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IRELAND,  
ITS PRESENT CONDITION  
AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.

IN A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE  
SIR ROBERT PEEL, BARONET.

BY

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TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

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DUBLIN, JANUARY 15, 1847.

SIR,

Ireland has been to you a subject of deep solicitude, from your earliest entry upon public life, and you are not the only public man that it has perplexed. On the contrary, it has been a source of painful anxiety, if not embarrassment, to each succeeding administration. More than thirty years have now elapsed since you became intimately acquainted with its condition. It is at the present moment in a state of the greatest destitution, and requires attention more than it ever did—a large portion of its entire population being either dependant on forced and unnatural employment or gratuitous relief, to avert starvation. The extent of that relief cannot be calculated; as yet, the amount of it for instant wants is uncertain—its duration, as to time, greatly more so.

It is not to the wants of the moment that your attention



is craved; these must be faced instantly, as they best can be met. It is to the future that you are requested to turn your powerful and practical mind. Time does not admit of deliberation for the existing distress, otherwise than to relieve it. There is still time for consideration as to after years, over several of which, under the most favourable circumstances, that distress will extend its influence.

It would be a waste of time to stop to inquire into the causes which have made the loss of the potato crop of 1846 press with so much greater severity upon Ireland than it does upon England, and, excepting some portions of the Highlands and Islands, upon Scotland. The staff of life is equally high-priced in those parts of Great Britain. Distress prevails there from pinching want, wherever there is a large population; but that distress is manageable, and is met by the society in which it exists. Each locality can usually form its own government and take upon itself its own wants. Not so in Ireland. It is impossible. The means are wanting to such an end. The structure of society is different. There is, indeed, no want of benevolent and kindly feelings among the higher and middling classes of each community in Ireland to aid and assist, and that largely; but the instant you descend below those classes, the remainder of the population is wholly involved in the distress. The many are of every society the strong bond; but in Ireland, on occasions of scarcity, instead of being, in their respective positions, the means in general of affording relief, or at least of supporting themselves, they are all, or nearly all, from necessity the recipients of relief. Such is the fact as regards Ireland.

Some diseases of the human frame demand inquiry in order to ascertain their origin and progress, before a remedy can be safely applied; other diseases are familiar or apparent, and their treatment a matter of ordinary



practice—the virulence or mildness of the complaint, and the condition of the patient, constituting the only difference in the application of relief. The same may be said of communities. It is apprehended that the disorder of Ireland is of the last mentioned class; that the disease is apparent, and the remedy evident, although difficult of application, from the magnitude and importance of the subject. The disease is not, perhaps, over-population, but a great excess of the number of those who depend upon their labour for support. The remedy is emigration. It has already been begun; its progress, to be safe and certain, must be gradual, and while kindly, it must at the same time be vigorously persevered in, to ensure a successful result. The time, however afflicting to every humane mind, is otherwise most favourable for carrying on the cure.

Man is valuable or otherwise, according to his productive industry; no matter what position he is placed in, whether exalted or humble, his importance and value in social life depend in a great measure, if not entirely, on the quantity of good he can perform for his fellow-creatures and himself. If the marketable value of the labour of one class, by reason of excess of their numbers, falls so low as to prevent their permanently earning, by honest industry, a maintenance for themselves and their families, they are continually becoming a burden to others.

If the numbers in any community, liable to such a contingency, are so numerous as to overwhelm the remainder of that community, it must follow that man is then, with reference to the actual condition of the country, in too great numbers.

The disease of Ireland is, that its population has, from time immemorial, I believe, been greatly, in numbers, in advance of the improvements of the country, and consequently of the means of employing that population. That



which should be the source of its strength and wealth, if engaged in productive industry, has been, and continues to be, the cause of its poverty and helplessness.

It is not meant to be contended that Ireland is not capable of maintaining the population now on its surface, if that surface were improved to the extent to which Nature made it capable of improvement. But it is meant to be contended that the number of human beings now on the surface of Ireland (the fact is a melancholy one) is the greatest drawback to its improvement, and consequently to their own welfare and prosperity.

It is not necessary to state to you in what manner the population of Ireland are employed. The inhabitants of three of the four provinces, and not a small portion of the fourth, may be said to be dependant, in one way or another, entirely on the cultivation of the soil.

