

THOUGHTS  
ON THE  
NECESSITY AND MEANS  
OF  
EDUCATING  
THE POOR OF IRELAND,  
AND  
ATTACHING THEM TO THEIR COUNTRY.

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BY JOHN DONOVAN, Esq,  
BARRISTER AT LAW.

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## THOUGHTS, &c.

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**A**T a period the most awful that has occurred in the history of this country, or perhaps of the world, at a time when every Government in Europe has been shaken to its foundation, and the British Empire itself, which has so often fought for glory and for an imaginary balance of power, is now reduced to fight for its very existence ; it becomes the duty of every Irishman who sees the dreadful precipice on which his country stands,

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to

to warn his fellow citizens of their danger; and if any man thinks he has discovered, or can advise any means for saving the country, it would be criminal to remain silent. Had the great talents of the members of the present Administration produced any plan likely to give *permanent* security to this country and effectually to improve the situation of the people, it might be considered presumption in an obscure individual to set up his judgment in opposition to theirs; but since they have not even promised any thing of considerable moment, except the further emancipation of the Catholics, and the taking off the hearth tax, (measures, which although in themselves extremely proper, can by no means be considered sufficient to extricate the country from the desperate situation in which she is at present) any man who thinks he can point out the dangers of the country and how they may be avoided, has not only a right, but



but it is his duty to deliver his sentiments to the Nation.

As to the dangers which threaten this country, before I state my opinion I shall first take notice of the opinion delivered by Mr. Grattan at the commencement of this session; his opinion is at all times worthy of the most serious attention, but particularly so at present, when he is considered as Prime Minister of Ireland: “ If” says he, “ France should be possessed of all the coast, and the harbours “ from Brest to the Zuyder Zee, this island “ must sink to the bottom of the ocean,” but she is now possessed of them, and in all human probability will retain the possession; again he says, “ It is on the Continent alone that the British Empire is “ to be saved;” “ it is impossible to separate the Western Empire, the Continent cannot belong to France, and “ Ireland to herself.” Now those expressions,

preffions, as well as the whole tenor of his  
 speech, plainly shew, that it is his opi-  
 nion, that unless the Allies should, con-  
 trary to all probability, succeed against the  
 French on the Continent, these islands,  
 Ireland at least, must sooner or later be  
 swallowed up, and form part of what he  
 has termed the Western Empire. As I  
 differ entirely from this opinion, and am  
 persuaded that, notwithstanding the ac-  
 quisition of Holland, and the success of  
 the French on the Continent, this coun-  
 try may still be saved, if Ministers will  
 but act wisely and honestly towards the  
 people ; I shall state my opinion of our  
 situation and point out such remedies as  
 I think, if it is the will of heaven, would  
 still preserve Ireland among the nations  
 of the earth, and make her more re-  
 spectable than ever she has been ; even  
 though France should add the Spanish as  
 well as Dutch navy to her own ; even  
 though she should make such gigantic  
 exertions



exertions as to give her the absolute command of the ocean.

The danger which threatens our existence as a nation, is this ; that unless the French Republic is destroyed (of which there is not the slightest prospect) it is more than probable, it is almost certain, that sooner or later, France will be superior to Britain at sea ; and in that case, the generality of politicians give up this country as absolutely lost. Now the only reason for despairing in such circumstances, is, that we are conscious, that the *affections of the great mass of the people, the lower orders, are not with the Government of the country*, and that Government could not, in the hour of danger, look to them for support, but would rather fear them as enemies ; that this is the case, is most notorious ; it would be folly to pretend to disguise it ; but I think the cause of this  
most



most alarming symptom may be discovered, and proper remedies applied.

The causes of this want of attachment to the country and its Government, I conceive to be, 1st, the barefaced corruption and profligacy of many successive administrations; 2dly, the extreme misery and ignorance of the lower orders of the people.

Misery would of itself make the poor disaffected, and anxious for any change; but ignorance encreases this evil considerably, for the ignorant, incapable of calculating the calamities which attend a violent Revolution, suppose that every poor man would immediately get riches, without labour; the ignorant also are the easier misled, and when misled, the most ferocious and cruel, as we see in every insurrection of slaves; and as I am sorry to add, we have seen in our own country.



country. That the lower orders of the people of Ireland are extremely ignorant, is evident by comparing them with those of a similar description in England, Scotland, France, Holland, Switzerland, and America—indeed it hardly requires such a comparison to prove it, when we consider that scarce one peasant in twenty knows so much as the letters of our alphabet. That the lower orders of our countrymen are extremely miserable would also appear from comparing their situation with that of the lower orders in almost every other country, and also from our own observation. But as this is loudly denied by the whole host of the uncharitable and unfeeling, by all that description of men who can argue, that the West Indian negroes are as well off as any European peasantry, and that God and nature never intended the great mass of human creatures to enjoy more comfort and happiness than they experience; therefore

therefore to stop their mouths, some further arguments must be adduced to prove, that which every man who has eyes to see and a heart to feel, requires no further proof of.

First, to begin with the state of the metropolis.

When our celebrated preacher, Mr. Kirwan, lately addressed the public by an advertisement for the poor of his parish *only*, he begins with those remarkable words “ shall 20,000 of your fellow-  
“ creatures perish for want of the com-  
“ mon necessaries of life,” and he calls  
“ upon the children of prosperity to con-  
“ sider with attention the *ill-fated* popu-  
“ lation of this country.” If 20,000  
were perishing for want in *one parish*—  
what must have been the state of the  
metropolis ! The other day when men of  
the first rank and consequence undertook  
a charity to relieve the distresses of the  
poor,



poor, their advertisement begins “ Miseries on Miseries,” and they draw a most frightful picture of the state of the poor.

If after those testimonies, supported by that of every charitable individual or association that examines the situation of the poor—and if, in spite of the evidence of his own senses, any man will still insist that the lower orders of the people in Dublin are as happy and as comfortable as they can or ought to be, I will not say that man is deceived, but I will say his heart is bad: If such is the state of the poor in the metropolis—it must be supposed that they are at least equally miserable in the other cities and great towns of the kingdom, where the same causes prevail, and where there are not an equal number of rich to relieve their distresses. If it is supposed that this distress is merely temporary, and occasioned by the war, this supposition makes nothing against the

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the argument; for if the time of war and danger must in the nature of things be the time of misery to the poor, and consequently of discontent; we will find that at the very time we want their attachment and support we must not expect either. As to the condition of the poor in the country, I believe it is generally allowed, that there is no peasantry in Europe (where the peasants are not absolute slaves) worse housed and worse fed, than the peasantry of Ireland. (Some few districts of Ireland are, to be sure, an exception to this general observation.)

Did Government ever bestow its care to improve the situation of the poor? Is there any national provision for the old man who is past his labour? For the sick who cannot labour, and who requires assistance even to live? Are the distresses of the poor at all noticed by the Government? Are the children they give to  
the



the nation educated? Does the industry of every individual meet encouragement, or insure a livelihood? Is there one single point, wherein that attention is paid by Government to the situation of the poor, as to make them think the Government is their friend, and feel a personal interest in preserving it?

