

REPORT
ON THE
SUPPOSED
PROGRESSIVE DECLINE
OF
IRISH PROSPERITY.

BY
W. NEILSON HANCOCK, LL.D.



DUBLIN:
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1863.

REPORT

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THE PROGRESSIVE DECLINE

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W. NELSON, LONDON, 1844.



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PRINTED BY ALEXANDER THOMAS, AT THE 'ARCADE' PRESS, 11, N. B. STREET.

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REPORT
ON THE
SUPPOSED
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OF
IRISH PROSPERITY.

64, Upper Gardiner-street,
Dublin, March 27, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR,—In pursuance of His Excellency's commands I have examined some of the statements as to the supposed progressive decline of Irish prosperity, with a view to ascertain the real truth as to the state of the country; and I now have the honour to report, for His Excellency's information, the result of my inquiries.

*The Diminution of the Population of Ireland from
1841 to 1861.*

I propose, in the first instance, to examine the allegation of progressive decline in the condition of the Irish people, so far as it is founded on the diminution of the population since 1841, while the population of other portions of the Empire has been increasing.

In the discussion of this subject the statistics usually referred to are, the total population of England and Scotland in 1861 as compared with 1851 and 1841. But if the returns of the several Superintendent-Registrars' districts be taken, instead of the totals,

Decrease of
population in
agricultural
districts in
England and
Scotland.

a very different bearing will be given to the question.* It appears from the "British Almanac" for 1862, that in 1861, out of 631 districts in England, there was ascertained to be a positive decrease from 1851 in 248, being the districts almost exclusively agricultural, and, therefore, most nearly corresponding with the greater part of Ireland.

It is stated in the same publication that there was a diminution of the population between 1851 and 1861 in twelve out of the thirty counties of Scotland, indicating a general decline in the population of the rural portions of Scotland. The increase in Great Britain has been chiefly in the manufacturing towns; and a similar, though smaller increase has taken place in Ireland. While the population of many towns has increased, the increase has been chiefly in those like Belfast, Londonderry, Ballymena, Banbridge, Carrickfergus, and Lurgan, where manufactures exist.

Increase of
population
in manufac-
turing dis-
tricts.

The mode in which this result has been effected in England and Scotland is, by a migration from the agricultural districts to the manufacturing districts. But it seems to have been generally overlooked, that the same change has been going on from the agricultural districts in Ireland to the English and Scotch manufacturing districts.

Large
number of
persons of
Irish birth
in England
and
Scotland.

It appears that in 1841 there were 419,256 persons then resident in England and Scotland who had been born in Ireland, whilst there were in Ireland only 34,608 persons who had been born out of Ireland.

In 1851, the number of persons then resident in England and Scotland who had been born in Ireland was 733,866; and the Census Commissioners state that from the increase thus shown between 1841 and 1851, 400,000 persons must have in this period entered Great Britain with a view of settling there; and this

* Mr. Andrew M. Porter, Barrington Lecturer on Political Economy to the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, was the first to call attention to this comparison.

number is 25 per cent. of the entire diminution of the population of Ireland from 1841 till 1851.

In 1861 the number of Irish born in Great Britain had again increased, being 805,703. To replace those who died in ten years amongst the 733,866 (probably one-third) and to produce the increase ascertained, a migration of 300,000 persons must have taken place in the interval between 1851 and 1861. Thus, 40 per cent. of the decrease in the population that took place in the latter period will be accounted for, and there will now be upwards of 800,000 persons of Irish birth in England and Scotland.

This migration of the population from districts where low wages prevail to districts where high wages* prevail, is calculated to benefit both those who migrate and the labouring classes in the districts which they leave. So far as it arises from the extraordinary prosperity of English manufacturing enterprise, and from the other causes that have led to the decrease of the agricultural population of England and Scotland, it cannot be ascribed to any particular policy of the Government with regard to Ireland or the Irish race. From the nature of the case such a migration naturally takes place to the greatest extent from those districts of the country, whether in Great Britain or Ireland, where wages are lowest.

It cannot be alleged that the introduction into England and Scotland of 400,000 persons of Irish birth before 1841, and 700,000 since, is the result of any policy against Ireland or the Celtic race ; neither can a diminution which pervades agricultural districts of all parts of the United Kingdom, though in different degrees, be ascribed to a policy against Ireland alone.

The fluctuations of the Irish population since the

Changes in
population
of Ireland.

* English manufacturing wages are generally double the amount of Irish agricultural wages. Thus :—Manufacturing labourer (Hull, 1861), 17s. a week ; agricultural labourer (Limerick, 1860), 7s. to 10s. Woman at weaving (Bradford, 1861), 13s. ; woman on farm (Limerick, 1860), 5s.

first complete Census in 1821 is shown by the following table :—

Number of inhabitants by complete Census.	Year.	Number of Inhabitants.	Increase per Annum.*	Decrease per Annum.*
	1821	6,801,827		
	1831	7,767,401	1·4 per cent.	
	1834	7,943,940	·75 per cent.	
	1841	8,175,124	·41 per cent.	
	1851	6,552,385		2·5 per cent.
	1861	5,798,233		1·3 per cent.

The slow rate of increase that will be observed between 1831 and 1834, and the still slower rate from 1834 till 1841, show that the population had nearly attained a maximum in 1834, and was not, as is commonly represented, increasing at a rapid rate until 1846.

The highest rate of increase in the preceding table is lower than any of the rates founded on private estimates before 1821, which I have not included in it, as not being of the same authority. But if we take Mr. Parker Bushe's estimate of 1788, Mr. Newnham's in 1805, and an estimate founded on the incomplete Census of 1813, the following will be the result :—

Number of inhabitants by private estimates.	Year.	Number of Inhabitants.	Increase per Annum.	Decrease per Annum.
	1788	4,040,000		
	1805	5,395,456	1·9 per cent.	
	1813	5,937,858	1·5 per cent.	
	1821	[See preceding table.]	2·0 per cent.	

Wretched state of the Irish population before the famine.

The state in which the population was between 1834 and 1841, the period when it reached its maximum, is a consideration of great importance. The Commissioners appointed in 1834 for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland—a Commission comprising amongst its members Archbishop Whately, Archbishop Murray, and the Right

* The increase and decrease per annum is an estimate from the total increase or decrease between each Census period.

Hon. More O'Ferrall—at the commencement of their Third Report, published in 1836, state their opinion as to the condition in which the labouring classes of the Irish people were at that time. They say :—

“It appears that in Great Britain the agricultural families constitute little more than one-fourth, while in Ireland they constitute two-thirds of the whole population; that there were in Great Britain in 1831, 1,055,982 agricultural labourers; in Ireland, 1,131,715: although the cultivated land of Great Britain amounts to about 34,250,000 acres, and that of Ireland only to about 14,000,000. We thus find that there are in Ireland about five agricultural labourers for every two that there are for the same quantity of land in Great Britain. It further appears that the agricultural produce of Great Britain is more than four times that of Ireland; that agricultural wages in Ireland vary from 6*d.* to 1*s.* a-day; that the average of the country in general is about 8½*d.*; and that the earnings of the labourers come on an average of the whole class to from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week or thereabouts for the year round. . . . A great portion of them (agricultural labourers) are insufficiently provided at any time with the commonest necessities of life. Their habitations are wretched hovels; several of the family sleep together on straw, or on the bare ground, sometimes with a blanket, sometimes with not even so much to cover them. Their food commonly consists of dry potatoes; and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal in the day. . . . They sometimes get a herring or a little milk, but they never get meat except at Christmas, Easter, and Shrovetide.”—(P. 3.)

That the condition of the labouring classes in Ireland had not improved up to the famine, is shown by the Report of the Land Occupation Commissioners in 1845. They say :—

“In adverting to the condition of the different classes of occupiers in Ireland, we perceive with deep regret the state of the cottiers and labourers in most parts of the country from want of certain employment. It would be impossible to describe adequately the privations which they and their families almost habitually and patiently endure. It will be seen in the evidence that in many districts their only food is the potato, their only beverage water; that their cabins are seldom a protection against the weather; that a bed or a blanket is a rare luxury; and that nearly in all, their pig and their manure heap constitute their only property.”

Such being the condition of a large proportion of

the people of Ireland from 1834 till 1845, when the population was at its highest amount, it is perfectly clear that a *mere increase* of population was no proof of prosperity; and if so, it is idle to argue that a *mere decrease* of the population is necessarily an evidence of decline.

When it is represented that Ireland was in a most prosperous state in 1841, and that the prosperity continued unchecked until 1846, the fallacy in the proof of progressive decline, from decrease of population, becomes apparent. A mere statement of the number of the population, without any reference to the accounts of the sufferings of the people when their numbers were so great, proves nothing.

Failure of
the potato
the primary
cause of the
decline in
population.

As to the immediate cause of the decline of the population, there is little difference of opinion that it was the failure for a series of years of the potato, which forms the chief food of the people, and the abundance and cheapness of which alone enabled the population to exist on the wretched wages that prevailed before 1846. This cause was beyond any human power to control.

The mode in which this cause operated in decreasing the population will at once appear from the statistics of migration to Great Britain and emigration abroad.

I have already shown, that between 1841 and 1851, about 400,000 people permanently migrated to England and Scotland; and that 300,000 followed the same course during the period from 1851 till 1861.

Great extent
of emigra-
tion from
Ireland.

In the ten years before 1841, it may be estimated that 630,000 left Ireland permanently; about 400,000 going abroad, and 230,000 going to reside in England and Scotland. Such a large emigration and migration, chiefly of the young and able-bodied, would produce a large effect on the number of births in the succeeding ten years, and most probably lead to a stoppage of all increase of the population after 1841.

The population was 8,175,124 in 1841 ; and if the emigration abroad and migration to England and Scotland had continued at the same rate as before 1841, the population would, in all probability, have remained stationary until 1861.

But the emigration from 1841 to 1851 increased from the 400,000 of the preceding ten years to 1,240,000, as estimated by the Emigration Commissioners ; and the migration increased from 230,000 to 400,000. When the lesser numbers, amounting to 630,000, led to a stoppage of the increase of the population, the larger numbers, amounting to 1,640,000, would produce a direct decline of 1,000,000 in the population ; and a further decline, which it is impossible to estimate, owing to non-births, on account of the young and marriageable forming a large proportion of the emigrants. It is thus that the decrease of the population from 8,175,124 in 1841 to 6,552,385 in 1851, is to a very large extent to be accounted for.

From 1851 to 1861, the numbers permanently leaving Ireland would appear from the Census Commissioners' estimates for 1851, and the Irish Registrar-General's returns up to the end of 1860, to have been about 1,250,000. This was in excess of the 630,000 leaving Ireland from 1831 to 1841 by 600,000, and so calculated to produce a direct decline in the population to that extent, and also an indirect decline by the non-births, from the undue proportion of young and marriageable persons amongst those who went. The excessive emigration of the preceding ten years would, in like manner, continue to produce a similar indirect effect ; and these causes account almost entirely for the diminution of the population from 6,552,385, in March, 1851, to 5,789,233, in March, 1861.

The statistics of Irish emigration abroad are of great interest and importance. They are given in the following Tables.

Emigration
abroad from
Ireland.

EMIGRATION ABROAD, as estimated by the Emigration
Commissioners :—

From 1831 to 1841,	.	.	40,346	per annum.
„ 1841 to 1845,	.	.	61,242	„
1846,	.	.	105,955	„
1847,	.	.	215,444	„
1848,	.	.	178,159	„
1849,	.	.	214,425	„
1850,	.	.	209,054	„
1851,	.	.	249,721	„

The above numbers do not include those migrating to England and Scotland.

The next Table includes as well those so migrating as those emigrating abroad.

Total num-
bers perma-
nently leav-
ing Ireland.

TOTAL NUMBERS PERMANENTLY LEAVING IRELAND, as ascer-
tained by the Registrar-General in Ireland :—

	Per annum.		Per annum.
1852,	190,322	1858,	64,337
1853,	173,141	1859,	80,599
1854,	140,555	1860,	84,621
1855,	91,914	1861,	64,292
1856,	90,781	1862,	72,730
1857,	95,081		

It thus appears, that as the migration to England and Scotland of the Irish population had been going on previously to 1841, so the emigration abroad had also attained a considerable height before 1841, and went on at an accelerated rate before 1846.

It is not, by any means, a matter of surprise that the Irish emigrated in such large numbers before 1846, when we consider the wretched wages of the labouring class (5*d.* to 10*d.* a day, with only half employment). In New York the wages in 1847 for common labourers were ordinarily 4*s.* a day, and for a time as high as 5*s.* 2*d.* a day. The readiness of the Irish labourer to seek for employment where his labour is best paid, is sufficiently shown by the annual migration of harvest labourers to Great Britain, ascertained, in 1841, to amount to 57,651 in the year, and in 1862, to 28,695, notwithstanding the diminished population.

I have no doubt, that even before the famine the

emigration would have been much larger than it was but for the high passage-money* to America, consequent on the system of protection which then prevailed. I think, too, that it was not till after 1841, that the education given in the Irish National Schools began to have a considerable effect in diminishing the numbers of those who could speak only Irish,† in increasing the intelligence of the people, removing their prejudices against distant countries, and qualifying them to take advantage of the high wages and facility of acquiring land in the United States and in the Colonies.

So strong was the feeling before the famine, amongst persons of influence and intelligence, as to the necessity of a very considerable emigration for the improvement of Ireland, that the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of the Irish Poor, in their Third Report, in 1836, already quoted, say:—

Emigration recommended by Irish Poor Inquiry Commissioners long before the famine.

“We consider it due to the whole community, and to the labouring classes in particular, that such of the able-bodied as may still be unable to find free and profitable employment in Ireland, should be secured support only through emigration, or as a preliminary to it. . . . It is thus, and thus only, that the market of labour in Ireland can be relieved from the weight that is now upon it, or the labourer be raised from his present prostrate state.”

The Commissioners, with reference to the feeling of the people on the subject of emigration at the time of their Report, quote a great deal of evidence to show that there was a great willingness to emigrate so far back as 1836; that large numbers of those who were able to do so, actually emigrated at that time; and that the chief cause preventing many more from following their example, was the want of

* It appears from the evidence of Mr. Godley, before the Land Occupation Commission, that the cost per head incurred by Government for the passage and location of emigrants sent out to Upper Canada, in the year 1825, amounted to £21 5s., which would be £106 5s. for an average family. In 1844 Mr. Godley estimated the cost of a family emigrating to Canada at £30. To New York it is now about £4 10s. a head, or £22 10s. a family.

† The numbers of those who could speak only Irish were in 1822 (estimate by Irish Society) 2,000,000; in 1851 (Census) 319,602; and in 1861 (Census) 163,276.

means to pay the passage-money. The Land Occupation Commissioners in 1845, expressed their conviction that a well-organized system of emigration would be of great service as one of the measures which the situation of the occupiers of land in Ireland then called for.

From the foregoing sketch of the amount of emigration, and the state of feeling on the subject of population before the famine, it is not difficult to understand how the number of emigrants increased so rapidly after 1845.

Remittances
from the
Irish in
America to
promote
emigration.

The famine at once made the labouring classes, and very many of the small farmers, hopeless of being able to continue in Ireland; and when the accounts of the calamity that had befallen their fellow-countrymen reached America, the annual remittances which had slowly increased for the preceding ten years were rapidly enlarged.

The late Mr. Jacob Harvey, who was so active in promoting the large contributions from the United States for the relief of distress in Ireland, writing in 1846, from New York, says :—

“I have made inquiries from those houses which give small drafts to the poor Irish, and I am rejoiced to find that the remittances are greater than ever before known at this period.”

In a subsequent letter, in January, 1847, he says :—

“I am happy to say, the poor Irish themselves are doing their duty; without any public meeting or addresses, they have been silently remitting their little savings to their relatives at home.”

Mr. Harvey estimated the remittances in 1847 at £200,000 sterling. In 1848, they rose to £460,000, and in the single year 1853, amounted to the sum of £1,439,000.

The very strong feeling in favour of emigration amongst some intelligent friends of Ireland in America, is shown by numerous passages in the correspondence between Mr. Harvey and Mr. Jonathan Pim, of this city, during the famine, which was published,

in 1852, by the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, in the Appendix to their Report.

On the 15th of May, 1847, Mr. Harvey writes :—

“ I feel more and more convinced of the benefits of emigration, and *I want to encourage it all I can*. Notwithstanding the numerous arrivals up to this time, such is the demand for labourers, that there is a gentleman now in town wanting one thousand men for the Erie Railway ; and he has not yet been able to fill up his list, and he offers four shillings, sterling, per day.

“ The rivers and canals are now open, and all the able-bodied men have no difficulty in finding good places in the interior.”

On the 29th of May, 1847, Mr. Harvey writes :—

“ As an Irishman, bound by duty as well as sympathy, to give my poor aid to serve my countrymen, I can see no way so clear as by encouraging emigration. The benefits conferred on the emigrant are positive. . . .

“ The high prices of the produce of the soil have given an increased spur to agricultural pursuits throughout the whole Union, and it will require an increased influx of foreigners to overload the market. What a blessing it is that there is such a continent to be filled with human beings. Look at the map, and you will quickly decide that our present population is as a speck on the horizon.”

I believe that a very large proportion of these remittances from the Irish in America was to bring out the relatives and friends of those who sent them. An enormous emigration fund (if I may call it so), being thus created, another circumstance rendered it far more effective for its purpose than it would otherwise have been. Previously to Sir R. Peel's Free Trade Measures, Indian corn was almost unknown as an article of consumption in the United Kingdom; but in 1849, the importation of it had reached the surprising quantity of 2,200,000 quarters. The sudden increase given to the importation of this article, as well as other bread-stuffs from America, lowered the return freight, and equally, of course, the cost of emigration ; and thus removed one of the greatest hindrances to emigration that had existed before the famine.

