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## THE ADMINISTRATION OF IRELAND.

IN visiting Ireland, the Prince of Wales gave a proof of his sense of duty and of his courage; for some courage was required after all the fears that had been expressed, though really the Prince and his Consort were in no danger, since the disunionist leaders must have known too well that in this case a crime would have been the worst of blunders. The Prince, perhaps, may have thought of the examples of history, and of the days when those who bore his title took the field in defence of their heritage. He had good cause for exertion. Not even when Hoche's armaments appeared in Bantry Bay was the Crown of Ireland in greater peril.

If the Prince set us an example of duty, he also saw one. Amidst all these wretched scenes of faction, intrigue and weakness, while English noblemen and gentlemen are not ashamed for the sake of office openly to conspire with the avowed enemies of the realm, the eye of any Englishmen who cares only for the country must rest with pleasure on the figure of Lord Spencer. Praise of the living may sound like flattery; but distance gives somewhat of the privilege of history, and we who look from afar may pay our tribute to one who has made such sacrifices to patriotism, and has so bravely and steadfastly held a most hateful and dangerous post. The breath of calumny will soon pass away from the mirror, and it will be better to have served the country at Dublin than to have reposed amidst the social delights of Althorp.

There are those to whom the Prince's visit, though late, seems to have been the first step in a right direction. More than twenty years ago an unheroic policy was, after careful study of the question, propounded for Ireland. It consisted of (1) Disestablishment and religious equality; (2) a reform of the land laws, abolishing primo-

geniture and entail, and facilitating purchase ; (3) the residence of the Court in Ireland ; (4) one or two Sessions of Parliament at Dublin for the purpose of dealing with Irish questions ; (5) an increase of local self-government, perhaps in the form of Provincial Councils ; (6) a line of Government emigration steamers running from an Irish port. It is needless to say that every item of the policy, with the exception of local self-government, was meant for the three Celtic and Catholic provinces, which to the great confusion of our ideas are miscalled Ireland.

Late the Prince's visit was, and being paid under the pressure of State necessity, it was robbed of all its spontaneity and of much of its grace. Besides, it was that of the heir, not of the wearer, of the crown. Yet its result has surely been such as to justify a proposal which had been treated by great practical authorities as paradoxical and futile. The policy of cold and dignified indifference prescribed by Mr. Parnell, at all events totally broke down. His lieutenants were obliged to betake themselves to getting up hostile demonstrations, which they did with imperfect success. It is evident what the effect would have been if every other year the Phoenix Park, surely no unlovely place of sojourn, had taken its turn with Balmoral.

A hand was at the same time held out, not before there was need, to the Unionists of the North of Ireland, whom English Radicalism, in its courtship of the Irish vote, has been doing its utmost to disgust and estrange ; while the Government, deeming it right to repress with impartial rigour Unionist as well as Disunionist demonstrations, has appeared to turn a cold shoulder to its friends. Lose the loyalty of the North, and all may be lost ; keep the loyalty of the North, and rebellion elsewhere may be confronted without fear.

One great political grievance the Irish have, and they will not be satisfied till it is redressed. Craving, most of all people, for objects of personal attachment, they have never seen those by whom they were governed. Constitutional liberties and privileges, to their hearts, are cold comforts in the absence of a chief ; they ought to see both the Sovereign and the Parliament. To hold one or two short Sessions of Parliament at Dublin would be very inconvenient no doubt, but it would satisfy as nothing else will satisfy the craving for a Parliament in College Green. The Parliament in College Green before the Union is a strange object of wistful regret for Catholic Ireland. It was a Parliament of exclusion as well as of corruption and factious violence. It did nothing for the people ; yet there is a not unnatural longing for something in its place. Let the Parliament of the Union present itself to the eyes of the Irish people ; then, and not till then, they will understand that boons bestowed on them are the gifts of Parliament, and not the gifts of Mr. Parnell.