If to all those questions every man must answer no, it is no wonder that the poor are discontented. We have no right to expect their assistance in defending a state, in which they do not feel any Interest. "The world is not their friend nor the world's law." It is natural that they should look forward to Revolutions; and the most likely way to change their sentiments would be to improve their situations. If the cause of our despair and of our danger is that the lower orders are not attached to the Government of the country—is not the remedy obvious?

vious ? Remove the cause, and the danger vanishes. But how is the attachment of the lower orders to be gained, and how are their affections to be won ? the answer to this is very easy—Government should cultivate their attachment by deserving it, by conferring real benefits on them, by labouring for their good, and by convincing them that it was the wish of Government as much as possible to improve their situations and make them happy.

I know that every plan which is proposed for the improvement of the situation of the poor will be considered Utopian and visionary, especially by those who both in and out of Parliament maintain that corruption is the only way of governing Ireland ; and it is probable whoever shall propose such a plan will be set down by them as a disaffected person and a jacobin ; but this is no time  
to



to conceal the truth ; had the country been wisely governed hitherto we would have now no cause to fear ; but since it has been so governed, as to leave the lower orders miserable, and make them disaffected, and that in consequence of such misrule, the country is in the extremest danger—the disease that has so long preyed upon its vitals, and now threatens its existence, should no longer be concealed, but it should be exposed and attacked with boldness and resolution, as well as skill.

We hear a great deal, especially in Fast Day Sermons, of the wickedness of the people bringing down curses on the nation. I admit it is sometimes so, although I think it is generally the wickedness of those in power which causes the misery of nations. “ *Quicquid delirant reges* “ *plectuntur Achivi ;*” but I shall tell our rulers and governors, not in my own words,

words, but in the words of the prophet Ezekiel, or of God himself, what kind of conduct in those in power, brings down divine indignation and wrath upon their heads; and I would seriously recommend it to them to consider attentively the passage.

“ Son of man, prophesy against the  
 “ shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say  
 “ unto them—thus saith the Lord God  
 “ unto the shepherds; woe be to the shep-  
 “ herds of Israel that do feed themselves!  
 “ Should not the shepherds feed the  
 “ flocks?

“ Ye eat the fat, and you clothe you  
 “ with the wool; ye kill them that are  
 “ fed: but ye feed not the flock.

“ The diseased have ye not strength-  
 “ ened; neither have ye healed that  
 “ which was sick; neither have you  
 “ bound up that which was broken, nei-  
 “ ther



“ ther have ye brought again that which  
“ was driven away ; neither have ye  
“ fought that which was lost : but with  
“ force and cruelty have ye ruled them.

“ And they were scattered, because  
“ there is no shepherd ; and they became  
“ meat to all the beasts of the field  
“ when they were scattered.

“ Therefore, O, ye shepherds, hear  
“ the word of the Lord.

“ Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold  
“ I am against the shepherds ; and I will  
“ require my flock at their hand, and  
“ cause them to cease from feeding the  
“ flock ; neither shall the shepherds feed  
“ themselves any more ; for I will de-  
“ liver my flock from their mouth,  
“ that they may not be meat for them.”

*Ezekiel, chap. 34.*

Having

Having produced this authority, which will be allowed to be no Utopian dream, but divine truth, I think I may safely assert that the very reverse of the conduct here reprobated is the line which a good Government ought to pursue, in order to obtain the favour of God or Man. In the same spirit, but in other words, it may be expressed, that it is the duty as well as the interest of the Government not to suffer the children of the poor to run wild and be lost for want of education, not to suffer talents given by God for the service and the ornament of the nation, to lie hidden (like diamonds in the mine) for want of notice, or be cramped for want of encouragement—they should take care that justice and not cruelty and oppression is done between the creditor and debtor ; they should assist industry and reward virtue ; against the pressure of old age and sickness they should administer comfort and support ;

in



in short, the paternal care and attention of a good Government should, like the blessings of Heaven, enter in at the door of every poor man in the nation, and visit his miserable cottage, his family and his situation; it should educate his children; redress his wrongs; assist his industry; and relieve his wants; or in the simple but sublime language of the prophet, the shepherds should feed the flock, they should strengthen that which is diseased—heal that which is sick, bind up that which is broken—bring back that which has been driven away, seek after that which was lost.

If ever we shall have a Government that will act on those principles, that Government will find in the gratitude and attachment of the lower orders, in the affections and love of the whole people, and in the esteem and praise of every honest and good man, a more  
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solid



solid satisfaction, and a more powerful support than they could derive from all the venal Ayes or Noes which are to be bought or sold in Parliament. It would be impossible that the people should not be attached to such a Government as here described, for every man is by nature attached to his own interest, and in this case, it would be evidently the interest of all, of the poor particularly, to preserve a Government which, next to heaven, was their best friend. All orders would rise, in the hour of danger, as spontaneously to preserve such a system, as the hand does to preserve the head.

If this can be doubted, or that the attachment of the people is what may truly be termed "the cheap defence of nations," the only impregnable ramparts for a state, the history of every nation which has existed, or which now appears



appears on the great theatre of the world, will prove the fact to an absolute certainty. What is the present situation of all those countries in Europe which have been governed on different principles? they wanted not armies or fleets, they wanted not treasure, nor artificial resources; but they wanted, what would have been of more importance to them than all these, they wanted the attachment of the people; had they possessed that, Flanders would not have been lost; Holland would not have been lost; Spain and Italy would now be safe, the German Empire would be safe; Ireland would be safe. Having said so much of the absolute necessity of cultivating the attachment of the people, if we wish to continue a nation, and are not content to be swallowed up in the great Western Empire mentioned by Mr. Grattan, I shall now proceed to the means by which it is to be cultivated; and of all the im-



portant services that the people have a right to expect from Government: I shall begin with education, being the first in order, and also in value.

*On the Education of the Poor.*

The earth, beautiful as it is, when smiling with cultivation, in whatever region it appears rude from the hand of Nature, presents nothing to the view but pestilential swamps, and a horrid wilderness: the soil of the human mind too, must be broken and cultivated, or it is in vain we expect to find in it the fruits of virtue or of happiness; these are not the wild spontaneous fruits of the soil; but the delicious produce of human industry and culture. This, then, is the cause of the diversity of national character and disposition; that in some countries the human mind is cultivated in one manner,



ner, in others, somewhat differently ; in some it is more cultivated, in others less ; but in Ireland it is not cultivated at all.

When I speak of the people, I always mean the great mass of the population of the country, the lower orders ; and on them, I think, the God of all the earth might look down with supreme compassion, and say of Ireland, as was spoken of Israel ; “ my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”† In order to prove this, I shall only put it to the feelings and the judgment of every man who is a father, and has himself received an education ; if he could suppose his son to grow up neglected like the beasts of the field, or like the children of the peasantry of Ireland, without the advantage of any education, moral instruction, or example, what sort of a man would

† Hosea, chap. 4th.



he expect him to turn out? Is it not probable, is it not almost certain, that he must be destitute of every honest principle—a disgrace and sorrow to his parents, and a burthen to himself? But if this is not granted—I think it may be positively proved that common honesty, so indispensably necessary to the happiness of society, is never the spontaneous growth of the human mind, but that it is always an acquired virtue.