It would be only a waste of time to stop here to point out that large portions of Ireland are subdivided into small farms or holdings of land, of from 2 to 20 acres. The fact is notorious, whether from parliamentary reports, or personal knowledge of every man who has had occasion to become acquainted with Ireland. Each of these spots bears the burden of a family, of a father, a mother, sons and daughters, and not unfrequently of grandfather and grandmother, their sole dependance being the produce of these small portions of land, and occasional, but uncertain and ill-paid, employment as labourers at home, or periodical migratory labour in England or Scotland. If, in our insular and variable climate, it is the will of Providence to bless the country with a full crop of corn and potatoes, as in the years 1843 and 1844, the country is quiet, peaceable, and contented. The wants of such a population are few, and too easily satisfied. See them in such a year in numbers at their places of worship, or at markets, and they are well clothed,



healthy, contented, and cheerful. If, on the other hand, as in 1839, 40, and 41, or what is nearer to the point, in 1846, when it was, and has been the Divine will to blight any portion of the crop, extreme privations are to be borne, and in the present year the great majority of the people are in a state of entire destitution. You see at this moment, and will see as the season advances, that, notwithstanding the enormous sums that have been expended in affording relief, the population are prostrated—their little clothing and furniture pledged and pawned, everything that can be converted turned into what will purchase a starving existence, with squalidness and misery in every quarter. The amount of the affliction is overwhelming in three provinces of Ireland, and in a great part of a fourth; to grapple with it is as greatly beyond the reach of private benevolence as it is beyond the power of public Boards with the best intentions, and all the industry that can be used.

It can easily be imagined that in a mountainous and barren district, where Nature never intended man to be thickly planted, in such a year distress would prevail—such a local affection would not surprise, and would be manageable. But this is not the case under consideration. The country over which this affliction is spread is fertile, capable, as a whole, of producing annually three times the quantity of the fruits of the earth from its surface that it now produces—capable of supporting a population as numerous as at present, under all vicissitudes of years, without either the distress that now exists, or entailing on posterity the burdens which must be created to relieve that distress, however insufficiently relieved it will be, even by those burdens, and by an extent of private benevolence perhaps unprecedented.

The cause of this anomaly is—man being, with reference to the present condition of Ireland, in vastly too great num-



bers. Each occupier of 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 15 or 20 acres is his own master, his family must struggle up with him, and all must be supported from the same means, and are trained to the same occupations. Their time is not, as it ought to be, money, in all the callings of life—because they cannot employ it profitably for themselves or others. There are too many masters, and too few servants. That community of interest and feeling, that elsewhere binds society together in the present age, by making each class feel that its own interest and happiness depend on the general prosperity of the whole, and which enables the master to support the servant in periods of privation, and prompts him for his own sake to do so, may be said to be little known, or to exist in a limited degree only in Ireland. Each occupier of a small portion of land is his own master, and when distress arises, he is unable to support himself and his family, and the country becomes for the time a melancholy and afflicting scene of pauperism beyond the reach of local relief.\*

The truth is, that human labour, as a marketable commodity, is, from the overabundance of the population, greatly below its value in Ireland. It cannot be bought up by speculators like articles of merchandize for a profit, and laid up or brought to market as a demand arises. No, the

\* The Writer of these pages considers that the right of the able-bodied, but unemployed and destitute and their families to Out-door relief, while so unemployed and destitute, is just, and cannot be resisted. At the same time neither can it be excluded from notice in the consideration of this subject that circumstanced as Ireland has been for years with a superabundant population, that in many rural districts of it, such relief would be equivalent to an absorption of the whole property of these districts. However just therefore in principle, and however indispensable in its progress as a corrective hereafter, against superabundant population, such relief would be—it would in its application to Ireland fail of doing good, unless accompanied with the means of relieving the country of its great present excess of population.



physical and moral wants of man must be attended to, whether his labour can be made productive or not, and, as his superiority, in comparison with every other thing in creation, is vast, so are the difficulties of improving his condition increased.

