

Report, delivered before the Philanthropic Association of the
Meadville Theological School. - June 22^d 1847.

Ireland.

The origin & cause of her calamities.

In introducing to your minds the subject for consideration this evening, I feel that no words are necessary to attract your attention or awaken your interest in the facts to be presented. The feeling with which Ireland ever turns toward America, - "the home of her emigrant & the asylum of her exile," - is reciprocated by the sympathy which exists in American bosoms, for her oppressed condition and her ardent love & noble efforts for freedom. To Americans, the condition of Ireland is rendered peculiarly interesting, - by the unaging flame of her patriotism, her poetry, & her eloquence, - by the number of her sons who mingle with us in our daily life, - ^{especially} by the distress which forms so mournful a contrast to the prosperity of our own happy land.

The calamity, which is just ceasing to afflict our Irish brethren, has cut off many thousand human beings! - And it is estimated that before it shall have ceased two millions will have been destroyed. - One fourth of the entire population!! It has indeed surpassed, both in the number who have been swept from existence, & the awfulness of the death by which they have perished, everything that has happened among men since the bright bow of promise spanned the heavens, as an everlasting sign of the covenant between God & man. - It will long render the 19th Century memorable in the annals of mankind. It ~~is~~ ^{has} already

called loudly on your sympathy & benevolence. Thanks to the Bountiful Giver of all things, the power has been given to the American people to mitigate in great measure, if not entirely, to prevent further ravages of the destructive calamity. That power has been generously exerted. And now, since, the need of action has ceased, there is time & opportunity afforded to make those inquiries that must interest all, relative to the causes of the suffering, which required our aid.

It is, probably, generally supposed that the late famine in Ireland, has been owing to an excess of population together with the failure of the potato crop. If it were indeed to be thus attributed to the ^{fore} unseem operations of nature, or the inscrutable decrees of Divine Providence, independent of man's influence, it would be ours to alleviate the distress in silence & submission. - But where nature has done so much for the welfare & prosperity of the land, the failure of one article of food, the potato, cannot be sufficient to account for the destruction of so large a proportion of a whole population. It must only evince a lamentable condition of things that would permit such to be the case. And as the work of the guilty hand of man is so clearly to be traced in the origin & seen in the present causes of such a condition, it becomes all who possess a single feeling for suffering humanity to lift up their voices & exert every means in their power, for the restoration of the oppressed to their just rights & privileges.

The Country - Few countries on the face of the earth are more highly favored by nature than Ireland. The picturesque scenery along the banks of its rivers, & on the margins of its numerous lakes - its lovely vales & hills green to their summits have been celebrated by her own poets & all travellers who have visited her shores. The continual verdure of the land long ago obtained for it the names "Green Erin" & the "Emerald Isle." The climate is generally warm, & nowhere subject to extremes of heat or cold. Though

by its moisture it is rendered favorable to production, it is not by this made unhealthy. The raging fevers which frequently visit it are attributed by those who have considered the subject, to other causes, — to unwholesomeness, or insufficiency of food, or to exposure & severity of labor.

The Island contains about 32,000 square miles, being about $\frac{3}{4}$ as large as Pennsylvania. It is divided into four Provinces Ulster, Leinster, Munster, & Connaught; — situated respectively in the North, East, South & West. It will be important to bear in mind the distinction between these four Provinces, & the thirty-two counties into which it is subdivided, — as both will be referred to in subsequent remarks. From the present unhappy condition of the country, — by the want of means among the laborers & enterprise among the Capitalists, much of the land, including mountains & bogs is uncultivated. By late examination it is estimated that four & one half million acres, which is nearly all this portion might be reclaimed. This would add $\frac{1}{3}$ as much as is now used, to the agricultural land of Ireland. — But even that which is now used can scarcely be called cultivated. Much of it might be made to produce twice as much as it does; & scarcely any part is as productive as proper attention might make it.

And yet even in her ruined & (^{exhausted} worn-out) condition, the land produces enough to maintain her whole population. The yearly exports taken by the wealthy, to other lands for a "better market" are sufficient to preserve her whole population from the danger of Starving. Grain of every kind is produced, in the best cultivated portions, in as great abundance to the acre as in either England or Scotland. But from the moisture of the climate, potatoes, the principle article of food are particularly adapted to cultivation. According to statistics in 1842, from the port of Waterford, the export of grain to England had been increasing for forty years. Till at that time it amounted to five times
(in 1842)

as much as forty years before. In 1802 the whole export of grain from Ireland was 461,000 qrs. - in 1838, it was 3,447,000, or 8 times as much. Since then it had somewhat diminished. But the amount was in 1842 upwards of 2,000,000, chiefly of oats. In the neighborhood of Cork are situated large dairies, and farms for grazing. And from Cork are exported, every year, large quantities of raw provision (beef, pork, butter, &c) - Thus, from the very people, by whose labor this produce is obtained, the food which they need, & to which they should be entitled, is wrested from them; leaving them continually on the very verge of starvation. There has been drawn from Ireland, in a single year, in amount of agricultural exports, over \$50,000,000, for the benefit of the rich proprietors of her soil. Probably that amount has been much lessened during the past year by the failure of the potato crop & other causes: but even if \$30,000,000 have been drawn away how many of the starving population of ill-fated Ireland would it relieve?

But beside these considerations, there are ample resources for manufacturing still unemployed. And by the means of internal navigation, - by the numerous large & favorably situated harbors, & by her favorable situation with respect to neighboring nations, it is acknowledged to be unsurpassed & scarcely equalled by any country in Europe in its facilities for commerce.

Thus, although the population before the late famine numbered 8,000,000, it is estimated that the country might not only sustain, but comfortably support double the number, if the land were properly ~~and~~ cultivated, the resources well applied, & the products justly distributed.