To prove this, I will put another question—Did any man or woman in the nation ever know or see a child, that from its own nature respected the property of others, and would not take another child's plaything, before it had been often checked, and taught that it was wrong to do so? Now if we follow the uneducated child up to manhood, we will universally see, the same dispositions are retained—the character of every ignorant



norant and savage people is the same—dishonesty, low cunning, deceit and cruelty. If it is argued that the corruption of human nature is not to be remedied by education, such argument is ridiculously false and contrary to all experience. When God looked down upon his creation, and all the works of his hands, he saw that all was good: but nevertheless he assigned it to man as an employment to weed the garden of life, to cultivate the fruits of the earth and the virtues of his own mind. If this is neglected, misery and vice are the certain consequences.

If ever there was a time, in which the education of the poor, might, without the utmost danger, as well as disgrace, be neglected by the Government, that time is now no more.

France bestows the utmost attention to her rising generation, and it must follow

low as certainly as any effect from its cause, that if their republic should stand on its present principles, the French will be in future, even more than they are at present, a *nation of soldiers*; what force then could Ireland oppose to such a nation, in a future contest, if our peasantry are to continue as they now are, uneducated, miserable, and without attachment to their country. But if any one shall say—that Government can do very well without the people being happy, that they do not want their attachment, that they are this year superior at sea, and that they rely upon Providence that this superiority will always continue; I answer, the first assertion has no foundation; and the term *reliance upon Providence* is profaned, when it is so applied. Does any man who exhausts his ground by bad farming, rely upon Providence, that in future years he will have as great crops, as if he had farmed it well?

Does



Does the country gentleman, who never planted, nor cultivated trees, rely upon Providence, that his future woods will provide for his children and grand children ?

No ; but many of them do plant for the benefit of future ages ; the most stupid farmer considers not only what he will do with his ground this year, but what he will do the next year and the year after : while our modern European Legislators seem never to consider beyond the present year ; and the reason is obvious ; they consider they hold their great places and appointments on a very precarious tenure ; it is therefore their principal object, to cram their pockets and provide for their relations as fast as they can ; and as for the nation it may take its chance. With their respective nations they have nothing to do, but to fasten on them like hungry leeches, and drink their blood until they are gorged

gorged with it; when they are full, off they drop, and another set as hungry takes their place; these, in their turn, are succeeded by another, and another; how then is it possible that nations so governed should enjoy health or happiness?

If the general principle is admitted, that the poor ought to receive education, I think the best talents in the nation should be set at work, to draw up the most perfect plan, and the most proper for the particular situation of Ireland—but, in the mean time, as every man who complains of any thing that is wrong, is sure to be asked for his remedy; I shall take the liberty of submitting to the consideration of the public what I conceive to be the great objects of educating the poor, and also such means as appear to me to be the most likely to carry those much desired objects into effect. The advantages which I would



would expect from educating the poor, are, 1st, that their minds would be by this means opened and prepared to receive instruction, whenever it should be laid before them in a proper shape; and then, a good Government would always take care, to supply them with such information as would be necessary and proper for them. 2dly, Every genius and talent that Ireland contains among her millions now doomed to ignorance, would be discovered—and might be cultivated and directed to the advantage of the nation and of its possessor. It is indeed a melancholy consideration, to think how many of the brightest geniuses, who might in every branch of human knowledge, have been the lights and ornaments of our country, have had their great talents buried in obscurity, (like our precious metals in our mines) because there has been no one to notice them; because in this country no attention is paid to those



those things. How many Newtons and Locke may have been lost to the world, because they had the misfortune to be born in a country, where the children of the poor are not even taught *to read*. Should the wintry blast of poverty howl at their birth, here they will find no genial spring to visit their young minds, and call forth into life, the latent seeds of genius and of virtue. Those heavenly seeds are scattered with impartial hand over all the regions of the earth; but some legislators prepare the foil to receive them, while others let them “lye on  
 “ the way side, for the fowls of the air  
 “ to devour” and the winds of heaven to disperse.

There is another kind of talents which deserve to be particularly mentioned—How many Wedgewoods, how many Arkwrights, how many men whose mechanick genius might have raised the  
 manu-



manufactures of our country to the greatest perfection, and given employment and support to our starving millions, may from the same cause have been lost to our country. As a very elegant and feeling poet has touched on this subject, with much more beauty and force of language than I am master of, I shall quote his words.—

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart, once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands, which the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or wak'd to extasy, the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes its ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll,  
Chill Poverty repress'd their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of their soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness in the desert air.

GRAY'S ELEGY.

Though

Though this is now the melancholy lot of the poor, it ought not to remain so; the finest and the sweetest flowers of the field should not be suffered to “blush unseen and waste their sweetness in the desert air;” the national garden is not overstocked; thither they should be transplanted, and carefully watered, and cultivated.

The next great advantage I would expect from educating the poor, is, that it would be a powerful means of attaching future generations of Irishmen to their country, and of reviving in Ireland the spirit of patriotism, which has been so long frozen by the misery of the inhabitants, or broken down by that system of corruption and iniquity which has so long prevailed in this country. Government would have every encouragement to undertake the education of the people, that the experience of all ages and of many countries



countries can give. “ As the hand of  
 “ the potter fashioneth his clay,” so can  
 Government, by the force of education  
 and wise institutions, form and fashion the  
 minds of future generations at their plea-  
 sure. To prove this, I might refer to the  
 history of a hundred nations ; but I shall  
 select two, which in their time, made a  
 great figure in the world ; the Spartans  
 and the Athenians : those two nations  
 retained for many centuries precisely  
 that national character which their res-  
 pective legislators, Lycurgus and Solon,  
 thought most proper to give them ; and  
 the prosperity of those states, as well as  
 of antient Rome and modern Switzer-  
 land, was more owing to the wisdom of  
 their institutions, than to the force of  
 their arms. It appears to me so per-  
 fectly at the option of the Government,  
 to determine the future state of the coun-  
 try, and the character of the people, that  
 I think it might be put to them as a  
 simple

simple question from the speaker's chair:  
 "Is it your pleasure, gentlemen, that the people of Ireland, should be in future, an enlightened and happy nation? Let all who are of that opinion say aye, all who are of a contrary opinion say no."

Having said so much of the absolute necessity of educating the poor of Ireland, I shall now present a short sketch of a plan which would appear to me likely to answer what I have already stated, as the objects of education.