This absence from their sight and their hearts of the powers that govern them has been called the one political grievance of the Irish people. If there is another, what is it? What is there which the Irish Members of Parliament have with anything like unanimity or perseverance sought to obtain for their country, and which Parliament has obstinately refused? Two literary champions of the Irish revolution have essayed to state its case. One dwells mainly on defects in local self-government, from which Ireland does not alone suffer, and to the cure of which Parliament was actually addressing itself when this rebellion broke out. The other dwells on Castle government, which his patriotic fervour leads him to represent as not less arbitrary and tyrannical than that of an Austrian governor of Venetia, as though the Austrian governor of Venetia had been the servant of a Parliament in which Venetia was fully represented or had been restrained by a free press, habeas corpus, and trial by jury. The Vice-royalty is a survival from the time when Ireland was really remote and the carriage of the Lord-Lieutenant had to be taken to pieces to be carried over Penmaen Mawr. Whether it should be retained has long been an open question among British statesmen, but it can hardly be abolished with safety unless the Court will take its place. If it is retained, the limitation to Protestants ought of course to be abolished. Home Rulers demand in its room an Irish Secretaryship to be held by an Irishman. Would a Protestant Irishman from Ulster serve their turn?

The question of local self-government is necessarily suspended by the continuance of a smouldering rebellion. The police cannot be handed over to the management of Moonlighters and people who avow their intention of extirpating the English. Otherwise a good deal might be done in this way. Public education itself might perhaps be wisely assigned to local Councils. In the Catholic Provinces the priests might cripple it at first, as most of them opposed its introduction; but local opposition to them would spring up and the Imperial Government would be relieved of the strain.

It is from its union with the agrarian movement that the political movement derives its present strength. Movements purely political have always come to nothing. O'Connell's Repeal was a prolix farce, saving that it brought him rent. The aims of the leaders are political, but the aims of the people are agrarian. The people are persuaded that if they can get rid of the English connection they will be at liberty to deprive the landlords of the rest of the rent. Despoiling landlords will not make land which does not produce grain capable of feeding a population which, even if it did produce grain, it could not feed. Like the French in Canada, the Irish, having a low economical standard, multiply with a rapidity which defies the laws of prudence and overflows the limits of subsistence;

the Church in both cases encouraging early marriage. Quebec is relieved by profuse emigration into the States; otherwise she would be the scene of chronic famine: and Ireland must be relieved in the same way. If she is to be permanently cured of her complaint, there must be not only emigration but clearance. Socialists who call upon the State to provide food for everybody on the spot, will find it necessary to invest the State with the power of determining how many people shall be brought into the world. Priests oppose emigration because it carries off their flocks, demagogues because it carries off discontent. But it is the prime and most absolute necessity of the Irish situation; and a Government line of emigration steamers running from an Irish port is a proposal which invites consideration. Whither the emigrants shall be sent is a difficult question. To send them to the Northern States is to swell the ranks of the enemy. The same may be said as to Canada in a somewhat less degree. In the Southern States there is as yet no Fenianism, and the rise of manufactures is improving the market for labour. The emigrant from Celtic Ireland hardly ever takes to farming. But Australia is more within reach than it was, and Tasmania seems to have room for a good many inhabitants, while the climate is one in which an Irishman will not suffer as he does when he is sent from the mild climate of Ireland to a country where the winter is long and severe.

Agrarian legislation is beneficial just in so far as it increases production and gives more bread to the people. This will hardly be done by confiscation, which puts an end to investment in land and to the advance of money upon it, or by encumbering the country with a multiplicity of complicated and unsaleable tenures. What Ireland, and not Ireland alone, wants in this way is a free land market and the Torrens system of conveyance. It is strange that by the side of a drastic, not to say socialistic, Land Act, Parliament should allow primogeniture, entail, and the costly and cumbrous system of conveyancing to flourish as before.

A free market would put the land into the hands of those who would till it, either on the large scale or on the small. In this way absenteeism, which undoubtedly is a great social evil, will be cured; it is not likely to be cured in any other way. The notion of treating estates again as fiefs and reviving feudal duties is surely chimerical. Landlordism, it is to be feared, however beneficent and picturesque in theory, is practically a failure. Where there is no obligation to work, pleasure in most of us gets the better of duty, and it carries off the squire to London or the Continent. Absenteeism is becoming very common in England. It is likely to become commoner still if scientific agriculture and democracy put an end to fox-hunting and game-preserving, as they probably will. But the

days of great estates, held for the purposes of political influence or of social pride, are past in Ireland and England alike. Territorial aristocracy is being killed by American harvests.