And yet there exists a population, in Ireland, starving & unemployed, wearing out a miserable existence on the charity of those only a degree less wretched than themselves, or supported by a tax levied on the more wealthy & better instructed classes. Who will ascribe this to the ordinations of Divine

Providence? Surely, something far different in its operation produced it. Or, who will ascribe it to the ignorance & idleness of the people? and not, ^{rather} pity their sad lot which makes them so? It is easy for those interested, thus to exculpate themselves; but as long as man's guilt is so perceptible, — while injustice & oppression are so plainly instrumental in producing it, it is a libel on God's goodness to ascribe it to Him. — We discover, then, that it is not to the failure of the potato crop that this late calamity is to be attributed; but to that condition of things which makes so large a population dependent upon one article of food for their support.

To consider the causes of that condition, or rather, the one principal cause, & its origin, is the subject to which I invite your attention. — Many & various causes are assigned by different writers, — each biased in his opinion by the different point whence the subject is viewed, or by prejudices of various kinds. — Thus one imagines that the state of religion; — the evils of popery — are sufficient to account for it; — affirming that so long as the population are bound down by the chains of superstition & ignorance, their condition will continue as it is. — But this, bad as it is, cannot produce starvation! Another ascribes ^{it} to the want of general intelligence, & to the idleness & carelessness of the people, But these are rather to be accounted for by other causes, than to be considered as such themselves. Yet another attributes it to the bad Government, declaring that a repeal of the Union, & a Parliament of their own would remedy all. — Doubtless, all of these are more or less influential in producing & perpetuating the present condition, But neither can be sufficient in itself to account for it; for all of these exist equally in other countries yet without so disastrous results. — One other cause

has been assigned by those who have considered the subject;— It is, the tenure of the land, & the evils of absenteeism. This will I think, appear to all the principal & most important cause, the most direct in its influence, & the most deleterious in its operation. — The unjust distribution of the land to a few individuals, who do not occupy it; but residing in distant places, drain the country of its resources, robbing the tiller of the soil by exorbitant rents. — In other words, the relations of Landlord & Tenant as they developed, the one owning & receiving the profits of the land; the other subject to him almost to the degree of life & death. — This appears very evidently to be the great difficulty. — The others are incidental & indirect, & all together would not produce starvation, This in connection with the others will fully account for it; without supposing it to be produced by the "operations of nature". Each of the causes mentioned influences the rest; all acting reciprocally, & rendering it difficult, almost impossible, to remedy any, or better the condition of the people in any considerable degree, without improving the whole social, religious & political system. It will also be difficult to discuss the influence of the one referred to separately from the rest. While this is spoken of, its connection with others should not be forgotten.

But before considering the present relations of Landlord & Tenant, it will be well to take a short survey of the history of the people. — It would be in vain to attempt to give a full historical sketch, or to relate all their wrongs & grievances. That were a work too great for a single hour, & unnecessary for the present purpose. Those events only will be related, which bear directly upon the present subject; — showing the origin of the great evil, which causes the present calamity. —

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Ireland, like most other nations, had her "golden era" - It was before any foreign invader had been able to plant foot on her soil. Her Kings were of her own race, and
"The hearts & hands of freborn men
Were all the ramparts round them" (Moore)

According to tradition, for nothing ^{more} reliable remains, the people were active & courageous, generous toward friends, & bitter toward their enemies, ardently attached to religion, & extravagantly fond of music & poetry. Bards were highly honored, and were accustomed to wander about, singing their effusions accompanied by the harp. - Indeed, the people possessed those natural talents which if cultivated & properly directed ensure national prosperity & success, happiness, - But alas,

"Her ^{harp} ~~pipe~~ is turned to mourning
And her pipe to notes of grief -"

Her minstrels now sing with sad recollections, the melodies of former days. A foreign foot now treads her soil. Her own sons are crushed & oppressed. By want & famine they are emaciated. An ignorant & degraded race, they are deprived of subsistence on the land of their birth & the field of their toils.

For many years before the first invasion from England, the different clans, like the Highlanders of Scotland, & the Indians of America, under their several leaders, had been engaged in bitter contests. - Finally, the wife of one of the chiefs, like the renowned Helen of Troy, was stolen by the chief of a hostile clan. After vainly waging war for her recovery, the betrayed husband, O'Rourke, applied to England for aid. Henry 2^d ready to gain a foothold on the Island, sent an army of 1500 men to his assistance. The object was accomplished & the English gained possession of a portion of the soil, and at that time commenced the long series of evils which for 7 centuries have not ceased to afflict Ireland. Shortly after this, without any pretext, except the subjugation of a single clan, Henry divided

the whole island between the ten principal adventurers, who regarded themselves as Lords & owners of the soil. This however was little more than nominal. — It is unnecessary to detail any of the events that happened between the 12th & 16th centuries. The English established a colony in the Island, between whom & the natives there were constantly enacted scenes of the most bloody violence. And although they wished to unite them with their own nation, the English constantly treated the Irish as enemies, thus sprang up that inveterate hatred toward the British Government which continues unabated to the present time. Fire, famine & the sword were each employed as means of subjugating the people, & scenes of massacre & distress darkened the whole period. Still, at the close of the 15th century, the English colony in Ireland, called the Pale was but small.

Henry 8th in the beginning of the 16th century began more determinedly to extend the English dominion in Ireland. Under him was made the first attempt to introduce the protestant religion. It is mournful to reflect that that Reformation which was elsewhere the herald of civil & religious liberty, was destined in Ireland only to sow fresh seeds of discord, & strife, producing a continual harvest of suffering & calamity. — Religion, although it has not been the cause of the sufferings of the Irish, has been more or less intimately connected with their calamities, & has ever been the occasion or pretext for many acts of oppression. — The light which then burst from the clouds which had so long obscured it, to shed its lustre on mankind, was ^{here} soon obscured, if not extinguished —

" — — — The beams it has left of its burning,

But deepen the long night of bondage & mourning
That dark o'er the Kingdoms of earth seems returning
And darkest of all, hapless Erin, o'er thee!" (Moore)

Had proper efforts been made for the intellectual, moral & religious elevation of Ireland, who can tell what might have been her condition now?

