

ON
THE CONDITION OF THE
AGRICULTURAL CLASSES
OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE
PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS AND EVIDENCE,
FROM 1833 TO 1840.

AND REMARKS BY THE FRENCH EDITOR,

PUBLISHED AT VIENNA.

WITH A PREFACE,
BY
HENRY DRUMMOND, Esq.

VOLUME I.
STATE OF IRELAND.



LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1842.

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PREFACE

TO THE FRENCH EDITION.

It appears necessary to acquaint the reader with the motives which induced the Parliament of England to extend its inquiries into all the parts of which society is composed, and the reasons that have induced the Editors to class in a systematic order the results of these various Inquiries.

The decided object of the Editors is to prove, that it is not in the power of society to choose its institutions, and that Providence, which has given immutable laws to the whole of creation, has not excepted human society from its universal dispensation.

Of all the bodies politic in Europe, the English Parliament is perhaps the ~~one~~ which has had the power of proceeding with the greatest impartiality. It is composed, and has always been composed, of landed proprietors, of independent fortunes, and unassailable in their station. Amongst the 658 members of the House of Commons, there

are indeed some manufacturers, merchants, or men of personal property ; but they are without influence, and remain isolated amidst so numerous a body, the members of which are united by the same interests, the same habits, and the same alliances. With regard to the House of Lords, its members are wholly strangers to all that is not territorial property.

Thus, since there have arisen projects of public works or disputes amongst the different bodies of manufacturers, merchants or shipowners, Parliament has always instituted an inquiry, conducted by a Committee which is appointed by the Speaker of one of the two Houses.

These Houses, having no member competent to judge of the various professions, are in the same position as a tribunal, the magistrates of which are called upon to adjudicate in disputes respecting the construction of a building, although themselves ignorant of the art of building, and even of the different materials of which the edifice is composed. This tribunal selects a jury of artists, and the parties appoint barristers. The same takes place in an Inquiry : the whole of the proceedings are in the end printed, and every one is instructed in what concerns his profession.

The legislative assemblies of the rest of Europe, on the contrary, comprise members who belong to

all the various professions and trades; these are necessarily chosen to decide upon questions which, it is supposed, are within their knowledge.

These kinds of Inquiries are instituted in England at intervals only, and always for some special object, to which the persons interested have, by their petitions and claims, succeeded in drawing the attention of one of the Houses of Parliament.

The various revolutions which have taken place in France, excited the censure, and we may say the scandal, of almost the whole of England; the war against France, or the different states which the French had stirred up to revolution, was popular, notwithstanding its long duration and the immense sacrifices which it required. Perhaps in truth that war was never more popular than in 1814, the period when the peace was made.

From the moment, however, that peace was concluded, the English, after having been shut out for so long a time, made an irruption on the Continent. Travelling was no longer confined, as formerly, to the highest rank of society; all classes of English, from the highest to the lowest, were anxious to visit France. They went expecting to see there great prosperity, and were astonished at a superabundance of wealth which they themselves carried thither. They identified themselves successively with the democratic opinions, the more

readily as the first period of the peace was a time of trial in England, since it brought a change of existence, and every change of existence is a trial for a country as for a family.

These continental opinions fermented only gradually, but from 1815 to 1830 they acquired continually increasing force, and led astray the best minds. The revolution of 1830 caused them to break out ; the aristocratic party, which governed the country, was attacked with an unexampled violence in England. All the principles of the government were called in question, or rather were treated with reprobation. The clamour of the democratic party demanded a parliamentary reform, and it was obtained. The old parliament was dissolved, and new forms of election created a new one. From the earliest times, each successive parliament received at most but a fifth part of new members, so that, of the 658 members of the House of Commons, there never were more than 115 or 130 members changed at each election ; but in 1832 there were above 200, all taken from the democratic party, and these, added to the old opposition, formed a majority, although a doubtful and wavering one.

In the state of agitation in which the minds of the people were, the ancient usages could no longer suffice ; everything was questioned, and everything

as required to be enlightened. Thence meetings upon meetings, in all the counties, petitions upon petitions, projects upon projects ; then the Parliament, and principally the House of Commons, was obliged to form committees upon committees, and institute inquiries upon inquiries.

Each of the parties, of which agriculture, art-anship, manufactures, commerce, navigation, public works are composed, had special committees and commissions, and in short passed through all the proceedings of an inquiry.

These Inquiries have not all been conducted with the same forms : those respecting Ireland, and the poor in England, differed from the usual forms. These changes will be pointed out, as we proceed to give the extracts from each different inquiry. It suffices to say, that in Ireland they were all conducted publicly, that every inhabitant had the power of co-operating, either by questions or replies, and that the number of those who availed themselves of this permission was immense. It was no longer the administrators who spoke, but the governed, every one expressing his approbation or his disapprobation of all that had been done, that was doing, and that was intended to be done. All these documents have been printed, in large folio volumes, in number without end, and these labours have cost considerable sums.

As the greatest part of the interlocutors had no fixed plan, all the subjects are mixed up and confused. No one, certainly, has read this enormous and incoherent collection, which moreover costs a very large sum; but so many persons have contributed to its formation, so many have heard the discussions, that the information which has been elicited has produced more effect upon the public than a long and irksome perusal could have done, and we may say that it has produced a salutary effect, and that the public opinions have been rectified.

In order to give an idea of this labour, the Editors have first given an extract of all that relates to agriculture and the condition of the rural population. They have deemed it necessary to add some remarks, to acquaint the reader with an order of things known to the witnesses, of which he is probably ignorant. The reports of the Commissioners, which follow these Inquiries, have also given occasion for some critical observations. This portion, however, is not confounded with what belongs to the Inquiries, and the Editors are of opinion that from this work may be derived sure and salutary maxims of government.

PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

THE following work is the translation of two volumes which have been published by the Government at Vienna, they being an abstract of the Reports presented to Parliament by various Commissioners appointed since the passing of the Reform Bill to inquire into the state of the country. It has not been possible to refer to every passage of the English original from which the extract is taken in the French, in order to give the exact words of the Report, and to ensure the sense not being altered by a double translation; and this is the more to be regretted, because, in some instances, the French compiler has mistaken the sense of the original; but in every case in which the original could be ascertained, the words themselves have been used, without noticing the way in which they have been rendered into French.

The object of the French author was to show to the continental nations the folly of supposing that it is commerce and manufactures, rather than agri-

culture, which constitute the true wealth of this country, in order to prevent the French and Austrian nations from further giving way to their love of manufactures, to which they are tempted by erroneously supposing that the power of England is derived from these sources.

The object of the English translation is to show to the English, in a more attractive form than is presented by many folio volumes of parliamentary reports, what the real condition of this country is ; and how manufactures and commerce, in their present excess, are sources of weakness, and not of strength, to the country ; of distress, and not of comfort ; of discontent, and not of peace.

The only source of real wealth and prosperity to a people is the produce of their land. None other can be permanent, none other can be anything but fallacious, specious, and ultimately prejudicial. Hence it follows that the inhabitants of a country are interested in its permanent prosperity only in proportion as they are owners of land, or derive their support from its produce in some form or other. On the other hand, a manufacturer of silk or cotton, for example, who brings his raw produce from the Mediterranean, converts it into some other form by his mill on the Clyde or at Manchester, and exports the manufactured article to the Seine or the Baltic, is no more interested in

the welfare of Great Britain than in the welfare of Italy, Egypt, France or Prussia. This is equally true with respect to all people employed in the manufacture of such commodities ; a manufacturing population has only a divided interest in the welfare of its country. A manufacturing population has no exclusive interest in the prosperity of England, and hence, with it, the prosperity of England is never a paramount consideration to the prosperity of other nations. The self-interest of the landowner leads him exclusively to the promotion of English interests ; the self-interest of the manufacturer leads him to promote the well-being of any country which best conduces to the success of his manufacture. The first necessity of a people is food, and the manufacturer cares not whence his food comes ; if it can be found cheaper from Germany than from England, although the interest of the former country is advanced at the expense of the latter, from Germany he will have it.

It is the law of existence of all organized bodies, that they continue in being only as they consume something that comes out of the earth ; and therefore people are ill or well off, according to the proportion which they bear to the quantity of the produce of the soil on which they are located. The agricultural population increases only as the produce of the soil increases. The manufacturing

population does not multiply according to the augmented means of support, but according to the additional use of machinery, and consequently at a different ratio from that of the increase of food. Montesquieu said long ago, *les machines dont l'objet est d'abrégé l'art ne sont pas toujours utiles*. Moreover, the people who are employed in a manufactory are considered by their employers merely as a part of the machine, and are treated in the same way, being used only so long as they are fresh and in vigour, and left to rot when their services are no longer profitable to their master. Such people, also, are for the most part under no head, have no man to whose heart they can appeal, have no master on whose sympathy they can draw. The great mills are usually the property of shareholders or companies, who necessarily delegate the management to a clerk, whose duty it is to make the concern most productive to his employers, without the smallest reference to consequences amongst the workmen. A great part of the sufferings of the slaves in the West Indies are owing to similar causes. The estates were seldom under the management of the real owners; the greater part were under the direction of trustees, mortgagees, and creditors of various kinds, who necessarily appointed an overseer, whom they continually urged to remit more money: he had no means of fulfilling

the wishes of his employers and of retaining his place, but by making the estate as productive as possible at the present moment: the waste of human life, the torments and death of the slaves, was a secondary consideration; and the poor slave could never see the real owner, and appeal to his mercy, to his pity, to the common humanity of a fellow-creature. So it is in many cotton-mills. In addition to all this, the great heat, and mass of deleterious particles continually breathed, make those employed in these mills extremely unhealthy; and this unhealthiness is to such an extent, that when the discontent and irritation in which such a population must continually be is adverted to, as a source of danger to the state, it is sometimes urged in reply, that no real danger can arise from a people reduced to such a state of moral and physical decrepitude as they are who work in cotton-mills,—a most inhuman source of consolation!

When labour is expended in agriculture, the amount and quality of the produce are both increased, and a corresponding increase of population is a source of additional power to the country. It is perhaps not too much to say, that the produce of Great Britain has been augmented one-third within the last fifty years. This increase has tended greatly to mitigate the evil arising from the

multiplied number of manufacturers. The greater productiveness has taken place principally in Scotland, where the soil is very dissimilar to that of England, and in the agricultural districts far superior. The land is comparatively fresh, for agriculture was scarcely known in the north as a system a hundred years ago, and, as a whole, it is still conducted in a manner very inferior to the best-farmed districts in England. The neighbourhood of Whinstone seems always to require under-draining, and as this is the case with the greater part of the north of England and the south of Scotland, large sums have been successfully laid out upon that operation, whereby the produce has been greatly augmented. Such an increase, however, must come to an end, because the fertility of soils is not without bounds ; and neither the soil nor climate of Britain are naturally congenial to the growth of wheat, for much of it is unfit to be made into bread, when ground into flour, without a mixture of some which has been ripened under a warmer sun.

The consolidation of the produce of divers taxes seems to facilitate financial operations, and to make the whole equally available for any and every part of the public burdens ; but it is very questionable whether this be really a wise practice. In private life, an individual will strain himself and econo-

mize, when he has a definite object to gain, to an extent which he will not do when he has only the general motive of living at ease within his income ; and it is the same with the public. If a direct tax, no matter how unpopular under other circumstances, such as the income-tax, had been imposed, the produce of which had been devoted to the liquidation of the national debt, that most important end might have been attained ; and in like manner, if the produce of a tax on raw silk and cotton had been devoted to a provision for silk and cotton spinners, such as defraying the expenses of their emigration to our colonies, the wisdom and justice and humanity of such a measure being obvious, would have made it palatable to all.

The best provision for silk and cotton spinners is emigration to our colonies, and this seems to be one of the principal uses of a colony to the mother-country. The colonies of modern Europe have been greatly mismanaged in comparison to those of the Greek cities and of Rome ; but the causes of this mismanagement and remedies for it would not be within the bounds of this preface ; and whether ill or well managed, New South Wales and India furnish inexhaustible means of relief both to the poor people and to the mother-country, which is in continual danger from masses of her starving children. One of the best criterions of good govern-

ment is the quantity of food which is enjoyed by the labourers, and this is a point which no statistical tables can prove on one side or the other. No information worthy of being trusted is to be obtained on the subject except by living amongst the people, by searching into their wants, and by seeing the way in which they provide for them. They who will not take this trouble fall into continual errors respecting the relative happiness of the poor of England and the poor of other countries, the poor of manufacturing and of agricultural classes, and of the same classes at different periods.

The numbers of a people constitute the power of a state only in so far as the people are happy and contented. A term in common use now is "the greatest happiness principle," which expresses the truth of what should be aimed at, although they who make most frequent use of it labour under great mistakes as to the means by which the largest amount of happiness is to be attained. In speaking of the poor, the political economists make their calculations on insufficient data ; for example, they set down 10s. a week as the rate of wages, and multiply these by the 52 weeks in the year ; they conclude that a poor man has 520 shillings, or 26*l.* per annum, to spend. From such a case, however, so many deductions are to be made, and

so great, is the variety of circumstances between different families, that it is impossible to form an average; far less any accurate idea, of the real condition of the poor from such a general and wholesale statement. The number of the children, the state of their health, and of that of their mother; the rent and condition of their cottage; the size of their garden; its being overgrown or otherwise with trees; the convenience of fuel; the nature of the employment; the number of days in each month that the labourer has been prevented from working; the deductions made from his wages for that loss of time; accidents, &c., are all matters too minute to enter into calculations made by writers, but which do constitute so great an amount of the real prosperity, of the real well- or ill-thriving of the poor, that without taking them into the account nothing is at last known of their true condition.

All that the political economist means to meddle with are the physical and animal wants of man; but these do not constitute all his happiness, and his moral condition modifies it to an immense extent. The English economists have never considered anything but the one point, how to be rich; and for this they have sacrificed all the happiness of the people, or rather they have confounded the two things together.

The capital of a labourer is strength and time.

The economists unanimously represent it to be a great advantage to mankind to have things cheap ; but this assumes the principal matter in hand, which is that the labourer has money to give, and here lies the fallacy. Any means of employing his labour and time is an advantage, but anything which tends to non-employment of his labour and time is a disadvantage. Thus the labourer was happier and better off in every way when he employed the time spared from labour at his vocation, for which a deduction is always made in his wages by his employer, in weaving and spinning the clothes worn by himself and family, than now, when clothes are a tenth part of the price, and he has ceased to make them for himself. Cheapness and dearness are alike to him who has nothing to give. That which increases the wealth of the master manufacturer, and that which increases the enjoyment of his labourer, are two totally different and distinct things.

“ The greatest happiness principle,” as employed by them, means, when translated into the language of truth, “ the greatest wealth principle,” to which the happiness of the many has been sacrificed. The train of logic in the writings of the English economists is thus :—trade employs people ; employment makes people rich • *ergo*, trade makes people happy. To show the fallacy of this reasoning, it might be sufficient to point to the fact, that

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the effect of the method in which trade has been carried on has been to make colossal fortunes in the midst of starving millions, and to increase continually the clamour for bread from multitudes ready to perish.

Traders and manufacturers can always find markets and consumers much better when left to their own ingenuity than when a government endeavours to assist them ; and from thence the economists draw the erroneous conclusion, that government ought not to interfere with trade and traders let the consequences be what they may. Thus, although it be shown that trade and manufactures pushed beyond a certain point produce the misery of the lower orders, and that the rich capitalists alone profit by it, still the economists contend that trade and manufactures must not be discouraged.

Statesmen are of a higher grade than either merchants, manufacturers, or economists ; their business is with the welfare of the whole of the population of the country ; not with their ephemeral money-making interests only, but with the whole moral as well as physical, permanent as well as temporary, prosperity of the kingdom which they are called upon to govern. The interests which are temporary, however specious, must give way to those which are permanent : although trade may bring in a large income to-day, yet if it call into being a

population which will produce evil to-morrow, the trade of to-day must be checked instead of being promoted.

It is not denied by the economists that the manufacturing poor cannot find a sufficiency of food in this country, and therefore they contend that food ought to be brought from foreign countries, not merely for the sake of feeding the people, which are already superabundant, but in order to extend manufactures and commerce still further ; which is to aggravate the evil under which the country at present labours, and make it in all future times past remedy. If foreign corn were to be brought in as a measure of temporary relief until there were time to send out as emigrants the surplus population, and if at the same time measures were taken to diminish the extent of manufactures, the admission of foreign corn would be justifiable ; but if it be sought for on any other grounds, there is no assignable limit to its admission, nor to the increase of manufacture until the whole kingdom become one great Birmingham or Manchester.

Foreign statesmen see this our condition very clearly ; British statesmen are too much tainted with the low principles of traders. Foreign statesmen have been warned by the ablest economists in their own countries against the effects of our commercial system, and although during fits of

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jealous of the power of England they are tempted to think that this power is derived from its manufactures, and therefore to encourage them in their own country, in order that she too may become more rich and more powerful, their more enlarged views finally prevail, and they refuse to extend their commerce from fear of the consequences which they see produced amongst ourselves. English economists pursue "the greatest money principle;" the foreign economists pursue "the greatest happiness principle." The most influential foreign writers who take sound views are Count Pecchio in Italy and the Vicomte de Villeneuve in Belgium.

Whilst, however, it is not to be denied that the manufactures of England are now producing public mischief, it is true, on the other hand, that they have been a source of wealth. In the management of the physical resources of a country, wisdom consists in preserving due proportions: it is the just balance of all the organs which sustain life that gives health in the human economy, not a violent action in the heart with imperfect motion in the lungs or digestive powers. Of all the continental nations, Austria is the one which least requires in her actual circumstances to be warned against any evil likely to accrue to her in the present moment from extension of her trade and manufactures. The disturbance of her equilibrium is quite the op-

posite of that of England. It is political, and not commercial causes, which will produce her dismemberment.

Blessed at present by a reigning family, whose amiable disposition and gentleness of manners have endeared it for several generations to its subjects, and particularly to those of the Austrian States, Austria is nevertheless without political consequence, save by an immense army, which no one can either wield or pay. Her aristocracy has been destroyed by former emperors, and her court is filled with powerless princes, counts and barons. Five kingdoms, discordant in laws, language and customs,—Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, Styria and Lombardy,—each requiring a separate department of government, demand a machinery so vast as to be a clog and hindrance to whatever vigour exists at the centre of the government of the whole. This vast machinery, joined to the immense army, demand a greater annual income than an impoverished people can raise. National bankruptcies and depreciations of the currency, which are robberies of the public, have taken place more than once. Notwithstanding all this, the lower classes are better off and happier than in almost any other country in Europe.

Rather, therefore, than hold up to Austria the errors of England, in order to encourage her to re-

sist the first steps towards similar dangers, it would have been a kinder and more statesman-like act to have pointed out to her government how she might profit by what is good in England without falling into the delusions by which we have been beguiled.

It is not possible for those at the head of the government in Austria to tell the Emperor what is best for the various provinces under him without consulting them; nor is it possible to know what the real wants of the provinces are unless the inhabitants have free access and speech to the ministers. Hence, as a preliminary to any improvement, is the annual assembly of all the nobility or a certain number of them, and representatives of, not delegates from, the people, in order to consult for the common good, and without whose concurrence no law should be valid: increased life and animation would then flow into the remotest parts of that immense empire, whilst the whole power of the empire would remain unimpaired.

The best means of fostering the introduction of money would be to encourage farmers from England to settle upon the estates of the noblemen. In England the lands are not cultivated by the proprietors, but by another class, whose wealth is equal to half that of the proprietors themselves; for example, if a farm of 300 acres be worth 10,000*l.*, the capital required to stock it would amount to

5000*l.* The consequence of introducing a similar system of cultivation into Austria would be to liberate the whole of the funds of the nobles now locked up in the cultivation of their lands. In addition to this there should be complete opening of the ports to all produce at an equal *ad valorem* duty, which would cause each of those different provinces to put forth the produce peculiar to itself, and without which opening there can be no full spontaneous development of the resources of each.

Centuries must elapse before Austria could be in difficulties from causes similar to those which now trouble England ; for it is the abundance of coal which is one great source of our facility of manufacture, and this no other European country produces in an equal measure. If the *laissez faire* maxim has been pushed to a culpable excess in this country, the opposite evil of meddling with everything has been carried in Austria to an equal extreme. The good and the evil of the practices of both countries must be freely admitted before it be possible to recommend the amelioration of either by the adoption of anything from the example of the other.

The hereditary antipathy of the Frenchman to everything that is called by the name of English ; the religious bigotry which is ever indignant against those who refuse to permit the Bishop of Rome

to dispose of the crown of their kings ; and the high chevaleresque feelings which lead him to look down with scorn upon the sordid maxims of a *nation boutiquière*,—have all conspired to cause the compiler of this work to give a colour to facts, and an asperity to his remarks, from which a calmer observer would have been more free. Nevertheless, the work is highly interesting, as containing in a tangible form the most authentic account of the actual condition of Great Britain and Ireland, which condition is traced up to its source, and presented by one who, if not without some bias of his own, is at least free from all which might pervert the judgment of a man born and educated amongst ourselves, with the prejudices incident to the political and religious creed in which he would have been brought up. The remarks of the compiler everywhere exhibit proof of great acuteness, long habits of observation, and unwearied assiduity of research.

H. D.

London, January, 1842.

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III E.8

COMMISSION.

WILLIAM THE FOURTH, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. To the most Reverend Father in God, Our right trusty and right entirely beloved Councilor Richard, Archbishop of Dublin, and Our trusty and well-beloved the Most Reverend Daniel Murray*, Doctor in Divinity, Charles Vignoles, Doctor in Divinity, Richard More O'Ferrall, Esquire, the Reverend James Carlile, Fenton Hort, John Corrie, James Naper and William Battie Wrightson, Esquires, Greeting: Whereas an humble Address has been presented to Us by the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses, and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs in Parliament assembled, humbly beseeching Us that We would be graciously pleased to issue a Commission to inquire into the condition of the Poorer Classes of Our subjects in Ireland, and into the various Institutions at present established by Law for their Relief; know ye, that We, reposing great trust and confidence in your intelligence, discretion and diligence, have authorized and appointed, and by these presents do authorize and appoint you, the said Richard, Archbishop of Dublin, etc. etc. etc.,

* Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

to inquire into the condition of the poorer classes of Our subjects in Ireland, and into the various institutions at present established by law for their relief; and also whether any and what further remedial measures appear to be requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor, or any portion of them; and for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, We do by these presents give and grant to you, or one or more of you, full power and authority to call before you, or any one or more of you, such persons as you shall judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises: And We do further by these presents give and grant to you, or any one or more of you, full power and authority to inquire of the premises and every part thereof, by all lawful ways and means whatsoever, within all parts of Our United Kingdom: And We do further by these presents give and grant to you, or any one or more of you, full power and authority, where the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath to any person whatsoever to be examined before you, or any one or more of you, touching or concerning the premises: And We do further by these presents give and grant to you, or any one or more of you, full power and authority to cause all persons to bring and produce upon oath before you, or any one or more of you, all and singular records, books, papers and other writings touching the premises, and which shall be in the custody of them, or any of them: And Our further will and pleasure is, that you, or any three or more of you, upon due inquiry into the premises, do propose and reduce into writing, and submit to Us, such further remedial measures (if any) as may appear to you to be requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor, or any portion of them: And do

certify to Us from time to time, under your hands and seals, your several proceedings, as the same shall be completed; and do within the space of one year* after the date of these presents, or sooner if the same can reasonably be, certify unto Us in like manner the whole of your proceedings under and by virtue of these presents, together with what you shall find touching or concerning the premises upon such inquiry as aforesaid: And We further will and command, and by these presents ordain, that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any one or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment: And for your assistance in the due execution of this Our Commission, we have made choice of Our trusty and well-beloved John Revans, Esquire, to be Secretary of this Our Commission, and to attend you, whose services and assistance We require you to use from time to time as occasion shall require. In witness whereof, We have caused these Our letters to be made patent. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the twenty-fifth day of September, in the fourth year of Our reign.

By Writ of Privy Seal,

BATHURST.

N.B. Three other Commissioners were appointed since this Commission: Lord Killeen, A. R. Blake, and J. E. Bicheno, Esquires.

* This Inquiry lasted from the 25th of September, 1833, until towards the middle of the year 1836.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

REMARKS*.

This mode of inquiry, by Commission, had no precedent. Ireland had formerly her own separate Parliament, the forms of which were the same as those of the Parliament of England: but in 1800 that country was united to England, as Scotland had been a century before, and since that period the Inquiries which related to her were instituted at London before a Committee, chosen for this purpose by one of the Houses of Parliament, and to which the Irish were cited as witnesses. These kinds of inquiry, however, together with their results, were almost unknown to the Irish public, and this was much to be lamented, for the proceedings of the English Parliament were less marked with partiality than those of the Irish Parliament had been. It is true that they were both exclusively composed of Protestants; but the English, naturally more dispassionate, were not liable to entertain the animosities, or to be parties to the measures of injustice, oppression, or revenge, which Protestants, all of whom were landholders in Ireland, exercised against the Catholics, despoiled and necessarily irritated.

* All the Remarks are by the Editors.

These Inquiries, moreover, were instituted for Ireland, as for England, upon isolated interests ; and the Parliament perceived that, in order to be acquainted with, and to ameliorate, the body politic in a state of society so extraordinary as that which we shall proceed to exhibit, it was necessary to appoint a Commission which should visit the country. It was this Commission which the preceding ordinance instituted ; and as the persons who formed it themselves give an account of their proceedings, and of the remedial measures which they propose, we shall leave them to speak for themselves, adding only occasional remarks or comments of our own.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS :

On the object of the Inquiry, the difficulties which it presented, and the course they have pursued, in order to render it complete and impartial.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

SIRE,—We, the Commissioners commanded by Your Majesty “to inquire into the condition of the poorer
“ classes of Your Majesty's subjects in Ireland, and into
“ the various institutions at present established by law
“ for their relief, and also whether any, and what further
“ remedial measures appear to be requisite to ameliorate
“ the condition of the Irish poor, or any portion of them;”
having made very considerable progress in the arduous duties entrusted to us, are now enabled to lay before Your Majesty the large body of evidence which has been collected.

We take this opportunity of stating to Your Majesty,—

I. The difficulties which we have had to encounter, both from the extensive and complicated nature of the subject itself, and from the peculiar social condition of the people of that portion of Your Majesty's dominions in which the inquiry has been prosecuted.

II. The course which we have pursued in collecting information; shewing how far it is full and impartial, and therefore how far worthy of confidence.

III. The reasons why we are not yet enabled to obey Your Majesty's Command to report, “Whether any and
“ what further remedial measures appear to be requisite to
“ ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor or any of them.”

I. As to the difficulties of the Inquiry.

The great proportion of the population about and amongst whom the inquiry was to be made, is constantly fluctuating between mendicancy and independent labour. In whole districts, scarcely one of that class of substantial capitalist farmers, so universal in England, can be found. The small resident gentry are but few, and the substantial tradesman is not to be met with at intervals of two or three miles as in England; for there are but few towns of sufficient trade to create such a class. The clergy of the various persuasions, and the proprietors, when resident, are, in many cases, so much at variance with each other, or with the working population, upon political questions, that great caution was requisite in regard to the manner and degree in which we could avail ourselves of their assistance. Similar difficulties existed with regard to the constabulary, from the frequent collision in which they are placed with the people; and parochial authorities can scarcely be said to exist.

In an inquiry about a population, in which many of the ordinary distinctions of society are commonly merged in the same individual, and in an inquiry amongst a people, the various classes of whom had long been at variance with each other, it became a matter of fearful moment to determine respecting whom the inquiry should be made, and from whom testimony could be received which would not merely be impartial, but which would be admitted by all to be so; the one requisite being as important as the other. We became quickly and painfully alive to the danger which would attend the slightest error in our procedure. Did we appear to rely too much on the clergy or laity of any one

persuasion, we were certain to be accused of political or religious bias. Did we receive testimony more freely from the rich man than from the poor man, or from the poor man than from the rich, we were certain to be denounced as having prejudged the subject about which we had undertaken impartially to inquire.

But great as were these difficulties, great as was the circumspection which they required, another and yet more formidable difficulty existed. Your Majesty had commanded us to determine “Whether any, and if any, what further remedial measures appear to be requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor, or any portion of them.”

To determine what measures might be requisite to ameliorate the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, required an investigation extending to almost the whole social and productive system; for the poor classes in Ireland may be considered as comprehending nearly the whole population; and as no institution is isolated in its effect, it is impossible to decide upon the consequence of removing or creating one law or custom without considering its connexion with every other. It became, therefore, matter of grave importance to determine whether so extensive an inquiry was practicable, and if not, what portion would be chosen. It also became necessary and difficult to decide as to the order in which such an investigation should proceed—which class of subjects should be taken first, which last—which were primary in their effects, which secondary.

On every side we were assailed by the theories of those who were born or had long resided in the country, and consequently might be supposed to have possessed good opportunity for ascertaining the soundness of their opinions. One party attributed all the poverty and wretched-

ness of the country to an asserted extreme use of ardent spirits, and proposed a system for repressing illicit distillation, for preventing smuggling, and for substituting beer and coffee. Another party found the cause in the combinations amongst workmen, and proposed rigorous laws against Trades' Unions. Others again were equally confident, that the reclamation of the bogs and waste lands was the only practicable remedy. A fourth party declared the nature of the existing connexion between landlord and tenant to be the root of all the evil; pawnbroking, redundant population, absence of capital, peculiar religious tenets and religious differences, political excitement, want of education, the mal-administration of justice, the state of prison discipline, want of manufactures, and of inland navigation, with a variety of other circumstances, were each supported by their various advocates with earnestness and ability, as being either alone, or jointly with some other, the primary cause of all the evils of society; and loan funds, emigration, the repression of political excitement, the introduction of manufactures, and the extension of inland navigation, were accordingly proposed, each as the principal means by which the improvement of Ireland could be promoted.

Having so difficult a question to deal with, and so many plausible solutions offered to us, aware that the public would be impatient of a second Inquiry, we felt bound to use great consideration in selecting the subjects and the order of investigation. That many, if not all, of the alleged causes of evil did exist in a greater or less degree, was sufficiently evident; and that good might arise from some of the remedies proposed, we were not prepared to deny. To decide, without careful investigation, upon the degree in which each might be productive of evil or of benefit, would

have been at variance with the trust which Your Majesty had confided to us. We therefore determinèd that the Inquiry should embrace every subject to which importance seemed to be attached by any large number of persons.

The great range of Inquiry thus opened to us, made it desirable that it should be conducted in separate branches. It was evident that the minds of the Assistant Commissioners, if employed each upon a multitude of subjects, many of which were of themselves sufficiently extensive for a separate Commission, would be incapable of minutely investigating any one, and consequently that the most obvious facts alone would be ascertained; whilst it was evident, from the great variety of opinions, that the truth was far from obvious, and required a patient, minute and diligent search. Two other evils seemed inevitably to attach to such a general Inquiry. The great length of time during which the examination would last, if each subject were thoroughly investigated, would render those who gave evidence impatient; consequently the latter subjects of the Inquiry would in most cases be neglected. Again, several of the subjects could be far more efficiently conducted by persons having peculiar practical knowledge. The Inquiry into the management and efficiency of hospitals, dispensaries and other medical establishments, would in all probability be more usefully conducted by medical men; whilst an Inquiry into the wages and habits of farm labourers, and into the nature and extent of employment for them, would be better entrusted to those long practised in rural occupations.

The division which appeared to us the most convenient was into two principal branches:

The first, an Inquiry into the extent of destitution, into

the modes in which relief was afforded to the destitute, and into the effects of those modes.

The second, an Inquiry into the causes of destitution.

It was considered advisable to subdivide this latter branch into four distinct heads :

1st. An Inquiry into the rate of agricultural wages, the habits of farm labourers, the nature and extent of employment in agriculture, the nature and state of agriculture, to endeavour to discover whether there might be any measures within the reach of the legislature which would tend to increase the demand for labour.

2nd. An Inquiry relative to the manufacturing population, and to trade and manufactures, for similar purposes.

3rd. An Inquiry relative to the fisheries.

4th. And one relative to mining.

II. Course pursued in collecting information.

We will now state the course which we have pursued in collecting information ; showing how far the evidence is full and impartial, and therefore how far worthy of reliance.

Our first act in the collection of information was to circulate a set of Statistical Questions. These questions were sent to the clergy of each persuasion, to the magistracy, to the heads of the police, and to such educated persons as had been named as able and willing to give us assistance. The purport of these questions was to obtain an outline of the extent and nature of each parish ; the number of destitute persons it contained ; the number and nature of the institutions for the relief of the poor ; the rates of wages, rents of cottages, etc. ; about 7600 of these questions were circulated, about 3100 returned, and the state of about 1100 parishes was described by them. Many well-in-

formed persons in every part of the country were induced, through answering these questions, to send statements, by which considerable insight was afforded upon many subjects of importance.

To obtain information sufficiently extensive in its range, and sufficiently impartial, by means of circulating questions, was obviously impossible. As a Board, we could not pass from one district of the country to another, and receive local evidence, if the country was to be extensively visited, and if our Inquiry was to conclude within any reasonable number of years. If each member of the Board had taken a separate district, it is probable that each would have been more impressed by those circumstances which had been subjects of personal observation, than by those which had been collected by his colleagues, and consequently were to him only written evidence. Besides, many of the Commissioners had other important duties which would not admit of their leaving Dublin. To have contented ourselves with such information as we could obtain by witnesses brought to Dublin, would have been materially to lessen the chance of obtaining full and impartial information, not only as regarded classes of persons, but as regarded the various districts of the country.

It was obviously necessary, therefore, that others should be deputed to make local inquiries.

The difficulty, great under any circumstances, of selecting persons upon whom reliance could be placed, as possessing intelligence in tracing the truth, diligence in pursuit of it, patience in examining a variety of persons of different views and habits, and impartiality in deciding between conflicting statements, was much increased by the peculiar state of society.

litico-religious parties, each regarding the other with jealousy and animosity, it was extremely difficult to find persons who would be able, even if they were desirous, to divest themselves of every partial feeling, nurtured as they had been in an anti-social state. And even when persons should have been found who really were themselves thus impartial, there was still a danger that they would be suspected of partaking of the prejudices with which their relatives, friends and connexions were known to be imbued.

On the other hand, to have left the Inquiry to those who were foreign to the country, would have been to entrust it to persons ignorant of its peculiar social construction; of the peculiar habits and feelings of its people; of the peculiar idioms of its language; and, consequently, to those who would be incapable of guarding against imposition in the receipt of evidence, and against giving offence to those from whom they received it. The only mode of combining the national knowledge possessed by the one with the impartiality almost certain in the other, appeared to be by joining in the Inquiry a native of Great Britain with a resident native of Ireland.

In order to reap the fullest advantage possible from such an arrangement, we required that all evidence should be taken in the joint presence of the Irish and English Assistant Commissioners; and we have in a few instances been compelled to reject evidence which, through accident, had not been thus taken. We likewise empowered either Assistant Commissioner to invite the presence of any person whose evidence might appear to him individually to be important, and to put any question he might think pertinent to the Inquiry.

In preparing instructions for the Assistant Commis-

sioners, we searched the evidence given at various times before Committees of Parliament relative to the condition of the people, and to the causes which have directly or remotely led to that condition, and also the various private publications upon the subject, and consulted those persons who, from their habits and position, were likely to be the best acquainted with the situation of the people. Certain circumstances were stated by those whose opinions were thus obtained, as conveying a faithful representation of the general physical and moral condition of the working classes. Other circumstances were mentioned either as the immediate or remote causes of that condition; and, again, others as the immediate or remote effects. We felt it to be necessary, not only to ascertain to what extent those statements might be facts, but whether they embraced the whole of the facts; and whether those facts affected a few districts, or the whole country. With this view, minute Heads of Inquiry, based upon the information thus obtained, were drawn up. Those Heads of Inquiry did not anticipate the negative or affirmative, but were so framed as to admit of any explanation within the range of the class to which each belonged, being general as to that class, but confined to the main subject of which each formed only a sub-division. It was carefully enforced upon the Assistant Commissioners, that those Heads of Inquiry were not for the purpose of restricting them, but merely as an assistance to the memory, ensuring ~~that~~, at each examination, no portion of the subject, however minute, which was known by us to be worthy of consideration, could be omitted. The Assistant Commissioners were expressly reminded that they were not merely at liberty to probe each portion of the subject as far as it might in their

discretion appear necessary, but that they were positively required to do so; the Heads of Inquiry being merely for the purpose of putting them, previously to their going out, in possession of all points of the subject, as far as they were known.

In order that the evidence might be at once full and impartial, and be collected and registered in a manner perfectly satisfactory, the Assistant Commissioners were desired to adopt the following course:—

1st. To request the attendance of persons of each grade in society, of each of the various religious persuasions, and of each party in politics; to give to the testimony of each class an equal degree of attention, and to make the examinations in the presence of all; in fact, in open court. Not to allow any person to join in conducting the examination, and to state at the opening of the proceedings, that any statement made by an individual, and not impugned by any person present, would be considered to be acknowledged as at least probable by all.

2ndly. To note down, at the time of examination, the replies given, or the remarks which occurred to him; to register, as nearly as might be possible in the words of each witness, the statements which might be made; to register the names of all the persons who attended the examination; and, before proceeding to examine another district, to send the minutes of the previous examination to the office of the Commissioners in Dublin, signed by both the Assistant Commissioners.

By the first of these directions, it was hoped that, as none are so conversant with those matters which peculiarly or chiefly belong to any class as the members of that class, by receiving their evidence, the Assistant Com-

missioner would possess himself of the most competent testimony; and that, by receiving the statement in the presence of other classes not having the same interests, or even having opposite interests, but possessing, from local connexion, sufficient knowledge of the circumstances of the witnesses to determine its probability, the best security possible would be obtained that each statement would be worthy of credence, and that it had not been made solely with a view to a sinister and class interest; that by refusing to allow any resident of the district to sit with the Assistant Commissioner, or join in the examination, the working classes would feel more confidence in the impartiality of the procedure, and would therefore speak without restraint. By the second head of direction, we hoped to provide against the possibility of misrepresentation through any of the circumstances being forgotten, or others which did not exist being inadvertently inserted; by the words of each witness being recorded as nearly as might be, to leave the evidence less open to misinterpretation, and, in effect, to bring the reader more immediately in contact with the witness; by the list of persons who attended the examination being given, to enable the public to decide whether each class was fairly represented; and by the minutes of evidence being transmitted to the Board immediately after the examination, and the Assistant Commissioner not being permitted subsequently to alter them, to obtain a sufficient guarantee that they had not been adapted to the theories of the examiner.

The Assistant Commissioners were required only to collect evidence (facts and opinions), and to record their personal observations on the subjects, and in the manner already detailed; they had merely, in the examination of

witnesses and of local circumstances, to act as our representatives ; they were not instructed to furnish any general report nor to make recommendations ; for as each Assistant Commissioner was restricted to one branch of the general Inquiry, and prosecuted that branch in a single division of the country, we considered that any general conclusions to which he might come would be drawn from partial evidence, and consequently be little trustworthy. We, however, reserved the power to call for either should we ultimately deem it expedient.

In addition to the certainty of having every portion of the Inquiry investigated in each of the districts visited, the systematic form adopted makes the evidence bear the same arrangement for every district,—each point for each district being always in the same part of the evidence. It has also enabled us to separate the evidence upon each branch of the Inquiry into several distinct heads, and to print the evidence on each head taken in various parts of the country conjointly. By this arrangement, the mind will not be perplexed in the consideration of any subject by the constant intervention of matters wholly foreign. The examinations relative to the support of deserted and orphan children, for instance, taken in a variety of parishes, and in each parish nearly at the same time with examinations relative to six other subjects, have been separated from those other subjects, and have been printed consecutively in the alphabetical order of the names of the parishes ; a certainty is created by this arrangement, that however extensive the whole evidence may be, every fact bearing upon any one subject will be found within a small compass. The primary questions circulated have each, with the answers belonging to it, been added as a supple-

ment to that portion of the evidence collected by the Assistant Commissioners to which it relates.

III. The reasons for not yet being able to obey Your Majesty's command to report to you, "Whether any and what further remedial measures appear to be requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor, or any portion of them," are perhaps sufficiently given in the fact, that we have not yet completed the second branch of our Inquiry, namely, that which relates to the "causes of destitution." We feel, however, at liberty to make a more extended explanation, and we think such due to ourselves. We should be little worthy of the high trust reposed in us, did we content ourselves with deciding upon the extent and nature of distress, or upon the means of only present alleviation. We consider it fell to our duty to endeavour, if possible, to investigate the causes of the destitution which we discover, and to ascertain why classes of Your Majesty's subjects are from time to time falling into a state of wretchedness; why the labouring population do not provide against those events which seem inevitable; why the able-bodied labourer does not provide against the sickness of himself or that of the various members of his family; against the temporary absence of employment; against the certain infirmity of age; or against the destitution of his widow and his children, in the contingent event of his own premature decease; whether these omissions arise from any peculiar improvidence in his habits, or from the insufficiency of employment, or from the low rate of his wages. It would not even be sufficient did we answer, that the limited amount of em-

- least to endeavour to trace whether there be any circumstances which restrict the amount of employment or the rate of wages; or in any other way offer impediments to the improvement of the people, which are such as can be remedied by legislation.

