second

place I pass them by, because they are made in too general a form to admit of any but a general denial, and because, as they do not contain that one particle of truth which is necessary to vivify a lie, so I conclude that those who believe them now must needs believe them still. There are, however, other charges which are true in part, and of which the vice consists in gross exaggerations and in a wilful forgetfulness of all extenuating circumstances. I shall proceed to discuss our real faults without any desire to palliate them. The faults exist, we have therefore to pay the penalty for them, and we shall be the better able to contend with these, as well as our other enemies, their allies, when we look them in the face.

Before passing on to your graver accusations, I will notice one, put forward sometimes with a drollery that ought not to be a substitute for sense. "There has never been a people so badly treated as the Irish," it is said: "from the beginning of things it seems to have been England's vocation to trample on Ireland, and Ireland's to be trampled on; from which surely she ought to infer that this treatment is just what she deserves. Successful people are apt to deserve success\*, and blows are honestly come by." This doctrine of "success, a test of merit," never will flourish except on the soil of the op-

\* "And prove the Cæsar or the Catiline

By the true touch-stone of Desert—Success."

LORD BYRON, *Doge of Venice.*

pressor. A certain Egyptian that smote a certain Hebrew believed it; but he died on account of his error. We have been taught that there exists a test of desert altogether different from success: we are told that on a day, still a long time off, several things will be set right which have gone wrong; and many an epitaph be brought painfully to book. I have myself known a child who lost his arm in consequence of a kick from a mule: he has since grown up, he will always feel his loss when any bully chooses to assail him: but I do not therefore set the mule above the man. I do not think this new creed likely to be generally avowed; acted upon it will always be by some, though not by all to whom a love of paradox may recommend it. You may, if you please, identify greatness with success, and suffering with ignominy; you may mould the not unnatural prejudice of savage life into a philosophy (and as such it is original); you may even elevate it into a religion, if antiquated religions displease you; but you cannot adopt this new-old doctrine and retain any but the most Platonic love for justice and for truth.

You will perhaps not be displeased if I postpone to my next letter a consideration of those heavier charges upon which you, I think erroneously, base your dislike to us. I should myself prefer this course, because I hope to be more successful in that part of my subject than in the portion hitherto treated. In this letter I have not sought to do more than analyse

the symptoms of your uneasiness, draw conclusions from them as to its hidden causes, observe on some circumstances connected with the recent relief system which seem to have increased it, and persuade you, if possible, to mitigate your resentment, or at all events to express it as it is expressed by English gentlemen who share your delusion. In the most important of these objects I fear that I may have failed; and if so I ought to apologise for having given you so much trouble in vain. Should you accompany me farther, we will discuss in a more serious tone the more serious of the imputations brought against my countrymen. If, without palliating our faults, I can show that they are less than you imagine, I hope that you will be well pleased; and should I prove that, without ceasing to be ours, they are yours also in part, let me trust that you will draw an inference as to what your future policy in Ireland ought to be, and help to amend what you have helped to impair.



## LETTER II.

The Faults of the Irish.—The continued Existence of Society in Ireland accounted for.—The Connection between Irish Faults and past Misgovernment.—Brief Sketch of Events in Ireland.—Variations of English Policy according to Change of Circumstances.—Outlawry, Legal Tyranny, Corruption.—The Irish Constitution.—The Union.—Catholic Emancipation.—Agitation.—The Penal Laws still operate in Ireland.—English Intolerance still finds a Mode of expressing itself.—National Debt of England to Ireland.—Amendment the Test of Repentance.—Imperial Legislation during Forty-seven Years.—A Poor Law.—Neither the Responsibilities nor the Rights of Property asserted in Time.—The Problem of to-day the same as that at the Time of the Union.

SIR,

I PROCEED to discuss the specific charges brought against Ireland. It is not without humiliation that I admit the faults of my countrymen, although I believe that my country can afford those admissions which truth requires. The reluctance with which I make them is, however, mitigated by the consideration, that what you imagine to be our complete and final condemnation is by far the strongest part of our case against you. Unhappy the country in whose mouth even justice becomes a railing accusation; unhappy that other country whose faults are amongst her weapons of defence, and whose virtues have so often betrayed her! The

*tu quoque* argument is the last to which I would willingly resort; nor shall I allude in this letter to any defects on your part, except those which are so inextricably interwoven with ours, that to handle one class is to handle both. I would gladly omit all mention of these also were it possible to dispense in argument with that connection which subsists between cause and effect. In the mean time, Sir, be assured that this is a practical question. Material improvement will not take place without moral amendment; and should you be disposed to undertake the latter, you ought to understand that the work on your side of St. George's Channel and the work on our side is one work, and that, to be carried on in either country, it must be carried on simultaneously in both.

Among the sins with which you charge us are the following, ranged in the order of their presumed wickedness, viz. :—

1. Our poverty.
2. Our lawlessness.
3. Our disregard of truth.
4. Our bullying propensities.
5. Our sloth, procrastination, helplessness, &c.
6. Our insolent content, and savage merriment in misery.
7. Our bad taste, and peevish ingratitude to you.

I have already stated that I shall notice those accusations only which contain some particle of truth;

but I must own that the first two charges in the above black list are true altogether. Poor we are, and he would be a bold man who denied it. Landlords, farmers, and labourers; these three classes are all poor, and so poor, that if you would support the country by compelling any one of them to maintain the other two, (to receive in turn no doubt the same assistance,) you act as wisely as if you desired a man to become rich by shifting his halfpence from one pocket into the other. Our merchants and manufacturers, also, of whom we have but few, are poor; you would call them adventurers: our professions are overstocked; in fact, the only men well paid are the attorneys who put diseased estates out of pain. The lawlessness of Ireland is about equal to the poverty which causes it. I do not speak of this year merely, which has exhibited the somewhat riotous saturnalia of despair; but, from the earliest times, the people of this country, though very reverential in disposition, have had no respect for the law of the land. They are much addicted to litigation among themselves; but though fond of the law as a game, law as an object of reverence is what they do not understand. This is a grievous calamity; but not enjoying your gift of wondering, we are obliged to contemplate the fact simply with regret. The marvel to us is, not the lawlessness that surrounds us, but that amidst so complete an indifference to the law of the land, *as such*, civil polity can exist. Society in this country

is a great Fact for which it is hard to account : under the same circumstances it would at once go to pieces in England. The truth is, that there exists a principle of compensation in all human things, the result of a Providence more compassionate than the theories of the philosophers. There is an unwritten law as well as a written ; and of these, the more merciful has proved the more durable and the stronger. In all countries they flourish in some measure, each class at the other's expense. There are in Ireland social traditions (those immemorial and undefined "mores" without which laws are of no avail but to prolong decay) which have been to us a substitute for law ; there are household affections which extend their peaceful influence far beyond the limit of the hearth ; there is a reverence for antiquity and eminence, civil or ecclesiastical ; there is a moral sense, profound though perverted ; there is religion, abundant in quantity, whatever you may think of its quality. The consequence of these things is that there has been a Society.

Society would seem to include permanently its imaginative element as well as its sensual and moral ; and the first, though on it hangs the whole gradation of ranks and honorary distinctions, is subject to strange aberrations. In England, fifty years ago, the man who was but a footpad on the common, was a hero at Tyburn. In Ireland, if any one shoots you for your purse, he is hated and despised ; whereas the man who shoots you to revenge an agrarian feud

meets with pity, and if a reproachful, yet a protective sympathy. That sympathy is for the criminal, not with the crime. If you take the trouble of observing this distinction, it will save you from the sin of much needless calumny. Sympathy with crime is a depravity common neither in Ireland nor elsewhere. Sympathy for the criminal, rather than for the law, is an hereditary disease, and national calamity, in itself, a grave offence ; but the necessary result of the fact that, till a very recent period of English domination, law in Ireland was the friend neither of the people nor of justice, but the impartial persecutor of both. Why need it surprise you, Sir, that the law of the land should present itself in a different aspect to your countrymen and to mine? The same instincts which cause the one to revere, cause the other to hate it. The Englishman reveres the law because his liberty has been its creature, and his prosperity its ward. The Irish peasant has had a liberty too: but for centuries it was the liberty of moonlight mountains and tufted bogs, that bewildered his pursuers. He enjoyed it ; but he gave no thanks to the law. The Irish peasant had his prosperity also. On the domains of his fathers, perhaps beneath the ruins of their hall, the serf not seldom of some intruder, he devoured the prey he had caught, if in secrecy, then in security. To kill an "Irish enemy" was accounted an excess if not a crime. Within later times he had conacre, and he had a vote. He ate, and



gave thanks—but not to the law. There exists in England, also, a class of laws held, I fear, in slender esteem. I mean the game laws. No blacker catalogue of crime and misery was ever registered after an Irish eviction—an act which, even when accompanied by tyranny and cruelty, is often the defence of a starving landlord against a starving peasantry—than some of your own economical writers have lately recorded as attributable to an inordinate passion for pheasants' eggs. Should that time ever arrive when the rest of your laws are protected by no higher sanction than the game laws, the violation of them will be regarded as poaching is now. I would advise you, in that hour, to emigrate to Ireland. Liberty exists in this country, and so does law;—the former means a liberty to kill; the latter a legal restraint on him who would protect himself: but, to tell you the truth, law and liberty are the two things on which least store is set. On this subject there has seemed for the last year to exist a conspiracy between the government and the governed. We have, however, our safety notwithstanding. Be civil to every one, and every one will be obliging to you. Collect no rents, your own or any other person's: shun the hustings: avoid relief committees and boards of guardians: above all things keep clear of those agrarian feuds, the traditional causes of our social warfare; and you shall roam through the land as safely as the lady whom Senanus spurned. Under

the same circumstances your security in your own country would be the security of partridges and of grouse.

I have referred, Sir, to the past, as though you were acquainted with it: but lest I should seem guilty thereby either of flattery or of malice, let me proceed upon the opposite and more probable supposition, and write down (since you may, perhaps, be versed in only one side of our annals, as of our character) a short compendium of some past circumstances which have taken place in this island—circumstances which stand to her in place of a history, and which are the chief cause of her present condition, as well as of those stains upon her character, on which you enlarge. You have heard of Irish outbreaks and insurrections; nor has the information fallen upon an inattentive ear. Are you willing to hear the opposite side? Faults there were on both sides: if you acquaint yourself with éach class, you will have complied with the outward conditions of an impartial judgment. Having adjusted the balance you will be able to form a conclusive judgment. You will then be able to decide whether the severer condemnation is to be passed on that unhappy people, broken in its first fall, whose worst deeds were but the convulsions of one under torture, or on that great nation which held in her hands the destinies of both which initiated the whole policy followed out in the weaker; and, therefore, by a political

fatalism decreed its conclusion; that great nation which was just to every people whom it respected, and respected every people, save that one which had not earned respect by a united resistance; that great nation which, if the past cannot be recalled, has still the power of atoning for it; unless, as the severest punishment for past offences, she is deprived of the faculty of judging aright where she was too long contented to act wrong. On this subject, I refer you to an admirable book, entitled the "Past and Present Policy of England towards Ireland," which enters into detail more than I can do; and proves with what clearness, as well as intrepidity, both of thought and expression, an Englishman, when free, can treat this theme. If the rest of his countrymen chose, like him, to exercise their faculties on Irish matters, as they do on most beside, I need not have troubled you with this letter; or I might have written it in a tone far more agreeable, probably to both of us.

In the year 1172, England, or rather a warlike race, who, having conquered England, thought they could do no less than conquer Ireland likewise, undertook that enterprise which you have no doubt so often deplored. It was not difficult to find a pretext for intermeddling in Irish affairs, for the people were at that time as extravagantly given up to dissensions as they are now; but an 'appropriation' of the whole country on the grand scale projected by Henry II.

requiring a pretext, that sovereign betook himself to an English pope, who conferred Ireland upon the English king, as a fief held from himself, together with the title of "lord," receiving in return certain valuable considerations. Thus, partly through internal dissensions, partly by fallacious treaties, partly by force, partly by imposture, and, in no small degree, by marriages—for the English adventurers who settled here were adepts at fortune hunting—the island was subdued with a "fatal facility." Had it caused you more trouble in the conquest, you would have taken more trouble to govern it aright.

Lacking, however, then, as in more recent times, the leisure necessary for Irish affairs, you contented yourself with planting a feudal colony, and made over the island to a band of Norman adventurers, the most respectable that ever settled here, not a few of whose titles, the oldest in either country, continue to adorn the Irish peerage. The Norman middlemen, to whom you thus let your enormous dairy farm, were diligent in removing useless fences and securing fixity of tenure. They refused, of course, to pay rent; and if one of your bailiffs was caught straying beyond the limits of the pale, he received the salutation given to a tithe-proctor in later times; but they compensated for these affronts by comporting themselves worse to the natives than to you.

What between the exactions of these middlemen and their feuds, for like other robbers they stabbed at each other over their spoil, the unfortunate natives, seeing no other refuge, were obliged to fly from your agents to your laws, which they vainly invoked, and, for the protection of which, knowing that business should be done after a business-like fashion, they offered, in the year 1278, the sum of 8000 marks. King Edward I., who reigned at that time, was minded to take the ransom, and though not to let the captive go, yet to legalize the servitude: but the Barons, whose interests were inconsistent with any scheme of methodical oppression, disapproved of the project, as at a later period the West-Indian planters disapproved of negro emancipation; and partly by open denial, partly by passive resistance, compelled the king to abandon it.

In the reign of King Edward III. the same endeavour was made by the Irish: again they supplicated participation in English laws and the privilege of being lawful subjects of the English crown; again the prayer was rejected. Great persons then in power affirmed that the Irish were aliens, and ought so to be treated: nor were their instances unsuccessful. It has been remarked, that the greatest of the Roman emperors were those that persecuted the early Christians with the most severity: the same observation may be made with reference to the English kings and the Irish people.



Sir John Davies observes on the matter thus : “ I note as a great defect in the civil policy of this kingdom, that for the space of 350 years after the conquest first attempted, the English laws were not communicated to the Irish, nor the benefit and protection thereof allowed to them, though they earnestly desired and sought the same ; for as long as they were out of the protection of the law, so that every Englishman might oppress, spoil and kill them without controlment, how was it possible that they should be other than outlaws and enemies to the crown of England ? If the king would not admit them to the condition of subjects, how could they learn to obey him as sovereign ? ” . . . . . “ In a word, if the English could neither in peace govern them by law, nor could in warre root them out by the sword, must they not needs be prickes in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, until the world’s end ? ”

Sir John Davies does not seem to have taken otherwise than an indulgent view, on the whole, of this matter, though he notes this one “ defect ” in England’s policy. Probably he had not time to look at these trifles in detail : and it is in detail that suffering exists. A week appeared a long time to those who passed the last year in Ireland. During the 350 years preceding the period at which Sir John wrote, there must have been much of unrecorded suffering amongst the Irish poor. The famines, for instance, were almost perpetual. Edmond Spenser,

secretary to the lord deputy thus describes the state of the people, as though he had lived in 1847. "The Irish were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stonie heart would have rued the same. Out of everie corner of the woods and glynnes they came creeping forth on their hands, for the legges would not bear them. They looked like anatomies of death; they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eat the dead carrions; yea, happy were they who could find them; yea, and one another soon after; insomuch as the carcasses they spared not to scrape out of the graves; and if they found a plot of cresses or shamrocks there they flocked, as to a feast, for the time; yet not being able to continue long there withal."\* At a later period the same writer recommended that the English cavalry should make frequent irruptions through the disturbed districts, to the end that such of the outlaws as were not cut off by the sword, might, on their return, find their crops torn up by the horses' feet. Practical and imaginative tenderness are different things, and each has its reward. Spenser possessed a most tender imagination, for which he has been rewarded by the title of the "Gentle Poet." It is to be supposed that the savages who burned his castle, with the only child of "his Elizabeth" in it, were not readers of the "Fairy Queen."

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\* Spenser's "State of Ireland."

Let us now cast a glance back, and survey the space we have traversed. When a few words, such as usurpation, confiscation, and outlawry, constitute the whole of a nation's annals, the historian, thus moving through an unresisting medium, advances with a rapidity that deceives the incautious reader. The interval between the reign of King Henry II. and King Edward III. is no inconsiderable one. It exceeds that which has elapsed since the Emancipation Act, during which you remark that we have improved but slowly. Contrast the progress then made by your country and by your colony. If you turn over the pages of your chroniclers, you will find that not a few of those achievements which "make old story ring" were enacted within that period. If you study your constitutional histories, you will discover that during the same period some progress had been made in the building up of that mighty fabric—your laws. The foundations of your trade had been laid; the seeds of your letters had been sown; your arts had budded, and promised no scanty bloom; your manners had reached a noble elevation of uneffeminate refinement; cathedrals, which in the day of your wealth you have neither been able to rival nor keep in repair, rose, like an exhalation, from the sacred soil; the march of your military greatness had advanced "with the slow motion of a summer cloud," and now hung upon the horizon of Europe, illustrated from fortress to fortress with un-

sullied but ominous glories. What aspect did Ireland then present? One enormous blot. Great men had been amongst you and enriched you with gifts. They were honoured in their generation; some of them adorn your annals; others, content to leave their works behind, have bequeathed you no name. How many such did you suffer to arise in Ireland, once their native home or hospitable asylum? Call to memory, Sir, the magnificent court of Edward, and adorn it in your fancy with the last of the tournaments, those more than dramatic, those truly ideal representations, at which, in a theatre larger than any built by mortal hand, the heroic virtues were impersonated by the highest and noblest of the earth, for the delight of those who were taught to associate danger, violence, and the shock of arms with the fair images of justice and of honour. Chaucer, the "morning star of English song" was then living. Imagine him present, and called on like a minstrel of old for a hymn or exulting ode. Of what think you had been his theme? The Crusades or the more recent passages of Cressy and Poitiers? I know not: but had a sudden compulsion fallen upon him and bade him to celebrate any one of those scenes of massacre and treachery which had so long defaced Ireland, sure I am that his princely audience would have been scattered ere long by the unexpected notes of elegy, and de-

manded another bard, not too honest to be a patriot.

Such was the state of things from the Conquest to the time of Edward III., and such it continued to the Reformation. Up to that period the people had nothing to complain of, except that they were at once bound as outlaws and oppressed as slaves; two very common evils, but not always inflicted on the same race at the same time. The Norman-Celtic colony continued to maintain itself over a large proportion of the island; the English dominion was acknowledged within the compass of the pale; that is, within four counties round Dublin. Up to that period the English sovereigns "called for obedience from the people of Ireland, not on principles of subjection, but as vassals and mesne lords between them and the popes."\* One bond, that of a common faith, subsisted between the two nations; and the Irish were attached to that ecclesiastical authority, which alone, in the multitude of their masters, they had found to exercise a beneficent sway. Then came the Irish Reformation; and England, exchanging the cruelty of a weakness that could not restrain its own proconsuls, for a state tyranny no longer delegated, initiated this country for the first time, and now unsolicited, in her laws, and subjected serfs and

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\* Burke.



masters alike to the civil and religious despotism of the Tudors.

You know the story. King Henry VIII. was tired of his wife ; but having been a great theologian in his youth, and complimented as such, he knew that he could not have two wives at the same time. He applied to the pope in vain for a divorce, and determined henceforth to be his own pope : accordingly he claimed an absolute sway over the souls of men, and exercised it over their bodies. He was a man of great intellectual and physical energy, formidable alike from mental sharpness of sight and moral blindness ; but puffed up to that degree by high-feeding and vain glory, that confounding the office of “ Commander of the Faithful ” with the humbler functions of “ Defender of the Faith,” he established his western caliphate upon two immutable articles of belief—the one, that he himself was in all things to be obeyed ; the other, that he was bound in turn to marry no woman until he had cut off the head of her predecessor. The Reformation had difficulties to contend with in this country, with which, however, Henry was competent to cope. The English sway in Ireland had been originally founded, and subsequently maintained, on that imposture, now obsolete, that the pope, as a spiritual potentate, had a right to dispose of temporal kingdoms. With an admirable versatility which generally flourishes at the expense of originality, King Henry had, as if to anti-

cipate the difficulty, appropriated the old theory as to spiritual and temporal power, though he applied it in a converse form, affirming that he himself, as a temporal potentate, possessed absolute authority over the spiritual faith of men. Thus, upon two impostures, alternated by a single juggle, that portion of British dominion in Ireland, which rested on fraud, not force, continued to depend.

I beg, Sir, that you will not suppose me by any thing which I have said respecting the first establishment of the Reformation in Ireland to reflect upon the Anglican Church as it now exists, or on any constitutional theory as to its character and pretensions which it has accredited. I am an unworthy but obedient son of that Church; but as I find no fortieth article prescribing to me in what manner I should regard the external circumstances which accompanied a certain period of her fortunes, I must commit myself on that subject to the light of natural reason; and hold my judgment free to determine whether the Church that now is was indebted to Henry for aid, or has maintained itself in spite of the scandals by him brought upon it; and, if the former supposition is to be preferred, whether the aid which he afforded is to be likened to that with which Christianity was advanced instrumentally by Nero, or piously by Constantine. What we have now to consider is the mode in which the Reformation brought about by him and his successors na-

turally presented itself to the people of this country, and the means which were adopted for the correction of their judgment. In this respect, as in most others, you will note a difference in the fortunes of the two countries. In England the Reformation was in accordance with the sympathies of the people, for reasons of which King Henry knew nothing; and, the bishops and clergy for the most part consenting, it was conducted according to the forms of the ecclesiastical constitution. In Ireland it was brought about rather nakedly by royal authority and act of parliament; and it found little reception among the priesthood, and none among the people. Its effect was not to diffuse Protestantism through the land, but simply to subvert the Roman Catholic Church, desecrating its temples, and scattering its clergy, much after that fashion which prevailed in France at the time of the Revolution. Faith and morals alike disregarded, two things were required—to renounce and to conform. As men skulk in caves when hurricanes prostrate their houses, the people hid their heads till that tyranny should be over-past. When they raised them again to listen, whatever sound struck their ear, it was not the music of the liturgy. As chary of your religion as of your laws, you had banned the use of that liturgy, except in an unknown tongue. If the clergyman, as well as his congregation, was ignorant of English, the service was required to be celebrated in Latin.

I need not, Sir, trouble you with the details of those religious persecutions which converted that Irish aversion to England, before but a natural instinct, into a religious passion, sanctioned by whatever remained in the land of reverence or of loyalty. During the periods of that struggle feudalism expired both in England and in Ireland. In England feudalism had been a tree rooted in the soil, under the shelter of which popular institutions gradually rose up, and failed not to attain their full stature, when that which had protected, yet overshadowed them, gave way. In Ireland it was a rock which long had lain a tyrannous weight upon the earth; and when it was removed there was nothing but blackness and barrenness beneath. English feudalism, by a gentle euthanasia, died into constitutional liberty; Irish feudalism met with a more bloody end, and left no legacy behind to the people, except a legal tyranny worse than the outlawry which had preceded it.

The interval between the reign of Edward III. and the greatest of the sovereigns that succeeded him, Queen Elizabeth, was a long one, and to England had not been a blank. She had had her struggles; but all that tasked her energies had developed them: her contentions had had a fair field; her destinies had worked themselves out; the wars of the Roses were over; a peaceful and prudent reign had enriched her; religious conflicts had developed her intellect to the utmost; and the wreck

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of the Spanish Armada lay scattered at her feet. When all those elements which constitute national existence, whether on a large or small scale,—arms, laws, trade, arts, sciences, a just gradation of ranks, and a church,—are allowed to mingle and ferment together; when there is a past on which memory can repose, and a future to which hope can look, then, and from a soil thus enriched, great men spring up, its spontaneous growth. These conditions having been fulfilled, two states, one in antiquity, and the other in the middle ages, each less than a province of Ireland, had matured more of mental excellence than vast regions have produced in periods of rude or of emasculate barbarism; without these a continent is as vacant of greatness as a South-Sea Island, and a century as complete a blank as an hour. In the grave and in the dungeon time is not.

The Macchiavellian habit of thought, counted wisdom in the 16th century, had somewhat stained your policy; but that was a great period when you had a Cecil for a minister, a Bacon for a Lord Chancellor, a Raleigh for a buccaneer, and a Sidney for a fine gentleman. I forget what Irish princess it was that visited Queen Elizabeth. If she was admitted to that court, irradiated by the last gleams of the chivalrous age, in which the prime intellects of the modern world were concentrated, she probably witnessed, in common with the men whom I have named, one of those dramatic representations with



which a man greater than all the rest was then sustaining his country. Had she been invited to task his universal genius with some new subject, what theme, think you, would she have chosen? The annals of her country would have supplied her with many tragic remembrances, but a small choice—for blood is like to blood. The struggles of the Elizabethan period had been the most severe that had yet shaken the island; but the storm of battle was over; and the Saturnian promise of “*Pacata Hibernia*” shone auspiciously upon the harvest of destruction. A few years later, the Princes of Tyrconnel and Tyrone—accompanied by all that remained to them—their kinsmen, their friends, and their fame, committed themselves to the waves, contented to find a grave in Rome, the world’s chief burial place, in which their bones are still preserved. Would not this migration have been a theme as poetic as that prescribed to Shakspeare by his prosperous mistress—the “*Merry Wives of Windsor?*”

Subsequently to the Reformation, the Irish cannot justly be said to have been outlaws. To the great mystery of law they were effectually introduced, both by Henry and Elizabeth, through the law of the “*Royal Supremacy.*” The undertaking, if a late, was a great and pious one; but you will admit that the augurs had not chosen a fortunate day, nor been circumspect to avoid evil omens, when they inaugurated their temple of justice.

Law once established, institutions follow; and not long after the period which I have chosen as a momentary resting place, we find that most important changes in the parliamentary representation of the country were made; the effect of which was to increase the power of the crown by submitting the Irish House of Commons to the influence of the Government. Forty close boroughs were now created, which gave to the Crown the command of eighty votes, and a predominance of power to what was then called the English as distinguished from the Irish party. This noiseless revolution was effected by Queen Elizabeth's successor, the Planter of Ulster. "The accession of James I.," according to Lord Chancellor Clare, "was the era of connection between the sister islands." "The multitude," says Sir John Davies, "being brayed, as it were, in a mortar, with sword, famine, and pestilence together, submitted themselves to the English Governments, received the laws and magistrates, and most gladly embraced the King's pardon and peace." It must be owned of James also, that he had not selected the most auspicious moment for the installation of a parliamentary constitution; but I am bound to observe that the plantation of Ulster, if distinguished from preceding acts of aggression by a colder atrocity, was, notwithstanding, a statesmanlike device, and the only measure worthy of the name which England had yet carried out in Ireland. It is

remarkable that her stoutest deed, and that one most nearly connected with a purpose, should have proceeded from one of her weakest kings. Had James, when he rooted out the natives, planted them in England, instead of driving them to "the Devil or Connaught;" and had he dispersed the intruders over the whole country, instead of garrisoning a province with them, his enterprise would have done much to amalgamate the two races, and elevate the character and the fortunes of both.

The period of law having at last set in, tyranny became legal; and a foundation was laid for that system under which Ireland was subsequently governed by the Protestant connection and the penal laws. It was now deemed advisable to take the lands out of the hands of their possessors, who were almost all, except the recent settlers, Roman Catholics; but there was no pretext for carrying out this policy by force. The result may be stated in the words of Burke. "Sir J. Davies boasts of the benefits received by the natives by extending to them the English law; but the appearance of things alone was changed—the original scheme was never deviated from for a single hour—unheard-of confiscations were made in the northern parts, upon grounds of plots and conspiracies, never proved in their supposed authors; the war of chicane succeeded to the war of arms and of hostile statutes, and a regular series of operations was carried on in the ordinary

courts of justice, and by special commissioners and inquisitions, for the purpose of the total extirpation of the interest of the natives in their own soil, until this species of subtle ravage being carried to the last excess of insolence and oppression under Lord Strafford, it kindled the flames of that rebellion which broke out in 1641. By the issue of that war, and by the total reduction of the kingdom of Ireland in 1691, the ruin of the native Irish, and, in a great measure too, of the first races of the English, was completely accomplished."

A massacre admits neither of justification nor palliation, and I offer neither. The outbreak of 1641 was a fearful crime, and fearfully was it avenged. In the mean time, Sir, as there are degrees in guilt, let me recommend to you not to believe without investigation whatever you may hear on that subject. The number of English who fell is very differently stated by various writers; indeed upon no other count of the indictment have your witnesses against us found it more difficult to agree in their testimony. You may find a brief and able summary of the early authorities on this subject, without further trouble than that of referring to the "Dublin Review" for October 1846. Lord Clarendon, in his history, asserts, "that there were forty or fifty thousand English Protestants murdered before they suspected themselves to be in any danger." Temple says, "that besides those few which fell in the heat of fight during

the war, there were, in less than two years from the breaking out of the rebellion, 300,000 British and Protestants cruelly murdered in cold blood, according to the most moderate computation ;” that is to say, 35,000 Protestants murdered beyond the number that existed in the whole of Ireland at the time, according to the calculation of Sir William Petty, who contents himself with affirming, that during the eleven years of war, 122,000 fell, of whom two-thirds were cut off by war, plague, and famine ; thus reducing the number of those who were massacred to 37,000, in ten years. Rapin states the whole number at 150,000 ; Hume at 40,000. Carte affirms that the whole number of the *English* in Ulster at the time could not have exceeded 20,000, of whom a large proportion certainly escaped uninjured. The Scotch he computes at 100,000, of whom it does not appear that any fell except in open war. By others, the number of Protestants destroyed in the war is reckoned at 10,302 ; while Warner asserts that the number who fell during the first two years are not to be reckoned, at the utmost, above 4,028, of whom but a small proportion could have been massacred. At the conclusion of the war, the number of the Roman Catholics was reduced from 1,200,000, to 700,000. “ Even the private exercise of the Catholic religion was made a capital crime ; and in 1657, the punishment of confiscation and death was denounced against all those, who, knowing



where a priest was hid, did not make discovery to the government."