Henry 8th making the introduction of "pure religion" his pretext began with a martial course, but contented himself with increasing his revenues, by several confiscations, & by siezing the property of several rich abbies, & religious houses. It was evident that the reformation of religion was not the important object, for but little attention was paid to it, either in England or Ireland.

And Mary, although upholding the catholic religion, was sanguinary in her spoliation, & massacred the very people whose religious faith accorded with her own.

If Elizabeth was as she has been called a "bright star" to England, she was a "consuming fire" to poor afflicted Ireland. If her reign in England was that of an Augustus, it was equally that of a Nero toⁱⁿ Ireland. - Under her reign "the reformation" was made a pretext for all oppression. It was proclaimed & enforced with unexampled rigor. A few adopted, many rejected, but none understood its principles. Still "reform" was the watchword of the assailants, & the signal for extermination. Every form of the Catholic religion was prohibited throughout the land. The rack was directed to be employed on all suspected. Three quarters on the peasantry were granted to the soldiery & "executions were ordered to butcher without mercy." - Under such treatment, - harassed - irritated & persecuted - the whole population flew to arms, determined to achieve their liberty, or perish in the attempt. A general rebellion ensued, & blood was shed profusely. - But after vainly struggling, the Irish were overcome by the superior numbers & discipline of the British troops. The estates of their brave leader, Hugh O'Neil, Earl of Tyrone, comprising a great portion of the northern province, were siezed by the Queen's ministers, & granted to those prominent among the invaders. But the tenantry still held the actual possession for some time. - The estates of the Earl of Desmond, a descendant of one of the ten families to whom the Island had been granted by Henry 2^d - covering a large portion of country in the South,

shared a similar fate. They were ravaged with fire & sword, & the innocent tenantry delivered up to slaughter & famine. Raleigh & Spenser, two of the brightest names of the age, received a portion of the plunder. To the former was granted 40,000 acres of land in Cork & Waterford. This was afterwards sold to the great Earl of Cork, who at that time came to Ireland penniless, and left at his death an estate which now constitutes three ample fortunes. Spenser received 30,000 acres. The remainder of the forfeited lands were divided into manors & seignories, containing four, six, eight, or twelve, thousand acres each. In order to prevent the Irish from retaining possession of this estate as they had of O'neils, it was determined that no Irishman should buy or in any way hold these portions. And it was commanded to drive the natives into the bogs, mountains & wildernesses of the west. Continual efforts were made by the Ministers of Queen Elizabeth to dispossess the people of the land. But though the island had been much depopulated & ~~destroyed~~ desolated, & the people slaughtered or impoverished, they were not subdued & James 1st ascended the throne with the same inveterate hatred & determined resistance to encounter, that had hitherto existed.

James, 1st pursued the work of reformation with equal eagerness, though with less devastation & loss of blood. He also engaged in a contest with O'neil, ~~the~~^{he} descendant of the great northern chieftain, though with ^{better} greater success than his predecessor Elizabeth - The result placed at his disposal 50,000 acres of land, forming six counties in the Province of Ulster. He appropriated this, by reserving ~~by~~ a portion for himself, by planting a colony of Scotch, & by selling some to the English - The colony of Scotch occupied the principal portion, & at this time constitute the Presbyterian portion of Ireland. Down, one of the six counties is still possessed by twelve London Companies, under the name of Londonderry - These are now among the wealthiest companies

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in London. It is also said that they are among the best Landlords in Ireland. Thus it is that the northern portion of Ireland is the most prosperous.

Charles^{1st} who succeeded James did little of any importance. It remained for Cromwell to finish the work already begun. Though great had been the calamities of Ireland, the climax had not yet been reached. Though wars & confiscations had taken place, murders ^{had been} committed, & gradually the prosperity of the people ^{had} departed they had yet but a foretaste of what awaited them. Nothing had been carried on in the grand & extensive scale, that they were destined now to witness. Cromwell now stepped in, and by an artful policy, but still more by fire & sword he seized & appropriated nearly the whole country to himself, & his soldiery. Extermination & whatever of evil had been endured, were but a shadow of what was now to be manifested. The ~~last~~ wrecks of Cromwell's desolation are still seen after the lapse of two hundred years over every part of the Island. He accompanied by his followers, already accustomed to the sight of blood, under the pretext of serving God & religion, regarding themselves as the chosen instruments to execute Divine Wrath against the enemies of God & breathing forth destruction & vengeance upon all who dared to oppose them, - determined to Christianize, or exterminate the people of Ireland. After his army had engaged in prayer & divine service, Cromwell proclaimed his object to be 'to cut down & destroy the barbarous & blood thirsty Irish (!) & all their adherents.' And thoroughly & faithfully did he execute his threat, they spared neither childhood, nor old age, they ~~regarded~~ regarded neither male nor female, neither those in high nor those in low condition. After they had satiated themselves with slaughter, they collected together & transported to the West Indies 80,000! * And it is said by an English writer * that "200,000 persons quitted their country in despair." The ~~rest~~ remainder were crowded

* O'Connell is the authority for this, It seems almost incredible. * Bicheno.