The principal occupation in Ireland being agricultural, our first attention has been directed to that branch of industry. We are informed, both through private communications, and through parliamentary and other public documents, that there is much unreclaimed land in Ireland which might be brought into cultivation, and that land already under cultivation might throughout Ireland be more efficiently worked, and thus increase the demand for labour. We wish to ascertain to what extent these statements are well founded, and whether the evil is attributable to want of capital or to want of skill; and whether there are any circumstances which have deterred British capitalists from coming to Ireland, or have prevented the investment in agriculture of capital actually existing in Ireland; and to what extent those circumstances have proved injurious: in case the evil arises from a deficiency of skill in the tenantry, to ascertain whether there are any means by which a superior knowledge of agriculture can be diffused; whether it be possible generally to introduce those systems which, in Down, Armagh, and in other counties, are reported to have produced the most beneficial results, both to the owner and to the occupier.

Other causes of inferior cultivation have been assigned, upon which it is necessary to possess information: Some of these respect corporate lands, lands of minors, lands in litigation, lands held under custodium, etc.; and more particularly lands in possession of sub-landlords, whose

interest is not sufficiently extensive to permit them to look beyond present gain, whilst the interest of the head landlord is too remote to induce him to lay out capital, the benefit of which could scarcely accrue to himself, even at a very distant time; others respect the conditions upon which the tenantry hold the land and buildings; others respect the means of communication, their absence or their imperfect condition as creating an impediment between the grower and his market.

We are also about to inquire into the actual condition of the agricultural labourer as to food, clothing and habitation; and the terms upon which he possesses con-acre ground, or holds as a cottier tenant. We feel that in endeavouring to prevent the existence of destitution, we shall more strictly fulfil Your Majesty's Commission, than if we merely devised means for alleviating misery after it had arisen. We shall feel deep pain should we ultimately be compelled to leave to any portion of the peasantry of Ireland a continuation of distress on the one hand, or a mere offer of charity on the other. Far more grateful would be the office of recommending measures by which the industrious labourer might have the prospect of a constant field for his exertions, with a remuneration sufficient for his present demands, and admitting of a provision against those contingencies which attach to himself and to his family. It is our anxious wish to do more than diminish the wretchedness of portions of the working classes; we are most solicitous to place the whole of those classes in the greatest state of comfort which it may be within the reach of the legislature permanently to provide, consistently with the good of the rest of society.

But even were there not that necessity which we are

convinced there is for further inquiry, to enable us to decide whether much of the now existing misery might be prevented, still we should be compelled to proceed, in order to avoid recommending measures which might lead to new evils. We cannot otherwise tell what might be the effects upon those who are now able to support themselves, of any mode of relief which might be proposed; how far such mode of relief to those who are destitute might increase the amount of destitution. These are not idle fears, but such cautions as necessarily suggest themselves to those who are acquainted with the effects produced upon the labourers in England by the public provision for the destitute in that country. Looking beyond the physical condition of the working classes, we also are desirous of guarding against the moral degradation which might follow in the train of measures benevolently intended, but ill-judged, when applied to a nation possessing the habits, and being in the peculiar situation, of the people of Ireland.

Having heard complaints within and out of Parliament, that we have consumed much time and money in prosecuting our Inquiry, we avail ourselves of this opportunity of soliciting the attention of Your Majesty to one or two remarks on these alleged grounds of complaint. Your Majesty's Commission bears date 25th September, 1833; we have therefore to the present time been occupied one year and ten months. We have the fullest reason to believe that we shall have completed the evidence before the close of the autumn; and that we shall then be able to lay an additional portion of it before Your Majesty, accompanied by some recommendations as to certain parts of the subject referred to us; and that early in February

we shall be able to close the Commission by a final report. Whether the time occupied by the Commission be or be not unreasonably long, must wholly depend upon the nature and extent of the subject; the extent of the district to which it refers; the number of classes of persons in those districts whom it peculiarly concerns; the willingness and ability for giving the required information possessed by those of whom the Inquiry must be made; and finally, upon the minuteness of the investigation. To estimate fairly the time necessary for an Inquiry, without considering those circumstances, would be impossible: one Commission might be fairly accused of being dilatory, though it had existed but six months; whilst another might have been most active and diligent, and yet have extended over several years. An Inquiry for obtaining an accurate body of statistics—for ascertaining the numbers of each religious denomination in a country, would require far less time than an Inquiry, for instance, into the mental and moral effects produced upon a population by various systems of education.

An Inquiry into the circumstances which retard the prosperity of a nation, and into those circumstances which might improve its general condition (the objects of our Inquiry), is clearly very different in its scope and difficulty from an Inquiry into the effects of a single institution, as, for instance, into corporations. For an Inquiry relative to corporations is not only confined to the effects of a single institution, but even to its effects upon a very small portion of a community. In like manner, an Inquiry into the administration and operation of an existing system of Poor Laws, though most extensive as regards the district of country and the classes of persons affected—including

the whole country and its population—is yet comparatively very limited in the subject. An Inquiry as to whether any measures can improve the condition of a people, might and would include an investigation into the immediate and remote effects, both on morals and on production, of every law and every usage. It must embrace every class of the community, in every district of the country.

No Commission could possibly be entrusted with a wider or more complicated subject for its investigation than ours; few Commissioners, perhaps, ever received such wide instructions. Few Commissioners have had a greater district over which to extend their examinations. None could have had a larger portion of a community to consult. None have had a community in which information was more difficult to collect than that of Ireland; and we think the evidence which we now lay before Your Majesty will show that the minuteness and accuracy of investigation will bear a comparison with the known results of any other Inquiry. Thus, whilst no other Inquiry has upon any one point exceeded in difficulty that with which we have had to contend, we have had to encounter the combined difficulties of all other Inquiries.

These remarks are not made under the impression that Your Majesty has considered us to have been dilatory in our proceedings; they are not made with the desire to disparage the labours of others, nor to claim for ourselves any peculiar merit. They are made, because we know that on the close of our labours a period will have elapsed rather exceeding that occupied by several very effective Inquiries, particularly by that on the English Poor Law.

been formed of the manner in which it was conducted, both as regards diligence and accuracy, and because we feel, that in measuring our labours, and the time they are likely to occupy, by such a standard, we shall have taken the surest mode of showing that we have used the utmost diligence.

With a view to lighten, as far as possible, the arduous duties attaching to us, the collection and the arrangement of the evidence, and the general machinery of all Commissions being to a great extent similar, a Secretary was appointed who possessed experience in such occupations, and who was therefore likely to anticipate many facilities and difficulties which would escape the observation of those who were not equally practised. From the similarity, in many respects, of an Inquiry into the operation of the Poor Laws in England, and an Inquiry into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, the Secretary to the former Inquiry was appointed. But the business of the English Inquiry having been prolonged beyond the period anticipated, he was not permitted to join us till six months after the Commission had been in operation, and consequently the experience by which we were to benefit, and thus to shorten our labours, was withheld during a very important period of our sittings.

With regard to the economy with which we have conducted the Inquiry, this cannot, any more than the time, be justly estimated without considering the extent and difficulty of the duties, and the manner in which they have been performed. An Inquiry which contains but one branch can, of course, be conducted for a smaller sum than one which contains three or four; for either an additional number of Assistant Commissioners will be required

for the latter, or if an equal number only be employed, they must be continued during a far greater length of time. Again, a Commission, the examinations of which can be conducted by Assistant Commissioners acting singly, will be at far less expense than one the examinations of which must be taken before two Assistant Commissioners. On the English Poor Law Inquiry, the Assistant Commissioners were only engaged during three months; the Assistant Commissioners on this Inquiry have been constantly employed during nearly eighteen months. The great expenditure upon every Inquiry of this description consists in the travelling expenditure of the Assistant Commissioners. Had it been possible to bring before a Parliamentary Committee the same description and the same number of witnesses as have been examined before our Assistant Commissioners, twenty times the amount of our expenditure would not have sufficed; and yet the value of evidence depends chiefly upon the number of persons examined, and upon the number of districts about which information is gained.

We cannot conclude this sketch of our proceedings up to the present period, without remarking that, having been appointed to inquire into the condition of that portion of Your Majesty's Irish subjects who are or may be considered as requiring relief, we have felt it our duty to devote our attention, in the first instance, to those classes in which distress was known or supposed principally to prevail. We think it necessary to make this observation, in consequence of our evidence containing so few details as to the condition of the poor placed in more favourable circumstances. We know that there is a very large num-

judicious devotion of individuals to the personal superintendence of their estates, and the improvement of the condition of their poorer neighbours, much misery has been alleviated, and much wholly prevented.

All which we humbly certify to Your Majesty.

RICHARD, DUBLIN.

F. HORT.

D. MURRAY.

JOHN CORRIE.

CHARLES VIGNOLES.

J. L. W. NAPER.

R. MORE O'FERRALL.

W. B. WRIGHTSON.

JAMES CARLILE.

FIRST PART.

INQUIRY ON THE STATE OF IRELAND.

BOOK I.

GENERAL SYSTEM OF CULTIVATION OF LANDS IN IRELAND. — CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM IT. — CHANGES ATTEMPTED TO BE MADE IN THIS SYSTEM.

TABLE

of the Parishes or Baronies in which this Inquiry was instituted, the number of Witnesses who were examined, and the names of the Assistant Commissioners who received the depositions.

Counties.	Parishes or Baronies.	Number of Witnesses.	Names of the Assistant Commissioners.
PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT.			
Galway	Parish of Aughrim.....	16	F. Diggers, Esq. W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.
	Barony of Kilconnel ...	27	
Leitrim	" Dromahair ...	28	Rev. C. Clarke, E. B. Malloy, Esq.
	" Mohill	20	
Mayo	" Murrisk	24	
Sligo	" Carbery	43	
PROVINCE OF LEINSTER.			
Dublin	Barony of Balrothery .	42	J. Power, Esq. F. Sadleir, Esq.
Kilkenny...	" Galmoy.....	31	
	" Gowran	38	W. J. Gisborne, Esq. T. N. Vaughan, Esq.
	" Clonlisk	60	
King's.....	" Philipstown ...	21	J. Binns, Esq. J. O'Hea, Esq.
Louth.....	" Dundalk	52	J. Power, Esq. F. Sadleir, Esq.
Meath.....	" Kells.....	60	
	" Moyfenragh ...	56	
Queen's ...	" Maryborough .	71	
Wicklow.....	" Portnahinch... 49		
	" Talbotstown... 60		
PROVINCE OF MUNSTER.			
Clare	Barony of Corcomroe .	62	W. J. Gisborne, Esq. T. N. Vaughan, Esq.
Kerry	" Iveragh.....	43	
	" Trughenackmy	68	
Limerick...	" Conello.....	76	
	" Coshlea.....	30	
Tipperary ...	" Middlethird ...	74	
	" Decies Without		
Waterford {	" Drum	29	
	" Middlethird ...	72	
PROVINCE OF ULSTER.			
Armagh	Barony of Fews	43	J. Binns, Esq. J. O'Hea, Esq.
Cavan	" Loughtee	25	
Down.....	" Iveagh	31	
Fermanagh {	" Lecale	33	
	" Tyrkennedy ...	25	

CHAPTER I.

OF LANDLORDS AND THEIR TENANTS.

ACCORDING to the published official statements of the population, the total superficies of Ireland contains 17,182,763 English statute acres:—

Leinster	4,270,213
Munster	5,210,472
Ulster	4,041,627
Connaught	3,660,451

Total . 17,182,763 acres

of which about one-fourth is uncultivated. As the Catholics have only since 1788 been allowed to hold lands, the difference of religion, say the witnesses, is one of the causes which hinder the landowners from residing on their estates. Many of them go to England, and this is the reason why more capital passes from Ireland to England than formerly.

When a forty shillings' rent was sufficient to constitute an elector, the landowners subdivided their farms, in order to multiply these electors; but now that the qualification is raised to 10*l.*, they would be very glad to resume the lands, in order to consolidate them, and thus to increase their political influence; they cannot, however, expel the small farmers before their leases are expired.

All the witnesses agree in saying that the lands are let at exorbitant prices, and the bad effect of this is not confined to the peasants; for the landowner, believing himself richer than he really is, is induced to engage in greater

expenses, and finds persons who will advance loans to him on the nominal price of his estates. The farmer cannot pay, and the landowner is obliged to make seizures on all sides in order to discharge the interest of the mortgages. Mr. Shawe, proprietor of some estates in Ireland, and farmer and agent of many others, assigned another cause for the embarrassment of the Irish landowners, namely, the modification made in the law of primogeniture during the war, obliging the eldest sons to allow pensions to their brothers and marriage-portions to their sisters.

The Commissioners have paid great attention to the effects resulting from the residence or non-residence of the landowners.

Some persons complained of the non-residence of the landowners, saying, that if they dwelt upon their estates, the labourers would have more work; that in times of difficulty the tenants would have more help; that in those parts where the landowners do reside, they take care of the aged, the orphans and the poor; that they subscribe towards the support of the hospitals, the schools, the chapels, and all useful establishments; that they mend the roads, and give employment in keeping up their parks, etc.

The English Commissioners have expressed their opinion, that the state of Ireland is so hopeless, both from the pecuniary embarrassment of the landlords, and the ignorance and poverty of the farmers, that they are amazed that society can continue to exist. They state, that landowners, with very few exceptions, are looked upon only as the tyrants of the soil; that, although in England and Scotland complaints are sometimes heard against the landowners, they are in general humane, protecting and supporting those who are under them; whereas in Ireland, huma-

nity is not to be expected from them ; and that in short their absenteeism, their neglect of the lower classes, and their political dissensions, are alone well nigh sufficient to keep the country in its present state of misery.

The Commissioners inquired if the lands were let directly to those persons who cultivated them, or if they were sublet to them by individuals, who, on speculation, became middle-men between the landowner and the farmer.

Nearly all the baronies have shown that the custom of employing middle-men in the letting of lands was formerly general, but that the landowners are seeking to get rid of them, and that the number of leases which pass in this manner is daily diminishing.

The complaints against the middle-men are general. In the barony of Kilconnel, province of Connaught, a remarkable instance was detailed of the facility with which lands are sublet. A piece of land was let for 6*d.* an acre, sublet afterwards for 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre to another person, who again sublet it to a third at 3*s.* an acre ; and he sublet to several small tenants, receiving from them on an average £1 7*s.* an acre.

Whatever clauses are contained in the lease granted by the head landlord are continued in all leases granted by each inferior middle-man ; but it is impossible to enforce their execution*. Whoever wishes to have any land, signs the lease without even seeking to know what it contains.

In the province of Munster, many persons who had paid their rents to middle-men have lost both their money and

[* In the Report, Appendix F., this refers only to certain clauses

their farms, these middle-men having failed to pay the proprietor in fee; and many instances are mentioned of farmers, who are obliged to pay these middle-men day by day, whilst the latter render their payments only yearly or half-yearly.

Many proprietors in fee, having still very long leases granted to middle-men, have appointed bailiffs to reside upon their estates, in order to protect the tenants against the exactions of the middle-men.

The Commissioners have taken every possible means of ascertaining to what extent the soil of Ireland is sublet by middle-men, and what influence this system may have upon the state of cultivation. In order to assure themselves of the truth, they visited many districts.

In the barony of Kells (Upper and Lower), province of Leinster, they obtained the following results* :

	Plantation Acres.
Quantity held direct from the proprietors in fee	27,754
Quantity held under the Courts of Chan- cery and Exchequer	216
Quantity held on glebe lands.	1,494
Quantity held in college and endowed charity lands	334.

The lands of the tenantry holding under the first class of landlords are in a better condition than the rest. That portion held under colleges and charities, as well as that held on glebe lands, is in a miserable state, because the system of letting and subletting has been continued, which the proprietors in fee have long since checked.

In the 216 acres held under the Courts, the tenants are

[* These and the following statements are copied from the Report of the Commissioners (Appendix F., p. 162, *seq.*)—TRANSL.]

the most miserable, on account of the great subdivision of the lands, and of the high price paid by those who sublet them; for the Chancery Court, having the administration of all the property of minors in dispute, is obliged to put their lands up to auction, and the great competition produces enormous prices.

With respect to the lands let directly by the proprietors in fee, the Commissioners have divided them into three classes, namely :

	Plantation Acres.
Proportion held under resident landlords	13,479
Proportion held under non-resident landlords, having agents on their estates	12,370
Proportion held under absentee landlords, not having resident agents	3,675.

The estates of the resident proprietors were found to be in a much better state than the others, and those let by the middle-men the most neglected of all. The Commissioners remarked, that the tenants of the resident proprietors were, in general, treated with more humanity, and were not sued for the payment of their rents, as those who are under the power of agents and middle-men; and that, in short, the best off among the farmers were those living under a resident proprietor, who made improvements on his estates. These remarks are confirmed by all the depositions.

In the barony of Galmoy, province of Leinster, there is no resident proprietor.

In the barony of Gowran, in the same province, the majority of the proprietors are resident.

Nearly all those in the barony of Clonlisk are resident.

In the barony of Philipstown there is not a single resident, which is the subject of much complaint among the tenantry.

In the barony of Dundalk there are farms very well kept up, thanks to the resident proprietors.

In the barony of Moyfenragh, in the same province, there is not a single resident proprietor; and the only estates in good condition belong to an English absentee, who has expended capital in their cultivation.

In the barony of Portnahinch there are
12,800 acres, held under resident landlords.

2,942 acres, held under non-resident landlords, having
agents on their estates.

6,823 acres, held under absentee landlords, not having
resident agents.

In the barony of Talbotstown, province of Leinster, one-fifth of the cultivated lands is let or held by resident proprietors—three-fifths by agents—one-fifth by middle-men.

In the other provinces of Ireland the number of the resident proprietors diminishes in proportion to their distance from Dublin.

The Commissioners took pains to obtain information respecting the usual length of the leases in each parish.

In the barony of Kilconnel, province of Connaught, they found that the greatest portion of the land was let for a fixed term; but that the landlords, from a fear of increasing the influence of the Catholic priests, were becoming every day less disposed to renew the leases.

A land-agent maintained that it was better neither to grant nor to accept a lease, because then no party ran any risk; and that in bad years an abatement was allowed

to tenants not having a lease, which those who held leases would certainly never obtain.

Nevertheless it has been remarked, in many parishes, that those who held leases had considerably improved their lands, whilst those who had not any had done nothing for theirs.

In the barony of Dromahair, in the same province, it was stated, that formerly the custom existed of granting leases for the term of three lives, which extended them beyond fifty years; but that at present this custom has nearly ceased, and the leases are shorter. The witnesses state, that the farmer who holds a long lease labours for himself, whilst he whose lease is short labours for another, and the farm is no better cultivated.

The witnesses examined respecting the condition of the barony of Carbery, in the same province, stated, that leases for twenty-one years were generally speaking replacing those for the term of three lives; because, when the land was in an uncultivated state, it was necessary to grant longer leases, in order to encourage the tenants to undertake the labours which were indispensably needful. In the barony of Clonlisk, province of Leinster, tenants hold from year to year, for otherwise the peasants vote contrary to the will of the proprietors. The Commissioners think that very short leases are preferable when the proprietor is resident, because he pays for the improvement of the land and for building, which is not the case when the lease is long. In the barony of Kells the Commissioners found, that one-half of the estates was let on long leases, and the other half from year to year. They do not think that this has created any difference in the cultivation of the land. They remark that the farmers know absolutely

nothing of agriculture, and that the buildings are in a most wretched condition. Whatever difference there may be between one farm and another, depends upon the agent or the proprietor, but not upon the length of the lease.

This state of things is general in Ireland, and all the depositions agree on the fact, that the tenants who are the most uncertain in their farms are those who hold on glebe lands, the usufructuary being unable to grant a longer lease than for his own life.

The Commissioners made inquiries respecting what is called taking a farm in common, and whether this custom was still in force.

The reply was as follows: eight or ten persons agree to take a farm of thirty or forty acres together: in each of the fields, the first takes an allotment from one end to the other; the second takes another next to that, and cultivates it as he pleases; the third does the same; and all ten are thus employed in cultivating, in sowing and gathering in their crops, side by side, each having his allotment separated from that of his neighbour by a small strip of grass. As the quality of the soil varies however much in the length of each field, in order to equalize the portions, he who in the first instance had the first lot, takes the second the following year, and so on until he cultivates the last.

This, according to the depositions, is the most ruinous of all the systems of farming; it only admits of the cultivation of oats and potatoes, very rarely of corn, and never of grass nor any kind of pasturage; it prevents the rearing of cattle, and it leads to all sorts of quarrelling.

sublets the land comes only upon the richest, and will have only to deal with him.

The number of farms held under this tenure is diminishing every day throughout Ireland. They are remarkable for their bad cultivation, and no one is desirous of renewing this sort of lease.

In many baronies the Commissioners observed, that the majority of the farms were not leased, on account of the poverty of the tenant, who has not the means of paying the great expense of writings and stamps.

In several baronies of the province of Munster, and principally in that of Conello, a stop is put to making leases by the disorder consequent upon disputes concerning tithes, the payment of which has been for several years refused.

The competition for land is so great, that even those who hold their farms only from year to year, find others willing to take them at an extremely raised price. The Commissioners questioned the witnesses in all the provinces of Ireland, in order to ascertain whether any clauses were introduced into the leases with a view to prevent farmers exhausting the land, by compelling them to follow a systematic cropping: they also examined the leases in the different parishes which they visited.

They ascertained, that in general no clause of this kind is inserted in the leases, as the proprietor understands the art of cultivation no better than the farmer; that the lands of those few who had introduced such clauses, were in the same condition as the lands of those proprietors who had not done so, because it was impossible to cause the wisest conditions to be carried into effect. It is not possible even to prevent the farmers subletting; for, say the witnesses,

if a pauper runs up a cabin during the night upon a corner of your land, how can you take the shelter from over his head the next morning?

They found, that in several baronies the richest tenants, when they know that the proprietor will not renew the lease, divide their lands into parcels of half an acre, a quarter of an acre, and even still less, and sublet them thus during the three or four last years that they hold their farms. They then give them up to the landlord in a state of complete exhaustion.

Many proprietors, in order to prevent the exhaustion of their lands, give the farmers a large sum of money, on condition of their leaving the farm before the expiration of the lease. In the barony of Kilconnel, the instance of Lord Clonbrock was mentioned, who gave 1700*l.* for this purpose. The original lease was at an annual rent of 295*l.*, and for three lives; only two, of the age of seventy-five, remained, who threatened to sublet in small parcels, and did not give up their lease until they received that sum.

REMARKS.

The people of the North, who have spread over the whole of Europe, had all the same territorial laws, to which the countries they subjugated were obliged to submit. Thus at the period when England, France, the South of Germany, Spain and Italy, were invaded, the lands became the property of the military chiefs, as soon as they could form fiefs; and these in turn divided the fruits

of their conquests among their generals or chief officers, under a condition of receiving from them in return military service. But this general law had not throughout the same application. In the mountainous countries of the south of Europe, the lands capable of cultivation lie in narrow valleys, difficult of access. The new proprietors, not wishing to fix their dwellings in these spots, granted them to their vassals on payment of tribute, which was eventually commuted into a sum of ready money.

In other countries, as France and Germany, the vassals, who had the grants in perpetuity, obtained them only on condition of paying in perpetuity tributes in money or in labour. This system still exists in Germany, but in France the Revolution has abolished it, with more or less injustice.

In England the system has been altogether different. The conquerors have remained proprietors of the soil, and when the successors of William the Conqueror invaded Scotland and Ireland, they followed the same system.

A characteristic of the three kingdoms, to the investigation of whose condition these Inquiries are directed, is, that the conquerors have retained the lands, and that the number of landholders has continued very small, in comparison with what we know to be the case on the continent of Europe. But the feature which distinguishes Ireland from

the proprietors of the soil, to this day, let it in small portions, whilst in the latter the land is only let in large farms.

One cause is the following: the English, when they conquered Ireland, remained the principal landholders, and at first let the lands upon the same system as in England, that is, in large farms. But the English, after having adopted the Reformation, desired to establish it in Ireland. This the Irish unanimously resisted. The English, conquerors in 1640, confiscated under Cromwell all the territorial possessions of the Catholics; and Lord Clare, Chancellor of Ireland in 1810, declared, that since the former period fifteen-sixteenths of the soil of Ireland had been confiscated at different times. From 1640 to 1788 the Catholics were not allowed to possess landed property in Ireland; they had incurred a civil death, and the lands passed to the nearest Protestant relative by right of primogeniture, from male to male. From that moment nearly the whole of the lands in Ireland became the prey of the English; but their irritated vassals kept up a warfare with them, and they were unable to reside upon their estates. In order to derive from their lands some revenue, they had therefore no alternative but to let them to middle-men, who sublet them in smaller portions, leaving to the under-tenants the power to divide and sublet them still further.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SIZE OF FARMS.

THE Commissioners have in all the baronies inquired into the number of farms under the size of one acre; of those consisting of from one to five acres; from five to ten; from ten to twenty; from twenty to fifty; from fifty to eighty; from eighty to one hundred; and, lastly, the number of farms of one hundred acres and above. The following Table shows the results of the only information which they could obtain :

Baronies.		Number of Farms.							
		Under One Acre.	From 1 to 5.	From 5 to 10.	From 10 to 20.	From 20 to 50.	From 50 to 80.	From 80 to 100.	Of 100 and above.
Province of Leinster.	Balrothery	175	250	125	200	100	50	75	50
	Galmoy	212	341	142	138	145	44	14	27
	Clonlisk	122	359	257	226	207	54	14	25
	Kells	66	472	325	252	155	30	17	79
	Moyfenragh	25	134	128	107	151	47	13	53
	Portnahinch	147	587	453	362	218	73	43	39
	Maryborough.....	299	579	295	175	106	10	3	6
	Total for Leinster...	1046	2722	1725	1460	1082	308	179	279
Province of Munster.	Corcomroe.....	190	1008	513	188	77	16	6	13
	Trughenackmy	35	62	31	65	84	41	16	4
	Conello	189	350	575	643	551	87	32	38
	Coshlea	110	397	531	531	385	35	5	15
	Middlethird	37	190	117	140	227	64	15	22
	Total for Munster...	561	2007	1767	1567	1324	243	74	92

The tenancy of very small allotments of land for a single year is not included in the above table.

REMARKS.

The province of Leinster is the richest, or rather the least poor, in Ireland, as it includes Dublin, the seat of government. That capital naturally receives from the three other provinces an amount of duties, which is expended in it, and the landholders have no fear of residing there. The agriculture of its environs has thus the advantage of resources, of which the other provinces are destitute; and consequently there are more large farms in its neighbourhood than in other parts of the country.

The families of the rural population are divided into two classes—those who are in a condition to employ labour, and those who, for their livelihood, must obtain it. It may be reckoned, that a farmer who cultivates 100 acres and upwards with his family, is not equal to the labour which the farm requires; he must therefore employ labourers. On the other hand, families whose occupations do not exceed from one to ten acres, cannot subsist upon their produce, and are obliged to work as day-labourers.

Now, in the preceding table, we observe that in Leinster there are 458 farmers, occupying 80 acres and upwards, who have to find labour for 5493

families of farmers of ten acres and under ; whilst in the province of Munster there are only 166 farmers of 80 acres and upwards who can give employment, and 4335 families who require it. So that in Leinster ten farmers have to find occupation for 120 families, whilst in Munster ten farmers have to employ 261. As ten families of farmers cannot give labour to 120 families, very great misery exists in Leinster ; but far greater still in Munster, where ten farmers have to employ 261.

CHAPTER III.

OF OCCUPATION FOR ONE YEAR, OR BY THE CON-ACRE SYSTEM.

MR. Brassington stated, before the Committee charged with inquiry into the agriculture in the three kingdoms, that in Ireland “ a farmer, holding on lease 100 acres of land at a rent of 1*l.* 10*s.* per acre, con-acres 12 or 15 acres of that land at 12*l.* per acre, and that pays a large proportion of the rent of the whole farm.” He said that nearly all the day-labourers hire small lots of land for a single year, upon which they cultivate potatoes, and that only in the eastern part of the province of Leinster they attach themselves to no landholders, and leave their cabins to go whithersoever they choose.

The Commissioners appointed to visit Ireland made the most minute inquiries, in order to ascertain whether this system of occupation was general in each parish, and in what points it differed in various parishes.

In the province of Connaught, the barony of Kilconnel showed that a day-labourer hired for a year one-quarter or one-eighth of an acre, to cultivate potatoes; also that a higher class of persons held one or two acres for growing oats during the year; that a very considerable portion of the barony is cultivated upon this system of letting in small lots for a year, termed *con-acre*; that the day-labourers, and a part of the shopkeepers in the villages, derive an income from this. This land consists of old meadows or fallow-land, which the farmers sublet in this manner, commonly giving permission to burn the surface,

and the fallow is most in request, since it requires little labour. The labourer does not trouble himself to manure it, as his interest extends not beyond the harvest.

In general the small farmers, for the sake of the straw, cultivate oats; but the labourers never cultivate anything but potatoes.

It was stated that, in the barony of Dromahair, half an acre was the extent of land sublet to a man for a year in con-acre; that this system of occupation was general, but that it prevailed more in the neighbourhood of the small towns, because the shopkeepers and artisans competed with the labourers to obtain lots of ground, on which to cultivate potatoes with the spade, the plough being almost unknown in the barony.

In the baronies of Mohim and Carbery this system is universal; since, according to the witnesses, the artisans and shopkeepers are unable to go to a distance to procure potatoes, their only description of food, which are moreover too heavy for their transport.

In the barony of Murrisk this system is unknown; the cause of which is that the farms are exceedingly small, and all the soil which can be manured is planted with potatoes.

In the province of Leinster, the Commissioners found some baronies in which this system is not general, because the labourers had obtained more constant employment from the large farmers; such are the baronies of Balrothery and Clonlisk. It prevails, however, throughout almost all the country, as in the baronies of Galmoy, Gowran, Philipstown, Dundalk, Kells, Moyferagh, etc.

In the provinces of Munster and Ulster this system is, with very little exception, universal. The Commissioners inquired into the price and the conditions of this kind of tenure.

From the replies given in every parish of Ireland, the price of rent of the lot of land is fixed at from 4*l.* 8*s.* to 10*l.* 10*s.* per acre, according to the conditions to which the farmer binds himself on yielding the land. Sometimes the latter has to work and manure the land, and the labourer in that case has only to burn it, find the seed, plant, weed it, and gather in the harvest. In other cases the labourer has to do everything.

In some baronies the amount of the produce is not equal to the rent, where the labourer has to manure the ground largely before planting it.

The Commissioners inquired what was the produce in potatoes of an Irish acre of land cultivated on this system, and found that it varied from 14,500 lbs. to 29,000 lbs.; that when the soil is bad, the crop consists only of refuse potatoes, but in general regard is only paid to the quantity of the produce. The potatoes grown upon manured land are of a better quality than those produced upon land which has been burnt.

In some baronies the labourers sell a portion of the crop, to repay money which they have been previously obliged to borrow. In this case, the poor people, pressed by their creditors, sell their potatoes as they dig them up, at two-thirds of the price which they reach in the course of the year.

In other baronies the crop is divided into three portions. The best sort serves for the tenants' food, the worst is food for their pig, which pays the rent, whilst the middle quality is reserved for planting.

The Commissioners examined with great care the different witnesses, with a view to ascertain the motives which induced the poor to hire plots of land at so dear a rate

In the barony of Kilconnel the reply was, that this sort of tenure was the principal resource of the labourer; that if the crop is not so productive as he expects, he gives it up for the amount of his rent, and becomes a pauper, unless he obtains from his neighbours credit for the provisions he receives; in which case he pays the proprietor for the potatoes upon which he lives, more than double the price which the latter obtains in the market for ready money; for that which the proprietor sells in the market for 4*d.*, he sells on credit to the labourer for 8*d.*

The whole harvest is not ordinarily worth the rent which the labourer pays, to say nothing of his labour; nevertheless, he is very eager to pay, in order to have a plot of land the following year; and he endeavours to make his bargain in such a way as to pay his landlord in labour, the poor man fearing to lose his sole means of livelihood.

The labourers would certainly be able to buy potatoes in the market at a lower price than that which they pay under such a system. But as, unhappily, they have no other employment, it is their only means to obtain food throughout the year for themselves and their families, since no one is rich enough to give them day-labour.

In the barony of Dromahair it was stated, that in hiring a plot of land the labourer never thinks of making any profit, but that the poor fellow has only this means of turning his labour to account: if he found employment at the lowest price known, the potatoes which he could buy would come cheaper to him than paying such rents; this system is become necessary in a country in which the majority of the inhabitants has no other employment.

In the barony of Philinstown it was stated, in reply to

the inquiry of the Commissioners, that this system prevails from want of employment, and that persons hold con-acre even at the distance of five miles from their dwellings, never with the view to make any profit by the sale of their produce, but to insure to themselves a supply of food; and that they hope to be able to pay, by going to seek work for some months in England. In England, however, the law obliges each district to support the poor who have established a claim upon the soil; and as this right is acquired by six weeks' residence, the magistrates do not permit the poor who come over from Ireland to reside so long a time. The following is an official statement of the number of Irish driven from England by order of the magistrates, on account of poverty, and who left Liverpool for Ireland:

In the year 1824	.	.	.	2481	poor.
„ 1825	.	.	.	3028	„
„ 1826	.	.	.	6428	„
„ 1827	.	.	.	6055	„
„ 1828	.	.	.	4249	„
„ 1829	.	.	.	5086	„
„ 1830	.	.	.	5679	„
„ 1831	.	.	.	5863	„

The labourers are described by the witnesses to be in such a state of misery, that social order is constantly endangered. The large farms rear cattle, and yield little work; the small farmers have not the means of employing the labour which they need, so that the condition of agriculture is rapidly growing worse, whilst the country is in a state of famine; and in spite of their utmost efforts, nothing is able to relieve the people from their miserable

condition; nevertheless, *there are thousands of acres of bog-land which might be drained.*

In all the baronies of Ireland the replies have been similar to the preceding ones.

The Commissioners everywhere inquired how the poor paid such high rents, and whether this system of letting was not one cause of the disputes and troubles in society, and of crimes.

In the barony of Kilconnel it was stated in reply, that the poor who hire these plots of land are made to sign a note for the amount of the rent, and that the period of payment is fixed at the time of the Quarter Sessions, in order that the landlords may imprison the tenants in case of non-payment. The payments are generally made in money, but sometimes in day-labour; the latter is the case chiefly when the land is very bad, because it is a sure means of inducing the poor to take it, and the price of the labour required in payment is reckoned at sixpence a day. The tenants who have to pay in money are not allowed to dig up the potatoes before they have paid what they owe to the landlord, or have at least given good security; they are not even permitted to gather in such a portion of the crop as, carried to market and sold, would pay the rent.

If the crop is not worth the amount of the rent, the proprietor of the field may sell the produce and sue the tenant for the rest; but such a proceeding is almost unknown. The labourer is sometimes permitted to dig the potatoes, but never to remove them from the field till the rent has been paid; during the time of digging, he is allowed to carry off as much as his daily wants require.

for wages be substituted for the con-acre system, it would be most desirable.

In other respects the system is not productive in this barony of litigation between the farmer and the labourer who hires under him. On the contrary, labourers express themselves grateful for small portions of con-acre, and many of them who were questioned on the subject designated different landholders as good or bad, according as they let much or little of their ground for potatoes, without particular reference to whether the rents demanded were high or low. ●

In the barony of Dromahair, it was stated that the farmers who let con-acre are usually persons greatly in need of money to pay their rents, or else they would not break up good pasture; for the mischief is equally great for the landlord, the farmer and labourer. The farmers never allow the labourer to introduce into the agreement the condition of paying the rent in work; because if they are not paid, they oblige him to work at half-price, and that too in harvest-time, when the poor can obtain employment.

Frequently the labourer is unable to pay, and he then abandons the crops and is reduced to beggary. Such is the eagerness to obtain from farmers plots of land, that although they do not permit the potatoes to be dug up before the rent is paid (fearing that they might be carried off in the night, or that the wet would spoil them), the labourers, nevertheless, do not like to have any disagreement with the farmers, lest they should refuse them the land the following year.^a

In the barony of Mohill, it is a common thing to make the labourer take an oath that he will pay the rent before

a certain day. He is not allowed to dig up the crop before he has paid the rent, and if he attempts to remove it he is summoned to the Petty Sessions. There are frequently disputes on the neglect of the farmer to keep the fences in repair, and to prevent the trespassing of cattle and their destroying the crops.

Throughout Ireland the evidence of the witnesses was the same as the foregoing. In the province of Leinster the labourers often rear a pig with the crop of potatoes, and they obtain a postponement of the payment of the rent till six weeks after they have dug them up.

Many persons are fined for burning the land, as that is forbidden by an act of parliament, which declares that method of cultivation pernicious. In many baronies disturbances have arisen from the farmers opposing the removal of the crop before the payment of the rent, and it frequently rots upon the land. In the province of Ulster this system has caused few disputes, because the labourers are afraid of not having the plots of ground the following year; but the magistrate says that generally, in cases of litigation, it is the farmer who is in the wrong, from giving bad land, or not fulfilling the conditions of the bargain.

On the contrary, in the province of Munster, disputes are very frequent on account of the excessive price at which the farmers sublet the land. They often pay their servants by permitting them to cultivate plots of land. In some parishes coalitions of the labourers have taken place, to compel the farmers to let land on this system.

All the witnesses concur in opinion, that a continued employment for the poor, bringing in only 6*d.* or even 4*d.* a day, would be far preferable to con-acre; but that this

system has taken such root, that nothing but a total revolution in society could destroy it.

The Commissioners finally inquired of the witnesses whether they considered this system to have any influence on the increase of the population. The unanimous reply was, that it had a decided tendency to encourage early marriages, because in certain baronies a married man considers himself sure of obtaining half an acre to cultivate potatoes, and thinks he has no occasion to trouble himself about the future. In other baronies, it is stated, no woman will marry a man who has not a quarter of an acre hired for a year, and that no woman will refuse a man if he obtains this settlement.

The rapidity in the increase of the population of Ireland may be judged of from the following table.

Provinces.	Population in the year 1821.	Population in the year 1831.	Increase in ten years.
Leinster	1,757,492	1,909 713	From 100 to 108
Munster	1,935,612	2,227,152	„ 115
Ulster	1,998,494	2,286,622	„ 114
Connaught	1,110,229	1,343,914	„ 121
Total of Ireland ...	6,801,827	7,767,401	100 to 114

REMARKS.

The reader will observe in the foregoing table a phænomenon which requires to be explained, and which may remove from the minds of those interested in political œconomy many unfounded prejudices. Leinster is the least poor of the four provinces, and its population, during a space of ten years, has increased only in the proportion of 100 to 108 ; whilst the population of Connaught, which is in a state of misery unparalleled in Europe, has augmented from 100 to 121. The inquiries made respecting the state of these two provinces prove that, in these ten years, the misery has a little diminished in the province of Leinster, and has greatly increased in that of Connaught. The increase of the population is not therefore, as some have believed, a proof of the prosperity of a country : in some instances it is a proof of the reverse. Let us explain this.

From the twelfth to the seventeenth century the population of Europe increased very slowly, and nearly in an equal proportion throughout Europe, because the whole of Europe had the same laws. No one had the right of building or settling on the land without the permission of the lord of the manor, who granted this only when he hoped to derive advantage from so doing. The families who

of which increased his revenue. The increase of the population thus met with obstacles, and depended on the pleasure of the chief, who had an interest in not allowing families to settle on his domain without the means of subsistence.

In the towns the law was still more severe : no family could settle in them without belonging to one of the corporations into which the community was divided : no one could build without a permission from the municipal authority, and these permissions were granted to the manufacturer or merchant only on condition of having served an apprenticeship of seven years, and, moreover, of taking only a limited number of apprentices.

It is evident that, under such a system, the state of things in Europe could not at that period be the same as it is at the present day, when most of these barriers are broken down. Families settle, each upon an acre of ground, the landlords being so blind as to let it thus in small lots, and the increase of the population follows the increase of the division of the land. From the above table we might conclude, that the landowners of Leinster had let much less land in small allotments than those of Connaught and the other provinces of Ireland, and the investigation of the Commissioners has confirmed this fact.