The reign of the Puritans was not favourable to the Irish. Passionate advocates for private judgment, they conceded to the Roman Catholics no particle of that which they themselves so vehemently used or abused; even Milton, no feeble champion of toleration, excepting them alone from its benefits on religious grounds, as Locke did at a later period on political. Lord Clarendon says that the sufferings of the Irish from the Puritans had never been surpassed but by those of the Jews in their destruction by Titus. The Puritans no doubt lamented, like Titus, that the exterminating sword was committed to their hand; no doubt they wept sore and wrestled with the Lord; but they carried the work bravely through, and entered into possession of the chosen land. It is thus that Lord Clare describes their zeal. "His (Cromwell's) first act was to collect all the native Irish who had survived the general desolation and remained in the country, and to transplant them into the province of Connaught, which had been completely depopulated and laid waste in the progress of the rebellion. They were ordered to retire there by a certain day, and forbidden to repass the river Shannon on pain of death; and this sentence of deportation was rigidly enforced till the Restoration. Their ancient possessions were seized and given up to the conquerors, as were the possessions of every

man who had taken a part in the rebellion, or followed the fortunes of the king after the murder of Charles I., and this whole fund was distributed amongst the officers and soldiers of Cromwell's army, *in satisfaction of the arrears of their pay, and adventurers who had advanced money to defray the expenses of the war.*" It was thus, you perceive, in no small degree, a pecuniary consideration which consigned the "ancient inheritance of the inhabitants" to the subaltern officers in Cromwell's army; a motley crew of Ranters, Fanatics, Infidels, and Democrats; and thus added a well venomed social cancer to the religious and political sores already existing. Suppose, Sir, that the property of—let us say—Yorkshire alone were snatched from its present possessors to-morrow, and transferred, with all its castles, manor-houses and halls, to a regiment of Irish adventurers, the scum cast to the surface by the fermentation of our worst passions and follies, would no interruption to your prosperity take place from this disruption of ties? If this be so, feeble indeed must be that bond which, in England, connects the lower with the higher nation. In Ireland it left some traces behind; and Tipperary, a county of undesirable celebrity, is supposed to have been more largely enriched with the dregs of the Cromwellian mixture than most parts of Ireland, many of the common soldiers as well as officers of the English army having settled there.

At the Restoration, the Irish, who had fought and suffered for the royal cause, demanded of King Charles II. not a reward for their loyalty, but the restoration of their lands. They were answered by an Act of Settlement which secured 7,800,000 acres of the country, more than half its productive area, to English adventurers. It should be remembered, however, to the credit of Charles, that he did not sell this portion of his dominions to a foreign power. At this period also was conceived that restrictive system which overlaid Irish trade in its infancy; a law being passed which prohibited perpetually the importation of Irish cattle into England. "Such was the absurd fury of the English about these cattle, that when, after the fire of London, the Irish proprietors made a contribution of 30,000 beeves for the relief of the sufferers, this act of charity, instead of exciting any sentiment of gratitude, was interpreted into an insidious attempt to defeat the provisions of the prohibitory Act."\* On the whole, however, Charles II. being but a weak and dissolute prince, and the nation being sunk in that debauchery which is a frequent recoil from fanaticism, as well as accompaniment of it, the Irish suffered less from legal restrictions in his reign than they were used to. An exception to this exemption occurred consequent upon the "Popish Plot," when a great

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\* Leland.

part of the nation fell into a rather sharp fit of a periodic madness. Upon this occasion the "popish ecclesiastics were ordered to depart the kingdom; the seminaries were suppressed, and the Catholics were disarmed." It was proposed also to expel them from the corporate towns, to which, though previously expelled by law, they had had licence to return, the English inhabitants needing servants.

Next came the Revolution. The Roman Catholic party in Ireland, having for a short time the ascendancy, threatened in concert with King James II. a formidable retaliation of the oppressive laws under which they had suffered for the last 150 years. William the Deliverer appeared on the scene. He delivered England from tyranny and arbitrary government; he delivered Ireland to the penal laws. How happens it, Sir, that even the same event must operate in such opposite modes upon the two countries; and that Fortune could not extend to the one her open palm without smiting the other with clenched fist? A Dutchman could not creep out of his native dikes to dethrone his friends and relations, without bringing on this devoted country a malediction worse than the plague of frogs and the other nine plagues of Egypt. On this occasion, however, only 1,060,792 acres of land were confiscated. "This fund was sold under the authority of an English Act of Parliament to defray the expenses incurred by England in

reducing the rebels of 1688; and the sale introduced into Ireland a new set of adventurers.\* Here again, Sir, you will perceive that there was a connection between confiscation and very humble pecuniary considerations. A revolution is as expensive as a famine; and a very rich country did not know how to pay its way.

During a century and a half there has been no confiscation in Ireland. For a confiscation by force there has been no excuse; for a confiscation by fraud, like that undertaken by Lord Strafford, no opportunity, unless instead of perverting the old laws a new one had been introduced for the purpose. Let us review the confiscations of comparatively modern times—those that took place since the happy settlement of “*Pacata Hibernia*.”

Confiscated in the reign of James I., 2,836,837 acres.

Set out by the Court of Claims at

the Restoration . . . .	. 7,800,000	„
Forfeitures of 1688 . . . .	. 1,060,792	„
	<hr/>	
Irish acres . . . . .	11,697,629;	

being very nearly the whole extent of the kingdom. There is much force in the expression, “the substantial prosperity of England.” Our great proprietors have been but the shadows that flitted along the wall of your festive halls, or the chalk lines

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\* Lord Clare’s Speech on the Union, 1800.



erased by the feet of the dancers. Let our constant calamity plead our occasional excuse. Seldom with us have either the rights or the duties of property been defined, until that property was transferred, or the proprietors ceased to exist.

Power having in England passed from the great nobles to the crown, and from thence to the legislature, the tyranny over Ireland was necessarily transferred also; and accordingly the English Parliament, by an imposture of its own, claimed a right to bind Ireland by laws made irrespectively of the Irish Parliament, and commanded Mr. Molyneux's book in defence of his country to be burned. In 1707, the Irish Houses of Lords and Commons presented an address to the Queen, praying not to be excluded "from so great a blessing" as a legislative union with Great Britain: but the English government rejected their petition as in the reign of Edward III. they had rejected a proposition for communicating to the Irish the protection of English laws. They gave, however, practically to the Irish Parliament an unlimited authority, so far as it should be exercised for the oppression of the natives; nor is it to be forgotten that that Parliament, whose every act was approved by the Privy Council of England before it could pass the Irish House of Commons, not only fully sanctioned the policy of the penal laws, but finding them established, followed them up by additional provisions

no less tyrannical in nature, and more minute in detail. It could hardly have been otherwise; legislation takes the shape of its mould, and advancing, cannot get out of its groove. The people being condemned to servitude, their oppressors saw no safety except in their complete subjugation. Lord Clare insisted especially upon this fact, affirming that unless an amalgamation of the two countries took place, the dominant minority in Ireland had no alternative except that of continuing to coerce the majority or changing places with them. It is thus that he accounts for the refusal of the proposed union in 1707 by the Queen's Government. "The Parliament of England seem to have considered the permanent debility of Ireland as their best security for her connection with the British Crown, and the Irish Parliament to have rested the security of the colony upon maintaining a perpetual and impassable barrier against the ancient inhabitants of the country." The close connection between these two facts does not, however, plead the excuse either of the oppressor or his agent. The Executive of England, less jealous than the Legislature, governed Ireland by contract, a few of the great Irish families undertaking its management in turn. Most of the property of the country being at last vested in the hands of Protestants, a despotic squirearchy was thus set up in the place of the old feudal oppressors, and diffused the virus of the Legislature through the

minutest pores of society. To this privileged class the people were committed. A small and new minority was installed as slaves of England and as the delegated tyrants of Ireland; and again this country suffered alternately from the oppression your might had inflicted, and that which your weakness could not restrain.

You have heard, Sir, of the penal laws. Inconsistent with honour, interest, conscience, and shame, they were not only consistent with the whole previous policy of which they were the consummation and triumph, but likewise so admirably consistent with themselves, and apt for their proposed end, that they cannot be appreciated without some knowledge of their details.

First, as to religion. On this subject let me quote a passage from Burke. "The law of William and Anne ordered all popish persons exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, all orders of monks and friars, and all priests not then actually in parishes and to be registered, to be banished the kingdom; and if they should return from exile, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Twenty pounds reward is given for apprehending them. Penalty on harbouring and concealing. As all the priests then in being and registered are long since dead, and as these laws are made perpetual, every popish priest is liable to the law."

Second, as to property. Let us consider first the

case of property already existing : 1st, then, the right of primogeniture was taken from Roman Catholics ; 2nd, that of testamentation ; 3rd, that of settlement. Next as to the acquisition of real property, and the acquisition and security of personal, the law provided that Roman Catholics should be “ disabled from taking or purchasing directly, or by a trust, any lands, any mortgage upon land, any rents or profits from land, any lease\*, interest, or term of any land ; any annuity for life or lives, or years, or any estate whatsoever, chargeable upon, or which may in any manner affect, any lands.” If, as Mr. Burke asserts, “ those civil constitutions which promote industry are such as facilitate the acquisition, secure the holding, enable the fixing, and suffer the alienation of property,” he had a right to say also that the penal laws had for their object the one great mandate, “ thou shalt not improve.” Do you think that such laws as to property would be ventured upon among the Hindoos ? But Ireland had not the advantage of being governed by a Company obliged to consult at least for its own security and profit.

Third, as to personal privileges. No Roman Catholic was admitted to any office connected with Church or State, the Army or the Law. An attorney was obliged to swear that he would not employ a Roman Catholic clerk at seven shillings a week.

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\* A lease for a term not exceeding thirty-one years is excepted.

“No tradesman was capable, by any service or settlement, to obtain his freedom in any town corporate; so that they trade and work in their native towns as aliens, paying, as such, quarterage, and other charges and impositions. They were expressly forbidden, in whatever employment, to take more than two apprentices, except in the linen manufacture only.”\* No Roman Catholic of any rank was allowed to possess arms without express licence from the Lord-Lieutenant and Council.

Fourth, as to Education. Let laws ever so stringent be passed to keep a nation prostrate, there is a chance of its getting on its feet if education be permitted; measures were accordingly enacted condemning the Roman Catholic population to perpetual ignorance, a precaution at present adopted by the southern states of America with respect to their slaves. All Roman Catholics were excluded from the universities; and to form private academies and schools of their own, was equally prohibited. “Popish schoolmasters” were proscribed, though teaching in a private family. Any person sent abroad for education, though but in childhood, was “disabled to sue in law or equity; to be guardian, executor, or administrator; he was rendered incapable of any legacy or deed of gift; he forfeited all his goods and chattels for ever, and he forfeited for his life all

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\* Burke. Tracts on the Popery Laws.



his lands, hereditaments, offices, and estate of freehold, and all trusts, powers, or interests therein.”\*

Fifth, as to Morals. To deny political and civil privileges to the great bulk of a nation is to degrade; to forbid property is to barbarize; to prevent education is to brutalize; to ban religion is worse than all these: but so long as the moral sense and those affections of which it is the seat subsist, there is a chance that a buried humanity may force its way up into the light. The whole constitution of society is founded upon that habit of reverence of which the fifth commandment, ranged first in the second table of the law, and the link between our duties to God and to our neighbour, is the symbol and the sanction. Was it from ignorance of this fact, or from the knowledge of it, that the penal laws included enactments of which the direct tendency was not only to force subjects into rebellion against their sovereign, but to tempt children to wage war on their parents? The eldest son, on conforming to Protestantism, was entitled to the paternal estate, his father retaining only a life interest in it; the other children, on the same conditions, and at any age, could extort from their father a separate and independent maintenance. “Every child of a Popish parent was encouraged to come into what is called a court of equity, to prefer a bill against his father, and compel him to confess

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\* Burke. Tracts on the Popery Laws.

upon oath the quantity and value of his substance, personal as well as real, of what nature soever, or howsoever it might be employed; upon which discovery the court was empowered to seize upon, and allocate for the immediate maintenance of such child, or children, any sum not exceeding one third of the whole fortune.”\* If the children discovered that the parent had increased his property subsequently to the award, they were entitled to bring a new bill against him, and thus keep him always in chancery. “The wife of a Roman Catholic had also the power, on changing her religion, to deprive her husband of his children; and by that hold she inevitably acquired a power and superiority over her husband.”† She had also the privilege, on conforming, to apply to chancery on her husband’s death, in which case “she was to be allotted a portion from his leases, and other personal estate, not exceeding one third of his whole clear substance.” The virtue of a nation is, however, a stubborn thing, as well as its vices; and these provisions of the penal laws failed on the whole in their object, though there were not wanting persons weak or vile enough to be seduced by them.

It is thus that a countryman of yours comments on this period of English policy in Ireland. He asks “if it be possible to conceive any maxims of policy more detestable, or a more monstrous union

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\* Burke. Tracts on the Popery Laws.

† Ibid.

of human malignity and folly? Do the pages of Machiavel contain suggestions more profligate? Was the expulsion of the Moriscoes more barbarous and impolitic? or the revocation of the edict of Nantes more unwise and intolerant than this deliberate and long-sustained system, pursued by a country which plumes itself upon its free constitution, and its own glorious struggles for civil and religious liberty?"\* . . . All which questions I leave you to answer.

It has happened, Sir, in the remote dependencies of other great nations, that good laws have worked ill, or bad laws worse than was expected, through the corruption or wickedness of the subordinate instruments who executed them in detail. In Ireland the matter was otherwise; the executioners were more merciful than the judges: nor could the men be found, though corrupted by the tyranny obtruded upon them, though blinded by an apparent interest, and inflamed by the animosities both of religion and of race, to carry those laws into full effect, and make them bring forth their perfect fruits. The sentenced priest was spared by the despotic neighbour near whose gate he lurked; the people still knelt around their broken altars; the children still revered their fathers if not their laws; the multitudes condemned to perpetual poverty and apathy, glanced with more

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\* "Past and Present Policy of England towards Ireland," page 56.

toleration at the possessions torn from them, than you, Sir, at their children's rags; society continued to exist; no rebellion gave a pretext for this oppression; till, partly from a universal disgust, partly from a proved inefficacy, and partly from the terrible warning of the French revolution, those laws were repealed, and the sword of injustice, "fatigata nondum satiata," rested from its labour.

Before this time two great revolutions had taken place in Ireland, the one, asserting the freedom of her trade, the other, the independence of her Parliament. Neither was achieved without a struggle. "Previous to the year 1780," says Mr. Huskisson, "the agriculture, the manufactures, the commerce, the navigation of Ireland, were all held in the most rigid subserviency to the supposed interests of Great Britain." But Ireland both felt the injury and knew where the remedy lay: the least of the wrongs you had done her worked the cure, for it united her people, and their natural leaders stood at their head. They demanded that room should be made for virtue; that a sphere should be opened to industry; that the people of Ireland should be afflicted by no malediction heavier than the primal curse, and at least be permitted to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. Your "merchants, manufacturers, shipowners, and country gentlemen, all took the alarm:" Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester interposed, and, with loud prophecies of their

own approaching downfall, protested against our ingratitude as well as effrontery. "Towards the close of that year (1779) the events of the war in North America, and the state of things in Ireland, produced a different feeling in the British Parliament. State necessity, acting under a sense of political danger, yielded, without grace, that which good sense and good feeling had before recommended in vain."\* Under the same circumstances, and with the like inauspicious urgency from without, was the legislative independence of 1782 won. "On the old Irish volunteers, I desire to be understood not to convey anything like a censure. . . . From their first levy, till they disbanded themselves, no act of violence or outrage was charged against them; and they certainly did on every occasion, where their services were required, exert themselves with effect to maintain the internal peace of the country. The gentlemen of Ireland were all in their ranks, and maintained a decided influence upon them."† Notwithstanding, the volunteers constituted a large army; and the aspect of it seemed equivocal to an infirm conscience, though to them their trumpet gave "no uncertain sound." They had met at Dungannon, the nobles and the peasants—and a new language sprang

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\* Huskisson's Speeches, vol. ii. page 108.

† Lord Clare's Speech on the Union.



suddenly into existence ; they called the Roman Catholics “ fellow-subjects,” and themselves “ Irishmen and Christians.” It was your hour of trial, and England had not strength for it, because justice was against her, and a great fall had dispelled a long inebriation. The revolution of 1782 was a revolution effected by blood ; but that blood had flowed in a remote land. You lost America ; but you retained Ireland. I cannot say that I admire the mode in which you compelled us to win our liberties. Had we not conquered them with a “ fatal facility,” such as attended your first successes in Ireland, the struggle might have imparted to us that political training of which we stood in need, and we should have been taught how to use what we had won. The patriots who fought the battle of Ireland were great and honourable men ; but the boon which they won for their country was one which included a bitter in its sweet, and was well characterized by Mr. Pitt, as by no possibility a “ final adjustment.” “ To call that a system which was no more than the mere demolition of another system, could only be the effect of great misconception or great hypocrisy.”\* Freedom was, however, necessary before we were qualified to treat of a constitution at once free and safe. Freedom and safety were by Mr. Grattan asserted to be but one. “ The classic minister must know, Tacitus has

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\* Mr. Pitt's Speech, Jan. 31, 1799.

told him, that between the powerful and the impotent there can be no peace. The powers I speak of were powers of peace; they were powers of protection; they were the great reserves of the Irish Parliament to secure the trade of Ireland and harmony of the empire."\* Without applying this great principle to the peculiar circumstances of the Union, we may well acknowledge its force as relates to the Irish constitution of 1782. Notwithstanding, I cannot say that I feel as much gratitude to you as if you had afforded us a triumph less lamentable than one over your honour and the good government of both countries. You bullied, and you instructed us in the art; you conceded pusillanimously what you had refused iniquitously; and you taught us that rights may be achieved, when they are extorted; the worst lesson, except one, which can be taught, and the last to be forgotten.

It has been, Sir, the singular felicity of England in her government of this country, that when compelled, by a pressure foreseen by all except herself, to repeal some portion of a code past its work, she has performed the task in a manner so partial as to leave her policy relatively more inconsistent than before, though less unjust. Troubling herself but little about a principle, and acknowledging a necessity only so far as it has been felt, she has sub-

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\* Mr. Grattan's Speech on the Union, Jan. 15, 1800.

jected herself to unnecessary pain by refusing to allow of an inevitable amputation except at the rate of two or three inches at a time. Thus when the Roman Catholics had ceased to be slaves, she thought it expedient to deliberate for half a century before making them freemen. Another "defect" which you will "note" in your policy is this; that whenever rights have been wrung from you they have been conceded at once too late and too early; too late for justice or just gratitude, that is to say, for conciliation; too early, if any relation exists between political privileges and that political education which is necessary for their use. Tyranny, dying in a hurry, had not time to wind up its affairs; and our legislative independence, conceded with all that rashness which is the end of a timid policy, was granted unconditionally, and was ours before we knew what it meant. As at that critical period any serious dissension between the two Parliaments threatened the most fatal consequences, you found it necessary to substitute for your former government, half by force and half by contract, a new government by corruption, of which the memory still survives to the disgrace of both countries. It is true that many great and honourable men were then in the Irish Parliament who resisted the seduction; but in a nation of which three-fourths had been slaves and one-fourth tyrants, both sections being therefore equally deprived of a country,

no duty was less likely to be understood than public duty; and the corruption actually existing was such as to recall to memory that which existed in England when Sir Robert Walpole declared, as the record of his experience, that "every man had his price." I know not whether this also ranks among the subjects of your astonishment. At last the Legislative Union was effected, that great measure so necessary for the consolidation of the empire and the eventual prosperity of either part; but it was carried incompletely, and it was carried by corruption. A great man was then living amongst you who proclaimed that "what is morally wrong can never be politically right." I believe that no one disputed his sentence. Such positions, if denied, have a chance, as the contest drags on, of being applied as well as acknowledged. Truisms, such as Mr. Fox's noble dogma, are the great truths on which all others rest; but they sometimes require to be sharpened into sarcasm before they can make their way amid the press of modern thought; and they fall flat on those who think an expedient a much cleverer thing than a principle. You carried the union by corruption; and no doubt it will be the fashion for many a year to regard the tempted as much more criminal than the tempter. Without deciding on such delicate questions, I may observe that corruption, as usual, has met with retribution, and that the country, as usual, has had

to pay the price. Had the Union been honestly contracted, it could scarcely have failed to bring forth its promised results : but the persons concerned in that measure made terms for themselves, not for their country ; and the sufferings of the people having therefore continued, discontent continues ; and the Union is by many persons remembered as a fraud and resented as a wrong. Whether it was a fraud or not depends upon the further question, whether it was or was not intended to produce to this country a participation in English prosperity. One of the ablest of the Irish advocates for the Union concluded a remarkable dissertation on the subject, in words which might, perhaps, be closely imitated by several of the Repealers of 1847. " Union merely forms my means ; which I am ready to vary, if any man will prove that they are ill chosen. My end, I solemnly declare, is the prosperity of my country."\* The Lord Chancellor Clare, in his speech on the Union, characterizes it as " an incorporation of these kingdoms," observing also, " I hope I feel as a true Irishman for the dignity and independence of my country ; and therefore I would elevate her to her proper station in the rank of civilized nations. I wish to advance her from the degraded post of a mercenary pro-

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\* Speech of Mr. William Smith, reduced to the form of an Address to the people of Ireland, 1799.



vince to the proud station of an integral and governing member of the greatest empire in the world." It is impossible to read this sentence without wishing that the Lord Chancellor's aspiration had been gratified: in the mean time the Union, however incomplete, is in one sense a real one; and though it does not extend to this country a participation in English prosperity, it must needs admit you to the communion of Irish pauperism, should this country become thoroughly pauperized. Squire Thornhill intended to delude Olivia by means of a false marriage effected by a false clergyman; but his agent, who had other ends in view, effected a true marriage by the instrumentality of a true clergyman. Should such prove eventually the mischance of your England, the great Minister who carried the Union had an opposite cause for regret. Mr. Pitt meant honestly and wisely. He spoke thus:—"It is to identify them (the Irish) with us; it is to make them part of the same community, by giving them a full share of those accumulated blessings which are diffused throughout Great Britain; it is, in a word, by giving them a full participation of the wealth, the power, and the glory of the British Empire," &c., &c. This splendid prospect was distrusted by Mr. Grattan\*. "All these things are to come: when? He does not tell you. Where? He

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\* Mr. Grattan's Speech on the Union, Jan. 15, 1800.

does not tell you : you take his word for all this. I have heard of a Banker's bill of exchange, Bank of England's notes, Bank of Ireland's notes ; but a Prophet's promissory note is a new traffic. All he gets from Ireland is our solid loss : all his promises are visionary, distant, and prophetic advantages." Nothing can be more conclusive than the arguments by which Mr. Pitt proved that without a union the dissolution of the empire must take place ; nothing more delusive, as the event has proved, than the anticipations indulged in by him and its other advocates as to the prosperity which Ireland was to attain. But half his prayer was granted, because but half his design was carried out. Then as now, there were two Englands, and the worse would not allow itself to be guided by the better.

Year after year you continued to refuse the rights of citizenship to the people you despised, or a motive for affection to those whose enmity you feared. Your great statesmen, however opposed to each other on other questions, were upon our side, with very few exceptions ; but Ireland was the party to be benefited, and her friends laboured in vain. Men spoke of the " United Kingdom," but no one knew where it was. What availed it that we had all the sense of England in our favour, when all its shrewd-witted prejudices, and the pseudo-sense of inertia weighed against us ? On the matter of " Popery " the two great political parties had

changed sides. The descendants of those old Tories who had drunk the health of Charles Edward, when the Highlanders of Scotland poured forth their blood for him, had found an egg of the old Whigs dropped into their nests, and hatched it as devoutly as if it had been their own. Respectable farmers innumerable, hard-headed and hard-handed, planted their feet firmly, and refused to move. Multitudes who thronged your heathen towns were visited periodically by that dreadful nightmare "No Popery," of which this year they have had a paroxysm, the sharpest since the Gordon Riots, when they were on the point of burning London to vex the Pope. Of the Roman Catholic they knew as little as of any other religion; but they had heard of a certain magician in the dark ages, white-headed, but bright-eyed, who had visited their country, as well as many others, and played conjuring tricks innumerable, building churches by enchantment, binding kings in cobwebs, blowing up Parliament houses, sophisticating wills, extending to their ancestors a cup as intoxicating as that of Liber himself, and making love to their venerable ancestresses—in short, turning the whole house upside down. There were also scruples in high places; (honest scruples, without doubt;) but royal scruples have not yet proved friendly to Ireland. More years than constituted the whole existence of the independent Irish Parliament had passed, and

Catholic Emancipation seemed as distant as ever : but the time and a man had come ; the Clare election took place ; all over the country stirrings were seen, like those which agitate the prescient quicksilver on the plates of the engineer, when the countermine approaches him ; the necessity which was foretold was believed when it arrived ; what you had not the wit to foresee you had the grace to feel ; the greatest warrior and one of the greatest statesmen then living, had the courage to open their eyes, and despise the imputation of fear. They had the virtue, at a great personal sacrifice, in which to a certain extent the public shared, to answer the summons of the time. They brought in the Emancipation Act ; and, coercing England as they had been coerced by Ireland, they carried it by force.

I was a boy when that great measure was passed, but I have not forgotten it. I can recollect standing upon the steps before my father's house ; and as I watched the fires of rejoicing which lit up their luminous cypher along the distant hills, growing numerous by degrees as the glow of a summer's evening dissolved, some portion of that enthusiasm which is not denied to the hearts of the very young in a country however outworn kindled within me, and I triumphed in a future radiant with prosperity and gratitude. That prosperity has been adjourned ; that gratitude I have not yet seen ; but

I have seen some reason to believe that not much was due. Gratitude, Sir, is a great word, and should not be used without a meaning. It denotes a moral affection, to be bestowed according to the laws of reason, upon worthy objects, and in measure due. To redress a wrong is to discharge a debt; and though our thanks are due for justice as well as generosity (the former being often the more difficult virtue), yet if a debt has been paid too late to avert great losses, and if the payment has been accompanied with insult and injury, our gratitude must suffer a proportionate diminution. In the case of a wrong redressed, as in that of relief bestowed, our thanks are largely due to those individuals, both numerous and eminent, who made sacrifices in our favour: to England at large they must be paid in a more qualified manner. Gratitude, however, I paid to England also with the prodigality of inexperience; but with that feeling was mixed a more painful tribute. It was strange if I felt for you what you did not feel for yourself; and yet such things have been. The Act had passed, and you had done with it: you had paid off finally a great claim, which discharge you were resolved to consider a gift on your part; and if you were not pleased with the act, nothing remained but to be pleased with yourself. I, on the other hand, an Irishman, was humiliated for England's sake; and the cheers then given to your country by men as



quickly surprised into affection as into resentment, but who did not love her well enough to be jealous for her fame, rang with an impaired harmony and imperfect satisfaction on my ear. I lamented that she should have refused the boon to hear the debt demanded, and denied the debt only to surrender the spoil. I was then full of the glories of English history, in the earlier part of which I took an especial interest; and as for its Irish portion, imperfectly as I was acquainted with it, I could not but lament that to a course so lame so impotent a conclusion should have been added.

Such sentiments you will probably resent; but if my gratitude and shame were ill-founded, my hopes were vainer by far. No rational person, grown to man's estate, could have expected the prosperity of Ireland from Catholic Emancipation alone; no one of its rational advocates had ventured on such an anticipation. The removal of the last vestige of the penal laws was a necessary precondition, but it could not be in itself an efficient cause of Irish prosperity. If England were reduced to destitution should you, to revive her prosperity, content yourselves with reading aloud the "Magna Charta" at every market cross? Was the Reform Bill sufficient to feed your paupers? Catholic Emancipation, like the Union, afforded you an opportunity for the introduction of a great remedial policy; but you did not know that the

need was great; and you allowed the opportunity to go by. Of all the oppressions with which your England had afflicted this country, there was not one which, by means however various, did not tend towards a common end; and whether you proscribed her religion, or warred upon her morals; whether you made it her necessity to despise herself, or her duty to detest you; whether you engulfed her in apathy, or provoked her to rebellion; whether you assailed her with confiscations, or withheld from her rights; whether with plenary authority and the bell, book and candle of the State, you passed an interdict on her for ages, and committed her to darkness and the blank of outlawry; or imparted to her the perfidious and terrible gift of laws, restricting her legally from civil and religious privileges, when these first asserted themselves; from property, when property was enfranchised; from education, when knowledge moved abroad; from commerce, when commerce became a power in the world; the tendency of your versatile policy continued unchanged, and its result has been the reduction of this land to poverty. Poverty, the consummation which you had reached, and if not the chief grievance of Ireland, the joint product of all her wrongs, their concentrated, and abiding, representative record and result—poverty could not be removed by Catholic Emancipation. On the contrary, by the long denial of that just measure,

and the long struggle thus rendered necessary, a new evil was added to those already existing, a more rankling discontent, accompanied by a systematic agitation, less degrading than the servile content of the last century, but unfavourable to an advance in the peaceful arts, because inconsistent with staid expectations. The struggle for emancipation bred in the heart of this country a sorer, though not a deeper wound, than fifty years of the penal laws. If this circumstance should surprise you, account for it by the fact, that men may sleep in their chains and be unconscious of them, but that they feel those chains when they strain against them. That poverty, Sir, still remains, though many of its original causes are abolished; and it looks up at you, demanding food, and inquiring of its parentage.