In the first place, I think the plan of education should be national; by which I mean that it should take in all the children of all the poor of Ireland, without regard to the religious distinctions of their parents; and the reasons for this opinion are, 1st, that it would be a powerful means of uniting the people, and banishing those religious feuds  
 and



and animosities which have been so long the curse of this country ; we see that even among animals, which appear by nature the most hostile to each other, if they are but bred up together, they lose their hatred ; the dog, the cat, the lion, and the tyger will all agree ; and will it be said, that an Irishman only is by nature that untameable savage, that what would even deprive a tyger of its ferocity, can have no effect upon him ? 2dly, the plan ought to be national, because the object is national, and because the expence should be national ; nothing but the authority of the Legislature can create a permanent fund adequate to the expence of such a plan ; 3dly, it ought to be national, for if it was not so, in those parts of the country where Protestants are thinly scattered, Protestant Schools could not be supported, and consequently some of the Protestants would receive

no kind of Education ; there would be a similar inconvenience to the Catholics in some parts of Ulster ; the Catholics, also, would have this additional inconvenience ; as by far the greatest number of the poor of Ireland belongs to their persuasion, and as they have their own Priesthood as well as ours to maintain, it could not be expected, that any subscription which might be made among the richer Catholics, would be sufficient for the education of their poor ; from those reasons, it will appear, that such a plan of Education as would take in all the children of all the poor of Ireland, is the only one proper for this country. But such a plan cannot be forced upon a people, even by the ruling powers. Schools might be built at the national expence, but parents would not send their children to them, unless the plan was such as met general approbation, or at least



least the approbation of the enlightened men of the different religious persuasions. Their opinion would probably sway the multitude. In order to obtain this, among other considerations, nothing of religion must be introduced into the system of Education, unless the heads of the different religions would consent to draw up certain Articles of Faith, which they all believe, and certain moral rules drawn from scripture, which they all admit, and agree that this should be taught in the different schools it might be necessary to establish; otherwise it must be left entirely to the parents to form the religious character of their child. For it could not be expected a parent would send his child to the schools, if he supposed his eternal salvation would be endangered by it. If this was attended to, the parents would want

no inducement to have their children educated ; for if such a plan was adopted, as without doing violence to the religious feelings of the poor, would promise to educate all their children and to cultivate every genius that could be discovered amongst them, and place it in its proper situation, what peasant is there in the land who is a father, that could deny his child a fair chance of rising in the world to wealth and rank above his birth ; provided the nation and not himself was to pay the expence of his education ?

Supposing a national plan to be formed, and ready for adoption ; in order to derive the wished advantages from it, the zealous cooperation of all the gentlemen and clergy of the different religions ought to be procured. If the subject is of the first importance, it would not be beneath



neath the first characters to attend to it; unless they were to attend to it, but little good could be expected from any plan; the best institutions would degenerate into a job; the masters would neglect their duty, and the nation must pay them for doing nothing: the schools established for the public benefit, would turn out public nuisances. But if they (seriously reflecting on the advantages the nation would gain by their attention to this subject, and also on the security it would give to the lives and properties of the rising generation, and of their own children;) would exert themselves to assist the execution of such a plan, there is no reason, why the poor all over Ireland, should not be, at least as well educated as they are in those parish schools in Dublin, which are occasionally visited by gentlemen. The first thing, which it would be necessary to establish, is, a body of  
men

men to superintend and direct the course of national education. I think this body should be a Committee chosen from amongst those men who should voluntarily subscribe in aid of this measure ; and I think care should be taken, that this committee should be composed of the properest men of every religious persuasion. It should be the province of this committee to select, or to compose such books, as might be most fit for the different stages of education : they should appoint the masters for the different schools—and remove them if they neglected their duty. The difficulty of choosing the masters would not be so great as it might at first appear ; in the University, a thousand lads can be examined in four days in a long and difficult course of study, and a comparison can be formed of their respective answerings ; in the choice of masters indeed there should be  
a com-



a comparison of their characters as well as their knowledge. The next point to be considered is, what schools it would be necessary to establish, and to me the following appear absolutely necessary, 1st,

*Primary or Nursery Schools.*

Those schools should be established all over the country, at the distance of 3 miles at the farthest from each other ; so that no child should be more than a mile and a half distant from a school. Here all the children of the poor of both sexes, should learn reading, writing and the first rules of arithmetic ; in teaching them to read, such books should be made use of, as were judged most likely to interest the minds of the young scholars, (by amusing them, and giving them an early inclination for reading), and at the same time to convey as much information

formation as they were capable of receiving—I have already mentioned that the books to be used in the schools should be selected by those who were intrusted with the superintendence of the national education ; and if the properest books for this purpose are not to be found in our language, they should translate from other languages whatever was worthy of being translated, or they should themselves compose books for the use of the schools : the children should be encouraged to learn, by small premiums, by praise, and honourable distinctions at the school ; for encouragement is found to be a more powerful, as well as humane method of training either man or beast, than violence and terror—the children should be sent to those schools as soon as they could bear the fatigue of walking to and from them ; (I suppose this would be, at about five years



years of age) at the age of ten or twelve the best scholars might be candidates for admission in other schools, which shall be afterwards described; if not successful, or that their parents choose to keep them at home, they might continue to learn at those schools till they were fourteen, and after that age they might remain at the disposal of their parents. It appears to me, that this education would be sufficient for the great mass of the people, who are destined to live by the labour of their hands; I think it would be sufficient to open and prepare their minds for the reception of every kind of information which might be necessary in their situation; and with such information it should be the care of a good Government to supply them.

The next advantage which I have stated, as likely to flow from a good plan of national education, is that every genius

nus and talent in the nation might be discovered, and directed to the greatest advantage, both for its possessor and for society—for this purpose other schools should be established ; I shall begin with

*County Classical Schools.*

There should be one classical school for the poor in every county ; where a limited number of boys (suppose from 20 to 50, according to the wealth and population of the county) should be dieted, lodged and educated at the expence of the county ; the advantage of having it supported at the expence of the county, would be, that the country gentlemen would by this means be induced to pay attention to it ; and for the same reason, I think the neighbourhood of the county towns, or at least a central situation in the county, should be chosen for this school—the expences of such a school would hardly be more than that of a parish



rish school, in Dublin, and could not be considered any burden on a county.

If the appointment of master to one of those schools, was made somewhat a better provision than a country curacy, there might always be found among the fizers of Dublin college, a sufficient number of men properly qualified, who would undertake the task : the number of boys, as I mentioned before, ought to be limited ; and the vacancies should be filled up by those of the candidates who were the best answerers in the first course of reading already mentioned. In order to determine this in the most impartial manner there should be a public examination, once or twice in the year, (suppose at the time of the Assizes) at which gentlemen of consequence in the county should make it a point to attend. The age of admission into those schools should be from ten to twelve ; and the  
boys

boys here should be for five years instructed in the classics, english, writing, and arithmetic—here as in the primary schools, the boys should be encouraged to learn by premiums &c. and it should be impressed upon them, that their future situation in life depended upon the progress they made while they were here.