The residence of the Court in Ireland would tend to banish the fancy, which malignity is trying to inflame, that Irishmen are socially disliked and disparaged. At the public schools or at the universities, where social prejudice shows itself without disguise, will anybody say that Irish boys or youths are treated with contumely by their fellows? Are they not rather favourites? There are jokes about Paddy no doubt: so there are about Sandy and Taffy. It is hardly to be expected that the behaviour of certain Irish Members in the House of Commons will be taken for that of gentlemen, or that it will fail to cast its shadow on the body to which they belong. The "comic Irishman," which has been cited as a proof of British insolence, is largely the creation of two Irish pens—those of Miss Edgeworth and Mr. Lever. Everything in the Empire, social grade included, is open to Irishmen as freely as to Englishmen or Scotchmen, and they do in fact hold many of the highest places in the State, the Army, and the Church. Greater honour, we are told, ought to be paid "to the country which has produced Castlereagh, Canning, Gough, the two Lawrences, Nicholson, Roberts, and Wolseley." That list of names is itself the answer to the complaint. It has only to be added that the names all belong to the British element of the population which the Nationalists propose to drive out of the country.

History cannot be abrogated, but it may be read in the light of common sense and equity. In the age of conquest Ireland was conquered, as England was, by the Normans, and special evils were entailed by the circumstances of the conquest which produced a local separation of the races and the "Pale." In the age of religious wars, Catholic Ireland was involved in religious war; she did what she could in support of the Catholic powers which were trying to extirpate Protestantism and liberty with the sword; and happening to be in the part of the field where Catholicism was worsted, she suffered a small portion of that which the party of Protestantism and liberty suffered in the part of the field where Catholicism was victorious. All this belongs to the past as completely as the Inquisition and the Dragoonades. That England crushed a brilliant civilization is a preposterous fable, as, in fact, apologists of the present rebellion admit when they call Englishmen unfeeling for letting in on the fiction the light of history. The only native civilization which Ireland ever had was ecclesiastical, and this was ruined, not by England, but by the barbarism of the clans. Commercial exclusion was very bad, though this also was in the spirit of the age; but it has been compensated ten times over by the

market which England has afforded to Ireland, and the employment which her manufactures have given to Irishmen who would not have found bread in their own island. If it is called harsh to tell these truths, the answer is that no people have suffered more than the Irish from lies, and that they have no worse enemies than those who teach them to subsist by the exhibition of historic sores and by getting up abortive rebellions instead of exerting themselves, like other nations which have been unfortunate, to make up the lost ground. That Catholic Ireland has been most unfortunate, and that great allowance ought to be made for the political shortcomings of her people on that ground, no one has striven harder to show than the writer of this paper. It is a different thing to say that the political shortcomings of the Irish, even in Ireland, much more in the United States, where their political character is just the same, are the results of British oppression. Does courtesy require us to believe that the Government of Mr. Gladstone is in the habit of "causing puling infants to be tossed on bayonets, and calling in famine to exterminate the Irish people when the sword has failed to do the work?" There is no justice, as Mr. Morley truly says, in being unfair to one's own countrymen; or, it may be added, to one's own country.

That history has left its trace in the bitterness of the Irish against England is true. Yet about this there is a good deal of exaggeration. Twenty-three years ago, when the writer of this paper first visited Ireland, the feeling was nothing like so strong. Its present intensity is the work of a vitriolic press in the hands of men whose aim is not to improve the condition of the people, or to tell them any sort of truth, but to fill them with hatred of their British fellow-citizens for the purpose of getting up a rebellion. With that press it will be found necessary to deal, however unwelcome the necessity may be. Freedom of opinion is precious, but inciting to murder and civil war is not opinion, nor does every villain who can buy a fount of type become thereby sacrosanct and privileged to do the community any mischief that he pleases.

Of the Roman Catholic religion nobody wants to say anything discourteous. In Ireland it has numbered among its adherents Bishop Moriarty, Dr. Russell, and Lord O'Hagan. But its effects on national character are much the same everywhere, and the responsibility for them certainly does not rest on England or on the Union.