The inquiry into the manufactures and commerce shows that, in the towns where the corporations

have maintained their privileges, the population has increased much less than in those where these privileges have been abolished.

The remedy pointed out by the drainage of the bog-lands may indeed partially lessen the evils of society if effected under a good system, as it may increase them if applied under a bad one.

Three centuries ago, all Europe presented a uniform aspect: bogs, commons and woods occupied above three-fourths of the surface. For three centuries all Europe has been engaged in draining, clearing and cultivating, but each country has followed its own system. In Great Britain the lands thus brought into a state of culture have been divided into farms of three hundred acres. In Ireland, on the contrary, they have been parcelled out into farms of ten acres, five, and even less than a single acre. Here are the two extremities of the chain. The English system has limited the increase of the population; the Irish system, on the contrary, has placed no limit to it. If therefore the Commissioners propose the drainage of the bog-lands, they will only augment the evil; if, on the other hand, they adopt the English system, they will materially better the country; and this point we must explain. All the various states of Europe have for three centuries undergone clearing, and they are all richer or poorer in proportion as they have adopted more or less completely the one or other of these systems.

CHAPTER IV.

OF SMALL TENANTRY, WHOSE OCCUPATIONS DO NOT
EXCEED TEN ACRES.

THE Commissioners inquired whether there are many offers for small farms when they fall vacant.

In the barony of Kilconnel a witness replied, that when land is out of lease, if the vacant farm be large, it is advertised in the newspapers; but if small, fifty bidders would instantly be found, all of whom would be ready to promise any rent that should be asked.

In the barony of Dromahair it was stated, that if a farm of five acres is vacant, all the neighbouring inhabitants outbid one another so eagerly, that the one to whom it is knocked down often does not obtain even potatoes for his own consumption, being obliged to grow oats for the market in order to pay his rent; and that, to find food for his family, he is obliged to take a plot of land of some neighbouring farmer for a year, to grow potatoes, upon the con-acre system. No amelioration in this class of people can be expected; for if they gained anything, the landlords would take advantage of the competition to raise the price of the land.

In the barony of Mohill, as soon as a man has any money, he directly gets possession of a little farm, purchasing the lease of some one, even should he ruin himself by it.

In the barony of Murrisk the competition for small farms is said to be so great, that if a farmer who is in

difficulties wishes to emigrate to America, he instantly finds some one to pay his voyage, on condition of the lease lapsing to him.

In the province of Leinster the answers were the same. In the barony of Moyfenragh it was added, that the peasants have a very strong attachment to the soil, chiefly because a small farm gives them a habitation. In the barony of Portnahinch, even if the tithes and taxes were abolished, the small farmers would not be better off, because they are ruined by the competition.

In the provinces of Munster and Ulster these statements were confirmed and enforced by the following facts. In the barony of Decies-without-Drum it was said that, even if permanent employment were assured to each of these little farmers, yielding 5s. a week, they would be most anxious to get land, and would sacrifice part of their wages to obtain it, from the habit they have of possessing it. In the barony of Fews, no one can form any idea of the attachment of the peasants to the soil. They had rather be in want of everything than quit their native places; and, in spite of the excessive price of rents, leases sell at corresponding prices. A lease of a farm of $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres was sold for 123*l.*, and for another of $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres 45*l.* was given, besides 8*l.* 0*s.* 8*d.* rent additional. Although many sons of farmers are taught weaving, that trade is never looked on as an exclusive means of support; the weaver is also a farmer, and retains the same anxiety for a small portion of land. In the barony of Iveagh it was found, that when the landlords do not receive their rents, they themselves pay the tenant to quit the farm, and that another person directly offers the landlord double what he gave to the tenant, on condition of taking the lease.

granted to him. It was stated, that many people go from this district to England, and become small dealers in linen, etc. : when, after some years, they have made a little money, they return, and being anxious to settle, give excessive prices for any little holding, to spend the rest of their life in misery.

The Commissioners inquired what was the length of leases of the small farms. The reply was, that very often they are let only from year to year, and that it is lawful for the landlord to raise the price of the lease ; but that the peasant, having no other means of subsistence for himself and his family, is not the less anxious to have the land at any price, and that, after his paying the rent by the sale of his oats, he has only a few potatoes left for his subsistence.

The Commissioners inquired how the small tenants, paying such excessive prices for their farms, are able to maintain their families.

The answer given in the barony of Kilconnel was as follows : it is never until a year of the lease has elapsed that the rent of the first six months is demanded ; the landlord takes on account whatever portion of the rent the tenant may be able to offer, and the rest is allowed to remain over, and is usually paid in labour : those of the small tenants (although holding as much as ten acres) who have an opportunity of paying the entire amount by labour are considered very fortunate ; sixpence a day, winter and summer, is the ordinary wages of those constantly employed. The small holder pays the highest price for his land—at least one-third more than another ; and he can afford to do so, because he can pay by his labour.

The only means of subsistence for these poor people depends on the quantity of small plots of land which they sublet in con-acre by the year to still poorer tenants, whilst the large farmers grant portions of their land only to obtain labour cheaper. Under the present system, the witnesses said it is impossible for these people to accumulate any capital; all they can do is to pay their rents and get potatoes to live on. If they can lay by any savings they seek to get their daughters married, in order to insure to themselves support when they are no longer able to maintain themselves by their own labour. None of them reckons upon more than the crop which he has planted, and if that fails the misery is inconceivably great.

Thus, in these districts, the adoption of the recent improvements in agriculture is out of the question, since the farmers have no other capital than the produce of their own labour. Their lodging and clothes correspond with their food; and if they do not pay their rents, and are turned out of their farms, they become beggars.

In the barony of Mohill it was stated, that the rental of land at a price which appears excessive is much increased by the universal custom of measuring into a farm half the adjoining roads, ditches, and all the included wastes. The Commissioners met with several cases of hardship resulting from this practice, which bears the heavier in proportion to the smallness of the farm. In one case a man occupied seven acres of land, of which not less than one acre and a half consisted of road. It is with a view to obtain a shelter for their families that these poor people take the land at such a high price, which is soon so exhausted as to produce nothing. The only resource for these small tenants is to work at 4*d.* a day; and, bad as

is their condition, they consider themselves less wretched than those who stand every day in the streets of towns, looking for any kind of employment.

In the barony of Murrisk, it was stated, that some of the agents of the landed proprietors carry on a traffic in oats, and that, to prevent the small tenants being in arrear of payment, they oblige them to bring their oats to the store, and the tenants return home with a ticket in their pockets, which they produce on pay-day; whereas, if they were allowed to hold their oats over, they would often have the benefit of a higher price, and would not be starved.

The Commissioners found great difficulty in obtaining an exact idea of the real state of the tenants of this district, who, fearing an increase in the price of farms, endeavour to conceal what they possess. It was stated that the excessive misery was less attributable to the high price, than to the extreme division, of the lands; that the misery has been progressive in proportion to the subdivision of the soil, from the prejudice of the people that every one has the right to possess enough land to maintain himself.

Only one instance in all the barony was cited of a small tenant lodging money in the savings' bank.

Much employment might be found in the reclamation of bogs, and the tenants would work in bringing them into culture, but from the conviction that the moment the land is made productive they would be charged the full value of it.

In the barony of Carbery it was mentioned, as a proof of the wretched condition of the small farmers, that in the extensive improvements carried on upon the estate of Lord Palmerston, the number of tenants who applied for employment was so great, that the agent, being unable to find

work for them all, put the names of a considerable number into a hat, and those who drew out their own names formed the list of persons to be employed for the following month, at the end of which time the same lottery was repeated. There are very few instances of tenants with an appearance of poverty possessing anything; and the treasurer of the savings' bank deposed that, although, as agent of many landowners, he had to receive every year the rents from more than two thousand individuals, not one of them ever deposited a farthing in the savings' bank; and that, in some instances, where industrious persons have amassed sums of money, they squander it extravagantly in celebrating the marriages of their children.

The Commissioners visited a tract of land on the sea-coast, in which the wretched cabins were wholly or partially covered with drifting sands. All traces of the old soil which the inhabitants cultivated had entirely disappeared; some houses had been entered by the roof, and the inhabitants were unable to obtain permission to build houses elsewhere.

In this same barony, in addition to the excessive price of land, the landlords stipulate in their leases for a certain number of days' service, which the tenant must give at any moment he is called upon.

The witnesses deposed also, that the arrears of rent due to the landlords give them the power of making their tenants vote as they choose; and that lately the furniture, etc. of many farmers has been seized, and the owners driven from their land, for not having obeyed the orders of the landlord.

The foregoing evidence was confirmed by that of the province of Leinster: and it was stated in the barony of

Gowran, that the landlords are not sorry at the farmers being in arrear of pay, since, besides the influence which this gives them at elections, they make the tenants work, requiring of them service-labour, and taking their cars to bring home coals or turf: the arrears of rent make the tenants so dependent on them that they dare not refuse anything.

In the barony of Philipstown it was added, that the landlords wait till the tenants are able to pay them, but that no abatement in the rent is ever made; so that when a good year comes, all the profits are swallowed up in the arrears which have to be paid.

In the barony of Moyfenragh great complaints are made, that the few buildings upon a farm are always erected by the farmer; these usually cost, upon a farm of from four to ten acres, 12*l.* to 13*l.*; and that the landlords, notwithstanding the excessive price which they receive for their lands, will not even do any repairs.

In the provinces of Ulster and Munster the Commissioners found these facts confirmed. In the barony of Iveagh, the value of the rent of lands, according to the depositions of the witnesses, appeared so extraordinary as to be scarcely credible, and the Commissioners took the greatest pains to ascertain the state of things. They found that the statements of the witnesses were not at all exaggerated; that, for example, a man had paid 100*l.* for a farm of seven acres, the rent of which was 1*l.* an acre.

In the barony of Lecale 170*l.* was given for the lease of a farm of six acres, for which a rent was paid of two guineas an acre. A tenant stated that he had a farm of four acres, rented at 2*l.* 4*s.* 10*d.* per acre; and that if he wished to give up his lease, he could obtain for it 2*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.* In

this barony the landlords allow their tenants to be only two months in arrear; and if the farmers do not pay, they sell the lease, and, retaining what is due to them, they give the rest to the ejected tenant. All the witnesses depose, that the enormous prices given for farms are occasioned by there being no other means of living, as the country has neither manufactures nor commerce.

In the barony of Tyrkenney the landlords never abate the price of the rent, and the farmers are generally a year in arrear of payment: the land is extremely subdivided. Scotch farmers, who have been brought over, have declared that it is impossible to improve agriculture under such a system of division of the land. The capital of the farmers, large and small, is declining so rapidly, that there is not one pig killed now for ten that were killed some years ago.

In the barony of Omagh it was stated, that under any circumstances the peasantry would be most anxious to get land; even if manufactures were thriving, they would still seek land. It is remarkable, that in almost all the baronies the witnesses deposed, that the peasants desire the independence of possessing a farm; and that even if other labour was found them, producing 5s. a week (which would be much more than they can gain with their small farms), many of them would not quit their land.

The Commissioners inquired whether the taxes or the tithes were one great cause of the misery. The general answer was, that the diminution of these taxes would not afford any relief; that the landlords would be benefited by it; that many of the taxes have since the peace been removed, and that no reduction in the value of land has taken place. The tithes of the English clergy, it was stated,

are paid with the greatest reluctance, and it is on this account that the landlords insert in their leases the condition that the farmers should pay the tithes, knowing very well that the peasantry would oppose the payment, and in the end get rid of it. Several baronies of the provinces of Ulster and Munster are in fact freed from the payment by insurrections against the receivers, in favour of all those whose property is seized and who are ejected from their farms: other persons have been prevented from taking possession of these same farms.

The Commissioners wished to know if the small tenants were not better off on the lands where the landlord was resident, than on those where he did not reside. The reply was, that in general the tenants are better off under a resident landlord, because he affords the farmer facilities for paying his rent, by employing him in day-labour or in the improvements on his estates.

The Commissioners inquired what were the disturbances or crimes caused by this system of small farms, and by the great competition for them. In the barony of Mohill, province of Connaught, it was stated, that, in spite of the excessive misery of the tenants, their patience is truly surprizing, and that there are few crimes committed by the peasants. It was added that there have been capitalists, who were desirous to purchase lands, and clear them of all these people, in order to cultivate them on a better system, but that the population appeared to them so dense that they regarded the thing as impossible, and have never ventured to make the experiment.

In the barony of Galmoy, province of Leinster, it was stated in reply, that the perpetrators of the outrages were usually persons reduced to destitution and prompted to

crime by despair, or revenge against those who take the leases of the farms from which they have been ejected. The peasantry are now quiet, from the persuasion that the Government have come to the determination of investigating the causes of their distress. The tenants see well enough that the general spirit of the landlords is to drive them from their lands; but no person, acquainted with the feelings of the people, would dare to take lands in Galmoy over the heads of the present possessors.

In the barony of Gowran, a magistrate declared his opinion, that almost all the crimes committed in this district are connected with tithes or the taking of land; that to be or not to be dispossessed, is to the peasants an affair of life or death.

In the barony of Philipstown, the witnesses assert that many of the crimes committed in the neighbourhood are connected with the taking of land—that there is a feeling among the people that no man has a right to come in on the land of another—that when a crime is committed, the public voice accuses the person who has been dispossessed of his farm; but the ejected tenant suffers so much in many cases, that there is a very general feeling in favour of those dispossessed. An instance was mentioned of a farmer, who, having been dispossessed, hired a soldier to shoot the man who took his farm; the soldier did so, and afterwards turned king's evidence, and the farmer was hanged.

No one in this barony dares to take the farm of a man who has been ejected.

In the barony of Dundalk it was deposed, that all the crimes are caused by the taking of land and the payment of tithes.

land reaches to such a pitch, that in the last two or three years there have been no less than fifteen crimes committed (in cases of the ejectment of farmers from their lands for the non-payment of tithes or other causes) by bodies of armed men, who set fire to two houses, killed two men, and beat and wounded many others. These bodies of men consisted of neutral persons, who revenged those that had been ejected, and protected the poor. One man was hung, and many others punished, and all have gone to prison readily, and begged for death as a deliverance from their misery. It was stated that these have now formed a band of men, dressed in white, who have sworn to defend themselves in a body against any that should attempt to drive them from their farms. One man, whom his landlord sought to eject, declared to the judges, that if they ejected him from his farm, they might at the same time arrest him, for in three days he who took his place would be killed.

In the barony of Portnahinch, a witness declared that the number and atrocity of crimes had frightened all the people of the neighbourhood; that the landlords are desirous of dislodging the farmers, in order to consolidate the lands; and that the people have so deep a sense of the injustice which they suffer, that they regard vengeance as an act of justice. When the offender is known, he is so protected, in a direct or indirect way, that it is impossible to take him, however atrocious the crime he may have committed. Rents meanwhile remain unaffected by this system of intimidation; for however strong may be the fear of outrage in those who offer rent, or take land from which another has been ejected, the fear of destitution is still stronger, and land may be considered as the only means of subsistence. The Commissioners have no hesi-

tation in stating, from very particular inquiry into these circumstances, and the opportunities they have had of learning the feelings of the lower classes, that, however atrocious may be all these crimes, they have originated in the conviction of the people, that the poor and humble have no chance of justice or fair play in Ireland, when the interests of the rich and influential are in opposition to their own; and that the comparative calm which has reigned during the last twelve or eighteen months, is the result of a general conviction among the lower orders, that there is now a real and sincere desire to redress their grievances and improve their condition.

In the province of Munster, the barony of Corcomroe has been the most disturbed part of the county; and the witnesses declared, that it was a class of men who had first hired lands, and had become an intermediate class between the landlords and the farmers, who instigated the disturbances, with a view to protect themselves from ejectment, and prevent the landlords from consolidating the farms, which would destroy the existence of those who sublet.

In the barony of Iveagh it was stated, that in 1821 and 1822 the disturbances were so great that no rents could be collected, no one venturing to demand them; there have been no disturbances since, and all has been paid.

In the barony of Trughenackmy the landlords have instigated the peasantry against the payment of tithes, because they would profit by augmenting the price of the land if the tithes were suppressed.

In the barony of Conello, a farm was leased upon several lives, and a man murdered the last survivor in the lease in order to possess it himself: he was hanged. In the

preceding month, the houses of various persons, following tenants who had been ejected, had been set on fire. There is no violence to which a man who is ejected is not driven, and the whole parish become his accomplices. A farmer was lately advised to murder the man who had supplanted him, in order to avoid being himself punished, and the farmer was murdered. The people are delighted to have pointed out to them such instances of revenge.

In the barony of Middlethird, hundreds of threatening letters have been sent, and the magistrates give a long list of persons beaten, wounded, or killed by armed parties. Houses have been burnt, and the landlords have been obliged to save themselves by flight. Each parish has its regulations respecting the taking of land, undertakes to cause them to be put in force, and punishes those who contravene them. In the barony of Decies-without-Drum, the general rumour has always been, that the instigators of the crimes are people of a higher class, but this has never been proved.

Lastly, in the province of Ulster, some baronies have remained tranquil, but in many others numerous and atrocious crimes have been committed. The witnesses agree in assigning, as the causes of all the disturbances, motives of revenge against those farmers who have superseded ejected tenants. In reply to the inquiries of the Commissioners, as to whether this system tends to favour the increase of the population, the witnesses stated, that so much was this the case, that unmarried men pay more for their farms than those who are married, because their possession gives them an opportunity of marrying.

Amongst all the witnesses whom the Commissioners examined in the barony of Kilconnel, they found only two old unmarried men. One of these—a good workman, espe-

cially in mowing—said that he had not married, because his father had died young, and the sole charge of his mother and sister devolved on him.

In the barony of Dromahair, the witnesses declared that as soon as a man has taken possession of a cabin, however small, he does not remain three months without marrying; that, moreover, he has nothing to lose, and those who are married are not worse off than himself. When a man has any money, he is hard to be pleased; the poor man cannot be a chooser, and he that is destitute hardly hesitates at all; he meets a girl at a fair, and is perhaps married to her before the week is out.

In the barony of Murrisk, it was said that a man begins life in general with a portion of his father's land: when he has made up his mind to marry, he runs up a cabin beforehand, and takes a subdivision from his father at whatever price. Small holders are induced to marry, by feeling that their condition cannot be made worse, and they promise themselves some pleasure in the society of a wife.

In the barony of Carbery a witness said, that in the year 1822 he visited a district, to see who required relief, and that he found none in want of it—all were comfortable; but having a fortnight ago visited the same district, as tithe-commissioner, he found the inhabitants in a very miserable condition, for, instead of twenty families who lived upon the land when he first visited it, there were subsequently seventy, and they all attribute their misery solely to the subdivision of the land consequent upon the new marriages.

In the barony of Gowran, province of Leinster, many persons have said that they married because, if it came to the worst, their wives could take to begging for them and for themselves.

In the province of Munster, a proprietor in the barony of Iveagh said, that when the landlord prevents subdivision, the sons of the tenantry do not marry so early : “ Among the sons of my own tenantry,” he added, “ there are several unmarried men, who will not marry, because they know I should not let them remain in their fathers’ houses, as the father would certainly give them a part of his land.”

The answers to the inquiries made in the other baronies of Ireland are similar ; in that of Decies-without-Drum, it was added, that the only provision necessary for a man’s marrying, is a bundle of straw for a bed, a blanket, an iron pot, and a stool.

REMARKS.

No positive idea can be formed of the degree of innocence which modern society might attain, nor of the amount of crime which it might bear : we are therefore brought to form comparative ideas. Criminal justice in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, has the same laws and the same mode of procedure ; but England and Scotland, which possess large manufactures, cannot be compared with Ireland and Wales, which have scarcely any. Wales is mountainous, and the soil far from good ; but the landowners have admitted families to occupy it, only on their declaring the quantity of land necessary for them to live upon. The farms there, in general,

are of the rent-value of 50*l.* We have just seen how it is in Ireland. The following Table will give an idea of the effect produced by the two systems upon public morality. We give the last-published official returns, observing, that they in no respect differ from those of the preceding year.

Countries.	Population according to the Census of 1831.	Number of Persons brought before the Assizes in 1834.	Proportion in a Population of 1,000,000.
Wales.....	805,236	442	549
Scotland.....	2,365,114	1,987	840
England.....	13,091,005	22,009	1,681
Ireland	7,767,401	21,380	2,752

The Legislature sees, by this view of the state of society, the influence which the mode of tenure has upon the state of public morals. Here are two countries, separated only by a short sea-passage : in one country, out of 1,000,000 inhabitants, only 549 are annually brought to justice ; whilst in the other, there are 2752—that is to say, in the proportion of 1 to 5 ; and this is a regular course, which for two centuries has been advancing progressively.

We shall endeavour, in the following remarks, to explain this phænomenon ; and it will be seen that this number of offences, which criminal justice prosecutes in Ireland as crimes, might be regarded elsewhere as virtues.

CHAPTER V.

ATTEMPTED CHANGES IN THE GENERAL SYSTEM OF CULTIVATION, BY THE CONSOLIDATION OF FARMS AND THE DISLODGE-
MENT OF THE TENANTRY.

THE Commissioners inquired whether the landed proprietors had adopted the system of consolidating the small farms into single ones; whether this system was pursued perseveringly and on a large scale, and what effect it had had upon the produce of the land, on the condition of the tenants, etc.

In the province of Connaught, the witnesses in the barony of Kilconnel replied, that, although there existed a general disposition to consolidate the farms, the system had not been pursued to any extent in that barony, except on the estate of Lord Clonbrock, who had thrown a large number of minute holdings into a certain number of farms of ten acres each. This he had effected without having recourse to any harshness. The land was held by about fifty occupants; Lord Clonbrock offered to each tenant a sum of money as compensation for being ejected; he also offered them locations on the unreclaimed part of another estate, together with assistance towards building a house. Several accepted the latter condition; a few emigrated to the colonies, availing themselves of the money received; so that only four or five of the original fifty occupants remain.

The great subdivision of land leads to considerable waste in the numerous ditches and fences necessary; and the produce of a farm of ten acres will for this reason far ex-

ceed the united produce of the small holdings from which it is made; the more so, as these small tenants, who have no skill in systematic cropping, and are ignorant of artificial manure, reduce the land to such a state of exhaustion, that when they lay it down to grass, it produces nothing but daisies and thistles; they are then obliged to allow it to remain so, until it gets a fresh coating of vegetable mould. Upon a farm of four acres, one half was always in a state of exhaustion, and the tenant could only grow what was indispensable for his food, namely potatoes; he found himself compelled to economize even the seed, which was taken only from the refuse. This small tenant, being sometimes obliged to engage the use of a neighbour's plough and horses for a day, was made to repay such aid, by giving about twenty days' labour for the ploughing of an acre, which, at sixpence a day, amounts to ten shillings.

This system of consolidation is impeded by a general, though not acknowledged, fear of the disturbances caused by the distress to which the people are reduced. The witnesses affirm that, so strong is the attachment of the small tenants to their farms, that all the compensation given them, and the assurance of work at sixpence a day, cannot reconcile them to the loss. This good treatment allays their animosity against those who succeed them in their farms; but they are always fearful of being deceived, although the landlords have gone so far as to give a pension of two pounds a year to those widows who are deprived of their lands. "It is not for our good," said one of the witnesses—a small tenant—"that the landlords want us to go elsewhere; if they can make more money of the farms

Several of the principal landlords have made provisions against subletting, and a general covenant in the lease is, that in case of subletting, the original tenant shall either forfeit his farm or pay 10*l.* an acre; and at the present time it is nominally impossible for a poor man to procure the place for a house. Such is the difficulty, that the mode has been struck out, of making additions to the original house to provide some room for the young people as they get married.

In the barony of Dromahair the witnesses stated, that the size of holdings has been on the decrease in the greater part of the barony for several years, and that only one landlord has made any efforts to check the universal tendency to subdivision which prevails, although the Roman Catholic priests are beginning to use their influence to prevent it, and advise the small tenants to teach their children trades, rather than to quarter them upon their farms of five acres. The landowner above mentioned had in view the correction of abuses which had arisen while the land was leased to middle-men, and he selected the period of the expiration of the leases of several of this class to carry the consolidation into effect. This was in the year 1823, and a lease of two thousand acres, in the hands of one of these middle-men, having expired, about six hundred persons were put out at once, and not one fifth of the population that existed on the land previous to the new arrangements are now inhabitants of it.

Under the old leases the great subdivision was productive of much loss. The innumerable and irregular fences contributed to diminish the produce of the land; but since the alteration, there is a perceptible change for the better.

The middling class of farmers, who have succeeded the petty occupiers, are able to send to market milk, butter and cattle in increased quantity and of improved quality. The cultivation of grain has diminished, and this is regarded as advantageous to the cultivators. The occupiers of the enlarged holdings are so convinced of the greater profit to be derived from grazing, that they till no more than is necessary for their own consumption.

In the large farms, although a much smaller number of labourers on the whole are engaged, they are in general permanently employed, and the farmer has something to take to market.

A portion of those who were ejected by the consolidation of the farms, subsisted for a long time only by begging. The condition of those whom the landlord retained is so much improved, that they even refuse the offer of considerable farms, and the labourers employed on those farms find work all the year, and by degrees relinquish the desire of possessing land.

A large proprietor has introduced a farming bailiff from Scotland, for the purpose of instructing his tenants of ten acres in the advantage to be derived from a judicious course of cropping. The benefit of this has been proved, and several farmers often unite to hire a servant-boy for the year, whom they employ each in turn for so many days in the week in rotation.

The witnesses complained of the immoderate price at which proprietors let their lands, and that the roads and fences on or adjacent to the farms pay rent as if they were arable land, whether the farms are large or small; in the case of a small farm, the proprietor receives at least nine-tenths of the value of what it would pay.

The witnesses agree in desiring that a fund should be provided for the support of those who are ejected by the consolidation of farms, and who have no means of subsistence left.

In the barony of Murrisk the witnesses stated, that there was not a tenant holding ten acres of arable land, and that the majority had not more than four. Since 1829 the forty-shilling freeholders have been disfranchised, and the franchise has been raised to 10*l*; the landlords have endeavoured, but fruitlessly, to consolidate the farms. Twenty families, comprising 114 souls, were ejected from the lands of one proprietor by his agent; as the lands were held under a joint-tenancy without a lease, the drivers, previous to ejectment, seized all the corn, made the tenants thresh it, and sold it to pay the rent due. These families, who held amongst them about 63 acres, had nothing then for it but to beg, since no trade has found its way into the country. Those who beg generally go to other places, as they do not like to show their misery at home.

A general disposition to emigrate exists among the small tenantry, and half the population would go to America if the proprietors paid their passage, which they have not the means of doing.

Fully one quarter of the barony consists of unreclaimed but improveable bog-land; capital and industry are alone requisite to bring it into cultivation.

In the barony of Carbery, from an examination of the maps of one parish, and inquiries among the tenants, it appeared to the Commissioners that there were no farms above thirty acres each, not six above twenty, and that the majority were between five and ten acres. The twenty

largest farms average twenty acres each, and the twenty smallest one-third of an acre.

In order to prevent a greater subdivision, proprietors of land cease to grant leases. In one parish, in order to consolidate farms of thirteen acres, four years' previous notice was given to 120 families to remove from the land, that is to say, one-third of the inhabitants of the parish. At the time of departure, instead of 120 families, they had increased to 160 by marriages contracted in the interval. Twenty of them went to America. The improvement of the land produced by this small consolidation is perceptible to the eye, especially since the introduction into the parish of Scotch farmers. Another proprietor possesses 1300 acres, of which one-third alone are cultivated: upon this one-third he has two hundred families, and he considers the farms on his estate to be sufficiently consolidated.

One witness said, that many instances might be cited, in which from fear no one has dared to lay out capital upon the lands formed by the union of several farms, the tenants of which had been expelled. No Scotch or English farmers have actually hired farms, but several have wished to do so, and taken steps with that intention, but have eventually withdrawn from fear of violence.

A proprietor wishing to consolidate his land, his corn-stacks were burnt, his horses killed, and his farming implements broken, and a witness exclaimed before the Commissioners, "I believe it, when you have driven 120 persons from their lands at Balligilligan!"

The witnesses, speaking of the barony of Balrothery, stated, that for the last twenty years there has been an increasing disposition to enlarge the size of farms, and the principal motive is to keep down the number of small

tion. The long duration of leases has not permitted the ejection of the farming tenants. The improved rotation of crops has been tried by a number of landlords and farmers, although the want of capital sometimes impedes the advantage otherwise derivable from the system.

Whenever small farms have been consolidated into large ones, they have been converted into grazing farms.

The poverty of those who cultivate farms of less than an acre is beyond conception, and whenever any of them have been ejected, they have emigrated, others have begged, or others, assisted by the neighbouring villages, have taken forcible possession of small plots of the commons in their neighbourhood, in despite of their landlords.

These wretched people have endured every kind of privation, and misery has brought on disease. It is a dreadful cruelty to eject these people, without giving them the means of going to America, or providing them with some resource.

The rent charged for small farms is from ten to fifteen per cent. higher than that charged for the large ones, because the competition is greater; and if a man possesses some money, he hires his farm cheaper, as the landlord is more sure of receiving his rent punctually.

In the barony of Philipstown the size of farms has been decreasing; and in those cases in which consolidation has taken place, the land is converted into grazing-land; for the soil is so exhausted that corn cannot be grown upon it, and the small farmers moreover can neither work it themselves nor pay for labour. The landlords care little for consolidating their estates, because they cannot let large farms at the same price as small ones.

Two farmers from Scotland have settled in this barony ; they have taken two large farms, and their example is conferring great benefit on the neighbouring farmers. The ejected tenants settle on the bog-lands, to which they think they have as good a right as any one else. They arrive at nightfall, set-to work to build, and the next day the cabin is completed. The only way to turn them out is by a legal process and by forcible means.

The great obstacle to consolidation is that it stops the demand for labour. The soil is so exhausted, that it is all given up to grazing. In the barony of Dundalk, great attempts at consolidation have been made, the chief motives for which have been to prepare for the poor-laws and to keep down the population ; the rent of large holdings also gives less trouble in collecting, and is better paid. All the new farms are laid down to grass, and the Scotch who have come to settle in this barony have not yet been able to commence any systematic cropping : they adopt the grazing system, to restore the fertility of the soil. For the last fifteen years the junction of farms has been pursued eagerly, and a great number of families have been ejected by force. In 1827 thirty-two families were ejected ; in 1828 ten ; in 1829 eighteen ; in 1830 fifteen ; in 1831 thirty ; and in 1832 twenty were expelled by legal means, without reckoning those who quitted upon the first notice from the landlord.

In the barony of Kells, say the witnesses, no disturbances have ever taken place, although many families have been deprived of their farms, and have been dispersed wherever they have attempted to build. The system adopted by the landlords is instantly to throw down the

house of those who have to quit the land. During the last ten years a hundred families have been ejected in the barony, and their houses destroyed. Not long ago five or six hundred persons, who had been refused a renewal of their leases, collected from different baronies and took possession of a large extent of common-land, containing several hundred acres. They divided the whole common into small lots, and began building cabins on them ; they could only be expelled by sending to another district for a troop of cavalry. As no instances are known of the landlord assisting his ejected tenantry, many have been driven to begging, others have taken refuge in the towns, whilst many of these unhappy people have died of starvation.

Formerly the land was consolidated into farms of ten acres, which were considered large, but now these farms are thrown into larger ones, of a hundred acres. The witnesses say also, that the land cultivated in large farms is more productive, and that the large farmers hold at a low rent, because they find the soil so much exhausted.

In the barony of Moyfenragh, the size of holdings has increased of late years ; the landlords have determined to rid their estates of the swarms of paupers which the subdivision of the land has raised upon them.

In the barony of Portnahinch the system of joining small farms has prevailed to a trifling extent. One landlord refused to continue leases to fifty or sixty small occupiers, but he assisted them to remove to an uncultivated mountain tract : each family having assigned to them a house, and from ten to seventy acres of ground, they have done very well. To several other families, who preferred emigrating, he gave from five to ten pounds for their passage-money. Notwithstanding the attachment of the small

farmers to their country, they are easily induced to quit it, since the land yields nothing, whatever labour they bestow on it.

In the barony of Talbotstown, the witnesses say, the proprietors are disposed to consolidate their lands ; nevertheless, the country has been, especially of late, peaceable and free from any outrage, owing to the general persuasion of the people that the Government are resolved on redressing their grievances and improving their condition. One proprietor, a young man, went to Scotland to study agriculture, and on his return he caused 114 families, who were established on his estates, to be ejected by legal force ; he however granted them assistance.

Throughout this barony the rent of large farms is from twenty to thirty per cent. less than that of small ones. In the provinces of Munster and Ulster, according to the witnesses, there exists the same tendency to consolidation. In many baronies the disturbances have hindered the progress of this system ; in others it has been adopted by force. In almost every part, however, consolidation is easily put into execution, by rendering some assistance to the families who are compelled to quit the land.

In the barony of Middlethird the Commissioners were accosted one day by a man who had been turned out of his farm, and who declared to them that he would kill any one that should dare to take the land which he had cultivated. The Commissioners then asked him what would become of his wife and children if he were hanged. “ I should die,” said he, “ for the cause of the people ; and as I have contributed to support the women and children of many persons hanged for the same cause, the people would support mine.”

REMARKS.

Neither ancient nor modern history presents any state of society at all comparable to this. We must examine the causes, as the Inquiries have not even approached the subject.

We have seen that the seizure of Ireland was made by the English, who, having divided it into fiefs, appropriated the land for the most part to themselves. They founded, as in England, religious orders, making at the same time grants of land. In Ireland, as in England, these lands were the best cultivated. The English nobility embraced the Reformation with the greatest zeal, as, by abolishing the religious orders, they confiscated their lands in favour of the lords of the manor. During 150 years, however, the efforts of the English to establish the Reformation had been fruitless, when, in 1640, an army of 30,000 men, under Cromwell, landed in Ireland. Discipline overcame numbers, and the Irish were conquered.

Confiscations followed, not only of the property of the religious orders, but of all the lands of those who did not espouse the Reformation, and the most cruel laws were put in force against the Catholic priests and their flocks; these confiscations were granted to the officers in Cromwell's army. Ireland at that period had only 800,000 inhabitants.

Such a field for plunder attracted a large emigration from England, especially at the period of the Revolution, in 1688, when the Protestants acquired a power which they have preserved up to the present day.

Attention was now directed to the establishment of Protestantism in Ireland, the more so as the Protestants (according to their own showing) constituted one half of the population. Ireland, in consequence, being divided into 32 dioceses and 1385 livings, the government named 32 bishops and 1385 rectors and vicars, etc.—all Protestant, and gave them the buildings, the glebe and the tithes, which had not been previously confiscated.

But as none of the Catholic bishops or curates would apostatize, each diocese, from that period to the present day, has had two bishops—each living, two clergymen: the one, a Protestant, without a flock, who, being allowed to marry, brings upon himself a family, and to maintain which all the revenues of the Church have been transferred to him; the other, a Catholic, unmarried, who, fulfilling the increased duties of his office, receives from the charity of the Catholics the means of existence.

From this period until the parliamentary reform of 1833, no Catholic could be a magistrate or hold any civil office: and, as we have seen, it is only

since 1788 that the Catholics have been allowed to hold lands.

A state of civil strife, thus organized in each parish, has prevented these new confiscators from residing upon their estates ; in the course of time the former landowners, who had been plundered, became a class of middle-men between the new proprietors and the rural population. They obtained leases for fifty, eighty, and even a hundred years ; and with a view to self-protection, they never sublet their lands to any but Catholics. The Protestants, supported by the administration and the civil power, have endeavoured to maintain their political ascendancy ; and thus for the last two centuries a civil strife has been deeply organized, which breaks out in one place or another every five or ten years, but especially in the provinces of the south and east. There the Protestants cannot maintain their ground against the Catholics ; since in these two provinces, out of every hundred inhabitants, there are only four or five Protestants. These are the owners, who endeavour to consolidate their lands, and with reason. On the other hand, the Catholic population, seeing the small number of their opponents, desire to rid the country of them ; but the power of England is at hand—her troops arrive, and it ends by their remaining masters wherever they present themselves.

The county of Tipperary has 402,563 inhabitants, and the number of persons brought to justice at the assizes during the years 1832 and 1834 was 3724—that is to say, 1241 a year on an average. Thefts, however, which among a less ardent people form nine-tenths of the crimes committed, are unknown in this county; and among these 1241 persons annually brought before the assizes, only fourteen were for theft. The remaining 1227 crimes consisted in sending threatening letters to the new farmers, destruction of cattle, arson, armed attacks on houses, firing upon houses and persons, homicides, stealing arms from the stores, commotions and fights—in short, all the elements of civil strife; and notwithstanding this continual state of warfare, the inhabitants are a most charitable and hospitable people, strongly attached to their religion, their country and their families, and whose manners are perfectly chaste.

CHAPTER VI.

OF EMIGRATION.

THE Commissioners inquired, in the different baronies which they visited, the number of persons who had emigrated, what was their condition, to what country they had gone, and what assistance they had received in order to emigrate. These same questions were addressed in writing to all the parishes in Ireland.

The witnesses in the barony of Kilconnel enumerated above one hundred individuals who had emigrated from this barony during the last five years. All of them were persons of very moderate means: a few were young men who possessed from 15*l.* to 20*l.*; but not two could be mentioned who had the command of 100*l.* All these were persons who would have staid at home if they could have got a sufficiency of land.

The labourers, say the witnesses, would leave by hundreds if they had only so much as 5*l.*, so persuaded are they that the land cannot support them. One landlord divided between 300*l.* and 400*l.* among fifty families; of that number but three entire families emigrated: out of the other families, about twenty individuals followed their example, but not until the landlord had promised to allow the fathers 2*l.* each in their rent towards their sons' expenses. They emigrated either to the United States or Canada. The number of those who have left has had no influence, either in reducing rents or increasing wages. It

would be necessary that two-thirds of the present population should be removed, before wages could rise to tenpence a day.

In the barony of Dromahair, according to the witnesses, a considerable number of persons have gone to the United States or Canada ; but they have been in general persons possessed of some substance. They would have remained, but for the excessive rents which the poor peasantry pay for the farms ; and they have preferred to emigrate, rather than to lose, by remaining, the little which they possessed, since the price of farms is so high that the landlord draws in rent more than two-thirds of the produce of his land : thus it is the poorest class which remains upon the land. One witness chartered a vessel to convey emigrants to New South Wales, and the applications from persons desirous to go were innumerable. It would require fully one-third of the able-bodied population to emigrate, that the price of wages should rise to tenpence a day.

Emigration has of late years been considerable in the barony of Mohill among all classes, and many persons of capital have gone, after the expiration of their leases ; this has been caused by the landlords refusing to renew their leases, except at an increased rent. One of these persons carried with him 7000*l*. Among the emigrants were many sons of small farmers, who drained the little stock of the family to enable them to go ; but in most cases they have remitted to their parents what they borrowed, and have besides enabled their brothers and sisters to follow them to the colonies ; for the eagerness of those who have emigrated to have the other members of their family follow them is inconceivable.

For a long time past two or three ships have sailed an-

nually for Canada or the United States, filled with emigrants from the barony of Murrisk; but unfavourable accounts having been received from those who departed, only one vessel cleared out with passengers this year. For eleven guineas, a man, his wife and three children, may be conveyed to North America. Most of those who emigrated have been persons possessing small capital.

In the barony of Carbery, the witnesses state, that in the years 1833 and 1834 the number of those who emigrated was very considerable, and they were mostly persons in possession of some money. The Protestants especially see their numbers daily diminishing, and they fear, if they remain at home so small a body, they will be exposed to violence: many of them only await the expiration of their leases to depart. The landlords now care no more for a Protestant than for a Roman Catholic tenant.

The people are more disposed to proceed to the United States than to British America: the fare to New York (4*l.*) is nearly double the fare to Quebec, and many persons have embarked in vessels bound for Canada with the intention of proceeding on foot from Quebec to New York. There are many instances of persons returning from America with money which they had saved there, and giving excessive prices for small portions of land.

Barony of Balrothery.—For some years the emigration of small farmers and labourers has been considerable; but, unfortunately for Ireland, they have generally been the most industrious, well-behaved, and the most monied of their class, thus leaving all the riff-raff as an increased burden on the country. Many who have hitherto forborne to emigrate would now accept a free passage, notwith-

year emigrated from this barony exceeded that of any previous year. One man has returned from America with a sum of 240*l.*; others have made remittances to enable their families to join them.

Barony of Clonlisk.—Emigration from this district has not been considerable.

Barony of Kells.—If a free passage to America were offered, many more would probably emigrate than have emigrated hitherto, and the parish would pay the cost as far as the port.

Barony of Maryborough.—Emigration has been considerable during the last five years. The Catholics have emigrated from distress, and the Protestants from the disturbed state of the country. If they had the means, almost all the labourers would depart—old, young, married and single.