A remedy must be found—that remedy is to remove a portion, and a large one, of the present population of Ireland from the scene of its present distress, and fearful and unexampled suffering. If there be truth in these observations, there is no other effectual remedy. Other expedients may be applied, but, while they may do good, that good will be only temporary and partial, and fail as a permanent remedy. Sacred and profane history alike show from the earliest ages, that when man became too numerous in one part of the world, nature taught him to relieve himself by going to another.\*

It cannot be supposed that the merciful and divine Creator of all things intended that vast regions of the earth should be untrodden by the foot of man, while other, (as regards surface) small portions of the globe should be so densely peopled as to inflict the greatest of all worldly evils—starvation, on his creatures.

It will be said that great difficulties stand in the way of extended emigration. No doubt great difficulties are to be expected, must be met, and manfully overcome. If we wait until Ireland can be regenerated without great difficulties, when will that epoch arrive? Can any difficulties that are to be met and overcome, be greater than the difficulties that have been, and which must continue to be met,

\* The command of the Creator to the whole human race was, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." It is not possible to separate the two parts of this command without entailing misery on the species. The increase of population and emigration have either been united from the earliest ages of the world, or great sufferings have been inflicted by the separation of them.



and which must be attempted to be overcome in the years 1846 and 1847? If matters remain as they are, what are the difficulties to be encountered in 1847, 1848, and 1849, even under any probable circumstances; over all of which years the present distress, and the cause of it, will exercise a most serious influence! If no effectual relief be afforded in the mean time, the probable evils of those years are fearful to be contemplated.

But the difficulties that stand in the way of a large and comprehensive system of emigration will be different in 1847, from what they would have been in 1844-5. Love of fatherland, and separation from friends, will no longer be obstacles in many parts of Ireland. The sufferings of the present year will live long in the memory, and will have done much to efface those not to be undervalued, but still often imaginary feelings. It is believed at the present moment, if such a thing were possible, and a pathway could be laid across the Atlantic, it would be crowded with thousands from Ireland, engaged in the hopeless task of traversing it, rather than remain amidst the destitution that afflicts and surrounds them here.

As an evidence of this desire for emigration, it may be stated, that it is consistent with the writer's information, that at this unusual season for emigration, the people have been, and are leaving this country for Canada and the United States. In other years the usual time for emigration is not until March and April.

Let it not be said that emigration will depopulate the country. It will not do so permanently; but it will remove to scenes of industrial exertion, and comparative comfort and happiness, masses of our fellow-creatures, who can neither benefit themselves or others in Ireland—who may deteriorate, but cannot improve their social condition here.



Such extended and comprehensive emigration, to be successful, must be voluntary on the part of the emigrants. There must be no ejection—no harshness—no compulsion. The arrangements for it will require attentive consideration, both as regards the removal of the emigrant from this country, and his location in America. It must be gradual, and spread over years; but it must be vigorously, while humanely, persevered in.

There can be no doubt, that if it be possible to resuscitate the Potato, and if it were desirable to continue it as so large a portion of the food of man in Ireland, as it has been heretofore, it will be some years before a full crop can again be raised in this country. Fears of another failure will operate largely to prevent its being planted; and, independent of this, seed cannot be obtained in sufficient quantities for the purpose at any price. And lastly, no small numbers of the population, pinched under the severe affliction of the present year, will leave Ireland as soon as they can. Even if we could insure from each seed of potato planted, the fullest crop that could be obtained, it would not be before 1849—it may be 1850—until such a crop as 1844 produced can be expected. Substitutes cannot be found to supply the place of the potato at once, and can only be brought from other countries. Here, then, are three, it may be four years, during which the coarser bread-stuffs must continue, at any cost, to be brought to Ireland in larger or smaller quantities for food, and the means of such carriage will afford the continued means of facilitating emigration, and, moreover, the means of increased employment and demand for emigrants in the Canadas and the United States. Such importations of food can only be continued at an enormous expense to the country, and will create burdens which it will be difficult to bear, and which, in not a few instances, will lead to



irretrievable ruin. Let the opportunity, therefore, which it affords of relieving the country, at comparatively little cost, of its superabundant population, be at once and vigorously embraced.