into a narrow district;— the clergy were ordered on pain of death to quit the country, & those who had the hardihood to remain were obliged to perform their offices in caves & cliffs of rocks. Two thirds of the whole Island were siezed & confiscated. The land was appropriated in various ways. By an Act of Parliament passed September 25, 1563. ten counties were appropriated (so much of each as was confiscated) one portion for those who had advanced money for the support of the war, another portion for discharging the arrears of the army; & the remainder to be appropriated by Parliament for various purposes. It was determined to drive all the Catholics to the bogs & wildernesses west of the Shannon. But after endeavoring for some time to do this, it was abandoned, & those who had not already been transported, & were not considered dangerous were permitted to remain. Thus, according to Sir ^{John} Petty, "The British protestants & church had $\frac{3}{4}$ of all the lands; five sixths of all the houses; & two thirds of the foreign trade. Three fourths of the Irish were left in a miserably destitute condition, & although there were 8 papists for 30 others, & excepting the Scotch 20 papists for 1 other, there were far more men fit to be soldiers among the latter than among the former." The account of the distribution of the land by Cromwell as given by his commissioners is still preserved— According to this, of which there is no reason to doubt the accuracy, the surface of the country is estimated at 10,400,000 Irish acres.— Of this only ~~the~~ 800,000 acres, or the $\frac{1}{13}$ part, were left in the hands of the original Irish. The remainder, 9,600,000 acres, was divided among the new proprietors, of which 2,500,000 were siezed from former settlers— This was little less than a virtual resumption of the whole country. "I know of but one instance," says Mr O'Connell, "within the scope of my knowledge of a property that never was forfeited and that I possess myself." The descendants of those who were

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thus possessed of the ~~soil~~ land, are generally the owners of the soil now.

King Charles 2^d the son of him who was deposed by Cromwell when he ascended to the throne, for some reason or other, "only confirmed these confiscations, & established in their estates & territories, the descendants of his father's murderers."

The result of the war between James 2^d who was supported by the Irish & King William tended also to strengthen these grants. The treaty of Limerick made at the close of this contest in 1691 between William & James, secured to the Catholics the free exercise of their religion. But it was infringed little by little, until in the reign of Queen Anne it was almost entirely violated. Even after this celebrated treaty, a son by turning Protestant could disinherit all the rest of the family, if Catholics. A Catholic could not ~~buy~~ buy land. It was a crime for a Catholic to teach school. If a Catholic possessed a horse worth a hundred pounds (£100) his own son might take it from him by turning Protestant & paying fines. If a son abjured the Catholic religion, he could prevent his father from selling or otherwise disposing of the property, & at his father's decease could take it all to himself. And there are even now, says a writer (Mr O'Connell) "Landowners whose titles can be shown to have originated in these atrocious laws.*" These & many other equally oppressive laws, were enacted against the Catholics, many of which remained in force until the celebrated act of Catholic emancipation, a few years ago.

The rebellion in the latter part of the last century completed their history as a distinct nation. In 1800 they were united to Great Britain, forming the "United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland."

Harassed, & oppressed as they have been for so long a time, who can [#]Bishop Hughes seems to contradict this, when he says, in a lecture delivered in New York about this time - that, "no son of Irish parents ever took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded" - His words are quoted from memory - It is not necessary to attempt to reconcile these statements

wonder that we ^{should} find the Irish in an ignorant & rebellious state? Indeed, the only wonder is that they should remain as quiet & peaceable as they are. - It would be presumption, to attempt to measure the proportionate guilt of England & Ireland in all these transactions. Many things are said of Ireland's lawlessness, & much in extenuation of England's cruel policy. - But the facts as given by different writers are before you. - They are not wholly in accordance with the extravagant complaints of Irishmen, nor are they interpersed, with the English writers, with every mention of cruelty, lamentations on the necessity of such a course.

As has been said, such are the facts of the history; & they alone concern us at present. - Imagine the condition of things as left by Cromwell - the land possessed by a few foreign landlords, & the tenantry reduced to the lowest stages of misery - to be continued to the present time, & you have the Key to the Irish calamities.

By the right of primogeniture, & by the power of Government, ever ready to lend its support power to suppress rebellion - the estates of the rich have descended ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ almost unbroken succession to the present owners. And by the increase of population the farms of the tenants, have greatly diminished in size, while their condition has been perpetuated by their inability to ~~see~~ ^{throw off their yoke}, & rendered weak & powerless by their iron bondage. - It is easy to be seen that this condition of things, thus perpetuated must be opposed to the welfare & happiness of the people, & the prosperity of the state. The consequences were & still ~~are~~ ^{are} continuous fatal. These soldiers & adventurers had no bonds of sympathy with the natives, & when they became the proprietors of the soil, there was nothing to create that friendship & confidence between them & their tenants which is so necessary to the welfare of both. Many of them degenerated into an idle, careless set of speculators. From their peculiar character is evident their unfitness to become lords of the soil, & especially of a people, for whom they could not ~~except~~ ^{still more} as it affected their pecuniary interests.

Thus the proprietary & tenantry, instead of protecting & benefitting each other, regarded one another with hatred & distrust; such were generally the relations sustained. But there have ever been & still are some honorable exceptions.

The descendants of these men are the present owners of the country. By the right of primogeniture the estates have descended in almost unbroken succession. And most of the titles of the present owners may be traced back to the confiscations of Cromwell. They possess nine tenths of the whole Island, although they number but 10,000 while the whole population is 8,000,000 - that is about 1/800th part of the whole - Their estates of course vary much in size - The great & flourishing city of Belfast, containing 60,000 inhabitants, & celebrated for its extensive linen factories, stands upon the land of one proprietor - the Marquis of Donegal - To him the whole city belongs, & to him every citizen pays a tax - The land upon which it stands was given to his ancestor by King James - It is said that he would now derive an annual income from this city alone, of £300,000 - were it not that long leases were granted at fixed rents, when it was less valuable than ^{it has since become} ~~at present~~ - Waterford, another flourishing city belongs to the Marquis of Waterford - From these estates the proprietors receive immense incomes, which are for the most part, taken from the country, without any return - Barrington, an Irish writer - says that £3,000,000 or \$12,500,000 are annually drawn from the country - How many poor would this make comfortable! How many ignorant would it educate! How many destitute would it clothe! How many starving would it preserve!