At the expiration of the five years, the best scholars should stand Candidates for bachelorships in Dublin college; those who succeeded, would be in the fair road to advancement; of the rest, some might go from hence to the Catholic colleges for educating Priests, and by this means I think the Catholic Priesthood would be much improved, which I should consider as a national advantage: others might be put apprentices to such trades, as a good education would serve them at; and by this means the nation would gain a great number of intelligent clerks and



and shopmen, and some perhaps who rising from that situation, might be an accession to the mercantile interest of the community. I think, that the masters also, both in those schools and in the primary schools, should be encouraged to do their duty by premiums; for instance, when a boy from any of the primary schools, should gain admission into the county classical school; or when one from a county classical school was admitted as a sizer, in both these cases, I think, the master should receive a small reward.

In order to follow the line of classical education, I shall proceed from those schools to the institution of Sizerships in Dublin college, and from thence return to other schools which it might be necessary to establish.

of

*Of Sizerships.*

From the institution of Sizerships in Dublin college, (although many improvements may still be suggested) great advantages have been derived to the nation: men who have been the ornaments of the bench, the senate, and of every liberal profession, have by means of this institution received that education, which otherwise their circumstances would have denied, and cultivated those talents, which, had it not been for this institution, would have been lost, both to society and themselves. Now, though every one must approve of the idea of Sizerships, yet it appears to me that there are these great defects in the present establishment: 1<sup>st</sup>, the Sizars are not sufficiently maintained and supported by the college—2<sup>dly</sup>, there is not a sufficient encouragement to their genius and industry—3<sup>dly</sup>, the number is  
too



too small. As to the first point; they are allowed indeed, (after having waited as menial servants at the table of the Fellows and Fellow Commoners), to eat up what fragments are left; sometimes this affords them a sufficient meal, and sometimes it does not. But this appears to me so far from a liberal provision, for men destined to honorable professions, that I think nothing could be contrived to offer a more wanton and unmeaning insult to that conscious dignity of mind, and to those feelings which nature has almost always united with genius, and which cannot be separated from it.

If a young man has shewn those talents, which in the judgment of the college, should be cultivated for the benefit of society, and directed towards the liberal professions; why in the name of God, must he (after having struggled through the former part of his life, with

with all the disadvantages and all the *contempts* which poverty experiences,) be still further persecuted in that University which has approved his talents? here he should expect to find a sacred asylum, a peaceful harbour to protect him from the storms of fortune. Would it not be the better way to encourage him, to divest himself of that awkwardness and vulgarity of manner and of habits, which it is probable that in his former state of poverty and inferiority he must have contracted; and to learn that independence and dignity of mind and manners, which better accords with the liberal profession for which he is destined; this defect would be very easily remedied—suppose the bursar, or the caterer of the college, in laying out the dinner, was not to calculate, that there ought to be such a superfluity at the table of the Fellows and Fellow Commoners, as that the fragments might feed



feed their servants, the Sizars; but would just provide such a dinner as was sufficient for the number who were to sit down to it; the saving at that table would afford a plain dinner to the Sizars at a separate table; and that *cruel* and *unmeaning* insult, of forcing enlightened men, who have better prospects before them, to do the offices of menial servants, might, and ought to be done away. Independent of this, I say, they are not sufficiently maintained by the College; for the two first years all the emoluments they get from the College would not keep a coat upon their backs; and, in order to support their existence, many of them are obliged to give up a great part of their time, while in College, to act as Ushers to Schools, or in whatever other capacity they can piece out a scanty subsistence; perhaps, the youth of the finest genius in the nation, must quit those stu-

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dies



dies which are congenial to him, and be employed for four or five hours in the day teaching little children to spell; this is enough not only to cramp and prevent his exertion, but entirely to break his spirit. Now, at the expense of 300 guineas a year, this institution might be put on totally a different situation from what it now stands; and this sum I would ask, not merely as a charity, not merely for the cause of learning, but for the public advantage. For among the many advantages that the public derives from this institution, we might point out one man, whose talents (by this means given to the public) are to the public intrinsically worth more than what the whole expense of the institution could be supported for; the man I mean is our Chief Baron. The manner in which I would apply this money is, to each of the thirty Sizers I would give 5 guineas



guineas per annum, and to every Sizer on his getting a premium or certificate at the examinations I would also give 5 guineas; that would allow 150 guineas a year amongst all the Sizers, and at the most 120 per annum amongst the best answerers at the examinations; the remaining 30 guineas might be given in premiums to the best English compositions for Sizers only. The advantage that would be derived from this sum, so applied, is evident. All the Sizers would be much more comfortably circumstanced than they are at present; and those of superior genius and industry might live upon the honorable rewards of their merit, without having their attention taken from their studies, or being obliged to make a livelihood by other means. I think also the number of 30 too few, and that they should be increased to 50. A great number of men of learning

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are



are always wanted for the schools and for curacies. But I think this institution would be much more perfect, if whenever a Sizer passed through the College with uncommon credit (of which more than one or two instances could not be supposed to occur in a year) such men should be assisted at the expense of the nation to whatever profession the natural bent of their genius inclined; (for instance, those who were disposed for the bar might be specially exempted from the usual fees and impositions upon their admission. They might be admitted after a certain course of study in Ireland, and not be obliged, at an expense that would to them be ruinous, to eat a certain number of dinners at a certain place in London, nor to pay a large sum in Ireland for the purchase of chambers which are never to be given to the purchasers. Every obstacle that now presents itself should



should be removed out of the way of those talents which the nation has taken under its protection—those who chose the church might be particularly recommended to a curacy, at least—those who were inclined to study physic, might have all the advantages which this country can afford to medical students, without expence, and have some small sum given towards their support during the time of their studies. Those men would enter into their respective professions with a character that would very much assist their progress.

These are all the observations I have to offer on classical education; and I think this plan, which is extremely simple, would be sufficient to draw from obscurity every genius which was not formed for obscurity; and to place it in such a situation as would be most  
to



to the advantage and credit both of its possessor and of the country. The steps would be but few, and a true genius could not miss them. From the nursery schools, to the county classical, from the county classical schools to the university, from the university to the profession of their own choosing—and, through that, to whatever degree of rank, wealth and honour their merits or their good fortune might raise them, I now return to the other schools which are not in the classical line of education, but which would be of perhaps equal utility. These are, 1st,

#### A SCHOOL OF ARTS.

The situation most proper for this school would be Dublin; both because it contains the best masters for every art,  
and



and the Dublin Society's Model-room; and also because it contains the greatest number of gentlemen of science and taste to visit and attend to this school. Here a limited number of boys (suppose 100) should be lodged, dieted and instructed in whatever branch of the arts they shewed the greatest taste for. They should be instructed here for a limited time, and the vacancies filled up by those candidates who discovered the greatest ingenuity and turn for the mechanic arts. This should be determined by a committee of gentlemen of science appointed to visit and inspect this school; for if, in one single instance, merit should be obliged to give way to interest and favour, the whole scheme of national education would be destroyed, and no longer serve to discover and cultivate those talents which are the most worthy of



of cultivation. At the expiration of the term of education in this school, the boys should be put out according to the genius they have discovered; those who shewed the greatest genius might be put to the finest arts; those who discovered less, to the common mechanic trades; and they would not make the worse carpenters or smiths for having learnt the principles of mechanics. 2dly,

### A SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

Should be established; and the best situation for it would be near the great Botanic garden which the Dublin Society intends to establish; here a knowledge of botany and experimental farming might be learnt together. The idea of this school I do not pretend to take credit for; as I have taken it from Dr. Dickson's Essay on Education; a book which  
is



is worth something more than *honourable mention* at the Royal Irish Academy; and which I think ought to be read by every one who is anxious to know how the situation of the people may be improved by the means of education.