As has already been shewn, it cannot be doubted that, under the most favourable expectation of the crop of 1847, there will be a short, very short supply of coarse food during that and the year 1848, produced in Ireland. Every human being who shall leave Ireland for the United States or Canada, in 1847, will be relieved not only from the suffering that will assuredly exist here in 1847 and 1848, and it may be 1849, but will also be a relief to those who remain, whether of his own class, or the classes above or below him. The people are sensible of this; and if the writer of these pages can trust to his information—and it is believed to be accurate—the amount of emigration will only be limited by the means of transit, or by the means of defraying the expense of transit.

On these two points—the means of transit, and the expense of transit—let one word be said. As has been already stated, the very wants of the country for food will, in a great measure supply the first, for the present and two following years. The expense of transit will, in many instances, be borne by the intended emigrants, who are now, it is believed, leaving their farms untilled, and silently making their preparations for departure. Unquestionably, however, a large proportion of those desirous of emigrating have not the means wherewith to defray the expense of transit, small as that will be. But let it be asked what is the amount of humane, judicious, and well-ordered emigration which might have been accomplished by the sums of money which will have been expended in feeding the suffering population of Ireland during the years 1845-6-7? and how little permanent good will have been effected by



that expenditure, beyond the indispensable duty of saving our fellow-creatures from starvation? Having discharged this imperative duty, are we to stop short and not go farther to avoid a similar calamity, against the recurrence of the causes of which no earthly power can insure us? Every proprietor of the soil in Ireland, is deeply interested in going farther. Every other class who can afford to be taxed in Ireland, or in England or Scotland, for such a purpose, is deeply interested in going farther.\* If there be humanity and soundness in these views, and a rational and reasonable prospect of raising in the scale of happiness and comfort so very great a number of our fellow-creatures, all are bound to go farther. Let the cost, therefore be judiciously and carefully expended, but let it be considered as a drop in the bucket, as compared with the object. The comfort, and protection, and safety of the emigrants are matters of far higher importance than the mere cost; and will demand the most careful consideration of the Executive.

Let it not be thought that the privations which will meet the emigrant on his arrival at his new home will be unendurable. Care must be taken to guard, as far as possible, against such a contingency in the outset. Afterwards it cannot be doubted that the vastly increased demand for food from the British possessions in North America, and the United States, will afford the future

\* Since these pages were written, the great influx of people from Ireland into Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, &c., shows the extent to which the condition of the labourers in England and Scotland may be affected injuriously by such a continuous flood of "Home Emigration," independently of the inevitable expense imposed upon those places by the necessity of providing food for so great a number of human beings at the present moment, and further shews how deeply interested each of those parts of the United Kingdom is in the subject of these observations.



emigrants a ready market for their labour, or for their capital, as the case may be, as soon as they arrive, and this demand will not be bounded by one, or two, or three years, but will extend over several years, and probably until the value of labour is raised in Ireland to its proper level, when emigration will of its own accord cease.

You have been accustomed to grapple with and master figures, whether as representing the produce of former tariffs, or in constructing new ones, or in showing the income and expenditure of the greatest nation on the earth. Those now about to be presented to you, as an appendix\* to this communication are small, very small, in their separate amounts, and not by any means in the aggregate of the magnitude of the sums you have been accustomed to deal with; but they are large separately, and heaving large in the aggregate, in all that is connected with the higher and nobler parts of our nature—in all that relates to and evinces the feelings of the heart towards those who are of our kindred, no matter by what waters placed asunder or by what distance separated. They are large, powerfully large, in reading lessons of instruction to the

\* The Appendix, containing the list of Bills, is not published; it consisted of upwards of 170 pages of specifications of small bills of exchange, which could not interest the general reader. The Appendix was with these pages transmitted to the distinguished individual to whom they are addressed—merely to shew that the fact was as represented. Several weeks thereafter, there appeared in the city article of the Times newspaper, a paragraph from its New York correspondent, stating the amount of such bills drawn between January 1, 1846, and January 1, 1847, at £160,000. The period embraced in this statement is not one year, being only 349 days, and the writer from New York may have written about the second week in January. It is a satisfactory reflection to be able to state, that as information of the continued progress of the distress in Ireland reached America, the remittances from emigrants to their relations and friends in Ireland, have greatly increased.