I fear that you must be fatigued by the journey we have made together. I have snatched you up rather unceremoniously, and carried you from eminence to eminence of our records; and if from each in turn you have enjoyed no better prospect than that of black and barren wastes illuminated with the fires of smouldering villages, the fault is none of ours. I do not presume to call our humble annals a history. History implies a succession of events dependent each on the preceding, a series of external actions capable of being referred to internal causes, an exposition of the mind and life of a nation by means

of impulses flowing from within, and though confused, not seldom by jarring accidents, yet on the whole moulding outward circumstances to an image of itself, and methodizing them to something of an intelligible unity. Other nations, even the most miserable, have had a history; and may take refuge from the present in communion with the past: Ireland, thanks to the unprecedented character of British domination, has none. She knows not whether she was conquered; she knows not whether she was colonized; she has heard of a present union; she has dreamed of a future peace; she is certain alone that she has no history. No classic historian has recorded it; no poet has ventured to select from it one well-known tragic theme; the philosopher has passed it by without wasting a theory on it, as he would have turned from the journals of a madhouse, the calendar of a convict colony, or the battles of wild beasts:—and I can hardly blame you for having shrunk from annals the savageness of which cannot redeem them from monotony.

I have detained you thus long on a painful subject, because if I can induce you to pore upon those significant characters graven by the foot of your country upon the breast of Ireland, I may spare you the trouble of reading a feeble commentary from my pen. You will not now ask me so pertinaciously why we are poor. It is because you impoverished us, confiscating property over and over

again, incapacitating the great mass of the people from acquiring or bequeathing it, proscribing industry, and fomenting mutual animosity and common insecurity. You will not ask me why the people are reproached for sloth;—it is because there was no object for their energy; why they procrastinate—it is because there is no difference between to-day and to-morrow when each is a blank; why they bully you—it is because you bullied them, and failed to make them just concessions except on compulsion; why they are deficient in truth—it is because truth is the language of freedom; why they are lawless—it is because for three centuries they knew nothing of your laws, and for three centuries they knew them too well; why they are reproached with levity—it is because they are not ennobled by the graver happiness that entails responsibility; why they do not love the memory of their masters—it is because they could not love it without hating all they are bound to love.

We are not to be told, Sir, that all this evil ought to have been converted into good because it is now seventeen years since Emancipation was granted. Bad laws are bad because their effects sink deep. When a people has become free, its laws are moulded mainly by its character; but even then the laws react upon the character. It is a common opinion amongst you that the domestic morality of England has been seriously impaired by certain provisions of



your Poor Law. Even England, then, is not above outward influences. In your country agriculture is far advanced: your trade, which is called its rival, has greatly contributed to its progress, both by a transference of capital to the soil, and by that more adventurous energy which it has enkindled. But could your wastes have been converted into gardens if your farmers had been legally debarred from a prolonged tenure, or a reasonable interest in their land? You are a commercial nation; could your ships people the seas if, till of late, your trade had been—not fettered only, that your trade was—but strangled by restrictions? You are a manufacturing people; could you have clothed the nations if you had been forbidden to export? To you the future has been secure as the past: for this reason the present has ever afforded you, not a bed for the repose of apathy, but a firm footing from which to leap forward in advance; for this reason Hope has been a possibility to you, and Progress has been her gift.

I pray you not to believe that because Emancipation is granted, and because the people possess arms, if not food, therefore the penal laws are no longer in operation among us. They are removed from the statute book, but they survive elsewhere. It may be prejudice, but I have often fancied, when I remarked the scowl of some poor man in rags as he glanced at a relief committee that could not aid him, or when I

noted the prompt action of a boy catching at a stone with that transmitted hand of skill needed also in your manufactures—it may be a delusion—but I have thought that if the ancestors of those unfortunates (for the poor, too, have ancestors) had not been deprived of their estates two centuries ago (which may well have happened), or if their ancestors who lived one century ago had been allowed to acquire property and gain knowledge, those destined malefactors might at this moment be as prosperous and respectable as you are now. I could not guess, unless I knew what connection your family may have had with this country, whether, if your ancestors had also met their deserts, you might not yourself be in the position of those whom you despise. Are, then, the wrongs of past times never to be forgotten in Ireland? Yes, when they are worthily remembered in England; but I fear not till then.

It is a hard thing, Sir, to write down a nation. The press having now become a power in the world, as education and commerce had previously become, it might seem to you an inconsistency if you failed to assail us with that weapon as you did successively with every other placed within your reach. The persistency of your endeavour attests your sincerity, and the ability of many writers, together with the indolence of most readers, may do somewhat; but still I advise you to pause and examine your position once

more. Before you reiterate those charges which brand us with a character below humanity, remember that you have yourselves a human debt, I speak not now of nationalities,—to settle with this people. I will not here charge you with what is erroneously called your original conquest of this island. Most nations rest on the foundation of a conquest (you, indeed, can boast a fourfold foundation); and if the lenient hand of time were not allowed to heal old wounds, and prescription to sanction possession, there would be neither peace nor progress in the world. But we have somewhat else against you. For most precious and repeated opportunities vouchsafed and rejected, whereby the past might have become past indeed, or been changed into a blessing; for a weakness, more fatal than your might, which consigned this people to the delegated tyranny of double betrayers whom you dared not coerce; for the outlawry of ages, and for laws which taught us to lament our lost outlawry; for compacts broken and frauds displaced by frauds; for the ancient religion beaten to the earth amid its bleeding votaries and violated shrines; for a reformed religion gibbeted on high in ill-omened elevation, amid all that was disastrous and abhorred; for Christianity itself discountenanced and discredited on this side and on that; for all the highways of industry blocked up, and every by-road open to corruption in high places and rebellion in low; for agriculture discouraged and trade

prohibited; for a common woe preferred sedulously to the weal of either country; for secrecy rendered necessary and frankness made impossible; for virtues that could not be suppressed, distorted to uncomely shapes and directed to unworthy objects; for fidelity allied with treason, and reverence for law degraded into the virtue of an informer; for a present ever without peace, and a past whose every monument is a stone of offence; for history, which should be a nation's guide, condemned to become either a babbler of fables, or an instructress in sedition; for society without arts, resources without use, obscurity without rest, talents without objects, energies without a career, agonies without fame; for the streams of knowledge choked in their channels, and the springs of virtue poisoned at their source; for these and other demerits, our misfortune and yours, it remains that the Crown, the Parliament, and the People of England should answer and atone to God and to Ireland.

Perhaps, Sir, you may think it an ungracious thing to remind England of faults which some of her sons have acknowledged. It is true that the faults of past times have been acknowledged; and few will affirm that with the past the present has no concern; for if nations possess a continuity of existence, so they must be subject to a continuity of obligation. Moreover, as all that you have of greatness and of wealth is an inheritance from the past, you must

accept your estate with its incumbrances. If England has any part in the glories of Cressy, Agincourt, Blenheim, or Waterloo, the shame of the penal laws is hers; nor, indeed, can you disown it without losing for ever the privilege you claim of visiting on us the sins of our ancestors. That part of your nation which not only in word denounces but also in act reverses the past, is pure from its reproach; but even good words are not always equivalent to deeds. Mere acknowledgments of a debt are seldom met by a receipt in full. A nation which is its own confessor gets off with a prompt absolution; but Providence has imposed a penance notwithstanding, and Nature carries it into effect. I doubt, also, whether your confession is made with suitable dispositions; because, in the first place, it is generally mixed up with excuses, and occasionally with mention of your merits, which no penitent is called on to confess; in the second place, it is only made to yourself; and when we venture to repeat your own words, you are far from being pleased. You are, you admit generally, a miserable sinner; but you have not this or that foible. You have also a boastful way of representing the matter; not so much bewailing the sins of your fathers as exalting yourselves at their expense, affirming that you have made great improvements upon their notions, and that under the like circumstances you would have taken a more en-



lightened course, which I hope you are prepared to prove in action. Simple regret, you will remember, is not repentance, which must be accompanied by true contrition, amendment, and sometimes even restitution. Had you thought of repealing your legislative eccentricities in time, that single act might have been sufficient: but the evil consequent on such legislation once achieved, it was your duty to provide an effectual remedy. I will not say that you should have restored to this country the more important blessings of which you had deprived her, for impossibilities are not duties. To descend from moral to pecuniary considerations, I will not say that you ought to have restored to her fourfold the wealth from which you had restricted her, or even a fourth part of it; but it was your duty, and it would have been your interest, to help her to walk whom you had so often dashed to the ground.

It was your duty long since to have established among a people whom you reproached with ignorance and prejudice, and among whom you had long prohibited knowledge, an ample system of education, both intellectual and industrial. It was your duty to have aided her, so far as the State can afford aid without travelling out of its proper sphere, in exploring and realising those vast resources which the poverty produced by a century of restriction and the apathy produced by many centuries of

degradation could not but otherwise condemn to a long obscurity. An interference on the part of the State for the promotion of industry may well be withheld where enterprise and progress have become characteristics of a nation fostered by ages of success; but it does not therefore follow that such aid would be misapplied among a people at once the most exhausted and the youngest in Europe. It was more obviously your duty to have given to Ireland, whose appointments had for a century been jobbed away among Englishmen for the purpose of governing Ireland through the English interest, her full share in all public patronage and in those great national works effected by the public purse, such as naval stations, dockyards, and the like. Above all, it was your duty to have given her laws firmly administered and apt to promote social improvement or at least to remove the chief obstacles that stood in its way. You did not apply yourself to this task; you contented yourself with a legislation from hand to mouth. I will mention but a few instances to illustrate this position.

Ignorance and poverty had established in this country the potato system of agriculture, by which a crop, nearly the most productive and the most precarious that exists, was created with the least possible amount of that labour which renders class dependent on class and fixes a limit to population. It afforded an easy subsistence, and therefore mi-

nistered to a squalid contentment; it was connected with the con-acre, and therefore produced agrarian outrages; it was full of vicissitudes, and therefore encouraged recklessness; when it gave enough it gave more than enough and therefore promoted a habit of squandering; and it abetted a wandering mendicancy, by allowing every one to hang loose on society. Yet, instead of encouraging and instructing the Irish in a better mode of agriculture, you appeared in your recent allotment system disposed rather to imitate their example. The improvidence of poverty, and the absence of all except household consolations, had kept up that tradition of early marriages, commenced amongst a short-lived race. The consequence was over-population. Every one knew that this was a chief evil of Ireland; that it was increasing and must continue to increase. It was ministered to by that natural Poor Law which had grown up for the want of a better and which included the con-acre system, the subdivision of land, and the compulsory charity of the farmers. The poor alone, a very numerous order, were rich enough to maintain the poorest; and on them was that burden immediately thrown, which of course rested ultimately on the land. Every one in this country knew that the excess of the evil insured its continuance; the lawlessness which it produced, rendering it impossible for individual efforts to effect a cure. Laws against sub-letting existed;

but their provisions were always defeated among a people who, having no resource in manufactures, looked to land alone for their subsistence. Instead of at once correcting the details of those laws, and defining the duties of property, you abandoned as the farmers defeated them; and you contented yourself with counting a man a fool if he allowed his estate to be cottiered, and a monster if he evicted the intruders. It is but just to say that in some cases this over-population had been promoted by a short-sighted ambition to increase the number of forty shilling freeholders on particular estates: but this folly did little more than give an occasional direction to an evil which was the result mainly of other causes; and so thoroughly did all classes appreciate the danger, that if but a breathing time had been allowed, we should not have failed to set our house in order. The difficulty was that of warding off the ruin of all classes without pushing beyond the limits of social existence those who pressed against its outward circle. Many proprietors did their best, though it was impossible but that occasional errors should take place, in the way either of precipitation and cruelty, or, as more frequently happened, of remissness and a too easy good nature. Emigration on a large scale would have given the temporary relief necessary; and even by Mr. Malthus was prescribed as the only remedy in such a case. Systematic emigration was, therefore, talked about in Parliament; but

it was not carried into effect. A Poor Law, passed in time, guarded by severe tests of destitution, and accompanied by emigration, and measures to encourage industry, would, I believe, have worked well, or at least less ill than its practical substitute. Accordingly, a Poor Law was talked about year after year. At last it was imposed; but not till the evil was too great to be thus grappled with. More recently an amended Poor Law has been passed; but it was passed as a remedy for famine, an object to which it must any where have been inapplicable. It was hurried through Parliament at a time when all caution appeared selfishness, and when to hint a doubt was considered to pass a sentence of death on thousands. There was no time to deliberate, yet you resolved to enact permanent laws; and when appeal was made to authority or evidence, you challenged on the *voir dire* all economists as too well acquainted with general principles, and all Irishmen as knowing too much of their country. It now exists unguarded by tests, unaccompanied by measures to divert the pressure which must crush it, unsupported by those public works which ought long since to have been undertaken from their general utility, and unmitigated by any provisions against sub-letting, to protect that property by which alone the rates can be paid.

You improved the administration of justice by the establishment of the petty sessions courts; and



you embodied an admirable police force which would perform its duty, if the functions intrusted to it were such as a police can compass: but for the most part you contented yourself with treating symptoms as they appeared, and treating them empirically. If a measure worked ill, you had only to try another; nor does it seem to have occurred to you that the constitution of a country may be so enfeebled by a long course of quackery, as to be unable to bear a sounder discipline. In this perpetual treatment of symptoms, you discarded some large principles of politics. You forgot that legislation to be good must be suitable, and that it will be suitable in proportion as it has grown out of the deep and permanent needs of a country searchingly seen and understood; that as the morals of a country naturally illustrate its laws, so its manners illustrate its morals; and, consequently, that to cast the externals of a country in an arbitrary mould, is but to suppress all timely indications of what is needed, and to deprive yourselves of all guides to a legislation permanently useful. If the clergy could get no tithes, you lent them a million; if they could not pay back the million, you made it a gift; if the tenant would pay none, you put it on the landlord; if the landlord objected, you cut off one quarter of the estate of the Church, and bestowed it on a Protestant proprietary to appease Roman Catholic scruples. You passed coercion bills, and you repealed them; you pro-

hibited monster meetings, and you winked at them ; you prosecuted Mr. O'Connell, and you coquetted with him ; resolved the House into committees, and committees into the House ; you instituted a great number of commissions and published a great number of reports, which you seemed to think must of themselves do the country great service, as though the patient could recover if he were to swallow the prescription instead of the medicine. Above all, you spoke an infinite deal of the merest nothing upon Irish subjects, keeping clear, on the one hand, of large principles, and on the other, of those nice details suited to our complex circumstances ; you tried all your young statesmen and budding theories on Ireland ; and made her too often the field for English faction fights. I do not know, Sir, whether this course gave signs of a perfect repentance. It certainly did not amount to a restitution for the past, in the most restricted sense, and as certainly it made an indifferent provision for the future. In the meantime Nature, which cannot wait the leisure of statesmen, was at work. Certain great principles at which you had glanced occasionally, but ineffectually, were impelling a million of noiseless wheels in the darkness under you, and carrying the nation forward to one determined goal. Population was advancing ; production was augmenting in a lesser degree, that is, relatively diminishing ; you had failed to perform the first duty of government, that of providing for the

security of life and property ; without security, capital would not invest itself ; and without capital no large increase of production was to be had. If Providence had not, in its merciful severity, interposed with this calamitous potato blight, the eventual ruin to which we were tending must have been to us even more signal, and to you even more disastrous, than the trial which has overtaken us.

The end of the whole matter would seem to be this : a certain problem was proposed to you for solution, and you did not solve it. It now forces itself upon you again : it will give you no more time ; you must pay it the attention it demands, and the arrears accumulated by past neglect ; it will hear of no "repudiation." You were called on to deal with the poverty you had produced, and you did not deal with it aright. The problem now proposed to you is essentially the same ; but with two exceptions. First, a potato failure has occurred, of which the effect is, on the one hand, to increase our poverty in the same measure as if one-fourth had been suddenly added to our numbers ; on the other, to break down forcibly those agricultural traditions and social conventions which opposed an impassable barrier to improvement. Secondly, an agitation, created originally by yourself, still survives ; which, in its turn, may do good if it attracts your wise attention to that country, of whose sufferings, rather than of whose needs, it is the representative ; but which

must do evil if it summons that attention in vain, because it removes the minds of men from industrial pursuits; has hitherto divided classes and disfranchised the higher orders; is, of course, obliged to make its appeal to the passions and fancies of the populace, as well as to the hearts of the people; and substitutes political sentiment for political opinion, since it is the nature of sentiments to ascend from the many who feel, and of opinions to descend from the few who think. The question proposed to you forty-seven years ago, being again propounded, you may reply to it in either of two different ways. All that is certain is, that you must reply to it at once and once for all. A great integral part of your empire, reduced to poverty and comparative helplessness, by your own suicidal policy, demands your aid, that she may raise herself from her forlorn estate, and walk, your equal mate, along the paths of prosperity and greatness. Do you think it advisable, on the whole, to rail at her and bid her be gone; or to do what you can to help her?

With this question I conclude my second letter.

## LETTER III.

Ireland's Prosperity the only safety for England.—The Consequence to England of Irish Ruin.—The Irish Revenue and Expenditure.—Irish Property spent by Englishmen or in England.—Irish and English Trade.—English Charges on Irish Property.—The Rich the losers.—Invasion of England by Irish Labourers.—English Plagiarisms of Irish Faults.—An exaggerated Charge which might be brought against England.—Slight Suggestions as to Principles of Legislation for Ireland.—Good Measures only good if applied in Time.—Remedial Measures.—Security to Life and Property.—Colonization, Agricultural Education.—Amendment of the Poor Law.—Useful Public Works and Waste Lands.—The Tenure of Land.—Provisions for enforcing the Rights as well as Duties of Property.—Simplification of the Law.—Sale of encumbered Estates.—Sanatory Improvements in Towns.—Schools for the Children of the higher Orders.

SIR,

IN my last letter I discussed several grave Irish faults which stand in the way of our political and social well-being (to others I shall refer hereafter), and I endeavoured, by a reference to your policy in Ireland during nine-tenths of the period of your domination, to explain the origin and nature of those faults. I pointed out also that English policy in Ireland, though it had passed through several important changes, had, till a late period, tended always in one direction, namely, the reduction of Ireland to po-



verty; and that so signally had it failed, as regards English interests also, that after the lapse of six centuries, both countries were threatened with political ruin, from which, apparently, the Union was the only refuge of either. I observed that only the wisest men in England understood the full necessity for union, or the mode in which it might be made a reality; and that England, not allowing these men to have their way, had deluded herself and us by a union which did not bring forth the fruits of peace to either country, or of prosperity to Ireland. At the period of the Union, Mr. Sheridan, opposing that measure, said, "In Ireland the British Government has two formidable enemies—Poverty and Ignorance." I stated that these enemies had not yet been subdued. Mr. Grattan said, "I oppose this Union, because, in the first place, it is no Union." I stated that the question now once more proposed to you, is whether that Union shall be made real. Is Ireland to be treated as an alien, or as a sister?

I possess, Sir, no seat in either House of Parliament, for which reason I address you with my pen: but if I had a vote, I would record it in favour of the latter alternative; and I would advise all other persons to do the same, except English and Irish repealers. I do not see what better you have to do. I will not urge this course upon you on the grounds of justice; for I have compiled a brief epitome of

your dealings with Ireland, in the hope that the better class of your countrymen might rather themselves assert the claims of justice on our behalf than leave us to plead our own cause. There is, however, such a thing as a wise expediency. Do England and Ireland constitute two kingdoms, or one? If the former, vex yourselves about us no more than about Mexico or Poland: if the latter, consider whether your neighbour's side of the house can be burned without your goods suffering damage. You are more than a lodger. Solomon tells us, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind;" a proverb which must sometimes have recurred to your memory, when buffeted by the "boisterous embraces" of Irish agitation. The second Solomon, while engaged on the plantation of Ulster, probably thought that he was only troubling his neighbour's house; but how it has turned out must now be but too plain to you. There is another proverb, "He that is cruel, troubleth his own flesh." Do not imagine, Sir, that I am going to demand the gift of "another ten millions." I am convinced that every penny given gratuitously to Ireland, beyond what the emergency of the present moment absolutely requires, can only tend to degrade and enfeeble her: but there are other modes in which you can do her a service.

In the first place, as in the case of a projected building "proportion costs nothing," so good laws cost no more than bad; indeed, they cost less; for they

require less mending. Something you will have to give to the pauperized districts along the western coast. There are in Ireland nine unions comprising a population of 500,000 persons, in which the Poor Law valuation affords only twelve shillings a head to the inhabitants. You must pay for the support of these people or let them starve: but you have learned, by this time, how to distribute charity, which is best done in a very old-fashioned manner; and the cost will not, I hope, be much. Spend wisely (Ireland, you are aware, contributes to the revenue in that proportion which her impoverished state permits), and you will not be much out of pocket by treating this country with a politic justice; although, at best, a famine is an expensive thing.

Let us now recur to the other alternative, and consider how you are likely to fare if you content yourself with washing your hands, and declaring that the matter is none of yours. Such a proceeding might, perhaps, cement a closer alliance than can be said always to exist between two important parties in England, viz., its mind and its body; but I see an objection to it notwithstanding. Have you not heard of one who sealed up the top of his wine cask, and who, on the leak in the bottom being pointed out to him, replied, "Not so; for below there is wine enough; it has been stolen from above?" It is through Ireland's wound, by you inflicted, that England wastes. If you

cannot stanch it, you must bleed to death. In Ireland we have now come to the end of one period, and are entering upon another. For good or for evil a providential dispensation has broken up the old system, and Ireland must now advance in the direction of a new prosperity, or be ruined; ruined, at least, so far as this generation is concerned. Let us suppose the latter alternative (the former I shall consider hereafter), and imagine Ireland ruined. What would you be the better for that? Is it not, on the contrary, too certain that the one great mistake which your ancestors made, was in the assumption as an intuitive truth, of what at least required proof, that the poorer they could make one-third of their empire, the richer the whole must be. Ireland, though ruined, would still exist; and if it continued yours, you would still be compelled to pay for it. If you only held the great towns, it would still cost you as much as it does now, or probably more; for you would have to maintain larger establishments of every kind, except those connected with the Customs and the Excise. Your Irish revenue for the last three years amounted to—

1845	.	.	.	.	£3,842,000
1846	.	.	.	.	4,087,000
1847	.	.	.	.	4,333,000;

beside the amount of Irish revenue paid in England; and I perceive that between the years 1823

and 1847 the net excess of revenue over Irish expenditure left a net balance in your favour of £9,000,000, which was paid into the Exchequer, at Westminster. Can any thing be more plain than that if your expenditure were to remain stationary, and your revenue to diminish, an accident sure to happen when a nation is ruined, you would suffer before long a greater loss than the £10,000,000 which you so pathetically lament ?

This consideration is in itself important ; but let me add a few more not less so. A very large number of Irish proprietors are Englishmen or Irishmen resident in England, of whose continued residence you may feel assured until your laws afford security to those who reside in Ireland. They spend their money among you to the great benefit of English artisans : a proportion of it finds its way back to us, no doubt ; but, in the meantime, you have the first handling of it. If Irish property were destroyed, you would be losers so far. It may be said that new possessors of Irish estates would replace the old : but consider first how long property might remain unsold when it was worth nothing ; and secondly, how long a time might elapse, even supposing it sold, before your utmost enterprise could make it worth much, supposing that misery still produced lawlessness, and that nobody was allowed to do any thing that he liked with any thing of his own,



and every one was suffered to do every thing that he liked with what was none of his. My supposition includes these two parts; first, that not only Irish proprietors should be ruined, but Irish property also (and bad legislation could effect as much as this); secondly, that a very large proportion of the native population should continue to live.

A third consideration is this. The interest of the debts and charges on Irish property is computed at no less than £4,000,000 annually, which represents, we will say, a capital of nearly £100,000,000. A large part of this debt consists of mortgages in the hands of Englishmen, which would become of little value if the property were ruined; and a selfishness not well calculated would thus have killed the bird that laid the golden eggs. Consider next the trade of the country. It is not what it might have been; but we think half a loaf better than no bread, and, without any charity on our part, we share that half loaf with you. I subjoin a table of Irish exports and imports concluding with the last year during which the trade statistics of the two countries were separately kept.

## EXPORTS FROM IRELAND.

	To Great Britain.	To all parts.
		£
1817 . .	5,696,000	6,597,000
1821 . .	7,117,000	7,782,000
1825 . .	8,531,000	9,243,000

## IMPORTS FROM GREAT BRITAIN TO IRELAND.

(OFFICIAL VALUE.)

	£
1817 . . . .	4,722,000
1821 . . . .	5,338,000
1825 . . . .	7,048,000*.

Here again you perceive that a trade amounting to millions is at stake. Were I to ask you what you would do if we could send you no more beef, pigs, grain, butter, or eggs, you would no doubt reply that you would buy as good elsewhere, though there must have been some reason for your preference of our produce hitherto: but how could we possibly buy your cottons, your printed calicos, and your cloth, if we had nothing to give for them in exchange? Other markets you might doubtless make out; but still there must have been a reason for your preference of ours. Would you, to encourage us, reduce their price at once to our needs, as you expected Irish landlords last year to give their money for one quarter of the indifferent labour previously received in return for it? If not, Sir, we must withdraw our custom from you without transferring it elsewhere. In this case we should have to clothe ourselves in the skins of beasts; but when the cattle were once

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\* See also Appendix B, Railway Report, from which it appears that, from 1825 to 1835, the Imports have augmented from £8,596,000 to £10,918,000; and the Exports from £9,493,000 to £16,693,000.

killed, and our first suits worn out, what would then be our condition? Imagine a whole civilized people ranging about perfectly naked, or only decorated with such ornaments as were worn by the early Picts, that is to say, painted emblems of the sun, the moon, and all the heavenly bodies, together with historical hieroglyphics and berry-stained battle sketches wherewithal to terrify their enemies? Sure I am that were we ever reduced thus low—which Heaven forbid!—many of the guides of that animal which you affirm to have been too long ridden by the Irish Silenus, would assure you that we had adopted this device merely with a view to extortion. My supposition is not likely to be realized to its utmost extent; but it is not the less true that for every coat we are obliged to discard, you will lose to the value of the profit on a coat. Having, then, a large stake in this country, comprising these four parts, viz. your revenue, your proportion of absentee property or absentee expenditure, your charges and mortgages, and your trade, I do not see how you can possibly afford to ruin us. If all England were to rise up like one man, and laying a solemn palm or resolute fist upon green cloth or red box, to swear with invocations and asseverations, that he would do no less than this, I do not see what the issue could be but that all England, like another and more reasonable man, should sit down once more and reconsider the project. What you have already un-

wittingly lost in past centuries I dare not even hint, lest you should be a reasonable man no more, and account us seven times greater bullies, beggars, and buffoons than you have yet called us. I stand by my statement. The matter is a matter of money; "*tua res agitur.*" I have proved, by accredited statistics, that without any malice on our part, or one penny spent on yours, you may suffer ten times more from the ruin of Irish property than you have suffered during 1846-7, including both gift and loan. Ruin is more expensive than a famine. Under the existing law the more an Irish proprietor improves his estate, the larger becomes that proportion of the rate which is defrayed by his estate; you have improved your estate, and you would not allow us to improve ours; therefore the national rate must fall heavily on you. You have a share in the firm; it is you who have laid by gold; therefore to you the bankruptcy must be very sore. If blundering legislation should once more end in a great loss; if what Mr. Carlyle calls a "Joe Manton aristocracy" must needs wage war upon a "Midas" middle class, flying from the senate house to the battue, and bestowing one barrel on a famine and the other on a bird of the air, those that pay the cost must be those that have the cash. Would you be greater than Nature herself, you who are not ashamed to believe in "Natural Religion?"

On the troubles resulting from over-population

will you learn from a parable? The ambassador of a foreign power, travelling not long since in the neighbourhood of Derrinane Abbey, was lodged at so poor an inn that his bedchamber was immediately above that of a bull calf, the nocturnal lowings of which so grievously tormented him, that as he complained with much point, "though he had had the comfort of a bed, yet he had not enjoyed the luxury of sleep." Why did he not slip down stairs, open the stable door, and let his enemy out? The bull calf was not lowing at the ambassador, but from dislike of his prison, and because he was troubled with vague ideas of meads and milk. Depend upon it, Sir, that the traveller wrote in an allegory, meaning you to understand that till the Irish multitude, whose hunger is so importunate, be let forth into a fatter land, English statesmen are destined, no matter how sumptuous their dormitories, to enjoy but troubled slumbers.