Effect of free trade in reducing cost of emigration.

The fact that the cost of the emigration has been so largely defrayed by the friends and relations of the emigrants, by remittances from America, exceeding

The remittances from America show the

voluntary
character
and benefi-
cial effects
of the
emigration.

£10,000,000 in amount, proves beyond doubt the high wages earned there, and the success of land investments and agriculture in that favoured climate. These remittances arising not, as has been represented, from mere charity, but from the strength of family affection, prove how anxious the Irish in America must have been that their relatives should join them.

When the Irish population in the United States and in Australia are so prosperous, it is idle to deplore emigration as necessarily a calamity. It is to a large extent one of those changes which are sure to follow on the progress of trade, and on the increased facility of intercourse with distant lands.

Emigration
general from
United
Kingdom.

The tide of emigration that has thus flowed towards North America, and during the last few years to Australia, does not peculiarly affect the Irish race; for, from the English Census Commissioners' Report, 1861, p. 32, it appears that 640,316 English, 102,954 Scotch, and 194,777 Foreigners, emigrated from the United Kingdom in the period 1851-1861.

Emigration
greatest
where con-
ditions of
living worst.

As the chief economic forces which direct the tide of emigration, both as to the place whence it proceeds and the direction it takes, are the difference of wages in different places, and the difference in the facility of acquiring land, it follows that the emigration, other things being equal, will be greatest from those parts of the United Kingdom where the rate of wages is lowest, and the security of tenure least.

Emigration
from Ireland
up to 1861.

Another feature of the emigration table remains to be noticed. Some people, by taking the decennial period only, and finding nearly as large an emigration from 1851 to 1861 as from 1841 to 1851, assume at once that the depopulation is still continuing at about the same rate; but the figures show an enormous decrease in recent years as compared with the years immediately succeeding the famine. There was an increase in the years 1859 and 1860. In 1861 the emigration would probably have been larger, but for

the American war. The increase in 1862, notwithstanding the war, is a proof of pressure from the unfavourable seasons of 1860 and 1861. In 1863 there will probably be a further increase.

Should more favourable seasons return, and should a better understanding prevail between landlords and tenants, so as to secure a further increase in the rate of agricultural wages, and a greater stability for farming profits, we may expect the emigration from Ireland to assume gradually the same proportion to the population which prevails in the emigration from England and Scotland.

It is alleged by some that the emigration was in no respect voluntary, but entirely caused by the evictions of landlords. The following Table shows the number of evictions, compared with the numbers permanently leaving Ireland in each year since 1849.

The NUMBER of EVICTIONS, as ascertained by the Police, in each year from 1849 to 1862, compared with the number of persons permanently leaving Ireland :—

Years.	Number of Evictions.		Number of Persons permanently leaving Ireland.	Number of evictions compared with numbers leaving Ireland.
	Families.	Persons.		
1849	13,384	72,065	254,425	}
1850	14,546	74,171	249,050	
1851	8,815	43,449	289,721	
1852	6,550	32,160	190,322	
1853	3,820	17,868	173,148	}
1854	1,835	8,989	140,555	
1855	1,365	6,732	91,914	
1856	878	3,948	90,781	
1857	919	4,223	95,081	
1858	720	3,432	64,337	
1859	491	2,348	80,599	
1860	511	2,711	87,626	
1861	829	3,964	66,396	
1862	983	4,972	72,730	

* These numbers are obtained by adding an estimated average number of persons migrating to England and Scotland to the numbers emigrating abroad.

† These figures are taken from the Emigration Returns published by the Registrar-General for Ireland.

It is plain from this Table to what a large extent the emigration must have been voluntary, arising from remittances and favourable accounts from abroad, or from hopelessness of being able to farm with profit at home.

The view which I have endeavoured to present, that the emigration from Ireland, however accelerated by the potato failure, depends on deep and wide-spread causes, dating long prior to that event and extending in different degrees over the agricultural districts of the empire, obtains a singular corroboration in the statistics of the different races in Ireland.

Diminution
in the Celtic
element of
the Irish
population
not much
greater than
in the
English and
Scotch
elements.

When the population of Ireland was near its highest point in 1834, a religious census was taken, and a similar census was completed in 1861. The result has shown a diminution of the Roman Catholic, or Celtic element of the population, from 6,427,712 to 4,505,414, showing a diminution of 29·9 per cent. It was commonly supposed that, concurrently with this diminution of the Celts, the element of the population of Ireland of English and Scotch origin had largely increased, but such is not the fact.

The members of the Established Church, chiefly composed of people of English race, from 1834 to 1861 diminished from 852,064 to 691,509, being at the rate of 18·9 per cent. If we remember that these numbers include such a large proportion of the wealthier classes in Ireland, the decrease amongst those members of the Established Church, who are farmers and labourers, has been as rapid as among the Celtic Roman Catholics of the same class.

The Presbyterians, who represent the Scotch settlers, notwithstanding the representations of their increase, also diminished from 642,356 to 523,300, or at the rate of 18·5 per cent. If we bear in mind that the Presbyterians are chiefly located in the manufacturing districts of Ireland, it follows, in like manner, that amongst Presbyterian farmers and farm labourers

of Scotch descent there has been as great a decrease as amongst the Celtic peasantry.*

The favour with which emigration is still viewed amongst Presbyterians is shown by a remarkable project to form a Presbyterian settlement in New Zealand, which has received the patronage and approval of eighteen of the most influential of the Presbyterian Ministers in Ireland, and which is now extensively advertised by hand-bills at the different Presbyterian churches. (See copy in Appendix, No. 1, p. 85, *infra*.)

The only class which increased from 1834 to 1861, were those religious denominations not included in the preceding. Their numbers of 21,808 in 1834, and 78,010 in 1861, are too small to affect the result I have stated. And their increase arises chiefly from Methodists being, in many cases, included among the members of the Established Church in 1834.

From such facts it is manifest that the causes which have led to such a large migration to England and Scotland, and such a still more extensive emigration abroad, have affected the people of Ireland alike, whether descended from native Celts or from English or Scotch settlers. The causes must therefore be general, and it is impossible to ascribe them to any policy of the Legislature or of the Government directed against a particular race or creed.

Alleged Decline in the Quantity of Land under Cultivation.

It has been commonly represented that the policy of the State for some years has been to destroy tillage,

* The Celtic element of the Irish population after the civil wars of Cromwell, was estimated by Sir William Petty, in 1672, as 800,000 out of 1,100,000, or 72·7 in every 100. In 1723 an estimate was made of the number of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the population, then about 2,300,000, and the Roman Catholic or Celtic element was again estimated at 72·7 of every 100. In 1834 it was 80·9, and in 1861 it was 77·7 a larger proportion than in the reign of Charles II., in 1672, or of George I., in 1723.

by which the poor lived, and to promote an undue extension of cattle-farming.

As bearing on this point, I shall first refer to the following table :—

Total acreage under crops.	TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER CROPS of all kinds.			
	Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
	1847	5,238,575	—	—
	1848*	—	—	—
	1849	5,543,748	152,586†	—
	1850	5,758,292	214,544	—
	1851	5,858,951	100,659	—
	1852	5,739,214	—	119,737
	1853	5,696,951	—	42,263
	1854	5,570,610	—	126,341
	1855	5,688,836	118,226	—
	1856	5,753,547	64,711	—
	1857	5,859,117	105,570	—
	1858	5,882,052	22,935	—
	1859	5,862,605	—	19,447
	1860	5,970,139	107,534	—
	1861	5,890,536	—	79,603
	1862	5,751,695	—	138,841

Increase in recent years in land under crops. It thus appears, that from 1847 till 1859, the number of acres under crops of all kinds, although varying in different years, finally attained a maximum in 1860, rising from 5,238,275 acres in 1847, to 5,970,139 acres in 1860.

There has been, it will be observed, a decrease of 79,603 acres in 1861, and a further decrease of 138,841 acres in 1862. Even with this decrease, there were upwards of 500,000 acres more under crops in 1862 than there were in 1847; 200,000 acres more than in 1849, and 50,000 acres more than on an average of seven years from 1849 to 1855, inclusive.

Having thus shown the general result of an examination of the total acreage of the lands under

* Incomplete, owing to the disturbed state of the country.

† Half of increase from 1847.

crops, I think it may be interesting to exhibit somewhat in detail, in what direction the increase took place, and what variation the acreage of some of the chief kinds of crop underwent :—

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER GREEN CROPS.

Total
acreage
under Green
crops.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	727,738	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	1,167,639	224,450†	—
1850	1,317,572	149,933	—
1851	1,352,315	34,743	—
1852	1,335,483	—	16,832
1853	1,402,192	66,709	—
1854	1,404,518	2,326	—
1855	1,433,412	38,894	—
1856	1,547,746	104,334	—
1857	1,591,216	43,470	—
1858	1,603,464	12,248	—
1859	1,619,325	15,861	—
1860	1,591,817	—	27,508
1861	1,558,077	—	33,740
1862	1,465,855	—	92,222

From this table it appears that green crops increased with scarcely a variation from 1,167,639 acres in 1849 to 1,619,325 acres in 1859. Each succeeding year since 1859 has been marked by a decrease, and in an increasing ratio. This decrease marks the want of prosperity of the past three years, but affords no evidence of progressive decline, as the land under green crops in 1862 was greater than in any year before 1856.

It might be supposed that the increase in land under green crops was caused by raising food for cattle rather than by a restoration of the potato cultivation, which still so much concerns the mass of the people; but amongst green crops—indeed amongst all

* Incomplete.

† Half of increase from 1847.

the crops—the most remarkable change in cultivation has been in the potato, as the next table shows:—

Potatoes.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER POTATOES.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	284,116	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	718,608	217,246†	—
1850	875,357	156,749	—
1851	868,501	—	6,856
1852	876,532	8,031	—
1853	898,733	22,201	—
1854	989,660	90,927	—
1855	982,301	—	7,359
1856	1,104,704	122,403	—
1857	1,146,647	41,943	—
1858	1,159,707	13,060	—
1859	1,200,347	40,640	—
1860	1,172,079	—	28,268
1861	1,133,504	—	38,575
1862	1,017,317	—	116,187

Restoration
of potato
cultivation
to 1859—
decrease
since.

The foregoing table shows the extraordinary restoration of potato cultivation from 284,116 acres in 1847 to 1,200,347 acres in 1859, being within 37,000 acres of the quantity estimated‡ as under potatoes in 1846, when the great failure took place.

The potato cultivation has declined for the first time since the famine in three successive years—1860, 1861, and 1862, and especially in the latter year; but still the quantity of land under potatoes was greater in 1862 than in any year from 1847 to 1855.

Besides potatoes, I may notice turnips as being a most important green crop:—

* Incomplete.

† Half of increase from 1847.

‡ Vide Estimate of 1,237,441, in Thom's Almanac for 1847, founded on official returns of extent of land under potatoes in 1845 and 1846.

TOTAL NUMBER of ACRES UNDER TURNIPS.

Turnips.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	370,344	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	360,069	—	5,137†
1850	347,331	—	12,738
1851	383,548	36,217	—
1852	356,790	—	26,758
1853	399,377	42,587	—
1854	329,170	—	70,207
1855	366,953	37,783	—
1856	354,451	—	12,502
1857	350,047	—	4,404
1858	338,202	—	11,845
1859	322,137	—	16,065
1860	318,540	—	3,597
1861	334,104	15,564	—
1862	377,149	43,045	—

This table shows a maximum quantity of turnips in 1853. Since 1855, turnips have varied in the opposite direction from potatoes. As the quantity of potatoes increased, turnips diminished, and in 1861 and 1862 the opposite result has taken place, an extension of turnips compensating to some extent for a diminution of potatoes.

Next to green crops, the great increase since 1847 was in hay, or meadow and clover.

TOTAL NUMBER of ACRES UNDER HAY.

Total
acreage
under Hay.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	1,138,946	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	1,141,371	1,212†	—
1850	1,200,124	58,753	—
1851	1,246,408	46,284	—
1852	1,270,713	24,305	—
1853	1,270,742	29	—
1854	1,257,864	—	12,878
1855	1,314,807	56,943	—
1856	1,302,787	—	12,020
1857	1,369,892	67,105	—

* Incomplete.

† Half of decrease from 1847.

‡ Half of increase from 1847.

Meadow and
clover.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER MEADOW and CLOVER.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1858	1,424,495	54,603	—
1859	1,437,111	12,616	—
1860	1,594,518	157,407	—
1861	1,546,206	—	48,312
1862	1,552,829	6,623	—

Increase in
meadow and
clover.

The hay rose from 1,138,946 acres in 1847 to 1,369,892 acres in 1857, and the meadow and clover (under which head hay was classed after 1857) rose from 1,424,495 acres in 1858 to 1,594,518 acres in 1860, when it attained a maximum. There was a decrease in 1861 and 1862, as compared with the preceding maximum of 1860, but an increase in both as compared with any other year in the series.

Flax.

The prevalence of the flax crop in the North of Ireland seems to be not alone a question of industry, but also one of climate. As the best flax seed comes from the Baltic, we naturally expect flax to flourish best in the most northerly parts of the island; and such is the fact, the greatest proportionate growth being in Londonderry, and the other counties where there is a really large growth being Donegal, Tyrone, Armagh, Monaghan, Antrim, and Down—Fermanagh and Cavan coming next. The crop, though not large in total extent, is very valuable, and of great importance to the districts where it is grown.

Variation in
flax.—Acre-
age large in
recent years.

The acreage under flax increased in a remarkable manner from 60,314 acres in 1849 to 174,579 acres in 1853, then declined with slight variation to 91,646 in 1858. Since 1858 it has risen with a slight variation to 150,012 acres in 1862, a number larger than in any year since 1847 (except 1853 and 1854), thus showing a remarkable progress, instead of a decline, in the crop on which the linen trade of Ireland depends.

TOTAL NUMBER of ACRES UNDER FLAX.

Total
acreage
under flax.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	58,312	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	60,314	1,001†	—
1850	91,040	30,726	—
1851	140,536	49,496	—
1852	137,008	—	3,528
1853	174,579	37,571	—
1854	151,403	—	23,176
1855	97,075	—	54,328
1856	106,311	9,236	—
1857	97,721	—	8,590
1858	91,646	—	6,075
1859	136,282	44,636	—
1860	128,595	—	7,687
1861	147,957	19,362	—
1862	150,012	2,055	—

After flax, the crop most affected by the climate is wheat; and as we get our supplies of foreign wheat from warmer and drier climates than Ireland, it naturally happens that it is in the warmest and driest parts of Ireland that wheat is chiefly grown.

TOTAL NUMBER of ACRES UNDER WHEAT.

Wheat.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	743,871	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	687,646	—	28,112‡
1850	604,867	—	82,779
1851	504,248	—	100,619
1852	353,566	—	150,682
1853	326,896	—	26,670
1854	411,284	84,388	—
1855	445,775	34,491	—
1856	529,050	83,275	—
1857	559,646	30,596	—
1858	546,964	—	12,682
1859	464,175	—	82,789
1860	466,415	2,240	—
1861	401,243	—	65,172
1862	357,816	—	43,427

* Incomplete.

† Half of increase from 1847.

‡ Half of decrease from 1847.

Variations
in wheat,
with ten-
dency to
decrease.

Omitting 1847 as an exceptional year, from the extent of grain sown to replace potatoes, wheat was at a maximum of 687,646 acres in 1849; it fell to 326,896 acres in 1853. From 326,896 acres, in 1853, wheat rose to its second maximum of 559,646 acres in 1857, and remained with little change in 1858, and fell from 546,964 acres, in 1858, to 357,816 acres in 1862, very near the minimum of 1853. On the whole, its cultivation appears to be falling off.

The wheat crop is the one in which Ireland has been exposed to the most trying competition by the abolition of protection, as it seems to suffer most in our variable and often cold summers. A falling off in wheat cultivation is less an indication of decline in the condition of the country than the falling off of any other crop. It is the crop of all others in the growth of which the country has the least natural advantages, and which can be most easily replaced by supplies from abroad.

The most important cereal crop in Ireland is oats.

Oats.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER OATS.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1847	2,200,870	—	—
1848*	—	—	—
1849	2,061,185	—	69,842†
1850	2,142,596	81,411	—
1851	2,189,775	47,179	—
1852	2,283,449	93,674	—
1853	2,157,849	—	125,600
1854	2,045,298	—	112,551
1855	2,118,858	73,560	—
1856	2,037,437	81,421	—
1857	1,980,934	—	56,503
1858	1,981,241	307	—
1859	1,982,662	1,421	—
1860	1,966,304	—	16,358
1861	1,999,160	32,856	—
1862	1,974,737	—	24,423

It will be at once noticed how slight are the fluctuations in this Table, compared with some of the foregoing.

The diminution of the total number of acres under

* Incomplete.