I have now gone through all the schools which appear to me absolutely necessary; and I believe it will be allowed, that (whatever may be defective) there is nothing superfluous in this plan; the mass of the children of the poor would be taught reading, writing, and the common rules of arithmetic; and those who are selected from the mass, on account of superior talents, would all of them be put into a better situation of life than their birth and the circumstances of their parents would have placed them in; those who possessed great talents would rise to greater distinction; and might be the support, as well



well as the pride of the old age of their parents; this consideration must attach the peasantry of Ireland very much to such a system of education; and an attachment to the institutions of our country is almost the same thing as an attachment to the country.

The only part of education which now remains, is the military part; and it appears to me that unless a martial spirit should be infused into the minds of the rising generation, unless they are made a nation of soldiers, they must cease to be a nation at all. With this view, I think, that at all the schools, bathing and every exercise or means which would encrease the strength and activity of the boys should be attended to; and that all the boys should learn the use of arms, and to perform the simple military evolutions. If it should be supposed that it would be impossible to govern a well-educated  
and



and a martial people, and that a good education must necessarily make the people Republicans and Jacobins; as an answer to such a supposition, let the present state of Switzerland be considered. The Swiss, above all other nations, are a well-educated and martial people; their government is certainly not what is now called Democratic; and their territory immediately joins that of the French Republic. Notwithstanding all those circumstances there is not a nation in Europe more quietly or better governed, or perhaps farther distant from a Revolution.

The fact is, that it is because the Swiss are a well-educated and a martial people the country is prosperous, and the government is able to act with greater dignity than any government on earth

earth could do in the same circumstances.

This small state, surrounded by all the belligerent powers, has most nobly preserved its neutrality, during the various changes of the present war; and would never suffer its territory to be violated, or its councils to be dictated to by any power. Secure in the patriotism and military virtues of her people, Switzerland fears no attack. She hears without dismay the blast of war on every side. She sees the surrounding nations destroying each other; but in the very height of their fury they are all obliged to respect her well-educated and martial people. How weak and how contemptible does the conduct of all the other governments of Europe appear in comparison to that of Switzerland, even of those who in the language of desperation, not of true spirit, declare,

“ They



“ They have set their lives upon a cast,

“ And they will stand the hazard of the dye.

RICHARD III.

Switzerland has no such desperate game to play. And it would be worth considering whether, what constitutes in that country the happiness and prosperity of the people, and also the strength and dignity of the government, would not be worth practising in Ireland; which is by nature infinitely superior to Switzerland. This is certain, that if the Irish people were like the Swiss, no nation on earth could ever think of invading our country; and the only reason why we are not so is, because in Switzerland the education of the people and their interests have been always attended to by their government. It is not from Switzerland alone, but from the experience of all countries and times, that it may  
safely



safely be said, that a martial people  
 or a great army is full as easily govern-  
 ed as an unwarlike nation or a rabble.  
 This is the cause which has so long  
 preserved the wretched system of the  
 Ottoman government; that of all the  
 false principles, errors and follies which  
 it is possible for a government to adopt,  
 the only one which it has not fallen  
 into, is that of suspecting the people,  
 and not venturing to give them arms;  
 the avoiding this one folly is the only  
 support of their government; had they  
 fallen into this, their empire could not  
 have stood three months against the  
 force of either Russia or Austria.

As to the idea of defending Ireland by  
 regular, militia, and fencible regiments,  
 I must own I have not the least faith  
 in it. As our armies are now consti-  
 tuted, the lower orders hate them, and  
 ever will hate them. I will engage to  
 prove, if the House of Commons  
 thought



thought it worth their while to establish a committee of inquiry for the purpose, that part of this army on which we must rely for our defence, conduct themselves more like Russian Cossacks or Tartars than like Irish soldiers in a peaceable country ; and that they are more dreaded and detested by the peaceable inhabitants than any foreign enemy could be. But if this was not the case, and they behaved themselves ever so well, how are our armies to be encreased ? By crimping and kidnapping ! For every one foldier which a recruiting officer procures by those means, government gets at least twenty enemies among the lower orders. When a poor wretch is torn from his bed, and from his family, handcuffed and hurried on board a tender (in defiance of the positive law of the land ; in open and barbarous violation of personal liberty and security, and of every thing which



which is dear to man, and ought to be respected by government) the curses of his disconsolate and perhaps *starving* family are raised to heaven against that government under which such oppression and villainy are too often practised with impunity—and this is not all, if a foreign enemy should land, who possessed humanity as well as force, what part is it to be expected that the children, the brothers, the near relations, and the friends of the *murdered* man would take? Let every one consult his own feelings, and they will tell him.

If such practices are encouraged or tolerated; if they are not punished with the utmost severity, (whatever may be the rank of the offender) I do believe, (so help me, God, as I state my real belief) that government will, when it is too late, discover that their security



rity is not exactly in proportion to the number of red coats which they distribute. They will remember how once, in a time of danger, Ireland smiled secure under the protection of her brave *Volunteer* army; they will remember, when repentance comes too late, that noble spirit which once existed in this country; which has lately been crushed; and which ought to be revived, if it is the will of God that Ireland should still continue to be reckoned amongst the nations of the earth.

I have now finished the sketch of such plan of national education as I have been able to conceive, and I submit it to the public judgment as a plan not complicated, very practicable, and at the same time likely to accomplish those objects which have been always found to result from educating a people; that their individual happiness as



well as their national character, prosperity, and strength is thereby much promoted and improved. As to the other means of attaching the people, and those services which ought to be rendered them, I have already mentioned them in the beginning of those observations; I shall only now repeat, that the industry of those who are able to work, ought to be encouraged and assisted; and that the miseries of those who from old age or sickness cannot work, ought to be relieved, and their lives supported by a national provision. They should not be left relying on the precarious and pitiful support that can be derived from private charity.

This is no new or extravagant idea of my own. The principle (that those members of society who cannot labour for their own subsistence, or cannot get work, should be supported at the expense



expense of the nation) is adopted in England—there are indeed many defects in the English system of poor laws. The principal defect is that which is mentioned by Blackstone; that more attention is paid to support those who do not labour, than to encourage and assist those who are willing to labour; the poor rates are also much higher than they need or than they ought to be; but these, and all other defects that there are, in a most excellent institution, might be easily discovered and removed, if men of talents and humanity as well as influence would turn their attention to the subject. However, the poor of England feel in those laws, the *protecting hand* of the government of their country. Where are the poor of this country to turn for *protection*? They must trust in that God “ whose ears are ever open to the cries of the miserable, and those who



have no helper," that the time will come when men may be found, who will not be ashamed to rise in the Senate, and plead the *unfashionable* and *odious* cause of *the poor of the people of Ireland*.