Barony of Portnahinch.—The emigration has been rather considerable during the last few years, the emigrants consisting of small farmers, the best labourers and agricultural and useful mechanics. None of the large farmers have emigrated.

In the provinces of Munster and Ulster the answers were the same. The want of means is the only obstacle to emigration: those who depart are not the most wretched, but the most industrious and the best conducted: two or three hundred persons have emigrated from several baronies each year. The Protestants say that they emigrate from fear of the Catholics; the Catholics deny this, assigning as the true motive of their emigration the jealousy of the Protestants at the landlords ceasing to make religion a reason for exclusion from their farms, and the Catholics obtaining them as easily as the Protestants.

About three hundred persons emigrated from the barony

of Conello in 1835. They consisted in great part of Palatines. The Palatines were originally German Protestants, who settled in Ireland in the time of Queen Anne, planted villages in various parts of the country, and obtained leases of land. They continue to this day a distinct body from the Irish population about them, and do not often intermarry with their neighbours. A considerable number of these people emigrated, because they found they could not take land from which other tenants had been ejected without incurring considerable danger.

Generally speaking, the emigrants prefer to go to the United States rather than to Canada, and the witnesses in all the baronies state that they make remittances to enable their families to join them.

The following is a table of the number of persons who have emigrated from England, Scotland and Ireland, for the Canadas, the United States, the Cape of Good Hope, or New South Wales, annually, from 1820 to 1833:—

Years.	Number of Emigrants.	Years.	Number of Emigrants.
1820 . . .	19,984.	1827 . . .	13,477.
1821 . . .	13,194.	1828 . . .	13,275.
1822 . . .	12,349.	1829 . . .	15,820.
1823 . . .	8,860.	1830 . . .	32,020.
1824 . . .	8,210.	1831 . . .	49,864.
1825 . . .	9,340.	1832 . . .	103,313.
1826 . . .	13,837.	1833 . . .	62,684.

During the year 1832, in which the greatest emigration took place, the following number of persons emigrated:—

66,339 to the North American colonies.

32,980 „ United States.

202 „ Cape of Good Hope.

REMARKS.

In the earliest times emigration was necessary, since it was only by this means that the world could be peopled. Husbandry being little known, the herdsmen wandered from place to place with their flocks and herds, which in summer found pasture upon the mountains, and in winter on the plains. As their families multiplied, it was necessary to parcel out the country according to the tribes, and thus nations were formed. But each member of a tribe maintained his religion, his family, his customs, his laws—in short, all that attaches a man to the earth.

War formed another species of emigration. Urged by the desire of vengeance or of pillage, the strongest people superseded or mingled with the weakest. But these emigrations were voluntary, at least on the part of those who were the aggressors, and often after victory they submitted to the laws and the customs of the conquered people. Apart from this, war has been regarded as one of the greatest curses which God has inflicted upon man.

These two kinds of emigration, although very different, form so natural a consequence, that they constitute the history of the world. In both cases

there existed a common interest : the slave followed his master, the vassal his lord, the soldier his officer ; in short, the weak were under the guidance of a chief, whose power they constituted and whose protection they in turn received.

On the contrary, the emigrations which we have examined in this chapter have no precedent in history, and form a scourge unknown until recent times amongst civilized nations and even amongst savages.

Historians have pretended, that the course of emigration has been from north to south : this assertion has little foundation, for modern history shows that the Arabs and Africans, who inhabit from 20° to 30° latitude, have invariably pushed their invasions northwards, as the inhabitants of from 55° to 70° have uniformly taken a southern direction. The countries situated from 40° to 50° have thus been the object of ambition to the inhabitants of the north and of the south, because both these peoples there found, first the productions to which they were accustomed, and moreover the wine which is not produced in other climates.

But these modern emigrations are very different ; for the inhabitants of the banks of the Rhine quit the country which affords the best wines and where the climate is the most beautiful, and go to settle on the banks of the St. Lawrence, where it freezes

for eight months in the year. It is therefore not ambition, nor the desire of enjoyments, which urges these unhappy people—it is despair; and indeed it must be such a motive to actuate men, simple in their habits, who, as the recompense for the hardest work, do not even require bread, of which they know not the taste. They ask only for potatoes, and these they do not find; and, to undergo every hazard, without leaders, protection, or support, and without any knowledge of the places whither they go, they are obliged to tear themselves from their families, friends, country, and their habits of life. There is nothing more painful, nothing which appears a severer comment upon the governments of their respective countries, than to meet, descending the banks of the Shannon or the Rhine, those long trains of carts, filled with old men, women and children, in ragged attire, quitting Europe, hitherto so dear to them, in order to embark for the rude wilds of America.

There is in all this but one consolation—this new scourge is so terrible that it cannot endure. The Americans, who witnessed with such scorn the arrival of these white negroes, as they call them, find no longer any cause for laughter; and in order to put a stop at once to these importations, they have recently raised to ten dollars (forty-four shillings) the duty of two dollars which was for-

merly paid for each white man imported ; observing, with some reason, that the English, who seek to stop the traffic of African negroes, would do well to commence by putting an end to that of the whites.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE.

THE Commissioners inquired in every barony the number of acres, what proportion of the land was mountainous, plains and bog, to what extent it was cultivated or capable of cultivation, and on the cultivated lands the number of acres of each sort of culture.

The information obtained, in reply to these inquiries, was very incomplete. In general the large farmers do not devote the twentieth part of their farms to tillage. In the barony of Kilconnel the largest tillage-farmer keeps seventy acres under tillage on a farm of 250, but he is yearly reducing it, as it is not so profitable. Another farmer tills only forty acres in a farm exceeding two hundred. Two others, who occupy, the one five hundred acres, the other a thousand, devote nearly the whole land to grazing.

The small tenants are the most numerous, but the greater portion of the district is held by large grazing farmers.

Notwithstanding the general tendency throughout Ireland to diminish the quantity of tillage in the large farms, the increase of population, on the other hand, requiring a larger quantity of con-acre for the supply of potatoes, operates in some degree to counteract this. The total extent of the pasturage and the quantity of cattle have diminished. The landlords have thus been absolutely obliged

to let the lands in small lots, from the extreme increase in the population.

If the farmers had the necessary capital for the proper cultivation of the mountain-tracts; said one of the Commissioners, this part of Ireland would be the most valuable.

The Commissioners interrogated the witnesses as to the system of cropping practised in each district.

Corn is cultivated, but in small quantities, and in so imperfect a manner as not to deserve the name of culture. The general plan of the farmers is, first to have a crop of potatoes on a fallow, then two years oats, and sometimes as long as the land continues to produce them, even for twenty successive years; they then leave the soil without sowing anything until it has in some degree recovered its fertility, when they recommence the same rotation. The produce per acre diminishes every year; but it never enters into the farmer's head to let the soil rest, until it is so much exhausted as absolutely to produce nothing.

The witnesses state that the great misery in Ireland is caused by the frequent failure of the potatoe-crops, and that in 1834 and 1835 the people were obliged to dig them up long before the proper time, which occasioned many fevers.

The Commissioners inquired whether much care was bestowed on cultivation, and whether the artificial grasses, and the different roots and plants recently introduced into the cropping, were known.

Little attention has been paid to cultivation. The small farmers alone grow corn, and they have not money enough either to harrow, roll or weed the land. In most of the baronies the seeds of the plants recently introduced into the system of cropping are scarcely known, and they are

only in the hands of some of the large farmers, who cultivate them from curiosity.

In the neighbourhood of Dublin the cultivation of artificial grasses begins to spread; but when any one has attempted to grow on a large scale french-beans or peas, the novelty has attracted so many depredators that the attempt has been given up. The people insist on planting potatoes, upon which they ought to live. The good kinds of potatoes are unknown.

Formerly flax was extensively cultivated, as the women spun during the winter; but since the introduction of machinery for spinning, the manufacturers have found it more advantageous to import from Holland and Russia. For the last two or three years the crops of flax having completely failed on the Continent, the manufacturers have had recourse to the north of Ireland, and this branch of industry has been resumed.

In general the soil of Ireland is of the best quality, but the universal ignorance of the art of cultivation deteriorates it. The Commissioners inquired if the arable land afforded no employment to the labourers. The witnesses replied, that the small farmers alone cultivated grain; that the farms were so small as not to give employment to one family throughout the year; that, in order to live, they let part of their cabins to artisans (such as carpenters, locksmiths, etc.), and seek work elsewhere, which they can with difficulty find, since the large farmers, being unable to cultivate corn at the same price as the small ones, have no arable land, and consequently no employment for labour.

In some parishes the population is so dense that no system of agriculture could give employment to the mass.

The witnesses cited an instance of one, which contains 18,000 English acres and 14,000 inhabitants.

The Commissioners collected statements of the soil of a great number of farms, the nature of their cultivation, and the number of men and of horses employed upon each. From these they deduce the following results:—

1st. That more than one-third of Ireland is cultivated by spade-husbandry.

2nd. That, although the wages of day-labourers are not half, sometimes not even a third, of what they are in England, yet the cost of labour is not cheaper than in England, because labourers so badly fed cannot do so much work as those who are well fed.

3rd. That it requires eight Irishmen to do the work of three Englishmen, and that the horses in some of the baronies are of so wretched a kind that two are required for the work of one in England.

The Commissioners wished to ascertain the state of such farms as were devoted to grazing and rearing cattle; whether the labourers were better off in those than in other farms; whether the dairies were well regulated, and what was the quantity of butter and cheese they furnished.

They ascertained, that in general these farms are held by persons of small capital; that the labourers are not better treated there than upon other farms; that there is no separate establishment for the dairies; that the butter is not of a quality proportioned to the nature of the soil, and that in general no cheese is made, the milk being too poor, from the bad cultivation of the pastures; nevertheless many improvements have already been introduced in this kind of farms.

Another inquiry made by the Commissioners was,

whether the quantity of sheep increased or diminished; whether the breeds were better in proportion to the quantity of wool and of meat, and to their quality, and also what were the obstacles to more extensive breeding.

In some districts the answer was, that the quantity of sheep was diminishing, in proof of which a statement was given of the number sold each year at the great fairs, showing that from 1830 to 1834 there was a much smaller number sold than from 1812 to 1816. In other districts it was stated, that the number had increased, as the quantity of arable land had much diminished, on account of the great advantage derived from rearing.

Generally speaking, there has been some improvement in the wool: the weight of the fleece is from four to five pounds in certain breeds, and from seven to eight in others, and even nine pounds for the rams. In the barony of Dromahair two shearings are made in the year, one in the autumn and the other in the spring, because the great moisture causes the wool to fall off. The weight of the two clippings is nine pounds.

There has been some improvement likewise in the quantity of meat: the weight of a sheep varies from 70 lbs. to 100 lbs.; there is less bone and more flesh than formerly. The sheep are killed at from two years and a half to three years old. The obstacles to rearing a greater quantity of sheep are, according to the witnesses, the want of capital to drain the land and form good pastures, and, almost throughout Ireland, the number that are stolen; for some time the depredators have been so daring, that they do not carry them away, but shear them in the night. In several baronies the foxes and eagles commit great havoc among the lambs.

The Commissioners put the same questions respecting cattle, of the quantity fattened, and the methods employed for this. The replies were similar to the preceding ones : some improvement has taken place in the breeds, but the state of agriculture is not enough advanced for the best English breeds to prosper.

In proportion to the spread of capital, the rearing and fattening of cattle increases. This art is still in its infancy : in general, grazing is the only means known, and the people are ignorant of the advantage of keeping the cattle in the shed, feeding them with the new farm-products—roots, vetches, etc. The small quantity of cattle fattened is sent to Liverpool ; they are killed at four years old.

The Commissioners inquired into the state of the farm buildings, and whether there was in general a good supply of agricultural implements.

The houses of the small farmers are scarcely superior to the cabins of those labourers who hold land upon the con-acre system ; and the farmers holding fifty acres, and who keep three cows, have no means of turning the milk to profit. In many baronies the plough is almost unknown, there being at most five or six in a district.

The Commissioners also inquired what system of manuring was employed on the land ; whether animal manure, sea-weed, composts, or whether the custom of burning the land prevailed.

Lime, burnt with turf, is employed, and the landlords generally allow the farmers to take as much as they require.

The principal resources of the farmer are bog-earth and road-scrapings, for the cattle are not stalled for feeding, and straw is their only food in winter. The largest farmers sell the straw which they have to spare, over and

above what they require for their own use, and they do not understand allowing the heaps of manure the requisite fermentation. They generally leave them piled up before their houses, forming nuisances which are the cause of much sickness. Sea-weed is in general use as manure : in many baronies the landlords are paid for this manure by an increase of rent on their lands to the amount of 12s. an acre, and they have deprived the farmers of it who have voted against them. Neither bones, salt, soot, rāpe, nor malt-dust are used as manures. It is impossible to prevent the small farmers, and those who rent small lots of land by the year, from burning the land.

The nature of the enclosures, and the manner in which they are kept up, was another point of inquiry.

The fences mostly consist of dry stone walls, banks of earth or hedges. The farmers are at the expense of keeping them up, and their destruction is a source of litigation and quarrelling.

The Commissioners inquired if the rents have diminished or increased in value.

Generally speaking, the rents of the large farmers have diminished in value for the last five or six years ; but the lands held by the small farmers are let at such exorbitant prices, that it is impossible they can pay what they owe to the landlord out of the produce of the soil. They are obliged to have recourse to labour for others, and, if they fail to obtain work, they do not pay, and are consequently ejected and driven to begging.

The Commissioners received detailed accounts of the state of the rivers, their floods, and the general progress of drainage.

The rivers and streams are very badly attended to, and

are not at all made to keep a regular course ; they are also obstructed by mills and dams. Those which are liable to overflowings are not kept in by embankments, and the country is all inundated. The little streams or ditches which serve to drain the land are dammed up by the small farmers for their own purposes.

In general the people have a strong prejudice against drainage, and the country is subject to fevers from want of outlets for the water.

The Commissioners instituted an inquiry into the state of roads and highways.

The roads, according to the witnesses, are much improved, and the cars which, twenty years ago, could only carry six or seven cwt., now bear from eighteen to twenty-three cwt. This improvement is attributed to the great powers which the law has given to the county to levy the necessary cost for the public works, and to carry them into execution ; it has greatly favoured the cultivation of certain lands by facilitating the application of lime to them.

Many landlords have made roads, adjoining their estates, at their own cost. Amongst these, Lord Palmerston has expended in this manner 1900*l*.

The old cars of the country have given place to the Scotch carts, which are much more serviceable than the English ones.

In several baronies the land has been so much divided that there are scarcely any cars remaining, and the corn is carried on the back of a donkey or a horse. One Commissioner stated, that for every horse there are at least nine donkeys used for transport.

REMARKS.

Man and the food of man have always seemed so identified in a natural order, that no attention has been given, either in ancient or modern times, to establish their relations. Neither writers nor legislators have, up to the present time, supposed or suspected that there could be any disorder in this respect, and Europe is in fact taken by surprise. God has given the earth to man so superabundantly productive, that hitherto it may be said there was more food than could be consumed.

In fact, if we regard such parts of our globe as South America, where the increase of population has been checked by causes depending upon the climate, we find them covered with the means of subsistence. Every one has heard of the immense herds of oxen, cows and calves; thousands are annually killed for the sake of their hides, which are sent to Europe, and the flesh is cast away to the animals which people those countries. On the sea-coast fish are so abundant, that they are only caught for the sake of the oil and shells.

Europe was precisely in this state, when in the middle ages the system of clearing began. Many centuries must pass over America, as they have done over Ireland, ere that country can be reduced

to the state of poverty to which Ireland is brought. Any legislator, magistrate, or writer, who should at the present day in America speak of regulations for territorial property, to make it furnish subsistence for the community, would appear absurd, and equally so indeed in some parts of Europe, where large tracts of forests have been left standing. Deer and wild-boars are there found in such abundance, that they constitute an essential part of the food consumed in the neighbouring towns.

The inquiries relative to England will unfold to the reader the system by means of which the inclosure and cultivation of land have continued the same abundance of food to the population of this country, although it is increased tenfold, as well as in Ireland, and although nearly the whole of the Irish labour for their support. Individual labour has succeeded in clearing the dry lands or the mountainous parts, but the bog-lands require collective labour, which the scattered agriculturists are unable to undertake.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF CAPITAL.

MR. BRASSINGTON, a farmer holding a pretty large occupation in Ireland, who has travelled through the whole country as agent of many proprietors, and is expert in the valuation of lands, stated to the Committee charged with examining the state of agriculture in the three kingdoms, that a man required to have at least 500*l.* capital to take a farm of a hundred acres in Ireland; but that the farmers of this country were far from having such a capital, and that thus the agriculture in Ireland was not comparable to that of Great Britain. He stated, however, that many Scotchmen have settled in Ireland, and that in the province of Leinster, chiefly in the environs of Dublin, there is more capital than in the other provinces. The farms in that part are better managed, and attention is begun to be paid to the drainage of the soil, and the care of the hedges and ditches.

The same witness adds, that the division of the farms in that part is excessive; that among a hundred small farmers, there is scarcely one who has the necessary capital to manage his farm well, and that he does not apply the capital he possesses to render the ground productive. It answers his purpose better to turn usurer, since for 10*l.*, which he lends to those worse off than himself, he exacts the crop of a piece of land, which amounts to an exorbitant interest.

He stated, that the joint-stock banks, which were sanc-

tioned by the law in 1826, had only been established in Ireland for eighteen months; that already, by renewing the notes of the farmers, they have afforded them the means of fattening cattle, which was not done previously; and that when these banks shall have had time to operate sufficiently, they will produce the best results, from the great facility they afford of creating capital in a country in which it is excessively scarce; that they advance money at four per cent., whilst the other banks demand six per cent.; that they have already forced the Bank of Ireland to establish branch-banks everywhere; and that there is no fear of their failing, as the private banks have done, which have thus brought ruin on the country.

This statement is confirmed by that of Mr. Blacker, the agent of many landowners in the province of Munster, who adds, that the joint-stock banks can only affect the farms of above fifty acres; that they have already produced a very great effect by loans to the farmers; and that they have acted indirectly upon agriculture, by favouring in the north of Ireland a trade in linen, which, without these banks, would not have attained a fifth of its present importance.

The Committee interrogated the witnesses as to what lands would offer to English companies the greatest advantage for the application of their capital. The reply was, that the lands already in cultivation were so badly managed, that it would be more advantageous to put them in a good state of culture than to employ capital in draining the bog-lands; although some of these have so little depth, that it would cost only 7*l.* per Irish acre to drain them: others again thirty feet in depth, would cost 22*l.*

REMARKS.

Capital is derived from two different sources : the most abundant is that of the public banks. Their institution was unknown to antiquity, and we owe it to the Hanseatic towns, from Hamburgh to Dunkirk, which in the middle ages commenced exchanges with Genoa and Venice. All the governments of Europe have since that period successively availed themselves of this powerful auxiliary, of which the following investigations will give a complete analysis.

The second source of capital has been known from the earliest times—that of private individuals, whose savings are converted into money, which they lend at a greater or less interest, and with greater or less security.

From this source, agriculture in Ireland, constituted as it is, can derive no advantage. No person will lend money to a man who holds the precarious tenure of a farm of five acres, or even of one acre ; or if he does, it is always at an exorbitant interest, proportioned to the risk which he runs for the money lent. This system is condemned by religion, and it is needless to comment on it.

Those who possess or cultivate the soil of Ireland, divided and subdivided as it is, are for the

most part destitute of resources, either from individuals or from the public banks ; and this, with the exception of Great Britain, as we shall presently see, is common to nearly all Europe. Capital has taken, and must take, in Europe, quite a different course. We have seen that men, when they formed themselves into communities, found their means of subsistence ready to their hands. The same may almost be said of their garments, as they covered themselves with deerskins, and in many countries with the skins of sheep. But for their dwellings they had everything to provide, especially when, in the progress of civilization, corporations of various arts and trades were established in the towns. The materials—such as stone, lime, plaster, wood—were indeed provided beforehand, but iron and the other metals required long preparation, and all these materials had to be transported to the towns. Such labour necessarily employed the capital which existed. The corporations of each art and trade became in a manner securities ; and the buildings and mechanical implements which they constructed, the first materials which they accumulated or the goods which they manufactured, formed a guarantee. This guarantee, as well as the person himself who borrowed, was under the eyes of the lender, and not isolated in distant districts, situated in the midst of woods and marshes.

Eventually these same corporations, finding the capital of private persons too small for their manufactures, commerce, and navigation, founded for and amongst themselves public banks, which, being in times of emergency a resource for aid to the governments, received from them exclusive privileges.

Thus has the industry of trade throughout Europe absorbed by legal means all the resources, of which agriculture has been legally despoiled. In the course of these inquiries, the consequences of this European system established in Ireland, compared with a wholly opposite one established in England, will be unfolded.

CHAPTER IX.

OF TAXES AND TITHES.

THE Commissioners investigated the complaints made by the different parties in Ireland respecting the taxes and tithes.

In general it is not the taxes imposed by Government upon the lands, although they are unequally assessed, that is complained of: the general cause of complaint is the tax laid by the grand jury upon each county for the maintenance and improvement of the roads, bridges, prisons and hospitals, for the police, and the salaries of the persons employed upon all these objects.

In the barony of Murrisk, province of Connaught, it was shown that these last taxes exceed those of the Government. The tenants who hold small plots of land from year to year, suffer much from them, there being no grace allowed, and a man never knows when the cess will be collected. In other baronies it has been proved that these taxes have increased every year, and that they are assessed at the rackrent; so that the poor, who pay for their land the highest rent, pay also the largest share of taxation. This county cess exceeds the rent itself, although the Government taxes do not amount to above one-sixth or one-twelfth of the rent.

Notwithstanding that the number of the members of the Church of England is very small in Ireland, the tithes have been levied in that country with the greatest rigour. The following is a table of the number of livings and

parishes in each ecclesiastical province of Ireland, furnished by the Commissioners, who in 1834 were charged to inquire into the state of instruction in that country :—

Names of ecclesiastical provinces.	Number of livings.	Number of parishes.
Province of Armagh.....	552	658
Province of Dublin.....	311	624
Province of Cashel	469	791
Province of Tuam	103	275
Total.....	1435	2348

The amount of the tithes varies much in the different parishes, from 1*d.* to 4*s.* per acre ; and the witnesses deposed, that the collectors levied them with such rigour, that they had caused a great proportion of the disturbances which had taken place by their attempts at extortion.

In the barony of Galmoy, province of Leinster, a woman's cloak was snatched from her as she was going to mass, for payment of tithes due to the English clergyman. From this cause, according to the witnesses, disturbances have prevailed in this barony, and tranquillity has only been restored since the collectors have no longer dared to levy the tithes.

A magistrate in the barony of Gowran, province of Leinster, declared that all the crimes committed in that district were upon lands which have been given to other persons, upon the ejectment of farmers for the non-payment of tithes ; and he gives a list of crimes committed from this motive of revenge against the new tenants. More than twenty houses were attacked in the early part of 1833 ; several farmers were killed, and others wounded or beaten by armed bodies of men.

• In the province of Munster, and principally in the barony of Conello, the disturbances have been the greatest, and the landlords take to themselves the half of the tithes, and support the peasantry in their resistance to the English clergy.

The Commissioners inquired what taxes the Catholic inhabitants imposed upon themselves to support their own worship.

In the barony of Kilconnel, the large landholders usually pay to the parish priest 2*l.* a year, and the small tenants pay from 2*s.* to 5*s.*; more than one-third of the parishioners however pay nothing at all. In addition to this, the priest receives fees on marriages, etc., and raises subscriptions for the building and repairing of chapels, etc.; but the receipts from all these sources do not exceed 60*l.* a year.

In the barony of Dromahair a Catholic chapel has been erected, and the Protestants pay their proportion of the expense, from the kindly feeling existing between them and the Roman Catholics.

In the barony of Murrisk, the tenants generally contribute to the priest 2*s.* 2*d.* a year; but the Commissioners were told by the witnesses, that if they examined the books of the priests and landlords, they would always find more due to the former than to the latter.

The following is a table of the population of the ecclesiastical provinces of Ireland, distinguishing the different religions into which the country is divided, which was furnished by the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Instruction in this country in 1834.

Names of Provinces.	Roman Catholics.	Members of the Church of England.	Presbyterians.	Other Protestants.	Total.
Armagh	1,955,123	517,722	638,073	15,823	3,126,741
Dublin	1,063,681	177,930	2,517	3,162	1,247,290
Cashel	2,220,340	111,813	966	2,454	2,335,573
Tuam	1,188,568	44,599	800	369	1,234,336
Total ...	6,427,712	852,064	642,356	21,808	7,943,940

The following table shows the proportion of the members of different religious persuasions in every 100 persons.

Provinces.	Roman Catholics.	Members of the Church of England.	Presbyterians and others.
Province of Armagh (Ulster)	63	17	20
Province of Dublin (Leinster)	85	14	1
Province of Cashel (Munster)	95	5	...
Province of Tuam (Connaught).....	96	4	...
Total of Ireland.....	85	10	5

REMARKS.

The tithes, which, at the period when they were fixed in each parish, were regarded as a benefit, have been so perverted in Ireland from the object of their institution, that they are regarded as a crying abuse, and have in fact become such. There is no country where the Catholic religion struck deeper root than in England: the periodical invasions to which Europe was a prey, from the sixth to the twelfth century, did not harass England in an equal degree. The ecclesiastical establishments, upon which the spoliators principally fell, prospered so much in this island, that it was able

alone to furnish, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, founders of religious orders for France and Germany.

The Cistercian and Benedictine orders, and that of St. Bernard, had many more establishments in England and in Ireland than in the rest of Europe ; and it was these orders that founded successively all the livings in places where a certain number of cottages were clustered together.

The inhabitants helped to support these establishments, by paying a tithe of their harvests ; and they experienced in fact a great advantage, as the Order which founded the living, erected a church and a parsonage, and gave them a pastor, who spared them long journeys to perform their religious duties, who instructed their children in religion, who was the physician in times of sickness, arbiter in their disputes, and who, above all, being in correspondence with those orders who were the most skilful agriculturists in Europe, instructed them in the art of agriculture, till then unknown. At that period were imported into England, as well as Ireland, cattle, trees and plants which had never before been known in those countries. The fact deserves attention, that this tithe formed a kind of link between the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich, and that the richest countries were those in which there were

large and small tithes ; because there the rich and the learned enjoyed a wider field of action, than in those parts where the portion of the clergy was limited to the thirtieth sheaf of corn. We must further remark, that in countries where the cultivator was not the landowner, but only the occupier, the payment of this tithe did not fall upon him ; for he took the farm at a price proportioned to the burdens which it had to support, and in the end the whole was expended in the parish.

At the period of the Reformation, this great and admirable association was destroyed, and ecclesiastical property confiscated. The produce of the tithes was given to Protestant clergymen, who, having no flocks, resided in Dublin or England, leaving the agriculturists under the conscientious scruple of paying to heretics, and of giving a morsel of bread to their Catholic pastor, which they have always done without murmur, and with a devotion that proves how the traditions of their fathers have convinced them of the sacredness of the sacerdotal institutions.

With regard to the interests of the rural population, the Inquiry develops the barbarous state into which agriculture is fallen, although, two centuries ago, it was on a par with that of the rest of Europe.

BOOK II.

**CONDITION OF THE FAMILIES OF LABOURERS
EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE.**

TABLE,

Showing the Parishes in which this Inquiry was made, the number of Witnesses who were heard, and the Assistant Commissioners who received the depositions.

Counties.	Parishes.	Baronies.	Number of Witnesses.	Names of the Assistant Commissioners.
PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT.				
Galway.....	Headford.....	Clare.....	16	F. Diggins and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esqrs.
"	Kilcummin.....	Moycullen.....	20	
"	Kilcreest.....	Dunkellin.....	17	
"	Killimore.....	Longford.....	17	
"	Tuam.....	Clare.....	2	
"	Omagh.....	Ballynahinch....	19	J. Spencer and W. Gray, Esqrs.
Mayo.....	Aughavale.....	Murrisk.....	14	
"	Ballina.....	Tyrawley.....	25	
"	Cong.....	Kilmain.....	15	
"	Kilgeever.....	Murrisk.....	13	
"	Kilmore Erris.....	Erris.....	18	F. Diggins and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esqrs.
"	Burrishoole.....	Burrishoole.....	17	
Roscommon..	Boyle.....	Boyle.....	10	
"	Kilkeevan.....	Ballintobber.....	17	
"	Kilkenvun.....	Athlone.....	11	
"	Moore.....	Moycarnon.....	17	T. Osler and J. O'Flynn, Esqrs.
Sligo.....	Achonry.....	Leney.....	8	
"	Drumcliffe.....	Carbery.....	11	
"	Kilmacshalgan.....	Tyrrera.....	15	
"	Sligo.....	Sligo.....	10	
"	Ballymoat.....	Corran.....	14	
PROVINCE OF LEINSTER.				
Westmeath...	Moat.....	Clonlonan.....	17	T. Osler and J. O'Flynn, Esqrs.
"	Ballinacarrig.....	Moygish.....	7	
"	Killucan.....	Farbill.....	6	
"	Benowen.....	Kilkenny.....	11	
"	Multifarnham.....	Corkanree.....	10	
"	Castlepollard.....	Demifore.....	8	Capt. White and T. N. Vaughan, Esqr.
"	Mullingar.....	Moyashel.....	17	
Meath.....	Castletown.....	Delvin.....	7	
"	Lillucan.....	Farbill.....	6	
"	Clonard.....	Moyfenragh.....	32	
Carlow.....	Aghade.....	Forth.....	4	Capt. White and T. N. Vaughan, Esqr.
"	Mullins.....	Mullins.....	12	
"	Carlow.....	Carlow.....	19	
"	Dunleckney.....	Idrone.....	25	
"	Tullow.....	Rathvilly.....	15	
"	Cadamstown.....	Carbery.....	7	Capt. White and T. N. Vaughan, Esqr.
Kildare.....	Castledermot.....	Kilkea.....	22	
"	Kilcock.....	Ikeathy.....	38	
"	Naas.....	North Naas.....	34	
"	Rathangan.....	Ophaly.....	28	

Counties.	Parishes.	Baronies.	Number of Witnesses.	Names of the Assistant Com- missioners.
Longford	Abbeyshrule	Rathcline	9	J. Spencer and W. Gray, Esqrs.
"	Cloonguish	Longford	5	
"	Granard	Granard	8	
"	Killashee	Moydow.....	8	
"	Templemichael.....	Ardagh	8	
Wexford.....	Monart	Scarewalsh	5	
"	Maglass	Forth	6	
"	Old Ross	Bantry	8	
"	Kilcormack.....	Gorey.....	5	
"	Horetown	Shelmalier.....	5	
"	Templeshannon.....	Ballaghkeen.....	4	
"	Whitechurch.....	Shelbourne	4	
PROVINCE OF MUNSTER.				
Clare	Tomfinloe... ..	Bunratty.....	17	P. F. Johnston and E. B. Molloy, Esqrs.
"	Kilfarboy	Ibrickane	15	
"	Kilmanaheen.....	Corcomroe.....	30	
"	Kildysart	Clonderalaw.....	20	
"	Kilferagh	Moyarta.....	18	
"	Abbey	Burren	12	
"	Killaloe	Tulla	18	
Cork.....	St. Mary's Shandon	City of Cork	9	
"	St. Finn Bary	" "	7	
"	Skull	Carbery	21	
"	Trinity	City of Cork.....	6	
"	Kilbrogan	Kinnalmeaky ...	20	T. Martin and J. Lalor, Esqrs.
"	Macroon	Muskerry.....	25	
"	Liscarrol.....	Orrery.....	14	
"	Multoze	Kinsale	12	
"	Innishannon	Kinnalea.....	14	
"	Kilgariffe	Ibane	15	
"	Ross-Carbery	Carbery.....	19	
"	Kilcagh.....	Imokilly.....	14	
"	Templetrine.....	Courceys.....	8	
Kerry.....	Killarney	Magonihy.....	6	
"	Cahir.....	Iveragh	4	G. C. Lewis and D.G.Lube, Esqrs.
"	Listowel.....	Iraghticonnor ...	4	
"	Dingle.....	Corkaguinny.....	4	
"	Tralee	Clanmaurice.....	3	
Limerick.....	Rathkeale.....	Lower Conello...	5	
"	Newcastle	" "	5	
"	Askeaton	" "	1	
"	Kilcornan	Kenry....	5	
Tipperary.....	Carrick	Iffa and Offa.....	15	
"	St. Mary's	" "	12	
"	Roscrea.....	Ikerrin	6	

Counties.	Parishes.	Baronies.	Number of Witnesses.	Names of the Assistant Commissioners.
PROVINCE OF ULSTER.				
Antrim.....	Tickmacraven.....	Glenarm.....	10	C. W. Borrett and J. Pebles, Esqrs.
"	Antrim.....	Antrim.....	20	
"	Glenavy	Massareene.....	10	
"	Lisburn.....	" "	18	
"	Carrickfergus	Carrickfergus	15	
"	Kirkniriola	Toome	20	
"	Drumaul.....	" "	16	
"	Billy.....	Carey	14	
"	Rainoan	Cong	8	
"	Larne	Glenarns.....	12	
"	Resharkin	Kilconway.....	15	
"	Ahoghill.....	Toome	18	
"	Ballymoney	Dunluce.....	20	
Donegal.....	Stranorlar.....	Raphoe.....	35	
"	Clonleigh.....	" "	16	P. F. Johnston and J. R. Barry, Esqrs.
"	Kilbarron.....	Tyrhugh	25	
"	Clondehorkey	Kilmacrenan	28	
"	Conwall.....	" "	23	
"	Fahan	Ennishowen.....	29	
Londonderry.	Templemore.....	Londonderry.....	25	W. Borrett and J. Pollock, Esqrs.
"	Drumachose.....	Kenaught.....	20	
"	Dungiven.....	" "	16	
"	Upeercumber	Tyrkeeran.....	23	
"	Kilrea	Loughinsholin ...	16	
"	Maghera.....	" "	25	

CHAPTER I.

FOOD, LODGING AND CLOTHING OF THE PEASANTRY.

IN the different districts which the Commissioners visited, they made inquiries respecting the customary food of the inhabitants, to which they received the following replies.

Potatoes constitute the principal, and in many cases the sole food of the peasantry. Persons who own a horse and one or two cows can procure no other; being obliged to sell their butter and eggs to pay their rent, they can never taste them, and it is quite a luxury for the labourers occasionally to eat their potatoes with thick milk. Twice a year they indulge in a little bacon or a herring. All those who are engaged in the oatmeal trade, and the bakers, state to the Commissioners that they had never sold anything to a labourer; and in contradiction to the notion which has been put forth, that this class prefers potatoes to bread, all the witnesses declare that they preferred bread, but could not afford the expense. One witness said, that corn can never become the food of the people, so long as the farms are divided into three or four acres, and are let so high.

With respect to the quantity of potatoes necessary to feed a man, his wife and two or three children, all the witnesses declare that 5lbs. a day are required, and that the people eat them without salt, because in general they cannot afford it.

The Commissioners remark, that, having taken various opportunities of visiting the people at their meals, when

they were not expected, they had never seen upon the table more than a third part of the necessary food.

The potatoe-crop, said a witness, is in Ireland an affair of life or death. When it fails, a complete famine ensues; corn is out of the question, as the rich alone have the means of buying it.

A single year of scarcity, said another witness, affects many following years, for the people are compelled to eat the seed-potatoes, and they then plant such bad ones that it is impossible to eat them.

The Commissioners investigated the comparative advantages of corn over potatoes, as food for the people.

The great weight of potatoes, said one witness, is an obstacle to their transport, which is not the case with corn, so that one district is in a state of famine whilst another is overflowing with provisions.

Another witness said that the crop of potatoes is very variable, notwithstanding that their cultivation is better understood; and if it were as precarious as formerly, the great increase of the population would produce incalculable evils, for the public peace depends upon the harvest.

A country like this, said a third witness, in which the food entirely consists of potatoes, has always three months of positive famine—June, July and August; and the longer the time that intervenes between the growth of the potatoes of the old crop and the new one, the greater is the distress of the whole population. The people are then obliged to dig up the potatoes, although they are no larger than a pigeon's egg.

The crop of the poor labourers, who rent small plots of land by the year, is more backward by two or three weeks

than that of the farmers, because they have not the means of sowing until too late.

The potatoes which are eaten before they are ripe cause bowel-complaints, which are very prevalent in the country at these periods.

The witnesses say that the labourers in these times of famine are reduced to one meal a day; they cannot even procure cabbages. The majority have exhausted their crop of potatoes by the first of April, and in May there is not one of them who has a single potatoe left. From this time to the month of October, the great distresses and disturbances in Ireland prevail. Employment is then scarce; the wholesale dealers supply potatoes on credit, at double the price they fetch for ready money, and they exact besides some days' labour gratis. Without this credit, one half of the population would perish. The peasantry, knowing that the following year they must apply to these same dealers, are very exact in paying them. The small farmers are, in this respect, pretty nearly on a footing with the labouring classes, but they obtain credit more easily.

The quality of the potatoes which the dealers sell at this time of the year is of the worst description: they have begun to sprout, so that the food of the people is composed partly of potatoes in a state of germination, and partly of those which are unripe; and it is calculated that, by digging them up prematurely, at least two months of the food supplied in the year is lost.

The Commissioners state, that the year in which they travelled through the country they saw the people eating potatoes no bigger than nuts; that the distress is so great, that the peasantry are obliged to feed on hedge-plants, and

especially on wild mustard, which gives a dark yellow colour to the skin of the people. The quantity of it consumed is enormous.

At these times, say the witnesses, there is an end to begging, for no one has anything to give. The carts carry nothing to the markets, for the people hinder every kind of circulation.

A magistrate deposed that he had known many people, who, regarding transportation as a means of putting an end to their misery, have committed thefts for the express purpose of bringing upon themselves that sentence.

The Commissioners inquired into the condition of the dwellings.

The usual dimensions of the cabins occupied by the peasantry are 20 feet in length by 13 in width, and the walls are 6 to 8 feet high, built of dry stones, plastered over on one side. The cabins very rarely consist of two rooms; and, where this is the case, the second, situated behind the chimney, serves as sleeping-room, on account of the warmth afforded by the chimney. They have never more than one story, nor any ceiling. Most of them have no chimney, and the smoke finds its way out of a hole which is left in the roof, or by the door: this occasions eye-complaints among the peasants. There is frequently no window.

The Commissioners, in the visits they made, found not a single cabin into which the rain did not penetrate. In general they are thatched with oat- or wheat-straw, but the poor people cannot renew the roof, and they recover them with potatoe-stalks. The floor is neither

planked nor bricked, and receives no preparation; it is lower than the level of the ground, and so full of inequalities that the water stands in little pools.

The Commissioners visited these cabins in August, after two months of excessive heat, and did not find a single one with the floor dry. They observed many which beggars and persons ejected from their holdings had constructed in the ditches, in order to avoid paying anything for the ground they occupied; for the landowners let at an extremely dear rate.

The witnesses say that, when the landlords build the cabins, they cost them 5*l.*, and they let them for 1*l.* 16*s.* a year. In general they erect them on their worst land, chiefly on bog-land, because the tenant quickly sets to work to bring into cultivation a piece of land, for which, at the end of three years, the landlord makes him pay rent. When he is unable to do this, all that he possesses is seized—his cow or his pig.

The cost attending seizures is of small account, and the poor are forced to pay this in labour; in the barony of Middlethird, the witnesses say, that when a landlord intends to seize the potatoe-crop of a labourer, he plants a cross on the spot, and there is no instance of the unfortunate man touching the crop.

Generally speaking, said an old man, for the last fifty years the dwellings have become worse and worse, and if there have been any instances to the contrary, they have been in the towns.

The Commissioners, in addition to all these depositions, say that there is not one of these cabins which would be considered habitable in England; that the Irish live in a

state of filth which it is impossible to imagine ; that the pig which they rear has no separate sty, but lives with the family ; that the poorest of the agricultural population in England would not put their animals into the cabins rented by the Irish at 1*l.* 10*s.* a year ; and they are astonished that, notwithstanding such poverty, there should still exist any order in society.

The Commissioners inquired how fuel was procured, and what was the cost of it.

The common fuel of the country is turf. There is an abundant supply of it in the bogs ; but, say the witnesses, it is not within the reach of the poorer classes, as the cost of it is excessive—18*s.* or 1*l.* will not buy sufficient stock to last one cabin for a year.

Hence, they add, all the turf which is left upon the ground, faggots and branches of trees, are stolen ; the alternative is either to steal or perish, for the poor have no means of buying, and the rich will not give.

This thieving is not considered disgraceful, and parents even encourage their children to it, who thus become accustomed to petty depredation. They pillage the fields ; and some crops, such as turnips, it is impossible even to attempt to cultivate, as it is a great luxury to the peasantry to eat this vegetable.