† Half of decrease from 1847.

cereal crops has been dwelt on as an evidence of decline. The figures are as follow :—

TOTAL NUMBER of ACRES UNDER CEREAL CROPS.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.	Total acreage under cereal crops.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	
1847	3,313,579	—	—	
1848*	—	—	—	
1849	3,174,424	—	69,577†	
1850	3,149,556	—	24,868	
1851	3,099,401	—	50,155	
1852	2,976,606	—	122,795	
1853	2,833,387	—	143,219	
1854	2,743,736	—	89,651	
1855	2,832,564	88,828	—	
1856	2,785,208	—	47,356	
1857	2,786,828	1,620	—	
1858	2,748,380	—	38,448	
1859	2,652,780	—	95,600	
1860	2,639,384	—	13,396	
1861	2,624,957	—	14,427	
1862	2,552,223	—	72,734	

The figures in this Table taken alone show a decline, but this decline was concurrent in most years with the increase of potato cultivation I have already adverted to. The acreage under both is given in the following Table :—

TOTAL NUMBER of ACRES UNDER CEREAL CROPS and POTATOES.

Year.	Total Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.	Total acreage under cereal crops and potatoes.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	
1847	3,797,695	—	—	
1848*	—	—	—	
1849	3,893,032	47,668†	—	
1850	4,024,913	131,881	—	
1851	3,967,902	—	57,011	
1852	3,853,138	—	114,764	
1853	3,732,120	—	121,018	
1854	3,732,396	1,276	—	
1855	3,814,865	81,469	—	
1856	3,889,912	75,047	—	
1857	3,933,475	43,563	—	
1858	3,908,087	—	25,388	
1859	3,853,127	—	54,960	
1860	3,811,463	—	41,664	
1861	3,758,461	—	53,002	
1862	3,569,540	—	188,921	

* Incomplete.

† Half of decrease from 1847.

‡ Half of increase from 1847.

From this Table we learn that the quantity of land which was under cereals and potatoes increased from 1847 to 1850, then declined to 1853, and then increased in 1857 to very nearly the amount of 1850, and to a higher amount than in 1847 or 1849. From 1857 there has been a decline, especially remarkable in 1862.

Allegation
of 7,000,000
acres under
cultivation
in 1841
unproved
and incre-
dible.

It has been alleged in the House of Commons—

“That the agricultural returns showed that in the year 1841, the number of acres under cultivation was 7,000,000, while in 1862 it was only 5,781,000.”

From this statement it would naturally be supposed that there was some system of collecting agricultural returns in 1841 similar to that by which the number quoted in 1862, was obtained; but such is not the fact. The collection of the agricultural statistics of Ireland was commenced in 1847, and hence I have commenced my tables with that year.

Again, it might be supposed that this information was obtained by the Census Commissioners in 1841; but no such returns were obtained by the Census Commissioners in 1841.

The Census Commissioners in 1841 obtained information of the number of cattle, and size of farms, and the total extent of *arable land*, as distinguished from waste, but no information as to number of *acres under crops*. The alleged number of 7,000,000 acres under crops in 1841 was not ascertained by official returns, and as a private estimate it is, to my mind, incredible.

From 1841 there was no extensive change in the way land was held or cropped up to 1846, so that it is safe to assume that there were as many acres under crop in 1846 as in 1841. Now, it was ascertained by careful investigation, in the collection of agricultural statistics, that there were 5,238,575 acres under crops of all kinds in 1847. Any person who had any general acquaintance with the country in 1846 and 1847, knows that 1,761,425 acres of land did not go out of cultivation in the spring of 1847.

Mr. M'Culloch has been referred to as an authority

for part of the estimate of 7,000,000 acres under crops in 1841. I find no estimate in his "Commercial Dictionary" in 1846; but in his "Statistical Account of the British Empire," published at the end of 1846, he gives an estimate, introducing it thus :—

"There are no means by which to form an accurate estimate of the extent of land under the different crops in Ireland."

His estimate is—for cereals, 3,350,000 acres; potatoes, 2,000,000; fallow, 300,000; flax, 100,000; gardens, 15,000. Total, 5,765,000 acres. He omits turnips and hay; but if 1,235,000 acres be added for them, the 7,000,000 would be made up. Mr. M'Culloch's estimate would seem to be for 1846, and on close examination the chief items appear excessive.

Inquiries were made as to the extent of the potato crop in 1845 and 1846, and from returns of the extent of land planted in 1845 and 1846, it appeared that in parishes containing 5,027,476 persons, there were 842,573 acres. Taking the same proportions for the entire population, it was estimated that 1,237,441* acres were under potatoes in 1846, instead of Mr. M'Culloch's 2,000,000, or a difference of 762,559 acres.

Again, the 300,000 acres of fallow must be omitted in any comparison with returns for subsequent years, as fallow is not included in the returns.

As to cereals. The acreage under cereals in 1847 was 3,313,579 acres. The acreage under potatoes in the same year fell off from upwards of 1,200,000 acres to 284,116 acres. It is well known that in 1847, on account of the failure of the potato, an unusually large quantity of land was devoted to the growth of cereals; and, therefore, Mr. M'Culloch's estimate, being greater than that unusually large quantity, appears to be clearly excessive for 1845, and (judging by the large exports of wheat, oats, flour, and meal, of 3,135,971 quarters in 1845, as compared with 2,762,642 quarters in 1841), even more excessive for 1841. For this excess it will be safe to reduce Mr.

* *Vide* Thom's Statistics of Ireland, 1847, pp. 191-2.

M'Culloch's estimate of acreage under cereals by a least 350,000 acres.

The estimated acreage for flax may be assumed to be pretty accurate, as also may be the acreage added for turnips and hay, for, as live stock was much less numerous in 1841 than in 1849, and as potatoes were in 1841 largely grown and very productive, the acreage under hay and turnips would be much less in 1841 than in 1849.

If the corrections referred to be introduced into Mr. M'Culloch's estimate, and assuming that Mr. M'Culloch's estimate in 1846 is the authority for the estimate under discussion, the estimate of 7,000,000 acres under crops in 1841 is reduced to 5,587,441 acres, a less number than has been ascertained to have been under crops in any year since 1850, with the exception of 1854; and less, to the extent of 382,698 acres, than the maximum of 5,970,139 acres under crops in 1860. Thus the worthlessness of the argument for progressive decline, founded on the decrease of land under crops, is rendered manifest.

An allegation has been made that the crops in 1841 were of the estimated value of £50,000,000. This is to be rejected as unworthy of serious consideration. There were no official returns of produce in 1841; and when the private estimates of acreage seem to be so erroneous, private estimates of produce must be still less to be relied on.

Increased
acreage
under crops
since 1847.

It appears from a general view of all the Tables of acreage under crops, that in the year 1860 there were devoted to the growth of cereals, flax, potatoes, turnips, and other green crops, nearly as many acres as in 1849, and nearly 300,000 acres more than in 1847; to the growth of hay and clover, upwards of 400,000 acres more than in 1847 or 1849. There were in pasturage in 1860, probably upwards of 1,200,000 acres more than in 1847.

Increased
crops and
pasturage,

Thus, while pasturage has increased, it is not by subtraction from the total quantity of land formerly de-

voted to the growth of crops, but by the reclamation of land which in 1841 was considered as improvable waste. owing to increase of arable land.

In 1841 there were in Ireland 13,461,301 acres of arable land, whilst in 1860 the arable land of Ireland had increased to 15,400,000 acres, showing an addition of nearly 2,000,000 productive acres.

The population have not been changed from agricultural labourers into cattle-herds, as alleged by some, but extended cattle farming has been added to the previous amount of cultivation of cereals, potatoes, turnips, and flax. So far, therefore, as the industry of man is concerned, there has been no decrease in the cultivation of the soil.

There have been depressing influences at work in the past three years, but even these have not lowered the extent of land under crops more than four per cent., leaving the increase previously made practically unaffected. So that the theory of progressive decline, so far as the land under crops is concerned, is without a vestige of foundation.

Estimated Total Produce of Crops.

The amount of land under cultivation in any year is the result of the enterprise and industry of those who grow the crops. The reward they receive for their exertions depends partly on the amount and quality of the produce, and partly on the price; in other words, on the changes of the season in Ireland, and the changes of season and other circumstances affecting prices in those foreign countries from which we import articles that compete with the produce of our soil.

To ascertain by statistics of enumeration whether the crops of any season have paid the farmer, becomes a very complicated question; for, with regard to each crop there are three conditions—quantity, quality, and price, and there are compensating circumstances in the variation of these conditions as to different crops and kinds of produce; but these compensations depend on proportions of production, which again vary according to the district. Thus, an increased Statistics of total produce more liable to inaccuracy than acreage.

profit derived from flax in Ulster would be no compensation for a falling-off in wheat in Munster.

The statistics of the total produce are published by the Registrar-General. He explains very fully the difficulty of compiling them, from the diversity of weights throughout Ireland. I may add that they are estimates which must, to a very considerable extent, be founded on matters of opinion, and are not capable of the same checks as the acreage under crops, and so cannot be brought to anything like the same degree of accuracy. But as they are published under the authority of the Government, they are, of course, appealed to in the discussion of questions as to the state of the country.

These statistics are relied on, as proving progressive decline. I shall therefore proceed to examine them:—

Wheat.—
Acreage,
total pro-
duce, and
average
price.

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCE, and AVERAGE PRICE of WHEAT.

Year.	Extent under Crop.	Estimated Total Produce.	Average Price per Barrel of 20 stones, Dublin Corn Exchange, to 1st November in succeeding Year.	
			s.	d.
1847	Acres. 743,871	Quarters. 2,926,733	29	4
1848*	—	—	—	—
1849	687,646	2,167,734	23	9
1850	604,867	1,558,196	22	1
1851	504,248	1,493,525	23	3
1852	353,566	1,154,205	29	9
1853	326,896	1,133,585	40	4
1854	411,284	1,452,467	41	8½
1855	445,775	1,520,819	40	0¼
1856†	529,050	1,629,963	33	3
1857	559,646	1,662,957	25	10
1858	546,964	1,746,464	24	10
1859	464,175	1,468,475	30	8
1860	466,415	1,271,588	30	2½
1861	401,243	851,871	31	0
1862	357,816	683,048	—	—

* Acreage incomplete owing to disturbed state of country.

† The estimates of produce were made differently before 1855 and after 1856. I have, therefore, distinguished the two series of years. In the earlier periods the produce was estimated by the Sub-Inspectors of Constabulary, in Sub-Inspectors' Districts, in November in each year. Since 1855 the produce is estimated by the Constabulary in January or February, after each crop, in Poor Law Electoral Divisions, and corrected according to opinions of Poor Law Guardians. In 1855 the opinion of the Poor Law Guardians was to some extent used in checking the returns of the Constabulary; in 1856 both systems were used. The tendency of taking the opinion of the Guardians has been to lower the rates of produce.—*Vide Tables of Estimated Acreage Produce, 1856.*

In the above table are given the acreage and total produce, from the official returns of agricultural produce. I have added the average price at the Dublin Corn Exchange, as published by Mr. Thom in his Statistics of Ireland. The falling off from 1847 to 1853 seems to have been caused partly by the low average produce, but chiefly by the low range of prices. It would appear that wheat-farming was prosperous from 1852 to 1856, and the acreage consequently increased.

In 1851 and 1857 the produce was about 3 quarters to the acre; from 1854 to 1856 the produce was greater, and the prices very high. In 1858 the produce was at a slightly higher rate, but the price was low. In 1860 the produce per acre fell below 3 quarters to the acre, and the price fell still lower. In 1861 the produce fell to a little more than 2 quarters the acre, and the price, though it rose, was not high. In 1862 the produce fell to the lowest rate of all, less than 2 quarters to the acre.

It appears, therefore, that the prosperity of wheat-farming has declined since 1856, and those who grew it must have suffered heavily in 1861. The year 1862 was the worst year as to produce since the statistics were first collected in 1847, and the acreage has consequently fallen to very near the minimum of 1853.

Decline in profits of wheat-farming since 1856, and especially in last two years.

The estimated total produce of oats is as follows:—

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCE, and AVERAGE PRICE of OATS.

Year.	Extent under Crop.	Estimated Total Produce.	Average Price per Barrel of 14 stones, Dublin Corn Exchange, to 1st November in succeeding Year.		Oats.— Acreage, total produce, and average price.
			s.	d.	
1847	Acres. 2,200,870	Quarters. 11,521,606	11	9	
1848*	—	—	—	—	
1849	2,061,185	9,836,893	9	11	
1850	2,142,596	10,341,973	10	10	
1851	2,189,775	10,771,236	10	8	
1852	2,283,449	11,712,528	11	7	

* Incomplete.

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCE, &c.—*continued.*

Year.	Extent under Crop.	Estimated Total Produce.	Average Price per Barrel of 14 stones, Dublin Corn Exchange, to 1st November in succeeding year.	
	Acres.	Quarters.	s.	d.
1853	2,157,849	10,690,881	15	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
1854	2,045,298	11,293,101	15	7
1855	2,118,858	10,266,350	14	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
1856	2,037,437	9,236,869	14	7
1857	1,980,934	8,895,347	14	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
1858	1,981,241	8,953,541	13	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1859	1,982,662	8,170,856	15	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
1860	1,966,304	8,841,924	14	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1861	1,999,160	8,045,689	13	8
1862	1,974,737	7,283,000	—	

Falling off
in produce
of oats since
1854.

This table shows a falling-off in the total produce, from 1854, and especially in 1861 and 1862, when the produce fell off nearly 800,000 quarters in each year, with little change in the acreage under crop. In 1859 the yield of oats was deficient. There was, it is well known, a very short crop of straw in the same year. The rise of price, however, afforded some compensation. The produce in 1861 was below 1859, and the price was lower. In 1862 the produce was far below any previous year, without, I am told, any compensation in rise of price.

It is to be borne in mind that in the statistics of the wheat and oat crops, the quantity and value of straw is omitted.

The attempts made to decide the question of decline of the agricultural interest by a simple comparison of totals, without any regard to prices, is very fallacious; thus the minimum produce of 8,045,689 quarters in 1861, at 14s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per barrel, would realize more than the high produce of 10,771,236 quarters in 1851, at the price of 10s. 8d. per barrel.

The statistics of total produce, if unaccompanied by tables of prices, and careful explanations as to the quality of the crop, are very liable to mislead, notwithstanding all the care devoted to them. For the

reasons I have already referred to, they cannot be considered as more than rough approximations to the truth, unless corroborated by other tests of prosperity or decline.

But, making every allowance for these considerations, there can be no doubt that 1861 and 1862 were very unfavourable years for the oat crop, which occupies one-half the entire land under crops other than meadow and clover, and four-fifths of the land under cereal crops in Ireland. I have been assured by a well-informed gentleman that 1862 was the worst year for cereals in Ireland since the disastrous year of 1816.

Potatoes being so largely consumed on the farms where they are grown, as human food and as feeding for pigs, poultry, and even cattle, it is much more difficult to estimate their produce than that of grain crops. Again, the same weight of potatoes in different years, represents, according to quality and freedom from disease, a very different amount and value of food.

The Registrar-General's statistics of the total produce of potatoes are as follows :—

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCE, and PRICE of POTATOES.

Year.	Extent under Crop.	Estimated Total Produce.	Average Price per ton at end of February in following year.	
	Acres.	Tons.	s.	d.
1847	284,116	2,048,195	157	6
1848*	—	—	—	—
1849	718,608	4,014,122	83	9
1850	875,357	3,945,989	82	11
1851	868,501	4,441,022	76	8
1852	876,532	4,255,604	102	1
1853	898,733	5,741,538	92	6
1854	989,660	5,061,654	98	4
1855	982,301	6,235,281	74	7
1856	1,104,704	4,408,543	70	5
1857	1,146,647	3,509,344	80	0
1858	1,159,707	4,892,225	48	4
1859	1,200,347	4,329,523	75	10
1860	1,172,079	2,741,380	81	8
1861	1,133,504	1,858,433	88	4
1862	1,017,317	2,148,204	77	6

* Incomplete.

Serious falling off in the produce of oats in 1861, 1862.

Potatoes.—
Acreage, total produce, and price.

There are no official returns of the prices of potatoes, but I have made an estimate from the published prices in the last week in February in Dublin and three other towns, in each year.

Increase
in acreage
under pota-
toes account-
ed for by
changes in
prices.

The prices in the foregoing table are very interesting, as to a great extent accounting for the steady increase in the acreage under potatoes, notwithstanding the great fluctuations in productiveness of that crop from year to year, and notwithstanding that the potato has never recovered the great fertility which it had before the famine. The extraordinary high price of the potato crop of 1847 accounts for the increase of acreage up to 1849. Again, when the rate of produce diminished in 1852, the rise of price prevented any diminution in the acreage in the next year. The diminished produce of 1854 was accompanied by a rise of price. The apparent falling off in produce from 1855 to 1856 being accompanied by a fall instead of a rise in price, may be partly accounted for by the different mode of taking the estimates of produce. The fall in produce in 1857 was followed by a rise in price; and the large produce of 1858 led to a fall in price. Then the continued fall in produce from 1858 to 1861 was followed in each year by a gradual rise in price, and the increased produce in 1862 led to a fall in price.

Serious de-
crease in pro-
ductiveness
in potato,
especially in
last three
years.

The table exhibits a very great decline in produce since 1859, and something quite startling in 1861, when it was far below a third of the average produce from 1851 to 1855, and below a half of the average produce from 1856 to 1860; and the rise of price was not such as to at all compensate for the decline since 1859.

In 1862 there has been a slight recovery in the rate of produce from 1861. The amount in 1862, however, is less than half the average produce from 1851 to 1859, and about one-third the produce of 1853 and 1855.

It is to be borne in mind that the land under

potatoes in 1861 and 1862 was about one-fourth of the entire land under cereal and green crops in those years. Such a serious falling off in produce must have had a most disastrous effect in impoverishing the farming classes.

The remaining tables of total produce of sufficient importance to require notice are those of turnips and flax.