The only thing that now remains is, to calculate the expense of such a plan; and also to point out means for defraying it. The expense of educating the people of Ireland would be about 100,000*l.* a year. But to what should be spent in encouraging and assisting industry, and relieving want, no limit can be fixed; but as much as the revenues of the country could possibly afford should be applied to those purposes. I think, at present, five or six hundred thousand pounds annually might be applied to those purpose; in time to come, considerably more; without laying on a single tax, which would  
be



be at all injurious to the country; but on the contrary, by means which would much promote its advantage.

The way I calculate the expence of educating the people on the plan proposed is this; suppose the school of arts should cost 2000l. a year; the school of agriculture 1500l. the improvement of the institution of Sizer-ships 300 guineas a year—the only expence that remains is the interest of the money at first laid out in establishing those schools, which could not be more than 4000l. a year; and the annual expence of the primary or nursery schools. As to the number of those schools, if we suppose Ireland to contain (as the Geographers assert) 18,000 square miles of land, exclusive of the loughs and harbours, the number would be exactly 2000 (the schools being at the distance of three miles from each other)



other) if the figure of Ireland had been regular, and that calculation exact. At 45l. yearly for each, this would amount to 90,000l. and bring the whole expence of educating the people under 100,000l. per annum. That 45l. per annum would be a sufficient allowance for each nursery school, will be admitted by any one who considers what a number of people (who could teach children to read and write, and with the help of an arithmetick book to cypher,) could be found, who would think a cabin rent free, and a salary of 35l. per annum was a good establishment; and worth qualifying themselves for.

The means by which I would provide for the expence of educating the people are, 1st, by

#### A TAX ON ABSENTEES.

A tax of 4s. in the pound (which is no more than the land tax of England) laid



laid on the estates of absentees, would of itself nearly, if not altogether, produce as much as would pay the expense of educating the whole people.

It is highly unjust and unreasonable that their properties should not be taxed; it is unjust that those who live in the country, and are of service to it, should be obliged at their expense to pay for the protection of the property of those who do not choose to live in it, but do as much injury to it as they possibly can. I believe no argument can be adduced to shew why the absentees should form a *privileged class* of Irishmen; themselves exempt from taxation; and yet their properties as well protected as if they paid their share; (at the separate and sole expense of those who reside in the country and are of use to it.)

In



In addition to the produce of this tax, the money now given to diocesan schools might for the future be added to this fund—and there might be also a private subscription in aid of the measure, which would be attended with this additional advantage, that it would interest the subscribers in observing how their money was laid out.

The expense of educating all the people of Ireland would be amply provided for by those means. It now remains to consider what other sums might be applied in improving the situation of the poor, and attaching them to their country, by giving them an interest in it. The first grand resource which I shall mention is,

*The saving that would accrue to the nation, if, instead of the expensive system of corruption, honesty and the public good*  
was



*was made the principle of government.*

Not to speak of the wickedness of the system of corruption, I calculate the expense of it at 300,000l. annually laid out in corrupting the morals of the nation and its representatives; and in breaking down that spirit of patriotism which is so natural to man, and which would be the surest defence of the country in the hour of danger. I do not wish to exaggerate the misfortunes of my country; I had rather that my statement was considerably under, than any thing over, the truth. I have calculated on the best grounds I could meet; and if I am wrong, let the *Ministers of Corruption* shew me, or rather the nation, what I have mistated; until they do, I can only calculate upon probable grounds; but such as I submit to the public are fair grounds. It  
appears



appears to me that what may be called the *ordinary* expenses of corruption are at least 200,000l. annually; and the *extraordinary* may be reckoned at 100,000l. more. Under the head of the ordinary expenses of corruption I class the exorbitant salaries which are annexed to places, (the business of which is done by deputy for a mere trifle) in order *to oblige peers, members of the House of Commons, and their friends*; I also rank those pensions which are bestowed without merit; and the value of those places which are *sold for the private advantage of those in power*. What I call extraordinary, is what is expended at elections, and in *bribery* of all sorts. As to the ordinary expenses, the calculation will not be considered too high, if the value of the parliamentary places is first considered; next, that of those places which, though not considered parliamentary,



mentary, are only to be got by parliamentary connections; and thirdly, of those places of trust and emolument which are notoriously *sold* (not for the advantage of the nation, but for the private advantage of those in power.) When all these things are considered, who can doubt but that the nation is plundered, and its resources and prosperity drained off to supply the pestilential sink of corruption? O! but this is a false statement, some will say; although, to be sure, there is a little patronage and jobbing, and all that, going forward; things are not so bad as here represented; they are transacted with some kind of *delicacy* and *honour*; and to prove this they may produce every newspaper in which "From two hundred to two thousand pounds are offered to any *lady* or *gentleman* who has *influence* to procure for the advertiser a civil employment



ployment of *adequate* value;" and we may always see in the *Postscript*, that the strictest *delicacy*, *honour* and *secrecy*, are to be observed in the transaction.

Now, although I must admit that the word *Honour* is always to be found in these postscripts, and also that I have heard of such a thing as "Honour among Thieves;" yet it does appear to me, that those advertisements (now grown as common as advertisements for Bank Loan, or Canal Stock, or any other marketable commodity) must prove to the satisfaction, or rather to the dissatisfaction of every reasonable man, that such practices as I have stated do exist.

There is another ground on which I think I may fairly calculate the ordinary expenses of corruption.

Perhaps



Perhaps it is not known to some of our present ministers, *innocent* and *spotless* men, who are themselves so far above the reach of corruption, that some of them do not even appear to understand the word when it is mentioned in the House of Commons, but seem as much puzzled at it as the Houynhims were at a *lye*, to know what could be the meaning or the use of it? Perhaps to those virtuous men it is not known, that in former parliaments seats have been actually bought and sold; and that from two or three thousand pounds each was reckoned the *market price*. Now the nation is grown of late so exceedingly *wicked*, that if we could suppose such a horrid thing as that there should be a dissolution of parliament to-morrow, and that the seats in the next parliament should be offered for sale to the highest bidders,



bidders, there can be no doubt at all but they would bring near 3000l. each; that is, 300 seats for one parliament would bring the enormous price of 900,000. Now the mass of the people are so *uncharitable*, that they cannot be brought to believe that those civil employments which have *nominally* no profit annexed to them would be purchased at that immense price, unless there were to be places, pensions, patronage, contracts, jobs and other political bonus's created at the expense of the nation, sufficient to reimburse the *speculators*. If the mass of the people are right in forming such judgment, I am sure that less than the value of 200,000l. a year would not give the purchasers of seats a common *Smithfield bargain* for the money they laid out. This too, takes in but *part* of the system, and allows nothing for *conscience, character or attendance*.