The greater portion of these Landlords reside in various parts of Europe - induced so to do by various reasons - Indeed, under present circumstances, they whose object is pleasure & enjoyment, have little inducement to live in Ireland. Receiving through

agents residing there, their stipulated incomes, nothing but disinterested philanthropy could induce them to ~~come~~ expose themselves to the frequent rebellions & riots in Ireland, or to reside there in the midst of the destitution & poverty of the people, & the desolation of the country, while they can command by their wealth, the enjoyments of more prosperous situations. Some possessing estates both in England & Ireland, naturally prefer a residence in the former country. Others pass their lives on the Continent, in the gaiety of Paris, on the sunny shores of the Mediterranean, or in the quiet recesses of the country, there dreaming away their existence, supported by the bread of their famishing tenants - ignorant & regardless of the condition of those depending on them & on whom they indeed depend, & of the beneficial influence which they might exert by their presence & attention upon their estates. Many of them possess splendid residences in Ireland, which they occasionally though at long intervals, visit.

In the language of Beaumont, a French traveller, who visited the country in 1835 & 7 - before the immediate cause of the late calamities had made its appearance - "There are misfortunes here, which are so much beyond humanity, that human language cannot describe them - If the author were here obliged to relate the scenes of mourning & desolation which he has witnessed; to repeat the sounds & cries of despair which he has heard; if he were obliged to tell the grief of the Mother's voice, when refusing to her children a little bread; & if, in the midst of this extreme wretchedness, he were obliged to paint the insulting opulence (of the rich) displayed to all eyes by the rich man the immensity of his domains, where man's hand has created artificial lakes, valleys & hills; the magnificence of his palace, which is upheld by Columns of the most beautiful marble of Greece or Italy; which the gold of America, the silk of France & the cloth of India vie with each other in adorning; the splen-

did dwellings destined for servants; the still more splendid abode of the horses; all the wonders^{of art}, all the inventions of industry, & all the fancies of vanity accumulated in this place, in which the master does not even deign to reside, & which he visits only at long intervals; the sumptuous & indolent life of this rich man, who knows nothing of the miseries of which he is the author, has never seen them, & does not believe them; who derives from the sweat of the poor (500,000 francs) nearly \$100,000 as rent; each of whose senseless & superficial enjoyments represents the distress or ruin of some unhappy individual; who gives every day to his dog the meat of a hundred families & causes to die of hunger those who furnish for him this life of luxury & pride;—if the Author were obliged here to recall the dismal impressions which the sight of such contrasts have caused him, & the terrible questions which such inconsistencies have raised up in his mind, he feels that the pen would fall from his hands & that he would not have the courage to finish the task which he wishes to accomplish.”

A few other landlords live in Ireland, & their estates form a happy contrast with the rest of the land. They have directed their personal attention to the improvement of their estates, the removal of distress & the general education of the people dependent upon them. Wherever this has been the case, a marked difference has soon appeared. “The great question” says Köhl, a German who travelled in Ireland in 1842, “is that of residence or non-residence. When the Landlord resides upon his own estates, the tenantry are well treated, the land well cultivated, & the whole country prosperous & happy. When he does not reside, the tenants have no redress from the tyranny of his subordinates: executions for nonpayment of rent, are frequent & cruel, & the money of the district is sent out of the country without returning in any shape to those who lose it.” The resident Landlords live principally in the North & ~~the~~ in visiting one of those estates, the same

traveller remarks, "I had an opportunity of witnessing the wonderful effect the presence of the owner of an estate has upon the surrounding tenantry, & to how great an extent, therefore, the Irish Landlords who take no care for their dependents, are responsible for the wretchedness of the country." He adds also that some of the farmers in the northern portion appear as prosperous as those in England - This is corroborated by the fact that almost all of the suffering during the past winter has been in the South & West, where the land is principally held by absentee Landlords. Wherever they reside, intelligence & morality are much increased & general prosperity prevails -

Still, it is not to be presumed that even where they do reside, the condition of things is as good as it might be. It is very similar to that of England & other countries in Europe, where wealth & poverty are side by side. - The wealthy live in regal splendor, surrounded by scenes that must touch the hardest heart with sorrow, yet possessing every luxury & convenience that wealth can bestow,

The Landlords are not to be judged as necessarily cruel or wicked men. Although there are some who are avaricious & unfeeling; others, profligate & extravagant; & others thoughtless & indifferent - there are still many who are highly educated, ^{refined, liberal,} generous & kind. Indeed there appears to be much similarity in the situations of the Irish landholder ^{more wealthy of the} & the Southern Slaveholder. - Both hold, as property, that to which they have no right, though ^{the latter} is the more flagrant violation of the rights of humanity. In both cases they are ignorant of the amount of suffering caused by institutions which they uphold & continue, & indeed it may be said in both cases that the evils are more directly inflicted by "agents" & both classes are educated under such influences as lead them to believe that they have a rightful claim upon what they call their property: hence, not viewing the subjects in the same light,

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that we do, are not to be judged by our standard of right & wrong.