Many witnesses were of opinion that most of the diseases of the Irish peasantry arise more from want of fuel than from bad food : it is from the want of fires that rheumatism, fevers and pleurisies are so common. Those bog-lands on which turf is cheap are thickly populated, which is

The Commissioners made inquiries respecting the clothing of the labouring classes.

A man without any family is able to provide himself with clothes, but one who has a wife and children is obliged to go without.

The following is the cost of a man's clothing, as stated to the Commissioners :—

	£	s.	d.
A hat	0	3	0
A coat of the coarsest cloth .	0	16	11
Three waistcoats	0	5	0
Two pairs of trowsers	0	14	8
Three pairs of shoes	0	18	0
Six pairs of stockings	0	6	0
Six shirts	0	12	0
Cost for three years	3	15	7.

The witnesses say that, since the peace, the custom of wearing shoes and stockings has diminished.

The cost of a woman's clothing is as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
One cloak	0	9	6
One gown	0	6	0
One petticoat	0	2	8
Three shifts	0	3	9
Six caps	0	3	0
Three aprons	0	3	0
Two handkerchiefs	0	3	0
Cost for three years	1	10	11.

The cost of shoes for the women is not included, as

they wear none. Those who are the best off carry them in their hand when they go to church, and put them on when they enter it. All the witnesses state that the above cost for dress is that only of the richest farmers; but that in this class, as well as in the lower ones, the children go about absolutely naked till the age of ten.

It is very seldom that the people purchase new clothes, —they buy all the old clothes they can find. If a man has money enough to procure a fleece, his wife spins the wool, and they get it made into cloth by a weaver. The farmers holding above twenty acres, having generally two sheep, have their cloth made at their own homes.

The witnesses proceeded to say, that many of the peasantry abstain from going to mass, to avoid exposing their extreme misery; and a great number of them would have attended the sittings of the Commissioners if they had dared to appear in tatters. The clergymen present confirmed these statements, and added that scarcely a third of the inhabitants of the parishes go to church, from want of clothes; they take it by turn to attend, and lend one another their clothes for that purpose.

The Commissioners state that, without exception, they found the children quite naked.

With respect to the furniture, the following facts were confirmed by the testimony of various persons, and by the visits of the Commissioners to the dwellings.

Scarcely a third of the families of the small farmers and labourers have a wooden bedstead. Those in use cost 5s., and ought to last ten years; but from the extreme dampness of the cabins, they last only half that time.

A whole family sleep in one bed; for they have nothing to cover them, and they thus keep one another

warm. Lads and girls of eighteen years lie together, but the latter at the head, and the lads at the foot of the bed.

So likewise when the family sleep on the ground, having no bedstead, they lie always all clustered together; and the clergymen declare that this custom causes them the greatest pain, but that they never make any observation on it at confession, in order not to call in question the innocence of their children. The want of clothes, of fire to dry them, and of covering during the night, cause many more diseases than bad food.

Very few families have a palliasse for the straw upon which they lie. A man must have at least twenty acres to possess a blanket; commonly the people have only half a blanket.

A magistrate deposed that, in his rounds, he had taken the trouble to inspect the cabins; that out of six dwellings, he found only in one a woollen blanket; and that the greatest misery which the Irish have to suffer—especially the children—is from the cold.

The Commissioners, in the visits they made, found the sexes intermingled; and they express the greater surprise at this, as the Irish, who are very hospitable, receive with open door all who pass by. All the inhabitants of a cabin are huddled together under one part of the roof, upon which they heap potatoe-stalks, to prevent the rain from falling where they sleep.

The Commissioners seldom found any chairs; generally three-legged stools are used. All the utensils consist of an iron pot, a wooden box, a pitcher to hold water, a knife, an iron fork, and two or three wooden platters.

They describe the condition of 200 cabins which they

visited; in many they found absolutely nothing at all. Nothing can exceed the dirt and misery in which the people live; in order to keep themselves warm, they lie by the side of the pig.

The most wretched dwellings are found on the bogs, where those take refuge who have been forced to quit their farms upon the consolidation of the lands, which system at the present time causes the greatest discontent and suffering in certain baronies.

The Archdeacon of Meath says that, whilst travelling through Europe, he made a point of examining into the condition of the people; that he has found nothing at all similar to Ireland, and that it is a mystery to him how the Irish are able to endure so much cold and hunger.

REMARKS.

This picture of the state of things throughout Ireland merits the more attention, as the inhabitants of France and a great part of Germany are advancing more or less rapidly toward the same state—cold and famine; and the only difference between these countries and Ireland is, that their inhabitants have not like the Irish a sense of their sufferings and perils. In addition to this, the division of lands, which is the cause of all the calamities, is honestly regarded by them and by their governments as a source of prosperity.

The theories of the eighteenth century have struck deep root in the minds of people on the continent ; whilst in England, the highest classes of society have always received them with fear and distrust, however great the authority of those who supported them. Montesquieu and Adam Smith have established a school in the rest of Europe :—no laws of entail, no rights of primogeniture, no restrictions in the sale, purchase or division of lands ; consequently no territorial property, especially among the religious orders ; no corporation of arts and trades, no apprenticeships. “ Let things alone,” has been the general motto. The English Parliament, exclusively composed of landowners, have allowed the ancient regulations respecting corporations of arts and trades, as well as apprenticeships, to lose their power, as if it were a matter of indifference. These inquiries will show what have been the effects of this relaxation.

The same Parliament, on the contrary, has maintained the ancient jurisprudence relative to territorial property in England. But in Ireland, where the English could not reside, as we have already seen, the Parliament has not interfered ; that is to say, the landowner has not been obliged to make enclosures, to form water-courses, to drain the bog-lands, to open new roads, or to keep up the old ones.

Every landowner has been at liberty to portion out the soil into farms of ten, five, or even of one acre ; he has been at liberty to sell for fifty years, for a hundred years, and, in short, has been left to act as he pleases. We see the fruits of this.

In Great Britain things have not been allowed to take their own course in this respect. The reader will soon judge of this other system.

CHAPTER II.

OF ORPHANS, FOUNDLINGS, AND BASTARDS.

Extracts from the Depositions.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway. Examinations taken by Francis Diggins, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Headford, barony of Clare. Sixteen witnesses.

It is impossible for the working classes to lay by a half-penny, and they seldom try to do so. They are therefore not able to leave anything to their children in case these become orphans.

Orphans are chiefly supported by small collections made at chapel and from house to house.

In this parish two orphan children were supported by a poor man, who was an insolvent himself. He was in gaol for the last two months, and the neighbours made a trifling collection for the children among themselves.

There are fewer desertions than formerly, the principal cause of which is, that there is now no assessment made by the vestry for the support of the children.

When the Foundling Hospital was open, it was much less expensive to send the children up to Dublin, than to pay for nursing them in the parish; and the closing of the Foundling Hospital is in this respect a great loss.

Nevertheless, according to other witnesses, many foundlings have been kept in the country rather than send them to the Foundling Hospital; and the people congratulate themselves on the closing of this establishment, because all

the children were there brought up in the Protestant religion.

It would be difficult to establish a legislative interference that would not be calculated to increase the number of desertions.* The Foundling Hospital was good at the time when it existed, to prevent the desertion of children; for in this case they were brought to the churchwarden of the parish, and were supposed to belong to a Protestant family; the Catholic mothers made therefore every exertion to keep them.

Parish of Kilcummin, barony of Moycullen. Twenty witnesses.

The evidence of Mary Carr gives an idea of the manner in which foundlings and orphans are brought up. There are fifty widows in the parish, who are in the same situation as this woman, supported by the bounty of their neighbours, and upon the brink of mendicancy. She gave the following deposition.

“I am a widow. My daughter also is a widow. I am rearing a foundling, who is now twelve years old. I have a cabin, for which I pay 8s. a year rent. I am two years in arrear. I was not able to work hard for the last three years; before that I used to manufacture a bit of canvass to pay my rent. I often go, at the risk of my life, to places for the neighbours, striving to earn something. For one day that we have enough to eat, we are two days that we have not. I attend the sick sometimes. I need not risk myself at all, but for the little boy, who must have something to eat. I received altogether 6*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.* from the parish for supporting the child. The people are unwilling to pay the cess; I do not think they are able. The blanket that was on my bed I cut up to make two

little petticoats for the child. I do not know what kitchen means. I am not able to buy a halfpenny-worth of milk in the fortnight, and have not tasted even a herring these three months: I got no meal since the time it was given out by the Committee. I cannot spin wool, but sometimes get a stone of potatoes from a neighbour for spinning one pound of flax: a cripple, three feet high, might spin flax, but it requires a strong person to spin wool. A woman would get 6*d.* a dozen for yarn fifteen years ago, but now she would not get 3*d.* My part of the collection at the church is sometimes 1*d.* and sometimes 1½*d.* a week."

Parish of Tuam, town of Tuam, barony of Clare; evidence of the Protestant Archbishop, written by himself.

Any children that are deserted are supposed to be illegitimate. There have been some instances of their perishing before they were discovered, but they have been very few. From the present rate of wages and the little employment given to labourers, they would be utterly unable to support the orphans of the parish, since they can hardly maintain themselves. The support of orphans generally falls upon the nearest relatives.

At the last assizes the Protestant clergy sought for presentments from the going judge of assize, but few parishes obtained what was requisite. The churchwardens are obliged to take care of deserted children, but last Easter there was no appointment of such offices. There is an odium attached to the office, the duty of which is to levy a rate upon the parish, and it was severe to inflict upon Protestants exclusively such an office. When the churchwardens had the charge of foundlings, they were always taken good care of, and had great tenderness shown

them. The clergy visited them, and the churchwardens saw them at the periods when those who took care of them were paid.

Five pounds per annum is the highest sum for the support of each child. Heretofore the sum was provided by a vestry assessment ; but since that was abolished, it has been sought for under a special law from the going judge of assize.

When the children attained a certain age, they were apprenticed, and for this an apprentice-fund was levied on the parish. When children are deserted at a more advanced age than what may be termed infancy, the law makes no provision for them, and they generally become beggars.

The practice of taking care of deserted children increases the number of desertions ; but if no charge were taken of them, might not a worse crime in consequence be apprehended ?

The present system requires improvement: that which I would propose, is to commit the superintendence of deserted children exclusively to the Protestant parochial ministry, and that the funds requisite be entrusted to them, and the due administration thereof be accounted for before the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The general opinion, however, is against this arrangement.

Desertion has not decreased since the closing of the Foundling Hospital in Dublin.

Evidence of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, written by himself.

There is scarcely an example (I never heard of any) of legitimate children having been deserted. There are not any funds for the support of deserted children ; few of them

are sheltered or educated by the religious orders. The churchwarden does not always take care of them.

County of Mayo ; examinations taken by John Spencer, Esq., and Wilson Gray, Esq. ; parish of Aughvale, barony of Murrisk. Fourteen witnesses.

The parochial assessment for the support of deserted children has been discontinued for three years, although the number of orphans has lately very much increased by the prevalence of cholera. One of the officers of health says, that there cannot be less than three hundred children under the age of twelve years without father and mother ; a subscription was raised, by which perhaps one-fourth of them were assisted. He could not say what had become of the others. A large number must have been reduced to beggary ; the children of the town labourers particularly could scarcely have any other resource.

A poor man, a weaver, stated that one of his neighbours had taken four of these children, another three, and that his aunt and himself had received two ; that they could not do otherwise, since the parents had died suddenly. Not one of those who took the charge of these children had the means of boiling a potatoe more.

Town of Ballina and Ardnaree, barony of Tyrrawley. Twenty-five witnesses.

There are four deserted children in the parish, all of whom were deserted more than two years ago. The support of the children now falls on the nurses, with whom they were put out by the churchwardens, before the collection of the parochial funds for their support ceased.

A labourer, one of those on whom the support of three

foundlings has devolved, says : “ I have seven children of my own to support ; four years ago my wife undertook the care of a foundling for 6s. a month. We were regularly paid for the first and second years. The third year I processed the churchwardens, and recovered the amount ; but though the churchwarden is by law accountable to me for the money, the law is little protection to me, as I am too poor to pay for it. I worked yesterday for 5d., and have no work today, and the expense of serving the process and the attorney’s fee would amount to 4s. 6d.”

An instance was mentioned of the inhabitants of a village, where a child was deserted, undertaking its support ; they passed the child from house to house, leaving it a few weeks at each, as agreed on among them.

Parish of Cong, village of Cong. Fifteen witnesses.

There are two young orphan children ; a peasant took them to his cabin for a year and a half, while they begged for their food, which he could not afford them.

County of Roscommon ; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq., and W. M’Cullagh, Esq. ; parish of Boyle, barony of Boyle. Ten witnesses.

There are six deserted children on the list in this parish, all supposed to be illegitimate. More children are left in houses than in fields or on the road. The women who nurse the foundlings become almost invariably attached to them, and rear them as their own children.

These people are opposed to the re-establishment of the Foundling Hospital, because it separated for life the child from the mother ; whereas now she watches what becomes of it, and can claim it again, if circumstances

One witness said, that it was certainly very bad to desert a child, but that it was still worse to send it to the Foundling Hospital, where it was made a Protestant. It was stated, moreover, to be much less expensive to nurse foundlings in the country than to send them to an hospital; and all the witnesses agree that the child, not acquiring in that establishment family habits, turned out ill.

Province of Leinster, county of Carlow; examinations taken by Captain White and T. N. Vaughan, Esq.; union of Aghade and Ballin, barony of Forth. Four witnesses.

The Catholic priest estimated the number of desertions each year at about three, and nearly as many orphans are left unprovided for: notwithstanding the general misery, the charitable people receive and keep them until they are old enough to gain their livelihood. He prefers this system to the Hospital, or any other means of bringing up these children.

Parish of Carlow, barony of Carlow. Twenty-nine witnesses.

The construction put on the laws about the provision for deserted children, requires that the child must be under twelve months old, found destitute, and without any traces as to the parents. If at the vestry the parishioners disagree about the provision for a deserted child, the clergyman applies to the sitting judge of assize, who gives a *fiat* on the parish. The churchwarden takes charge of deserted children as overseer of deserted children, but not in his character as churchwarden. The children are sent to school, and must be brought up Protestants. The limit of expenditure for each child is 5*l.* a year, and the assessment is in proportion to the number of children on the list. A clergyman gave his opinion that the religious

persuasion of the child ought to be decided by the majority of the rate-payers.

Parish of Dunleckny and Wells, barony of Idrone. Twenty-five witnesses.

The labouring classes are quite unable to make any provision for their children being left orphans. There are in this parish from thirty to forty orphans, supported either by their relations or by begging !

A rate is laid for the support of foundlings, but the law only allows a provision for children under twelve months old, found destitute and deserted.

The facility of having illegitimate children well taken care of may increase the number of them, but it prevents infanticide, no instance of which has occurred for twelve years.

The Protestant Dean thinks the closing of the Dublin Foundling Hospital a matter of regret, and that it has been a cause of great inconvenience to the parochial clergy. The witnesses state that the children put out to nurses are much better cared for than those brought up in the hospitals, that they are more moral, because they become members of the family, and that such an attachment grows up between the peasants and the children, that it is with the greatest pain and reluctance the nurses will give them up, and the children have often, when apprenticed out, run away from their masters and returned to their nurses.

Province of Munster, parish of Kilbrogan and Ballymooden, barony of Kinnalmeaky ; examinations taken by Thomas Martin, Esq. and John Lalor, Esq. Twenty witnesses.

A most extraordinary mode of providing for foundlings has been adopted for some years in this parish. For-

merly, when the funds of the Cork Hospital were very considerable, there was no objection to receiving children from different parts of the country. Every child which was exposed in Bandon was in consequence sent to Cork, and the woman who brought it generally took a letter to the churchwarden of some parish there, who sent the child to the hospital. When, in consequence of the diminution of the funds of the hospital, a regulation was made that no foundling should be received but those of Cork and the Liberties, the parochial authorities of Bandon had recourse to the following expedient to save their parishes from the burden of supporting the foundlings. Each child, as soon as possible after being discovered, was given in charge to a woman named Rebecca Clarke, who was understood to take it to Cork and get it into the hospital; she received 10s. for each child. It appears that this system still continues. Mrs. Clarke, on being examined, stated, that her mode of getting a child into the hospital is to expose it in Cork, either at the gate of the hospital or in some gentleman's hall. The child then, of course, becomes a foundling of the parish in which it is thus exposed, and it is sent by the churchwarden of that parish to the hospital. Within a fortnight from the present time (October 2nd, 1834), Mrs. Clarke has exposed a child in this way; she says that, although she has been going on thus for years, she was but once detected, and then she could not be punished, as she was not caught in the fact.

This account of the way in which the children were disposed of, after they left Bandon, rests on the authority of Mrs. Clarke alone. The foundling-overseers knew or know nothing more than that she got the children and

was paid. The witnesses, however, gave her a good character, and she herself speaks with the greatest apparent candour and openness, and, there is every reason to believe, with truth.

This inquiry was continued in the same manner in a multitude of parishes in different counties of Ireland, and the evidence established facts of the same nature as those already cited.

In several baronies it was stated that there are usually four orphans to one foundling, and that the vestry has not the power to levy a cess for orphans, whilst they have the power of doing so for foundlings under twelve months old, whose parents cannot be discovered.

In other baronies the people refuse to pay the rate fixed by the churchwardens, and prefer rather themselves to take charge of the children from charity than to let them become Protestants. Nevertheless, in all other respects, there are no complaints against the churchwardens, who have very difficult duties to perform, and who are very upright.

The private societies which have been formed for orphans and foundlings are always under the control of a Protestant minister, and on condition that the children are Protestants. Thus the witnesses say that these societies have never been at all successful.

The people everywhere prefer that no law should be enacted respecting the manner of bringing up orphans and foundlings, rather than to force them to be Protestants; for up to the present day all the funds raised by authority can be applied only on condition that the children shall be brought up in the established religion, and it is for this reason that the people refuse to pay. Several

witnesses state that, if religious orders were to be established, all the difficulties would be removed.

In the barony of Ophaly a union of Catholic parishes has been made for orphans and foundlings, which contains twelve orphans and three deserted children. Two of these latter are supported by private contribution, and one by a grant of grand jury presentment, and no great difficulty is found in collecting it. This union of parishes has been made, because a single parish is not rich enough to pay the cost attending the application to the judge of assize for permission to levy a rate.

In many parishes the witnesses state that the charity of the Catholics takes the place of the Protestant law, and does much more good.

BASTARDY.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Headford, barony of Clare. Sixteen witnesses.

Bastards are never supported by the parish except in cases of desertion. Feelings of honour frequently induce marriage before the birth of the child.

An allowance has usually been granted to the woman at the petty sessions for the last twenty years: the amount varies from 2*l.* to 4*l.*, according to circumstances, for three years. The woman's oath is the only evidence required; and her having been a bad character does not affect her claim.

Unless married to the fathers of their children, women who have had bastards seldom get husbands; and the witnesses are persuaded that, by the influence of a magistrate and a clergyman, any man might be forced into marriage.

The woman falls very considerably in the estimation of her neighbours, and a pecuniary consideration would never induce a labourer to marry one of this class.

The bastard children are subject to taunts, and a small farmer would have a great objection to give his daughter to one of them in marriage.

A female bastard is never reproached, and the gentleman's bastard is more reproached than the poor man's.

County of Mayo ; examinations taken by John Spencer, Esq., and Wilson Gray, Esq. ; parish of Kilmore Erris, barony of Erris. Eighteen witnesses.

A magistrate stated, that within the last three years at the petty sessions for the half-barony of Erris, containing a population of 23,000 persons, about twenty-five applications for wages for nursing bastards had been made by the mothers against the fathers.

The mother's oath affiliating the child is taken, but it must be supported by other circumstantial evidence, or some implied acknowledgment on the part of the father, before proceedings can be taken against him.

It is questionable whether the law authorizes the churchwardens to issue an order to seize the property of the father ; nevertheless they do this, and the judge always approves it.

The wages granted vary, according to the father's ability to pay them, from 5s. to 11s. a quarter ; and this allowance is made for eighteen months or two years.

The father invariably refuses to marry the mother of the child, and the influence of the priest alone can bring him to consent to it. It is an invariable practice for the two parties to go to confession before marrying.

One of the witnesses declares his belief that nine out of ten rape cases are fictitious, got up merely for the purpose of forcing the father to marry. Under this impression, a regulation has been imposed upon the Catholic clergy of this diocese, not to marry such parties while a prosecution is pending.

The facts stated by the witnesses cited in the other districts of Ireland are of the same kind as the preceding.

One witness declares that the number of bastards in the towns is two per cent. on the number of births. Another states that in the country the proportion is one per cent., and in parts where there is a garrison three per cent.; and that in this number one-half the parents marry eventually.

In some parishes the women pursue the father, smash his windows, abuse him; and all the inhabitants back them, and force the man to marry, or to quit the country.

REMARKS.

In all ages there have existed orphans according to the decrees of Providence, and, according to the human passions, natural children and foundlings. As the various parts which compose the structure of society pass thus under the observation of the reader, he is easily enabled to analyse them, or rather to compare them one with another. During the fifty centuries which preceded the Christian æra,

society was composed only of masters and slaves, and at the present day a portion of the globe is still under the same system. No one can deny that this state of things is more favourable to orphans and natural children, of whom we speak, than the system at present existing in Ireland. For in the former case the most disadvantageous condition in the lot of these children was their being the children of slaves ; but they had at the same time a master obliged by the law and by his own interests to feed, lodge and clothe them, without their being conscious of the weight of slavery.

Has Christianity then come to make worse the condition of that class for which our Saviour had such a predilection ? Certainly not—quite the contrary. In the state of slavery the masters of these children provided only for their corporeal wants ; and Christianity, in depriving them of that protection, substituted other protectors, temporal as well as spiritual, in the religious orders. At the period when men were freed from slavery, religious orders were simultaneously established, who formed the most essential condition of the new state of society which was established ; for without them what was to become of these children ? The Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, in his evidence, manifests so strongly his conviction that the confiscated property of the religious orders, with which

the Protestant clergy is gorged, belongs to these children, that he proposes to form establishments for their reception, but upon the condition of their being brought up as Protestants.

Of all the species of persecution attempted by the Protestants upon the Catholics in Ireland, this is the most ingenious, but has not been the most successful. The faith and charity of the Catholics have a strength, which neither Protestant archbishop or sovereign can corrupt*. Here then is an entire people, having only a half of the necessary means of subsistence to support them in their toils, willing to take upon themselves the maintenance of these children, and doing so, without being able, as they simply express it, “to boil a potatoe the more.”

* [The author has imputed a religious motive to the Archbishop of Dublin, when his object was simply one of benevolence and charity. Of course a Protestant Archbishop could only sanction the education of children in his own creed. It requires a very jaundiced eye to see anything of a spirit of persecution in the Archbishop's recommendation. ENGLISH EDITOR.]

CHAPTER III.

WIDOWS WITH FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway; examinations taken by F. Diggens, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Kilcummin, barony of Moycullen. Twenty witnesses.

IN order to form an accurate estimate of the proportion of those amongst this class of the community who are able to support themselves, or are either in part or altogether dependent on their relations and neighbours, the following inquiry was made into the circumstances and condition of all the widows living in a limited district.

The village of Outerard was chosen, without any reference to its comparative poverty or comfort; nor was it until the several instances narrated had been gone through, that the witnesses expressed their opinion, that if in anything this was not a fair specimen of the condition of the entire parish, the difference consisted in there being some trifling advantages belonging to the poor of Outerard above those of the average of villages in the neighbourhood.

By this enumeration it appears, that in a village containing one hundred and fourteen families there are twenty-two widows; of these, six are entirely dependent on their relations for support, and two partly so maintained; eight live upon the bounty of their neighbours, and one is assisted by their charity to support herself: five maintain themselves altogether by their own industry. There are seven who have families of young children; of the whole

number, not more than half can be said to be removed above abject want, and but five enjoy any degree of comfort.

1. Mary Kelly is forty-five or fifty years of age ; is eleven years a widow ; has four children—two sons, the eldest of whom is only thirteen, and two daughters, the eldest of whom is fourteen. She lives in a small cabin, built for her by an officer who was quartered here ; she has no plot nor potatoe-ground, and pays no rent ; she is quite unable to work in a field, and has no earnings. She had some good days in her father's house, who was a comfortable farmer, and lived pretty well before her husband died ; she is now depending on her friends for her support. The land they held being too dear, all they had was canted, and they were obliged to fly ; and though she does not carry a bag, she goes to the neighbours' houses to ask for relief. The family are very badly clothed, and are often stinted in their food, and the witness fears they will be worse off before a year goes round.

2. Mary Commons is seventy years of age, ten years a widow, and has no children living with her. She has two daughters married, who are in a low state, and unable to do anything for her. She cannot earn anything for herself, and still she does not beg publicly, though she does not appear to have any better means. She has no house, but a few sticks put up against the gable-end of an old house that lately fell in, and many a better shed is made for pigs ; a tall man could not stand up in it ; there is neither hearth nor window, and a wattle thrown across serves for the door. She appears to get her health very well, and I do not know, says a witness, how she can, lying on a wisp of straw without any covering. She is

old and feeble, but healthy; only she is of a hardy race of people she would not live at all in this state. She has two sons, who are no help to her. Her children's houses are little better than her own, and unless she happens to come in at meal-time she gets nothing from them.

3. Mary Manly is sixty years of age, and never had any children. She is three or four years a widow. She held three acres of land, for which she paid no rent, having a freehold lease. She now has neither house nor land, since she was turned out last May. While she had a house, she kept lodgings and lived very comfortably. She is now very low, and could not be much worse off. She sold the most of her furniture, and must sell the rest: she is depending upon charity. She is now in Dublin, looking for law; she went there on foot, to show her lease to the Chancellor.

4. Mary Halloran is forty-five years of age, and has five children, the eldest of whom is only fourteen years old: they all live with her, and she tries to support them by washing, which is the only means she has of earning. Her brother, a man who gets only petty jobs, helps her; she is not as badly off as some others, but she is worse off than those who beg.

5. Bridget Sullivan is seventy years of age, and has five or six children, all of whom are married; as yet she is entirely supported by her children, and gets no assistance from any other person. She has no house, and goes, turn about, to each of them.

6. Catherine Walsh has two sons, one of whom is not able to earn a fraction, the other can earn 8*d.* a day whenever he gets employment; nothing would please him better than hard work if he could get it, but he cannot, and is

oftener idle than employed; they count themselves very well off any day they get two meals. They have a right to be much better off now than they were some time ago, for he has constant employment for the last two months. She lives in a small cabin, and holds no land, and they have nothing to subsist upon but his 8*d.* a day, as often as he can get it.

7. Mary Lee is seventy years of age, and twelve years a widow. She has no children; she has no house now; she once had, but it was taken from her two years after her husband's death. She is now in a most miserable state of want, and is hardly able to cross the road, she is so weak; she has too genteel a manner to be a common beggar. She intrudes upon the neighbours with whom she was once acquainted; they know what she wants, and never wait for her to ask it: she generally stops three or four nights in each house. She has hardly so much clothes as would screen her. She is not the least use in any house into which she goes; I know, for I had her nine years in my own house, being loath to turn her out, as I bought the house she lived in. I never made any difference between her and my own family, though she was unable to do anything, except to make down a fire, and never brought anything into my house, unless a piece of tobacco, or a grain of tea; and if she came a night now, she would be as welcome as ever.

8. Mary M'Donagh is sixty years of age, has a house of her own, and is comfortably supported by her son.

9. Catherine Burk is between seventy and eighty years of age; has neither son or daughter, brother or sister; she is supported by going from house to house among the neighbours.

10. Sally Cane is as poor as she can be; she is sixty years of age, and has no children. She sometimes stops with her brother, who is himself poor enough, but is chiefly supported by her neighbours, and goes about from house to house. She is as badly off as any widow in the parish. New South Wales would be a good berth for half of them.

11. Bridget Keating has one son, who is thirteen years of age; she has a cabin, but has no ground, not even a garden; she is able to do a little work for a lady, by whom she is chiefly supported; she never goes from house to house.

12. Widow Curly is very poor, and is unable to work; she keeps a lodging-house, but it is not half support to her. Her daughter gives her some assistance.

13. Sally Walsh is not in distress; she has two sons in constant work.

14. Widow M'Gauley is fifty years of age; is reduced low enough, but is tolerably comfortable when compared with others. She carries on little traffic.

15. Widow Joyce is seventy years of age; she lives with her son, who is very well off. She looks bare enough, but witness believes she has enough to eat.

16. Mary Kelly is forty-five years of age, is handy at the needle and very industrious; she has one son, a little boy, whom she supports; she has no land, and will be thrown out of her little cabin immediately.

17. Bridget M'Donagh is thirty years of age, and is two years a widow; she has one child; her husband was servant to Mr. Martin. She sometimes stops in her father's house, and would always live there, but her step-mother would not allow her; she goes in and out to the neighbours, and lives mostly upon them.

18. Mary Cooney has two children—one six, the other three years of age; her father supports her and them.

19. Mary Carr is supported partly by carrying eggs to Galway, and selling them, and partly by the assistance of the neighbours.

20. Mrs. Walsh is nine years a widow; has five children; her eldest son is twenty-four, her second eighteen years of age; her son is a labourer, and got only 6s. to earn this year. She is as much distressed as any widow in the parish, the only difference between her and others being, that she has sons able to work if they got work to do, and others have not. She holds half an acre of land, on which her husband built a small mill; and though her rent is only 1*l.* a year, yet, from the scarcity of work, she was unable to pay it.

The witnesses say that the poor widows living in the country are worse off than those in the towns. In towns they have many chances, but in the country none.

No man, except one having an old lease, could lay up anything for his widow or for old age. All the widows above spoken of, belong to the town; it would be endless to count all the widows in the parish.

County of Mayo; examinations taken by J. Spencer, Esq., and W. Gray, Esq.; town of Bellina and Ardnaree, barony of Tyrawley. Twenty-five witnesses.

Labourers' widows are generally reduced to beg. On the death of their husbands they immediately give up their houses, if their landlords held such. They procure their own and their children's food by begging from door to door, and get their lodgings for nothing among the labourers. The change is not very great to many of them, as a great part of the labourers' wives and families are ac-

customed to beg, when the labourers are out of employment. A very few succeed in their endeavours to support themselves by industry, but in the most laborious and wretched manner.

County of Roscommon; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Boyle. Ten witnesses.

There are about sixty widows in the parish of Boyle with families of young children, and one hundred and one who have none; not more than twelve are supported solely by their own industry.

Of these one hundred and sixty-one widows, upwards of one hundred are entirely dependent on their children for support.

The labourers frequently give a day's labour to the widows holding land, and these prefer remaining at home, where they are sure of obtaining sympathy and assistance. Nevertheless, this class of widows is decidedly worse off than the mothers of illegitimate children, because they have not wages allowed them by the Sessions.

All the witnesses agree in saying that a working man cannot possibly provide against the destitution of his widow and orphans.

County of Sligo, parish of Drumcliffe, barony of Carbery; examinations taken by T. Osler, Esq. and J. O'Flynn, Esq. Eleven witnesses.

There are in this parish more than one hundred widows, and the witnesses say that, bad as the condition of the aged widow certainly is, they really think it, on the whole, better than that of any other class of the destitute poor. The very poorest of their neighbours never refuse them house-room. Such as can walk to any distance beg; those who are not quite helpless, shift about from cabin to cabin,

where they are always made welcome to a potatoe, even if the family are themselves in want; and as for those who are bedridden, they are sure of having even better sustenance brought to them than they could get for themselves by going out.

Everybody among the poor thinks it a duty to help the widow, and those who are well enough off to give away a bit of old clothing, are sure to put it aside for some decent widow.

A widow said:—"I have seven children, three of them went away, as they were starving. I have now four with me. I have a cabin and bog-garden. I pay £1, 10s. for the whole. It is dangerous to sleep in the house, lest it may fall. I have £2, 10s. worth of con-acre, and am rearing a pig, which will hardly pay half the rent. When I am run out of potatoes, I live on weeds and cabbage."

Dr. Longheed states, that he knows of no instance of a widow being provided for by the landlord under whom her husband lived; but on the contrary, that in this neighbourhood the landlord seldom loses any time in getting them off his ground as fast as he can.

Province of Leinster, county of Carlow; examinations taken by Captain White and T. N. Vaughan, Esq.; parish of Carlow, barony of Carlow. Nineteen witnesses.

There are in the parish about seventy widows. A Ladies' Industrious Institution has been established, at which some may earn threepence a-day at knitting, spinning and rug-making; but, generally speaking, there is no employment for females.

There are twenty widows on the list of the Established Church, and the average collection is £50, 18s. 11½d. per annum for the last three years. None are put on the list

but Protestants. This fund has never been made a means of proselytism ; nor does the desire to get on the list lead to any hypocritical professions of a particular religion, inasmuch as they must be old parishioners and well known.

The law gives no relief to this class of persons. On the estates of absentee landlords they have nothing to expect, and there is no instance of the widow of a small farmer or workman being permitted to retain his cabin and his garden. The widows of mechanics are in no better condition ; they never get support from those by whom their husbands were employed ; their relatives sometimes support them, but they are seldom able.

This state of society, say the witnesses, must produce incalculable evils, and nine-tenths of the prostitutes of the town have been driven to this way of living by necessity.

All agree in saying that the workman can never lay by anything.

*County of Kildare, union of Kilcock, barony of Ikeathy and Oughterany.
Thirty-eight witnesses.*

Among fifty widows in the union, there are twelve with families with young children, and in the most wretched condition. The labourers often give a Sunday morning to a widow to assist her in digging her potatoes ; nevertheless they are obliged to beg.

A collection is made at the church, which affords some relief, without any distinction of religion. The women who have illegitimate children are mostly better off than the widows. They are younger and more able to work, and an allowance is made to them at the sessions.

County of Longford; examinations taken by J. Spencer, Esq. and W. Gray, Esq.; parish of Abbeysrule, barony of Rathcline. Nine witnesses.

Amongst the depositions which the Commissioners received on the subject of widows with families of children, was that of John Casey, who gave the following statement.

“In my parish of Kilcormack, of which the population is 3,800, there are no less than thirty-six widows, having weak families of young children. I know the number accurately, because I have made a list of the poor of the parish for my master, who distributes meat among them at Christmas. There is no town in the parish, and the manner in which they live is this: the neighbours build huts for them on the verges of bogs, for which they pay no rent; and they endeavour to rear a pig, which gives them such clothes as they are able to procure. They get a little patch of land rent-free, and the neighbours are always ready to plant it for them; there is not a Sunday in the year that my own boys are not employed in planting her con-acre for a widow. This supplies them with a little stock of potatoes, and they have occasional assistance from those who know them. They sometimes get a little job, for which they are paid in potatoes. They also get some field-work in the season, for which they sometimes receive threepence a day, but oftener a greater value in potatoes. Let them do what they may, they are often reduced to beg, but I have never known any of them beg publicly in their own parish. There is thus no kind of constant occupation at which a woman can earn even a scanty pittance.”



When it was asked whether a woman could not earn something by spinning, the same witness replied—"Buying flax to spin it, and sell the yarn, is like buying powder to shoot a robin-redbreast; the bird is not worth the powder. They will pay sixpence for a pound of flax, and after spending perhaps three days in spinning it into two hanks, they will sell the yarn for eightpence; then, if the wheel goes out of repair, it would never pay for mending it."

The witnesses said they did not know an instance within the parish of landed proprietors granting to the widows of their tenants either cabins or gardens, whereas there are farmers who allow the widows of their cottiers a cabin and a plot, and occasionally a patch of con-acre, rent-free.

One witness adds, that he has known widows, after having passed through the stages of support by private charity and mendicancy, to have been driven by absolute want to prostitution: But widows do not beg with the assurance of women with illegitimate children.

County of Westmeath; examinations taken by Thomas Osler, Esq. and James O'Flynn, Esq.; parish of Benowen, barony of Kilkenny. Eleven witnesses.

One witness stated that she did not know the exact number of widows in the parish; that in spinning they earn about three-halfpence a day, and that they get a good deal of private charity, potatoes, milk, meal and all kinds of food: they do not consider this begging. Often, with one child on her back and another in her arms, with two or three following her, the widow begs from door to door, until they are old enough to be useful to the farmers, when she supports herself by labouring, with their assistance.

She adds, that all the labourers of the parish assist the widows by working for them on a Sunday.

Province of Munster, county of Clare ; examinations taken by P. F. Johnston, Esq. and E. B. Molloy, Esq. ; parish of Kilfarboy, barony of Ibrickane. Fifteen witnesses.

The Commissioners are convinced that it is impossible for the women to earn their subsistence ; nearly all the lands of the parish belong to absentee proprietors, and when the question was put whether these ever contributed to the relief of those who paid them rent, it was answered with a laugh that expressed astonishment at such a thought being entertained. A tithe-valuator, who knew the circumstances of every holding in the parish, declared that he never knew an instance where a widow was spared either in tithe or rent ; that no one of them ever obtained ground or a cabin rent-free ; and, on the contrary, that in many cases, in proportion to their misery, they paid a higher rent. A widow who does not beg, seeks her only means of support in the acquisition of a small piece of con-acre, because the neighbours will dig it for her gratuitously.

A collection is made at the Protestant church, and among thirteen persons who participate in this money, there are about six widows, all Roman Catholics, and no attempt has ever been made to withdraw them from their faith. This relief, however, does not exceed 2s. a year. One witness stated that there was also a collection made at the Catholic chapel.

County of Cork ; examinations taken by T. Martin, Esq. and J. Lalor, Esq. ; parish of Liscarrol, barony of Orrery and Kilmore. Twenty-one witnesses.

The number of widows is twenty-eight. Their misery

is very great, and the witnesses cited the following instance. When the cholera appeared here, a small hospital was established, and notwithstanding the great dread which was entertained of the disease, three poor widows feigned sickness in order to gain admission; when these women were detected, they refused to go out, and staid three weeks or a month, until they were turned out by force.

Examinations were also taken in nine other parishes of Ireland, and the facts detailed were of the same nature as the preceding.

REMARKS.

Widows, burdened with children, have added a new complication in the free state which Christianity has introduced into society. In the state of slavery, a woman losing her husband did not lose the means of subsistence for herself and her children,—the master was always obliged to feed, clothe and lodge them. But in the free state, a widow becomes the head of a family, to sustain which she has none of the resources afforded by the profession of arms, of navigation, of administration or the law.

The widow is almost equally a stranger to the labours of agriculture, to the handicraft of the artisan, to manufactures and to commerce; she

can neither work in the mine nor at the anvil. In all ages the only resource of women has been to spin, and modern inventions now deprive them of their sole means of earning a livelihood.

Let it be attentively remarked, that this number of families, the heads of which are incapable of supporting them, amount to more than a tenth of the whole. Who then is there to provide for so much want, if not the Catholic clergy, a class of men living in celibacy, who by their position constitute the intermediate link between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak? How much greater too was the security of society, when the religious orders, the great owners of the land, accumulated by their skill and industry in agriculture immense stores of the means of subsistence, for which their only use was to aid the poor, as they were themselves subjected to sumptuary laws, a fixed residence and a regular employment of their time!

Surprise is excited at the commotions which take place in Europe, but let us examine only the miseries to which the different classes of society have been subjected. Women, it has been said, and with reason, have gained everything by Christianity, which alone has invested them with a dignity of existence before unknown. Instead of being the prey to the wild passions of their mas-

ters, they have gained the privilege of choosing a companion.

The ties of marriage have become not only indissoluble, but from the day when a man has contracted them, his wife alone has a right to fix his affection. Christianity has thus established between man and woman an equality, which philosophy had never even imagined. But since the confiscation of the property and the destruction of the religious orders, how large a proportion of women have been brought even to regret their freedom from this ignominious yoke which Christianity has thrown off, and still more for their children than for themselves !

CHAPTER IV.

THE AGED AND INFIRM POOR.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway; examinations taken by F. Diggens, Esq. and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Tuam, town of Tuam, barony of Clare. Evidence of the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam, written by himself.

THE collections made at the Protestant places of worship are distributed among the Protestant poor generally, at the selection of the minister. I know nothing of contribution and distribution of other places denominated places of worship.

The head of a family feels a right to be supported by those members of his family to whom he gives over his land, if he holds under a lease.

It is not the disposition of the Irish to cast off their aged and infirm parents, if they have the means of supporting them. Children do not feel aggrieved by having the sole support of their parents. I have known the parent to go from one daughter to another for support; but if there is a son, the parent generally resides with him. The relatives of the aged are often in a condition which would not enable them to afford sufficient subsistence to them, but they always get from their children a part of what is going.

When children are in employment at a distance, they generally send money to their parents for their support.