There is another danger, Sir, worse than all the losses which I have hitherto suggested as the consequences of doing nothing effectual to right the condition of Ireland—I mean the danger of an Irish invasion of England. Louis Male, Earl of Flanders, had reduced his Flemish insurgents to the point of starvation, when, just as they ought to have died, the whole inhabitants of Ghent waited upon him, without appointment, at Bruges, and consumed a sumptuous dinner which had been prepared for



him by the respectable corporation of that town. Beware of an army of specious men who have beaten their swords into reaping-hooks, in order to cut down at once your labourers and your harvests, and to devour the increase. England is nearer to us than America; Australia is farther than either; Guernsey and Jersey are both very small. What is to prevent Irish labourers from finding their way to England in thousands where they have hitherto done so in hundreds? They have an interest in accepting employment from you if they can find none at home; and the number of half labourers supported hitherto chiefly by their potato patches, which are gone, is at least double that which the agriculture of Ireland can permanently employ. Remember that, if Irish agriculture is to be improved, the small farms must be consolidated, and that a large additional number of labourers must thereby be thrown on our labour market (as your economists pleasantly call it), a market at present scantily supplied with customers, and in which the prices are not determined by the free will of purchasers or sellers. Remember, that after the disproportion between the demand and supply has reached a certain point, the more numerous the candidates for labour are, the worse their labour will be, connivance proving stronger than competition. Remember, that the number of labourers hitherto employed in Ireland, compared with those employed in England, has

been relatively to the area of cultivated land as 5 to 2, and relatively to the produce raised by them as 4 to 1. Remember, that good agriculture would diminish, not increase the number of labourers employed. Remember, that the farmers, who, as you think, ought to give more employment, used to pay their labourers in potatoes, and with the potato have lost not only a large part of their produce, but what constituted nearly the whole agricultural currency of Ireland. Remember, that half of these farmers are men who elsewhere would till their farms with their own hands; and that necessity is teaching them to do so. Are you not a free trader in labour as in other commodities; and if so, ought not our labourer to sell his labour in the dearest market, and your farmer to buy labour in the cheapest? Your farmers have an interest in engaging them, for none work better, when they are tolerably fed, and when they are removed from a lawless state of society; and they can work at a cheaper rate of wages than the English labourer, who expects some small comforts as well as a livelihood. If the unmarried alone were to emigrate to England, or, indeed, if the married men were to join the company, leaving their families, as so many wards in Chancery, to be taken care of by the Board of Guardians, I do not see why, having themselves alone to support, they should not be able to underbid the English labourer in his own market. This country would then have a far better

chance than at present; for not only would the numbers be diminished, but we, like Louis Philippe, should have got rid of our “emeuteurs.”

It may be said that your farmers would not avail themselves of this cheap labour if it had the effect of reducing the existing labouring class to destitution, and thus increasing the poor rates; but this belief cannot be indulged in by those who know that a present advantage comes more home to men than a remote danger, or who remember how willing English farmers were to beat down the rate of wages to the minimum when they had to pay out of the rates the additional sum necessary to enable their labourers to live; thus pauperising labour itself, a far worse evil than the support of bonâ fide paupers out of the proceeds of bonâ fide labour.

It is true that you have passed a law enabling you to transport any Irish beggar to Ireland. If this law were ever to come generally into operation, we should insist upon your making it a part of your Poor Law system instead of your Penal system. An English pauper is sent back to his parish for relief: an Irishman, guilty of a sea voyage, who has applied for casual relief somewhere on your western coast, is to be sent, not to his own home, but to Belfast, Dublin, or Waterford,—favoured spots, which have thus a chance of becoming sinks of destitution sufficient to furnish a pretext whenever you have a fancy

to try how a rating by the union, the county, or the province, would answer in place of that by electoral divisions. I should not be surprised if those cities of refuge were to show their gratitude by returning your present to you. The paupers would thus be supported on the lowest computation for every alternate week at your expense, and in many cases for two weeks out of three. Moreover, a race possessed of extraordinary wisdom and experienced virtue would thus be formed. There is not a nook in your island, or a creek on your coasts with which the man of many labours would not have formed an acquaintance (“modo me Romæ ponit, modo Athenis”); and on his final return, when old age demanded its dues, there is not a hovel in Kerry that would not boast a separate *Odyssee*, for every Irish *Ulysses* would have the wit to be his own *Homer*. A class of men truly Anglo-Irish would also arise, men of two countries and no prejudices, who might undertake the whole carrying trade of abuse which you seem desirous to establish between the two countries.

But I have been guilty of a digression, which is the more inexcusable, as the law that suggested it is itself but a poetic dream. If it works, its effect must be to encourage emigration to England. It only enables you to take up those who are convicted of begging. The invading army will be an army of labourers; a certain proportion of each detachment will find work; and the rest being sent

back free of expense will try their chance again, and make their way where they find an opening. This invasion is not to be prevented except by violence on the part of the English labourers, which in England must be but local, and therefore unavailing; for it would not suit a country, at once commercial and crowded, to encourage Lynch Law.

Judge, Sir, what are likely to be the ultimate consequences of this Irish settlement in England, assuming as data your well-known opinions of us. By degrees your favoured land will be as much over-peopled as Ireland. Emigration will become every day more obviously necessary. You will still be talking about it, but you will probably have only succeeded in discovering difficulties which you ought to have overcome. Emigration being still unaided, the question is who the emigrants are to be, Saxon or Celt. You affirm that the Saxon makes much the better emigrant; I admit that the Saxon is much the richer man; and all agree that he has more enterprise. The Saxon race therefore will begin to move off; and, in place of the forest giants which you fell, you will make a young "plantation" of your own in New Brunswick, as you did in Ulster. In the meantime, population being thus reduced at home, wages will rise; and your "Irish enemy" in every parish having waxed prosperous, will think it his duty to marry. The Irish are a people of sanguine temperament, af-



fectionate dispositions, and strong social needs, with a considerable regard for household morality, and only a finite power of calculating consequences; the aggregate of which qualities points ominously in the direction of holy matrimony. Let no one deceive you: the question with them will very soon be narrowed into this small compass, "With whom are they to contract marriage, Saxon or Celt?" The Saxon might probably frown upon their suit; but it is possible that an infinite number of modest young Irish women, with violet eyes, a winning mirth, and a bold innocence, hearing of the prosperity of their brothers, might find their way to England also: and it might happen that she who was one man's sister, not standing in that relation to another, would become his wife. What next? for this is only the beginning of the end. There is not one in a thousand of those young wives, who before the end of one year would not have brought into the world another being exactly like his father, with the exception of being smaller. These are amongst the arts of war; and it was the young women beyond the Danube and the Caspian that blew up the Roman Empire. What is to stop this process? In what can it result but the diffusion of one single brogue swallowing up the sixty-four dialects of England?

Moreover, Pope Pius IX., whom you were lately on the point of setting down for an enlightened man, has

thrown off the mask, and openly declared that he prefers his religion to yours; nay that he is a Roman Catholic Puseyite, though a liberal in politics; in confirmation of which he is constituting in England a hierarchy, built up of bishops, archbishops, and probably a cardinal at the summit. An Irish settlement in England cannot but stimulate his zeal. What, if on finding this church, though in all other respects perfectly appointed, yet deficient in a laity, he should resolve to put up with yours, and issue orders for your conversion accordingly?

I forbear, Sir, to enlarge upon subjects which, being serious, should be entertained with a graver attention than I can expect from you. Indeed, the dangers to which I have drawn your notice are serious enough, too: but you may avoid them if you choose; and if you choose to incur them, I choose to laugh. There is a seriousness in laughter at times; and I avouch to you my own settled opinion, that if when summoned again to grave deliberation, you should content yourself with playing once more that childish game "beggar my neighbour," and doubling your stakes, then every danger that I have announced to you is imminent;—and one more besides. Suppose these vast Irish settlements to have taken place in England, and that, by the seductions of time and depraved habit, you had grown reconciled to our vices, as impoverished labourers grow accustomed to Indian

meal in place of wheaten bread, what is more probable than the gradual amalgamation of the two races by intermarriage? Now, Sir, qualities both physical and moral are transmitted by descent—eagles give birth to eagles, adders to adders. Do not imagine that our bitters would be neutralized by your sweets: for while the coasts of Cork, Kerry, and Mayo, are comparatively peaceful, the counties of Limerick, Tipperary, and Clare, inhabited by a race who, though you call them Celts, are no more Celts than Hindoos, are amongst the most lawless in Ireland. You will reply, that they enjoy too small a tincture of your English blood, and that a little medicine does but stir up the evil: but I have already shown you that in many parts of England also the Celtic element may in time predominate. See the matter as it is (for an Englishman without moral courage is nothing), and sum up your account. You assert, after an acquaintance of six centuries with us, that the Irish character is a compound of all that is hateful and all that is base. What result but one can follow from the “incorporation” of this pernicious race with your pure breed? If you have any vices, is it not probable that the vices of the two countries will blend into no quasi union, as vices have always a tendency to conspire? Is it not absolutely certain that your nobler qualities would become gradually dissipated in our follies?

“*Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?*”

In fine, Sir, having first lost a large proportion of your historical remembrances, which could not be enjoyed in common by each section of this strange composite, and, after these, all your peculiar virtues, you would find betimes that those beggarly Irishmen had not only beguiled you of your ten millions and indeed of all your property, but, with no gentle magic, actually "robbed you of yourself." You would miss the great thoughts that now stimulate your industry, and the bodings which now direct your anger: reduced to plough with an ox and an ass, your agriculture would languish, or your fields turn up spontaneous potato crops: bewitched through Irish wrong-headedness, your costliest fabrics would be woven awry; your enemy would have got into your own shoes while they were still on your feet; and you would have to beat yourself instead of your neighbours, as Sancho Panza lashed the trees instead of himself: English obstinacy, superinduced upon Irish giddiness, would make all your errors irrevocable; nay, I doubt whether English resolution, trepanned into Irish recollections, would not render martial law permanently necessary: and, to make an end of this hideous anticipation, I can see no other prospect than that going on yearly from bad to worse, frantic dispositions producing foolish institutions, and these reacting upon the former, all business should cease, the sound of the hammer should be heard no more



in your populous cities, but in its place a Babel of garrulity and blows, no man rightly understanding his brother or himself; until, within a century and a half, or at most two centuries, you should have been sophisticated into a generation of very baboons; whereof what final issue can be expected but that the land should be conquered by the French?

I can fancy, Sir, that I hear a voice which expresses a surly, certainly a puzzled, discontent at this very "un-English" doctrine. "It is hard," you say, "that, do what we may, we are equally doomed to suffer. If we take our part of this Irish load, we suffer at once to that extent: if we let Ireland alone, by this means, also, we are to suffer indirectly and later, but to a much greater and indefinite extent. Here is some attempt to cheat us. Moreover, the Irish are losing even their speciousness. For hours John Bull sat very far back in his chair, with his hands half in his pockets and half out, deliberating whether he would give or not, and how much. He was talked round. People said that every one expected him to give; and that all the world would be surprised if he did not give when every one was giving. Once assured that the charity is a fit one, John scorns to give a paltry sum; so he gave ten millions: but he swore a little, because he suspected he was made a fool of, and he vowed he would give no more. Now he is to be told that he



must do more, and do it for his own sake ; that the best he can do will only remove part of the mischief which he has done ; and that, when he has done all, he is not an indulgent master, but an unprofitable servant." Who told you, Sir, that all these things had happened to our good friend, John Bull? I thought that he had given very willingly ; and I should be very sorry if any disgrace or trouble incurred by you were to fall on him. Again, I hear another and shriller voice, which says, " Please, Sir, to name your demand. There is nothing that makes one so nervous as not to see one's way. You say you do not want a great money gift, and you seem to resent some part of what we last bestowed on you ; but call it gift, loan, good legislation, repentance, restitution, or by any fine name you can invent, only tell us what the sum total amounts to. Is it any certain quantity?" Yes, it is a certain quantity ; but both you and I must remain quite uncertain what it is until we have worked out the equation. You will then see at the right-hand side of the line of figures what X, Y, Z, represent. At present all I can say is, that the certain but unknown quantity amounts exactly to whatever is necessary to make Ireland a prosperous kingdom, minus what she may herself contribute without a violation of possibility or of proportion.

Why should I, Sir, flatter England by magnifying her virtues, with which she is already acquainted, or

by concealing from her the difficulties that beset her path, or by kindling an agreeable, or by calming a painful indignation? I have heard the cry of a hungry people; and therefore all the fury of an incensed nation must be to me a trivial sound. Be the mob clad in rough jerkin or broad cloth, what more can the storm that masters it effect than to blow a certain quantity of water into a certain quantity of foam. If an Englishman, on other occasions upright and wise, is seduced into an ignorant impatience, the question with him must be, not how angry he is, but whether his anger be just; not how ignorant he is, but whether knowledge can or cannot be gained. With an Englishman of another order, the question must be, not how great his anger and ignorance are, but whether he can afford to keep such expensive infirmities; since the recent English invective so fatally impedes the passing of remedial measures for Ireland, that every single foolish word that is spoken in public must cost the parent country between sixpence and ten shillings, according to the influence of the speaker. We are much concerned that you should be annoyed, but we cannot help you. If England must of old snatch a mess from Pope Adrian's plate, and a bone has stuck in her throat, is that our fault? On the contrary, we have our own grievance in this matter; and it would be our interest to help you if we could. We are far from being comfortably

lodged. If, by the laws of nature, an over-crowded population finds a vent, as hot air does, are we answerable? If an increased competition, produced by an influx of Irish labourers, should reduce the rate of wages in England, and not reduce her poor rate, is that our fault? Certainly not. The laws of political economy are proof against all the eloquence and anger in the world. They have held their ground against Irish lawlessness, and do you think they will flee before the face of English law? If you had known that a union was to take place binding together the living and the dead, I suppose you would not, in old times, have committed the justifiable homicide. What is that to us? It is in the nature of things, that those who learn by experience exclusively should learn too late. Successful and ensnared by your success, you would now retreat from the land you have laid waste; but she conquers you by her bareness, and the winter of her discontent makes a mock of your summer triumphs. Her gods are "gods of the hill country:" barbaric gods, that laugh at you from granite promontories, girt with cloud, whereupon golden harvest never waned. There is much in our constitution of things which justly displeases you; but we might ask, "Are we then on a bed of roses?" Be not incensed with your handywork; nor think that even the omnipotence of Parliament can recall the past. The stone, once flung, will descend in a parabolic curve, whatever predilection

you may have for an ellipse. An Englishman is an honest man, even in adversity. Would you annul all connection between the past and present, between offence and retribution? Would you sit at the feast of unreason, and shirk the bill? Would you break lamps, and refuse to pay half-a-crown as a fine? What, Sir, must you alone drink port, and your neighbour alone have the gout? It is very condescending of you to nail up our wild crab trees in your garden, but I cannot see why both sides of your wall must be the south side. You had your season of good things. Being angry now, you ask us, vehemently, whether we are or are not poor, lawless, slothful, procrastinating, and much more. I have answered by referring to a certain old almanack, of which every second letter is red letter: I inferred that, to a greater or lesser degree, we must needs be guilty of those faults, unless we were faultless. Have you already forgotten my brief epitome of the past? You would then have forgotten it yet sooner, if I had taken more care that it should give you no offence. History has been called, "Philosophy teaching by example." If you think this method of instruction too tedious, let me try the catechetical instead.

You who object to our disloyalty, what do you mean by the word? If to revere our present institutions be a righteous loyalty, to how many of our institutions in time past can you point—

“ Which it were not, by consequence converse,  
A treason against nature to uphold ?” \*

Loyalty means a reverence for law impersonated in rulers who may lawfully be loved. Why would you sophisticate that venerable principle into a servile affection for a perpetual sentence embodied in an unseen executioner? You who object to our poverty, why did you allow to the great mass of this people no other means of acquiring wealth than those of the gambler, the adventurer, and the miser? Why did you render it more natural for a poor man to grope for gold among ruins, than to win a hardy support by spreading his canvas to the winds? Did you think that our mother-wit was sufficient to squeeze oil out of pebbles? Habitudes, not expedients, enrich; and trade commits herself neither to a timid caution nor to an impulsive enterprise, but to courage and to a prudence which looks with its own simplicity to average results, the increase of equal laws. You who attribute to the Irish peasant a want of truth, why did you render it impossible for the Irish peasant to answer plainly a simple question, “Where does your priest live?” But these faults are more than of your teaching;—they are your own. What can be more lawless than to leave a whole nation without laws? What policy ever called im-

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\* “ Philip van Artevelde.”



perial was more beggarly than to make the subjects of your empire beggars? What could be more deceitful than to demand a nation's submission, and not in return to impart to it safety? You who accuse us of bullying, why did you accord to our agitation what you withheld from our patience and denied to your own reason? You who accuse us of sloth, what could be more slothful than to leave your vast national absentee estate to the tender mercies of the wicked and to the wisdom of the weak? You who accuse us of procrastinating, why did you, in later times, content yourselves with endless debating, instead of doing what was to be done? Year after year the same great question, Catholic Emancipation, was brought before you, an annual farce. Year after year the sages on one side of the House rose up, and wove the same flimsy tissue of transparent fallacies, with the same command of countenance and the same success. Year after year honourable gentlemen on the opposite side stood up, and by a sudden transformation made the same arguments assume the most opposite shape. "They must not be citizens, because they were always rebels." "Lest they should be always rebels they must be made citizens." Then you changed hands, and the series of transformations recommenced. What could Ireland gain from this grave game of political cat's cradle? You were not so slow in your conquest of India. In the enactment of remedial measures you were slower still.

You who have a distaste to our barbarous levity under ordinary afflictions, why do you occasionally indulge in uncivil merriment at our extraordinary trials? You who chide us for being peevishly discontented with you, are not you greatly discontented with yourself? You who wonder at our bad agriculture, why did you think it sufficient to sow the dragon's teeth? You now advise our farmers to cultivate green crops: they are much obliged, and will do so if they can find time, space, and money: otherwise not. You think us presumptuous; how happens it that an English gentleman is filled with wrath when he hears the amount of an Irish rental, without having ever heard of the difference between an Irish and an English acre? Why are you shocked at the price paid for con-acre without inquiring whether the land thus let out (and often let by compulsion) is manured land or unmanured, and whether the rent is paid in sterling coin or spurious labour? I must bring to an end this tedious historical catechism. Have you patience for one question more? You who turn in disgust from Irish poverty, slovenliness, and filth, why did you collect and why do you retain the whole fermenting mass of Irish pauperism, which would be your wealth if those paupers were spread over your colonies, a heap that threatens plague at the gate of your palace? A countryman of yours, Sir, remarkable for his wit as well as his knowledge, but who never uses the former but for the delight, nor

the latter but for the benefit of mankind, remarked when he first saw the hills of this country, often as blue as distant mountains, that “the very air of Ireland had caught the trick of exaggeration.” Surely, Sir, some of your less amiable fellow-countrymen, when enlarging on Irish vices, are themselves guilty of an exaggeration, which cannot be accounted discreet, considering how many of those vices constitute our only property in common. Am I beguiled by partiality, or can you have prejudices?

It may, perhaps, be asked, whether I have not in turn brought exaggerated charges against England. I have taken some pains not so far to injure a strong cause. Against individuals, even in past times, considered with reference to their own motives, I say nothing; for every age has its own temptations, and hard deeds might once have pleaded the same palliation, on the ground of inconsiderateness, as may still be pleaded for hard words. At that time also, as at present, the familiar course could hardly have been repulsive to a virtue that was not vigilant. A plain statement of the wrongs inflicted on Ireland must appear exaggerated, because the natural though hasty inference from it would be, that England must ever have been that wicked and base nation which thousands of Englishmen represent Ireland to be now. No inference could be more unsound. I believe England to have been and to be on the whole the justest, the wisest, and the strongest nation in

the world: I believe also that the miserable state of Ireland proceeds mainly from her injustice, folly, and weakness. Man is an inconsistent being. Justice does not always take time to be just; wisdom sometimes turns the dark side of her lantern toward those she does not love; and strength becomes weakness when divorced from these its accustomed allies. If we have not had the benefit even of England's virtues, although that circumstance may perhaps be no additional fault on her part, yet we may be permitted to count it among the number of our misfortunes.

You will perhaps ask, "If good legislation is really necessary for Ireland, upon what principles are we to legislate?—in short, what is to be done?" As to principles, that is a large and hardly a modest demand. Principles are not to be had every day, though indeed I do not know how you can quite dispense with them. Without entering upon this subject at present, I may observe that there are several principles which you would do well to eschew. One somewhat specious but unsound principle is put forward, rhetorically rather than philosophically, by those who insist on your giving us exactly the same laws in Ireland as suit you in England. The author of the "*Esprit des Lois*" lays it down as a fundamental position that laws are good relatively and not absolutely. There seems to be truth in this position. A nation forms



its institutions, as a fish forms its shell, by a sort of slow exudation from within, which gradually hardens to an external deposit, and must therefore be fitted to the shape of that which it invests and protects. The Irish are a race more dissimilar from the English than from most other European races, and they have reached a very different period of social progress; it may therefore well be inferred, that the same institutions will not always work in the same manner amongst both. It will require some tact, as well as a comprehensive philosophy, to give Ireland what she needs, which is, not the same laws as England possesses, but equal justice and analogous laws. Another principle, more convenient at the moment than salutary on the whole, is that of centralization. In a country the energies of which have become amply developed, centralization is necessary in order to direct and harmonize the divergent activities of many minds. In Ireland it was, you will remember, the policy of England for centuries to suppress all native energies; and, even after the period of the penal laws, to fill the various administrative offices with strangers; in other words to render torpid those social activities which in their excess need the restriction and counterbalance of a central authority. The more you can introduce of local administration in conjunction with central legislation, the more you can reconcile of municipal independence with political unity, the



more you will communicate to this country (for such instruction is only gained by practice) that political education without which we could make no more use of your laws, transferred to us in their details, than you could of our traditions. It is not in London that the mass of our people can acquire an initiation into public business or the habitual sense of public duty.

Another principle from which I would fain dissuade you is that of setting class against class, according to the adage, "Divide et impera." This was your policy when you promoted the intestine wars of Ireland; this was your policy when you planted your undertakers, and bade them rule over the serfs; this was your policy when you governed by "Protestant Ascendancy," and more recently when you fostered the Orange party; this, if your recent course has had any thing of a purpose, must have entered into your views in your late endeavours to write down the Irish landlords as the oppressors of the people. I would advise you at the least to confine your exertions on this subject to newspaper paragraphs. If you persist in stigmatizing Irish proprietors as a race of tyrants and exterminators, the result may be no worse than the addition of a certain per-centage to the number of murders which would otherwise have taken place. If the Legislature takes the matter into its own hands, the evil will be complex and lasting. At

the time of the Revolution you surrendered the poor a prey to the rich, the former class being then weak. Power having since then in some measure shifted its position, and democratic influences having made progress here as elsewhere, the England of your affections has shown a disposition, without any infidelity to past principles, to modify their application, and pay court to the strong, by confiscating, for the perpetuation of pauperism rather than the support of paupers, the property of that class which it had used up. This will not answer. As the two countries have but one real interest, so the different classes in Ireland can have but one interest,—a fact which a common ruin would teach them with a convincing force. The agitation which has hitherto existed has included elements that repelled the sympathies of the higher orders; but if, after contracting a fraudulent engagement that you would feed the majority on the minority, you were reduced in the end to leave the masses hungry, I can foresee a remote possibility that anger, which by its heat has a great power to fuse, or despair, whereof the frost sometimes knits together dissimilar substances, should cement a union between all classes in Ireland, most inauspicious to another Union. At best, after you had thrown the landlords to your pursuers, the pack would come up with you again, and come up with appetites sharpened by having tasted blood. I am,

therefore, wholly against the principle of propitiating one class by the sacrifice of another.

Having thus recorded a protest against a few of the principles heretofore in use, I will prosecute that subject no further at present (recommending it, however, to your best attention), because even a single principle would require a complete essay for its exposition and vindication. And I will now pass on to what may perhaps meet a readier acceptance from you, namely, practical measures. Of these I shall omit all which, being organic or constitutional, might invite a prolonged discussion. I will not here express any opinion on such questions as the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church, the revision of the Registry, an increase to the numbers of the Irish representatives, the assembling of the Imperial Parliament in Dublin, instead of London, from time to time, &c. &c. I will refer only to such as are directly remedial in their character. I do not offer these suggestions as new discoveries of my own; were they mine only, they would deserve but little attention; and not much did they rest on any single or exclusive authority. But be they old or be they new, and come they with credentials or without, it will be an unprecedented proof of originality on your part, should you not only approve of good measures, but act on them before the time is gone by. On this condition only I offer them to

your consideration. A few years hence they would be bad measures. Art, it is true, is long, but life is short—especially in Ireland.

I. The first thing that I would recommend to you is to maintain at any cost the peace of the country, unless you choose to abolish all law impartially, and thus restore to the inoffensive that natural right of self-defence which men surrender when the State guarantees their protection. A government, Sir, though functions not its own are sometimes thrust upon it, ought to govern. Your governments, I admit, have an excuse for their ineptitude in this respect; for, in the first place, England has less acquired that art than any other nation, her own people exercising so much self-government that they need little from without, and having so little indolence that they would hardly tolerate a strong control; and in the second place the Irish are a rather ungovernable people, and will remain such as long as their present misery remains. The nation, however, will not rest till it finds some one who can govern it. The worst political evil resulting from our disturbed state is not the loss of life; although the staid habits of improvement cannot coexist with that recklessness which constant danger engenders, and the indecent levity with which men speak of crimes that occur daily cannot but be in itself prejudicial to morals. No person not living in



the country can guess the thousand modes in which insecurity affects the prosperity of the country. Agricultural improvements must be effected by the joint efforts of landlord, tenant, and labourer ; if then the landlord is the slave of cottiers squatting on his land, and may not dispose of a farm as he will ; if the farmer must grow such crops as the labourer pleases, and fatten no calf because the poor want milk ; and if the labourer who works better than his fellows has a chance of being beaten for his pains (the work which should be done by a few being thus extended to the many competitors), such improvements will not be made. If guardians are bullied, the relief system is paralyzed ; if charity be extorted, it is but a " black mail " which provokes fresh extortions ; if popularity be necessary for safety, few will be honest ; if men are not respected by their neighbours, they cease to respect themselves ; if farmers may not look for their profits to those laws which work in peace, they must take the chances of war ; and while one man sows his whole field with potatoes, on the impulse of " double or quits," another hides his money in the thatch, because of all banks to which he could commit it, that which offers the highest rate of interest, the land, is most liable to stop payment. Not only men's actions, but their words, their looks, and their thoughts, are depraved from their natural bent by habitual insecurity. Responsibility, the gravitating principle of society, becomes the one thing



hated. It were an endless labour to point out the modes by which insecurity, in a community hampered but not restrained by law, and bondage under the name of freedom, tangle the skein of society, and lock the wheels of progress. The spontaneous movements of society will not take place where convulsion reigns. Where each man by himself is nothing and not his own; where multitudes, composed of men each of whom in his hovel is a model of patient suffering, catch fire from each other's breath, and exult in the intoxication of a momentary might, there it matters little what laws nominally prevail. When punishment is not practically their sanction, laws are lamentably blunted by non-natural interpretations; and the legislator who has tied down the executive arm has legislated for Babel.

Let me make a very few specific suggestions here. They are not, of course, intended to apply where an extraordinary amount of disturbance exists: in such cases stronger measures would be more merciful, and esteemed such by all but the most pedantic of the constitution's verbal critics. First, whenever a murder has been committed, a fine should be levied immediately on the district, and paid to the family of the murdered man; half the sum to be contributed, if the murderer is discovered and proved to belong to a distant parish, by the district in which he has resided. Secondly, let disturbed districts be proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant, either on his own responsibility, or

on sufficient representations made by its assembled magistrates; and in such proclaimed districts let the possession of arms be prohibited except under conditions to be prescribed by law, with which those already holding arms should be required to conform. Arms that must be concealed are not easily kept in repair. Thirdly, whenever a poor man assailed has made an efficient defence, and done the state a service, the state should reward him. I would observe, with reference to my first suggestion, that a fine, called by the name of a fine, would be far more effectual than the more tortuous policy of supporting by a tax on the district the additional police force rendered necessary for its protection. The State is bound to protect its peaceable subjects; and men whose property is endangered may not be rich enough to pay for its defence. This tax would also be very considerable; and as it would be foreseen and calculated on, it would be simply so much deducted from the rate or from the rent; in other words, the charge would fall upon those whom no one suspects of connivance in agrarian outrage. You must remember that, when a country is once impoverished, the threat of large pecuniary loss becomes a "*brutum fulmen*," an argument in itself against pauperising a country. The fine, however, would be felt as a punishment if imposed at once on the commission of an offence, and being a sudden as well as a small demand, it would be paid. The more you reduce these mat-

ters to a calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence, the more you will strike at the root of the evil, and bring the Irish out of the region of chance and into that of probabilities. Each person, at present, thinks he has a fair chance of not being the man shot, and the discovery of the offenders being every one's business is no one's business; but if each were sure of having to pay his seven and sixpence or pound sterling, that certainty would be a sore hindrance to the present system of connivance, which is based partly on intimidation and partly on sympathy. As for my third suggestion, what mode can there be of dealing with assassins (especially where it is hard to procure evidence) so natural, significant and cheap as to shoot them in the act? Promptitude and certainty are what give a salutary efficiency to punishment. If you have any thing to say on the score of time for repentance, pray consider whether there is any better time for repentance than about five minutes before the commission of the crime; and whether a speedy consummation of justice would not be a seasonable aid to such reflection as might indefinitely adjourn the commission of many an offence. On the subject of security, I will only add that the law never can be loved till it is respected, and never will be respected until it is rendered efficient as well as just. Shun all fine phrases, and attempt no petty saving in this matter. Send down special commissions at once, and in any

number, wherever they can expedite justice. Let the law be made supreme. Till it reigns, you seek in vain that spot on which improvement, whether industrial, social, or political, can plant the fulcrum of her lever.