From the extent of these estates, the number of tenants on them, & the difficulty oftentimes of collecting the rents, it became necessary to have an intermediate class of men, to whom I have already indirectly alluded, called Middlemen. This is a great source of oppression. The estates are rented to these individuals, who act as agents, & divide the estate into small farms, & thus sublet them to the tenants. They stipulate with the Proprietor for the payment of a certain rent, & all that they can collect from the tenants above this sum, is their own. Having no one to restrain their rapacity, it is easily seen how the consequence in most cases is the most cruel extortion, & unjust rents. Holding the tenants in their power, they demand rents, even above what can possibly be paid, & supported by the law, take by force, what they cannot collect otherwise. By paying regularly the income of the Landlord, the latter cares not to look further into the condition of his estates or tenantry. Sometimes long leases are granted to the Middlemen, extending through life or for a longer or shorter term of years, & these leases are inherited as other property. Thus it is that the ^{estate of the} Marquis of Donegal is let on long leases. Otherwise he would now receive the largest income in the 3 Kingdoms. Generally the estates are divided into large tracts, which taken by agents who again employ underagents, thus, there are often two or three sets of agents, & the rent ^{collected from the peasant} passes through several hands before it reaches the Landlord, each receiving a portion of the profits, & making the whole affair a matter of speculation, at the cost of the poor laborer. The middlemen, having frequently the management of large tracts of land are able to retire to their own splendid mansions, & there supported in princely magnificence, by the profits of this vicious system of renting. These compose the gentry of Ireland. They are sometimes

liberal, generous & benevolent; - but more inclined to hunting, gaming & enjoyment, than to anything else, & probably for the most part unconscious of their own guilt, - Still, as a class, they are said to be exacting, unremitting, & harsh, & without sympathy for their tenants. But this character is probably already rendered familiar to every one, by the popular descriptions by Lever, Lovell, & other writers of Irish fiction.

It yet remains - to speak of the People. - The Landlords are a small class, numbering about 10,000 & may be spoken of in general terms. - The Middlemen have similar occupations & have been described in few words. - But the tenantry, comprising nearly the whole of a nation of 8,000,000 people - different in their religion, differing in character, in intelligence, & in external condition - varying from intelligence to the grossest ignorance - from honesty & uprightness to the deepest depravity, & from prosperity to the most destitute condition - cannot be fully & fairly described within the short limits necessary on the present occasion.

This is the class who do all the labor - who are the source of all the wealth & the bearers of all the ills - they who support the Landlords & the gentry of the Island in splendor & magnificence while they themselves are sunk to the lowest depths of degradation. As has already been stated, where the Landlords reside in the country & devote their personal attention to their welfare & improvement the tenantry are prosperous & happy. But from this they descend to an inconceivable degree of ignorance, poverty & suffering - It may be imagined from the foregoing remarks what is their general condition; & it may be seen what influence their situation has had in producing the late calamity. - But although you have already been long detained - a more particular description may be sufficiently interesting to keep your attention a few minutes

longer. And it must be remembered that it is not a description of their condition during the distress of last winter, but the testimony of travellers & others written, none later than 1842, before the present ^{depriving them} evil of the potato, their chief article of food had commenced, & describing their ordinary annual condition.

The farms vary in size. Fifty acres are often held by companies of twenty or thirty families - while from five acres to an half is a common portion for a single family. "In Ireland" says Kohl, "there are single estates larger than German principalities with farms, (if they can be called such) not larger than the bit of ground which an English gentleman would set aside for rabbits in the corner of his park." In the county of Tipperary there are out of 3400 holdings, 280 of less than one acre & 1056 of more than one but less than five acres. The renting of these is by auction generally, & they are given to him who offers the highest rent. The poor labourer knows that he must have land or starve, & without any alternative, promises what it is impossible to pay in order to obtain it, - Then without any capital, even to procure proper tools or other means of cultivating the land properly, & none being furnished for him, it is obvious ^{with} what disadvantages he must labor. Most of the ^{land in the} country is cultivated with nothing but the hoe & spade. And so small a portion of ground cultivated mostly in potatoes, cannot give constant employment, & must occasion an idle & dissolute life. Thus for 8 or 10 months each year the most industrious Irishman has nothing to do. From this vicious system, the land is soon worn out. The soil is seldom renewed, for at no period is the laborer able to expend anything for a future good which may be received by some other individual. Thus much of it at present does not produce half as much as it might. Still, the agent supported by all the terrors of the law, makes his annual appearance & must be paid. If this cannot be done, unless he be particularly favorable, the tenant is displaced, & another substituted - Every year,

numbers are thus thrown out of house & home, & are obliged to join the host of beggars who throng the streets of the city, or the highways of the country. Or, perchance, if he be a man of spirit he swears vengeance, & by night, commits some desperate deed which causes his execution or his banishment.

Where a company is formed, as before mentioned, in order to prosecute the work more systematically, each individual is responsible for the payment of the whole rent, And thus oftentimes by the extravagance or carelessness of a portion, the whole of the company are involved in ruin, And what still adds to their difficulty, if a middleman fails to pay the Landlord, the tenant is obliged to pay the rent a second time. And no resource is left him, amid these difficulties, but to bear them or do worse.

But this is not all - Their houses & their whole condition are no better. Their houses, (if they are worthy the name) are built of mud & sticks, scarcely high enough to stand & commonly about ten ft. by fifteen in size - they contain generally but one room, with no floor but the ground, with no bed but straw, & often without that, without a single window, often without a chimney, & with but one aperture - the door, serving for the entrance & exit of parents, children, poultry, & pigs, if they be fortunate enough to possess any. The pig is a token of some degree of wealth & is always a sharer in their hut & their best fare, for it is to him that they depend in great measure, for the payment of the rent, Of clothes they are equally destitute, Their garments, or rather their rags are handed down from one generation to another, changing only by the loss of some & the addition of others - These of course are the most destitute of the Farmers, living in the South & West: - but they are not the most destitute of the people, for they are sent to the poor-house & the dread of this, with the love of liberty makes them appear satisfied with the worst condition, Thus destitute every year finds them in a most miserable condition, Says Beaumont.