I have known money to be sent from America for that purpose. The country poor have a great dislike to begging, and suffer many privations before they resort to this alternative for support.

The gentry have no regular subscriptions raised among them for the support of the infirm. The landlords look to the poor resident upon their own estates. Absentees are not so liberal, although in general more wealthy, but I think there is an improvement of late years. There are no almshouses in this part of the country.

I am sure that, considering the wages a labourer obtains, it would be utterly impossible for him to make any provision for the wants of old age.

Evidence of the Roman Catholic Archbishop, written by himself.

Amongst the agricultural population, the heads of families feel a right to their support, when aged, as proper possessors of the land occupied by the family. The support of the old usually devolves upon the younger branches of the family, or nearest relatives: their maintenance may frequently press heavily upon those whose means are far from adequate to their own wants; the pressure is lightened, however, by a sense of dutiful affection. A child, upon whom the burden of a parent's support falls, feels sorely aggrieved, not at sharing what he has with his aged parent, but because the laws that alienated the treasures of the poor leave him nought wherewith to relieve his aged parents.

Those who have not relatives able to support them, go from one neighbour to another for food and lodging. They sometimes receive money from friends who have emigrated to the colonies.

The comparative comfort of those who are maintained by their children, and those who maintain themselves by mendicancy, depends upon the means of the young relatives, who are themselves often more destitute than the vagrants, but are detained from a feeling of delicacy from going to beg.

The gentry scarcely ever subscribe regularly for their support; even in the seasons of appalling distress (1831 and 1832), there were individuals of large fortunes who did not subscribe one shilling.

There are, however, some splendid exceptions. From what has been already stated, the burden it appears is thrown, in times of distress, by the affluent gentry on their poorer but more benevolent neighbours. Orders are often issued by the proprietors of large mansions not to suffer such a nuisance as a beggar to approach their gates. I could name the persons, but it would be invidious to do so; such individuals should be forced by law to give what their inhumanity refuses.

There are no almshouses. They disappeared with the introduction of the establishment that has continued to devour all the pious resources that fed those charitable institutions.

The general opinion throughout the country is favourable to a provision for the poor, in case such burden do not fall upon those classes that are already taxed with their support. Those who hesitate on the subject, do so from an apprehension, first, that the morality of the poor might be injured; and secondly, that such provision would aggravate the burden of the middle classes; whilst the higher, as now, might be relieved from the onus of supporting the poor. With regard to the first objection, the

circumstances of Ireland and England are different, and therefore it does not follow that the evils produced in the one should necessarily be the consequence of the introduction of a legal provision for the poor in the other. I allude (and I do so without meaning offensive controversy) to the religious feelings of both nations regarding certain points of morality. Where the horror entertained of any vice will not be great, it is not to be supposed that it will be so scrupulously avoided as when it is looked upon as productive of the greatest imaginable misery. Now, it is a matter of notoriety that incontinence is regarded by the Catholic peasantry of Ireland with tenfold horror to what it is by the Protestant people of England; and therefore, though in one country the system of Poor-laws might tend to increase that crime, it does not follow that it would be productive of similar consequences in the other. As to the second objection, it is well founded, since it has been uniformly found that the pressure of the taxes in Ireland generally fell upon the middle classes.

It is in vain to make a provision for the poor, unless the property of the absentees and the church lands are almost exclusively taxed with the amount; otherwise such a provision would be no relief. All that would be gained by taxing the industrious classes would be to make that compulsory which is now voluntary, to create unthankfulness in the minds of those in whom now there is gratitude, and to make those give with grudging hearts who now give with the grace of a free voluntary offering. Such an exchange would be a serious loss; but if the properties of the absentees are taxed, and the church lands be re-appropriated to their original destination, the relief of the poor, the feelings of gratitude on the one hand, and

of kindness on the other, will be left unimpaired, whilst a large fund, now lying idle, will be applied to the support of the people.

County of Mayo ; examinations taken by J. Spencer, Esq., and W. Gray, Esq. ; parish of Aughavale, barony of Murrisk. Fourteen witnesses.

There are in this parish thirty-five old persons past labour ; thirteen are supported by their children, and three by more distant relatives ; twelve are begging, and seven are supported by their neighbours.

The poorer farmers, when they become old, do not generally live with their children ; they subdivide their land among them as they marry, retaining to themselves a cabin and a small portion of the land, generally rent-free, which the neighbours and children till for them ; and what it wants of supporting them, they make up by gathering provisions among the children and the neighbours : this is not considered begging.

Tobacco is become an absolute necessary for the old people, and they oftener beg for want of this than of food.

Dudley Toole may be taken as an instance of a worn-out labourer, partly begging, partly living among his old neighbours. He states his own case as follows :—

“ I am 88 years of age. After spending a great part of my life at sea, I came home here, when I was becoming too old to serve, and turned to labouring for my support. I have but two children, sons, who are sailors ‘in the American merchants’ service ; they do not assist me in any way. Having laboured for ten years, I was two years ago seized with rheumatic pains and a dizziness in the head, which has disabled me from working since. I did hold an acre of land on a lease, that I cultivated myself, and that supported me, with the

help of my hired labour : when I became unable to work, I gave this up to a friend without any compensation. I have since gone from house to house, among my old neighbours, getting a share of their meals, and a bed of straw in their corner. I have myself a sheet and a fold of a blanket, which I take about with me. It is to the small farmers, not the labourers, I apply—all old acquaintances, that knew me when I earned my own bread, and some of them relatives. They live near the town, in the country. I prefer going to persons in the country, because they can give me a good fire and a bed of straw. I stop generally but one night in the same house, and may stop two with a relation, or more, as I find welcome ; some would be glad to keep me for a week, but I would not trouble them, when I know I can have welcome elsewhere. When I think I have trespassed too much on one neighbourhood, I move off to another. When I come to a house, I ask a lodging for God's sake : the only refusal I meet with, is when some tell me they have not straw to make a bed. When I ask in God's name, they would think it a sin to refuse me, though I know many of them would be better pleased I did not trouble them ; but I have no reason to complain of them, for, winter or summer, I never saw them frown on me yet. I do not carry a bag : wherever I lodge, I get a share of the meals, —I am always sure of it. I expect nothing but my food ; I do not wish to carry anything away with me, nor be an incumbrance on the inhabitants beyond my bit. I come into the town once a week, to apply to five house-keepers, who give me a halfpenny each every week. What is killing me, is that I cannot get enough of tobacco ; the want of it, I believe, is taking away my eyesight ; it would

take fivepence a week to supply me, and I do not get so much. With some of what I get I buy tobacco, with the remainder I buy tobacco water, and steeping tow in it, I make that do instead of tobacco. For clothing I must depend on chance, as some one may give me a cast coat or other article. I got this coat from an old shipmate I happened to meet at the quay."

With regard to his fellow-labourers, Toole continues :—

"Of all the labourers that used to work with me, I do not know above a dozen that have passed the age of sixty: they are unwilling to beg, and work on to the very last of their strength; hard work, when they are not able for it, and bad keeping, kills them off. Five of these old men past sixty, that I formerly knew as workmen, are begging about; as many more are living in the country among their children, that have got some land; and I now remember three above that age, who, rather than beg, still hold out working, though, between age and sickness, they are badly able to do so. I have not known any old man belonging to this place leave it from shame, in order to beg elsewhere. When a man is known to have been honest in his time, he is best relieved at home; besides, the men generally work so long, that when they come to beg they are too weak to travel far."

One witness said, that he recollected the time when it would have been a disgrace that any near relative should be seen begging; but, he adds, poverty is now so great that the shame is worn off, and children are learning to see their parents beg without feeling it much.

Another witness said, that the age of the old people inspires compassion, but that the young, when in want of employment, are in greater distress than the old and infirm.

County of Roscommon ; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq. ; parish of Kilkeevan, barony of Ballintobber. Seventeen witnesses.

The number of aged poor supported by their relations is very small, in comparison with those who live by begging. In general the sons seem willing to support their parents, but much depends on their wives, who often consider what is thus given to be taken from their own children.

There is a great repugnance to beg, but for the last fifteen years the spirit of the people has been so broken down, that children are no longer ashamed to see their parents beg. What used to be the boast and pride of an Irishman, is lost in the poverty of the day.

As for the rest, those who beg are better off than the others. There are no hospitals. The subscriptions bring in nothing ; but if the able-bodied population could obtain employment, the Legislature would not have to be troubled with the poor or the infirm.

Province of Leinster.

In the union of Cadamstown, the population of which is 5000, the number of destitute persons impotent through age is about forty. About twenty, natives of the parish, are beggars ; the rest are strangers, amounting to 200.

There are about 270 supported by their relations, including widows and aged infirm. Those who beg are better off than the others.

The Inquiry instituted in the other parts of Ireland gave the same results.

The age at which the men become incapable of supporting themselves by their labour is in general from fifty-five to sixty-five years of age.

REMARKS.

We have seen that the widows find, in the feeling of maternal love, a motive which leads them to undertake the duties of the head of a family, to keep their children near them, to feed, to take care of and to bring them up, without having—without even the prospect of having—the necessary means for all this. They are mothers, and God is over them: this is their faith and their trust. But what can an old man do, who has no future before him, no interest beyond that of prolonging his old age, except to live a wandering life, as these Inquiries present him to us, and that at the period of life when men are most tenacious of their long-accustomed habits?

Here then we see the results of a system, which, whilst it destroys the protectors of society, multiplies the class who have need of protection. Let any one read the deposition of the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam, and the official reports relative to his diocese, and he will see that in every hundred inhabitants there are four Protestants. These four are the monopolizers of the property confiscated from the Catholic laity, as he the Archbishop is of the property confiscated from the Catholic clergy. His flocks are therefore the richest. In ten parishes, there is one in

which Protestant worship is performed, and he tells you, “for my Protestant poor I have collections made in the churches, and I know not what passes in the other places which are called churches.” Be it observed, that he and his clergy are in possession of the altars, of the parsonage, of the churches built by Catholics, in possession of the tithe levied upon the Catholics, or of the glebe and property in ancient times granted by Catholics.

Let us suppose this same property in the hands of a Protestant layman, he would entertain some feeling of charity for a Catholic tenant. He may be charitable, and it is his interest to be so, because his family succeeds to this property; but Protestant archbishops or ministers, who have families to support, know that the day after their death the family is obliged to quit the archbishopric or parsonage, that the revenues of the benefice will not be burdened with settlements or pensions for their families; and during their life, the fathers of these families will think more of them than of their flocks, and we must admit that they ought to do so.

We must say, that the minister of religion, when he marries, loses that character; the ministerial office is merged in the paternal one, and the father of the family, calling himself a clergyman, is un-

able to dispense even the charities which a layman would in the same position of fortune. The unmarried clergyman, on the contrary, is a stranger to all these present burdens, and to all these sorts of calculations for the future.

CHAPTER V.

SICK POOR.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway; examinations taken by F. Diggens, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Omagh, barony of Ballynahinch. Nineteen witnesses.

THAT the extent of disease, and the consequences attendant thereon, might the more accurately be ascertained, the Commissioners selected the townland of Clifden, as being best known by the witnesses present. The population of the townland is about 1400.

Thomas Connelly, a butcher, had six children. About four months ago he took a fever and died, after a few days' illness; his wife and four children were attacked with the same disease, and during six or eight weeks some one of the family was ill. There were two collections made for their support: to these collections the labourers and tradesmen subscribed a good deal: they got soup, milk, and sometimes a bit of meat, from the neighbours during their illness.

Another inhabitant was ill for fifteen days with a bowel complaint: during his illness he was supported by his neighbours; he died of the complaint.

The wife of a shoemaker was ill of fever about five weeks ago; four of her children had it, one of whom died. The husband attended his family all throughout.

One witness said that he was ill about six weeks; he had pledged what he possessed, and to recover his property would require at least a year's work.

Unless a tradesman can give a pledge, he will seldom be able to get anything on credit during his illness. The people are afraid he might die, and that they would never be paid. "The day before yesterday," a witness said, "a woman from this town was taken ill on the road: her daughter was with her all night: she lay by the side of a ditch, and died in the morning."

It invariably happens, when a tradesman dies, that his family are obliged to beg. Although tailors and shoemakers may have constant work, they are never able to lay up anything, and when they die their families are forced to beg.

In the town the sick sometimes obtain a piece of meat, and some broth and tea from ladies. In the country they have no assistance.

The cottier is better off in illness than a labourer or tradesman, for he generally has some provisions by him; but the labourer or tradesman has nothing but what he buys from day to day.

County of Mayo; examinations taken by J. Spencer, Esq. & W. Gray, Esq.; parish of Burrishoole, barony of Burrishoole. Seventeen witnesses.

The examination was held in a public room, which was crowded.

It was stated that there is no dispensary, neither in this nor any adjoining parish; there is no fund or subscription for the sick poor, nor any hospital where they can receive the least assistance; and what has been said of the infirm and widows may be repeated concerning the sick.

The Commissioners state, that they examined Michael Horan, whose family was at that moment ill. He holds three acres of land at a fair rate, and his condition may

therefore be taken as nearly the average condition of the inhabitants of the parish. He has no cow nor other cattle: his evidence is as follows:—

“Fifteen weeks ago fever broke out in my family, consisting of my wife and eight children. I had no means of removing them that were in health out of reach of the contagion; no neighbour would take any of them: I could not expect any one to take fever into his house. The sickness did not leave my cabin: ever since it has gone the round of us; as one recovered, another took sick: three of us are lying at present. I had no means to procure either medicine or the advice of a doctor. I went to the apothecary, to ask him what nourishment I should give them: he told me whey and toast, but I had no means of procuring them. In the middle of their sickness, when one of them would not eat a pennyworth in three days, I could give them toast; but once they could eat anything, they should eat the potatoes or die there. I had no whey for them but what the neighbours brought us, not a third nor a fourth of what they could use. The chief drink I gave them was water and sugar: the wife used to sell the eggs to buy the sugar; and when the harvest came I thought our potatoes were not half enough for us, and I knew I would want them again when I could not buy them. I used to carry six stone of them a mile into town on my back, and sell them for 9d.: the whole family was sick, and all lay in one room; we had no second. Those that were not yet down lay at one end of the cabin; the sick lay in one bed at the other. We had but one blanket and a sheet for the whole family: we cut the blanket in two, and covered the sick with one half, while the healthy lay under the other. No part of the family had any

other bed than straw or rushes. Since harvest we have had plenty of straw; but when it was scarce, in summer, we had no bed but the rushes we cut in the fields, and often lay on them the same day we cut them. Though I asked it, I could get no credit for any article I wanted, nor for money. The people of my own village had it not to give me; they were too poor themselves. We have had enough of potatoes since harvest; but during the summer we lived on half-diet."

When we asked him, say the Commissioners, how he procured the half-diet on which his family lived, he was evidently reluctant to tell; but one of his neighbours, who was present, exclaimed: "Tell the truth: how decent he is! why should you be ashamed to tell how they lived? His wife supported those six—she begged for the rest of them."

Many present were acquainted with the particulars of this case, as stated. This same man's family was attacked by fever three years ago, when it went the round of them all in the same manner, and carried off three.

A clergyman remarked that fever is common in this parish, caused by the scarcity and unwholesomeness of food, insufficiency of clothing, and, in many instances, the total want of night-covering; it is therefore most common where poverty is greatest and the family largest.

Another witness said, the cabins are generally such that one could not sit in one of them during a shower; and he knows numberless instances of families, unable to procure straw, cutting rushes for beds; and, still more, who, for want of bed-clothes, lie in the clothes they wear by day.

Another witness said, that, independent of rain from the roof, the cabins cannot but be damp, from their situation; as the most valueless, that is, swampy piece of land is al-

ways selected to build them on, for fear of wasting any that might be profitable. A clergyman mentioned a case on which he was called to attend, to administer the rites of religion, about three months ago. The family had been attacked by fever: he found the father and four of the children sick, and all together on one bed of moist rotten straw—nothing else under them: their sole covering was a single fold of what is called a poverty-blanket (half wool, half tow), which he was assured had been the only one they had used for eight years. Their only attendant was the fifth child, a girl eleven years old. No person would come into the house. Their neighbours used to leave some potatoes and occasionally some milk within a few yards of the door, which, when they retired, the child took in. This was their only support: medical attendance was quite out of the question. In this condition the children recovered; the father died. Their uncle, a man having eight in his own family, and supporting them in great poverty, took the children into his own house, and now gives them *a side of the fire and a place for their bed*, while they beg through the parish for food.

Such is generally the fate of a family of orphans; and three clergymen, and all the other witnesses, agree that the two cases above mentioned may be taken to represent the condition of a very large proportion of the parishioners when afflicted by sickness of a contagious nature.

The witnesses mentioned four or five such cases existing at present in the parish, and agree that a description of one is a description of all. Two of the families have between them fourteen members, most of them at this moment sick.

Fever occurs chiefly among the very poorer classes, from the causes already enumerated by one of the witnesses. They have no attendance but from their own family; no means of procuring medicine or other food than potatoes, except what is derived, in common with other cases of distress, from an occasional collection at the Roman Catholic chapel, some casual assistance from the church collection, from the clergymen privately, or the very few gentry that reside. But those resources, from the numerous demands made on them, are inadequate to afford any very perceptible relief, and the consequence is that the above cases may stand as a general description of their condition.

One witness added, that there are other cases, of common occurrence, worse if possible; they are those of strange families, beggars, who have no houses in the parish; a hut is erected for them by the way-side. Those that are for the time in health attend on the sick, and take in whatever is left outside by neighbours charitably disposed. This witness has known families, as they sink one after another under the disease, unable to leave such a hut for four months; and has himself known, he thinks, two cases of persons dying by the road-side, unsheltered, before such a hut could be erected for them.

Province of Munster, county of Cork; examinations taken by T. Martin, Esq., and J. Lalor, Esq.; parish of St. Mary's, city of Cork. Nine witnesses.

There is a society in the parish called "The Sick Poor Society." The funds are raised by a subscription of a penny

a week, and by the donations of individuals. From the 25th of November, 1832, to the 24th of November, 1833—

	£	s.	d.
The Penny subscriptions produced .	75	4	3
Donations	11	17	0
	87	1	3

About half the funds of the Society are distributed by the Sisters of Charity. In the case even of contagious sickness, it is surprising to see the willingness of the poor to attend; they are willing to go in the way of infection; and, as a way of providing in case of sickness, the wives and daughters are frequently sent out to beg, as it is quite out of the power of the labouring class to make provision in health for the hour of sickness.

There exists in the parish a society, by contributing to which, members who fall sick are provided for; it is called “St. Mary’s Mortality Society,” and consists of tradesmen and labourers, who, in case of constant employment, might be able to subscribe; but not more than half the labourers have regular employment, so that many fall off from the society, being unable to pay the subscription.

It was considered by those examined, that if food, fuel, etc. were given to the sick poor, it would tend to promote idleness and improvidence. This statement is confirmed by the following fact: when blankets were given out before the cholera, they were in many instances pledged; many were marked, and found at the pawn-brokers.

The labourer’s sickness always leads to the destitution of his family, and it is highly probable renders him reckless.

The Commissioners, being anxious to know the actual state of the sick poor, went round with the visitors of the Sick Poor Society. The number of cases which fell under the observation of one or other of the Commissioners was about forty. The following are not selected, but taken nearly in the order in which they occurred. The conversations are given *verbatim*, notes of them having been taken at the time.

1. In a small room, two women lying coiled up in corners, a mother and daughter; a little straw under, and a single covering over, each of them. A young woman attending them, a daughter, said she had just recovered from fever. She showed a few miserable, black, wet potatoes, and said they had nothing else to eat. So struck were the Commissioners by the evident misery, that they did not think of asking questions.

2. A very small room in a cabin; an old woman sitting in a corner, palsied and blind. Being addressed, she said—“I’m very badly off; I can’t stir a step without somebody to help me; I’m a prisoner here; my husband has nothing to do now; I’ll just tell the truth, he cut a handful of briars, and sold them to get something to eat.”

The husband was asked, “How do you support yourself?”

“I do as well as I can, one way or another.”

“How do you pay your rent?”

“Sure, I owe 9s. for this place, and I don’t know how I’ll pay it at all.”

“Would you let your wife go to the House of Industry?”

“Is it let her away from me? Why then I wouldn’t, as long as I could do anything—if I was forced to beg

from the neighbours." [He said this with tears in his eyes.]

"But if you went there with your wife?"

"Sure, they wouldn't leave her in the same place with me; they'd put us asunder."

"And is that the reason? You'd be treated well there."

"It is the reason, sir, and she shan't go as long as I can get a bit for her."

3. A small room; a man, Terence Sullivan, lying on a bed, said "he was dead in his limbs." A neighbour attends him sometimes, and shakes his straw; he gets 8*d.* a week from the Sick Poor Society, and pays 6*d.* of it for his rent; has only 2*d.* for himself. He has a son, a labouring man, badly able to support himself, and with a wife that wouldn't let him do much for the old father if he were able; he brings home an odd meal; a charitable woman in the neighbourhood sends him a bit of breakfast; he would not go to the House of Industry.

"Why so?"

"Why, because I am afraid I couldn't make my soul* there as I can here."

"The priest attends there regularly."

"Well, may be he do, but I couldn't go there at all."

"But the Society won't be able to give you assistance any longer."

"Well, God is good—I'd rather take my chance, and stay among neighbours, than go there."

4. A very small room; a young woman lying on a bed; she has swellings in her legs and pains all over her. Her

* Insure eternal salvation.

father is a labourer, and being handy, gets something to do in mending shoes. She does not like to go to the House of Industry without her cloak, which is in pawn for 5s. "I was there," she said, "and came home on account of a duty* I had to do."

"Were you badly used when you were there?"

"Yes, there is very bad usage there; there is little to eat or drink, and bad beds, and you see 'em all turning† for lucre. I'd rather stay at home if I could."

5. An old woman, a beggar; her sister lying in a corner, a half idiot: she pays for the room.

"I would not go to the House of Industry."

"Why?"

"I would not go there at all, at all; I would not have my liberty, and I'd rather stay among God and the neighbours and Christians, and take my chance to get a bit of vittles from them."

"But you'd be better off there than here, you would have something better to eat."

"I wouldn't go there if I was sure of getting that box full of good vittles every day."

6. An old woman, sick and bedridden; her daughter, a poor widow, attending her. "She would not go to the poor-house at all. She hasn't long to live, and where would be the use?"

The daughter was asked, "Would you let her go there?"

"No, sir, we wouldn't let her go among strangers, while we can do anything for her; I'd rather go beg about the streets than let her go there."

* A religious vow to perform.

† Becoming Protestants.

7. A woman sick, lying on a bed in a small room; nobody belonging to her. A poor family that has the room "give her the corner *for God's sake*."

"Would you go to the House of Industry?"

"Hy' ah! no, sure, there would be nobody to bury me out of it; I wouldn't go there at all."

"You'd be better off there than here, with enough to eat."

"Hy' ah! what matter? if I had anything at all to keep me, I'd be better contented to stay here, and die among the neighbours."

8. A young woman sick, and almost blind, in a small room; her aunt supporting her by begging, but she is lying in bed sick now; a poor family owning the room, giving them the corner, for charity.

"Would you go to the House of Industry?"

"Hy' ah! no, sir; I never was in such a place, among strangers, and I'd rather stay among the neighbours."

"Why wouldn't you go there? you'd be better off."

"Why, I'd like to be able to go out to mass; it's the only comfort now."

"But the priest would attend you there, and you'd hear mass."

"Well, sir, I wouldn't like to go there."

"Why so?"

"Why, if you must know it [she said this with tears], there is a little creature of a sister I have, and she's at service, and she has nobody to look after or care about her but me; and if I went to the poor-house, and she was out of place, what would she do? she'd have no place to come to."

“Yes,” said the woman who owns the room, “that is the reason she would not go there.”

9. An old woman, Nelly Mullins, supported by her daughter. This daughter does a little plain work sometimes; her husband is no help to her; she was obliged to leave him—he took to drinking. She was asked, “Would you let your mother go to the House of Industry if we could get her there?”

“Hy’ ah! no, sir, she has not long to live, God help her, and sure we wouldn’t let her go there.”

“But she’d be better off.”

“I don’t know, but I wouldn’t let her go there; if I was obliged to beg on the streets, I’d rather do it.”

10. Margaret Crowley: chief dependence on her aunt, who begs; they get a corner for charity from a poor family. She would not go to the House of Industry. “I’d like to be among the neighbours; I never was in any sort of a strange place; I wouldn’t like to be there, where there would be nobody but strangers to do a hand’s turn.”

“Well, but if you were well treated, and your aunt went with you?”

“Well, I suppose I would go.” She said this reluctantly.

11. Ellen Callaghan, an old woman, has the jaundice, says she is all sore inside; has seven children. Her son, a young man, lay in a corner sleeping, after being up the night before watching coals on the quay, to earn 8*d.* to pay the rent of the room. This woman was asked if she would like her son to go to the House of Industry.

“If he’d like it himself; I wouldn’t begrudge him to go there.”

“ Would you go there ? you’d be well treated.”

“ No, Sir, I’d rather have my liberty ; ’t is sweeter than good living.”

“ But the Society will not be able to give you any more assistance.”

“ Well, God is good ! I’d rather go begging on the streets than go there.”

REMARKS.

Since the Reformation was introduced into Ireland, the Lord Lieutenant and all the members of his Government, the military governor together with all the army, the chancellor and the judges, the archbishops and bishops, as well as the clergy who hold the livings, have all been Protestants. They have scarcely had to legislate for and judge any but English Protestants, in favour of whom all the lands were confiscated. They have been, if not rich, at least the most rich, and consequently have not needed for themselves hospitals or asylums.

Ireland, at that time peopled with one million of inhabitants, had only charitable institutions proportioned to its population, and at that period even these establishments were less necessary than at the present day. The clergy were then the only medical men, and the sick received gratuitously from the same hands the relief of medicine

and the aids of religion. The first hospitals were founded for sick pilgrims, and the first asylums for poor pilgrims. The persons thus brought hither from various countries, found in these institutions still some consolations under their sickness or their poverty : they all met under the same circumstances, in the same spirit, and they had all the same faith. Let any one compare this moral state with the spirit of hostility and the feelings of dread of these establishments expressed by the witnesses, whose depositions we have just read.

The pilgrimages diminished in proportion as parishes were established and corporations of arts and trades were more and more developed ; but these professions and trades, newly accumulated in the towns, caused chronic maladies to the workmen. The order of St. Jean de Dieu, exclusively devoted to the art of healing, was founded. It established hospitals to receive the sick, which at the same time served as schools for students in their profession. These institutions were largely endowed with testamentary bequests. When the Reformation took place, the Protestants seized upon the administration of all the hospitals. The monks, who were the founders and administrators of these establishments, had taken a vow of chastity and poverty ; but these new administrators were married

men, and it was necessary to give them salaries—the donations then ceased.

The following investigations will acquaint the reader with the system pursued by these new administrators. We may here observe, that not only has scarcely any foundation been created since the Reformation, but that the property of the ancient foundations has been for the most part squandered away: this was the cause that, a few years ago, permission was granted for the establishment of the Sisters of Charity, and leave for them to take the charge of some of these asylums. They have occasioned such a revival of public confidence, that in the city of Cork the Protestants themselves have begun to make donations, which they entrust only to these Sisters of Charity.

CHAPTER VI.

VAGRANCY AND MENDICITY.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq., and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Headford, barony of Clare. Sixteen witnesses.

THERE are perhaps less vagrants and beggars in this parish than formerly, which is attributed to the comparatively few labourers in the county of Mayo who go to England for work. The wives and children of those who left home in search of work had no other resource during their absence than to beg.

The land is better tilled than it used to be, and produces more, and there is more agricultural employment; but this increase is not sufficient to compensate for the fall in the price of labour. "If," added one of the witnesses, "we had not a good landlord, who gives an abatement in the rent, we should be worse off than before; the landlord of a neighbouring district is a non-resident, and the labourers obtain little or no employment, and their land pays very high rent."

Vagrants are more numerous after seed-time than at any other time of the year, because at that time the men leave home in search of work and the families go out to beg. But in all these cases persons who are reduced to beggary leave their own neighbourhood, and this it is which makes the number of vagrants appear much larger.

The chief cause of vagrancy, said one witness, originates in the minute subdivision of the land. If the children of vagrants could get employment, they would accept it, and would hire at fifteen shillings a year rather than continue begging. In general they live much better than those who remain at their homes, even when the latter are in employment.

An able-bodied beggar would get from one to two stones of potatoes in the day—more in fact than he can consume. Those who have families get much more; they sell the surplus of their collections, and purchase clothes, tobacco and soap.

The witnesses state, that there are many vagrants who return home richer than when they left it, and that no instances are known of their dying from starvation, though many have contracted diseases, such as low typhus fevers, from the badness or scarcity of their food, of which they eventually died. They live longer in general than working labourers.

A vagrant is never refused lodging by the poor cottier or householder, which the clergyman of the parish considers as highly prejudicial to the poor: the beggars thus spread diseases and fevers, and often circulate false reports and excite rebellious feelings. The people are fond of listening to them, and the beggars oftener call at the poor man's house than at the rich man's.

The charity of the richer classes is exerted more in employing more workmen than they require than in giving alms. The poor give ten times as much as the rich, in proportion to their means.

The idea of the people is, that what is given in charity never shortens the quantity of what a man possesses.

One witness (a labourer) said: "I consider that I would be in greater want if I gave none away, than if I gave a great deal away; for I think that charity never shortens quantity, and that what a man gives to beggars is a gift to God: it is, as they say, to lay up for the day of judgement."

A clergyman stated that diseases are often spread by lodging vagrants, particularly typhus fevers, itch, and scrofula; that, independently of disease and immorality thus disseminated, there is an irregularity and want of decency that is calculated to injure the morals and habits of the labouring classes.

There is no instance of a vagrant passing a poor man's door at meal-time without being invited to share the repast. He and his family enter and sit down to table, almost as a kind of right. The majority of those who thus practise hospitality do not know how they shall themselves live the next day.

There is no punishment inflicted for vagrancy. Rigorous laws against vagrancy could never be enforced while a possibility of a person starving existed.

County of Mayo; examinations taken by J. Spencer, Esq., and W. Gray, Esq.; parish of Aughavale, barony of Murrisk. Fourteen witnesses.

The number of persons residing in the town who live by begging may be estimated at one hundred.

One witness states that vagrancy has advanced progressively for the last ten years—with increased rapidity during the last five; this is attributed, among other causes, chiefly to the ruin of the linen trade.

The greatest exertions are made by the labouring classes to avoid begging; but when once they lose caste, by having

begged, they make little exertion to regain it. Those who go to England in search of employment are not called vagrants or beggars; for if they beg or borrow on their way thither, they are sure of repaying it on their return. The life led by vagrants is a harder one than that of the labourer, but, being better fed, they are able to support it.

One witness was of opinion that a farmer holding ten acres of land gives one stone of potatoes each day in alms; and one person present at the sitting declared that he had often given even more.

All the witnesses agree in saying, that it is a very common thing, among even the poorest labourers, to relieve beggars in winter, and be themselves in great want in summer. One man, who himself had been reduced to begging, exclaimed, "When a beggar asks for God's sake, I cannot hold back part of what I have. The poorest man amongst us, when he has it in his hands, will not refuse." No inquiry is made into the character of the person soliciting relief. Three magistrates gave their opinion, that immorality is not more common among beggars than among the classes immediately above them. They did not recollect a single instance of a beggar brought before them at petty sessions charged with an offence. The influence of religion, as inculcated by the Roman Catholic clergy, is a great restraint on them.

The Commissioners examined a great number of vagrants. They ascertained that the cause of their following the trade of begging is the impossibility of obtaining employment. They have the same tendency to intermarry among themselves as the other classes of the people. The witnesses say that it is very troublesome to

have to do with these people, but that there is a general disinclination to the introduction of poors-rates.

County of Roscommon; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq. and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq.; parish of Moore, barony of Moycarnon. Seventeen witnesses.

In this parish the number of beggars has doubled during the course of a few years, and twenty years ago there was not one fourth so many as at present.

The wages of mechanics are lower by three-fourths than they used to be. Weaving and spinning are almost extinguished: the poor have frequently not the money to buy the flax. Formerly begging was only followed by labourers on their way to seek work in England; but now that they no longer find the same employment, they beg both going and returning.

Some, when seeking relief, say that they are unable to get work, others make no apology at all. Some no doubt prefer idling about to regular work, but it is only because the habit from necessity has taken hold of them that they become idle.

The respectable portion of the poor in the parish would be glad to have their children taken care of and educated when possible; but those who live by begging are never inclined to part with them,—“they would not sell that charm.” There is as much affection amongst those who beg, but not so much obedience to the commands of the parents, as amongst other classes.

One witness stated that his house is situated on the public road, and that he has counted twenty or thirty families passing it in the day. “There is not one of these vagrants,” said a clergyman, “who would not emigrate to

America if the means were given him ; and the people throughout the country are so convinced that mendicancy and vagrancy are brought on by misery, that no one ever says an offensive word to the vagrants or beggars about their importunity. Religion is the measure of charity amongst the Irish, and not their means."

County of Sligo ; examinations taken by T. Osler, Esq. and J. O'Flynn, Esq. ; town of Ballymoat, barony of Corran. Fourteen witnesses.

Vagrancy has increased very much of late, but not in proportion to the increase of misery. When the crop of potatoes fails, the number of beggars increases very much. In some districts the decline of the linen-trade is one great cause of vagrancy, because the weavers are unable to work hard at out-door labour.

The small shopkeepers have greater repugnance to begging and vagrancy than the country-people, because they are better brought up, and it is amongst them that most of the people reduced to this extremity die. No one actually dies of starvation, but from long privations.

Beggars and vagrants never use any violence, and very seldom murmur. Those who give alms never inquire into the characters of the persons they relieve, and poverty is regarded as one means of salvation.

Charity is universal. It is a custom to plant a corner of the land a man holds with potatoes, set apart for charity. Men frequently deny themselves food who give away to others.

The Commissioners made a calculation in the town of Ballymoat, that the amount given in charity annually would be equivalent to 25s. for each person. When the sum was declared, there was a murmur amongst the wit-

nesses, who thought they had been "trapped," as they said, into an admission of the amount of their charities, in order to serve as a guide for taxing them with the poor-law; and in consequence the next day scarcely any of the farmers attended at the Inquiry.

The facts collected from the rest of the Inquiry are of the same nature as the above. The poor and the beggars have a kindly feeling to one another, and, in the present state of society in Ireland, begging is the easiest mode of living, and often the only one possible.

REMARKS.

That life of and unsettled objectless adventure which our laws term vagrancy, has only been known in warm climates. We read, in the romances of the Arabs and Spaniards, descriptions of the inexpressible delight which men find in penetrating into deserts, to enjoy a state of solitude and subsist at hazard upon what they meet with. But countries under a temperate and moist climate had hitherto secured their inhabitants from such a wandering life, and we see that there is no exaggeration in the pictures of romance; since, in spite of the severity of the climate of Ireland, those who have been driven solely by despair to adopt this nomadic life, have found in it so great a charm that

The laws, however, which Parliament has enacted against vagrancy are very severe, and strictly enforced in England. In Ireland they are powerless, for the simple reason that there is not in every place a prison for the reception of the vagrants ; moreover, imprisonment may be a punishment in England, but it would not be so in Ireland. For what is it that this new class of wanderers require ? —simply food, lodging, warmth and light, and all these a prison offers them.

CHAPTER VII.

ABLE-BODIED PERSONS OUT OF WORK.

Province of Connaught, county of Galway ; examinations taken by F. Diggins, Esq. and W. T. M'Cullagh, Esq. ; parish of Kilcreest, baronies of Dunkellin and Loughrea. Seventeen witnesses.

THERE is a general deficiency of work for nearly three months of the year in this parish, during which time very few of the labourers can get any employment. There are many days of winter in which a man would be prevented from working by the inclemency of the weather.

A witness stated that half the year he had nothing to do, and would be glad to work at sixpence a-day. Whole troops of labourers would take work at that price, especially in the country, for in the towns there is more work to be obtained. The labourers are supported during the slack season chiefly by con-acre ; they often work in the summer-time at sixpence a-day, but in this time of the year the potatoes are twice as dear as in winter, and many workmen are obliged to pledge their clothes in order to support their families, thus rendering it impossible for them to go to mass even in fine weather. Starvation drives the workmen to steal potatoes, digging them up before they are fit to eat. The greater part of the people are always in debt ; and when those who have gone to England for work return, there may be half a dozen watching them, each expecting to get part of what is due

to him—one for con-acre, another for house-rent, another for provisions given on credit, and so on.

One witness said that he wanted a labouring man to work for a day, and his wife had to come the night before for the price of his breakfast, or he could not work.

A landowner stated that he had five or six tenants, and that, not being able to get his rents as regularly as formerly, he was obliged to give less employment, and that he could not any longer give provisions on credit to his tenants, as used to be the custom with the landlords. He regards the increase of the price of provisions as the greatest calamity that the labourers could suffer.

The families of labourers out of employ go begging. One witness said he believed this parish to be better off than the surrounding ones, especially those in the county of Mayo, which, he said, “would give beggars to the whole nation.”

The poor of one county pass to other counties, so that there is a regular and continual exchange of beggars; for they are ashamed to follow this trade in the district where they are known. They adopt begging only in the last extremity.

Parish of Killimore, barony of Longford. Seventeen witnesses.

From September till March there is little or no employment for labourers in this part of the country. The small farmers are the principal employers, and their poverty, from the depression of the times and the high rents, leaves them unable to give employment until the harvest. One witness says that in the parish there are from six hundred to eight hundred able-bodied men who do not get three months' work in the year; all the work done by hired

labourers could not, at the highest calculation, give constant employment to more than one hundred men. When this number was first mentioned, some of the witnesses present scouted the idea of there being so little employment; but, upon their examining the calculation, they agreed to its justness, and said that, if one hundred was not over the mark, it was under it.

There is no such thing in this parish as wages given by the small farmers; they exchange their labour, and give day for day, one to another. They cannot afford to give money, and there is so little employment to be had that they set no value on their labour.

For fifty miles round this place, said one witness, every grain of wheat and oats, and every pig, is sent to foreign markets. The people do not know the taste of meal or flour; some of them kill their pigs, hoping to get a better price by doing so, and they cannot eat even the entrails.

During the winter months they live on the produce of the con-acre; in summer they live on cabbage and green herbs. Those who have a plot of early potatoes dig them before they are half grown, eating them unripe. This causes sickness, sends many to their graves, and wastes in one month what would support the people for two if allowed to mature.

For three months in the year a labouring man gets only one meal a day.

In the mountainous districts, say the witnesses, famine is so great, when the potatoes are finished, that the people bleed the cattle and other animals and feed on the blood, after boiling it. An instance is mentioned of a man who bled the same animal three times in one season.

Without this resource, he would have died of starvation.

The greatest calamity of the labouring classes is neither sickness nor beggary; it is the want of employment, which is universal. An able-bodied man excites no pity in begging. 7

The labourers who overcome the shame of begging are much better off than the others. Those who go over to England can only reach that country by begging; they are often aided by their neighbours with means to pay their passage, but on condition of repaying them on their return.

All the people are in debt; there were fifty ejectments served in this parish only during the past month.

County of Mayo, parish of Kilgeever, barony of Murrisk. Thirteen witnesses.

The land in this parish, containing a population of above 11,000, is cut up in so many small holdings, that there are scarcely a dozen farmers occupying as much as ten acres of arable land. A man can scarcely procure thirty days' labour through the year, and will take work for twopence a-day and his food. Notwithstanding all this distress, there is no instance of a father abandoning his family.

Province of Leinster, county of Kildare; examinations taken by Captain White and T. N. Vaughan, Esq.; parish of Naas, barony of North Naas. Thirty-four witnesses.

There are in this parish 317 families of labourers, amounting in all to 1600 persons, out of employment, who would have actually died of starvation during the month of August last, but for the relief from a subscription made

by a clergyman in the neighbourhood. One witness states that he knew several men who never tasted food for forty-eight hours, and the whole population was reduced to one meal a-day.

When labourers are out of employment, their wives and families are driven to begging, or go collecting weeds or anything to keep life together.

Parish of Rathangan, barony of Ophaly west. Twenty-eight witnesses.

Formerly a labouring man would as soon have been accused of a capital crime as of begging, but now, from want of employment, they think nothing of it.

A witness said, that a person, when he hires a day-labourer, is obliged to give him a breakfast before he sets to work, the value of which is deducted from his pay. A Catholic priest said to the Commissioners, "It would make your blood run cold to hear the tales of misery that are told me at the confessional; the hardships the poor bear are beyond endurance;" and he instanced an example. A farmer's wife, respectably brought up, with four children, was on the death of her husband driven out from their holding, without a roof to cover them; they remained in a wretched hut by the road-side for forty-five nights. "Her son," adds the Catholic priest, "came to me when he heard it, and, in a state bordering on distraction, said, 'What am I told, sir? am I to live and see those things?'"