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCE, and AVERAGE PRODUCE of Turnips.—
Turnips.—
Acreage,
total pro-
duce, and
average
produce.

Year.	Extent under Crop.	Estimated Total Produce.	Average Produce per Acre.*
	Acres.	Tons.	Tons.
1847	370,344	5,760,606	15.5
1848†	—	—	—
1849	360,069	5,805,848	16.1
1850	347,331	5,439,005	15.7
1851	383,548	6,081,326	15.9
1852	356,790	5,675,897	15.9
1853	399,377	6,562,471	16.4
1854	329,170	5,207,636	15.8
1855	366,953	6,073,598	16.6
1856	354,451	4,581,172	12.9
1857	350,047	4,360,197	12.5
1858	338,202	4,364,788	12.9
1859	322,137	3,462,071	10.7
1860	318,540	2,627,978	8.3
1861	334,104	3,392,884	10.2
1862	377,149	3,792,682	10.1

This table shows progressive improvement in rate of produce up to 1855. In the second series of years it shows a remarkable depression in 1860; and even 1861, though above 1860, was below the average of the five preceding years.

Falling off
in rate of
produce of
turnips since
1858.

In 1862 the greater number of acres under crop gives a larger total produce of turnips; but the lower average produce per acre shows that 1862 was as unfavourable for farmers growing turnips as 1861.

* Turnips are so much consumed on the farms where they are grown, and their market price is so variable in different places, that I was not able to get a good average price computed. I have added a column of average produce instead.

† Incomplete.

Flax.—
Acreage,
total pro-
duce, and
price.

ACREAGE, TOTAL PRODUCE, and PRICE of FLAX.

Year.	Extent under Crop.	Estimated Total Produce.	Price.
	Acres.	Tons.	
1847]	—	—	
1848]*	—	—	
1849	60,314	14,982	
1850	91,040	22,427	
1851	140,536	33,861	Average.
1852	137,008	35,462	Low.
1853	174,579	43,863	Above average.
1854	151,403	35,606	High.
1855	97,075	23,428	Low.
1856	106,311	18,791	Below average.
1857	97,721	14,475	Low.
1858	91,646	17,583	Very high.
1859	136,282	21,577	Above average.
1860	128,595	23,760	Average.
1861	147,957	22,568	Above average.
1862	150,012	24,258	Very high.

This table exhibits results similar to the tables of wheat and potatoes. The most remarkable changes in cultivation arise from changes in price. Thus the falling off from 1854 to 1858 was caused by low prices. The sudden increase in 1859 follows on the very high price in 1858.

Comparison
of average
produce per
acre since
1847.

The official estimates of the average produce per acre of the crops (with the exception of flax and some of the less important green crops) in each year since 1847, together with the average of these estimates for periods of years, are exhibited in the following Table :—

[TABLE.

* Incomplete.

ESTIMATED AVERAGE PRODUCE per STATUTE ACRE.

Produce as estimated by Sub-Inspectors of Constabulary, in Sub-Inspectors' Districts, in November in each year.

Year.	Wheat. Barrels, 20 stones.	Oats. Barrels, 14 stones.	Potatoes. Barrels, 20 stones.	Turnips. Tons.	Hay. Tons.
1847	6.6 } average.	8.4 } average.	57.7 } average.	15.5 } average.	1.9 } average.
1848*	4.5 } 5.5	7.6 } 8.0	31.0 } 44.3	14.3 } 14.8	2.0 } 1.10
1849	5.3 }	7.6 }	44.7 }	16.1 }	2.0 }
1850	4.4 } 4.9	7.7 } 7.7	36.6 } 40.7	15.7 } 15.9	2.0 } 2.0
1851	5.0 }	7.9 }	40.9 }	15.9 }	2.0 }
1852	5.5 }	8.2 }	38.7 }	15.9 }	2.1 }
1853	5.8 }	7.9 }	51.1 }	16.4 }	2.0 }
1854	5.9 }	8.8 }	40.9 }	15.8 }	1.9 }
1855†	5.7 }	7.8 }	50.8 }	16.6 }	2.0 }

Produce as estimated by Constabulary, in January or February, of following years, in Poor Law Electoral Divisions, and corrected according to opinion of Poor Law Guardians.

Year.	Wheat. Barrels, 20 stones.	Oats. Barrels, 14 stones.	Potatoes. Barrels, 20 stones.	Turnips. Tons.	Hay. Tons.
1856	5.2 } average.	7.3 } average.	31.9 } average.	12.9 } average.	1.9 } average.
1857	5.0 }	7.2 }	24.5 }	12.5 }	1.9 }
1858	5.4 }	7.2 }	33.7 }	12.9 }	1.9 }
1859	5.3 }	6.6 }	28.9 }	10.7 }	1.6 }
1860	4.6 }	7.2 }	18.7 }	8.3 }	2.0 }
1861	3.6 }	6.4 }	13.1 }	10.2 }	1.8 }
1862	3.2 }	5.9 }	17.0 }	10.1 }	1.8 }

These statistics bear out the common impression of three bad harvests in succession since 1859.

In preparing this table, I have noted the different methods in which the returns were obtained in the earlier, and in the later years. The tendency of taking the opinion of the Guardians has been, I am informed, generally to lower the estimates of produce,

* Though 1848 has been omitted in preceding tables on account of the acreage not being complete, I have introduced here the average produce so far as ascertained. The averages for 1848 are founded on the produce of thirty counties only, Waterford and Tipperary being omitted on account of disturbed state.

† In 1855 the opinion of the Poor Law Guardians was to some extent used in checking the returns of the Constabulary. In 1856, both systems of taking the returns were used.

and being taken in January or February, are probably more accurate than the estimates in November.

If we take the first series of years from 1847 to 1855, which may be strictly compared with one another, the averages being taken on the same method, it appears that there was an improvement in the rate of produce from the unfavourable season of 1848 up to 1855, and that the four years ending with 1855 except 1852 in potatoes), appear to have been very favourable years.

If we allow for the effect of the revision of the Guardians on the returns in the next series, the diminution in the average produce from 1856 to 1859 was not so great, as compared with earlier years, as it appears. At any rate without allowing for the different way of taking the returns, it is impossible to establish any serious diminution of the produce up to 1859.

Serious falling off in average produce in the last three years.

The produce having been estimated in each of the years from 1856 to 1862 in the same manner, this does not affect the chief result of the second part of the table—the diminished produce of the crops mentioned in 1860, 1861, and 1862, as compared with that of the four preceding years, estimated in the same way. This diminution has not only been very general, but very large in each kind of crop in the table.

Influence of weather.

The variations in the tables of total produce appeared so clearly to point to the influence of some general cause like the weather, that I made inquiry as to rainfall for a series of years, and give the result in the following table, which I have compiled from the information furnished to me by the Rev. Professor Galbraith, F.T.C.D.*

The first unfavourable year in this table is 1845, the year of the first potato failure; and 1846, the year of the great failure, appears to have been one of

* Professor of Natural Philosophy (Erasmus Smith's foundation) in the University of Dublin.

great rainfall. 1848 and 1849 were both years of suffering in the country. 1852 was unfavourable to potatoes; the grain did not suffer so much, because the excessive rain fell in June and November, before and after harvest. 1859, a dry year, was favourable to potatoes and wheat, but oats and hay suffered for want of rain in the spring. 1860, 1861, and 1862, appear again as unfavourable years.

RAINFALL as observed in the Magnetic Observatory, Trinity Rainfall.
College, Dublin, 1841-1862.

Year.	Rain-fall in inches.	Dry Years.	Wet Years.
		Inches below average, 1841 to 1860.	Inches above average, 1841 to 1860.
1841	28.50	.52	—
1842	28.08	.94	—
1843	27.70	1.32	—
1844	28.41	.61	—
1845	31.48	—	2.46
1846	36.11	—	7.09
1847	25.80	3.22	—
1848	34.11	—	5.09
1849	29.81	—	.79
1850	24.18	4.84	—
1851	26.40	2.62	—
1852	40.16	—	11.14
1853	28.96	.06	—
1854	23.84	5.18	—
1855	25.47	3.55	—
1856	27.93	1.09	—
1857	25.11	3.91	—
1858	27.07	1.95	—
1859	25.28	3.74	—
1860	36.06	—	7.04
1861	33.29	—	4.27
1862	31.33	—	2.31

The very unfavourable character of 1860, 1861, and 1862, are further illustrated by the two following tables, which I have compiled from information from the Ordnance Survey Office, Phoenix Park.

[TABLE.]

Rainfall. INCHES of RAIN which FELL in July, August, and September, as registered at Ordnance Survey Office, Phoenix Park.

Year.	Inches of Rain.	Dry Years.	Wet Years.
		Below average.	Above average.
1855	6.5	.6	—
1856	7.6	—	.5
1857	4.7	2.4	—
1858	7.2	—	.1
1859	4.9	2.2	—
1860	8.8	—	1.7
1861	11.0	—	3.9
1862	6.7	.4	—

NUMBER of DAYS on which RAIN FELL, as registered at Ordnance Survey Office, Phoenix Park.

Year.	No. of Days on which Rain fell.	Dry Years.	Wet Years.
		Below average.	Above average.
	No. of Days.	No. of Days.	No. of Days.
1855	189	6	—
1856	194	1	—
1857	195	Average.	—
1858	186	9	—
1859	180	15	—
1860	210	—	15
1861	182	13	—
1862	221	—	26

The first table shows the amount of rain which fell in July, August, and September, in each year, the three months which have the greatest effect as to harvest. The second table shows the number of days on which rain fell during the entire year. It appears from these tables that 1860 was the most unfavourable year but one, both as regards rain in July, August, and September, and as regards the number of days on which rain fell during entire year. 1861 was the most unfavourable year of the series in the first of these respects, and 1862 was the most unfavourable year in the series for the number of wet days.

When the produce of the most unfavourable and most favourable years is accounted for by variations in the climate, it seems to follow as an irresistible conclusion, that the unfavourable features in the present condition of Ireland arise from climate and not from national decline.

Deficient produce of last three years traceable to climate.

The only crop in which there has been a real decline in the rate of production is the potato. I have been informed by persons of great experience, that the produce of potatoes per acre has never since the famine at all equalled what it was before 1846, being on an average about one-half. This circumstance my informants ascribed to something in the potato plant itself as inscrutable to our present knowledge as the potato disease itself. It was on the potato that the large population in Ireland lived before 1845; and this remarkable fact as to the change in the productiveness of the potato, though often overlooked, is one of the most important to bear in mind, as no change in the laws, or interference of Government, could prevent the continuous loss of the half of so valuable a crop, rendering Ireland a less desirable place than it would otherwise have been for a poor and numerous population to live in.

In productiveness of potato there has been a real decline.

The true test of national decline is a decrease in the amount of land under cultivation, and not in the amount of produce, so far as this is influenced by the seasons—the one is within human control, and depends on human arrangements, which, in this case, are governed by the reasonable hope that unfavourable seasons will not always recur; the other is as variable as the sunshine, the clouds, and the prevailing winds, on which, in this country, to a greater extent than on any human industry, the amount of produce in any year depends. There has been no permanent decline in the land cultivated; and if the labour of the husbandman has not been blessed with abundant crops, it is not owing to any decline in his industry or skill. It is one of those trials which we must bear with resigna-

Conclusion as to total produce.

tion, and is an occasion for sympathy and help from the rich and fortunate towards the poor and the less fortunate, but is no ground for despair or for railing or discontent.

I should here add that from the very different climate of different districts, the general average produce of Ireland, or even of the several counties, is a very inadequate measure of the effects of an ungenial season in particular localities. From inattention to this circumstance, many well-founded complaints of distress from particular counties or districts, where, from the direction of the mountain ranges, the general elevation of the land, or other causes, the crops are, in bad years, greatly injured or perhaps destroyed, may not have received adequate consideration.

Total Value of Live Stock.

Judge Longfield, in his address to the Social Economy Section of the Social Science Association in August, 1861, dwelt on the prosperity of Ireland as indicated by the statistics published up to 1860.

Amongst the statistics to which he referred were those relating to live stock in Ireland. He says—

“From the returns, it would appear that the total value of the live stock in Ireland in 1841, was £21,105,808; in 1851, it was £27,737,395; in 1860, £33,839,899, being an increase of upwards of fifty per cent. in twenty years. The increase in value is even more than the returns show, for the average value of each animal is much greater now than it was then.”

Judge Longfield, by taking periods of ten years, seems to have overlooked the fact, that in the year 1860, a turn had even then come in the prosperity of the country, as judged of by the test he applied. The following Table shows the total value of stock in Ireland, as ascertained by the Census of 1841, and by the collection of agricultural statistics since 1847 :—

[TABLE.]

TOTAL VALUE of LIVE STOCK.

Total Value
of Live
Stock.

Year.	Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Pigs, Mules, Asses, Goats, Poultry.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
1841	£21,105,808	—	—
1847	24,820,547	6 years, about £600,000 a-year.	—
1849	25,692,616		—
1850	26,951,959	2 years, about £400,000 a-year.	—
1851	27,737,393		—
1852	29,154,229	£1,259,343	—
1853	31,458,785	785,434	—
1854	33,508,371	1,416,836	—
1855	33,679,731	2,304,556	—
1856	33,754,985	2,049,586	—
1857	34,346,429	171,360	—
		75,254	—
		591,444	—

Year.	Horses, Cattle, Sheep, and Pigs only.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
1857	£33,700,916	—	—
1858	34,334,890	£633,974	—
1859	35,368,259		—
1860	33,885,047	1,033,369	—
1861	32,769,035	—	£1,483,212
1862	31,204,325	—	1,116,012
			1,564,710

It is to be remembered, in examining the foregoing Table, that the estimate of the value of all the classes of live stock is, for the sake of comparison, made by the Registrar-General on the same scale in each of the years mentioned, although there is no doubt that since 1841 the animals comprised in the different classes have most materially improved in both breed and weight. It has been estimated that the average weight of Irish horned cattle sold in the London market rose from 640lb. in 1839, to 736lb. in 1860. The price of prime beef in the Christmas market in Dublin, in 1844, was about 45s. a cwt., in 1860 it was above 60s. per cwt. The effect of these two causes together, would raise the average value of cattle from the £6 10s. assumed by the Census Commissioners of 1841 to nearly £10.

Constant increase in value of live stock to 1859.

On referring to the Table, it will be seen that there was a constant increase in the total value of live stock in each year from 1847 till 1859, from £24,820,547 in 1847 to the maximum of £35,368,259 in 1859. If we allow for increase in weight and value, and assuming that pigs and sheep increased in these respects, as well as cattle, and to about the same extent, the maximum value of live stock in 1859 will be about £53,000,000, thus proving that there was great increase of wealth, as indicated by this test, till 1859.

Constant decrease in value of live stock since 1859.

The table no less conclusively establishes a serious decrease in wealth, as tested by the value of live stock, in every year from 1859 till 1862, and the rate of decrease has been, it will be observed, much more rapid than the rate of increase, the value decreasing as much in three years as was gained in six.

The entire fall from £35,368,259 in July, 1859, to £31,204,325 in July, 1862, shows a falling off of upwards of £4,000,000; but if we take the values according to the weight and prices of recent years, the falling off is £6,000,000 from about £53,000,000 in 1859 to about £47,000,000 in 1862. Notwithstanding their falling off for three successive years the value of live stock in 1862, allowing for weight and prices of £47,000,000, is more than double the estimated value of live stock in 1841 (£21,105,808), though some classes of live stock are included in the valuation in 1841 which are omitted in 1862.

Judge Longfield's statement as to the prosperity of the country (being made in 1861, when the value of live stock had fallen off to the amount of two and a-half millions, and when the decrease we have seen was going on in agricultural produce), gave rise to considerable controversy; and it was an unfortunate circumstance that, as his address was given in August, he could not have before him returns which, though collected in or about the month of July preceding, were not published till September.

Live stock constitutes such an important portion of

the wealth of Ireland, that it may be interesting to exhibit the changes in the numbers of three of the classes comprised in it, namely, cattle, sheep, and pigs.

The changes in the numbers of cattle are shown in the following Table :—

TOTAL NUMBER of CATTLE, as ascertained by the Census Number of Commissioners in 1841, and by Statistics Department from cattle. 1849 till July, 1862.

Year.	Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
1841	1,863,116	—	—
1849	2,771,139	136,000*	—
1850	2,917,949	146,810	—
1851	2,967,461	49,512	—
1852	3,095,067	127,606	—
1853	3,383,309	288,242	—
1854	3,497,901	114,592	—
1855	3,564,400	66,499	—
1856	3,587,858	23,458	—
1857	3,620,954	33,096	—
1858	3,667,304	46,350	—
1859	3,815,598	148,294	—
1860	3,606,374	—	209,224
1861	3,471,688	—	134,686
1862	3,250,396	—	221,292

Cattle are so valuable and so easily enumerated, that the returns on which this Table is founded are likely to be very accurate. The numbers show marked progress to a maximum in 1859, but a still more rapid decline in three years, reducing the cattle in 1862 below the number in 1853. The reduced number of 3,250,396 in 1862, is, however, still nearly double the number of 1,863,116 in 1841, thus refuting the theory of progressive decline.

The numbers of sheep since 1841, vary in a somewhat different way from those of cattle:—

[TABLE.

* Average of eight years.

Number of sheep. TOTAL NUMBER of SHEEP, as ascertained by the Census Commissioners in 1841, and by the Statistics Department from 1849 till July, 1862.