"Some, and these are a privileged class, eat three times a day; others, less fortunate, twice; some, in a state of indigence, only once; & there are those who more destitute still, pass one whole day, & sometimes two without taking any food." In the spring when their potatoes are almost exhausted, they are obliged to eat grass & weeds, & take food which none but one starving would think of & if on one day they eat a particle more than is necessary they are taught a bitter lesson for their extravagance on the next. Imagine the poor laborer thus situated beholding ⁱⁿ the fall, the produce of the land borne to a "better market," while he is left with little better than the prospect of absolute starvation in the Spring. See him, compelled to assist in driving his pig or his cow, or to carry on his back the sack of corn, - (which his famishing family will soon need - to the ship which is to bear them away for the benefit of the Middleman whom he hates, or the Landlord, whom he never saw. Add to this the feelings occasioned by the titheman, as he appropriates the tenth of the whole produce, for the ^{support} ^{form of} ^{of} religion which he abhors & the maintenance of ministers, from whom he receives no benefit, & whom he hates with the most bitter hatred; & you may imagine some of the causes of Irish suffering. - Imagine the situation caused by these things, & you may perceive how it is that the Irish starve. - Such a life is indeed terrible to think of, yet it must be borne under fear of greater evils. - Hope, which ever clings to life, & looks forward with better anticipations, causes them to prolong even such an existence (for life it cannot be called) rather than choose immediate & certain death.

Suffering, as you have discovered is, in Ireland, no new thing, & if a people could become accustomed to it, surely Ireland has had the opportunity. A certain amount of suffering may be seen in any nation or at any time; but here almost the whole people are in a suffering condition. "Misery descends in Ireland" says Beaumont, "to depths elsewhere unknown. The condition in Ireland which is above poverty

would elsewhere be considered a state of frightful distress; & the wretched classes among us, (in France) whose fate we justly deplore, would in Ireland form a privileged class" - And what renders this more awful is expressed by a writer of the last century, who says, "It is scarcity, which commonly maketh dearth; this is a marvellous dearth, that in such plenty cometh contrary to his kind." Everything which may yield a cent of tribute, & that can possibly be extorted from the poor tenant is taken from him. The potato is the only article of food left him. All the rest, grain, cattle, pigs, poultry, butter & eggs if he be able to raise these, & if not a large portion of his potatoes even go for the rent. For several months his potatoes maintain him; but if the crop happen to be less than usual, the spring months are a severe time, all over the country. And even with the usual crops, in some part of the country, the cry of starvation annually arises. Numerous statistics are given of the starvation & suffering during last century, which it is unnecessary now to present. "Within 30 years there has been more than can here be detailed. In 1817, fevers caused by poverty & hunger attacked in Ireland 1,500,000 individuals; 65,000 of whom perished. And it has been calculated that in 1826 the badness of the food made 20,000 sick." Bishop Doyle in 1832 being asked the state of health in the west, replied, "What it has always been; people are perishing as usual." In 1835 inquiry was made as to the number of deaths caused by want, & it showed a multitude of deaths, which want alone had occasioned. "Here," says a writer, "are the unfortunate whom hunger has manifestly killed; there the wretched whose death it has hastened, the latter, perishing from long exhaustion; the former, at once, from disease & hunger." - In the spring of 1838 the annual cry of Irish misery was also great, & many deaths occurred. "Irish poverty" says Beaumont, has an entirely distinct character, which renders it difficult of description, because it can be compared to no other poverty. - Irish misery has a distinct form; of which there is no model

or imitation. We feel in beholding it, that we can theoretically assign no limits to the wretchedness of a people, "+++ "I have seen," says he, the Indian in his forest, & the negro in chains, & have thought while beholding their pitiable condition that it was the limit of human misery. I knew not then the fate of the Irish. Like the Indian, the Irishman is poor & naked, but he lives in the midst of a people who seek for luxury & honor riches. Like the Indian, he is deprived of the good which human industry & the commerce of nations provide: but he sees some of his equals enjoy this good to which he cannot aspire. In the midst of his greatest distress the Indian preserves a certain dignified independence. However poor & hungry, he is still free in his forests, & the feeling which he has of this liberty alleviates his suffering. The Irishman feels the same deprivation without having the same freedom: he is subjected to rules & shackles of all kinds: though governed by laws, he dies of hunger, - a sad lot condition, uniting the evils of a civilized with those of a savage life. Undoubtedly, an Irishman who has shaken off his chains, & who has faith & hope in the future, is indeed less to be pitied than the Indian, or the black slave; but now, he has neither the freedom of the savage, nor the bread of slavery."

Such is the united testimony of travellers, & others. - Irish, English, French, German & American. If it were not corroborated on every side we could not believe it. But they, themselves, assure us, that before they visited the country, they had no conception, even from the most particular descriptions, of the real condition of the people. And even of what they relate in this brief sketch, "the half has not been told." Yet this is their ordinary condition. What then has it been in the extraordinary suffering of last winter? I need not attempt to describe it. "The pencil of the painter could not depict it, nor the pen of the poet describe it" except as a dim & indistinct vision, so far beyond anything in our experience, that our minds could not realize it. The cry has been borne long & loud, upon every breeze that has blown upon our shores. All may imagine, better than human language

can describe, the source whence it came.

You may discover from these things, the influence that the relations of Landlord & Tenant, exert in producing the late calamity, and it must be admitted that it is a powerful cause. It is not maintained that it is the only one. The establishment of a particular form of ^{the protestant} religion, where of the 8,000,000 people, 6000,000 are Catholics, & of the remainder the majority are opposed to it, is a great evil & extremely unjust. There is one Bishop in Ireland who receives a salary of \$5,000.- more than \$66,000.- And the gross income of the Bishops & Archbishops in Ireland is more than \$673,000.- while in England it amounts to ^{no} more than about \$800,000.- Thus eight million Irish who are nearly all opposed to the religion, pay nearly as much to the support of protestant Bishops as fifteen million English, who are mostly Protestants. But notwithstanding this, the proportion of Catholics, in Ireland, is rapidly increasing. — The bad Government is undoubtedly another fruitful source of evil, And these three causes; — the tenure of the land, Church establishment, & bad government appear to be the principal sources of all their evils. They who add to these, reproach of the people for their ignorance, intemperance & idleness only add calumny to calamity. How could they be expected to be otherwise different from what they are.