To withhold the extension of the franchise from Ireland would no doubt have been difficult. The objection to the whole measure is that it is another blind alteration of the basis of the government without a fresh survey of the constitution as a whole or any attempt to provide sufficient safeguards, another step in the progress of unor-

ganized democracy of which the bourne may be pretty certainly foreseen. But it was a special stroke of statesmanship to put political power into hands by which you are assured beforehand that it will be used for the subversion of the Legislature and the dismemberment of the nation. Is everybody, fit or unfit, entitled to the suffrage by the law of Nature? Why, then, are votes not given to the two hundred millions of Hindoos? Give an Irishman a vote, and he hands it over at once to the priest, to Mr. Parnell, or to Mr. Tweed. His political instincts and habits are those of the tribesman, not those of the citizen. Instead of being more free when invested with the suffrage he is rather less free, because he becomes the willing slave of his head centre, who is at this moment nominating his representatives. To govern the Celtic province as a Crown colony is what nobody has proposed. But if civil war should break out and a strong Government should be the temporary consequence, that Government will perhaps be found more suitable to the temperament of the people, as well as more conducive to the improvement of the country, than the demagogic system. In time, Ireland, if she remains in the Union, will be brought up to the level of British progress in self-government. At present she is in an earlier stage.

Let positive assurance be given of the inviolability of the Union and of the hopelessness of all attempts to destroy it. This is the great political need of Ireland at the present moment. A nationality the Irish may have in the Union, like that of the Scotch, with all the memories, sentiments, and symbols. Home Rule also they may have in the Union like that of the Scotch, if the Irish members of Parliament will only follow the example of the Scotch members, and instead of trying to wreck the Legislature, take counsel and act together on local questions. But let all doubt be removed at once from the minds of Irish Unionists about the determination of England and Scotland to uphold the Union, as the people of the United States upheld their Union, with the whole power of the nation. Nationalist leaders will then begin to direct their efforts to practical and attainable reforms. At present that at which they aim is not reform, but the severance of the Union, and to intrigue with them is to intrigue with dismemberment. No measures of reform, however extensive, have ever moderated the virulence of their abuse.

Ireland has been connected with England for seven centuries, surely a sufficient term of prescription. Nature has manifestly linked the two islands together, so that they must be united or enemies, while if they are enemies the weaker must suffer. The races are now mingled both in Ireland and in Great Britain. What can be more ridiculous than to hear a man bearing the name of Parnell, Biggar, or Sexton, talk of driving the British out of Ireland? Supposing separation to take place, what is to be done

with the Irish in England? Is every member of a nation of composite or federal structure to deem itself privileged at will, instead of bringing its grievances constitutionally before the United Legislature, to secede and break up the nation? Is every local demagogue to be at liberty to get up a civil war for that purpose? When Sicily or Naples becomes restless, do English Radicals call upon Italy in the name of morality to let the disaffected province go? Why is this duty of self-dismemberment to be enjoined on Great Britain alone? To the writer of this paper Jingoism and aggrandizement have always been hateful. But the Radicals must surely own that their country is a great moral power, that her influence in Europe is good for humanity, that it depends upon her retention of her high place among the nations, and that human progress, political and general, would suffer greatly by her fall. Nor can they doubt that with a hostile republic, for hostile it must always be, carved out of her side, she would sink to the level of a second-rate power, and lose her voice in the councils of Europe.

As to Ireland herself, does the most extreme of Radicals, if he has anything statesmanlike or scientific about him, believe in the feasibility of a Fenian Republic, or think that anything could come of such an attempt but confusion and a renewal of the calamities of the past? Can the most extreme of Radicals, one may add, watch the behaviour of the Disunionist leaders, listen to the almost delirious calumnies which pour from their lips, observe the methods and the engines of warfare to which they resort, mark their treatment of Mr. Gladstone after all that he has done for Ireland, and yet persuade himself that the cause which these men represent is really a great cause? The political insurrection is nothing but a conspiracy, conceived mainly in the interest of personal ambition. If on the part of the leader an actuating motive is venomous and fanatical hatred of the English race, to which his own ancestors belonged, this does not make the movement more reasonable or more worthy of respect.