Year.	Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
1841	2,106,189	—	—
1849	1,777,111	—	41,134*
1850	1,876,096	98,985	—
1851	2,122,128	246,032	—
1852	2,613,943	491,815	—
1853	3,142,656	528,713	—
1854	3,722,219	579,563	—
1855	3,602,342	—	119,877
1856	3,694,294	91,952	—
1857	3,452,252	—	242,042
1858	3,494,993	42,741	—
1859	3,592,804	97,811	—
1860	3,542,080	—	50,724
1861	3,556,050	13,970	—
1862	3,455,887	—	100,163

Maximum attained in 1854; tendency to decrease since. The maximum, it will be seen, was attained in 1854, the changes have been less marked since 1859, though there has been a considerable falling off. The number of sheep in 1862 are, nevertheless, greatly above the number in 1841; and when the improvement in the weight, breed, and consequent value is considered, the advocates of progressive decline are completely answered.

Pigs are so intimately connected with the potato crop, that their numbers might be expected to diminish at the time of the famine, and such was the case, as appears by the following Table :—

[TABLE.

* Average of eight years.

TOTAL NUMBER of PIGS, as ascertained by the Census Com- Number of
missioners in 1841, and by the Statistics Department from pigs.
1849 till July, 1862.

Year.	Number.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
1841	1,412,813	—	—
1849	795,463	—	77,168*
1850	927,502	132,039	—
1851	1,084,857	157,355	—
1852	1,072,658	—	12,199
1853	1,444,945	372,287	—
1854	1,342,549	—	102,396
1855	1,177,605	—	164,944
1856	918,525	—	259,080
1857	1,255,186	336,661	—
1858	1,409,883	154,697	—
1859	1,265,751	—	144,132
1860	1,271,072	5,321	—
1861	1,102,042	—	169,030
1862	1,151,785	49,743	—

The number of pigs from 1,412,813 in 1841, fell in 1849 to 795,463, little more than one-half. With the return of potato cultivation pigs have increased.

From 1858 to 1861, the number of pigs has declined considerably, but there has been a slight increase in 1862.

Pigs were, in former times, so much fed by the small holders of land, that it was supposed their numbers would permanently decrease with the consolidation of farms; but, in 1853, the number in 1841 was exceeded, and in 1858 it was nearly reached, and there can be no doubt, that if the potato was to recover its average produce before the famine, the number of pigs would, unless the price of pork should continue at its present low rate, rise far above the number in 1841.

Increase of wealth is not, indeed, shown by the number of pigs in 1862 as compared with 1841; but, considering the improved breeds and size of pigs, there is certainly no decline up to 1858.

* Average of eight years.

Amount of Government Stock held in Ireland.

Judge Longfield, in his address already alluded to, refers to the amount of Government Stock held in Ireland, as a test of the prosperity of the country. He says—"The amount of Government Stock transferred from England to Ireland, in excess of that transferred from Ireland to England for the ten years ending March, 1860, amounts in round numbers to £2,380,000, indicating to that extent an increase in the wealth of the Irish people . . . The increase of stock in Ireland during the preceding ten years (1840-50), is even more remarkable, being more than five millions."

The following Table shows the amount held in Ireland in each year in the periods above alluded to, and also in the years 1861 and 1862, with the increase or decrease in each year:—

AMOUNT of GOVERNMENT STOCK on which DIVIDEND was PAID in IRELAND in the following years, on the 31st December in each year:—

Year.	Stock.*	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	£		
1840	31,237,000	—	—
1841	31,460,000	223,000	—
1842	32,300,000	840,000	—
1843	33,480,000	1,180,000	—
1844	34,730,000	1,250,000	—
1845	36,200,000	1,470,000	—
1846	37,380,000	1,180,000	—
1847	38,600,000	1,220,000	—
1848	39,600,000	1,000,000	—
1849	38,135,000	—	1,465,000
1850	38,101,000	—	34,000
1851	38,408,000	307,000	—
1852	36,535,000	—	1,873,000
1853	38,153,000	1,618,000	—
1854	37,939,000	—	214,000
1855	39,670,000	1,631,000	—
1856	41,083,000	1,413,000	—
1857	42,217,000	1,134,000	—

* The sums in this column are exclusive of the £2,650,769 due by the Government to the Bank of Ireland.

AMOUNT OF GOVERNMENT STOCK, &c.—*continued.*

Year.	Stock.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	£		
1858	40,215,000	—	2,002,000
1859	40,304,000	89,000	—
1860	40,112,000	—	192,000
1861	38,972,000	—	1,140,000
1862	38,081,000*	—	891,000†

From the earlier years of this table (1840–1848), it will be observed that there was a continual and rapid increase during the period of the potato famine. I think that this may be attributed partly to the political excitement existing in Ireland from 1843 to 1848, partly to the want of confidence in landed security, and partly to the large amount of funds, which, under the Receiver system, was invested in Government Stock in the Irish Court of Chancery and the Court of Exchequer, and which in the year 1850 amounted to £3,969,437.

In 1849 the political excitement had subsided, the Incumbered Estates Act was passed, and the Receiver system in Chancery received a check. Accordingly, from 1848 to 1852, there was a decrease of upwards of £3,000,000, and the Government Stock was reduced to a little more than it was in 1845. Still this minimum of £36,535,000 was £5,290,000 in excess of the £31,237,000 held in 1841, proving a positive progress in those twelve years to that extent.

The amount of stock rose from £36,535,000, in 1852, to a maximum of £42,217,000, in 1857, indicating a very satisfactory state of affairs. Since then there has been a retrogression, and the Funds held in Ireland have fallen to £38,081,000 in 1862; being a fall of upwards of £4,000,000. There was a slight increase from 31st December until 12th February, to which date the return was made. The diminution from 1857 to 1862

* This includes £86,000 India Stock.

† Up to 12th February, 1863, there has been a change for the better. The amount of Stock held increasing by £113,000, being thus £38,194,000.

is sufficiently great to cause anxiety; but still with reference to the allegation of progressive decline, the amount held in Ireland in 1862 is £1,500,000 above the preceding minimum in 1852, and £6,800,000 above the amount held in 1841.

Deposits in Joint-Stock Banks.

In connexion with the subject of investment, the next test to be referred to, is one suggested to me by the great prosperity of the Irish Joint Stock Banks, an element of wealth entirely omitted by the advocates of progressive decline, I refer to the amount of deposits in joint-stock banks in Ireland. It is a test which derives considerable importance from the fact that the farmers are understood to be the most numerous class of depositors.

In Ireland the joint-stock banks, though bound to make a public return of their issues, are not bound to publish the amount of their deposits. But the confidential* returns which the Bank Directors have made to His Excellency have supplied the means of compiling the following table :—

Total
amount of
Bank
Deposits.

TABLE showing the aggregate amount of the PRIVATE BALANCES in the *Bank of Ireland*, and of the DEPOSITS in the *Belfast, Hibernian, National, Northern, Provincial, Royal, and Ulster* Joint Stock Banks at the end of each year since 1840.†

Year.	Total Amount.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£
1840	5,567,851	—	—
1841	6,022,573	454,722	—
1842	6,416,795	394,222	—
1843	6,965,681	548,886	—
1844	7,601,421	635,740	—
1845	8,031,044	429,623	—
1846	8,442,133	411,089	—
1847	6,493,124	—	1,949,009
1848	7,071,122	577,998	—

* The Directors consented to have the aggregate amount published.

† The returns from the several banks were not obtained up to the same day, owing to the way their accounts are kept; but being made to the end of the year, or within a few days of it, this period was taken.

TABLE showing amount of BANK DEPOSITS—*continued*.

Year.	Total Amount.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£
1849	7,469,675	398,553	—
1850	8,268,838	799,163	—
1851	8,263,091	—	5,747
1852	10,773,324	2,510,233	—
1853	10,915,022	141,708	—
1854	11,665,739	750,717	—
1855	12,285,822	620,083	—
1856	13,753,149	1,467,327	—
1857	13,113,136	—	640,013
1858	15,131,252	2,018,116	—
1859	16,042,140	910,888	—
1860	15,609,237	—	432,903
1861	15,005,065	—	604,172
1862	14,388,725	—	616,340

From the commencement of this Table to the end of 1846 the deposits increase at the rate of £500,000 a year, rising from £5,567,851 in 1840 to £8,442,133 at the end of 1846. Then there is a decrease of nearly £2,000,000 in 1847, arising from the potato failure in the preceding autumn. The loss thus sustained was not recovered until 1852. From the end of 1851 till the end of 1856 there is remarkable progress: the deposits increasing from £8,263,091 in 1851, to £13,753,149 in 1856, or at the rate of £1,000,000 a year, being twice the amount of annual increase before 1846.

The decrease of £640,013 in 1857 arose, as I have been informed, to some extent from a monetary and commercial crisis in that year. This was followed, however, by an increase of £2,018,116 in 1858, and £910,888 in 1859, being in the three years together, an increase at the rate of £750,000 a year, which is a higher amount of annual increase than before 1846.

The maximum of £16,042,140 at the end of 1859, as compared with £5,567,851 in 1840, shows a very great increase.

The amount of this total increase, and the much higher annual increase from 1852 to 1859, as com-

pared with the annual increase before 1846, afford the strongest possible refutation of the allegations of progressive decline among the classes usually depositing in the Joint-Stock Banks, who are, as already mentioned, supposed to be chiefly composed of farmers.

The stoppage of the annual increase in 1860, 1861, and 1862, which may be estimated at three times £750,000, or £2,250,000, together with the withdrawal of deposits of £432,903 in 1860, £604,172 in 1861, and £616,340 in 1862, amounting to £1,653,415 indicate no less conclusively a great deterioration in the wealth of farmers since 1859.

It will be observed, that these are the only years in which there has been a withdrawal of deposits in three years in succession, since 1840; and that the amount withdrawn in the three years, of £1,653,415, is not much below the £1,949,009 withdrawn in 1847, the only year in which withdrawals took place after the famine.

It is also to be borne in mind, that the bad crop of 1862 had not produced its full effect on the deposits up to the end of 1862, to which the return is made.

Want of
lasting agri-
cultural im-
provements
does not
arise from
want of
capital.

These deposits indicate, too, that any neglect in executing the more lasting agricultural improvements cannot arise from a general want of capital amongst those connected with land in Ireland; and it is a matter of grave inquiry why the farmers of Ireland should lend such large sums to the different banks, at an average of 2 per cent., to be employed in the large towns, and much of it in London, instead of expending it in agricultural improvements in Ireland.

Savings' Banks.

The amount of deposits in savings' banks has been sometimes referred to in the discussions on this subject. The deposits rose from £1,200,273 in 1849 to 2,143,082 in 1860, a continuous but slow increase, but to a less amount, and at a slower rate, than took place from 1,771,974 in 1837 to 2,410,720 in 1845.

It is to be remembered, before adopting the statistics of savings' banks as a test of prosperity, that the deposits in savings' banks in Ireland fell from £2,410,720 in 1847 to £1,334,296 in 1848. This fall arose in a great degree from want of confidence in savings' banks, caused by the failure of the Cuffe-street Savings' Bank in Dublin, and the Tralee Savings' Bank, in that year. It is impossible to say how far the increase in the amount of deposits from 1850 to 1860 (which did not equal the amount of the decrease in the single year 1848) was owing to a gradual return of public confidence.

It is equally impossible, on the other hand, to deduce any conclusion as to the want of prosperity in those classes who are the natural depositors in savings' banks, since the failures alluded to, in 1848, must have led the depositors, to some extent, to invest their savings in deposits in joint-stock banks, or in the Government funds, both which investments increased, as already mentioned, for several years prior to 1857.

The new post office savings' banks are certain to be most successful; but they have been so recently established that I have not noticed the statistics of them. Any progress up to the present would only indicate their superiority to the old savings' banks, and the readiness of the people to avail themselves of facilities for investing their savings with convenience and security, and would not be a safe measure of any increase or decrease of comfort amongst the classes depositing.

Investments in Railways.

The next test I shall apply is the amount of investments in railways.

In the year 1846 it was urged that the poverty of Ireland was so great that railways could not be made without enormous advances of public money; and it is still represented as a calamity that Lord George

Bentinck's plan of expending £15,000,000 on railways was not adopted in 1847.

The progress of the railways since that time under private enterprise is very remarkable, as appears from the following Table :—*

Railways,
miles open,
and receipts.

RAILWAYS.

Years ending 30th June.	Miles open on the 1st of January each year.	Total Receipts per Annum.
		£
1842	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	56,739
1843	31 $\frac{1}{4}$	63,350
1844	31 $\frac{1}{4}$	71,494
1845	65	119,398
1846	65	123,743
1847	120 $\frac{3}{4}$	184,581
1848	209 $\frac{1}{4}$	271,808
Years ending 31st Dec.		
1849	428	418,066
1850	515	514,035
1851	580	564,062
1852	666	679,519
1853	771	831,569
1854	865	874,477
1855	942	999,832
1856	1,023	1,117,965
1857	1,064	1,145,385
1858	1,188	1,175,721
1859	1,265	1,296,063
1860	1,364	1,368,447
1861	1,423	1,447,993

Railways
made by
private
enterprise
and now
chiefly
owned by
Irish pro-
prietors.

This table shows that in 1846 there were but sixty-five miles of railway open in Ireland; and that in 1861, there were 1,423 miles open. These works are estimated to have cost nearly £23,000,000. The greater part of this sum was raised by the issue of ordinary shares, and upwards of seven millions were raised by the creation of preference stock and the issue of debentures. They were to some extent, no doubt, carried out with the assistance of public loans, but not so far as to materially influence the general statement that they are the creation of private enterprise.

* Thom's "Statistics of Ireland," 1863, p. 758.

Judge Longfield has noticed the extent to which this enterprise is the result of Irish capital. He says: "In the first construction of some of these railways a large quantity of English capital was engaged, but in the transfers of stock which daily take place, the chief purchasers are Irish, so that Irish railways are becoming almost the exclusive property of Irish proprietors."

In the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland, the stock, in 1862, held by Irish proprietors was £3,882,000; and as it may be interesting to show the progressive hold that Irish proprietors have obtained on the stock of that Company, I give the following Return.*

GREAT SOUTHERN and WESTERN RAILWAY of IRELAND.				Funds vested in Great Southern and West- ern Railway by residents in Great Britain and in Ireland.
Year.	Total Stock of Company.	Held by Residents in Great Britain.	Held by Residents in Ireland.	
	£	£	£	
1847	1,743,000	1,119,000	624,000	
1848	2,138,000	1,436,000	702,000	
1849	2,462,000	1,617,000	845,000	
1850	2,665,000	1,696,000	969,000	
1851	2,788,000	1,812,000	976,000	
1852	3,140,000	1,936,000	1,204,000	
1853	3,536,000	2,009,000	1,527,000	
1854	3,646,000	1,826,000	1,820,000	
1855	3,700,000	1,690,000	2,010,000	
1856	3,827,000	1,661,000	2,166,000	
1857	4,003,000	1,701,000	2,302,000	
1858	4,166,000	1,600,000	2,566,000	
1859	4,511,000	1,440,000	3,071,000	
1860	4,792,000	1,288,000	3,504,000	
1861	4,866,000	1,189,000	3,677,000	
1862	5,056,000	1,172,000	3,882,000	

The increased investments in railways, which are thus exhibited, accompanying an increase in the value of live stock, increased investments in the Government Funds, and increased deposits in joint stock banks, appear to me conclusive evidence against the theory of progressive decline.

* For the part of this return up to 1859, I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Charles Halliday, late Governor of the Bank of Ireland; and Mr. Murland, Vice-Chairman of the Railway Company, has enabled me to complete it.

*Personal Property passing under Probate or
Administration.*

In considering the question of decline by comparison of distant periods, the tests hitherto noticed do not apply. The transfer of Government Stock from London to Dublin commenced in 1825 ; the Joint Stock Bank system, as distinct from the Bank of Ireland, has arisen since about the same period ; and the railway system is of still more recent origin. It is not easy to obtain statistics as to the wealth existing in former periods ; but in order to throw some light on this subject, I have compiled the following tables of the value of personal property passing under probate of wills in each year since 1821, and the annual average in each series of five years since the same time.

Personal
property
passing
under
Probate.

VALUE OF PROPERTY PASSING, in the years mentioned, UNDER
PROBATES OF WILLS and LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION ON
which DUTY WAS PAID IN IRELAND.

Year.	Value.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	£	£	£
1821	2,795,929	—	—
1822	2,679,144	—	116,785
1823	3,491,426	812,282	—
1824	2,755,750	—	735,676
1825	2,985,141	229,391	—
1826	3,477,228	492,087	—
1827	2,895,372	—	571,856
1828	3,593,257	697,885	—
1829	4,015,609	422,352	—
1830	3,260,751	—	754,858
1831	3,772,897	512,146	—
1832	3,452,327	—	320,570
1833	3,496,768	44,441	—
1834	3,755,946	259,178	—
1835	3,657,423	—	98,523
1836	3,609,765	—	47,658
1837	3,817,954	208,189	—
1838	4,316,845	498,891	—
1839	3,629,687	—	687,158
1840	3,404,541	—	225,146

VALUE of PROPERTY, &c.—continued.