This priest stated also that all the midnight murders and assassinations in this country had been attributed to political causes; whereas he could affirm positively that poverty and destitution were at the root.

One witness stated that he was the master of a school of forty pupils, whose parents paid him one penny each

a week ; but from the distress of the people, he received during the last ten months only 9s. 6d. among them all.

Those who purchase food on credit pay double the price of it ; nor can the seller be blamed, since he always ends by being ruined, from not getting his dues paid. All the Catholic priests say that the poor share all amongst themselves, without thinking of the morrow.

The facts gathered in the other parishes of Ireland are of the same nature as the foregoing ; and everywhere the witnesses agree in saying that early marriages are so prevalent, that girls of twenty years and men of thirty are considered as old maids and bachelors. So great is the misery in which children live at home with their parents, that they only think of marrying.

Other witnesses say, that the Irish, in marrying so young, do so only with a view to be supported by their children when they shall grow old, for the greatest confidence is universally felt in the spirit of family union.

REMARKS.

The melancholy state of society we have just witnessed is only the necessary consequence of the want of employment felt by those able to work ; for the subsequent investigations will show the development of a system, in which labour and its reward are never wanting to men in a condition to work, and in the countries in which this system exists mendicity and vagrancy are unknown. The

majority of the aged and infirm, of widows burdened with children, or orphans, find resources in their families, and do not become a burden to society. Moreover in Ireland these numerous classes compose only a fifth part of the community; whilst those in a condition to work, and who are destitute of employment, constitute nearly the whole body.

The laws of Providence designed that agriculture should offer continual employment to the rural population; each kind of grain requires its own period for sowing and reaping, and it is the same with the other preceding labours. The roots as well as the other vegetables are of such various species, that their culture gives occupation all the year round. The trees are planted and pruned in winter, and their fruits are gathered in summer; the cattle likewise require the care of the farmer during the whole year; the hedges and ditches can only be cleared and trimmed in winter, when the manure is also carried on to the fields and the drainage is attended to. This however, is the season the least productive of labour. But be it remarked, that in this season in Ireland—a country situated between 52° and 55° —out-door labour lasts only eight hours; and, if we reckon the wages of work by the hour, it is paid much more dearly in winter than in summer, which shows that it is at least as necessary.

Agriculture was therefore intended to furnish an uninterrupted succession of employment ; and if human laws were in accordance with the laws of Providence, they would not have permitted the cultivation of farms of less than three hundred acres, because that is the least extent which can yield, by the various kinds of cultivation, a succession of labour throughout the year, and thus ensure the existence of the families which are settled upon it.

But by permitting divisions of the soil into fifty, ten, five, and even a single acre, the land admits of only one species of cultivation, and consequently only a single period of labour. The existence of the country is therefore become as precarious as the harvest.

Much more care and prudence ought to be exercised in legislating for the country than for the towns. In the country there are neither hospitals, asylums, prisons, barracks, military, nor stores of provisions, as in towns. Society is there defenceless against the numerous famished and irritated population, who assemble moreover periodically at the fairs, where all those plans of nightly attacks, fires and ravages are formed, of which Ireland has been the theatre for two centuries.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF PUBLIC-HOUSES OR SMALL TAVERNS.

THE examinations taken show that the number of small taverns, in which spirits are sold retail, has increased since the cost of licences has been diminished.

Very little beer is sold, and almost the whole of the spirits are retailed out in small glassfuls. Much more is drunk in good than in bad times. Persons well off imagine that it is the cheapest nourishment the people can take in the state of wretchedness in which they are.

The witnesses say that the Catholic priests reprimand from the pulpit the tavern-keepers, who, after having given credit to the poor, exact repayment in labour.

The scanty clothing, the want of fuel, and the persuasion that whisky affords a nourishment as cheap as any other, are the causes of the great consumption of this spirit; and in times of agricultural distress, the people drink it with increased eagerness, for it is impossible for them, say the witnesses, to resist the temptation of warming themselves by this drink in the constant state of cold and wet in which they live.

Many houses in which spirits are sold pay no licence, and in the barony of Mohill alone there are above four hundred of these houses which pay nothing to the Government.

The spirit consumed in Ireland is called whisky; it is made from oats, and when the crop is plentiful and this

corn is at a low price, a contraband distillation is carried on. The distillation is made in out of the way places, away from any roads, and it is very dangerous to attack the illicit dealers. This trade is so considerable, that it is reckoned at three-fifths of the whole consumption.

Drunkenness is of rare occurrence, and is only seen at fairs and in the small markets. The labouring classes have not the means of indulging in drink; the small shopkeepers are the only people who have money to spend in this way: drunken women are never seen. The greatest drinkers are the fishermen and those who work in the mines.

REMARKS.

The fact of the increase in the number of small public-houses is not peculiar to Ireland; it is common to all Europe. Old people can still recollect the time when scarcely any of the villages had a house of the kind. What the villagers consumed they consumed in their own families; and those who left their homes to go to a distance, found hospitality at the castle, or the richest house in the village, or in a monastery, and at all events the parsonage was always a resource. Such was peculiarly the state of Ireland; but from the moment that an attack was made upon the whole fabric of society—that is to say, when its dissolution com-

menced by the confiscation of the property of a clergy living in celibacy, and its transference to a clergy who were married and burdened with families—from the moment that the rich, both Catholics and Protestants, were obliged to quit the country—the establishment of small public-houses was the natural result. The lower classes, being unable to incur the same expenses as the higher classes, were separated from them. The public-houses became the resort of dangerous assemblages, and in every case their gain has been the loss of the family.

CHAPTER IX.

LOANS UPON PAWN, AND SAVINGS'-BANKS.

A SOCIETY has been established within the last two years, in some baronies, to assist persons who are in need of loans to purchase either a pig, potatoes, or meal. The sum thus advanced has amounted to 720*l.*, amongst 400 persons who have borrowed money, at the rate of 6 or 7 per cent. interest, and on condition of repaying it weekly,—which makes almost 13 or 14 per cent. No one has sustained any loss.

In three-fourths of the baronies there are no pawnbrokers, but there is a class of men who practise usury, and who, after receiving the best securities, take as much as 100 or 150 per cent. interest. The working classes always pledge their clothes or beds, and sometimes their tools.

Money being very scarce, usury is carried to a scandalous extent, and all the witnesses lament that there are not everywhere pawnbrokers, who are by Act of Parliament forbidden to take more than 20 per cent. interest. The loan is for a year, but if the borrower repays before the expiration of that time, the lender exacts the same interest. They however sometimes advance loans for six months; and in these cases, if at the end of that time the borrower desires to renew his ticket for another half-year, he pays, besides the interest for the six months, a shilling for the trouble of making out the ticket.

These money-lenders settle in continually increasing numbers in the towns where there is some little wealth; they advance only the half or two-thirds of the value of the articles upon which they lend, and they reserve beforehand the interest of 20 per cent. The borrower never comes to reclaim his pledge, which is sold by auction at the end of the year; if there is any surplus, it belongs to the borrower; but the witnesses say that there never is any, for the lenders have a mutual understanding about purchasing the goods, which they sell in their shops: this enables the people to buy old clothes.

The smallest sum advanced on loan is sixpence.

All the poor people are anxious for the establishment of pawnbrokers, especially because their transactions are secret, whilst those of other societies are public.

The following statement was furnished to the Commissioners of the persons who had lodged money in the savings'-bank of Roscrea:—

Large farmers	16
Small farmers, holding from 10 to 50 acres	142
Labourers	45
Women	109
Wholesale dealers	51
Shopkeepers	34
Servants	35
Clerks, &c.	13
Deposits lodged by charitable institutions	10

Total . 455

One witness remarked that many of the labourers have a garden of two or three acres, and that there are ten small farmers for one large one. These labourers and small

farmers can have constant employment. The wholesale dealers are few in number compared with the other classes, and in general the country-people seem to appreciate more the benefit of the savings'-banks than the inhabitants of the towns. The deposits are made after the harvest, and especially in September and at Christmas, when the corn is sold. A part is withdrawn once a-year, when the payment of the rents falls due.

The small farmers usually deposit the dowry of their daughters, 20%. or 30%. This sum is withdrawn from the bank when they marry.

REMARKS.

These two kinds of establishments have been so little introduced in Ireland, and so generally in England, that we must defer speaking of the effects they produce until we come to that part of the Inquiry.

BOOK III.

ABSTRACT OF THE RESULTS OF THE INQUIRY, AND
MEASURES PROPOSED BY THE COMMISSIONERS WITH
A VIEW TO AMELIORATE THE CONDITION OF THE
PEOPLE.

3

EXTRACT

From the Third Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, and into the various institutions at present established for their relief, with a view to suggest such measures as may appear requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor.

SECTION I.

RESULTS OF THE INQUIRY.

THE evidence annexed to our former Reports proves to painful certainty that there is in all parts of Ireland much and deep-seated distress.

The official statements of the population of Ireland and of Great Britain respectively present the following division of families, according to the census of 1831:—

	Great Britain.	Ireland.
Families chiefly employed in agriculture	961,134	884,339
Families employed otherwise than in agric.	2,453,041	500,727
Total . . .	<u>3,414,175</u>	<u>1,385,066</u>

It thus appears that in every hundred families twenty-eight live by agriculture in Great Britain and sixty-four in Ireland, where the agricultural families constitute about two-thirds of the whole population; while in Great Britain they constitute little more than one-fourth.

The same statements of the population give the number of persons employed in agriculture in the two countries. They are composed, first, of occupiers not employing labourers; secondly, of labourers not occupying land:—

	Great Britain.	Ireland.
Occupiers employing labourers . .	187,075	95,339
Occupiers not employing labourers	168,815	564,274
Labourers not occupying land . .	887,167	567,441
Total of the two last classes .	1,055,982	1,131,715

It appears, therefore, that there were in Great Britain, in 1831, 1,055,982 agricultural labourers—in Ireland, 1,131,715; although the cultivated land of Great Britain amounts to about 34,250,000 acres, and that of Ireland only to about 14,600,000; that is to say, there are in Ireland about five agricultural labourers for every two that there are for the same quantity of land in Great Britain. Nevertheless the annual value of the agricultural produce of Great Britain is estimated at £150,000,000, and that of the produce of Ireland at only £36,000,000.

It further appears that in Ireland agricultural wages vary from 6*d.* to 1*s.* a day; that the average of the country in general is about 8½*d.*; and that the earnings of the labourers come, on an average of the whole class, to from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, or thereabouts, for the whole year round.

These calculations are made from the following table, which shows the wages of agricultural labourers in the different counties of Ireland, and the amount of their earnings in the year, so far as any estimate can be formed of them.

Province.	County.	Barony or Parish.	Amount of Wages.	Average Amount of Work obtained during the whole year by all able-bodied labourers.
CONNAUGHT.	Galway	P. Omev	6d. to 8d.	120 days
	Ditto	B. Kilconnel	Winter 6d., rest of year 8d. ....	.....
	Leitrim	B. Dromahair	8d.	140 "
	Ditto	B. Mohill.....	Winter 6d. to 7d., rest of year } 8d. to 10d.	140 "
	Mayo	P. Anghavale	6d. to 8d.	100 "
	Ditto	P. Kilgever	6d. to 8d.	30 "
	Sligo	P. Achonry	6d.	90 "
	Ditto	Village of Ballymoat...	6d.	24 "
	Ditto	B. Carbery	Winter 7d. to 8d., rest of year } 9d. to 10d.	120 "
	Carlow	P. Aghade	8d. to 10d.	145 "
	Ditto	P. St. Mullins	10d. on average	110 "
	Dublin	B. Balrothery	Winter 10d., rest of year 1s.	160 "
	Kildare	P. Kilcock	10d.	100 "
	Ditto	P. Naas	10d.	110 "
LEINSTER.	Kilkenny ...	B. Gowran	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	145 "
	Ditto	B. Galmoy	8d. on average	145 "
	King's	B. Clonlisk	Winter 7d., rest of year 8d. ....	.....
	Ditto	B. Philipstown ...	Winter 6d. to 7d., rest of year } 9d. to 10d.	100 "
	Longford ...	P. Killimore.....	6d.	80 "
	Louth	B. Dundalk	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	210 "
	Meath	B. Moyfenragh	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	155 "
	Ditto	B. Up. and Low. Kells	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	120 "
	Queen's	B. East Maryborough	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	163 "
	Ditto	B. West Maryborough	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	
	Ditto	B. Portnahinch	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	150 "
	Westmeath ...	.....	.....	90 "
	Wexford ...	P. Horetown	10d.	190 "
	Wicklow ...	B. Talbotstown	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	170 "
MUNSTER.	Clare	B. Corcomroe	8d. on an average ....	.....
	Ditto	P. Abbey	6d. to 8d.	100 "
	Cork	P. Killeagh	8d.	146 "
	Ditto	P. Liscarrel	8d.	130 "
	Kerry	P. Kenmare	8d.	140 "
	Ditto	P. Listowell	6d. to 8d.	150 "
	Limerick ...	P. Chapel Russell ...	.....	140 "
	Ditto	B. Coshlea	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d. ....	.....
	Tipperary ...	B. Middlethird	Winter 6d., rest of year 8d. ....	.....
	Waterford ...	B. Decies	8d. all the year ....	.....
	Ditto	B. Middlethird	10d. ....	.....
	Antrim .....	.....	1s. on an average	Majority employed great part of the year.
	Armagh	B. Fews	Winter 10d., rest of year 11d. to 1s.	
ULSTER.	Cavan	B. Loughtee	Winter 8d., rest of year 10d.	150 "
	Donegal ...	.....	1s. on an average	170 "
	Down	B. Iveagh	Winter 10d., rest of year 1s.	160 "
	Ditto	B. Lecale	Winter 10d., rest of year 1s.	160 "
	Fermanagh ..	B. Tyrkennedy	Winter 9d., rest of year 11d. to 1s.	190 "
	Londonderry	P. Aughedowey	1s. on an average	180 "
	Monaghan ...	B. Monaghan	10d. all the year	180 "
	Tyrone	B. Omagh	Winter 8d., rest of year 11d. to 1s.	150 "

The above table gives an average employment of about twenty-two weeks, of six working days each, to the whole of the labourers on hire, who are therefore destitute of employment during thirty weeks in the year. If about eight weeks or forty-eight days, for the work upon their own land, be added to the employment obtained by the labourers who hold land; and if fourteen days, for the employment on their con-acre ground, be added to the work of those labourers who, having no land, take con-acre, the average amount of employment obtained during the whole year by the entire class of labourers will be 166 days. This, at the rate of $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ per day, gives an average of $2s. 3d.$ per week during the whole year for the earnings of each labourer, and amounts to £5 17s. per annum, which multiplied by the total number of labourers, 1,131,715, gives the sum of £6,844,500.

This number of 1,131,715 adult persons, who have employment for only 166 days in the year at $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ per day, increased, it is calculated, in 1834 to above 1,170,000; and the number of children, women, and old persons dependent upon them, cannot be reckoned at less than 3,600,000*.

Thus circumstanced, it is impossible for the able-bodied in general to provide against sickness or the temporary absence of employment, or against old-age or the destitution of their widows and children in the contingent event of their own premature decease. A great portion of them

* This calculation is founded upon the census of 1831, according to which the adult males of Ireland amounted to 1,867,765, in a total population of 7,767,401 persons, or 100 in 416. The number of adult males in England amounted to 3,199,984, in a population of 13,091,005, or 100 in 409. In Wales, 194,706, in a population of 806,182, or 100 in 414. In Scotland, 549,821, in a population of 2,365,114, or 100 in 430.

are insufficiently provided at any time with the commonest necessities of life.

Their habitations are wretched hovels; several of a family sleep together upon straw or upon the bare ground, sometimes with a blanket, sometimes even without so much to cover them; their food commonly consists of dry potatoes, and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal in the day. There are even instances of persons being driven by hunger to seek sustenance in wild herbs. They sometimes get a herring or a little milk, but never meat, except at Christmas, Easter and Shrovetide.

Some go in search of employment to Great Britain during the harvest, others wander through Ireland with the same view.

The wives and children of many are occasionally obliged to beg; they do so reluctantly, and with shame, and in general go to a distance from home that they may not be known.

Mendicancy, too, is the sole resource of the aged and impotent of the poorer classes in general, when children or relatives are unable to support them. To it therefore crowds are driven for the means of existence, and the knowledge that such is the fact leads to an indiscriminate giving of alms, which encourages idleness, imposture, and general crime.

With these facts before us, we cannot hesitate to state that we consider remedial measures requisite to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor.

What these measures should be is a question complicated, and involving considerations of the deepest importance to the whole body of the people both in Ireland and Great Britain. Society is so constructed, its various parts are so connected, the interests of all who compose it are

so interwoven, the rich are so dependent on the labour of the poor, and the poor upon the wealth of the rich, that any attempt to legislate partially, or with a view to the good of a portion only, without a due regard to the whole of the community, must prove in the end fallacious, fatal to its object, and injurious in general to a ruinous degree.

We have shown that the earnings of the agricultural labourers are, on an average, from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, or thereabouts. Wretched as these are, they yet seem to afford to the Irish labourer as great a share of the produce he raises as falls in Great Britain to the labourer there. For as the Irish labourers exceed the British in number, and the produce of Great Britain exceeds that of Ireland by three-fourths, if a proportional share of the produce of each country were given to the labourers of each, there would be more than four times as much for the British labourer as for the Irish; and we understand that the earnings of an agricultural labourer in Great Britain average from 8*s.* to 10*s.* a week, while in Ireland they average from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* or thereabouts, if spread over the year.

This shows how necessary it is to observe the utmost caution in applying any remedy to the evils we have to deal with.

If, finding the earnings of the labourer so small as they are, we attempted to provide him with more than he has at present out of the land, without at the same time increasing the productive powers of it, we should give to him a greater portion of the produce he helps to raise, than, by comparison with Great Britain, ought to come to his share; we might thus throw land out of cultivation, and involve not only landlords and farmers, but the labourers and the whole community, in general destruction.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners, in this first section of their Report to the King, have established the only fact by which we can judge of the wealth or the poverty of an empire, namely, the number of the agriculturists compared with that of the other classes of society. There is no doubt, as has been well observed by those among the Irish witnesses who have travelled, that Ireland is the poorest country in Europe, and Great Britain the richest. This comparison, therefore, presents the two ends of the chain: no one of the states of Europe is so poor as Ireland, or so rich as Great Britain. But since society is never stationary, and experiences continually either a progressive or a retrograde movement, we believe that, in this self-styled age of enlightenment, France and the North of Germany approach near to the state of Ireland, and recede from that of Great Britain. This first picture, then, requires the reader's particular attention, for it shows the basis of the whole construction of society.

In 1831, Ireland had 884,339 families of agriculturists, who, besides providing for themselves, found food for 500,727 families not employed in agriculture. Great Britain had 961,134 families, who, after providing for themselves, gave sub-

sistence to 2,453,041. That is to say, in Ireland one hundred families of agriculturists found food for fifty-seven families not agricultural, and in Great Britain these one hundred families supplied food for two hundred and fifty-five.

The result is this : in Great Britain, the portion of society not agricultural receives from the agriculturists nearly five times as much as in Ireland.

The portion of society who do not share in agriculture is composed of several classes. The royal family, the clergy, the army, the magistracy and the administration, form parts essential to the maintenance of the whole in harmony. To these may be added the classes which live by handicraft, manufactures, commerce at home and abroad, and navigation.

Society is therefore five times stronger in Great Britain than in Ireland, since, for attack as well as for defence, it can command five times the number of soldiers or sailors.

The working classes moreover have many more advantages in Great Britain than in Ireland, since the agriculturists supply them, independently of their food, with the first materials for the employment of their industry.

We limit ourselves to these reflections. The result of all these inquiries will tend to develope the proof that agriculture is the sole principle of

creation, and that all wealth results solely from that which agriculture creates.

Agriculture is therefore susceptible of such an organization, as that the same quantity of labour yields a fivefold produce.

The Scotch afford a proof of this ; for even in Ireland, in Antrim, the nearest county to Scotland, whither some of the inhabitants of the latter country have emigrated, and cleared the land upon their method, the labourers, as we see in the foregoing table, earn a shilling a day, and are occupied all the year ; whilst in certain districts of the province of Connaught, the labourers have employment during only twenty-four and thirty days of the year, and earn no more than sixpence a day.

SECTION II.

A POOR-LAW UNSUITED TO IRELAND.

It has been suggested to us to recommend a Poor Law for Ireland similar to that of England, but we are of opinion that the provision to be made for the poor in Ireland must vary essentially from that made in England. The circumstances of the two countries differ widely; and legislation, we submit, should have reference to circumstances as well as to principles.

The law of England requires that work and support shall be found for all able-bodied persons who may from time to time be out of employment. According, however, to the regulations now in progress under the Poor Law Amendment Act, that work and support will in future be provided for them only through a workhouse, and it appears from the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners of England for the last year that into a workhouse the able-bodied who are married—those of the class who stand most in need of relief—in general will not go.

In Ireland the difficulty is, not to make the able-bodied look for employment, but to find it profitably for the many who seek it. There are in Ireland a greater number of labourers absolutely than in the whole of Great Britain, more than double the number relatively to cultivated land, and more than four times the number relatively to produce.

If, therefore, workhouses were determined upon for Ireland as an actual means of relief, they must be esta-

blished for the purpose of setting vast numbers of unemployed persons to work within them, and of so providing for such persons and their families. Now we cannot estimate the number of persons in Ireland out of work and in distress during thirty weeks of the year at less than 585,000, nor the number of persons dependent upon them at less than 1,800,000,—making in the whole 2,385,000.

This, therefore, is about the number for which it would be necessary to provide accommodation in workhouses, if all who required relief were there to be relieved; and we consider it morally, indeed physically, impossible so to provide for such a multitude, or even to attempt it with safety.

The cost of supporting the whole 2,385,000 for thirty weeks annually would be something more than £5,000,000 a year; whereas the gross rental of Ireland (exclusive of towns) is estimated at less than £10,000,000 a year; the net income of the landlords at less than £6,000,000; and the public revenue is only about £4,000,000.

We do not, however, think that such an amount of expense as we have mentioned would in point of fact be incurred; on the contrary, our conviction is, that the able-bodied in general, and their families, would endure any misery rather than make a workhouse their domicile. Now if we thought that employment could be had, provided due efforts were made to procure it, the general repugnance to a workhouse would be a reason for recommending that mode of relief; for assistance could be afforded through it to the few that might from time to time fall into distress, and yet no temptation be offered to idleness or improvidence; but we see that the labouring class are eager for work, that work there is not for them, and

that they are therefore, and not from any fault of their own, in permanent want.

As then actual relief is required by the able-bodied in general in Ireland, the workhouse system, as applied to them, must prove illusory ; and if it were established, we are persuaded that it would be regarded by the bulk of the population as a stratagem for debarring them of that right to employment and support with which the law professed to invest them.

It is unnecessary to point out the feelings which must thus be created, or the consequences to which they might lead. We must add, that if workhouses were established, and that want should send some of the labouring class into them, we are satisfied that they would no sooner be there, than the strict discipline which, as in England, it would be needful to enforce, separation of families and so forth, would produce resistance ; that tumults would ensue ; and that, after much trouble, expense, and mischief, the system would necessarily be abandoned altogether.

SECTION III.

It may be considered, however, that the objections applicable to a provision for enforcing in-door work would not be applicable to one for enforcing out-door employment; but considering the number of persons for whom work must be found, and the experience had in England of the consequences to which any plan of out-door compulsory employment inevitably leads, it appears to us that any attempt to introduce it into Ireland must lead to the most pernicious results.

If the farmers were compelled to take more men than they chose or thought they wanted, they would of course reduce the wages of all to a minimum. If, on the other hand, magistrates or other local authorities were empowered to frame a scale of wages or allowances, so as to secure to each labourer a certain sum by the week, we do not think they could, with safety to their persons and property, fix a less sum than would be equal to the highest rate of wages pre-existing in the district for which they were required to act; nor would anything less enable the labourer to support himself and his family upon such food, with such clothing, and in such dwellings, as any person undertaking to provide permanently for human beings in a civilized country could say they ought to be satisfied with. It would therefore, we think, be necessary to fix different scales of wages or allowances, which would average for the whole of Ireland about 4s. 6d. a week. This would be to double the present earnings of the body of labourers,

which are calculated to amount to about £6,800,000 a year. The additional charge for labour would therefore come to about that sum.

It could not be expected that the tenantry should bear this burthen; they have not capital to do so, even if the further sum they were required to expend on labour were likely to make a profitable return; but we are persuaded that it could do no such thing. If the law required that the whole number of agricultural labourers in Ireland should be set to work, there must be constantly employed in Ireland about five labourers for every two employed on the same extent of cultivated land in Great Britain; the labourers too would not be freely taken by their employers, and bound to please them or lose their employment, but would be forced upon them, and entitled to be paid a certain sum whether they gave satisfaction or not; under such circumstances, labour could not be expected to yield a profitable return to those who paid for it.

The charge must therefore come upon the landlords. Now the rental of the country at present goes to feed commerce, to give employment directly or indirectly to profitable labourers, and to keep society in a healthy state. If any considerable portion of it were devoted to the support of unprofitable labourers, it would be in a great degree consumed without being reproduced, commerce must decay, and the demand for agricultural produce and all commodities (save potatoes and coarse clothing) must immediately contract; rents must therefore diminish, while the number of persons out of employment and in need of support must increase, and general ruin be the result.

To apprehend all this may to some appear visionary. In order, therefore, to show how possible it is, we give the

following extracts from the Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the operation of the Poor Laws in England.

“We are happy to say that not many cases of the actual dereliction of estates have been stated to us. Some, however, have occurred, and we have given in the extracts from our evidence the details of one, the parish of Cholesbury, in the county of Berks. It appears that in this parish, the population of which has been almost stationary since 1801, in which, within the memory of persons now living, the rates were only 10*l.* 11*s.* a-year, and only one person received relief, the sum raised for the relief of the poor rose from 99*l.* 4*s.* a-year in 1816 to 150*l.* 5*s.* in 1831; and in 1832, when it was proceeding at the rate of 367*l.* a-year, it suddenly ceased, in consequence of the impossibility to continue its collection; the landlords having given up their rents, the farmers their tenancies, and the clergyman his glebe and his tithes. The clergyman, Mr. Jeston, states, ‘that in October 1832, the parish officers threw up their books, and the poor assembled in a large body before his door while he was in bed, asking for advice and food.’ Partly from his own small means, partly from the charity of neighbours, and partly by rates in aid imposed on the neighbouring parishes, they were for some time supported; and the benevolent rector recommends that ‘the whole of the lands should be divided among the able-bodied paupers;’ and adds, ‘that he has reason to think that, at the expiration of two years, the parish in the interval receiving the assistance of rates in aid, the whole of the poor would be able and willing to support themselves, the aged and impotent of course excepted.’ In Cholesbury, therefore, the expense of maintaining the poor has not merely swallowed

up the whole value of the land, it requires two years of rates in aid from other parishes to enable the able-bodied, after the land has been given up to them, to support themselves ; and the aged and impotent must even then remain a burthen on the neighbouring parishes.”

As the parish of Cholesbury became to other parishes in England, so, we are persuaded, would very many of the parishes of Ireland be to the residue at the end of a year from the commencement of any system for charging the land indefinitely with the support of the whole labouring part of the community ; and, as these must shortly bring down all others to their level, the whole of Ireland would soon have to lean on Great Britain for support.

It may however be said that England, with the Poor Law system we condemn, has become a great and flourishing country, while Ireland, without it, is in a state of semi-barbarism. The fact is undoubtedly so. But because extraordinary strength has withstood poison, it does not follow that poison should be prescribed as a remedy for weakness. The true cause of the greatness of England is to be found in her free constitution. It is the spirit of that constitution which, long and happily enjoyed, gives to England the energies she possesses, enables her to subdue any vice that may from time to time get into her system, and keeps her constantly ascending in the general scale of civilization. Unfortunately, it is only of late years, and by slow degrees, that it has been allowed to diffuse itself through the mass of the people of Ireland. For nearly the whole of the last century they were governed by a code, the policy of which was to keep them in poverty and ignorance, and which was perfect for its purpose. It was, to use the words of Mr. Burke, “ a machine

of wise and elaborate contrivance ; and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.” Although it is now no more, it has left behind it habits and dispositions which are opposed to improvement ; and we should consider ourselves accessories to a continuance of them, if we attempted to guarantee to the labourer pauper-support, instead of endeavouring to render him independent of it.

REMARKS.

Mr. Burke was a zealous Protestant, who scrupulously fulfilled the duties of his religion. He was the profoundest statesman, the most moral and high-minded politician, and the most eloquent writer that modern times have produced. We see in the words quoted by the Commissioners how he characterizes the government of Ireland by the English, or rather the government of the Catholics by the Protestants ; and he spoke thus in 1792 prophetically, for Ireland had not then been reduced to the misery which we have just seen disclosed. The Commissioners are right in refusing to Ireland the English poor-law. That law would be a remedy similar to those which Mr. O’Connell at

present proposes, of municipal franchise, universal suffrage, or an increase in the number of representatives. These are mere words. Ireland, cleared or cultivated as it is upon a system which on the one hand leads to the increase of marriages, and on the other exhausts the land and diminishes the produce of labour, cannot longer yield food for its inhabitants. The problem to solve therefore is, to increase the produce of the soil in a more rapid proportion than the population ; for Ireland, cultivated upon different principles, would be able to support twice or three times the number of its inhabitants.

SECTION IV.

THE Commissioners, recurring to the evidence which had been given respecting emigration, and the anxiety for emigrating which so many of the Irish show, propose to the Government to defray the expense of the voyage to those who desire to emigrate to the colonies, in order to make the market-labour in Ireland more scarce, and therefore more profitable.

They conclude by observing, that they do not look to emigration as an object to be permanently pursued upon any extensive scale, nor by any means as the main relief for the evils of Ireland; but, for the present, as an auxiliary, essential to the commencement of a course of amelioration.

REMARKS.

As soon as the government of the United States of America found that the agents of the English government seriously proposed to defray the cost of getting rid of this excess of population, it raised the duty from two to ten dollars. This measure is in fact a prohibition, and it is the more wise, as the American government, not hav-

ing established in its towns any corporations of arts and trades, which limit the increase of population, begins itself to feel the inconveniences of such excess.

We believe, moreover, that England could not make a worse employment of her capital. However miserable the existence of those who might leave their country, their places would be immediately filled, and new marriages would take place. The Commissioners have proposed other measures, which we shall proceed to examine.

SECTION V.

As the business of agriculture is, at present, the only pursuit for which the body of the people of Ireland are qualified by habit, it is chiefly through it that a general improvement in their condition can be primarily wrought; but in proportion as the earnings of the agricultural labourer extend, so will his consumption of commodities produced by persons in other occupations. Trades of different sorts will thus be encouraged, and in the natural and therefore certain course of things, we may expect that division of labour in Ireland which exists in England, and which is at once an acting and re-acting cause and consequence of the wealth of nations.

Having then improvements in the lands of Ireland immediately in contemplation, it appears to us that the laws which form the constitution of the Bedford Level Corporation in England afford principles of legislation directly suited to our purpose. *They enforce improvements in property at the expense of the property improved.* We propose to do the same thing, and with this view we recommend, in the first place, that a Board shall be appointed for Ireland, with the necessary powers for carrying into effect a comprehensive system of national improvement, and that it shall consist of a president and vice-president, having suitable salaries, and of such other members as shall be named with them.

To the end also that all legal questions which may be

raised by the proceedings of the Board shall be promptly and justly decided, we recommend that the president or vice-president, and such two of the judges of the Courts of King's Bench, Common Pleas, or Exchequer, as shall from time to time be appointed for the purpose, shall constitute a Court of Review and Record, with power to hear and determine the several matters we shall mention, and to act with or without a jury, or to direct issues of fact where it may think proper.

We shall now state the duties which we think should be respectively assigned to the Board of Improvement and to the Court of Review.

We recommend that the Board of Improvement shall be authorized to appoint Commissioners, from time to time, to make a survey, valuation, and partition of any waste lands in Ireland. There is abundant evidence before the public of the very great benefits that may thus be conferred upon the country. "Upon these lands," Mr. Arthur Young observed nearly sixty years ago, "is to be practised the most profitable husbandry in the king's dominions." The Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the bogs of Ireland in 1809 reported to the like effect; and committee after committee of the House of Commons have done the same thing.

The following extracts from a Report made in 1830 by a Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the state of the Irish poor, appear to us particularly clear and satisfactory on the subject.

"The possibility of recovering the bog and mountainous districts of Ireland has long been the matter of parliamentary attention. In 1809 a Commission was issued which completed a most minute and scientific inquiry,

the results of which were communicated to the House in four important Reports. It appears that there are 3,000,000 of Irish acres of waste land, equal to 5,000,000 of English acres, which are considered to be almost all reclaimable.

“In the year 1819 the subject was brought under the consideration of the Committee on the State of Disease, and it was recommended that ‘these objects may be properly left to individuals or associations as a profitable adventure, legal provision being made for the repayment by a portion of the ground, either in fee or in lease.’ Experiments which have been subsequently tried seem to confirm the reasoning and anticipations of the Commissioners with respect to the great profit and practicability of these drainages. It is in evidence that, by an expense of somewhat about 7*l.* an acre, land in the county of Sligo has been reclaimed and rendered worth a rent of 30*s.*; or, if preserved in the hands of the proprietor, that it is made capable of repaying all expenses by three years’ produce, leaving all subsequent returns clear gain. This evidence is confirmed by the experience of an intelligent witness, who considers the expense of improvement to have been rather overstated. Both these witnesses are English, having no local bias whatever to influence their judgment. These opinions have received further confirmation by the examination of General Bourke before your Committee. That gentleman states, ‘that he is proprietor of bogs in different places, and has tried the experiment of improving them; that bog on which turf has been cut, and which was in a wild and uncultivated state, had been, at an expense of 7*l.* an acre, raised from 10*s.* to the value of 30*s.* acreable rent.’ General Bourke expresses his belief that

similar improvements, though not perhaps to so great a profit, might be effected elsewhere; but that the state of the law prevents partition of bogs held in common without the expensive process of a bill in Chancery. He adds an expression of his belief, that if the proprietors of adjacent town-lands could obtain possession of their several allotments of bog by a cheap and short process, a considerable expenditure of capital would take place: the result would be profitable to a certain degree to the owner, and at all events would give immediate relief to numbers of people, by affording them employment, and would enable the population, superabundant in other places, to obtain settlements on the lands reclaimed. ‘No person of sane mind,’ observes Mr. Rickman, ‘would desire that the machinery of an English Inclosure Act should be employed throughout Ireland, because it would create interminable delay, and an expense usually estimated at 5*l.* the English acre.’ Various bills have at different times been brought forward to facilitate these objects, but no legislative measure has as yet received the sanction of Parliament.

“When the immense importance of bringing into a productive state five millions of acres now lying waste is considered, it cannot but be a subject of regret and surprise that no greater progress in this undertaking has as yet been made. If this work can be accomplished, not only would it afford a transitory but a permanent demand for productive labour, accompanied by a corresponding rise of wages and improvement in the condition of the poor; opportunities would also be afforded for the settlement of the peasantry, now superabundant in particular districts, on waste lands which at present scarcely produce the means of sustenance, or are suited for human habitations. This

change would be alike advantageous to the lands from whence the settlers are taken, and to those on which they may hereafter be fixed, and may facilitate the means of introducing a comfortable yeomanry and an improved agriculture in the more fertile districts. The severe pressure of the system of clearing farms and ejecting sub-tenants may thus be mitigated, and the general state of the peasantry improved."

The evidence quoted by the Committee shows not only the importance of causing the lands in question to be brought into cultivation, but the necessity of establishing a central authority in Ireland, with a summary jurisdiction for the purpose. The Board of Improvement will act as such. And, considering the embarrassed state of landed property in Ireland, the extent to which it is in the hands of creditors and courts of justice, and the difficulties which would arise from confusion of rights, if any particular assent were required before a Commission of Partition could issue, we further recommend that the Board shall be authorized to issue a Commission of its own motion in any case in which it may think proper so to do, provided, however, that due notice be given of its intention, that any party objecting to such Commission shall be at liberty to file objections thereto with the Secretary of the Board, and that such objections be heard and disposed of by the Court of Review.

We propose that the Commissioners of Partition shall be armed with the usual powers given to Commissioners under Inclosure Acts. And in order to bring all lands partitioned the more immediately and beneficially into cultivation, we propose that such main drains and roads as may be required in or through them shall be made by the

Board of Works, which, in consideration thereof, shall have an allotment of a certain part of each waste made to it in trust for the public, the extent to be proportioned to the charges incurred in making the survey, partition, drainage, and roads. We also propose that the annual acreable value of the land comprised in each allotment made by the Commissioners of Partition shall be stated in their award, and that each proprietor, whether he have a limited estate only, or hold subject to charges or incumbrances, shall have a right to make a lease of the share assigned to him, or of any portion of it, at a rent equal to the annual value so fixed, for a term of sixty-one years, to a tenant undertaking to enclose and cultivate the premises in such manner as shall be approved of by the Board of Improvement; and that the lease shall be good against persons having any estate in reversion or remainder in the lands, and against all incumbrancers, and against all persons claiming adversely any estate, right, or interest therein, so that none shall have a right to go against the lessee except for the rent reserved; and that each party authorized to make such lease shall also be authorized to contract for the transfer in fee of part of the allotment made to him, to any person or company that shall undertake to enclose and bring the residue into good cultivation, provided the contract be made with the approbation of the Board of Improvement; and that when the work is perfected, and proof thereof made to the satisfaction of the Board, a proper deed of transfer shall be executed under its direction, which shall be good against all parties whatever.

We also propose that similar provision be made for contracts by corporations sole or aggregate, husbands in right of their wives, trustees, guardians of infants, committees

of lunatics, and all who are usually authorized to act for persons under disabilities.

We recommend that the award of the Commissioners shall be returned to the Board of Improvement, and shall be conclusive as to all matters thereby adjudicated upon, unless objections be lodged thereto with the secretary within a certain limited time; that any objections so lodged shall be heard by the Court of Review; and that the order made by it shall be final, save that, if objections be made to the award on the ground that the allotment made to any particular party ought to be made to another, then and in every such case, as title to property will come in question, we recommend that any order made thereupon shall be liable to alteration or reversal by the House of Lords.

We further recommend that no award of the Commissioners shall be acted upon until the time of objecting thereto shall have expired, nor then as to the matter of any objections made to it until the same shall be finally disposed of.

We also recommend that the Board of Works be authorized and required to cause each allotment made to it to be fenced as well as drained, and to sell or let it in such portions and subject to such conditions as the Board of Improvement shall think expedient; and when required so to do by the Board of Improvement, to cause any particular part of such allotment to be improved, and hamlets to be built thereupon as model hamlets, and to effect any other improvement thereupon that the Board of Improvement may think proper.

REMARKS.

It is a maxim in English law that all land belongs to the king; and, in fact, this has not proved an unmeaning expression, when we see the numerous confiscations of peerages and of fiefs of land which took place from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. But this destructive principle has in the event become protective. Every proprietor of lands is obliged to cultivate them, or to permit them to be cultivated when unable to do so himself. Thus, when a man holds the upper part of a bog, the proprietor of the lower part has the power to oblige him to drain it; for drainage is, and must necessarily be, a joint operation.

Fifty years ago two-thirds of the English soil were common-lands. The Acts of Parliament for bringing them into cultivation have varied as the localities varied; but there has been one general law for these inclosure acts,—the law itself appoints the Commissioners, who in each instance have to make the divisions, to distribute the allotments between the proprietors of the district in proportion to their claims, to assign to them the labours which they are called upon to undertake, and to provide for the execution of these in one way or

another, without appeal to the courts, or even to the House of Lords.

This it is that has given to agriculture in England so admirable a unity, and has transferred the pursuit of that difficult art from the lowest to the highest rank of society, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened; and this it is which the Commissioners propose, with the more reason, as such an interference of legislation, applying only to waste lands, bogs, woods, mountains, and other uninhabited spots, does not destroy any existing property, nor injure any individual.

France and the North of Germany would in a few years double their power, if they would adopt this legislation for the uncultivated and uninhabited portion of those countries.