II. Emigration demands the second place in the order of remedial measures ; the second in the order of time, the first in that of importance. Whatever arguments may be urged in favour of the former are equally applicable to my present suggestion ; for over-population is the chief cause of lawlessness, and as lawlessness prevents the investment of that capital which might employ the super-abundant labour, there can be no remedy for an ever-increasing evil except death by famine, or emigration. To this paramount consideration I will add three or four others not unimportant. Without a large measure of emigration you render it physically and morally impossible for your new Poor Law to work beneficially, or long to work at all. That crop upon which nearly our whole population was fed, and which, underlying our entire social system, alone afforded subsistence to one-fourth of our numbers—that crop, which to the labourer was food and to the farmer food and money, having failed, we are reduced to nearly the same condition as if one-fourth had been suddenly added to our numbers. If in England your population were suddenly increased by one quarter ; or if, which



amounts to the same thing, your manufactures were in a moment to break down ; if, for instance, your supplies of cotton were wholly to cease, like our potatoes, you would neither be able to provide employment for those multitudes whom your cotton-mills had rejected, nor to support them unemployed on the rates, though backed by your enormous unrated property, a support of which little is known in Ireland. As for your common cry that "Irish property must support Irish poverty," you will find, on examination, that under average circumstances it is a truism, and that, as applied to the existing state of things, it cannot embody the truth, because it does not contain a meaning. Until the potato failure, Irish property did support Irish poverty. From what source do you suppose our beggars derived their subsistence ? From English or from Irish land ? A professed poor law is but a more scientific mode of distributing the burden. Irish property supported, however, as much poverty as it could bear ; of which the proof is, that all classes in Ireland were poor of their kind. The highest class were, of course, ill-paid functionaries, as the fund on which they depended was small, and had many prior claimants ; the tenants were farmers without capital ; the labourers for half the year had no hire ; and the beggars were the poorest beggars in the world. Perhaps with none of these classes, certainly with none but the last, can British society



dispense : and remember that it is good economy to allow to each, until absolutely cashiered, the wages which nature assigns to it, and without which it cannot keep its tools in order and do its work. When the gunwale touches the water, Sir, I would not advise you to press the boat down even a quarter of an inch lower. Ask yourself what you mean by property. How comes it that Australia, which is larger than Ireland, could not at once support the inhabitants of Rutland? Property is not land, but the produce of labour expended on land, or on aught else ; and it “ supports poverty ” chiefly by paying wages to poor people. A proportion must, therefore, exist between the number of people whom land can support, and the number whom it can profitably employ. The balance was seriously inclining against us even before the potato failure ; and if the existing labour fund, instead of being invested in reproductive labour, should be applied for the most part to unproductive labour, such as the distribution of Indian meal, no omnipotence of Parliament will prevail upon a property every day waning, to support a poverty every day waxing. Property supports the poor through that labour which produces property : if you would make it support any large number in a mode prejudicial to labour, you may indeed feed the poor for one year on the fruit hanging from the bough, but you have cut down the tree.

Another motive for the encouragement of emigration is to be found in the fact that you are a

manufacturing people, and that, while your other customers buy your manufactures at the rate of ten shillings or a pound, your own colonists consume at the rate of £5 or £10 a head annually. Remember, also, that you have to guard not only against the ordinary competition of foreign nations, but also against the caprices of trade. Take an instance. The discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope left the commercial cities of Italy like stranded ships, and rolled a tide of prosperity up every English river. If some mechanical change, such as a canal cut through the Isthmus of Suez, should readjust the balance (and to predict of the future is as hard as it is dangerous to disregard it); or if, when railroads become a cheap means of conveyance, and when all the cities of Europe are connected by iron rivers with double tides that run in opposite directions, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, your dominion of the waters should avail you less than at present for the purposes of European commerce; under such circumstances your markets would be steadier as well as larger, in proportion as you had multiplied your colonies. Of your existing trade, more than a fourth is carried on with your own colonies and the United States, once your colonies. The declared value of British and Irish produce and manufacture exported in 1846 to the colonies was £8,813,340, that of the exports to the United States £6,830,460.

The total declared value of British exports was £57,786,876. If these countries had never been peopled, what proportion of your present commercial and manufacturing population could find employment, or indeed could exist? The practical power of a nation, that political momentum, as it may be called, which is the joint result of its physical energies and its capital, depends in no small degree on the pressure of a population, though not crowded, yet large in proportion to the territory it occupies. With a smaller trade and a smaller population, could England have proved equal to her great trials during the early part of this century? In founding new colonies you will form new allies as well as markets for your goods; and Ireland, no longer pauperised, will be the greatest of them all.

The lamentable sufferings endured by emigrants this year, notwithstanding the activity and zeal of your Emigration Commissioners and Colonial Agents, who made the best use of the small resources at their command, sufficiently prove the necessity of a State superintendence of emigration on a large and commanding scale. Emigrants left to their own resources have now only to choose between fever and possible famine abroad, or pestilence and certain starvation at home. There is, however, a moral motive in favour of colonization, which, with a true statesman, would weigh yet more. Of all the evils resulting from overpopulation, the worst by far is the moral evil which

it engenders. This requires a speedy as well as effectual remedy. In proportion as Irish society becomes exasperated and demoralised, Irish emigrants will cease to be, what they now are, amongst the best in the world. Is it not better, Sir, that these should be the harbingers of your civilization than the pauperised and anti-English fugitives from a famine, the indirect result of that past legislation which tempted and permitted a whole people to depend upon one crop?

It is said, "These are things that should be left to themselves." It may be that the "laissez faire" principle works well in mature society; but colonies are children; and it does not follow that, if you leave your children to go their own way, that way will prove the best for themselves or for you. Hitherto the State has contributed to her colonies little except her convicts, a species of guano manure which has helped to force up a rapid crop of industrial improvements; it remains to be seen whether this method of breeding great nations by sending out your worst characters to those regions in which laws are weakest, religion crudest, and opinion least formed, is to create a society as edifying morally as it may be (for a time) physically prosperous, and as worthy of perpetuating the lineaments of England as it is certain to transmit her name. In your colonial as in your Irish policy you have sins of commission, and yet



more of omission, to repent and to repair. Where nations, and not companies, are to be bred, the complete seed of society must be sown. Amongst the earlier nations of the world, and under far less favourable circumstances, thus much was effected. The outward aspect of the paternal land alone was changed; emigrants, representing the various classes of the country they had left, went forth together, and taking with them its religion, its laws, its arts, and its manners, continued associated in civil polity, and created new States which re-embodied the image of the parent city and transmitted its greatness. In mere material advance, the progress of recent English colonies has, perhaps, been the most rapid ever known; but this in itself is a doubtful gain. Let the State look to it: rejoice in your colonists, not your convicts: rejoice in them as they are good men and good citizens, not as they are multitudinous only and busy; and if England cannot increase like the nations of old, by national propagation, do not make it your boast that she has vivified more vermin than the less pampered nations of Europe. Difficulties there are; but you are summoned to overcome them; and the necessity must find a man who will find the means.

Surely, Sir, it is an *à priori* argument in favour of emigration, that in large districts in Ireland there exists a starving population of two persons to an acre, and that in New Brunswick there are 11,000,000 of acres nearly uninhabited in the hands



of the Crown. Surely it is to be deprecated that in Ireland a million of labourers should pine for work, and in Australia a million of sheep should be boiled down into tallow for want of shepherds. I know where this argument stops; but I decline to believe that, because there is a limit to its application, it is therefore without a great and guiding significance. This is not the place to propound a complete scheme of colonization; yet I will say that, the more I have reflected on the subject, the more has it seemed to me practicable for the State, if she will not bow away her responsibilities like a frightened Irish poor law guardian, at once to elevate the character of emigration and to extend it to the measure of large but not unreasonable expectations. I will mention some suggestions, without comment.

First. To receive a larger than the usual number of emigrants, it is absolutely necessary that the demand for labour in the American colonies should be increased. Might not public works be undertaken for this purpose, promoted at once by the empire and by the colony? I can imagine no investment more likely to be useful. Besides the reproductive nature of the works to be undertaken (without which the progress of a colony may be delayed until some formidable rival has grown up and made its neighbourhood precarious), the home country would thus be enabled to enrich those paupers whom previously it could not maintain; whose passage-money is hardly

more than one year's interest of what is required for their support at home ; whose turbulence is a heavier tax than their food ; and whose gradual degradation is a greater evil than their sufferings.

Secondly. Would it not be possible to plant the germs of new colonial establishments, like those which within the last ten years have sprung up on the southern coast of Australia ? It is a common, but unfair answer to this question, to reply that such a plantation cannot be effected at a cost less than £20 a head, and therefore that our demand amounts to one of £20,000,000 or £30,000,000 sterling. My suggestion relates only to the germs of colonies which in a short time would be able, if their positions were well chosen, to import thousands of immigrants annually by the proceeds of their land sales, and probably to maintain themselves by their exports. The colonies of South Australia and Port Phillip at present contain about 50,000 inhabitants, a very small proportion of which came from Sydney and Van Diemen's Land. To have sent over that number of colonists at the expense of the State would have cost (if you count them at £20 per head) the sum of £1,000,000. What has the State actually expended on these colonies ? On the latter, I believe, little or nothing ; on the former, about one-fourth of the sum I have named ; and that only on account of accidental difficulties, the result of over-speculation. In the meantime they will for many a year import thou-

sands of labourers who would otherwise be starving at home.

Thirdly. Might not private capital and enterprise be made available through the instrumentality of companies, not by committing to their short-sighted policy the destinies of infant nations, but by intrusting to their energy distinct functions of detail, such as the transmission of emigrants, the sale of particular tracts, and the undertaking of specific public works?

Fourthly. Colonial labour markets being thus extended, might not proprietors be empowered to expend some portion of the money borrowed by them from the State for improvements at present often rendered impossible by local disturbance, in paying the passage money of a portion of their poor, who hunger and thirst after emigration? It is at best but a sad spectacle to behold a race profoundly attached to their country, imploring leave to bid adieu for ever to a mother who will not support them with her milk, and who summons them too imperatively to her rest. Those who have their true interests at heart will scruple to retain them, or attract them in larger multitudes, by the delusion of an employment that must soon be over; but surely, if the bond of country is to be torn asunder, there ought to be the least possible disruption of other ties; and comforts as well as necessaries ought to be provided for them by those who are conferring the last of many gifts, though the

most welcome. Moreover, part of the money thus lent will be recovered by the proprietors from the emigrants after they have become prosperous (I speak of this from knowledge and experience); and the State will thus have succeeded in a desirable but difficult matter, that of making the emigrants contribute to the fund expended on their own passage.

Fifthly. Might not many improvements be made as to details of colonial management, the aggregate of which would amount to much; such as a better system than the State has yet provided for the distribution of newly arrived labourers, who may starve in the streets of Sydney while hundreds of farmers would compete for them in the interior of the country? Might not a portion of the money, occasionally required by the colony for the importation of labourers, be safely advanced on the credit of the colonial lands? To prevent the possibility of the labour market becoming accidentally overstocked by an unforeseen immigration, might not the Government undertake some small public works susceptible of discontinuance and resumption at will, to provide a temporary employment? Are there not means, such as the sale of land with reserved lots, and a tax upon wild lands, &c., which would increase the eventual value of colonial property? Whoever reads the evidence given before the recent Emigration Committee of the House of Lords will be convinced that, if but a few of the suggestions there made by



persons who have acquired a long experience in the colonies, and have a deep stake in their fortunes, should prove well founded, very much might be done to promote colonization by a better management of details.

Sixthly. It will be asked, How are the necessary funds to be procured? I ask in return, Which are the parties to be benefited? The State gains because she is thus relieved from the burthen that at present embarrasses all her movements—Ireland is her “great difficulty;” and overpopulation is the great difficulty of Ireland. She gains, in the second place, because she provides a market for the future industry of her children. Proprietors gain, because, having room to move, the faculties nominally theirs, become theirs in reality. The colonies gain, because their resources are unlocked. The emigrants gain, because, when labour could not possibly come to them, they have been enabled to go to the labour. Let then the fund necessary be contributed by those four parties who share in the profit; and let each party, as far as possible, transact the details included within its proper sphere. Useless works will not be undertaken if the colonies have a due voice in the selection of them, nor unfit emigrants be sent out if they have agents at home sufficiently numerous to look after their interests: the money spent upon passages will not be squandered, if proprietors who are to repay it



are permitted to direct its application; nor will the enterprise of individual emigrants be repressed if they are assisted by the public only in proportion as they help themselves.

These suggestions are all founded upon one obvious principle, which I hope is not to be despised merely because every peasant who has to carry a load understands it. It is this; that the weight, which locally and at the moment presses with an intolerable force, should be evenly distributed and dispersed over a larger space and time. The empire should assist a member of the empire, and the future should make an advance to aid the present, that what might otherwise become a common pauperism may be changed into a common and permanent wealth.

The first measure for Ireland passed by the Imperial Parliament was Martial Law—a sad necessity: let not a great remedial measure, part of the foundation of Irish prosperity, be the last introduced into that assembly, lest it should be too late. If you cannot assist us, at least do not mock us by stating in opposition, I will not say to common sense, but certainly to the evidence of our senses, that we require no assistance. Do not tell us of the industrial resources of our country: we are acquainted with these as well as you can be; and therefore we know why they are not ours. They exist in Ireland as the strength of the man exists latently in the child: if you wish the child to grow

to man's estate, do not heap upon him the burden of a man. Above all, do not imagine that he can support it, if it is flung upon him suddenly and from a height.

III. The third suggestion which I shall make, is on the necessity of instituting in Ireland a large system of agricultural education. If such assistance is useful elsewhere, is it not absolutely necessary where a sudden dispensation has rendered the established method of agriculture as obsolete as the canon law, and made a system altogether different, and nearly unknown, indispensable? Without an improved agriculture, emigration, though it will for the present diminish pauperism, will not necessarily increase the relative productiveness of the soil; for the cultivation of the land may recede in proportion as the numbers it has to sustain are diminished; in which case, Ireland might again be visited by those famines from which she was not exempt before she numbered 2,000,000 of souls. It is also to be remembered that the diminution of numbers is a thing necessary only for a short time, in order to give her that peace without which her resources cannot be developed. Let those persons who imagine that Ireland is not over-peopled, because her ideal resources might sustain a larger number, ask themselves whether the fact that England may hereafter support a population larger by one-fourth than that which she now includes, proves that she would be

able to maintain that additional number at present. Long before she was populous Ireland was over-peopled, because she was not allowed to make her resources available in the same proportion as her numbers increased. Give her but the key of her casket (you snatched it from her long since, and now forget where you have hidden it), and in twenty years hence she may support 2,000,000 of free and contented children, beyond the number of outcasts that now rot above the mines of her hidden treasures. Surely, if you have the smallest faculty either legislative or administrative, it would not over-task it were you to establish throughout Ireland, at no wide intervals, agricultural schools, with model farms, to which the farmers could send their sons. In every national school a manual of agriculture ought to form part of the course. If to each school you were also to attach a garden farm of five acres, it would not only increase the salary of the master and bind him to the spot, but would also instruct the children in the science of green crops and the art of using their hands, cure many a headache, send them back better pleased to their books, quicken many a smile upon faces foredoomed to tears, and give the sons of a happier age the best possible introduction to their native land.

IV. The fourth practical hint which I would throw out to you is the necessity of amending your

amended Poor Law, if you would give it a chance of permanence. At best it must encounter great obstacles, from the difficulty of finding in the country the machinery necessary to work it. That machinery ought to be tough and seasoned, and you have not extended to this country the practical education of local business which your own has enjoyed for centuries. Besides your numerous subjects for astonishment, there is yet another reserved for you if you suppose that Irish guardians, suddenly summoned to the impossible task of subduing a famine by a Poor Law, will acquit themselves either with the same success or perseverance as English guardians, trained to the task from their youth up, and required only to administer an accustomed relief to an ordinary pauperism. The best assistance which you can give them is that which you found necessary at home—a test of destitution. Increase then the number of our poor houses, which at present cannot afford relief to more than about 100,000 paupers. In England if you had introduced no test, the consequence would have been the gradual ruin of the country; in Ireland there is a chance that the result may be nothing worse than the sudden ruin of the measure. I should regret its failure both because great immediate suffering would be the consequence, no substitute being provided for the relief of the people; and because on the subject of a poor law I agree more nearly with you than with those



whose judgment I hold in more respect. I fear, however, that our conclusions, so far as they concur, have been arrived at on very different principles. I believe that the State morally guarantees at least the lives of her subjects as long as they obey her laws, and are willing to obey the great law of nature—work. Though in the abstract one tendency of poor-law relief may be to discourage industry, I believe that other tendencies are at work also, and that the worst of its tendencies will not necessarily be realized if a sound system of moral education also exists, and if the relief afforded be severe and unalluring. I believe that it is only in savage life that the fear of death is necessary to alarm idleness, and that in a civilized community hope is a more effectual spur to steady exertion than fear. I believe that the poor man may advance on his road with a firmer courage when he feels that his country cares for him; and when, without hearing far behind him the cry of the pursuer, he sees in the distance the goal of an honest ambition. I believe that where applied without necessity, not only the tendency but the effect of a Poor Law must be to enervate and impoverish: but that in a society crowded and pushing forward it shuts out worse corruptions. It is said to supersede private charity. I believe that where a country is greatly over-peopled, the amount of pauperism will be such as either to preclude private charity, or degrade it to



that indiscriminate bounty which curses him that gives and him that takes; but that where the State has under-propped the social edifice, private charity has again its sphere, being left to deal with individual casualties, not with classes and with their chronic condition; and that it may well exert itself in saving a poor and deserving man, not from death by starvation, but from the workhouse. This creed is, however, consistent with the strongest disapprobation of the amended Poor Law for Ireland. From the want of religious and moral education and from long corruptions of detail, the principle of a Poor Law has never yet had a fair trial even in England: in Ireland your late experiment is rash indeed. A clever and apparently sincere writer proclaimed not long since in a newspaper, with no uncommon parade of sound principles misapplied, that now at last Ireland must flourish, because she had the benefit of English law, which did not consist so much in king, lords, and commons, &c., as in the parochial system. I am not sure that the same law would produce the same effect if it were applied to a different purpose, and under different circumstances. But to waive this consideration, we happen, Sir, not to have your parochial system. Instructed Englishmen often wander widely in their conjectures about Ireland, from the habit of reading books without knowing how to transpose and interpret. All things are different in the two countries, and yet in each there is a relative con-

sistency; accordingly, words have an utterly different meaning as applied to each, and you are but deceived by the common nomenclature. You stumble upon a theory, true or false in England, here unmeaning; you buy one in a shop, or you borrow one from a friend, or snatch one from a rival:—having got it, you become its slave, and seek to square every Irish circle by its tyranny, substituting the sensation for the sense of certainty, and ready to stone any one who denies that the red coat of an English soldier is exactly like the sound of an Irish rebel's trumpet. Your parochial system is altogether unlike ours. Our electoral divisions are three times as large as your parishes, and our unions as your unions. This you will say is a question only of degree. The difference between medicine and poison is one of degree. If you think it unimportant, we do not; and therefore, you have no excuse for not exchanging systems with us.

Suppose the case of an electoral division valued at £30,000 per annum, in which there resides a proprietor whose estate is rated at £3,000. Such a proprietor may, if he has money or credit, give considerable employment: yet he will diminish but little the rate on the electoral division at large, and, besides paying wages, he will have to pay a larger rate than he did before, in proportion as his improvements have increased the rated value of his property. Did you not substitute in England a rent-charge in place of tithes, on the ground that

the latter had ceased to be a tribute from the ground, which it may be called in early periods of cultivation, and had become a tax upon industry and a check to the investment of capital? In Turkey all men are invited to trade as vigorously and grow as rich as they can: but the moment any man in particular is known to have realized the fruits of his industry, some Pacha who does not believe in political economy fines him severely lest he should grow avaricious. Why should not Irish industry be "stimulated" (to use a phrase now fashionable) rather after the English than the Turkish manner?

I do not recommend a town-land rating. If it were possible, I should think it inexpedient: but whereas your problem was that great one, how to reconcile individual responsibility with joint action, your solution of it has been to swamp the former and paralyze the latter. You will ask what practical evil results from the size of our unions. The evil is that the business becomes oppressive, the detail unmanageable, and the more tightly we grasp it the more quickly the sand slips through our fingers. The physical obstacles alone are not inconsiderable. The district being large, it is necessary for the guardians to meet often; the distances being great, the best of them often cannot meet, and the business is left to a knot of guardians whose residence is not remote from the workhouse. You may think it a great scandal that a man should scruple to go fifteen or

twenty miles and back again once every week, and yet there may be very humble reasons for this scruple. He may have other business, or he may not have a horse, or he may have an objection to being shot; and an unpopular man whose iniquities have just been commented on by the less scrupulous part of the English press, one of those landlords who are occasionally described by it as “fiends or something worse,” and who, as you assure our inflammable populace, are waiting with impatience to see the people around them starved to death, shot down, or hanged up, merely that the rates may be diminished,—such a person would not be always safe in calculating on Irish field sports not beginning before the first of September.

There is one respect in which our Poor Law differs wisely from yours; I allude to that provision which divides the rate between landlord and tenant. The chance which the law has of working well consists in its tendency to bind these two classes in a league of mutual defence, by the large employment of labour, that labour being encouraged by the landlord’s liberality as well as example, but applied chiefly by the tenant in occupation. Should these two parties possess, even in appearance, an opposite interest, should each imagine that the plank can sustain but one, then neither can possibly do his duty, and each will save what he can to provide for the evil day.



V. The next observation which I shall make is on the expediency of undertaking useful public works in Ireland, such as railways, piers, harbours, and the like. It would be very unreasonable, if because you failed recently in an extempore attempt to execute worthless works through the instrumentality of pauper labourers, you were to shrink from undertaking useful works which could not be executed to better purpose than at a crisis when employment is needed. Upon those works you should employ only able-bodied men, and these only as long as they worked honestly. In the case of public works, as well as private employment, it is well worthy of consideration whether an emigration fund might not be created by giving a preference to young men desirous to emigrate, on condition of a proportion being reserved for that purpose out of their wages.

The reclamation of waste lands might occasionally, and on a small scale, be useful as an example and incitement; but such enterprises ought for the most part to be left in the hands of private individuals, or of societies, such as many a pauperised union might perhaps supply. In the natural course of things, the land first cultivated is that which yields its increase with good will, and meets its master's hand half way; at a later period men are reduced to wring a reluctant harvest from a niggardly soil which will do little more than pay a small interest on the money invested in it.



Every year, however, as new capital seeks an investment, the circle of civilization is pushed further out, and the new accessions of productive land are contemporaneous with a corresponding improvement in agriculture at large. Such is the natural course, and an intervention which disturbs it will hardly bring about beneficial results. If the State steps in, and, taking the matter into its own hands, does in ten years the work of a century, the local improvements made, though they may not even satisfy the needs of an emergency, may yet outstrip the general progress of society, and mar its proportions. Having also no root in themselves, there is also a risk of their not being permanent. Proprietors whose estates have been relieved of a pauper population without their participating in the expense and trouble, will not have learned their lesson; the poor will be deluded by the promise of tracts more extensive than productive; population will again make a bound in advance; and, when the void is filled up, agriculture will have no margin left. The loss of the potato throws also a great additional obstacle in the way of reclaiming wastes. The first crop yielded by the improved land was one of potatoes, and the industrial detachments that waged war on the wilderness thus carried their commissariat with them. This resource being now apparently cut off, it would be necessary for a much longer time than before to supply the new settlers with provision *ab extra*. In addition

to these considerations, I need not remark how much any such officious proceeding would be at variance with a well-known maxim, namely, that the State should not forsake her proper sphere to intrude into the regions of private enterprise. The utmost improvements that are looked for would not provide in the end for more than half a million of souls; and this temporary advantage would have been purchased at the expense of the poor as well as the rich, if, in the removal of obstacles, the State herself had, by a questionable transgression of individual rights, added to the existing insecurity of property, and proportionally discouraged the general investment of capital in labour. Moreover, public money expended upon emigration, railroads, harbours, &c., ought to be laid out so as to produce a proportionate outlay of private money, whereas that which is spent in the reclamation of wastes will be the beginning and the end; unless, as is not improbable, the work should require to be done a second time.

We must not mix up together two subjects so different as the cultivation of waste lands by the State, and the establishment of a class of small proprietors in Ireland; for, if we create a law for two different purposes, it will probably effect neither. A class of small proprietors would confer upon this country very great advantages, not only of an economical, but of a moral and political character. It would, in the first place, add to the

security of property, by widening the basis on which it rests. It would give the poor a deeper stake in the stability of all our institutions. It would break that hard line of demarcation which at present separates classes, and make it no longer coincident with that which distinguishes orders and races. Above all, by extending privileges and with them responsibilities and duties, it would help to stamp upon the minds of the people that great idea of law, without which men may be subjects, but can hardly be citizens likewise. The sale of estates in small portions would therefore be a most desirable thing; but the small estates thus formed ought to be scattered among the large ones. If they were all situated together in vast reclaimed tracts, it would be difficult to make the same institutions work in the aristocratic and democratic sections of the country. I do not see, however, why the State might not contribute by gift or loan to companies for the reclamation of waste lands, as well as to companies formed for other useful purposes, such as the promotion of fisheries, the working of mines.

VI. A law which should give the tenant security for the value of real and permanent improvements would be useful, because it would call forth the capital of that class whose capital has been the most unemployed, and the labour of that class which least understands its value. Such a security perhaps

would best be effected by provisions for the purpose of recording and giving validity to all written agreements between landlord and tenant. This proposition is not to be confounded with that wild scheme of "tenant-right," which would entitle the tenant to remain in possession at the existing rent, or to sell, at his pleasure, not merely his interest in his farm, valued according to the conditions of his lease, but the farm itself considered as a property with a fixed charge upon it. Such a "tenant-right" means neither more nor less than the right of the tenant to the property of the landlord, who would become but an annuitant on his own estate, a public pensioner without more duties or responsibilities than a fundholder. In those parts of the country where there are no manufactures to disguise the evil, the natural effect of such a system would be discovered very soon. The capital which ought to be spent upon the improvement of a farm would be sunk in buying up the interest of the former tenant. With the exception of the farmers already in occupation, that class would therefore not be enriched. The higher orders would be disinherited; and the poor man, not having the money necessary to purchase the interest of a farm, would be excluded by an impassable barrier from the farmer class. One generation of one class would be enriched; and the rights of all other classes, actual and potential, would be sacrificed.

VII. If you wish property to fulfil its duties, enable property to enforce its legal rights. Make the laws against subdivision of land, and those for enforcing covenants, operative in detail. Abolish those technical obstacles which render the enforcement of contracts so expensive, tedious and uncertain, as to be practically impossible. Nothing could more conduce to agricultural improvements than that landlords should build good farm houses ; yet at present, if a landlord undertakes such outlay, he has not the power, without much difficulty and delay, of recovering his own property on the violation of those conditions on which it was let. This is but one out of many hindrances, separately harassing, and ruinous in their aggregate, which leave a proprietor in possession of faculties on condition he does not apply them ; privileges till he uses them ; an occasional power of doing injustice ; and a general dominion over his estate about equal to that which he exercises over the air above it. If you were but to render it obligatory to commit all engagements to paper, you would preclude much litigation and promote combination for lawful purposes.

VIII. Laws which should diminish the preposterous legal expenses connected with the transfer of property, as well as simplify proceedings and abridge litigation, would open out new roads to social improvement and be very popular among all classes except that of lawyers.



IX. A bill was introduced into the last Parliament for the purpose of enabling the proprietors of entailed estates to sell a portion of them under certain conditions, for the purpose of liberating the rest from debt. I would advise you to introduce it again, and carry it through. Besides many lesser benefits, it would not only enable many a man of honour to become an honest man, but would actually change many an estate, now as dangerous as a rock under water, into an honest estate.

X. Grants in aid of municipal funds for the purpose of improving the sanitary condition of large towns, as well as of attaching to them parks and gardens for the health and recreation of the citizens, would be a useful object in itself, and would provide employment where it is much wanted at the present moment. Schools of design, academies, museums, &c., have, I believe, been established in some of the great towns in England, and are almost universally attached to those in the more civilized foreign countries. Perhaps there is no country that stands more in need of such assistance than Ireland, or that would repay it so quickly. But this cannot be counted as among the pressing needs of the time.

XI. Still more useful perhaps would it be if there were established in this country schools for the children of the higher classes, based upon that religious

and patriotic principle on which the early collegiate schools of England were founded, and in connection with that discipline from which they have degenerated. The great moral purposes of such an institution can never be attained in a school which is only set up as a pecuniary speculation. To breed up gentlemen, a school must be in the hands of gentlemen, for whom some generous provision has been made, and whose toils as instructors are mitigated by the humanities of a fellowship in letters, the family tie of chapel, library, and hall, and, above all, by a consciousness of the dignity of their calling. In these establishments the boys should be thoroughly instructed in the classics and in the language and grammar of their country; and every thing around them should be an auxiliary to religion, morals, and manners. Such would seem to have been the original intention of our schools of royal foundation. One such institution has more recently been founded in Ireland by the liberality of individuals: but more such are required; and although the patriotism of Irishmen could direct itself to no worthier task than their establishment, yet the State might well contribute to an undertaking in which she has so deep an interest. Those classes that represent mind and receive reverence, sit at the centre of the social fabric; and the little money necessary for the purpose of making them apt for their office is not money thrown away.