Year.	Value.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
	£	£	£
1841	3,402,468	—	2,073
1842	4,018,654	616,186	—
1843	2,945,740	—	1,072,914
1844	2,140,021	—	805,719
1845	2,686,525	546,504	—
1846	2,312,008	—	374,517
1847	2,363,573	51,565	—
1848	3,114,036	750,463	—
1849	2,478,949	—	635,087
1850	2,404,491	—	74,458
1851	2,435,229	30,738	—
1852	2,570,238	135,009	—
1853	2,926,428	356,190	—
1854	3,282,728	256,300	—
1855	3,309,829	27,101	—
1856	4,031,860	722,031	—
1857	3,948,506	—	83,354
1858-59	*4,611,911	663,405	—
1859-60	4,333,903	—	278,008
1860-61	4,175,799	—	158,104
1861-62	4,224,954	49,155	—

ANNUAL AVERAGE in each series of five years, since 1821, of Five years
the VALUE of PROPERTY PASSING UNDER PROBATES of average
WILLS and LETTERS of ADMINISTRATION on which DUTY passing
was paid in IRELAND. under probate.

Years.	Average in each Year.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£
1821 to 1825	2,941,478	—	—
1826 to 1830	3,448,443	506,965	—
1831 to 1835	3,627,072	178,629	—
1836 to 1840	3,755,758	127,686	—
1841 to 1845	3,038,681	—	717,077
1846 to 1850	2,534,611	—	504,070
1851 to 1855	2,904,890	370,279	—
1856 to 1860	4,220,395	1,315,505	—

The first table exhibits a larger sum as passing in Tables indicate progress in the year 1858 than in any former year. The second table also exhibits a higher average amount as passing wealth since 1821.

* These amounts are from 31st March to 31st March.

during the five years ending with 1860, than in any other corresponding series of years in the table; and the amount from 31st March, 1861, to 31st March, 1862, of £4,224,954, is larger than this highest average, as compared with recent years.

This latter table, especially if taken in connexion with the decrease of population, is at variance with the common allegation of great prosperity between 1836 and 1845, as compared with recent years.

Bank Note Circulation.

I shall now proceed to apply some tests of a more general and indirect, but not less accurate character, and first in order I shall place the state of the Bank Note Circulation. It is as follows:—

Bank Note
circulation.

AVERAGE AMOUNT of BANK NOTES in CIRCULATION of the
several BANKS of ISSUE in IRELAND.

Year.	Amount.	Increase in the Year.	Decrease in the Year.
Dec.	£	£	£
1833	5,081,000*	—	—
1836	5,864,000*	—	—
1845	6,354,494†	—	—
1846	7,265,721	911,227	—
1847	5,830,425	—	1,435,296
1848	4,823,992	—	1,006,433
1849	4,310,283	—	513,709
1850	4,512,443	202,160	—
1851	4,462,909	—	49,534
1852	4,818,238	355,329	—
1853	5,650,455	832,217	—
1854	6,295,607	645,152	—
1855	6,362,303	66,696	—
1856	6,703,189	340,886	—
1857	6,820,467	117,278	—
1858	6,146,914	—	673,553
1859	6,870,238	723,324	—
1860	6,917,269	47,031	—
1861	6,267,219	—	650,050
1862	5,643,029‡	—	624,190

* *Vide* Lord Overstone's Tract, 1837-57, p. 274.

† This average was ascertained for the purpose of fixing the issues of notes under the Irish Bank Act.

‡ This average is taken up to 15th November only.

In examining the above table on this subject, it is not to be forgotten that there has been an increase in the number of branch banks, greater facility of intercourse, and various other improvements, calculated to render the circulation more effective at the end of the period comprised in the table, than at its commencement.

Progress in
bank note
circulation
until 1860;
since then
pressure on
trade con-
sequent on
bad harvests

It is further to be remembered that the state of the circulation is more a test of a depressed or improved state of trade following on a depressed or a flourishing state of agriculture, than an immediate indication of the state of agricultural prosperity.

The table shows the circulation to have increased from £5,081,000 in 1833, to £6,354,494 in 1845, being an increase of upwards of one and a-quarter millions in twelve years. It also shows that the circulation increased from £4,310,000 in 1849, to £6,820,467 in 1857, being an increase of upwards of two and a-half millions in eight years. I have taken as the last year of the former period, 1845, and not 1846, because I think that the circulation in the latter year was abnormal, and not caused by a healthy state of trade, but by its artificial development from the sudden and enormous expenditure of money by the Government in Public Works. But even if we take the abnormal circulation of £7,265,721 in 1846, it will give an increase from 1833 of two and a-quarter millions in thirteen years, against an increase of two and a-half millions in eight years.

This appears to me to be a strong argument against the allegation of progressive decline from 1849 to 1857, or to 1859, when the circulation was even greater than in 1857.

It equally refutes the argument of progressive decline since the period before the famine, if founded on a comparison of a fairly-selected series of years before 1846, with a fairly-selected series of years after the famine. In five out of the six years from

1855 to 1860, the circulation was above the issue as ascertained in 1845, and in 1860, it had reached an excess of nearly two millions, or about forty per cent. above what it was in 1833. Further, the table appears to me no less conclusively to indicate, by the decrease in the circulation from £6,917,269 in 1860, to £5,643,029 in 1862 (being a decrease of one and a-quarter millions in two years, and being the only occasion of a successive decrease for two years since the famine), that a most serious disturbance of trade, consequent on the diminution of agricultural prosperity during the years 1861 and 1862, must have taken place.

If we compare this diminution with the diminution that took place from £6,354,449 in December, 1845, to £4,310,383 in 1849, it appears that the circulation has already sustained five-eighths of the entire decrease that took place at the time of the famine, and of the distress consequent on the famine; and this decrease is calculated only up to last November, when the serious losses of the farmers by the bad harvest of 1862, had still to produce the chief part of its effect on trade.

It is also to be observed that the circulation of 1862 is below the circulation of 1853, and also below what it was in 1836.

Traffic on Railways.

I shall now proceed to notice another general test of the prosperity of the country. I shall do so very briefly by quoting from, and referring to, a communication I have received from Mr. Murland, Chairman of the Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company, and Vice-Chairman of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company of Ireland, and which I have thought of sufficient importance, on this and some other points, to give fully in an Appendix* hereto.

* *Vide Appendix, p. 86, infra.*

He says :—"I have no doubt that the rapid increase in the traffic on Irish railways between the year 1851 and the end of 1859, and more particularly during the years 1852 to 1856, inclusive, can only be accounted for by the marked and general improvement which took place in the country during those years."

Mr. Murland then refers to returns of traffic on the Dublin and Drogheda Railway, which he says exhibit similar results to those of several lines within his knowledge. The increase of receipts of the Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company, from 1851 to 1856, was from £51,020 in 1851, to £80,692 in 1856, making the increase on the five years, £29,672. Allowing a deduction of £6,000 for a short extension, the increase in the five years was £23,672, equal to an average annual increase of £4,734, or about 9 per cent. per annum on the receipts of 1851.

The receipts in 1859, were £90,250, showing an increase of £9,559, in three years, equal to an average annual increase of £3,153, or nearly 4 per cent. on the traffic of 1856.

Mr. Murland further observes, that for the year 1860, the receipts show an increase of only £2,330 ; for 1861, an increase of only £1,440 ; and for the year 1862, a decrease of £3,740. He attributes this remarkable falling off for the most part to the very depressed state of the country.

Alleged Diminution of the Rental of Ireland.

One of the arguments relied on to prove progressive decline in the state of Ireland, is that the rental of Ireland in 1861 was not £15,000,000, and was then less than it was in 1805.

Sir William Petty, in 1672, estimated the rental of

Rapid increase in railway traffic till 1859; then diminished increase in 1860 and 1861, and decrease in 1862.

Rental of Ireland has increased.

Ireland as £900,000. In 1727, Mr. Brown computed the gross rental at £2,834,000. Arthur Young estimated it in 1779 as £6,000,000. The Poor Law valuation of landed property in Ireland, in September, 1862, was £12,570,004. As this is usually below the rental, the rental in 1861 was probably, at least, £15,000,000. Here is distinct evidence of progress; and the view advanced that the rental of Ireland rose from 1779, in twenty-five years, from £6,000,000 to over £15,000,000, and at the end of sixty years had declined, is quite unproved.

With respect to one county, with which I am well acquainted, it can be completely refuted.

Increase in
rental of
county
Armagh.

The rental of Armagh was, according to Arthur Young, in 1779, £119,000. In 1803 it was, according to Sir Charles Coote, bart. (see his Survey of Armagh), £209,000. It was in 1861, according to the valuation, with 15 per cent. added, £288,183.

The rental of 1803 is subject to deductions on account of depreciated currency, war prices, protection, and bounties on the linen trade of which Armagh was the centre. Omitting any account of these, the comparative rentals show great progress to 1861, as follows :—

1779,	.	.	.	.	.	£119,000.
1803,	.	.	.	.	.	£209,000.
1861,	.	.	.	.	.	£288,183.

The same result would, I have no doubt, be found by referring to the surveys of other counties.

Amount of Poor Law Relief.

In England the chief test applied all through the Lancashire distress, to ascertain the pressure from the cotton famine, has been the amount of poor relief.

Difference
of Irish and

English statesmen, and Englishmen generally, turn to the poor relief as the first test to ascertain at any

time the pressure on the poorer classes in Ireland ; and they naturally compare the numbers relieved in Ireland with the numbers relieved in England. But any conclusion drawn from this comparison, is almost certain to be erroneous, for the large and fundamental differences between the Poor Law in the two countries prevent the numbers relieved in each being truly or fairly comparable.

In Ireland no able-bodied labourer, no matter how great or unavoidable his want may be, can receive out-door relief while the workhouse is not full ; in England any labourer in want, who is prepared to submit to a labour test, can be, and usually is, relieved, without being asked to enter a workhouse. In Ireland no pauper has an absolute right to relief ; in England the poor have a right to relief, if willing to submit to the tests imposed.

The following Tables give the aggregate number relieved during each year :—

AGGREGATE (IN-DOOR and OUT-DOOR) RELIEVED during each Year. Total (In-door and Out-door) relieved.

Year.	Total of both In-door and Out-door.	Increase.	Decrease.
1846	250,822	136,617	—
1847	417,139	166,317	—
1848	2,043,505	1,626,366	—
1849	2,142,766	99,261	—
1850	1,174,267	—	968,499
1851	755,347	—	418,920
1852	519,775	—	235,572
1853	409,668	—	110,107
1854	319,616	—	90,052
1855	305,226	—	14,390
1856	217,136	—	88,090
1857	190,823	—	26,313
1858	183,056	—	7,767
1859	159,131	—	23,925
1860	179,514	20,383	—
1861	217,430	37,916	—
1862	289,947	72,517	—

Total (In-
door) re-
lieved.

TOTAL NUMBER RELIEVED (IN-DOOR).

Year.	Number Relieved.	Increase.	Decrease.
1846	250,822	—	—
1847	417,139	156,317	—
1848	610,463	193,324	—
1849	932,284	321,821	—
1850	805,702	—	126,582
1851	707,443	—	98,259
1852	504,864	—	192,579
1853	396,436	—	108,428
1854	310,608	—	85,828
1855	269,794	—	40,804
1856	212,579	—	57,215
1857	186,235	—	26,344
1858	177,205	—	9,030
1859	153,706	—	13,499
1860	170,549	16,843	—
1861	203,422	32,873	—
1862	266,605	63,283	—

Total (Out-
door) re-
lieved.

TOTAL NUMBER RELIEVED (OUT-DOOR).

Year.	Number Relieved.	Increase.	Decrease.
1846	—	—	—
1847	—	—	—
1848	1,433,042	—	—
1849	1,210,482	—	222,560
1850	368,565	—	841,917
1851	47,914	—	320,651
1852	14,911	—	33,003
1853	13,232	—	1,679
1854	9,008	—	4,224
1855	35,432	26,424	—
1856	4,557	—	30,875
1857	4,588	31	—
1858	5,857	1,263	—
1859	5,425	—	326
1860	8,965	3,540	—
1861	14,008	5,043	—
1862	23,342	9,334	—

The first matter to observe in these Tables is the small number relieved in 1846, and more particularly in 1847, when the pressure from the famine was

at its height. This arose from the Irish Poor Law of 1838 allowing no out-door relief. The pressure of the famine was consequently met by relief on public works, and in other ways entirely independent of the Poor Law; and there were on the 3rd of July, 1847, when the famine caused by the failure of 1846 was at its greatest height, 3,000,000 of persons receiving rations under temporary relief arrangements.

The Act of 1847, allowing out-door relief, only allowed it to able-bodied persons for two months at a time, where it should be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioners that in-door relief could not be given.

The workhouses were wholly unable to accommodate the numbers receiving rations in 1847, hence the great number receiving out-door relief in 1848.

Workhouse extension, however, took place, and 32 new unions were formed, and 32 workhouses erected, increasing the original number from 131 to 163.

This extended workhouse accommodation began to take effect in 1849; for, whilst the persons in workhouses rose from 600,000 to 932,000, the numbers receiving out-door relief fell from 1,400,000 to 1,200,000. In 1850, the pressure of distress abated, and the extended workhouse accommodation came into very general operation, and so the power of granting out-door relief to the able-bodied was gradually taken away. This explains the fact, that whilst the numbers receiving out-door relief fell 841,917 in 1850, the number receiving in-door relief fell only 126,582. The further fall of 320,651 in the recipients of out-door relief in 1851 compared with 98,259 fall in the recipients of in-door relief, shows the same causes in operation.

The amount of out-door relief given in Ireland since 1852, affords no test of the pressure of distress, for, to the small extent it can by law be given, it depends on the discretion of the Guardians; thus in the year ending 29th September, 1861, out-door relief was given to more than fifty cases in the year

Variations
in numbers
receiving
relief
explained.

Out-door
relief in
Ireland no
test of
pressure of
distress.

in only thirty-two Unions ; and to less than fifty cases in twenty-six Unions, leaving upwards of 100 Unions in which no out-door relief was given. Again, in the South Dublin Union, comprising the south side of the city, and part of the county of Dublin, out-door relief was given in the year ending 29th September, 1861, in 981 cases, whilst in the North Dublin Union, comprising the north side of the city, and part of the county of Dublin, no out-door relief was given.

The Tables of aggregate numbers relieved in work-houses are only brought up to 29th September, 1862.

The following Table affords a test up to 14th February, 1863, when the maximum number in the work-house was reached; and the comparison with the maximum numbers in former years is interesting. I have added the numbers receiving out-door relief in the same weeks.

MAXIMUM NUMBER of PAUPERS in WORKHOUSES on ONE DAY
IN EACH YEAR, ending 29th September, with NUMBER
RECEIVING OUT-DOOR RELIEF at same time.

Years.	In Workhouse.	Out-door.	Total.
21 February, 1852, .	196,966	3,473	200,439
19 February, 1853, .	160,774	3,482	164,256
11 February, 1854, .	116,033	1,549	117,582
24 February, 1855, .	99,627	21,784	121,411
16 February, 1856, .	77,844	1,047	78,891
7 February, 1857, .	59,218	1,161	60,379
13 March, 1858, . .	54,807	1,749	56,556
12 February, 1859, .	46,592	1,463	48,055
3 March, 1860, . .	46,545	2,206	48,751
23 March, 1861, . .	52,103	4,564	56,667
8 March, 1862, . .	61,791	6,762	68,553
14 February, 1863, .	66,976	8,758	75,727

This Table shows a marked improvement up to 1859, then increase in suffering each year since ; but the maximum last winter did not reach the number relieved in 1856.

Making allowance for all the considerations I have pointed out, the following conclusions appear to be clearly deducible from the Poor Law statistics :—

That the working classes must have been in a most wretched and precarious state before the famine, when it could, in consequence of the famine, become necessary to relieve 3,000,000 out of 8,000,000 population. Conclusions
from Poor
Law Statistics.

That up to 1852 there must have been still great suffering from the effects of the famine.

That the full workhouse accommodation, necessary to put an end by law to out-door relief to the able-bodied, being in operation in 1852, the statistics from that year to 1862 are comparable one year with another, and (though not comparable with English Poor Law statistics) indicate a remarkable improvement in the condition of the classes subject to extreme distress up to 1859; thus corroborating what we should expect to find as the result of the progress already shown in many kinds of wealth up to 1859, and adding another refutation to the theory of progressive decline.

That the change in 1860 and 1861, and the still greater change in 1862, also corroborates the previous results, showing that the diminution in wealth and agricultural prosperity affected the poorest classes.

That if poor relief were administered on the same principles in this country as in England, so as to make the statistics on this subject comparable in the two countries, the distress as indicated by the test of the numbers relieved in Ireland, would appear much greater than at present shown.

The total number receiving relief in 1861-1862, 289,947, when compared with the 2,943,505 in 1848, 2,142,766 in 1849, or the 1,174,267 in 1850, even making a large allowance for the diminution of population, indicates a total revolution in the condition of all classes in Ireland since 1845. But for that change it is impossible to conceive that such unfavourable seasons, causing short produce of crops, and decrease in cattle and other sources of wealth, would not have produced a larger effect amongst the applicants for relief.

When accounts are received of failing crops in

Reasons for
great dis-
tress being
anticipated.

Ireland, most people are influenced by the recollections of what the failure of the potato crop produced in 1845 and 1846, and how the slow recovery of that crop aggravated the sufferings of the people. Hence, extraordinary distress among the labouring classes is anticipated by those who sympathize with the poor, and feared by some who dread high poor rates, like those paid after the famine. Both parties forget the change that has taken place since 1846. The labouring classes no longer depend for food on the produce of potatoes grown by themselves, they are fewer in number, earning higher wages, and generally in continuous employment; and the effect of free-trade is to transfer the burden of unfavourable crops from the consumer to the farmer, as the abundant supplies of foreign wheat and Indian corn prevent the rise of price which a local scarcity of grain would otherwise produce.