statesman and philanthropist, in dealing with a warm-hearted people for their good, and placing them in a position of comparative comfort to that in which they now are. These figures represent the particulars of 7917 separate Bills of Exchange, varying in amount from £1 to £10 each—few exceeding the latter sum; so many separate offerings from the natives of Ireland who have heretofore emigrated from its shores, sent to their relations and friends in Ireland, drawn and paid between the 1st of January and the 15th of December, 1846—not quite one year; and amount in all to £41261 9s. 11d. But this list, long though it be, does not measure the number and amount of such interesting offerings. It contains only about one-third part of the whole number and value of such remittances that have crossed the Atlantic to Ireland during the 349 days of 1846. The data from which this list is compiled enable the writer to estimate with confidence the number and amount drawn otherwise; and he calculates that the entire number, for not quite one year, of such Bills, is 24000, and the amount £125,000, or, on an average, £5 4s. 2d. each. They are sent from husband to wife, from father to child, from child to father, mother, and grand-parents, from sister to brother, and the reverse; and from and to those united by all the ties of blood and friendship that bind us together on earth.

In the list you will observe that those offerings of affection are classed according to the parts of Ireland they are drawn upon, and you will find that they are not confined to one spot of it, but are general, as regards the whole country. This affords invaluable and convincing evidence that emigrants from Ireland do not go to a land of strangers, but to a country where there are kind friends to welcome them, and where they will live under the same laws they have been accustomed to here, and with the same religious



privileges, and only removed from an over-crowded country, where they are a burden to themselves and others.

These remittances have been annually increasing for the last ten years, until they have attained their present number and amount. The letters which accompany them from America in many instances contain strong invitations to the friends of the emigrants in Ireland to follow them, and state that, by good conduct and sober and industrious habits, they can, in Canada and the United States, in time insure prosperity, or, to use their own words, "success and good luck increase with" such habits. The remittances in many cases are sent for the express purpose of enabling the relations of the emigrants to follow them, and you will observe that such remittances are greatly more numerous in March, April, and May—the season at which emigration usually takes place.

It will no doubt be said that such tides of continued emigration as are herein contemplated will depopulate Ireland—raise the wages of labour—and operate injuriously on the consuming capacity of the country. I have already adverted to the first and last of these objections, which I am confident that experience will prove to be groundless. As to raising the price of labour, that result will I hope follow, and this I conceive to be one of the chief recommendations to be expected from emigration. If man, as is but too true, cannot now obtain by his labour a subsistence in Ireland, his condition can only be improved, and a similar state of things to the present for the future averted, by raising the wages of labour.

The contemplated emigration would be progressive in its character. It is to be hoped it would remove in the course of a few years an inert mass of unproductive population, who are often worse than unproductive where they are, not by their fault but from their misfortune, to scenes where



their energies and labour could be turned to profitable account. Take for example one portion of 100 acres occupied as large portions of Ireland are at present occupied. It will in many instances contain on its surface 8, 10 and 15 families—take 10 as about an average, and allow 5 the usual number of members to each family, which would give 50 men, women, and children, depending on the 100 acres. These 100 acres have been in cultivation from time immemorial, with no improvement. The occupiers have neither the skill nor the means to improve—their numbers keeping them in continual poverty, and the hopelessness of bettering their condition discourages them from making the exertions necessary to improve either themselves or the land. If these 100 acres of land were in the occupation of one or two tenants, such an extent of ground would be a fair stimulus to the exertions and energies of one or two families, and should occupy, including servants, not more than four or five families in its direct cultivation—in all consisting of 25 souls; and these would thrive, and the land would be properly improved. By degrees, therefore, there should be removed from these 100 acres, in a humane manner, one half of their present number of occupants, or 25 persons, probably 4 fathers, 4 mothers, and 17 children of various ages. Apply the principle to 1000 acres, to 10,000 acres, or to 100,000 acres, or to any given number of acres, and it must be admitted that the change contemplates a great revolution. But it is absolutely necessary; and the difficulties that must be encountered in carrying it out should be boldly and manfully met, and judiciously and humanely overcome.\*

\* The difficulty of locating suddenly, in a British colonial possession, a large body of new settlers, qualified, by their strength and capacity for labour, to provide comfortably for themselves and promote the welfare of their adopted country, is greater than is usually apprehended; and the efforts suggested by these pages will, therefore, demand great care and attention on the part of the executive government. The present case is one