The dictates of patriotism, of statesmanship, of morality seem to coincide and to be clear. But the nation is governed by party; and on both sides a section is now bidding for the Irish vote: not only for the Irish vote in Ireland, but for the Irish vote in English and Scotch cities, where the Irish unhappily are strong. A dismal sound is the name of the Irish vote in the ears of all the lovers of good government on this continent. Cities overwhelmed with debt by municipal corruption are not the worst effects of its influence. The political excesses which have brought discredit on republican institutions in America were not the work of true republicans, but of the Irish vote leagued with slavery, and under the patronage of the slave-owner working its will in the Northern cities. The Celtic and

to £100, but suppose that, for some benefit done to them all, they handed over to another person the annual rents, and that in the course of time population was doubled on the land liable to rent, and suppose that notwithstanding this increase the rate of wages had not fallen (as is asserted of England), that is, that the occupiers of the worst lot of land still made £100 a year each.

This supposition assumes that the gross produce obtained from the soil was doubled, therefore the other lots will be producing £220, £240, &c., instead of £110 and £120, and will contribute £20, £40, &c., to rent instead of half those amounts, as formerly—that is rent will have doubled and the owners of it receive twice the reward originally accepted as an equivalent for the service performed by them.

But, if in spite of all counteracting influences, population still increases, the time must come when the former average of wages (£100) cannot be maintained; a time when, there being greater competition for land, more will be given for it, although there will not be a *corresponding increase* in the amount to be obtained from it. The minimum being then reduced—say to £90—rent will be calculated on all land-values above that figure, and thus expands in both directions, upwards with the increase of the gross produce obtained, and downwards as the rate of wages falls. When such a weapon is turned against the people, where is justice? where is equality? where is the security of the social fabric?

The system of absolute ownership by individuals has already broken down in Ireland. If private property in land is just, legal and legitimate, then the owner of land is justly entitled to the full market value of the article he possesses.

Rack-rents and rents charged on tenants' improvements are in fact considerations voluntarily offered in the open market for the article the landowner possesses by tenants who would rather pay those rents than surrender their holdings, and that landowner is justly entitled to all he can get. The fault is in the system, as Mr. Henry George has declared, not in the landlords.

Ireland has only been fighting, in the land agitation, a battle which, if our civilization lasts, all civilized people will have to fight sooner or later. Unfortunately the remedy adopted in Ireland is but a half-measure, a very temporary expedient which allows of a re-opening of the question.

Making tenants part or whole proprietors by State interference is class legislation, and transferring property from Peter to Paul can be no settlement of the question while the just claims of other brethren, the labourers of the country and the poor of the towns, are ignored.

## VICTOR HUGO.

THE greatest of living Frenchmen, the greatest man of genius whom this century has known, the Altissimo Poeta, the most splendid romancist of his age, has accomplished his great career. He is the last survivor of a great period in French literature—the last member of one of the greatest literary brotherhoods which has ever existed: and he has carried with him to the very portals of the grave a lamp of genius scarcely dimmed, and a personal power and influence which every year increased. Not very long ago all Europe gathered round him to offer congratulations on his hale and hearty old age; since then, with more than the hands full of flowers of the classic tradition, with honours and praises from every quarter of the earth, he has been carried to his grave. The very sight of a man so distinguished, the consciousness of his honoured existence as the representative of the noblest and most all-embracing of the arts—that which depends for its effects upon the simplest and most universal of instincts—was an advantage to the world. The extravagances of hero-worship are inevitable, and in nothing is the ridiculous so tremblingly near to the sublime; but allowing for all that, and for what is worse, the almost equally inevitable foolishness which adulation creates, the position of Victor Hugo was of itself an advantage to the world. In a soberer *pose* altogether, and with a noble modesty, which we may claim as belonging to our race, Walter Scott occupied a somewhat similar position—which would have been all the greater had he lived to Hugo's age, an element which must necessarily be taken into consideration: but, save in this one case, there has been no parallel to the eminence of the great Frenchman in the estimation of his country and of the world.

It is not now that the critic requires to step forth to establish the