## LETTER IV.

Necessity of acting on a large Principle.—A Cure worth its Cost.—Self-love one Cause of English Dislike to Ireland.—England has her Blemishes as well as Ireland.—Mining Districts.—Manufacturing System.—False Civilization.—Alienation of Classes.—India.—The Colonies.—English Pauperism.—No Popery.—Covetousness.—Verbal Truth compatible with Hollowness and Pretence.—Some Characteristics of the Irish Peasant.—Position of an Irish Proprietor.—Dangers that lie before England.—Their connection with her present Policy towards Ireland.—Both Countries now on their trial.—Safety only in a true Union.—Two Destinies lie before England, each connected with her present Course.—The Bankruptcy of a great National Company.—The possible Greatness of a united Empire founded on Virtue and on Trade.—Practical Hints as to Principles of Irish Policy.—What has been effected by an approach to Union.

SIR,

IN my last letter I mentioned certain pressing inconveniences, with which England cannot fail to be visited, unless she closes with the present opportunity of uniting Ireland to her by the bonds of mutual interest and affection; and I then proceeded to indicate a few remedial measures likely to make that union a blessing to England, instead of a curse, by removing those two great evils, poverty and lawlessness, which will continue to be the scourge of the empire till they are effectually dealt with. On

those remedial measures I touched but slightly; because the object of these letters is one more largely practical than any specific measure: but those who approve the general tenour of my suggestions will easily acquire far more valuable information, as to the necessary details, than I pretend to supply. In this concluding letter my purpose is to urge upon you the danger of rashly throwing remedial measures to one side, and the necessity of rising above petty considerations, and carrying out a consistent, simple and remedial policy in Ireland. Such a course would deal at once with all our evils; and, in the absence of it, you will struggle in vain with the least of them. The actions of men are, however, often determined not by the motives which they assign to others or to themselves, but by an influence of which they are unconscious; at one time an aspiration which scarcely has a name, or a great creative idea, which secretly moulds their immature conceptions; and, at other times, a mere passion or obscure prejudice. Believing that that nobler England, which never before was found on a great occasion unequal to a great exertion, is at present disinclined to adopt a course worthy of her by reason of the strong distaste felt to Ireland by a certain meaner England, the enemy of both countries; and believing that distaste to proceed mainly from inordinate self-love, I shall in this letter point out the not surprising fact,

that England has blemishes as well as Ireland; from which it may be inferred that each country would do better to repent of her own sins than to open her eyes exclusively to those of her neighbour. I shall then drop a few brief hints on Irish character, Irish society, and the principles of a sound policy in Ireland. Finally, I shall describe two different destinies, which probably lie before England; between which she must herself decide, and which will be decided in a large measure by the course now adopted towards Ireland; one of these destinies being a short-lived prosperity succeeded by a shameful fall; the other, the consolidation of a great, a virtuous and a united empire.

To revert at once to what is practical—do you not think, Sir, that your countrymen might spend some of their leisure time as usefully in passing such remedial measures as I have roughly indicated, as in calling Ireland bad names? But some of these measures will cost money. Certainly they will; but remember that the first loss is the least. How often have you said that you scorned to buy an inferior article that must wear out soon and is but a sham—like empirical legislation. I have already proved to you, that lose you must by inaction, though gain you may by timely vigour: why then lose time also by choosing where there is a choice for the will but none for the reason? The medicine will not be the better for being sipped. In a town near this



place there resides an honest and thriving, but very obstinate tradesman, who had lately a diseased leg, but could by no means be prevailed on to allow any one to prescribe for him but himself; and whose mode of treating the malady was to eat whatever he pleased, for his appetite was good. His opinion was that he had already spent too much on his leg. Physicians at last came in, who told him to his surprise (for they not abiding in his house cared nothing for his temper), that he and his leg could no longer go on living together, but that they did not know how to cut it off. The end of the matter was that he had to send to Dublin for the Surgeon-General, who made peace between him and his leg, charging him, however, a fee equal to one year's profits. If you have been as obstinate hitherto as this man, Sir, I hope you will end by being as wise.

From the beginning, you had but the alternative of keeping Ireland your slave, or making her your mate; and from the moment that you swerved from the former, you should have adopted the latter policy; unless you had a demonstration of the fact that it had been the will not of England, but of Providence, that Ireland should be always poor and England rich, just as some races are black and others white, some animals are web-footed and others have cloven hoofs. All your eminent statesmen are now agreed that the very best possible thing you can do with Ireland is to make her prosperous. I

doubt whether there is one of them who does not speak the truth in saying that he wishes her well. If, then, it is not the will, but the power, that is wanting to them; and if knowledge and money are power; and if the former might be acquired by your legislators with less labour than a lawyer bestows on the studies necessary for his profession, do you not think that the latter might also be in some way found? Suppose that all those eminent statesmen were to go to their masters, and make a joint declaration that capital wisely invested in the redemption of Ireland would pay an interest of seven per cent., would not the middle classes command them at once to spend boldly? Would they venture to answer No? I hope not. What can be said of a country that does not allow its wisest and strongest to govern it, but that it is a foolish and weak country? In all countries the few govern, and the fewest direct. If a nation be not directed by what is high and thoughtful, or governed by what is strong and pure, what can be said, but that it carries its brains in its belly, and its active power in its heel rather than its hand? What can be hoped but that going ever ahead, it must reach at last that slough in which no corn grows? If those who should be the servants of the people are made the servants of its prejudices; if those who should vindicate its interests are required to pander to its passions; if those whose high station, as states-

men and ministers, summons them to the honourable office of chief toil, are permitted only to toil in chains; what else can a nation so infatuated expect, but that those men who had asked in vain to be trusted should decline to be used?—that they should refuse utterly to come down into the vulgar fight, remaining apart and wasting away, till the whole breed of capable statesmen had ceased from the land? The true statesmen of England at this day are not Anti-Irish; they belong to England, not to a section of England; and not to England alone, but to the empire. Let these men have their way. They will be equal to the emergency, if they are above one weakness—that of counting motives instead of weighing reasons. An incapable politician would now be tempted to determine his conduct towards Ireland by a multitude of small considerations—a little thought of English prejudice—a little of Irish misconduct—a little jealousy of a rival—little difficulties of detail, such as beset all great measures—a little clinging to a maxim that gives way—a little reaching after an advantage that fleets—a little fright at our temporary financial pressure—a compound of all these littlenesses would decide a waverer. A great statesman would recognise a great emergency, would meditate till he had discovered a great principle, and then would act on it at all hazards.

If the empire possesses neither money nor credit,

there is no help for it; and she had better tell us so at once, for there is no shame in being poor, but much in being one of those of whom the wise man says "there is that saveth, but to his own hurt." If, however, she possesses even credit, I suppose she is as well justified in using it as an Irish proprietor can be; and she has, like him, the prospect that by spending a guinea now she will be spared the necessity of spending ten guineas hereafter. If this country were in a prosperous condition, and one-half of England, owing to past oppressions and present afflictions, were reduced to an economical state that threatened destruction, would not this great empire be as willing to spend a few millions within the next few years, supposing such expenditure a necessary part of the remedial process, as she was, when much less rich, to spend thirty millions annually on a war with a tyrant, or as the King of the French, though no fool, has shown himself to spend seven millions on the fortifications of Paris, and seventy on Algeria? A great nation can even less afford to be parsimonious than profuse. She may err either way; but the chief danger of prodigality is not her spending too much, but spending foolishly; for money thrown away always involves worse losses than the loss of money. It is but due to you to say, as we have always said, that last year you were very liberal in the money spent on palliatives. Money so

spent must always do harm as well as good. But we aspire after a cure, both as the cheapest and best course. I hope that no person will assert, unless he is prepared to prove his proposition, that to spend money on a curative process would be against the canons of political economy. These canons are sometimes sophisticated by the doctors of the science; and we live in times when several who believe in the divinity have doubts as to the priest. Some people laugh at political economy. I am disposed to think it no laughing matter. I am not so much of an adept in the science as to presume to be its advocate; but, unless all financial matters happen by chance, they must take place according to laws; the science must therefore exist, and it must exercise great influence whenever men clearly understand more than its simpler axioms and their own definitions; or, whenever, understanding its principles on a larger scale, they can agree as to the application of them. In the meantime one proof of the greatness of the science is, that it always does great mischief, in a very scientific way, when incautiously made use of. It cost the empire about two millions last year in hard cash; it cost Ireland yet more, through the depreciation of labour and a social disorganisation partly the fault of the relief system and partly our own; and it allowed several hundreds of thousands to die, not of starvation, but of the diseases produced by



want. For the good done, and the good intended, we are grateful: but we want a cure. Why not spend money on that?

If the truth were told, I fear the fact is that you dislike us. Why do you dislike us? Is it merely because you have injured us? No. It proceeds also from inordinate self-love. You are, however, a lover of justice as well as of self: and to the better of this ill-matched pair I appeal. There are not wanting others who act on a diplomacy the opposite of mine, and experience the truth of that adage, "That if you can but fill a man full of self-satisfaction, whatever flows over will be the servitor's share." A powerful man, now no more, was sometimes obliged to adopt this expedient with regard to the Irish people; and in this respect, as in others, he is closely imitated by his graver English rival of the press, the agitator of a more occupied and orderly people, who, however, instead of assembling mobs, waits upon every gentleman at his own house, with six-columned broadsheet, substitutes for the fascinations of the human eye and voice, an accommodating disposition ever willing to sit at one side of the domestic hearth, while the tankard rests at the other; wields at least as vehement a tail; has his country's good, as well as his own, in no small measure at heart; strongly resents injustice and corruption in other people; mimics, impersonates, and gives a direction to much of the good and evil that is abroad; and apparently had

sense enough to perceive long since, that Brentford was not large enough to support two kings. It does not suit me, Sir, to conciliate your affections in this manner; you will, therefore, suffer me to provoke your love, if I can, by stirring up within you an insurrectionary sense of justice. If you worship yourself, it is because somebody told you that you are a god. I doubt the fact. An Irishman is sometimes reproached with a want of self-respect: yet it may be urged, in extenuation, that a recognition of what we are ought always to occupy a humble place at the footstool of our self-ideal, and that he may be acquainted with qualities in himself unworthy of respect. Perhaps, Sir, in you also there may lurk some less admirable qualities, although you are not acquainted with them. If you were acquainted with your own vices, you would still, I hope, continue to hate ours; but if you were tempted to hate us too, you would remember that the sword of justice is two-edged. Can there be any thing more ridiculous than a solid conceit? Shall a judge cut capers, or harlequin be made a judge? What say you, Sir, of a mere robust, determined, opulent man, descending from an omnibus, and walking up Fleet Street in the erroneous opinion that he, a lord of bales, is a sort of respectable divinity? Imagine such an one, the broker of the nations, taking his stand at last upon 'Change, lifting his hands up in worship, and giving thanks thus to

that exacting divinity—himself:—"Lord! I thank thee that I am not as other men are, or even as this Celt. My granaries are enlarged: I am filled with marrow and fatness;" and so to proceed; "I hate superstitious vanities: I give tithes of nothing that I possess; I hardly pray one day out of seven." What say you, Sir? Must not any genuine English merchant who passed by, the representative of that manly and uncovetous industry which once was eminently England's and in a measure is hers still,—must not such a man look on our friend as one whom much money had made mad, and refuse all dealings with him? Must not even the most waggish of those who sign their names "Clericus," at the close of a newspaper homily, inform his neophyte, that it became not the same man to unite in his single person the pride of a Pharisee, the faith of a Sadducee, and the morals of a Publican?

Your artists have often drawn the lineaments of Ireland. A quick fancy never halts for want of materials. Leonardo tells us that the chance folds of a curtain, or the cracks on a plaster wall, had sometimes suggested to him the groups that satisfied every eye except the most penetrating that ever looked on man. The genius of many an artist who has amused the public with Irish sketches yet never breathed Irish air, has evidently been quickened by such slight aids as a visit to the Zoological Gardens, or a child's book of demonology. Would you like

a portrait of England drawn by an Irish pencil? From me you have nothing of the sort to fear. I love England more than you do, but not your England. I have already said, and I take every occasion to repeat, that there are two Englands: one of these, of which you are a representative, may be called "America in England;" an expression which I cannot use, lest I should be supposed to join in the common clamour against America, without observing that America in England must needs resemble the America of the west in its faults chiefly, and be, on the whole, a very inferior thing. To your England I desire to pay no homage. But there is another England which you never saw, and for which I have long felt (may it not have been too long) a reverential affection which refuses to be blind. Many of those whom I have been allowed most to love and honour are English; and in them I have observed strong traces of their country. They belong not to the number of those imbeciles who only desire to hear the truth when it is in their favour; nor is it for their sake that I shrink from a complete portraiture of their country. Mine is not the hand that can paint that countenance in which two mysterious characters are mingled, and in which alternately two opposite expressions predominate. A powerful writer, one deservedly popular in England, and certainly not partial to Ireland, has exhibited a picture of your state, so deplorable, that if I believed in its general



truth, no greatness to which this country could ever attain would compensate me for my loss. I refer you not to that book\*, lest you should either believe it and despair, or but seem to yourself a believer, and allow feelings skin deep to be worn into a shallower thinness by the pleasure of an incredulous excitement. The scandals which deface your glories have been exposed with an unsparing compassion by those men, poets, philosophers, and divines, who embody indeed the spirit of an unspiritual age, and will remain its monuments. To these direct your thoughts, removing them for a time from material pursuits, if you would learn to hate what is to be hated in your country, or wisely to love the rest. If this task be too tedious, then inspect your blue books and reports.

You inveigh, Sir, against the squalidness of many an Irish village; have you read the report of a Commission which was instituted not long ago to inquire into the state of certain English mining districts? If it does not recount fables, your mines contained, not long since, a degree of misery and a peculiar species of degradation, whereof we in this country know nothing. Amongst us, women have never toiled in the attitude of beasts, amid slimy caverns, and surrounded by a savage race, naked, blasphemous and brutal. In this country, children of twelve years old are not to be found who do not know

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\* "Past and Present." By T. Carlyle.



the name of their country or their sovereign. Whether these atrocities have since been amended I know not; but they existed two years ago: nor can aught else so pointedly illustrate the degradation that had sunk through the social into the moral being, as the fact, that when the Legislature found it necessary to interfere, and, supplying the place of morals with laws, to protect womanhood and in it humanity itself from outrage, those unfortunates raised up from the depths and remanded to their native air but to die, bewildered and helpless, staggering between contending claims, for their own sake and that of their starving children, petitioned to be indulged again in what was there accounted but freedom of labour. You are offended at the cottiered and foodless wastes of Kerry; have you ever visited the alleys of your manufacturing districts? Have you ever read any of the Parliamentary Reports on that subject? Against the manufacturing class of England I bring no charge. Accusations levelled against a class are generally unjust and always foolish. I honour every recognised class in your land to which Providence has intrusted high functions, allotting severally to each for the good of all; and if any class has been made the object of undistinguishing and noisy attack, that is the last mark against which I should be disposed to cast a stone: notwithstanding, Sir, the manufacturing system has been allowed to grow up, a body without a soul, and well-nigh without

a directing mind ; and it includes within its region a misery that may well challenge competition in Ireland. Where else do strong men marry that they may become the pensioners of their young children ? Where else, in times of depression, does “ Godfrey’s Cordial ” supersede a mother’s milk ? Little fingers are most apt for delicate work. If unfortunately fingers and hands cannot be brought into the world without having bodies in connection with them, and if these bodies must needs include souls, small care, I fear, for one half century, was taken for the health of the one, or the hopes of the other. Great efforts have been recently made, I know, to correct these abuses ; nor are there in your land men who deserve better of their country than some of your great manufacturers ; but these gentlemen know how difficult it is to make straight a system that is awry, and they will be the last to join in that outcry which has been raised against a class, condemned like themselves, to struggle with a time that is out of joint—I mean the landlords of Ireland. In Irish hovels you meet with a worship which you condemn ; it is in English manufacturing districts that you are confronted by multitudes who have never heard of the existence of a God, or named that name at which the nations bow.

You may perhaps reply, that the scandals existing in your mines and manufacturing districts result necessarily from the rapid strides with which civiliza-

tion has been advancing in England, whereas the evils with which you reproach us are the indications of a savage state that forbids all progress. In Ireland it is true that you find a barbarism which displeases you: the very virtues of the Irish peasant have, you say, an element of the barbaric in them; his hospitality, his rude fidelity, his vehement heartiness, his devotion to the ties of kindred and of clan. Is barbarism then only to be sanctioned when begirt and over-browed by haughty civilization? Is it to be allowed as a pensioner in the city courts, and denounced as an outlaw on the moor? Are you quite sure that in your better life there is no tincture of the barbaric still to be found? If so, I fear that your rapid advance is to be accounted for by the fact that you have passed the summit of the ascent, and are sliding down the smooth declivity. Civilization is, of course, on the whole, a great improvement on barbarism; but that is a depraved and effête civilization in which there remains no mixture, mastered, but not merged, of barbaric fervour, with its natural accompaniments, a passionate simplicity and a homely refinement: and when a nation has advanced thus far I fear it is tending to a dead level, of which the ultimate limit is a social stale-mate, such as for centuries has held China in check. You think the Irish peasant servile to the objects of his reverence; and there is a certain kind of truth in the statement; for affection is a bondage, and the imagination, though

lawless, is not free ; but in Ireland you will not find the servility of a London shopman, with his “ bated breath,” his whispering “ humbleness,” and his practised smile. With us the man survives in the tradesman ; and the unthrifty hand that rests on the counter is a hand of flesh and blood. The Irish gentleman, you say, is asleep to public duties and awake to trivialities. Is there not among you a certain Dilettantism which is neither asleep nor awake ? Do not you also find it amongst the difficulties of the time to provide employment for men of wealth and station ? It is true that in Ireland, with much political excitement, we have had but little politics ; but zeal for public duty does not, even amongst those who have a grave regard for the duties of friendship, kindred, honour, morals, and religion, spring up quite so quickly as a new branch of trade. You will remember that till lately we were excommunicated from the pale of European politics, the tyrant being raised above political responsibility, while the slave is depressed below it : and that, since the period of the penal laws, we have hardly had time to graduate in English politics, or take up with unwavering credence either class of those great party watchwords, by you for the most part mistaken for the symbols of eternal principles. It is frequently said that in Ireland there are no friendly relations between the higher orders and the lower. There can be no greater misconception ; and it is a



remarkable fact, that notwithstanding the diversities both of race and of religion, and the sedulous endeavours made in this country and in England to effect an estrangement between classes that ought to be at one, there exists in Ireland a strong bond of mutual good-will between the high and low, in despite of agrarian animosities aggravated at present by a social crisis. During the existing convulsion, and while English intolerance can see but the darker side of the Irish peasant's character, the higher orders in Ireland meet with an invincible good humour that exasperated state of society from which they are certainly the chief sufferers. Each man goes about his usual avocations, and protects himself as well as the law permits from perils which the existing law cannot avert. He remembers that the agrarian outrages which stain our fields with blood constitute a guerilla warfare, regulated by its own code, which indicates the sentiments of the people on one subject only. He knows that the man whom you look on, and rightly, as an assassin, looks on himself as an executioner; and that he would no more shoot his victim on another quarrel than a lawyer of character would deceive out of court. If murders are committed, he thinks it less base that they should proceed from revenge than from love of money; and he remembers that last spring when the pay clerks of the Board of Works were travelling about the country, and paying about £40,000 in the course of a day, only two



instances of robbery occurred. In England we hear of two great social circles which touch but at one point; and of two classes which know so little of each other, that, while there is room for both, they have scarcely a pretext for enmity.

You are proud of your colonial possessions: how have you acquitted yourself towards them? A particular order is endowed with privileges, not for its own sake, but for that of the nation: a nation is elected for the benefit of the world to some high function, which if it fails to discharge its candlestick is removed. What you cannot use becomes soon abused; and nature works the cure. America was your colony: you did not plant your church in her soil; you did not impart to her your arts, your sciences, your manners, or the spirit of your laws. Without a portion you sent your Prodigal into the wilderness, and bade her prosper, honestly if she could, on condition that you shared in her prosperity; you moulded your coarser half into a distinct personality, and bade her be your pioneer along a perilous path; and now you denounce, while you emulate her, as though her errors were not your shame, and her short-comings your warning example. India is yours; but its hundred millions belong not to your Master. Till lately, if you did not discourage the endeavour to include that vast region within the bounds of Christendom, you made no effort to promote it. Till lately your swarthy sub-

jects doubted whether you were gods, but knew only that you were without gods. Till lately, many a British soldier who had sworn that the Mass was idolatry and deprived its votaries of citizenship, was compelled to ask pardon for "this one thing," if when a Hindoo idol was rolled forth in procession from its temple, he bowed himself and the standard of England before it. How comes it, Sir, that you are sometimes less smitten with remorse by the scandal of a century, than elated by some recent and partial attempt to abate it? Is not this also a repentance that halts upon its way? New colonies were to be formed. To sow a new nation with sound and perfect seed would have been to act on a principle: to turn the main drain of your house under your neighbour's garden-wall was an expedient: therefore you preferred it, and colonized with convicts. You boast of an empire on which the sun never sets. If you understand your responsibilities, you will not boast; if you proscribe the recollection of them among the subjects deemed obsolete or troublesome, better for you to have ruled an empire upon which the sun never rose; an empire of potentialities like the "industrial resources of Ireland;" better never to have ruled at all—better, I had almost said, to have been ruled as Ireland was ruled by England.

You exult, Sir, in your boundless wealth, and you despise the poverty of this land. Your wealth

was honestly come by, and yet it seems at times to mount with an insurgent insolence, and threaten your moral ruin. Our poverty was the necessary result of English oppression; and yet how can you know but that it may tend to our eventual good? It is now some time since I witnessed a scene which I have not yet forgotten. Entering with difficulty a mud hovel, I heard on all sides the murmur of the afflicted before I saw their faces, for there was neither window nor door, and the narrow inclosure was filled with smoke. Through a rift in the roof the light of the rising sun found entrance, and streamed, a solid beam, athwart the smoke from end to end. Right beneath that beam, there sat upon the earthen floor a little naked infant, an orphan, who laughed as if in scorn of the misery around him. In his hand he held a green hazel wand, moist with autumnal shoots, and, exulting in such strength as was his, lifted it with beautiful gesture and beat it with rapture against the ground, as if he possessed power to summon spirits out of the earth. It was probably the contrast between that fearless child and the haggard group around him that impressed me; and I have since thought that the outcast I then saw, so unprotected, yet so well protected, might be a symbol of his country. Since it was the will of God, while many strong men dropped, to preserve that child whom there was no mother to cherish, and whom, if a casual hand of

charity maintained, many a more charitable heart must have sighed to retain—perhaps he has been preserved to some good end. Perhaps, also, this country may be preserved for some good end. Let this, Sir, be determined by the event; but meantime be assured that your wealth is not exempt from corruption. If Irish pauperism be a lamentable spectacle to the eye, English pauperism is more awful far to the mind. That men should hunger amid blighted wastes is intelligible enough; that they should be lawless is its obvious consequence: but that a vast and growing pauperism should exist in the heart of infinite wealth, is an evil not transitory or superficial, but indicative of some disease preying upon the vitals of the land. Your pauperism, Sir, is more than your misfortune; in the endeavour to relieve it you have found the severest tests to be necessary; but you have not found them to be availing; nor can any palliative, unaided by a moral medicine, be of avail; for your disease is a moral disease. There is a direct connection between the wealth of your nation and the poverty of the obscure millions who produce that wealth. Your large capital and complex dealings render it necessary for you to have at hand a more numerous band of labourers than you can find employment for during the intervals of a depressed trade. Alternations between severe labour and compulsory idleness produce recklessness; extra-



ordinary prudence and self-control are required to lay up a store against the evil day; these qualities are not to be found amongst men who have been taught to work, but not to reflect or to pray; and the result is a pauperism that has increased while your wealth has increased, deepening as the shadow deepens while the light augments. To what does this amount, but that the virtue of England has not increased in proportion with her wealth,—that it has therefore relatively declined? I doubt, Sir, whether, on the whole, I would exchange our pauperism for yours.

You are astonished at the vehemence with which the Irish demand what you regard as the imaginary remedy for an imaginary grievance. Perhaps it is you who are unreasonable in wondering. The fact is, that the people feel that they suffer; and in this they are not mistaken: the exact cause of their suffering they do not know; neither is it within their province to know it. Why did not you know it long since; for none ought to have known it better? Social evils will always be mistaken by the many for political grievances. The cry of a people has more significance than their words; and to neglect the former is a greater mistake than to attach undue importance to the latter. Refer the clamour of the Irish not to the objects which they affect, but the causes that provoke it; and then judge whether there has not of late been as good reason



for a Repeal cry in Ireland, as for a "No Popery" cry in England.

But I will glance no longer at subjects on which I am unwilling to enlarge, and which you may not be unwilling to evade. My desire was but to hint that there are reasons for which you ought not to concentrate the whole of your affections at home, and thus deprive us of that moderate good-will which is necessary if you would form a sane judgment on our affairs. England has her faults, and so has Ireland: let the faults of both be exposed, that they may be corrected. Concealment of faults is a hazardous thing. I have acknowledged many of ours already; and have made no attempt to prove that our faults are not faults, because they can be accounted for, and because England in many instances partakes of their reproach. Would you hear our confessions more frequently? Then do not make candour an impossible virtue to us, by such an amount of prejudice and exaggeration as distorts our concessions and turns our truth into falsehood. If there be one impartial person in either kingdom, let him decide where I forbear to dogmatize, and pronounce on which side the balance declines. Let him resolve us whether a people is more to be pitied for being poor, or for putting their trust in wealth; for having no power, or for misusing it. Let him conclude which is more to be condemned, a Parliament that sits in Dublin without

functions and legislates without power, or a Parliament in London, which, intrusted with highest functions, is so engrossed with railway business that it has hardly time to consider the chief matters of the State ; let him tell us whether he prefers political sentimentalism or political materialism, and augurs best for a province that aspires to be a nation or a nation that degenerates into a firm.

There is one charge more, Sir, which I am forced to bring against you, lest you should misinterpret an admission which, with great reluctance, I have made to the discredit of my countrymen. I said that I considered them inferior to you in the virtue of verbal truth. The accusations brought against them on this subject in England are unjust, because they take no note of the various infirmities which, under various circumstances, lead to a want of truth ; or to the fact that its worst cause, dishonesty, is no Irish vice. It proceeds in them from many causes, beside an insufficient appreciation of truth ;—from an inconsiderate good nature ; from an abuse of metaphor ; from a habit of precipitation and vehemence ; from an extraordinary readiness and inaccuracy of thought ; from vanity, and from sensitiveness. After all due deductions, however, the charge still remains ; and I have said that in part it is just. It may be worth observing, that degrading and enfeebling as want of truth must be to individuals, it is yet more injurious to a nation.

People who would unite, must understand each other and themselves: therefore even punctuality and accuracy, the humbler duties of truth, are virtues without which cooperation, collective force, and consequent prosperity, cannot exist, and, in the absence of which those who would raise the social fabric build with round stones and mortar that will not cohere. All things, however, are matters of degree; and the Irish are not inferior, even in verbal truth, to the average of European nations, though they are inferior to the English. And now, lest I should leave you under a false impression, I must add, that I cannot consider the English to be an eminently truthful people, though they speak the truth. We hear a great deal about "cant" in England. What does "cant" mean? Not truth, I imagine. In whatever society we may be, we are told of shams, hollowness, and pretence. This sounds serious. Hollowness, I presume, is inconsistent with the substance of truth: why, then, set such store by the shadow? Is it possible that what has been said of modesty is applicable to truth also—that when allowed no other resting-place it sometimes seeks refuge on the tongue? Beware, Sir, lest by a subtle change moral truth should have died out from amongst you, and commercial truth have assumed the relinquished garb and strutted where her predecessor walked. Trade requires combination, and combination mutual trust;

we may therefore perhaps infer, that where trade continues to flourish, there verbal truth at the least must remain, if but as part of the stock in trade. But beneath these fair externals the living body of truth may have wasted away, and the void be unperceived by a fat and gross eye that rests on the surfaces of things.