Consumption of Tea and Sugar.

Published
Statistics of
consumption
of tea and
sugar incom-
plete.

I have not referred to some tests that are commonly used in the discussions as to the state of the country, such as the consumption of tea and sugar. As I have shown that there was progress in wealth and prosperity, it follows as a matter of course that there must have been increased consumption of such articles. But I have not attempted to rely on the statistics respecting them, because from the manner of collecting the customs' duties, only part of the tea and sugar consumed in Ireland pays duty in Ireland and appears in the returns as entered for consumption in Ireland. The rest is imported from Great Britain, duty paid, and the quantities so imported are not checked by the Custom-house authorities, and though noticed in the daily bill of entries in the ships' reports, are not added up or published in years, so as to admit of comparison. As an accurate measure of the consumption, the statistics published are quite incomplete.

Exports and Imports.

Other arguments are founded on the exports and imports of Ireland ; but I find that Mr. Porter, in his "Progress of the Nation," p. 342, published 1851, says—

No official Statistics of exports or imports except grain.

"No account of the trade between Great Britain and Ireland can be given for any year subsequent to 1825, the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland having at the end of that year been assimilated by law to the coasting traffic carried on between the different ports of England ; and with the exception of the single article of grain (as to which it was considered desirable by the legislature to continue to record) we have now no official register of the quantity or value of goods or produce received from or sent to Ireland."

I have found a similar difficulty to that noticed by Mr. Porter, in obtaining satisfactory statistics of exports and imports. I have, therefore, thought it desirable not to enter into the question of the commerce of the country.

Manufactures.

With regard to the question of progress in manufacturing industry, I do not think it comes properly within the scope of my inquiry, even if I had the means of a satisfactory investigation readily accessible.

But as the question is sometimes referred to as if Ireland were now subjected to unjust restrictions, cramping her manufacturing prosperity, it may be necessary to observe, that whatever may have been the policy 100 years ago, under the narrow views of economic science which then prevailed, such a charge preferred now, either expressly or by implication, is too groundless to require serious refutation.

Manufactures no longer subject to any unjust restrictions.

There is the strongest evidence that no such feeling is entertained by those connected with the chief manufacture in the country—the linen trade.

Satisfactory progress in linen trade.

Arthur Young, writing in 1780, says—

"The only manufacture of considerable importance in Ireland, is that of linen, which the Irish have for near a century considered as the great staple of the kingdom."

Irish linen
trade cared
for by the
Govern-
ment.

In 1861, the late Mr. John Herdman, ex-President of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and then extensively engaged in the trade, gave an account of the linen trade of Ireland, in the Trade Department of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, at the Dublin meeting of the Association; and he represented it as in a very satisfactory state, and as having made great progress from 1784. He also noticed that, in the recent commercial treaty with France, the linen trade of Ireland had not been overlooked, and spoke highly of the value of the treaty, and of the share of the advantages from it which Ireland would derive.

Annual Losses of Farmers since 1859.

It will have been observed, that I have made special reference in many places to the losses the farmers have sustained since 1859. In the absence of official statistics of prices as complete as those of produce, it is impossible to make a detailed and accurate estimate showing how great these losses have been.

Method of
estimating
losses
explained.

As it is of importance, however, to form a more vivid conception of what they are than is conveyed by any enumeration of quantities of produce, I have compiled the following Table to show the gross annual value of the produce of the three principal crops, namely, oats, wheat, and potatoes, and the estimated annual return from cattle, during the last seven years. After careful consideration I have excluded the other articles of agricultural wealth, which I have already noticed, inasmuch as they would complicate the Table and not materially affect the result. An additional reason for excluding flax was, that its growth is almost exclusively confined to Ulster. I have not gone back further than 1856, because, as already stated, the present system of revising the returns of agricultural produce collected by the Constabulary was not in force so as to affect the returns previous to that year; and, therefore, the returns from 1856, can be more properly compared together.

TABLE showing the VALUE of the ANNUAL PRODUCE of OATS, WHEAT, and POTATOES, and the ESTIMATED ANNUAL RETURN from CATTLE, during the last Seven Years.

Years.	Oats.		Wheat.		Potatoes.		Estimated Annual Return from Cattle.*	Total Estimated Annual Produce of Oats, Wheat, Potatoes, and Cattle.
	Estimated Price per Quarter.	Gross Annual Value of Produce.	Estimated Price per Quarter.	Gross Annual Value of Produce.	Estimated Price per Ton.	Gross Annual Value of Produce.		
1856-57,	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	£	£
1857-58,	23 4	10,776,317	55 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	4,552,012	70 5	15,521,745	10,862,862	41,712,966
1858-59,	22 9 $\frac{3}{4}$	10,146,255	43 4 $\frac{3}{4}$	3,608,270	80 0	14,037,376	11,001,912	38,793,813
1859-60,	21 1	9,438,524	41 8 $\frac{3}{4}$	3,643,924	48 4	11,822,867	11,446,794	36,352,109
	24 2	9,873,118	51 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	3,782,851	75 10	16,416,108	10,819,122	40,891,199
1860-61,	22 9	10,057,689	50 9	3,226,654	81 8	11,193,968	10,415,064	34,893,375
1861-62,	21 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	8,799,792	52 1	2,218,414	88 4	8,308,079	9,751,188	29,077,473
1862-63,	21 0	7,647,150	47 0	1,605,144	77 6	8,324,290	†9,751,188	27,327,772
								39,437,522 Average of four years.

Decrease in the annual produce of oats, wheat, potatoes, and cattle, below average of the four years 1856-59 :—in 1860-61, £4,544,147; in 1861-62, £10,360,049; in 1862-63, £12,109,750.

* To obtain the estimates in this column I have taken £9 as a more accurate expression of the value of cattle since 1856, than £6 10s., the value adopted in the Census of 1841, and I have assumed that one-third of the total value of cattle is a fair estimate of the annual return from cattle-farming.

† The materials for this estimate will not be collected before next July. I have assumed that the return will be the same as in 1861-62.

Losses of
farmers,
besides what
is shown by
Table.

It thus appears that the annual losses of farmers on the four chief products of oats, wheat, potatoes, and cattle, may be estimated as follows:—From July, 1860, to July, 1861, at £4,544,147; from July, 1861, to July, 1862, at £10,360,049; from July, 1862, to July, 1863, at £12,109,750.

There are some losses of farmers the results of which are not exhibited by the above Table, such as the loss arising from the bad turf crop in 1861. Again, the effect of the short crop of straw and hay in 1859 is only partially indicated in the estimated falling off in the return from cattle-farming; and as there are no statistics of the produce of straw in each year, it is impossible to present a complete view of the year 1859 by the statistics of hay alone. Further, I have been informed that the grain crops in 1861 and 1862 were so badly saved, that there was a much greater proportion than usual sold at the lower prices of the scale from which the average was deduced.

Compensa-
tion in flax.

On the other hand, the compensation which the flax crop afforded since 1859, in the districts where it is grown, is not indicated by the table. This compensation would amount to about £300,000 in the crop of 1860; £350,000 in that of 1861; and £700,000 in that of 1862. I may, however, add, that the increase in the cultivation and the value of flax is so much dependent on the temporary derangement of the cotton trade, consequent on the American war, that whilst it is to be regarded with satisfaction as an alleviation of the pressure in some districts, it is not necessarily an indication of any permanent change in the agriculture of the country.

Pressure of
losses of
farmers
measured.

In order to measure the amount of pressure likely to be produced by such losses as £4,544,147, £10,360,049, and £12,109,750, I will compare them with the rental of Ireland. If the value of towns, mills, mines, &c., be deducted from the valuation of Ireland, the purely agricultural rental will not probably exceed £13,000,000;

these losses, therefore, have on three years crop amounted to about two years rental.

Again, to compare 1862 with 1846, the official estimate of the losses in 1846, as stated by the late Marquis of Lansdowne, in the House of Lords, on 16th January, 1847, was £16,000,000, being £11,350,000 deficiency in the potato crop, and £4,660,000 in the oat crop.

What I have already established as to the very great progress in the prosperity of agriculture and wealth of farmers up to 1859, explains how the farmers have been able to bear their losses since 1859 without more suffering than has been felt up to the present.

The losses have, in point of fact, been met, since 1859, by a sacrifice of live stock (the floating capital of farmers), which has been reduced to the extent of £6,000,000 by intercepting the usual amount of deposits in joint-stock banks, which has taken place to the extent of £2,250,000—by the withdrawal of deposits to the extent of £1,750,000—by sales of Government stock to the extent of £2,000,000—by a diminution of expenditure on clothes and such comforts as may be curtailed in times of pressure—by borrowing what could be obtained on credit—by reducing the employment of labourers—and lastly, by allowing rents to run in arrear, or by getting abatements from the landlords.

As a proof that the pressure has in many cases extended through the different steps of the above series, and has now reached the landlords, I may state that I have been informed by agents of extensive properties in different districts that this winter was the worst for rents they had experienced since the famine. There are in the newspapers frequent announcements of abatements of rent, some as high as any given in the famine years; and on inquiry I have ascertained that the applications for receivers under the Court of Chancery have been more numerous this winter than for some years.

Small disorganization caused by losses explained.

The very much less social disorganization caused by the recent losses, as compared with that produced by the unfavourable years 1845 and 1846, arises partly from the fact that, in 1845 and 1846, the potato was grown to a very large extent by the labouring classes on the system of con-acre. They were the owners of the crop, and were made bankrupt by the failure; and thus, their labour being mortgaged for the rent of the potato-ground—a claim which the failure of the crop rendered them unable to meet—the relations between them and their employers were entirely deranged.

Condition of the Labouring Classes.

Change in condition of Irish labourer since 1846 not sufficiently considered.

Though the labouring classes have undoubtedly suffered from the losses of farmers and shopkeepers, and now even of landlords, leading necessarily to decreased employment in very many departments of labour, it is interesting to inquire why they have not suffered so much as has been anticipated by many persons, or so much as they did in comparison with the farmers in 1846. The anticipation I refer to has arisen, I believe, from not fully appreciating the change which has taken place in the condition of the Irish labourer since 1846.

In order fully to appreciate the change which has taken place in the condition of the Irish labourer since the famine, it is necessary fully to realize what his condition was before that time.

Without going farther back than the administration of the Marquis of Wellesley, and the Home Secretaryship of the late Sir Robert Peel, when the modern policy of governing Ireland may be said to have commenced, the following description of the Irish labouring classes was given by Bishop Doyle in 1825 :—

Bishop Doyle's account of

“ The evidence already given to Parliament shows that the average wages of a labouring man in Ireland (and the great mass of the poor are labourers), is worth scarcely *three pence*

a day!! Three pence a day for such as obtain employment, the Irish whilst in a family where one or two persons are employed, labourers in there may be four, perhaps six, others, dependent on these 1825. two for their support."

The Bishop further states :—

"In a parish with which I am connected, consisting of about 8,000 souls, not less than 337 families were relieved as public paupers during the last year, and probably one-half as many more, who would prefer death to the public exposure of their distress, suffered for nearly two months all the horrors of extreme want. How will it illustrate the extent or nature of our distress to state that in another parish, with which I am equally well acquainted, six-sevenths of the population subsisted for months of the last year either on alms or on one scanty meal of the most wretched food; and that the furniture of their houses, their wearing apparel, and nearly all the movables they possessed, were sold or pledged, to provide them with this pittance!"

The Bishop states in a note to this passage :—

"The last summer was one of little more than ordinary distress; that which is approaching is not likely to be much more abundant with the poor."

In 1836, the Royal Commissioners for inquiring *Poor Inquiry* into the Condition of the Poor in Ireland, to some of *Commissioners'* whose statements I have already referred,* reported *account of the Irish*

"That they could not estimate the number of persons in *labourers in* Ireland *out of work and in distress during thirty weeks of the* 1836. *year* at less than 585,000, nor the persons dependent on them at less than 1,800,000, making 2,385,000."

The estimate of these Commissioners received a singular but sad corroboration nine years afterwards, in the fact I have already noticed, of 3,000,000 of persons being in receipt of rations under the relief arrangements at one period during the height of the famine in 1847. It receives a further corroboration in the reduction of the population by two millions and a-half by emigration. It was the extraordinary productiveness of the potato before 1846, which enabled those 2,385,000 persons to exist, with only half work, even in the wretched condition they did.

* *Vide* pages 6 and 11, *supra*.

Sir Robert Kane's account of Irish labourers in 1844.

The condition of the labouring classes just before the famine, is noticed by Sir Robert Kane in his *Industrial Resources of Ireland, 1844*. He says:—

“That human labour can be obtained in this country on lower terms than in any other in Europe, is too well known to require example. It is thus that 8*d.* or 10*d.* per day is found to be the usual rate of wages at a distance from large towns, and that even on such terms *thousands of men remain unemployed during the greater portion of the year.*”

Judge Longfield's account of rise in wages from 1844 to 1861.

Judge Longfield, in his address on Social Economy already alluded to, gives the following account of the rate of wages, as ascertained from the evidence before the Land Occupation Commissioners in 1844, and the improvement up to 1861. Referring to the year 1844, he states that—

“In Munster and Leinster the rate of agricultural wages varied from 7*d.* to 10*d.* a day, and in Connaught from 5*d.* to 8*d.*, and that even at these low rates constant employment could not be obtained. It also appears to have been the general custom for the labourer to rent his cabin and plot of ground from the farmer; and that these bargains sometimes insured the labourer a supply of food, and were a source of profit to him, but that more frequently they were a source of litigation and oppression; and that, on the whole, it might be said that in no part of the civilized world was the condition of any industrial class so wretched as that of the Irish labourer. There is still much room for improvement, but I shall refer to the best authentic documents that I could procure to show what change has taken place, and is still going on, in the condition of the labourer. In the year 1856 the Emigration Commissioners applied to the Poor Law Commissioners for information on the state of the labouring population, as bearing upon the continuance of emigration from Ireland. The Poor Law Inspectors in the different counties gave returns of the rate of wages in their respective districts. I refer to the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for the year 1856.”

As an illustration of the rise in wages, Judge Longfield then quotes Mr. Horsley's statement that in Cork, Kerry, and Limerick the average rate of wages for agricultural labourers was 7*s.* 6*d.* a week; and he quotes Mr. Horsley as stating that “continuous employment is now easily obtained by all skilled able-bodied agricultural labourers.”

Judge Longfield adds that the rate of wages increased in twelve years (from 1844 to 1856) from 25 to 80 per cent., the greatest increase having taken place in those districts in which the greatest wretchedness had previously prevailed. From further inquiries he arrives at the conclusion that from 1856 to the end of 1860 the wages of agricultural labour in most parts of Ireland had obtained a further advance of 10 per cent.

Since that time, in districts where the pressure has been great, the diminished demand for labour must have led to a reduction of labourer's earnings, but I have not the means of giving an accurate statement of its extent. I have, however, been told by several persons of intelligence, that neither employment nor wages have diminished to the extent commonly feared, inasmuch as the farmers, to save themselves, must crop the land, and there is not now, as formerly, a superabundance of hands to do it.

The rise in wages and continuous employment referred to by Judge Longfield arise naturally from the facts already established as to the quantity of land under crops, and number of live stock to be attended to.

Cause of rise
of wages
explained.

As I have already shown,* there were devoted to the growth of cereals, flax, potatoes, turnips, and other green crops, about 300,000 more acres in 1860 than in 1847, and nearly as many as in 1849; and to the growth of hay and clover, which must be included amongst the crops which give employment, 400,000 more acres than 1847 or 1849; and to pasturage probably upwards of 1,200,000 additional acres during the same period.

Now, making every allowance for the substitution of ploughing for spade husbandry, consequent on the consolidation of farms, and for the use of agricultural implements to save labour, it is plain that this increase of land under crop and in pasture, and the increase in cattle must have increased the amount of

* Vide p. 28, *supra*.

agricultural work to be done. It is equally plain that by the diminution of the population (which has taken place in the agricultural districts) the hands to perform that work must have diminished by several hundred thousands. These are just the economic conditions to make a rise of wages inevitable.

Some of those who support the theory of progressive decline admit the manifest fact of a great rise in money wages since 1846, but endeavour to destroy the effect of this admission by adding that the price of food has also greatly increased.

No rise in price of wheat.

The average price of wheat in Dublin for seven years before 1846 was 30s. 11d. a barrel; and the average price for seven years, ending 1st November, 1862, was 30s. 9d.

Large importations of wheat in recent years of pressure.

The rise in wages, without any rise in wheat, has brought household bread within the reach of a much larger number of the labouring classes. Nine-tenths of the wheat produced in the country is consumed at home, and the extent to which foreign wheat has been introduced in the years of pressure may be judged from a comparison of the importation in 1860, 1861, and 1862, with an average of seven years before the repeal of the Corn Laws.

IMPORTATION of WHEAT and FLOUR.

	Quarters in the Year.
Before 1846, . . .	127,958*
In 1860, . . .	1,383,609
In 1861, . . .	1,412,809
In 1862, . . .	2,112,715

Slight rise in price of oats.

In oats there has been a rise. The average price for seven years before 1846 was 12s. 6d. a barrel; and for seven years ending 1st November, 1862, 14s. 3½d., being a rise of 14 per cent.

Large rise in price of potatoes.

Potatoes are, in most years, much higher than before the famine, generally averaging about £4 a ton, while they formerly averaged about £2 a ton; but those who are too poor to consume wheaten bread, are no longer absolutely dependent on the potato. They

* Average of seven years.

have now what the law denied them before free trade —Indian meal, the present price of which is from 7s. to 7s. 6d. per cwt., being about half the price of oatmeal. The importations of Indian corn and meal were—

Low price
and large
importa-
tions of
Indian meal.