Such is their condition & such the causes of it; — These cooperate & strengthen each other, & all tend to keep things as they are. — Undoubtedly the diffusion of knowledge among the people, would do much to ameliorate their condition, But while they remain as they are, they do not know enough to desire knowledge, & if they did they have not the means of obtaining it. The evils are deeply planted & firmly fixed — yet much might be done for their removal, Although Government may not have the power of immediately ^{apportioning} distributing the land as it should be, any more than ours has of immediately abolishing slavery, still by destroy-

ing the Right of Primogeniture & by other means within the power of the Government, one evil might be removed; by destroying the Church Establishment another might, soon be obviated: & by much might be done for the diffusion of Knowledge, notwithstanding the frequently suggested obstacle, of the power & influence of the Priest, ^{of reaction} Indeed if the people of England were as much interested for the liberty ^{& welfare} of their Irish Brethren as they are for that of the Negro at the south; & if while lamenting the mote in their brother's eye they would remember the beam in their own, Irish suffering would soon be removed.

Still, in the onward progress of the principles of freedom & liberty;— of Knowledge, justice, temperance, & righteousness, we cannot but hope that a better day is dawning upon afflicted & downtrodden Ireland,—

"Sweet land of song, thy harp doth hang
 Upon the willows now;
 While famine's blight, & fever's pang
 Stamp misery on thy brow;
 Yet take thy harp, & raise thy voice
 Though faint & low it be,
 And let thy sinking heart rejoice,
 There's hope still left for thee." (Lover)

The talents that have beamed forth so radiantly in some of her sons— the ardent love of liberty that no oppression could extinguish, show that there still lives a spark in the bosoms of her people, which needs but a breath to kindle it into flame.— Too long have they been crushed,— Ignorant, oppressed & degraded, they knew not their rights, & in their warm hearts they have regarded all who ceased to injure them, as friends & benefactors. And too often her own sons have played the traitor's part, by aiding the oppressors of their country for their own personal gain. But to the honor of human nature, they have not all been so. There have been some noble exceptions.— Some have been men. Grattan, a son, in talent & patriotism

worthy the land that bore him, has rendered his name illustrious forever, by devoting his life, & all his energies, for ~~this~~ his people's amelioration, & his country's independence. For fifty years, he labored for the accomplishment of this, his highest wish & greatest desire. But his people were not ~~ready~~ prepared for the thought he labored ^{endeavored} to inspire. — Since then, Father Matthew has been doing a noble work, — which shall cause his name long to live in ^{the} grateful remembrance of his countrymen & in the admiration of mankind. — Within a few years he has raised from debasement the character of five million of his countrymen, & restored them to the dignity of men. Grattan awoke in the hearts of his ^{people} countrymen, the desire to be free. Father Matthew has rendered them worthy & capable of freedom. — It needs but one more to complete the trio, who shall take hold & enable them to attain it. — Grattan has long since gone to his final resting place. — Matthew now trembles on the verge of the grave: but it may be that ere another generation shall have passed, the triumvirate will be complete, & Ireland be free! — Ireland must soon rise. — Though her course has ^{hitherto} been downward dark & mournful, a happier period is approaching. — Though clouds have long hung over her, the low murmurs of the coming storm may be already heard, which, when it shall have passed will leave brighter & more beautiful the day that shall follow.

"The nations have fallen, & thou still art young,

Thy sun is but rising when others are set,

And tho' slavery's cloud o'er thy morning hath hung,

The full noon of freedom shall beam round thee yet,

Eriu! oh Eriu! though long in the shade,

Thy star will shine out when the proudest shall fade.

Heaven grant that we may live to see the day when Eriu's ^(Moore) sons shall stand on their own soil, for which their fathers so heroically struggled & bravely died. — when the harp that has long hung in

mournful silence upon Tara's walls shall again be tuned to the sweet melodies of former days, - when the tear that falls for present wrongs from the dim eyes of her children, shall be seen only at the recital of wrongs that have ceased forever, - when ^{her} desolate lands shall again be converted into smiling fruitful fields, & the rich green Shamrock be the truly appropriate emblem of the "Emerald Isle": -

Works read or consulted for the foregoing -

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- Howden's do do - " do extends to union in 1800
- History of Ireland - 2 vols. Harper's fam. Lib. do do -
- Rees' Encyclopaedia -
- Introduction to Curran's speeches - sketch of Hist^y - do do -
- Perth Encyclopaedia - very full - gives statistics of exports &c. population &c. &c. -
- Barrington's Rise & Fall of the Irish Nation - gives full acct of union -
- Sydney Smith's works "Ireland" - and "Parnell & Ireland" -
- North American Review, vol 51 - gives extracts from Beaumont's travels in I^r (who travelled in 1835 & 1837)
- Edinburg Review, vol
- London Quarterly - April, 1836 -
- Bishop Hughes' Lecture - New York Tribune April 3, 1847.
- Ireland & its economy - by Bichens an Englishman - written 1829 - Excellent
- Ireland - a tale by Miss Martineau - contains a vivid picture of the condition -
- Travels in Ireland - by Kohl - a German - 1842 - contains much information -
- Letters - by Charlotte Elizabeth - attributes all the evils to the wickedness or stupidity of the Catholics in not becoming Episcopalian -
- Ireland - published by Lieber & Co.
- Ireland's welcome for a stranger - by one who travelled in '45 for the express purpose of inquiring into the condition of the poor. - Appeared since the foregoing was written