There is abundance of means as regards money, intelligence, and energy, amongst the tenantry in Ireland to improve the country and make it productive in proportion to its natural capabilities, but that tenantry so often stand in the way of each other as to render it impossible for a movement to be made. In every townland, there is to be found, as in every other condition in life, one, two, three, or more men as tenants, who, by reason of their greater intelligence, industry, and carefulness, are capable of holding positions greatly above those they now occupy; but they could not, and dare not, venture to extend their usefulness for their own benefit and that of their country, because they could only do so by the ejection of their neighbours from their homes and places of refuge. Upon these men, and such as them, however, would devolve the regeneration of Ireland, if the way were prepared for them. Their savings, in place of being deposited in the National Savings' Banks of the country, the present place of safety, would soon be invested in the improvement of a grateful soil, as far more remunerative. The course of that improvement would be gradual,—but pave a course for it, and set it in motion, and like the stone in the proverb, its progress would be vastly accelerated as it proceeded. The labour to be afforded in this way would be natural—the wages of labour would be increased, and as these were permanently increased, and steady and continued employment obtained, emigration would naturally cease. The increased wages of labour would be amply compensated by the annually increasing produce of the soil, and each succeeding year would add to its productiveness.

Let any intelligent person who has travelled in Ireland, that is and has been surrounded with difficulties, and the question is not, therefore, what can be done without difficulty, but, in what manner can the greatest portion of permanent good be effected amidst great and almost insurmountable difficulties.



and become familiar with its surface, reflect on the absence of villages in many wide districts of it; or if he find what is termed a village, observe what is the social condition of the inhabitants, as regards the great majority of them, or even of the population of large towns? It is extreme wretchedness. What is the cause of this almost entire absence of villages in the first place, and of the wretchedness that exists in such as are, in the next place? One answer suffices for both questions. The country where villages should exist has not been improved, so as to afford employment for the persons who naturally form the population of villages. There is little or no employment for the mason, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the painter, the whole family of artificers are unknown in the district. The farmer cannot afford to employ them. He must be his own tradesman—but raise it by improvement in the social condition of its population, and you increase the wants of it, and enable every family in it to employ and to consume. The wants of such a population will soon form a village. How is this change in the population of Ireland to be effected? Man is not, after a youthful age, an easily convertible subject. His habits, when he is in massess, cannot be changed. He requires to be trained for his intended pursuits from infancy. The surplus population of Ireland have been trained precisely for those pursuits which the unoccupied regions of North America require for their colonization. That surplus is an overwhelming incubus at home, whether to themselves or others. Remove them and you benefit them in a degree that cannot be estimated. Precisely as you do so, you raise the social condition of those who remain. As the improvement of the country progresses, the young, in place of being brought up to no trade or calling by which they could earn a respectable livelihood, because there is no demand for artificers, will be taught the various trades which the wants of a thriving



and industrious district require, and these, and others of the same class in different callings, will naturally congregate together and form villages. But the population of the country must be thinned in the first instance for the advantage equally of those who go away and those who remain. A few years will afterwards replace the numbers, but as the increase goes on, so will the condition of the country and of the people improve. The country will not be less populous, but the occupations of the people will be different, and the structure of society most materially changed and improved.

Native industry, native talent, and native enterprise, whether for rural, manufacturing, or commercial pursuits, exist in abundance. They are obstructed and stopped by the cause I have adverted to. Remove that cause, and leave these qualities to their own operation, and do not doubt the result.

Education is being much more widely diffused in Ireland than heretofore. The changes herein contemplated will give scope for that different state of mental improvement which education confers. Neglect to make provision for such a different condition of the mind, and, in place of being directed to and engaged in industrial pursuits, it will in many instances become mischievous.