IMPORTATIONS of INDIAN CORN and MEAL.

	Quarters in the Year.
Before 1846, . . .	11,007*
In 1860, . . .	1,317,514
In 1861, . . .	1,970,988
In 1862, . . .	1,773,255

If the cheap bread and cheap Indian meal is taken into account, the rise in oats and potatoes is prevented producing its full effect ; so that the great increase in money wages is by no means counterbalanced by the rise in oats and potatoes.

For the cheap foreign wheat and abundant supplies of cheap Indian meal, the poorer classes are indebted to the wise policy of the Legislature in abolishing the unjust system of protection which prevailed before 1846. The high price of potatoes since 1846 has, on the other hand, been caused solely by that crop never having returned to its former productiveness—a matter entirely beyond all legislative or Government control.

It is, then, impossible to maintain that there was not the most marked improvement in the condition of the labouring classes from 1846 to 1859. On the other hand, it is equally impossible not to perceive that such losses as the farmers have sustained since 1859, with their effects on shopkeepers and landlords, must have produced, and be now producing, in many districts, very considerable pressure on the labouring classes.

Marked im-
provement
in condition
of labouring
classes to
1859—pres-
sure since.

I have already† referred to the Poor Law statistics as indicating a fixed steady progress in the condition of the poorest classes from the famine until 1859, and their increased distress in each succeeding year, for

* Average of seven years.

† Vide pp. 64-67, *supra*.

it is from the labouring classes that those receiving relief usually come.

I will now refer to the statistics of crime for the same purpose.

Offences re- OFFENCES of all DESCRIPTIONS, specially reported by the
ported by CONSTABULARY (not including Dublin Metropolitan Dis-
Constabu- trict), since 1847.
lary, not
including
Dublin Me-
tropolitan
District.

Years.	No. of Cases of Outrage specially reported by the Constabulary.	Years.	No. of Cases of Outrage specially reported by the Constabulary.
1847	20,986	1855	4,201
1848	14,080	1856	4,125
1849	14,908	1857	4,032
1850	10,639	1858	3,492
1851	9,144	1859	3,618
1852	7,824	1860	3,531
1853	5,452	1861	3,881
1854	4,652	1862	4,401

Statistics of Crime shows improvement in labouring classes to 1858, and pressure since.

The enormous preponderance of offences in the earlier years (which were those immediately following the period of general scarcity in Ireland), includes numerous depredations upon property caused by want.

This table shows an extraordinary improvement amongst the labouring classes from 1847 to 1858, and the increase of crime since then indicates a change for the worse in their condition; thus coinciding with the conclusion indicated by the Poor Law statistics.

In order to see in what classes of offences this increase has taken place, I add another table—

CLASSIFICATION of OFFENCES REPORTED by the CONSTABULARY (not including Dublin Metropolitan District), for the last Four Years.

Offences.	1859.	1860.	1861.	1862.
Against the Person, .	1,399	1,266	1,235	1,167
Against Property, .	1,693	1,703	2,090	2,392
Against the Peace, .	526	562	556	842
Total, . . .	3,618	3,531	3,881	4,401

It appears from this table that the chief increase in 1860 and 1861 was in crimes against property; and in 1862, there was a further increase in the same class. This was accompanied in 1862 with a large increase of crimes against the peace—the increase being chiefly in threatening notices.

In each year since 1859 there has been a diminution of crimes against the person.

An increase of crimes against property, accompanied by a diminution of crimes against the person, is an evidence of increased pressure rather than of increased depravity.

The small extent of the increase, as compared with the crimes against property after 1846, seems to show that while some of the labourers must have been suffering very severely, the number in that position cannot be very great, and, of course, does not at all approach the numbers in the former seasons of distress.

Before drawing any conclusion adverse to the character of the Irish people from the fact of temporary distress in Ireland being always accompanied with crimes against property, when the same does not appear to happen in England, the difference between the Poor Laws of the two countries, as already noticed,* should not be overlooked; the English law giving the central authority and the guardians very large discretion in dealing with labourers out of employment from temporary pressure, whilst the Irish law (except in the rare cases of the workhouse being full), gives no similar discretion to either the Commissioners or the Guardians, for meeting such cases.

Labourers suffering temporarily from want of employment from causes beyond their own control, are of all others the class most likely to be tempted to commit crimes against property before availing themselves of workhouse relief.

* *Vide* page 63, *supra*.

Statistics of Crime since 1858 indicates increase of pressure on the poor, and not increased depravity.

Necessity of considering the restricted nature of the Irish Poor Law in connexion with increase of crimes against property.

General Conclusions.

The arguments for progressive decline have been confidently based on elaborate statistics; the most satisfactory way of testing the strength of such arguments is to examine fairly and fully the real tests of national wealth and prosperity, and to come to a decision, not by the mere criticism of mistaken or partial statistics, but by establishing the true state of the case by positive evidence, founded on a wide induction.

All the statistics I have examined appear to me to refute the theory of progressive decline, and to establish—1st, that there was in agricultural produce and other kinds of wealth a rapid progress in recovering from the effects of the famine. That this attained its height in sheep in 1854; in amount of Government stock held in Ireland in 1857; in pigs, after considerable fluctuations, in 1858; in cattle and the total value of live stock in 1859; and in the deposits in joint-stock banks in 1859; in the total number of acres under crops in 1860; in the issue of bank notes, after some fluctuation also, in 1860; and in the railway traffic in 1861.

2nd. That omitting all account of investments in improving and reclaiming land, in manufactures, &c., the capital of the country appears to have increased, as judged by the tests of live stock, Government funds, bank deposits, and investments in railways,* from about £60,000,000 in 1841, to about £120,000,000 in 1859, being an increase of 100 per cent.; and the decrease in these classes of wealth, since 1859, of about £8,000,000, still leaves their amount £112,000,000, or £52,000,000 more than in 1841.

3rd. That the high average produce of all crops for four years, 1852–1855, seems to have been one of the chief causes of this prosperity.

* In making this calculation I have estimated the Irish portion of the capital in Irish Railways at £1,500,000 in 1841, £11,000,000 in 1859, and at £12,500,000 in 1862.

4th. That the diminished average produce of all crops in the four years 1856, 1857, 1858, and 1859, seems to have led to a check of prosperity in some things, and, on the whole, to a diminished rate of progress in agricultural wealth ; but, being years of reasonable plenty, and following on years of more than average plenty, the well-being of the people seems not to have been affected, except in 1859, in the case of those specially affected by the scarcity of hay and straw.

5th. That the still further diminished produce of all crops in 1860, 1861, and 1862, resulting from inclement seasons, with scarcity of turf in 1861, turned the diminished progress in wealth into a positive decline ; and that the accumulation of the effects of three years' decline has produced a very serious diminution of national wealth and well-being—the losses of farmers in oats, wheat, potatoes, and cattle, in the three years, amounting to upwards of £26,000,000, or two years rental.

6th. That the losses in these years, though affecting indirectly all classes, have mainly produced pressure on the farmers, entitling them to a large amount of sympathy and consideration ; and that the labouring classes, owing to the rise in wages, increase of employment since 1847, and abundance of foreign wheat and Indian corn at a low price, are suffering much less than was commonly anticipated.

In statistical inquiries it is always important to compare the result of calculations, estimates, and inferences, with the practical experience of some persons having an opportunity to form an opinion, and on whose judgment reliance may be placed. Conclusions corroborated by opinions of practical men.

Accordingly, in addition to the information on railway traffic, to which I have already referred, I asked Mr. Murland to state his general impression, as derived from his experience, as to the condition of the country for the past twelve years ; and in his letter,

which I have annexed in the Appendix, No. 2, p. 86, *infra*, he gives the following opinion* :—

“ My view of the subject, then, is, that for the eight years prior to the year 1859 the country progressed considerably; and any person travelling through Ireland at that time, as I had occasion to do, could not fail to remark the improvement in the dwellings of the working classes, and in the cultivation of the land. It is also well known that the wages of labourers and tradesmen advanced materially; that increased rents of land were punctually paid, and still left the farmers independent.

“ In the year 1859 the change for the worse commenced. In 1859 there was a remarkable deficiency in the crops of hay and straw, in consequence of which the farmers suffered greatly in the following spring, from want of food for their cattle. In some towns in the North of Ireland hay was sold at the enormous rate of £13 per ton; and it came under my notice, that though hay was selling in the Dublin market at about double its usual price, some persons found their advantage in purchasing it in Dublin even at that price, and sending it by railway upwards of 120 miles to small towns in the north-west of Ireland.

“ Many of the small farmers were greatly impoverished at that time by the high price they had to pay for fodder, and also by the loss of cattle from want of food.

“ In each of the following years, 1860, 1861, and 1862, the seasons were unfavourable, and the crops very deficient; and I fear, from what I have seen and heard, that the last was probably the worst. At all events the evil has been cumulative; and not only are the small farmers in many parts of the country reduced to poverty, but the landlords also will lose a portion of their rents in many cases, so that all classes of the community will suffer more or less.”

Mr. Murland's statement, which I have selected from other accounts that I received to the same effect, coincides with the conclusions which I have deduced from the Statistics of Produce and of Wealth.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

W. NEILSON HANCOCK.

Major-Gen. Sir Thomas A. Larcom, K.C.B.,

Under-Secretary to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant.

* From his position as Chairman of the Dublin and Drogheda Railway and Vice-Chairman of the Great Southern and Western, few persons in Ireland have had a better opportunity of forming a general opinion founded on large practical experience.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX, No. 1.*

NOTICE of PLAN of PRESBYTERIAN SETTLEMENT in NEW ZEALAND extensively posted on Presbyterian Churches in Ireland, in January, 1863.

NOTICE.—EMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND.—Members of this congregation who are desirous of joining the community, now in process of being organized, to proceed to Auckland, New Zealand, in order to form a Presbyterian settlement in that country, are respectfully informed that a roll for the registry of eligible emigrants is in the hands of . Persons desirous of embracing this opportunity of emigrating will find it to be recommended by special advantages:—1st. In the passage to New Zealand, provision will be made for the religious instruction and superintendence of the emigrants, by the appointment, before starting, of a minister, who shall accompany them to New Zealand, and who shall be the pastor of the colony about to be formed. A community will obviously possess the advantage of securing better and cheaper accommodation on their way out than can be obtained by a single individual or by a single family. 2nd. On their arrival in New Zealand, emigrants will receive good land, and in a favourable locality, specially set apart for them by the Government, with the view of forming a township; each adult passenger is entitled to have forty acres of land, free of rent and taxes for ever.

N.B.—It is to be understood, that although it is expected that all who propose to emigrate with this community shall maintain their connexion with it on reaching New Zealand, yet if circumstances shall arise which indicate the desirableness and importance of their removal to some other locality, they shall not be held bound to remain in the colony.

We, the undersigned, approve of the scheme of forming a Presbyterian settlement at Auckland, New Zealand, and will be happy to forward the views of those enterprising members

* *Vide supra*, p. 17.

of this church who have originated the plan, and are endeavouring to carry it out.

Signed by the Revs. H. Cooke, D.D., LL.D. ; James Morgan, D.D. ; John Edgar, D.D. ; William Gibson, D.D. ; William M'Clure ; W. B. Kirkpatrick, D.D. ; John Bleckley, John Macnaughton, John Hall, John J. Black, John Meneely, William Johnston, Hugh Hanna, Thomas Toye, L. E. Berkeley, J. M. Killen, J. R. M'Alister, Patrick White, and Mr. David Cunningham.

APPENDIX No. 2.*

Copy of LETTER from JAMES W. MURLAND, Esq.,
Chairman Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company,
and Deputy Chairman Great Southern and Western
Railway Company.

25, Fitzwilliam-square, Dublin,
5th Feb., 1863.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have carefully considered the question you asked me yesterday, viz., how far do the returns of traffic on Irish railways, during the last twelve years, throw light on the condition of the country, and what conclusions do they point to ?

In looking at the receipts of the different railways (as published) for this purpose, it is necessary to note when new branches and extensions were opened, and make due allowance for them. It is also necessary to allow for the natural development of traffic which takes place on railways in consequence of the great facilities they afford compared with the old modes of conveyance, and which development would take place independently of any improvement in the country.

After making a fair allowance for such increase, I have no doubt that the rapid increase in the traffic on Irish railways between the year 1851 and the end of 1859, and more particularly during the years 1852 to 1856 (inclusive), can only be accounted for by the marked and general improvement which took place in the country during those years. In the years 1860 and 1861 the traffic progressed very little, not by any means as much as we have reason to expect it would have done if the country had enjoyed the advantage of ordinary seasons and ordinary crops ; and the returns just made up for the year 1862 (not yet published) show that the traffic on Irish railways has suffered a marked diminution in the last year.

* *Vide supra*, pp. 60, 83.

In illustration of these remarks, I will give you the returns of traffic on the Dublin and Drogheda Railway. I select it because there has been less change of mileage on it during the period under consideration than on any of the other lines; in fact, there was only one short extension, opened in the year 1853, and I know exactly what allowance should be made for that. At the same time I can state, from my knowledge of several other lines, that the returns of traffic on them, if carefully examined, would exhibit similar results.

I enclose a table showing the receipts of the Dublin and Drogheda Railway from 1851 to the present time. You will observe that the increase from 1851 to 1856 was—from 1851, £51,020, to 1856, £80,692; making the increase on the five years £29,672. But a deduction of about £6,000 must be made for the portion of this increase which is attributable to the short extension opened in the year 1853; thus leaving the increase in the five years at £23,672, equal to an average annual increase £4,734, or about nine per cent. per annum on the receipts of 1851.

You will again observe that, for the year 1859, the receipts amounted to £90,250, showing an increase of £9,559 in the three preceding years, equal to an annual average increase of £3,153, or nearly 4 per cent. on the traffic of 1856.

For the year 1860 the receipts show an increase of £2,330; for the year 1861, an increase of only £1,440; and for the year 1862, a decrease of £4,440. We must, however, for our present purpose, make a deduction of about £700 from this, as, during the latter months of 1862, a competing line to Navan was opened, which abstracts about that amount from our receipts at that station. But, after making this correction, we have still the large falling-off of £3,740, instead of an increase of two or three thousand pounds, which we would most probably have had if the country continued in its usual state.

The remarkable falling-off, must, I think, be, for the most part, attributed to the very depressed state of the country.

My view of the subject, then, is, that for the eight years prior to the year 1859 the country progressed considerably; and any person travelling through Ireland at that time, as I had occasion to do, could not fail to remark the improvement in the dwellings of the working classes, and in the cultivation of the land. It is also well known that the wages of labourers and tradesmen advanced materially; that increased rents of land were punctually paid, and still left the farmers independent.

In the year 1859 the change for the worse commenced, but it did not affect railway traffic till the following year. In 1859 there was a remarkable deficiency in the crops of hay and straw, in consequence of which the farmers suffered greatly in the following spring, from want of food for their cattle. In some towns in the North of Ireland hay was sold

at the enormous rate of £13 per ton; and it came under my notice, that though hay was selling in the Dublin market at about double its usual price, some persons found their advantage in purchasing it in Dublin even at that price, and sending it by railway upwards of 120 miles to small towns in the north-west of Ireland.

Many of the small farmers were greatly impoverished at that time by the high price they had to pay for fodder, and also by the loss of cattle from want of food.

In each of the following years, 1860, 1861, and 1862, the seasons were unfavourable, and the crops very deficient; and I fear, from what I have seen and heard, that the last was probably the worst. At all events the evil has been cumulative; and not only are the small farmers in many parts of the country reduced to poverty, but the landlords also will lose a portion of their rents in many cases, so that all classes of the community will suffer more or less.

Of course under these circumstances the receipts on the railways since the commencement of this year are very unsatisfactory, and must, I fear, continue so until we have more genial seasons, and better crops. It is not, you will observe, in the very year that crops fail we feel the effects in our railway traffic; and the failure at the time brings some traffic, in the way of the carriage of grain and flour to feed the people, and coals to supply the loss of peat. I fear that some of the goods traffic of last year was due to the large quantity of foreign grain imported into the country; but in the meantime the money leaves us, and in the following years we feel the loss.

I could support this view of the subject with more figures, taken from the returns of the Great Southern and Western Railway, and other railways; but it would give me some trouble to make the corrections I have alluded to in the published returns, and which would be necessary to make the conclusions from them reliable.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed,)

JAMES W. MURLAND.

W. Neilson Hancock, Esq., LL.D.,
&c., &c.

Dublin and Drogheda Railway.

[In this Table Shillings and Pence are omitted.]

RECEIPTS.

Year.	Passengers.	Parcels and Goods.	Mails and other Receipts.	Total.	Mileage.
	£	£	£	£	
1851	35,059	11,135	4,824	51,019	52 $\frac{3}{4}$
1852	38,954	12,399	4,929	56,283	52 $\frac{3}{4}$
1853	*50,755	15,007	4,863	70,626	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1854	45,586	19,699	5,019	70,306	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1855	49,247	23,025	5,362	77,635	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1856	51,036	24,147	5,507	80,691	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1857	51,675	24,937	6,359	82,971	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1858	52,796	26,273	6,702	85,771	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1859	54,814	28,721	6,715	90,250	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1860	54,918	30,784	6,877	92,580	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1861	56,317	30,710	6,993	94,021	62 $\frac{1}{2}$
1862	50,854	31,833	6,878	89,565	62 $\frac{1}{2}$

* Great Industrial Exhibition.