There are signs which make against you. I have known English tradesmen who cheated, yet who retained, notwithstanding, an alarming scrupulosity about verbal truth. They seemed to have a kind of conscience on the subject. Is not truth without honesty the virtue of one who dares not be true even to himself? Orthodoxy is a word which now sounds pedantic; yet it was once respected as denoting the integrity of revealed Truth. As such it was watched for by lovers who could be reverent as well as ardent, who were "made up of patience" as well as "impatience;" and whose observance was ever fortified by purity and trial. At present this sort of truth does not suit your taste. Moral Truth is a thing the existence of which many philosophers amongst you doubt. Once there was no doubt on this subject; and perhaps the sages of old time accounted verbal truth not a thing precious in itself, but rather a slight tax of attention and sobriety, to be paid in the hope that men who had shown themselves faithful in little things might be advanced to a higher command and an ampler prospect. Ab-



stract Truth is not appreciated save where it ministers to the mechanical arts; and the sciences you cultivate most are those which promote the conveniences of life. Truth as to outward details is itself but a superficial thing; truth as to what is within us presupposes a substance of genuine and stable feeling within: and yet your eloquent men stigmatise your age as the very triumph of conventionalities. Is there then no practical inner truth, or can your eloquence itself be untruthful? Even in your churches there sometimes appears to exist a convention of a singular character between clergyman and congregation. The former does not always expect his words to be taken literally; and the latter preserve a composure, during the discharge of very strong statements, as remarkable as that of trained horses during the firing at a review. A congregation in an Irish chapel, severely rated for the last agrarian outrage, is either downcast for the time or seriously displeased; so that a man, going out after the sermon, asks his neighbour whether it would not be a good deed to throw a stone at the priest on his way home, or to bring no Easter offering. This has an air of honesty on both sides. In Parliament great statesmen seated at one side of the House often make insinuations, which, if translated into the vulgar tongue, would amount to an assertion that great statesmen at the other side were in reality great liars and cheats, who



under pretence of advancing the public weal in reality consulted only for their own credit and gain. In those cases there must be some want of truth on the part either of those who bring the charges, or of those against whom they are brought; and I must add, that they are sometimes received with a very indecent serenity. You will say, perhaps, that such accusations are not resented because it is understood that they are not intended. Indeed! then perhaps your charges against Ireland were not intended! This should have been explained. In Ireland the passions have a sincerity.

I do not affirm, or imply, that England possesses less of moral truth than other nations which make it less their boast. I state simply that it does not bear that proportion which it ought to bear to her verbal truth, and therefore that she has nothing to boast of in this particular. Does a truthful nation, when called on to act, allow the gates of new and serviceable knowledge to be blocked up by a litter of wilful and sottish prejudices? Is it a truthful act to judge where you have no materials, and to condemn where you pause not to judge? You often depict with minuteness and consistency the character of an Irish peasant or proprietor. As long as a class of men seems to you stamped with one common image, conclude that you see it but from a distance, and as a mask. On a closer inspection you would trace the diversities of individuality. You know no more

of the Irish peasant or proprietor than the former knows of you, and you as little care to know them. I do not call the Irish the finest peasantry in the world, although, if their characters were equal to their dispositions, they might, perhaps, justly be so termed; but I have no reason to believe that they are inferior, in aught but happiness and a sphere for goodness, to the same class in England. The Irish peasant, Sir, is rich in virtues which you know not of because you only know the worst class of Irish, and only hear of the rest when they have been found wanting under the severest temptations. Amongst his virtues are many which, perhaps, no familiarity would enable you to recognise. I speak of the Irish peasant as a man and as a Christian, not as a citizen merely. There is a difference between public and individual virtues: to the latter class belong many which, by their own nature, remain exempt from applause or material reward; and among the former there are commonly counted several vices. Self-confidence, ruthlessness, and greediness—these are not virtues; but notwithstanding, when associated with a manliness as willing to suffer as to inflict pain, and an industry if not disinterested yet dutiful, these defects may help to swell the prosperity of a nation, as long as she swims with the tide. Many of the crowning virtues of personal character may be possessed where several fundamental virtues of civil society are wanting. The Irish peasant has a

patience under real sufferings quite as signal as his impatience under imaginary grievances; and, in spite of a complexional conceit not uncommon, he has a moral humility that does not help him to make his way. He possesses a reverence that will not be repulsed; a gratitude that sometimes excites our remorse; a refinement of sensibility, and even of tact, which reminds you that many who toil for bread are the descendants of those who once sat in high places; aspirations that fly above the mark of national greatness; a faith and charity not common in the modern world; an acknowledged exemption from sensual habits, both those that pass by that name, and those that invent fine names for themselves; and an extraordinary fidelity to the ties of household and kindred, the more remarkable from being united with a versatile intellect, a temperament mercurial as well as ardent, and an ever salient imagination. These virtues are not inconsistent with grave faults, but they are virtues of the first order. I will only add, that if England has wit enough to make these virtues her friends, she will have conciliated the affections of a people the least self-loving in the world, and the services of a people amongst whom, in the midst of much light folly, there is enough of indolent ability to direct the whole counsels of England, and of three or four kingdoms beside—provided only that Ireland be not of the number.

I have already recommended you to study the

Irish if you would learn how to govern Ireland; and though I cannot undertake to be your master, yet I would seriously advise you not to allow yourself to dwell only on the worst side of the national character. If you laugh at an Irish peasant's helplessness, remember that he is as willing to help a neighbour as to ask his aid; and that he has a remarkable faculty for doing all business not his own. If you think him deficient in steadiness under average circumstances, remember that he possesses extraordinary resource and powers of adaptation in an unforeseen juncture. If you think him easily deluded, remember that the same quick and fine temperament which makes him catch every infection or humour in the air renders him equally accessible to all good influences; of which the recent temperance movement is the most remarkable example exhibited by any modern nation. You accuse the Irish peasant of want of gravity: one reason of this characteristic is, that with him imagination and fancy are faculties not working by themselves, but diffused through the whole being; and remember that, if they favour enthusiasm, so on the other hand they protect from fanaticism. If you speak of his occasional depression and weakness, you should know that Irish strength does not consist in robustness, but in elasticity. If you complain of his want of ambition, remember that this often proceeds from the genuine independence of a mind

and temperament which possess too many resources in themselves to be dependent on outward position; and do not forget that much of the boasted progress of England results from no more exalted a cause than an uncomfortable habit of body, not easy when at rest. If you think him deficient in a sound judgment, ask whether his mental faculties may not be eminently of a subtle and metaphysical character, and whether such are not generally disconnected from a perfect practical judgment. You are amused because he commits blunders: ask whether he may not possibly think wrong twice as often as the English peasant, and yet think right five times as often, since he thinks ten times as much, and has a reason for every thing that he does. You call him idle: ask whether he does not possess a facility and readiness not usually united with pains-taking qualities; and remember that, when fairly tried, he by no means wants industry, though he is deficient in energy. You think him addicted to fancies rather than realities:—poverty is a great feeder of enthusiasm. You object to his levity:—competence is a sustainer of respectability; and many a man is steadied by the weight of the cash in his pocket. You call him wrong-headed: ask whether the state of things around him, the bequest of past misgovernment, is not so wrong as to puzzle even the solid sense of many an English statesman, not inexperienced in affairs; and whether the good



intentions and the actions of those who would benefit the Irish peasant are not sometimes, even now, so strangely at cross purposes as to make the quiet acceptance of the boon no easy task. You think him slow to follow your sensible precepts: remember that the Irish are imitative, and that the imitative have no great predilection for the didactic vein: and do not forget that for a considerable time your example was less edifying than your present precepts. You affirm that no one requires discipline so much; remember that none repays it so well; and that, as to the converse need, there is no one who requires so little of aid to second his intellectual development. The respect of his neighbour, you say, is what he hardly seeks: remember how often he wins his love, and even admiration, without seeking it. You think that he hangs loosely by his opinions: ask whether he is not devoted in his attachments. He seems to you inconsistent in action: reflect whether extreme versatility of mind and consistency of conduct are qualities often united in one man. You complain of the disposition of the Irish to collect in mobs: ask whether, if you can once gain the ear of an Irish mob, it is not far more accessible to reason than an English one. I have addressed myself to Irish mobs under various circumstances in the last two years, and encountered none that was not amenable. Ask also whether in most countries the lower orders have not enough to do, as well as enough

to eat in the day, and consequently a disposition to sleep at night. If half your English population had only to walk about and form opinions, how do you think you would get on? You say that the Irish have no love of fair play, and that three men of one faction will fall on one man of another: ask those who reflect as well as observe, whether this proceeds wholly from want of fair play or from other causes beside. Ask whether in Ireland the common sentiment of race, kindred or clan, does not prevail with an intensity not elsewhere united with a perfect appreciation of separate responsibilities and immunities; and whether an Irish beggar will not give you as hearty a blessing in return for a halfpenny bestowed on another of his order as on himself. Sympathy includes a servile element, and servile sympathy will always lead to injustice;—thus I have heard a hundred members of Parliament (and of party) drown in one cry, like that of a well-managed pack, the voice of some member whom they disapproved, and whom probably they considered less as a man than as a limb of a hated enemy. Sympathy, however, often ministers to justice also, as you will find on asking an Irish gentleman whether he has not often been astonished at that refinement of fair play with which an Irish peasant makes allowances for the difficulties of some great neighbour, whose aid is his only hope.

I have thrown out these few suggestions as to Irish character, not for the purpose of superseding your

own inquiry, but to incite and direct it. You will find that character very unlike the gross notion of it which you may have formed from a farce at the theatre. You will find also that it is formed on a type extremely different from that of the English character; and that one reason why you are tempted to intolerance as to our faults, and an inappreciation of our virtues, is that both happen to be the opposite of your own. You will be enabled to make innumerable practical inferences from the moment that you possess that key to them all. Perhaps one of these may be, that the Irish require to be governed by a strong hand, as well as a just and generous one; that a hand alternately strong and weak would be utterly unable to govern them; and that, if left without restraint during a period of peculiar excitement, their good qualities might for the moment suffer an eclipse, like those of children during a day of licence. Another inference, perhaps, would be that the Irish require leaders as well as laws; and, consequently, that if some of your wise men could succeed in tearing up by the roots the influence of the resident proprietors and the Roman Catholic clergy, the only substantial authority in the country, you might neither benefit the condition of that people nor your own. A knowledge of Irish character would enable you to understand, amongst other things, an anomaly not always observed, namely, that there is comparatively little of public opinion in this country. In the first

place, public opinion can neither grow up during the period of despotism, nor during the tumultuous recoil from it. In the second place, public opinion is made up of countless private opinions, each person retaining with stubbornness a portion of his own judgment, while yet he is willing to make a compromise as to another portion, for the sake of acting with others. In Ireland, the instinct of sympathy is too strong to admit a perfect independence of judgment. Opinions are not formed separately, and therefore cannot bring each its distinct contribution to the common stock; the strongest predominates, and spreads as a sentiment, the rest being merged in it instead of duly modifying it. The formation of public opinion is a sort of crystallization which must take place by a slow process, if the result is to be solid or definite in shape; and in Ireland the ardour of our political temperature produces too rapid a precipitation. The effect of all these circumstances is, that we have more of political passion than of public opinion, and more licence of debate than freedom of speech. Perhaps this evil might be diminished if you were no longer to bind together the Irish people by the common tie of an insulted race, provoked to animosity often and not always permitted to be grateful. Two courses were from the beginning open to England; one of these was to establish in Ireland institutions grounded upon Irish character; the other was to

assimilate, as far as possible, both institutions and character to the English. Either of these courses would have led to a result, but you adopted neither; and if you would now unite the two, you will require a deep knowledge of the people whom you have to deal with, and no small knowledge of political philosophy.

The Irish proprietors are a class of whom you perhaps know no more than that in good report and in evil report, when the country was at peace and when in rebellion, from the Revolution to the Repeal agitation, they have stood fast, the firm and faithful friends of England and the British connection. Had they served their country with the fidelity with which they served their employer, they might in the hour of calamity have been deserted, but they would not have been betrayed. The existing generation, however, have, under the most adverse circumstances, done much to vindicate their true position; and, if they fall, they will not have the consolation of seeing either country the gainer by their loss. In the meantime it has been their singular fortune that the charges brought against them have included too little truth to have much verisimilitude, while the violence with which they have been assailed will probably provoke a reaction. You have possibly met with individual Irish proprietors; I will leave you, therefore, to judge of their character by your own lights. If you possessed an estate in this



country, I suspect that absentee landlords would be judged of as gently by you as they are by us, who suffer most by their absence, but who know that residence is in Ireland a difficult virtue, whereas in England it is among the agreeable duties. You will perhaps be surprised that an Irish proprietor's position should be a troublesome one in the midst of a people such as I have described. The reason is this; that he has to deal not only with their good qualities, which God made, but with their circumstances which have been made by man; and with their worst qualities exaggerated at times by well-meant but blundering legislation.

The position of an Irish proprietor is that of a man called to the discharge of functions not his own, through the instrumentality of resources not at his command. The charges on his estate remaining undiminished, and his rents being reduced to one-half, he is suddenly invited to quadruple the quantity of labour he has hitherto given, although that labour has already, in many cases, far exceeded the amount given by persons similarly circumstanced in England, and although the value of labour is greatly lessened by the pauperizing relief employment of last year. How does it happen that those who see so clearly that the State cannot perform the functions of proprietors, shut their eyes to as plain a truth, namely, that proprietors cannot assume the duties of farmers? A proprietor may, indeed, ride

down to a hundred farms, and request a hundred farmers to cultivate their land in a manner exactly the opposite of that which they are used to, and twice as expensive; but his enterprise will probably be attended by much the same results as if he had admonished every tradesman in the neighbouring town to engage another apprentice. The land held in their own hands they may often improve, and are improving, urged not only by public duty, but also by the consideration that in many cases that small proportion of their estate constitutes the chief part of their present support; but I will not promise you that our landlords can quite at once change themselves into land-manufacturers, or get ten per cent. instead of four per cent. annually on the present value of their domains. In the meantime, the land refusing to bring forth its increase, the lord of the soil is set up as the most conspicuous mark for malignant shafts; and, stirred up by interested reports, those of his own order in England turn on him not seldom as the stags in their own parks turn on a wounded brother. This is but a small part of his trial. He is obliged daily to witness the misery which he did not cause, and cannot relieve. He is reproached by the patience of thousands to whom he can offer no aid, and by the impatience of hundreds who will not let him aid them. If he sinks into apathy or recklessness, he becomes an insignificant in a crisis when every thing has its signifi-

cance. If he rouses himself to the exercise of those rights without which the duties of property are abstractions, he is proclaimed a tyrant and exterminator. *De jure* he has a right to his patrimony: *de facto* not quite to his life. It may be well that when the days of man become very evil they should become very few. One of the chief duties of an Irish proprietor is to entertain cordial feelings that resist distrust, towards all of a class whose misery only is a certainty, and whom he cannot serve if he does not love. Another of his duties is to be of a cheerful courage under circumstances that would depress those who object to peril without honour and labour without a return; for, if he once yields to despondency, the springs of action, and probably of health, must give way. If in any part of this letter you have observed a levity which you thought unbecoming, I desire that you will excuse me. I am not an Irish proprietor, but I associate a good deal with that much-abused order: both they and I are obliged in these times of care to laugh now and then in self-defence; and of course I do not require you to laugh at indifferent jests that make against yourself. Irish proprietors, till the last two years, were reproached as idle. Idleness at least leaves time for courtesy; and I have heard not a few of them remark, in passing, upon English calumnies, with a good-humoured allowance for prejudice as well as ignorance, for which neither the me-

chanics that rush along your streets, nor the gentlemen who rush from the committee room to the House, would appear always to find leisure. Buy an estate, Sir, in Ireland, and teach the native landlords their duty. Near this spot there is a farm of 120 acres, the valuation of which is £120 per annum, and its population only 280 persons, about the proportional population of several unions. I pledge myself that you shall have the fee-simple of that farm for £5, if you will pledge yourself to live near it for five weeks. I fear that you hesitate; and yet on the whole if you balance the troubles of an Irish landlord, with whatever dignity may belong to the most arduous of positions, his great duties to the public, his honourable responsibilities, his powers, such as they are, of righting wrongs and helping the weak, his endless opportunities of defying calumny, and occasional chances of surmounting it, the success of a few efforts, the disinterestedness and the moral reward of all—taking these things into account, I am not sure that I would not prefer an Irish estate in Munster to the most comfortable citizen's retirement in Surrey, though backed by a large sum of money in the funds, and exalted by a seat in the House of Commons.

If you should feel any surprise at my preferring the position of an Irish proprietor to that of an English citizen, your surprise will not be diminished when I

avow my doubts as to a further question respecting the remoter prospects of the two countries impartially compared. The evils of Ireland lie on the surface, and are easily explained; the evils of England are internal, and proceed in no small measure from the circumstances which ought to have worked her well-being. Those who revere England most, and are most worthy of the solitudes which chasten patriotic love, look with fear, as well as hope, to her futurity. The agrarian outrages of Ireland are atrocities to which you are not tempted; but remember that the commercial prosperity, which softens national manners, corrupts them also. Spain was reduced from greatness by the gold mines of America, because she put her trust in them and neglected her industrial resources. I fear lest England should be seduced by the domestic mines of her industrial prosperity to neglect those moral resources which support her industry and disarm it of its dangerous influences. It is not easy to despise wealth when we have it; it is harder still to estimate it aright, neither over-valuing it, nor despising it. Government, with you, is a feeble thing; and for many a year religion and the manners have been the two sheet anchors which have held England safe in her moorings. Both of these are at present infirm; and should either yield your vessel will drift.

You have also external dangers. A very lamentable truth, but not a very surprising one, was



thus pointedly put forward, almost half a century ago, by an advocate for a real Union. "The received maxim is not to forego the opportunity of foreign war to press forward Irish claims and ripen every difference and discontent with the British Government into a ground of permanent and rancorous national hostility; insomuch that, in times of difficulty and danger, Great Britain, so far from deriving support or security from her connection with Ireland, feels it as a millstone hung upon her neck. . . . Is it to be expected that all this can continue; or, if it should continue long, that it must not involve both countries in common ruin?"\* Great shocks you have encountered; great shocks may yet await you; there is hardly any shock which a great nation cannot bear, while she is still sound at heart; but a scratch may be fatal if her blood be diseased. Impart to Ireland a share in your fortunes, and you may trust with more confidence to a prosperity which you have not hoarded: make peace with Ireland in the interval accorded to you; and when that European peace, which has lasted for thirty years is at an end, you will not fear again to tempt the fortunes of war. If domestic disunion should, in the meantime, render your foreign policy pusillanimous, your loss of fame will hardly postpone a danger which it will aggravate in the end.

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\* Lord Clare's Speech on the Union.

Nor is it your enemies only that you have to fear. A great success is dangerous to a nation as to an individual: your success has been great, let it not make you blind. A great task is necessary to a great people; and many a nation has fallen upon the last of its own victorious battle-fields, supported no longer by the helpful opposition of a foe with whom, breast to breast, it had wrestled long. Ireland still presents a great task to the noblest of England's energies; let her confront it bravely, and not shuffle it to one side. Mr. Pitt, recommending the Union, speaks thus: "Great Britain has always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland, and that common interest was never more obvious than when the common enemy (the French Republic) made her attack upon Great Britain through the medium of Ireland. . . . When that danger threatened Ireland, the purse of Great Britain was open for the wants of Ireland as for the necessities of England." Is not pauperism now the common enemy? Is it not certain that, if allowed to make a conquest of Ireland, it will from that platform assail England? Could a nation in a pet, or a nation in a fright, have contended with that common enemy which Mr. Pitt looked in the face and overcame? Is it not certain that she would have gone on indulging in evasions and recriminations, till the time for action had passed, the time for suffering succeeded, and the bitterest of lessons been

taught her by a common enemy who looked a great way before him and always knew how to make up his mind? If England proves equal to this emergency, she may be equal to the next, from whatever quarter it may assail her: and she may not be unequal to the greater danger of too smooth a path and a prescribed inaction.

England should remember, when she boasts of her free institutions, that there are other drawbacks connected with these, besides that turbulence which they are more apt to produce than efficient to control. Let us consider but one of them. Her leading statesmen must be successful debaters. A successful debater must be a master of the indirect arts of rhetoric; which circumstance is a hindrance to him as a statesman, for the latter ought to be a man of sense. No qualities are more necessary for a statesman than simplicity, courage, magnanimity, and an indifference to all indirect advantages. These are not the virtues which are acquired by habits of debate. Again, in proportion as the faculty of the advocate is acquired, the judicial faculty is stunted. A man of judgment is not often an orator. He does not marshal arguments in rank and file; he is not skilful to make a hundred points, and a hundred arrows glance from off him unheeded; but, by a tact not to be illustrated in words, he sees what is the one main view of the question, and commits himself to that. He possesses the inspiration of a sound mind,

which is next to that of original genius, and has little to say for himself. On the whole, it may be doubted whether if a man full of words shall not prosper—a nation full of words—a nation, the affairs of which are conducted in parliaments, public meetings, public dinners, and the newspapers—has not at least difficulties to contend with.

The dangers which are incidental to your prosperity and your freedom you cannot avoid; but you may guard against them by making the most of the opportunities of good placed equally at your command. A great question is now submitted to the assembled wisdom of the nation; but that assembly includes also by necessity a large representation of provincial follies and prejudices. Let those who debate the Irish question discuss it at least in the spirit of British fair play and British practical sense. Should they deny to Ireland alone the benefit of those virtues for which England is renowned, let them not deny us the benefit of a plain confession that justice and truth are not to be observed in dealing with political heretics. If many of those principles which have hitherto associated and divided British parties are superseded; if consequently there is a danger of opinion degenerating into prejudice, and parties into factions; let not those prejudices be concentrated on the most momentous of subjects, let not those factions make Ireland the arena of their gladiatorial sports. The elections being now over,

there is the less excuse for such invective as was prompted, in the case of some English radical members, by the need of popularity at the hustings. A wary politician will also remember that an excess of popularity is amongst the dangers against which he should guard ; and that, while a wise man knows how to make the "popularis aura" turn the wheel of his mill, a great gust of it is apt to make shipwreck of political cockle-shells with high rigging.

Above all, let England remember the one great danger and temptation which lies before her, that of irresponsibility. Few men have virtue and wisdom sufficient to dispense with the restraint of responsibility, which has therefore ever been attached to power by the institutions of a free State. Even where governments are not free in name, rulers are effectually held in check by an indirect responsibility, without which, as a silent convention, the minority would not be allowed to rule. The government by the majority is held back by no such restraint : where no one is answerable in particular, responsibility is but a name ; and if supported by popular sympathies, and not held in awe by moral scruples, a popular assembly is the most perfect form of tyranny.

The press is an illustration of irresponsible power. Consistency is hardly expected from a newspaper, which is therefore in a large measure irresponsible. It has been said, that whoever is indifferent as to his own life can always take away that of another. A



newspaper, whether it assails an individual, a class, or a nation, has a mark at which to aim. Its opponent has none, and can but fling a stone through the air. It has no life to lose. Nor is this all. A newspaper which can afford to keep a large staff of writers, individually holding different opinions, may vary its course every day, and yet each day produce an article written with that efficiency as well as ability which is not found but in conjunction with real convictions. It thus unites the occasional force which results from sincerity, with that habitual power which irresponsibility arms and makes reckless. Let the gentlemen of the press look to this evil, which must, if not rectified, break down either the nation or their own influence. Many of them are plainly men of high ability and doubtless of upright intentions; and we have come to a time when the largest Parliament House cannot contain all those who are practically senators. Let each man who exerts influence exert an honest influence, not thinking slightly of his own position; let each be faithful to himself and the welfare of his country; and let him neither abuse his own gifts, nor suffer them to be abused. An irresponsible press is the symbol of an irresponsible people. Unless it can realize a responsibility, it must be a firebrand, not a guiding lamp.

It is a common remark that great nations have often been the most oppressive to their dependencies. The reason is, that nations do not recognise

their responsibilities ; and that their temporary greatness blinds them to the fact of their own reciprocal dependence. Before the existence of the Imperial Parliament, England remembered neither her responsibilities as relates to Ireland, nor her reciprocal dependence ; and one of the most eminent of those who sat in the last British Parliament implied significantly enough, while resisting the projected Union, that the Imperial Parliament would not, in these respects, differ much from those which had legislated before 1782. It is thus that Mr. Grey expressed himself : “ I am far from supposing that British members will wantonly abuse their powers ; but the property of a nation should not be left at the discretion of any man, or any set of men who are strangers, however just or generous he or they may be ; and it is impossible for Ireland to enjoy that security which her constitution at present affords her, if she is united to England in the manner proposed.”\* Mr. Grattan thus illustrated the insecurity which he and the late Lord Grey anticipated from an “ absentee parliament.” “ Does he say (he is not speaking of Mr. Pitt) that such a parliament will have no prejudices against Ireland ? Let him look to his own speeches ; a capital understanding, a comprehensive knowledge ; and a transcendent eloquence : hear him with all these powers

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\* Speech of Mr. Grey on the Union, April 21, 1800.

speak on the subject of Ireland, whether it be the conduct of her administration, the character of her people, her commerce, her covenants or her constitution; and he betrays an ignorance that would dishonour an idiot." Pointing out the connection between national sympathy and political responsibility, Mr. Grattan proceeded thus: "How came the Irish Parliament, with all its borough members, in 1779, to demand a free trade—in 1782 to demand a free constitution? Because it sat in Ireland; because they sat in their own country, and because at that time they had a country; because, however influenced, as many of its members were, by places, however uninfluenced, as many of its members were, by popular representation, yet were they influenced by Irish sympathy. They did not like to meet every hour faces that looked shame upon them; they did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy; thus they acted, as the Irish absentee at the very same time did not act; they saved the country because they lived in it; the others abandoned the country because they lived out of it." God forbid that the event should corroborate these judgments of which we are now and again painfully reminded! God forbid that prejudice, ignorance, resentment, or any other evil, should ultimately prevail against those two countries which in union may indeed be miserable each, but the separation of which would probably be the ruin of both! If England has not

as yet felt her responsibilities, at least she has been warned. If she has been hitherto one of those nations found wanting, let it not be said hereafter that she was one of those found impenitent; for England, believe me, as well as Ireland, is at this time on her trial. She is called upon now to prove whether she be a nation capable of dealing with a great crisis; whether she knows how to use her own resources; whether her better mind be her directing and tutelary spirit, or one that stands on the threshold and bids her farewell.

Two destinies lie before England. To the free-will of every man two destinies are proposed, interwoven for a time, though issuing forth at last in opposite directions; and in each there is a necessary sequence, from event to event. England must determine which part of her twofold nature is to rule in her; and in that act she determines which of these two destinies is hers. One destiny is this—that her prosperity should increase yet more and more; that her commerce should extend itself still further; that her cottons should clothe a yet larger number of customers; that her self-gratulation should mantle yet higher in her cup; that of her prayers, all, except the best, should have been granted—and that none of these things should be for her good. Her wealth may culminate, but her worth decline; her physical power may advance, but her

moral energies retrograde; her manufactures may change all England into one Lancashire, but she may never learn how to submit the gregarious to the social, or to elevate a social system into a human; her mines may bring forth daily yet more of iron and of coal, and every stream in her land may turn a wheel; but the mines of ancient learning may be abandoned, and the fresh springs of imagination and affection dried up: her colonies may increase, but not to her praise; her zeal against "Popery" may become hotter, but her Christian love daily more cold; her scorn of Irish nationality may grow hourly more acrid, but that national bond which now feebly compasses her own thousand interests, parties, and sects, may yearly relax its hold. Of such prosperity, Sir, what must be the end? Bankruptcy—first moral, then political, lastly, financial bankruptcy. Beware of your allies, if your vices be of their number; beware of your foes, if the spirit of the future and the hopes of man fight against you. Do you trust your own fortunes, because they are so great? Do you suppose that the world could not dispense with England? Let it be your more becoming pride, after your ruin, that England—the England that once was—could not dispense with her virtue. The world, Sir, can very well dispense with many whom it has used; and Fortune sometimes seeks a younger mate. Your fall would be less alarming than you imagine, and the echo would



vibrate less far: it would be the tale of the day, and one more warning, probably despised. The whole fabric of your prosperity, such as I have supposed it, would drop, when its hour came, like one of those factory chimneys which one moment astonish the gazer by their height, and the next relax, and subside—a heap of bricks piled about their own base. If such should be the end of England, may I not be of those who survive to see it! Many would rejoice because they were your rivals, many because they were your foes; some because you had outstripped them, some because you had oppressed them; a few because in your humiliation they would have witnessed a mighty retribution, and a salutary triumph of the right. To none of these classes should I belong. I should lament the downfall of the nation that I had revered; of the land of my ancestors, native not less to my affections;—my own country still when she suffered me no longer to be her son. With a larger than national sentiment I should bewail the rejection of her who, as I had hoped, belonged not to herself, or to Europe, but to the world. With an awe not human only, but religious, and with a boding trouble for those I most revere, I should contemplate the instability, not of human greatness alone, but of human virtue, and of that greatness which Virtue counted but as one among the attributes of her divinity and the insignia of her command. Nations, like men, die out; and of all

the exits from national life few are unshaken by a pang, fewer still unhonoured by a tear. Some nations have fallen across the threshold of a great enterprise; some, like Herod, have dropped, stricken in a moment upon the noon-tide throne of permitted might; some have not relinquished a sceptre worthily upheld, until it sank into a worthier hand: but if the elect of nations stands condemned, because she fulfilled not that vocation with which she alone was called; and if the sword upon which, tried and sentenced, she fell, was no other than that weapon with which she was gloriously apparelled for unguilty conquests; then, Sir, all those who retain any commerce with human frailty or pious fear may be permitted in sad perplexity to wonder and to sigh. Let that come which must; yet England had never been made the richest and most powerful of the nations, if she had not at one time been the bravest, the most laborious, and the wisest; and if, by the most lamentable of declines, virtue drew corruption from her own reward; if industry produced wealth, wealth covetousness, covetousness all that is weak and base, and these their appointed end; let all who speak remember; let friend and foe, those who weep, and those who laugh, be warned; and let no man make mention of what England became, till he has called to mind what England was.