One fact bears strongly on what has been stated. It is well known that the value of landed property has heretofore varied in different counties, and even in the same county in Ireland, to an extent from five to seven years purchase,—not according to its comparative fertility, its convenience as to markets, or its natural and local advantages, but according to the number, or the reverse of the tenants who occupy it. The fact is so; and an estate is one fourth or one fifth less valuable if occupied by a numerous tenantry than if otherwise circumstanced in this respect. Why is this the case? It is well known that the



outrages that have been perpetrated in Ireland, and which have from time to time attracted so much of public attention in various ways, have been, and continue to be, almost, if not entirely, of an agrarian character. If a landed proprietor seeks to clear his estates of a portion of such small tenants and cottiers as occupy from two to twenty acres of land, with a view to improve the condition of his property, and of those who would remain, one of two things almost invariably happens. On the one hand ejectments, and the turning out on the world numerous and destitute families, by which humanity is outraged,—or on the other, a not unnatural resistance, on the part of the occupiers, in defence of what they consider their only place of refuge on earth, and their only protection against starvation and the weather,—by which the laws of the country are outraged, and it may be said set at defiance, and life and property made insecure.

Such a state of things has depreciated, and must depreciate most materially the value of property subject to its influence, because the rentals of such estates on paper come to be nominal rentals, inasmuch as they cannot be one year with another realized, independently of the other, and more serious contingencies which have too frequently arisen from the enforcement of the rights of property on the one hand, and the supposed natural rights of the occupiers on the other. To improve such estates, by the means heretofore employed, has been found, and continues to be, impossible. The only remedy is the one herein pointed out.

It is a mistake to suppose that Ireland, as regards land, is an over-rented part of the United Kingdom. On the contrary, and with reference to its general fertility and the quality of the soil, the value of land, and the income derivable from it, are greatly lower than in England or Scotland. This arises from the land not having been made productive by improvement in Ireland, by two-thirds of its natural



productive powers, and it is impossible to improve it as the country is now circumstanced. The obstacle has been pointed out. Remove that obstacle, and the improvement of the country will rapidly follow. The condition of the landed proprietor will be vastly improved; the condition of the tenant vastly improved; the condition of the labourer, and of all classes of servants, will be vastly improved. The wants of society in Ireland, as this improvement progresses, will be in proportion to its advancement. These wants will demand a greatly increased number of mechanics and artificers. The country will become a consumer of a greatly increased portion of its own produce, and of the produce of other countries. The increased expenses of such a different population will, as the change progresses, be amply provided for by the increased produce of the soil, in the first place, and do not doubt that manufactures and other remunerative occupations will in due time follow.

Let slip the present opportunity of accomplishing this vast and most important object, and the stoutest heart and strongest head will shrink from ever desiring such another. That opportunity is now upon us—the awful affliction is bearing us down. It was not sent for nothing; let the lesson it teaches be turned to a wise and benevolent end.

Out of office, or in power, let me pray of you to give the great powers of mind that God has conferred upon you to this good work. No such opportunity of doing so great a portion of good was ever presented to your practical understanding as that now before you. Let the effort be made, vigorously, generously, and humanely, and trust to Him who sent the affliction to enable you to see the measures successfully and satisfactorily carried out.

I have troubled you with a detail of the small American bills of Exchange, because there is attached to them, in my judgment, a degree of interest which bears most materially



on the important subject under consideration, and which could not possibly be conveyed by a mere dry abstract of them.

These remittances show by evidence incontrovertible that it is the want of opportunity alone that prevents the population of Ireland from raising itself and becoming prosperous. That opportunity cannot, as Ireland is circumstanced, be given at home, let it be afforded elsewhere. If Ireland were not "sea girded" would the population have become what it is? Certainly not, it would long ago have relieved itself.

If we turn from the physical capacity of the population as strongly manifested by these remittances, to raise itself, so as to enable it to support relations and friends, to the evidence which is afforded by them of the moral qualities of the population, there is proof equally incontestible of the heart of that population being in the right place. The first savings of labour are sent to aid those who were nursed in the same arms, and reared under the same roofs, with the emigrants, or to those who nursed and reared them.

I have made no apology for the great liberty I have taken in addressing you. What I see daily, what we all hear of, and know to be true, have urged me to write to you, and must plead my apology, and I respectfully request you will do me the favour of accepting of it in those simple words.

Do not, however, suppose me to be guilty of presumption. I am very far from thinking you will find much that is new in this communication, because the views put forward in it have no doubt occurred to your own mind, as they have occupied my reflections for many years. A lingering hope led me to think that time would by degrees operate the relief sought for. In this I have been mistaken. A great effort is necessary to accomplish that relief; it has not been made, it has been forced upon us, and we are now compelled to make it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

ROBERT MURRAY.



# STATE OF IRELAND.

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