I now



I now come to the extraordinary expenses of corruption ; under which head I have classed those sums which it must be supposed are spent *at elections*, secret services, and in bare-faced *bribery*. The exact amount of those sums it is impossible for me to calculate ; but I do suppose that the guess I have made is considerably under the real truth. In order to prove the gigantic scale on which bribery has been conducted when ministers were in great danger of losing their places, I shall recall to the reader's recollection what passed at the time of the disputed question of the regency. Does any one forget, that at that time our House of Commons was plainly told by *a minister* (though not in those very words) that government had before, in similar circumstances, expended *half a million* to corrupt *one party*, and that they might be then obliged to spend  
half



half a million more to corrupt *another party*. This declaration, made by a minister in the House of Commons, must be admitted as positive proof, as far as it goes: If so much was confessed, the amount of what has not yet been confessed must be very considerable.

It has also been confidently said, and generally believed, that a table has been kept at the national expense for a certain description of men called *castle-backs*, whose names it was judged prudent not to bring forward on the pension list: and that after dinner each man has received his daily *bribe* as the reward of his daily *prostitution*.

These kinds of transactions being all secret, it is impossible for me to state the amount of the sum so misapplied. But I conceive I have shewn fair probable



able grounds to suppose, that the standing expense of the system of corruption cannot be less than 300,000l. per ann. And this sum, vast as it is, can only be considered as the *appropriated* expenses of the system, for considerably more has been lost to the nation by *waste* and by *connivance*; for even the system of *corruption* has been managed with needless *prodigality*. For instance, if it should be judged necessary to corrupt every city and corporate town in Ireland, and as a means of accomplishing this purpose ministers chose to establish every where a *board of police*, would it not be sufficient to allow large salaries to the commissioners, without suffering them to plunder the nation in every possible shape afterwards? The same question, I believe, may be asked as to every department of the state; for it must be supposed that the same causes produce



the same effects throughout. It is the infernal wickedness of the system itself which obliges great men to *wink* at each others private *peculations* and *plunder*, until at length *impunity* begets *effrontery*, and this produces a *horrid emulation* amongst those in power and trust, *Who shall defraud the country most?*—But the advocates of corruption will say, that it is now grown a part of *our constitution*, which would be endangered if corruption was removed. I deny that *corruption* is any part of our *constitution*. As the ivy entwines itself about the oak, at the same time exhausting its vital sap, and concealing its venerable form, so has corruption entwined itself about our constitution, and so concealed it from our view, that when we look for *our constitution* we see nothing but *corruption*.

Whoever



Whoever sincerely wishes that our constitution should flourish, must also wish that the system of corruption should fall. It is "a bad tree and never can bring forth good fruit;" in the name of God, then, "let it be hewn down, and cast into the fire."

As a further means for raising money for this object, I think 150,000l. a year might be raised by a moderate cess in the nature of

#### POOR RATES.

In England those rates are excessively high; but I think a moderate cess for this purpose could not be complained of by any one (if the money so levied was fairly and judiciously laid out for the purpose it was demanded); the tax I have mentioned would be mode-

rate, and would be hardly, if at all, felt; for if the public fund sufficiently provided for the poor, the necessity of private charities would be in a great measure taken away; and every man of property might save at least as much in that respect as would pay his proportion of the cefs.

This sum, added to the probable saving from giving up the system of corruption, would amount to about half a million annually; which might be applied in improving the condition of the poor, and attaching them to their country. If a government was seriously to undertake that task, and begin with that fund, the effects it would produce would be of the utmost importance; they would find that in the same proportion as the poverty of the people was diminished, the prosperity of  
of



of the country, and consequently its revenues, and still farther means of providing for the happiness of the people, would be encreased. If they were constantly to pursue that object, there can be little doubt but that Ireland would in the course of ten or twenty years be as happy a country as any in the world; perfectly capable of defending herself from any enemy; and perhaps able to support and save the *falling* empire of Great Britain. I think I could also point out other taxes to the amount of 200,000l. annually for this purpose; which, instead of being a burthen to the nation, would be a positive advantage; but as long as the revenues of the nation are applied to the support of war and corruption, whoever should point out a new tax, might perhaps be contributing to the *miseries* and to the *murder* of his fellow creatures and countrymen.

I have

I have now finished the task I proposed to perform; I have endeavoured to shew the necessity of attaching the lower orders to the country and to its government, from the danger that is confessed to proceed from their want of attachment. I have also pointed out such means as occurred to me for cultivating and procuring that attachment, and given a sketch of a plan of national education (which, although almost *any plan* is better than *no plan*, I do not, however, recommend as a perfect one.) My wish is principally to turn the attention of the public to those subjects which every one will allow are of the utmost importance, and which have hitherto been most shamefully neglected in this country. So far am I from the vanity of expecting, or even wishing that my ideas (particularly on education) should be altogether adopted, that

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I do not think there is an individual in the nation, whose abilities (however great) can entitle him to prescribe to the Irish nation on a subject of such importance, as how the rising generation, and generations yet unborn, are to be educated and instructed. I think a plan of such magnitude could only be made perfect by the united labour of all the talents in the nation, and I think the subject is of such importance as to call for such a union of talents and exertion. I do therefore, with great deference, *propose* it to such of the nobility, gentry, and enlightened citizens of Ireland, as feel the necessity of educating and instructing the people and improving their situation, and who wish to contribute their exertions to the accomplishment of those great national objects, to associate without delay for that purpose.—The principal association should be in Dublin

lin—and I think there should be also associations in every city and town of Ireland which contains men of information, patriotism and philanthropy.—These associations would naturally attract every well-informed man in the community who felt an interest in the success of the measure, and consequently every man who would be capable of assisting to form a good plan for the purpose.

At the meetings of those associations every member might read what he had to offer upon the subject ; and different men might take up different parts of the great plan. The proceedings of these societies should be regularly printed for the use of the members, so that every plan or idea which was offered might be fully and deliberately discussed at subsequent meetings. If such associations should



should be speedily formed, I have no doubt but in the course of a year a plan of national education and instruction, and also for the improvement of the condition of the poor, could be formed, as perfect as the united talents of the nation could make it, and of such a nature as would meet the approbation of all classes and religions of the people of Ireland. If that could be accomplished, such a plan might be presented to parliament in the next session, supported by petitions from all quarters; and could hardly fail of success. As this appears to me the best means of obtaining those objects which every friend to Ireland must desire, I have conceived it a duty to deliver my sentiments to the public. As for myself, if there is one single idea in this book that shall be considered worth adopting, or if it shall at all serve to direct the public attention to the sub-

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ject, by calling on men better qualified than myself, to write on it, I shall be perfectly satisfied for the trouble I have taken ; if I should not be so fortunate, I shall at least be comforted with the consciousness of having, though ineffectually, endeavoured to serve my country.

F I N I S.