Draw we now the other lot. Who is she that

issues forth from the cloud, the Pallas of the nations? One who, gifted with highest gifts, remained the mistress of them all, and never became their slave; one who possessed them not for her own good alone, but for the good of all; and possessed her own soul in the quietude of strength and in the wisdom of peace. From the beginning she was destined to a great work. Descended from great and various races, she seemed by inheritance or by emulation to unite their virtues; for she manifested a Roman magnanimity, fortitude in the field, and reverence for law, in conjunction with a Saxon robustness and domestic faith, and all the chivalry of the Norman. She was seated sufficiently near to the great republic of European States, to challenge them to feats of arms, or sport with them in warlike games; and yet her insular position had imparted to her that exemption from external chances which secured the equable, simultaneous, and proportionate development of all her internal energies, and made her history the history of her mind. All those great principles which elsewhere have been allowed a separate expansion in separate places found, therefore, in her a common asylum, and either coalesced in her multi-form unity, or contended on equal terms on her stage. She was as commercial as Tyre, and as given to agriculture as Egypt. She united an aristocracy the greatest in the world, not from its antiquity or prescriptive exclusiveness, but its noble-

ness and its ministries of public duty, with whatever in popular institutions opens out a sphere for the energies of the many, without debarring from them objects of reverence, or exacting a forfeiture of their peace. Her nobles were the bastions of the throne, and the pillars of the people. Her throne was the sanctuary of her state and the unity of the nation. She was as ardent in the prosecution of new science as though all knowledge were yet to be won, and as vigilant in the conservation of ancient truth as though its whole increase were stored in her garners; and while literature and invention were with her unshackled, an apostolical church, the depository of a traditional creed, was careful lest one crumb of the complete faith should be lost, or one drop inclosed in holy vessels should suffer violation. She stood between the old world and the new, belonging to neither, yet to both; rooted in all the recollections of ancient times, and fanned by the gales of promise that blew from a younger shore.

If such should be the account rendered hereafter of the time that is now past, what worthy consummation shall be added for the future? Upon this wide platform and deep foundation what structure is to be reared? A new era has dawned upon the world; and discoveries which have quadrupled the speed of locomotion, and made the transmission of intelligence instantaneous, must affect the interests of mankind as though the earth had been, with reference to phy-

sical obstacles, compressed into one-fourth of its former size, while the intellectual sphere had been enlarged fourfold. How the change will affect social relations we know not, except that this sudden increase of human power must work great things for evil or for good, according as evil or good predominates in those on whom the responsibility of the boon is imposed. In proportion as the barriers of nationality and neighbourhood are broken down, there must rise, founded on the ruins of a narrower system, a Babylonian empire or a city of peace. A ruler will still be needed; or an instructress to supersede rule. That nation, we may well believe, will gain most from these new opportunities, which possesses most the energies necessary to use them, and the wisdom to use them aright. England, if she forfeits not her place, must be that nation; but before she is mighty without she must first be strengthened within. Let her prove to those who can but dream about the past, that heroism and piety are restricted to no conventional forms, but hang like the air above the world, and can embody themselves wherever there is a human heart to receive them and a hand the servant of that heart: let her prove that heroism needs not the fence of feudal towers; and that piety can pray and watch, though embosomed no longer in cloisters which harmonize the city tumults with their anthems, or fling the light of a midnight shrine from rocky island and on from wave to



wave. Let her educate her people, and let her first lesson be that education does not consist chiefly in verbal instruction, but in whatever acquaints men with their duties and familiarizes them with honest refinement. If she looks for a minister to aid her that which she has long sought after stands beside her still. Let her strengthen and honour her Church, that great institution, the oldest as the noblest in the land, the mother of her early civilization and the harbinger of her modern freedom, who wears upon her front the scars of England's whole history, who never slept but for England's calamity, nor woke but to remember her former deeds, nor was powerless till she was bound, nor dumb till none would hear. Let this Church, which long since and often has stirred in her sleep, be awakened if but by the tread of advancing events, and lift up her "mitred head" not only in the courts of princes, but what is better and more needed now, in the darkness of many a Pagan English town. Let her meet her great adversary with learning for learning, and temple for temple; let her send forth her voice, and the circumference of your sea-girt isle will send back a response. Let her be no longer the constable alone of the State, but a priest ministering at its altar and a larger one; and content no longer with that praise which now she claims as hers only, that whatever may be her defects or deficiencies, she has preserved the fulness of the

primeval faith and united it to a worship undefaced by modern additions ; let her cleanse her household as she purged her missal, shut out the profane from her tree of life, and re-enact the commandments. Thus confirmed in virtue at home, the paths of England will be made plain abroad ; and since she alone of the nations possesses that divine faculty, to fill with her own spirit each one of her sons, who, move where he may, is covered with the consciousness of his country, and strengthened by her arm, let her move forth in her colonial children for the good of furthest climes, and behold the whole countenance of England, surmounted by the crowns of past ages, reflected in other than Britannic waters. She will then be able to consummate an empire not only more universal than any which has preceded it, but nobler by far, and of an order never before revealed. Antiquarians and sentimentalists make a mock of trade. Your trade will be the most glorious of instruments when its moral end is recognised as its sanction. It is not aught that you possess which alarms your friends, but that which you lack ; not what you seek to multiply, but what you forget to retain. The precious metals are the circulating medium, or "lingua communis" of trade ; trade is the circulating medium of nations ; the nervous tissue through which there flows a common life, power, and mind. The trade of a mean nation has ever diffused a mean infection, because it is itself mean ;

but if the body of your prosperity be nerved by heroic energies and uplifted by an indwelling spirit of greatness, then you can never minister to the physical needs of mankind, without enriching them likewise with your moral treasures. It has been said that trade is the golden girdle of the globe: that cincture may minister at a grave office if it be clasped by the Urim and Thummim of British religion and British law. A world that England truly serves will not soon be able to dispense with her services; for in honourable rivalships the competitors are few, although the reward is great. Empires have hitherto been founded on violence and blood: if any one scorns the notion of an empire founded on virtue and on trade, let him consider that authentic canon and clear definition of power—"He that would be greatest among you, let him be as he that serves." The Roman, in old time, exulted in that mandate, "Tu regere gentes:" let it rather be the praise of England that she neither trampled on the proud nor spared the submissive alone; that from no unjust and tyrannous elevation she overshadowed a subject world; but that she raised the nations to her height, and enfranchised them into her common dominion of illumination and peace. Be assured that, however an abject sympathy may delight in the glitter of an oppressive sword, all power lastingly honoured has included some true service extended to the subject people in protection or needful restraint;

and that that authority will not soonest be rejected which alone has never demanded an external badge. Let England govern by serving; and the noblest of empires will be the longest lived. Should it ever yield to the common lot, it will die the noblest of deaths; for it will sink back amid the royal concourse of those nations whom it had reared up to be the inheritors of its excellence as well as the successors of its power. I have drawn the picture of what may be; what will be I cannot foretell: but even in your corrupt age there have been auguries that consoled the desponding, and eagles on the right hand. It was England who was summoned to stand up and to hurl from its seat that tyranny, a sudden and all but universal apparition, which covered the monuments of the European Past and threatened the civilization of the Future. It was England who first threw wide her prison gates and bade her slaves to breathe. When in your populous districts hope itself was lost, save the hope of a merely physical and therefore fatal prosperity, and the barbarism of gold seemed destined to a dominion rather shared than alternated with the anarchy of ignorance and vice; voices were heard, however feeble, amid that jarring and formless void, commanding order and invoking law. Never in England has any opprobrium arisen, but some man has been raised up to speak against it. From these and the like omens, I see already the promise of England's future, re-



flected like the light of an unascended sun from a thousand mountain-tops down on the plains below.

Let me hasten to the end. If the better of these two lots is to be drawn, it must be drawn by a united people. Whoever glances at a map of the world will wonder at the smallness of that centre upon which its best interests, enshrined within the British Islands, rest for support. That centre consists of two parts: that inmost wheel is formed of two segments: of these, if one be suffered to decay, or if the twain fall asunder, the whole mighty fabric will collapse, and your conquering progress be stayed for ever. On the 10th of February, 1800, a very ardent advocate for the Union, one who states that he had pressed that subject on the English Government for seven years before he could engage their serious attention upon it, spoke thus: "The British Islands are formed by nature for mutual security or mutual destruction, and if we are to pursue the course we have thought fit to run for the last twenty years it may become a question of doubtful issue, whether, at a crisis of difficulty and danger, Great Britain will be enabled to support us, or we shall sink Great Britain." If Lord Clare thought that nothing but a substantial union, by which he meant "an incorporation of these kingdoms," was a protection from this danger, is not the experience of the last twenty years, nay of the last twenty months,



sufficient to prove that the mere name of a legislative Union is an insufficient safeguard? Others may deem of this matter otherwise: but I desire to record in these words my own conviction, that England cannot dispense with the aid of Ireland, nor receive that aid unless she raises her from her present low estate. Whatever honest purpose, skill, or power, are necessary for this work, she must possess or acquire. Do you ask me how high the hand of England is to raise the land that England laid low? —As high as her own head.

Is it better, Sir, that two kingdoms which must be one or nothing should live together in peace, or be perpetually engaged in rancorous, objectless, and fratricidal war? Is it better that two kingdoms which form one empire should club together the worst follies of each into a common folly, and the worst passions of each into a common ruin, or that they should summon to a synod the best faculties and affections of each to direct the energies of both and provide for the common safety? You are a commercial people: what commerce can there be more profitable than the mutual interchange of good offices, attended perhaps at last by a higher blessing, the communication of good qualities reciprocally given and received? Let no one say, that he is pledged by the past: to what opinion can any statesman stand more pledged than to the good of his country? Establish, if you need them, hos-

pitals for decayed reputations and principles past their work : but call your strong men to the tasks of strength, and bid them labour in the spirit of freedom.

Begin, Sir, at last to govern Ireland in the spirit of a statesman. It is not too late yet : and it cannot be said to be too early. For six centuries you rested from thought on this matter : six centuries were to you sabbatical : therefore labour now on the sabbath day. You may plead for such profanation the threefold excuse of charity, of piety, and of necessity. Cast about and find some large and sound principles of action : and if you cannot find a political principle at once, remember that even a moral or ethical principle may be of use negatively, that is to say, may be significant as to what it prohibits. Another temporary guide to you would be this—note down whatever looks most like a principle or at least systematic practice in your government of Ireland till the last few years, and revolve how a course exactly the opposite might work. At one time it was a maxim to oppose the English interest on all occasions to the Irish, on a presupposition that they were incompatible : at another time to oppose class to class in Ireland. The troubles of last year in Ireland, which have embittered some old sores, have also tended to heal many differences. The clergyman of the Establishment and the Roman Catholic priest, the proprietor

and the farmer, have sat in the same relief committee, received the same blessings from the starving poor, been occasionally assailed by the same mob in the neighbouring town, and not seldom by the same missiles from England. Rather encourage than snap asunder those friendly relations; and make the union of classes in Ireland contemporaneous with a closer union of affections between the two countries. If it should occur to you, after reading our annals, that you forgot to conquer the country which ever and anon you overran, remember that this is no fault of ours, Ireland having been always too much divided to make the resistance which you met in Scotland; and that it is now too late to mend in this respect, except you had spirit enough to attempt an industrial conquest, by means of a copious investment of capital.

Wise men are men who can pick some instruction out of their own errors, otherwise worthless; but foolish men learn nothing by experience, because, passing through a variety of accidents but not having had courage or time to digest their chance observations into any consistent scheme of retrospective thought, they have in reality acquired no experience and stored up nothing but blows. The experience of last year alone has enriched you with several excellent negative principles. That the proper business of one single man cannot be done by a whole college of fellow-workers sounds paradoxical, though

many simple instances of the fact will occur to you ; but a principle, of which this is one application, was scientifically demonstrated last year by a vain attempt to place the labour of the country at the disposal of baronial boards. On this occasion the principle arrived at may be rendered useful at once, if applied in a converse form ; for instance, it may be inferred that what is, at least in part, the work of the State cannot be efficiently carried out by isolated individuals ; and of this colonisation may be an example. That what should be done by direct legislation cannot be effected by indirect, was also proved last year. The great mass of the population being left without food, you resolved to call charity by the name of employment, and a premium on pauperism by that of a test of destitution, in the hopes of eliciting private capital : but the effect of this indirect proceeding was to pauperize labour, and make what private capital existed hide in holes. Here also you would seem to have touched on a principle without digging it up into the light. Let us try to apply it in a converse form. It is probable, for instance, that what ought to be effected by indirect cannot be effected by direct legislation ; that a direct tax on absentees would be an illustration of this ; and that a more fatal one would be found in any law which interfered with the rights of property, for the purpose of enforcing its responsibilities, instead of asserting both



with equal plainness, and allowing the laws that vindicated and defined each to act and react upon each other indirectly. Here are two principles, each with a twofold application, to begin with. I have indicated a principle with regard to the Poor Law, namely, that a Poor Law is not a scheme for the support of an indefinite number of paupers, which could only be realized for a short time, because this process would eat up the labour fund; but that its economical value consists in its making the pressure of over-population onerous at an early stage, on those who possess the power to deal with it, and have the deepest stake in the country; thus suggesting to them in time the need of remedial measures, such as emigration, education, &c. Should this principle be sound, a corollary from it must be, that a Poor Law rendered fit to counteract a famine by the removal of tests then especially necessary, must thus be made unfit for its proper functions. An Irish peasant is always in favour of substituting his hat for a pane of glass, and making every thing do the work of every thing else; but English legislators ought to be above such devices.

If what looks like a great principle, and yet an obvious one, should appear to you corruptly denied, inquire whether it be really controverted, and remember that a great principle misapplied is a great mischief, which does in one year an amount of evil that otherwise must have required ten. If any expedient, very clever, but a little malignant, should occur



to you suddenly, think about it twice lest it should prove an ingenious way of going wrong. Thus, the suppression of the class of Irish proprietors might help you out a little for the first year, and it is certainly a pleasant charity to give the goods of one's neighbour to the poor; but the suppression of a class is a serious thing, every class having some function to discharge in the State which it can hardly evade though ever so selfish. If all the soap-boilers in England were to be banished in a day, a shock would be felt; and if you were to abolish that whole class in Ireland on which British dominion chiefly rests, you would be nothing the more secure. The Irish peasant sawed off the branch on which he was sitting; but English legislators should be more circumspect. You have discovered that Ireland wants a middle class. It wants it, because for a century you prohibited the acquisition of property by the poor; but remember that to attempt the creation of such a body by confiscating the property of the rich would be as foolish and immoral a proceeding as if you endeavoured to produce a middle class, relatively strong at least, by allowing the upper classes to be shot off by degrees, and the lower to be hanged off or starved out. A middle class is produced by capital, and capital by security of property, not confiscation. Irish rents are said to be too high. Remember that the value of land, like that of other commodities, is not determined by the caprice of the owners, but by general

laws. The farmer in Ireland demands a less share of the produce raised than in England because he invests less capital in the land, and because he is more pressed by competition. Rents are high relatively to the farmer's profits, not to the productive powers of the land; and wherever the land is let at a rate unusually low the agriculture is worst. I fear to tire you with suggestions; yet I must make a few more. Suppose not, because Ireland is full of old errors, that you are to create in her a system altogether new. You cannot build upon air. You can benefit no individual without first discovering what is good in him and making your appeal to that. In Ireland you can dispense with nothing that is good, and not at once with every thing that is bad: you must work according to the machinery you find, joining on the new to the old; and if any of your own institutions are not congenial with the character of this country, rather than bid them serve us in our own despite, you will do well to modify and accommodate them. Commit not to the rash and spleenful pretence of a flying season the grave task of legislating for the future in the present, and for two nations in one. Procrastinate no longer, nor cheat yourselves with half measures from a natural desire to distribute an inevitable expense over a large series of years, for the time of action is to-day, and you may clear by a bound a stream which you cannot composedly walk across. Even when you feel almost

sure that we have deserved punishment, punish us not by any injury certain to recoil upon yourselves. I have heard of forty Irish freeholders, who, being locked up near the court-house during an election, threatened to hang themselves, in order on the opening of the door to spite their landlord, who had made a point of being obliged by their votes: but British senators should make the best of all contingencies. Remember that foolish laws are foolish, not because in a nation of philosophers they must necessarily work ill, but because, all laws being susceptible of divers modes of operation, these in particular are likely to work ill in a nation so unwise as to require laws. Do not even despise an exhausted populace; for a rat dying in its hole may expel you from your house. Keep yourselves from unwise astonishment at the aberrations of the unwise; for wilder fancies than Repeal will float across brains delirious with hunger; and the eyes of those that watch on the rock now the seventh day will mistake far off foam for a white sail. Abstain from unreasonable anger at the frustration of unreasonable hopes; for it is not possible that the cripple taken out of your cage should at an early period dance to the satisfaction of polite company. For centuries this country has suffered from one disease, the moral heart-burn produced by energies that preyed on her inwardly, because they were allowed no outward object: help her, in the first instance, to help herself;

and show her no more favour when you have once given her a free stage. Do not experimentalize “in corpore vivo,” though it be also “in corpore vili :” the Irishman, being asked whether he could play the fiddle, made answer that he knew not, for he had never tried : but great statesmen should know beforehand what enterprises they can carry out and what they cannot. Consult for the common good, in a spirit of hope, because there is no cause for despair, and you have to deal with a people who eminently require hope, and yet are much subject to depression ; of patience because, though you do your best, you have great difficulties to contend with ; of humility, because the chief of those difficulties result from your own past delinquencies ; of courage, because weak courses turn out the most dangerous ; of wisdom, because unwise courage is the heroism of a fool—in one word, of Duty. Having consulted, should it be found absolutely necessary that Ireland must be ruined, leave her, if you can possibly afford it, her good name. In Ireland, that has always counted for something ; and the vainer amongst us are disposed to attach the more importance to it since it has become their only possession.

Finally, be not incensed at being reminded of what you know, for prejudice and anger make us forget our better knowledge. A century ago you must have known that civil rights and political privileges were distinct things ; yet you deprived the



Roman Catholics of property to preserve Protestant ascendancy. Another principle which you must have heard of was this, that the domestic was distinct from the civil or political sphere, and should not be invaded by them; yet the State departed from its proper functions to inform the son and wife when they were to take the property of the father and husband. You probably could have informed another that Church and State, though in alliance, are not one; yet you jobbed the Episcopal appointments to keep up the "English interest;" and an archbishop now and then governed all Ireland except his own diocese. Among the various distinctions of office necessary in a limited monarchy, there is, perhaps, none more important than that which keeps the judicial function apart from the Executive: yet, in Ireland, judges were too often made on political grounds, and magistrates who had no politics were sometimes official hacks. This strange state of the body politic, in which all the vital parts were unnaturally squeezed together, was not the less a tyranny, because it was one too weak for courage or generosity, and too clumsy to carry out a purpose; but what I would here remark is, that as you could hardly have been ignorant of those great principles which your policy violated, no harm could have followed had you been occasionally reminded of them. I have now, Sir, suggested, besides eleven practical measures before discussed, a yet larger number of



practical hints, to be expanded at your leisure by one in whose discretion you confide far more than in mine; which hints, if they pretend not to the name of principles, are yet of that high family and blood: and I will only add that should you act upon these suggestions, or such as are not opposed to them, we in Ireland will forgive the remote past because it is past, and the recent past because of its deeds most were well intended and many good, and its words were but wind; establishing it as our principle, to cleave in all her fortunes to England, and adopting as our motto the sound and simple dogma of Mr. Pitt, "We must stand or fall together—we should live and die together."

Alas, Sir, we contend upon unequal terms when England reviles Ireland, and Ireland England. You, in hating Ireland, hate but what you have always disliked, and never known: we, when compelled by justice or the common spirit of a man to accept the challenge and retort upon a plain-spoken with a courteous scorn, are reduced to speak against that country with which many of us have associated their most venerated remembrances and their most forward-looking hopes. Plainly we must speak or be silent; and if I err not in imputing to England the eminent possession of justice, that great virtue which is the corner-stone of the social edifice, the manlier of her sons will not repine at strong words if just, whether the voice

of justice alone, or that with which justice cannot always dispense, a just resentment. Yet still it is England that we speak against. It was your policy to sow in this land a race of men with no country; but Providence raised up in its place a race of men owing fealty to two countries. We have lately heard much of Irish nationality. There never was a time when I did not feel Ireland to be my country; and the stormy scorn with which for a year and more you have assailed her, trampling upon her in the hour of her sorest adversity, and embittering the flavour of the bread you gave, has pressed that sentiment around me with a closeness for which I thank you: but yet I once thought that those who have neither country for their interests, might have both for their affections; and I still distrust the soundness of that patriotism, which renounces the past to be faithful to the present, and responding to all claims that live in the circle around us, forgets the successive monuments of household generations gone by, which repose in no alien land. If the relations between England and Ireland be indeed such as you would make them, then I ought to apologize for not having touched with the lighter pen of a foreigner upon certain scandals in your country with which you may conclude me to have an imperfect acquaintance and no concern. Old habit, however, breaks out at times; and I have spoken of

England's existing blots, not with resentment only, but with such resentment as is not lavished save on corruptions that vitiate what we love. Can these two countries never be united save by a Union the result of a mutual necessity, the memorial of a partaken corruption, the provoker of a recurrent hostility, but never yet the spousal pledge of a common hope? Is it impossible that the sons of either should ever be true to the other, without being false to a nearer claim? Must our choice always halt between that mother who fed our bodies with her milk, and her who nursed our spirits from the stores of Shakspeare and Bacon? It may be so; yet circumstances once promised better: and fruits that moulder immature put forth a goodly bloom. A very few years had elapsed after the enfranchisement of Ireland, when she stood up no mean citizen of no mean city. When the French Revolution broke out as a plague, and threatened with peril and temptation the whole soul of the world; when the infection had already reached your shores and spotted your inmost chambers, two men stood up in England between the living and the dead: those two men were Pitt and Burke: one wielded the energies of your country, the other directed its mind; one was an Englishman, the other an Irishman. When the great republic had become the greater empire, and kingdoms, no longer rival, murmured "Who next must fall?" two men stood at the head of English affairs:

one directed her diplomacy, the other conducted her armies; both were Irishmen. To descend from those memorable epochs to more recent dangers, when the most warlike of the eastern nations precipitated itself upon your path, and all asked to whom India was to belong, two men rode, side by side, into the battle: one governed that empire, the other commanded her hosts; one was an Englishman, the other an Irishman. On those great occasions the soldiers who fought in common ranks were of no exclusive race: death was there impartial; and if that Saxon and Celtic blood had never met before, it mingled on the plain of Waterloo, and on the banks of the Sutlej. I know not, Sir, whether any of those who fought in the former field are permitted, now grey-headed, to haunt your English coasts: I know not whether the fathers of any who fought in that more recent field, grey, but not with years alone, are of those who have wandered from the land that gave them birth to that land to which their sons gave victory: but if it so should be, and if that hand which helped to lift the fortunes of England so high be now extended miserably in solicitation of a witholden crust;—all I can say is that it is a sorry sight. Let the boys in the market-place laugh as they may, I am not of their number.

I have said, Sir, what I had to say, and I release



you: Amid the din of conflict one voice is not heard far: but duty, which rests but slightly on hope, leaves us nothing to fear. Truth in the end must prevail. That certainty is a confirmation of faith, but no unbounded promoter of finite expectations; for her battle-field is larger than the British Empire, and during the agony of her strife generations live and die. Where the strongest are every day found wanting no one who is conscious of an upright purpose need stay to ask whether he be weak, or what the weak can effect. Such sentiments as I have expressed must excite the hostility of a large section of the British public; and, coupled with the admissions I have made, will win me no popularity in Ireland. I have not shunned such hostility nor sought such popularity. Connected with no party, and attached profoundly, reverentially, and sorrowfully, to both countries, I have endeavoured to serve both by bearing witness to whatever truth, or fragment of the truth, it has been permitted me to see: and if in this endeavour I have failed, as is probable, no lesser matter is worth my seeking or shunning. Should my advice pass for nothing, may England receive wiser advice from the wiser, stronger reproofs from the stronger, and from the source of wisdom, wisdom to use them both. May that nation, the greatest in the world, so great that in erring it errs from itself and cannot err less than greatly, possess now that true



greatness which will enable her to profit by her past errors in renouncing them, and to summon up her noblest faculties to provide that the commonwealth take no harm. May the two kingdoms hitherto intertangled, not united, retaining each with its own name whatever is best in its separate character and recollections, blend together the excellence of both into a common excellence, and bury the past animosities of both in a common oblivion. May their union be a union of mutual respect, good-will, and good deeds; and, with these conditions, may it be perpetual. May the imperial nation thus built up be worthy of its destinies, and show to the inferior nations of the earth for what cause nationalities exist. Should the better of those two destinies which I have pourtrayed be reserved for England, it will be said of her by the future historian, that at a period then long past she had been tried and not found wanting. It will be said, that after the termination of her most arduous war, when she was flushed by the greatest of her military triumphs, and flown with the insolence of a long and peaceful prosperity, the sins of her youth were allowed suddenly to overtake her, and she was summoned in a moment to confront and deal finally with that people, at whom, from the beginning to that hour, she had but glanced askance. It will be said, that she was equal to the emergency and to herself; and that putting from

her, as another's madness, the whole burden of the past and the cloud of self-willed delusion, she had seized the moment and consummated the triumph. With nations, as with men, the hour of temptation and of trial is the hour of rapid advance. Men do not grow either physically or morally by equable progress, but shoot forward at particular periods, especially after disease and suffering; and nations which sometimes sleep for centuries, at other times make in a few years the progress of a century, the blossom unfolding in an hour when the seasonable preparation has previously been made in secret. Ireland, like England, has now reached a period of transition, and possibly of transformation. The period of outlawry is past; the period of legal tyranny is past; and the period of agitation, together with that strong man who embodied and directed it, may likewise be past, if for England also is past the period of empirical legislation, of prejudiced discussion, and of contemptuous and capricious benevolence. Never was there more room for hope than now, if the two countries, wakened by so painful a shock, be capable of understanding themselves and their mutual relations. In vain would you legislate for Ireland until you have learned from what point of view the relations between the two countries are to be regarded: in vain would you even consult, until you have learned with what disposition, founded

on the past and on the future, the subject is to be approached. This treatise is the endeavour of one man to point out, as a preliminary to all sound judgment and sane action, those relations and that disposition. If it sounds like a message of war, I beg you, nevertheless, to believe that it is sent in the spirit of peace.

CURRAH CHASE,

*November, 1847.*

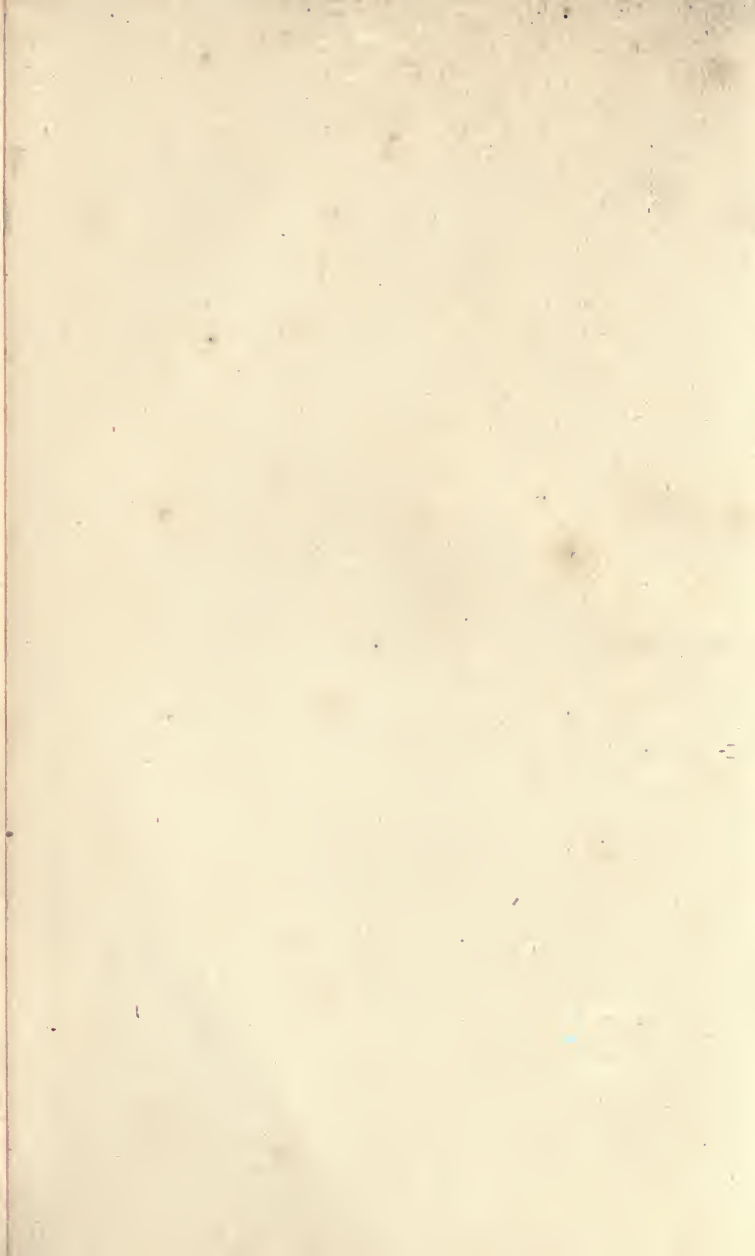
THE END.

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