If, on the contrary, a system of drainage and cultivation is followed on the principles of General Bourke, quoted in this Section, we see that by an outlay of 7*l.* an acre that gentleman has realized a rent of 30*s.*, that is to say, above 20 per cent. interest on his capital: but why?—because he has let his land in lots of five and ten acres. He has therefore created new families, with insufficient means of existence. This has caused an increase of the public misery; and the proof is, that these works of drainage have taken place in Connaught, a district in which, since the peace, the

state of the people has become the most wretched, as is seen by the following abstract of the replies from 1568 parishes to the following question put by the Commissioners :—

“ Since the peace, has the condition of the poorer classes in your parish been improved, deteriorated, or has it remained stationary ? ”

In 100 parishes which furnished replies, there were in Connaught 19 improved, 63 deteriorated, 18 stationary : in Ulster, 13 improved, 62 deteriorated, 25 stationary : in Leinster, 22 improved, 55 deteriorated, 23 stationary : in Munster, 28 improved, 39 deteriorated, 33 stationary.

SECTION VI.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO OBLIGE LANDOWNERS TO
IMPROVE THEIR ESTATES.

WE come now to lands already in cultivation. There is throughout Ireland an urgent necessity for drainage, and a general Drainage Act has been repeatedly recommended by Committees of the House of Commons. There is also in most parts of Ireland a want of such boundary fences as by law ought to be maintained; and the agricultural reports made to us are full of the mischiefs thus occasioned to the country.

By an Act passed in 1831, entitled "An Act to empower landed proprietors in Ireland to sink, embank, and remove obstructions in rivers," and which is commonly called Mr. More O'Ferral's Act, companies of undertakers may be formed, under certain regulations, for the purpose of carrying on drainage in any part of Ireland, but no companies have been formed; and although the Act, if carried into general effect, would have proved of infinite value, it has unfortunately remained a dead letter. We think the provisions of it and of the English Sewers Act may be modified, incorporated, and extended, so as to cause all lands to be kept duly drained and fenced, under the direction of a competent authority.

Under the English Sewers Act, which is one of the laws of the Bedford Level, but is applicable to the whole of England, Commissioners may be appointed for any county

or other district to overlook the repair of sea-banks and sea-walls, and the clearing of rivers, public streams, ditches, and other conduits whereby any waters are carried off. The Commissioners are a Court of Record, and may fine and imprison for contempts, and in the execution of their duty may proceed by jury or upon their view, and may take order for the removal of any annoyance or the safeguard and conservation of the sewers within their Commission. They may also assess such rates or scots upon owners of lands within their district as they shall judge necessary; and if any person refuses to pay them, the Commissioners may levy the same by distress of his goods and chattels; or they may, by statute 23 Henry VIII., c. 5, sell his freehold lands, and, by 7 Anne, c. 10, his copyhold also, in order to pay such scots or assessments.

We recommend that both draining and fencing, wherever necessary, shall be enforced by law, and that the Board of Improvement shall be authorized to appoint local Commissioners for any district they may think proper for the purpose.

We propose that the local Commissioners shall be a Court of Record for their district, and shall hold sessions when required so to do by the Board of Improvement; that an engineer shall be named for each district by the Board of Works; that before each sessions the engineer shall visit all parts of the district, and then make a report to the Commissioners, stating whether any and what works are required respecting any rivers, streams, water-courses, or pieces of water, or for the making, cleansing, or amending any drains therein; also whether any and what fences require to be made or repaired for preserving the boundaries of property and preventing trespass or

damage to the highway, specifying the manner in which any required works shall be executed, and giving an estimate of the sums necessary both for the execution of the work and for compensating any persons who may suffer loss thereby; and that he shall also state the portion thereof that ought to be charged upon the lands of each proprietor in each townland, having regard to the extent of improvement to be effected therein. We propose that the report shall be delivered to the clerk of the local Commissioners, who shall cause it to be forthwith printed and circulated through the district, and who shall transmit copies of it to each of the local Commissioners, and also a copy to the Board of Improvement; that the local Commissioners do give notice that they will, at a certain time, hold a sessions for the purpose of inquiring, by the aid of a jury, into the matter of the report, and to make presentments thereupon; that a sessions be held accordingly; that the Commissioners and jury, after full inquiry, do make due presentment in the premises, and that they be authorized to present a certain sum for the expenses of their Commission.

We recommend that, at the close of each sessions, the local Commissioners and jury, or the major part of them, shall sign their presentments in duplicate, and shall cause them to be read in open court, and that one part be kept by their clerk and the other transmitted to the Board of Improvement.

We recommend that the Commissioners be armed with powers to carry the presentments made as aforesaid into execution, and to levy rates for the purpose as hereinafter mentioned. But we also recommend that any party objecting to any presentment on his own behalf or that of

any person whom he may represent, be at liberty, within one month after the same shall have been made, to lodge objections thereto with the local clerk, who shall transmit the same to the Board of Improvement; that such objections shall be heard and disposed of by the Court of Review, and that such order as shall be made thereon shall be final. We further recommend that no presentment shall be acted upon until the time for making objections thereto has expired, nor then as to the matter of any objection until it be disposed of.

The total sum which may be required for carrying the presentments of the Commissioners of Improvement into effect, may be such as it would be impossible to raise at once by any rate, either upon landlords or occupiers; but if a rate equal to 5*l.* per cent. thereupon were assessed and made payable to the Board of Works, and the Board, in consideration thereof, were authorized to advance the requisite sum at once, this difficulty would be obviated; and by making the rate redeemable by the proprietor, and saleable by the Board of Works if he omitted to redeem within a certain time, the Board would be kept in funds for continuing operations.

We therefore recommend that all works to be effected pursuant to any presentment made at a sessions of improvement shall be executed upon contracts entered into with the local Commissioners, subject to the approval of the Board of Works; that after the contracts are entered into, the local Commissioners shall assess a rate upon the district equal to 5*l.* per cent. upon the general charge for works, compensations, and expenses; that they shall applot the same on the respective lands of the district, in proportion to the benefit to be conferred upon each; that

the rate be made payable to the Board of Works ; and that the required sum be then advanced by it.

We recommend that powers be given to enforce the rate by entry and distress. And as the benefit of the improvement for which the rate is levied will be enjoyed by all existing lessees who are in possession, and by all above them as they come into possession, and as the immediate landlord of a tenant who holds only from year to year may be considered as if in possession, there being no lease against him, and as we think it desirable that the rate should be borne by the head landlord after the determination of existing leases, we recommend that it shall be payable by the occupying tenant ; but that if he hold from year to year, he shall be authorized to deduct the amount from his immediate landlord, and that all future lessees shall also be authorized so to do. We also recommend, that it shall be redeemable by the proprietor within a certain time, on his paying off the sum in respect of which it has been laid on ; that if he redeem it, he shall be authorized to have it transferred to any person from whom he may borrow money for the redemption of it, or to a trustee for himself ; that if he omit to redeem, the Board of Works shall be authorized to sell it ; that it shall thenceforth be transferable, as an annuity in the public funds, in a book to be kept at the office of the Board of Works for the purpose, and be redeemable only by the proprietor on his paying such a price for it as would, at the time he redeems, purchase a perpetual Government annuity of equal amount.

REMARKS.

The first and best employment of capital that Great Britain can make for the relief of Ireland is certainly that which the Commissioners have proposed in Section V.—namely, the employment of the excess of population in the cultivation of the waste lands and drainage of the bogs. But this is only applicable in some districts which are scattered and of small extent; moreover it requires several years to produce any fruits.

We would remark that the second employment of capital, proposed in Section VI., is premature, although indispensably necessary when the country shall be in a better state. But at the present moment, the recommendations of the House of Commons, if followed, would have led to a general system of drainage, to planting or restoring the hedges as the law directs, fixing the course of the rivers by dykes, and giving a free channel to the waters; all which labours would not produce a sack of corn the more, nor restore that just relation which should exist between the population of a country and the means of subsistence which it produces. This is the problem the solution of which is the most urgent. Moreover in the present state of things, where are the landowners capable of furnishing capital, or of giving the interest for it?

We think that the second employment of capital should be devoted to a creation of farms of two hundred acres, as has been so successfully done in England ; and indemnifying, among the multitude of farmers holding from one to twenty acres, those who may not be employed in this new species of cultivation. This second measure would be applicable to all parts of Ireland. Upon these farms the drainage should commence.

Another measure, equally efficacious, would consist in not allowing the erection of any houses without the permission of the Committee. This want of dwellings would diminish the number of early marriages, which are sufficient to render null and void the best measures that could be adopted.

SECTION VII.

IN order to enable the Board of Works to execute the additional duties which we have proposed should be imposed upon it, we feel it necessary to recommend that the fund placed at its disposal shall be considerably increased. This may be done without any risk or loss, and with a certainty of very great advantage to the public. The interest payable upon loans made by the Board is so much higher than upon the Exchequer Bills which it is authorized to issue, that the surplus is more than sufficient to pay all expenses of management; and every outlay of money that has taken place in the making of roads, facilitating intercourse, and opening remote districts in Ireland, has not only tended to great local advantages, but, by improving the condition of the people, to a very great increase of the public revenue.

REMARKS.

According to the price of agricultural produce, especially since the peace, no speculation in land has yielded an interest of five per cent. during the first ten years, and landowners who have ventured to borrow at this rate have all been ruined. The success of the Scotch landowners is wholly attri-

butable to their having organized amongst themselves banks, to which in the end Government has granted privileges. The advances of these banks have not cost more than three per cent. interest per annum, and the periods of repayment were always fixed at a term of five or ten years.

If the English Government wishes to put Ireland into a progressive state of amelioration, it will succeed better, even for its own interest, by lending at two and a half per cent., than at the rate of five per cent., as recommended by the Commissioners.

SECTION VIII.

WE consider it advisable that the Board of Improvement should be enabled, as far as possible, to make provision for the occupants of cabins which may be nuisances, and, when such provision is made, to cause the cabins to be taken down ; and that landlords should be required to contribute towards the expense of removing the occupants and providing for them.

We therefore recommend that, at any sessions to be holden, as before-mentioned, the Commissioners and jury shall, whenever required so to do by the Board of Improvement, present as nuisances any cabins within the district which may appear unwholesome, or calculated to generate or continue disease, and to present a certain sum for each ; and that a portion thereof shall be raised off the property of the immediate landlord of the tenant, and the residue off the district at large ; that it be paid to the Board of Works, and that the Board of Works, under the directions of the Board of Improvement, do let to each tenant whose cabin shall be so presented a certain quantity of land out of some of the allotments to be made to it as aforesaid, for such term, and at such rent, and subject to such conditions as the Board of Improvement shall approve of ; and that it shall assist him, to the extent at least of the sum presented for his use, in erecting a cottage thereupon, and shall cause the presented cabins to be taken down.

REMARKS.

The propositions of the Commissioners to destroy all the unhealthy cabins, which produce epidemics, are undoubtedly excellent ; but the idea of dividing those lots which have not hitherto been divided, and giving a strip of ground to each of the miserable tenants, would in less than five years double the misery of the country by the new encouragement to marriage which a tolerable dwelling and a small plot of ground would hold out. If Great Britain enjoys such advantages over Ireland, it is from her following a precisely opposite system.

SECTION IX.

THE next point to which we think attention is due is the state of those occupiers of land who do the work of it themselves. We consider them as labourers, and they amount to about one-half of the whole class. They are at times employed on their own holdings, at others they work for hire. At present they are so utterly unacquainted with any good course of cultivation, that it is supposed they do not make the land they hold yield one-third of the produce that it might under proper management; they have no notion of alternate cropping, nor of house-feeding, nor of the value of manure, except as applied to a potatoe-garden. The extraordinary improvement that has been wrought in their holdings, where proper attention has been paid to them, warrants us in the hope that, by bringing agricultural instruction home to their doors, and affording them examples of order and cleanliness, and good cottier-husbandry, a general change will be effected in their habits and circumstances, and the whole of Ireland be essentially improved.

We therefore propose that an agricultural model school shall be established for Ireland, and that a school, having four or five acres of land annexed to it, shall be established in each parish or other district that may be appointed by the Board of Improvement; that the master shall give instruction in letters and in agriculture; that he undergo due examination as to both before he be appointed;

and that he be required to pursue an approved course of cropping on the land annexed to the school.

And we recommend that, at any sessions to be holden for any district as before-mentioned, the local Commissioners and jury shall present, when so specially required by the Board of Improvement, a site or sites for any school or schools that the Board may think proper to have erected thereon, with a certain quantity of land annexed thereto, not being less than four, nor exceeding five acres; that they shall also present the rent which should be paid for the same in perpetuity, and that the Board shall be authorized to take possession thereof, the usual restrictions, however, being introduced as to pleasure-grounds, gardens, parks, and so forth. The fund for establishing and maintaining each school to be provided as hereinafter mentioned.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners with reason observe, that the farmers who rent only five or six acres are so ignorant that they do not derive from the soil a third of what it is capable of producing. This is the case in all countries where the land is cultivated in small allotments or subdivisions. But we cannot agree in the opinion that any system of instruction would enable these farmers to fatten their cattle or adopt any regular course of cropping. These two vital points of agriculture

can only exist in farms of at least two hundred acres. What shall we say, then, to the childish proposition of establishing in each district a model-farm of three or four acres? The art of agriculture is wholly practical. Every ten acres of land, presenting a different quality and surface, requires a different treatment, which can be learned only by experience. He who cultivates the land must also have the necessary capital, and a sufficiently long tenure of the soil to induce him to risk its employment upon it. This is the only possible school.

SECTION X.

WE further think that improvements may be very extensively, though indirectly, promoted by giving to tenants for life in Ireland leasing and charging powers similar to those given in Scotland by the act to encourage the improvement of lands there, "held under settlement of strict entail."

There is, no doubt, a material difference between the law of Scotland and that of England and Ireland with respect to entails; in Scotland they may be perpetual, but not in any other part of the United Kingdom. Although, however, the mischief that may be done by perpetual entails is greater than any that can be produced by those of the limited species which the law of England and Ireland allows, the difference is not one of principle, but of degree; all settlements which tend to keep property long in fetters are against the policy of the law of England; and in proportion as she has become a great commercial country, she has discountenanced, and in a great degree prevented them. The powers usually contained in family settlements have in general proved sufficient for improvement and cultivation in England, but for Ireland, considering her backward state, we think a general enabling law necessary.

We therefore recommend, that all proprietors, being tenants for life, or *quasi* tenants for life, of lands, shall be authorized to grant leases for thirty-one years thereof at the improved rent, and without fine, provided each lease

be made with the approbation of the Board of Improvement, and contains covenants for due management; and that they also be permitted to charge the inheritance to a certain extent with any sum which they may expend on lasting improvements, provided the expenditure be made with the approbation of the Board of Improvement, and that it do not exceed the amount of three years' annual value of the land, and that it do not extend to ornamental works, or any buildings save farm-houses and such out-offices and homesteads as may be required for them. We also recommend that similar powers be given to all corporations, sole or aggregate.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners appointed by the king to enter upon this Inquiry are certainly men distinguished by study, education, rank and condition of life; but it is manifest from this Report that they are neither statesmen nor agriculturists, when they speak of the injury produced by the system of entails.

The benefits resulting to society from every institution which strengthens the maintenance of families form no part of the subject of this Inquiry,—they belong only to agriculture. There are three causes of prosperity,—the consolidation of lands, their perpetuity in this state of consolidation, and

the power of raising the capital which is necessary for their cultivation ; and the more strict and extended the entails, the more easy is the fulfilment of these three conditions. The proof of this is, that the agriculture of Scotland is superior to that of England, and of England to that of Ireland, just in proportion as the entails are more secured by the laws in these three kingdoms.

These very Commissioners, who in theory yield to ideas adopted by the public without examination, themselves propose laws and regulations securing to the tenants a possession of thirty-one years, which is equivalent to an entail limited to that space of time.

SECTION XI.

EXECUTION OF PUBLIC WORKS.

OUR attention has been particularly called to the fiscal powers at present possessed by grand juries. They have been much objected to, and it appears to us that local public works under their control have not contributed to the employment of the poor as much as they might be made to do, and that by a better arrangement profitable labour could be found for many of the unemployed at those periods of the year when there is the greatest destitution. Recent alterations have improved the system, but we are of opinion that a still further separation of the fiscal from the criminal business would be advantageous, and that much of the former should be transferred to County Boards, the members of which should be chosen by those ~~whom~~ they shall be authorized to tax.

We therefore recommend that a Fiscal Board shall be established in every county; that a certain portion of it shall be chosen by the resident magistrates having a certain qualification each, and another portion by the resident landowners paying cess to a certain amount; that the members of the Board shall have a qualification in land, and shall also be resident within the county, and that the number of the Board shall not exceed thirty-one. We recommend that each county be divided into as many districts as there are quarter sessions' towns therein, and that a certain number of the Board be chosen from each district; that the voting shall be in writing, according to a form to be given for that purpose; that voting-papers, with proper

blanks, shall be printed under the directions of the clerk of the peace, and that he shall cause a sufficient number of them to be delivered to the collector of cess in each barony; that one thereof shall be left by the collector, or such person as he shall depute for the purpose, at the house of each person, entitled to vote, ten days before the first day of the then next January sessions to be holden for that division of the county in which the barony is situated, with notice to him to fill up and sign the same, and return it within eight days to the collector's office. The papers returned to be delivered by each collector to the assistant-barrister on the first day of the said sessions; the assistant-barrister to open them in public court, to cause the clerk of the peace to write down the names of the persons for whom, and by whom, the votes are given, and then to declare on whom the choice has fallen, so far as relates to the baronies for which the election shall be taken; and to proceed in like manner at the first town of the next division of the county, and then to return to the Board of Improvement the names of the Board so chosen.

The Board to possess all such powers for making presentments for public works as grand juries now possess; and to be authorized and required also to present such sums as may from time to time be appointed by the Board of Improvement for or towards the erection or support of agricultural schools.

The Board to have power to enforce its presentments; but these we think should be subject to the revision of the Court of Review, in like manner as presentments under local Commissions of Improvement. A certain number of the Board to go out each year in rotation, and to be replaced by election, as in the first instance.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners could propose nothing more wise than this fiscal committee, to be instituted in each district. But it is well to remark, that the Commissioners all belong to that Whig party, which, in order to come into power, has never spoken but of elections and public discussions. But once in power and at work, they soon shake off their first error, and propose as members of the committee certain magistrates, who, we may observe, are all appointed by the king, but always selected from amongst the landowners resident in the district. As soon as this majority is ensured, they propose that the other members of the committee should be chosen; but for this election they recommend no public assembly of electors. A printed sheet is to be left at the residences of those who have the right of voting, and there, in the silence of the closet, they have to write down their vote. To save the electors the trouble of going to a fixed place, or rather to avoid their assembling, the collector of the votes has to go and receive the printed paper at the residence of each elector. This mode of election seems to us to differ widely from the system on which the same Whigs have brought about Parliamentary reform.

SECTION XII.

WE further recommend that the Board of Works shall be authorized to undertake and prosecute any public works, such as roads, bridges, deepening rivers, or removing obstructions in them, and so forth, that may be approved of by the Board of Improvement, subject, however, to the restrictions we shall mention; and that the several County Boards, or the Boards of such counties as may be particularly interested in each projected work, shall be required to raise by local rates such sums as shall be necessary for the purpose.

We further recommend that notice of any work, for or in respect of which any assessment is proposed upon any ~~counties~~ or county, or upon Ireland in general, shall be given to the Boards of the county or counties interested, or to all County Boards, as the case may be; that if any Board objects, it shall cause objections to be lodged with the secretary of the Board of Improvement, and that all objections so lodged shall be heard and disposed of by the Court of Review. Provided, however, that every order made by it shall be laid before Parliament within one month after its ensuing meeting, and that the same shall be final and conclusive after the termination of the session, unless Parliament shall otherwise provide; and that no such order shall be acted upon in the mean time.

REMARKS.

In order to understand this recommendation of the Commissioners, it is necessary to premise, that no public works can be executed without an Act of Parliament; and that as in all cases the payment of a toll is fixed, the speculators can only apply to the House of Commons. These being generally men of business, who speculate in the funds, or in land for their private interest, the House of Commons always appoints a Committee, which examines the propositions, listens to the opposing parties, and before whom the cause is solemnly pleaded. The expense of all this procedure is often enormous. Such a bill, ~~after~~ having past the House of Commons, at an expense of many thousand pounds, has been finally rejected by the House of Lords, which is in general opposed to enterprises of this kind.

But as in the present case the speculators are not private individuals, the Commissioners reasonably demand that the Committee shall be relieved from the obstacles and costs of the ordinary mode of procedure, and that it shall have the same power as an Act of Parliament, employing the new forms proposed, to compel the inhabitants to give up the necessary land or to pay the fixed tolls.

SECTION XIII.

RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

WE cannot conclude this part of our Report without observing, that we understand Poor Laws have been recommended in some quarters for Ireland, “in order that the Irish labourer may stay at home and consume the corn he raises, and that the English farmer may have remunerating prices.”

It might as well be suggested that the English labourers of any particular district should stay at home and consume all the corn they raise, leaving the farmers none to carry to market, in order that the farmers of another district might have “remunerating prices,” or, in other words, that farmers in one district might be ruined in order ~~that~~ those in another might thrive and prosper. If the Irish agricultural labourer consumed the whole produce he raised, civilization must end. It is the produce which the agricultural labourer raises beyond his consumption that elevates him above savage life; it is in proportion to that surplus produce that he is enabled to clothe himself instead of going naked—that he becomes a means of promoting national wealth, or proves in any degree a profitable member of society.

Those who complain of the introduction of Irish agricultural produce into England should be informed too that it takes no money from England; that part of it goes to pay the rents of Irish absentee landlords, and that the rest is exchanged for English manufactures; that if it did not go into England, English manufactures could not come into Ireland; and that there would not be one

penny more than at present applicable to the purchase of the agricultural produce of Great Britain. In proportion as the quantity of Irish agricultural produce sent into England is reduced, the quantity of English manufactures sent to Ireland must be reduced, and the English manufacturer's means of purchasing any agricultural produce must contract accordingly; the price therefore would not rise, but the quantity consumed would diminish, and the effect would be to throw the English labourer who works for the Irish market, and the Irish who works for the English, both out of employment, to the destruction of them, the injury of their employers, and the general deterioration of the interests of both countries. All this may be shown, not merely by general reasoning, but by an appeal to facts. As the import of Irish produce into England has increased, so has the import of English manufactures into Ireland*.

The English and the Irish farmer, and every ~~other~~ class of the community, both in Great Britain and Ireland, should consider themselves, not as rivals, but as fellow-labourers in one common cause—as partners in the joint-stock company of the empire—as equally interested in promoting that general prosperity through which only particular prosperity can be secured to any portion of the community. To quote again from Mr. Burke,—“England and Ireland may flourish together. The world is large enough for us both. Let it be our care not to make ourselves too little for it.”

* The official value of the imports into Great Britain from Ireland for the four years ending 1821, was £7,117,452, and of the exports from Great Britain to Ireland, £5,338,838; for the four years ending in 1825, it was, imports from Ireland, £8,531,355; exports to Ireland, £7,048,936. No accounts have been kept of the trade between the two countries since the year last mentioned.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners were obliged to recur to dates as far back as 1821 and 1825, to ascertain the commercial relations between Ireland and England, because since the year 1825 the Custom House has ceased to keep a register of the exports from one country to the other. The two islands are no longer separate. These relations, we see, are ruinous to Ireland, and the evil nevertheless continues, although it is not known.

The great evils of Ireland result from the fact that the majority of the landowners are English, resident in Great Britain, and that they there consume the incomes which they derive from Ireland : the aggregate of these revenues may be estimated by the difference which exists between the imports and the exports. Each year, from 1821 to 1825, the average value of the imports into Great Britain was £7,800,000, and the aggregate of her receipts in payment was only £6,200,000. Ireland thus pays annually a tribute of £1,600,000 to Great Britain. The wish expressed by Mr. Burke, that these two islands should flourish together, is making little progress to its accomplishment.

SECTION XIV.

CONNECTED with the error that exists as to the effects produced in England by the introduction of Irish corn, or other agricultural produce, is a very common notion, that the migration of Irish labourers to Great Britain is injurious to the labourers there. To prove how much delusion there is in this respect, we pray leave to refer to a very valuable Report that has been made to us on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, by Mr. George Cornwall Lewis, one of our Assistant Commissioners. It shows that the Irish labourers who settle in towns in Great Britain do not cause a redundancy but supply a deficiency of labour, that they keep work going, not wages down, and that without them capital could not increase and fructify as it does to the general good of the community. All this is proved by one striking fact—wages are highest where the Irish are most numerous. Then as to the labourers who go to Great Britain at the time of harvest, it is notorious that the crops in many places could not be saved without their aid; the complaints, therefore, made of their “incursions,” as they are called, are equally unfounded and unjust.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners draw a comparison which in our opinion is not over just. In all times and in all places the inhabitants of the high lands have descended into the plains in harvest-time; in

England during hay-time, in France in the corn-season, and in other countries during the vintage ; but as soon as the harvest is over they return to their homes.

The inhabitants of the heights of the Alps and Pyrenees, leaving their wives and children at home, as soon as the snow comes, descend into the plains, where they follow the pursuits of schoolmasters, pedlars, and tinkers. In the spring they return to their homes on the mountains.

These changes among workmen have never been the subject of any complaint. But it is not so with the Irish ; they are driven by misery to the seaports. There the magistrates, in order to get rid of them, defray their passage to England, where these unhappy men arrive with their wives and children, destitute of the means of subsistence, without talents or industry, covered with rags and diseases, and throw themselves upon the public charity.

The farmers in England live in isolated habitations. Their barns and crops are thus exposed to the depredations of those who are reduced by despair to robbery. They have no other alternative, but to give shelter and food to these new comers. They endeavour therefore to obtain some compensation, by giving them the employment which belongs of right to the labourers of the soil.

SECTION XV.

STATE OF COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES IN IRELAND.

It was our intention to inquire relative to trade and manufactures, to the fisheries, and to mining; but it has not been possible for us to go into these subjects as we had wished, and to make a report within the time allotted to us upon remedial measures.

We may, however, observe that Ireland is peculiarly well situated for commercial intercourse with other countries by her geographical position and superior harbours, and that her indented coast, her lakes, and the number, size and character of her rivers give her extraordinary means of inland navigation, while her roads and materials for road-making are of the best description. It has been questioned whether Ireland possesses sufficient coals within herself for manufactures, but coals are now carried to Ireland so rapidly and at so little cost from the English collieries, that manufactures cannot now be prevented from spreading in Ireland by want of coals. What they are prevented by, is want of order, of peace, of obedience to the laws, and that security of property which never can exist until the general habits and condition of the people are thoroughly improved.

REMARKS.

The English have an undeniable claim to a full measure of native genius and originality, but they are not remarkable for their power of analysing. In the instance before us, these Commissioners have spent eighteen months in investigating the state of agriculture in Ireland; their Reports represent that country as being in the most hopeless condition; and in the conclusion of these same Reports they attribute the backward and deplorable state of manufactures and commerce to want of order, tranquillity, and obedience to the laws. It appears to us, however, that there is still something more wanting;—on one side, the raw materials for manufactures; and on the other, the means of subsistence for the workmen.

The first—materials for manufactures—can only be derived from the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms: to agriculture alone must we look for the two former.

The vegetable kingdom is composed of fruits (of which the grape, the most abundant of all, yields wine), of vegetables, roots and corn. The fruits and vegetables, or roots, such as the potato, the chief product of Ireland, do not admit of any hand-labour or manufacture.

Corn gives employment only to the miller, the baker and the brewer ; and this but partially, since the greatest part is consumed by the producers. The vegetable kingdom, in Europe, is also capable of producing flax and hemp, but this is only one of those exceptions which confirm the rule ; for few soils are capable of growing them, and, as they require a peculiar mode of cropping, an advanced state of agriculture is necessary for their cultivation.

Timber, which Providence has given us a hundredfold more than our wants require, is of too little value in proportion to its weight to admit of being transported from one place to another.*

The productions of the animal kingdom consist in Ireland principally of pigs, and the horses requisite for the transports of the country : the skins of these animals are not susceptible of any manufacture*. The climate of Ireland is unfavourable to the mulberry, which feeds silkworms. There are, in addition, cattle and sheep ; but as, with the exception of the consumption in Dublin and two or three other large towns, these animals are exported to England for the payment of Irish rents due to English landowners, their skins, wool and fat are manufactured in England.

The only other resources are those derived from the mineral kingdom. Lime, chalk, stone, or brick-

earth, are found everywhere. There remain the metals. As iron comprises nine-tenths of the value of all the worked metals, we limit our remarks to this article.

Shropshire was in possession of this branch of industry in England, because iron is there found in the neighbourhood of the coal; but in a corner of Wales coal has been found together with iron and limestone*,—three ingredients which are necessary in these works. The iron-works of Shropshire have therefore been in great part abandoned, and the Commissioners admit that coal-mines have not been discovered in Ireland†.

Supposing that a similar discovery were made in Ireland to that in Wales—these three ingredients together—and that the works might furnish employment for 200,000 families or 1,000,000 persons: this would only tend to increase the general misery; since the Commissioners admit that Ireland contains 8,000,000 inhabitants and produces food for only 5,000,000. The manufactures of foreign articles produce the same ill effect. The prosperity of hand-labour, manufactures, commerce and navigation, is therefore only a consequence of the prosperity of agriculture, which is the sole source of all wealth.

[* This is the case also in all the districts between Birmingham and Wolverhampton.—TRANSL.]

SECTION XVI.

MEASURES FOR THE RELIEF OF THE POOR.

WE now come to measures of direct relief for the poor. The English Poor Law Act of the forty-third of Elizabeth requires that provision should be made "for setting to work the children of all such, whose parents shall not, by the churchwardens and overseers, or the greater part of them, be thought able to keep and maintain their children; and also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and using no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by," and for "the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other being poor and not able to work."

The Poor Law Act for Scotland, after reciting "that charitie wald that the poor, aged, and impotent persons should be as necessarily provided as the vagabonds and strang beggars repressed, and that the aged, impotent, and poor people should have lodging and abiding-places throughout the realm to settle themselves intil," empowers certain persons to "tax and stent the hail inhabitants within the parish, according to the estimation of their substance, without exception of persons, to sic weekly charge and contribution as shall be thought expedient and sufficient to sustain the saids poor people."

The law as to the poor in England is universally carried into effect by local assessments; but not in Scotland, for the poor there are in general supported by voluntary con-

tributions, which are administered by officers known to the law and responsible to it.

We have shown by our Second Report that the institutions existing in Ireland for the relief of the poor are Houses of Industry, Infirmarys, Fever Hospitals, Lunatic Asylums, and Dispensaries; that the establishment of these, except as to Lunatic Asylums, is not compulsory, but dependent upon private subscriptions, or the will of Grand Juries; that there are but nine Houses of Industry in the whole country; that while the provision made for the sick poor in some places is extensive, it is in other places utterly inadequate; and that there is no general provision made for the aged, the impotent, or the destitute.

Much is certainly given in Ireland in private charity, but it is not given upon any organized system of relief; and the abundant alms which are bestowed, in particular by the poorer classes, unfortunately tend, as we have already observed, to encourage mendicancy with its attendant evils.

Upon the best consideration which we have been able to give to the whole subject, we think that a legal provision should be made, and rates levied as hereinafter mentioned, for the relief and support of incurable as well as curable lunatics, of idiots, epileptic persons, cripples, deaf and dumb, and blind poor, and all who labour under permanent bodily infirmities,—such relief and support to be afforded within the walls of public institutions; also for the relief of the sick poor in hospitals, infirmarys, and convalescent establishments, or by extern attendance and a supply of food as well as medicine, where the persons to be relieved are not in a state to be removed from home; also for the purpose of emigration, for the support of penitentiaries to which vagrants may be sent, and for the

maintenance of deserted children ; also towards the relief of aged and infirm persons, of orphans, of helpless widows with young children, of the families of sick persons, and of casual destitution.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners appear to us here again to have taken a false view of the subject. The majority of them are Protestants, and under the influence of prejudices which may be regarded as invincible in England. In order to explain our meaning, we must go some way back, and repeat what has been already often said.

In early times workmen and their families were slaves, and, whether the head of the family were idle or industrious, well or ill, living or dead, the family was always maintained. The Christians perceived the dangers to which the weakest portion of society would be exposed, on destroying this yoke of servitude, which however was at the same time a security. Hence arose in the middle ages that spirit of making gifts to the Church, and especially to the religious orders. The latter cleared and cultivated the land, erected buildings, and thus provided for all the fresh wants which this new organization introduced into society. It is unnecessary to comment here upon the spirit of pillage

of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which succeeded to the spirit of generosity that distinguished the fourteenth and fifteenth.

The evil is done; the poor have been despoiled by the confiscation of the property of the clergy. The Commissioners seek the remedy, and with good faith. They labour in a country where England, all-powerful, has for two centuries been making every effort to eradicate the Catholic religion, and has succeeded only in giving it new vigour. A large proportion of the soil consists of bog-land, heaths and uncultivated tracts. We shall not ask—Why not give this land to religious bodies conversant with agriculture, such as the Benedictines, the Bernardines, the Carthusians and the Trappists? We are aware of the period in which we write; but we say,—Why not allow them to purchase these lands, or permit those noble-minded men with whom Ireland abounds to purchase them for these religious orders, with the especial charge of maintaining the poor of all classes? No, the Commissioners propose, we see, *after the most attentive examination*, to levy a tax to meet the exigencies of the case, and this too after having previously recommended a multitude of taxes upon the landowners, whose insolvency they have proved.

SECTION XVII.

IN order to effect the several purposes we have stated, we recommend that there shall be powers vested in Poor Law Commissioners, as in England, for carrying into execution all such provisions as shall be made by law for the relief of the poor in Ireland, and that they shall be authorized to appoint Assistant Commissioners to act under their directions.

We propose that the Commissioners shall divide Ireland into relief districts; that they shall cause the lands of each to be surveyed and valued; that after the survey and valuation shall have been completed, the person or persons who shall have been employed for the purpose shall make a report to the Commissioners, specifying the names of all proprietors of houses or lands within the district, and of all lessees and occupiers thereof, whether such persons hold directly from the head landlord or not, and the annual value of such houses and lands respectively; that the report be lodged at such place within the district as the Commissioners shall appoint, that public notice be given thereof, and that the same shall stand and be affirmed, and be final and conclusive as to the matter of it, unless objections be lodged thereto before a certain time, to be fixed by the Commissioners; that if objections be lodged, the same shall be heard by the assistant barrister of the county in which the district, or a certain part thereof, shall be situated, at a special sessions to be holden for that purpose; that he shall have power to vary or affirm the report; that what he shall do shall be final, unless objections shall be lodged thereto within the time

the peace before a particular period ; and that if objections be so lodged, the same shall be heard and disposed of by the Court of Review, as in the case of objections to the presentments of local Commissioners of Improvement.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners have surely not reflected upon the measures they propose. What ! before giving relief to the poor, it is necessary to make a general survey of the land, a valuation of its revenues, houses, implements, and in short of every species of property, or a registration of lands ! And we know in Europe what registrations are, since the results frequently differ so much, that before one valuation is finished it is necessary to recommence another. Moreover, the expense of this preparatory labour would be ten times the outlay that ever will be incurred for the poor. The Commissioners are wrong in instancing England, for that country has never undergone a general valuation*. The poor's-rates are proportioned to the government taxes, and the latter are fixed upon the declaration of private persons, who are liable to a very heavy fine if the Treasury discovers any incorrectness in their declaration.

[* The surveys for the Tithe Commutation and the Poor Law Acts very nearly approached a general valuation.—TRANSL.]

SECTION XVIII.

WE recommend that there shall be a local Board of Guardians for each district; that such Board be elected by the rate-payers; and that the rate-payers shall be the proprietors, lessees and occupiers stated in the surveyor's report as finally settled as aforesaid, and their successors, and that the election shall take place at such time and subject to such regulations as the Poor Law Commissioners shall appoint for the purpose.

We further recommend that a certain number of the Board do go out each year, and that other persons be elected in their stead, as in the first instance; and that the list of rate-payers be revised and altered from year to year, as may be necessary from change in occupation or interest in lands.

We recommend that the Board of Guardians shall have the direction of all such institutions for the relief of the poor within the district as shall be supported by local rate as hereafter mentioned, and that it shall be their duty to cause them to be duly upheld and maintained; and if any district shall refuse or neglect to elect a Board of Guardians, or if the Board elected shall refuse or neglect to act, we recommend that the Poor Law Commissioners shall be authorized to appoint Assistant Commissioners for such district with suitable salaries, and that the persons so appointed shall have the powers of a Board of Guardians, and shall be paid their salaries by a rate on the district for which they act.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners, in this section, again forget that Ireland is Catholic, and that in Catholic countries the natural guardian of the poor is the curate, who is unmarried ; that, although the government in Ireland does not allow him any aid for his ministry, he will still be gratuitously guardian of the poor ; and that if the Commissioners succeed in their efforts, in making the parish produce more than it has hitherto produced, the poor will have their quota of this surplus ; that the guardians, receiving only money, excite murmurs and inspire distrust, because the money realized goes first to pay their own salaries ; that the curate never asks for money, but at one person's house he asks for vegetables or potatoes, at another for corn, at a third house for fuel, clothing, etc., and of the richest persons, soup. He never comes to the rich man without asking for assistance, and never visits the poor man without giving it ; and it is right that the distribution should be committed to him, since it is he who imposes equally upon the poor and upon the rich the strict exercises of religion and severe morality. But men brought up in England, Catholics or Protestants, speak always of subjecting to legislative interference—that is to say, to force—that

which public virtue in Catholic countries has always succeeded in accomplishing by persuasion. No Catholic country has ever required to make laws for the relief of poverty, and in all times there have been workmen burdened with families, and unable to maintain them from want of employment, sickness, or premature death.

SECTION XIX.

WE propose that there shall be so many asylums in Ireland for the relief and support of lunatics and idiots, and for the support and instruction of the deaf and dumb and blind poor, so many depôts for receiving persons willing to emigrate, and so many penitentiaries for vagrants, as the Poor Law Commissioners shall appoint; that these several establishments shall be national; and that for maintaining them, and for other purposes hereinafter mentioned, the Commissioners shall be authorized to assess a national rate upon the whole of Ireland, and to require the Board of Guardians of each district to raise a proportional share thereof, regard being had to the annual value of the property of each district.

SECTION XX.

WE further recommend that there shall be an institution in each district for the support and relief of cripples and persons afflicted with epilepsy, or other permanent disease, also an infirmary, hospital and convalescent establishment, and such number of dispensaries as may be necessary ; and that the district shall be bound to provide for these several institutions by local assessment.

REMARKS.

Nations, as well as individuals, eventually lose the traditions of what they have been, when they wander from the paths which their fathers have followed. There has existed in every part of Europe, and in some states there still exist, asylums for lunatics, deaf and dumb, impotent persons, epileptic and convalescent patients, similar to those which the Commissioners propose in the two preceding sections. Have they been supported by rates and taxes ? Certainly not. They would not have existed for any length of time, since the governments have not only abstained from assisting them, but have confiscated the territorial property upon which their existence depended. How, then

have they been founded? Charitable landowners have granted to charitable ecclesiastics bog-lands and heaths, and the Order of St. Jean de Dieu was instituted. This order still exists in one part of Europe, and there also still exist bog-lands and heaths. Let only three of these monks be called, and every proprietor would come forward to lend his horses and his agricultural implements, and every labourer his assistance, in order to restore that admirable social structure which the confiscators have annihilated.

SECTION XXI.

WE have mentioned emigration as one of the purposes to which the national rate should contribute, but as the United Kingdom must be benefited in a very great degree, and particularly in point of revenue, by the improvement which extensive emigration coming in aid of a general course of amelioration cannot fail to produce in Ireland, we submit that one half of the expense should be borne by the general funds of the empire. And, considering the particular benefit which Ireland will derive from it, and especially those landlords whose estates may thus be relieved from a starving population, we propose that the other half be defrayed partly by the national rate, and partly by the owners of the lands from which the emigrants remove, or from which they may have been ejected

within the preceding twelve months, provided that they previously resided thereupon for a period of three years. We also propose that lessees who shall have sublet to the emigrants shall be considered the landlords liable to the charge; and that the contribution thus payable by the landlord shall be added to the portion of the national rate allocated to each district; and that the district at large, in case of non-payment by the landlord, shall be answerable for it. We are of opinion, however, that the contributions from landlords should be required only with reference to tenants in rural districts, and not from the landlords of tenants in market towns; we therefore propose that the national rate shall bear the full half of the expense incurred by the emigration of the latter class.

REMARKS.

Montesquieu, Voltaire, and on the other side all the theologians of the English Church, have declared that celibacy, by impeding the increase of population, is opposed to the laws of God. But here we see a body of Commissioners, belonging to these two schools, which moreover agree only upon this point, coming forward to declare that a Catholic country, in which the priesthood consists entirely of men living in celibacy, is burdened with over-population, and proposing means to relieve it of a portion of this population. No words can ex-

press the melancholy reflection which such an idea excites. We have seen in the course of the Inquiry, that those who emigrated were the youngest, the most industrious, and the most laborious classes ; and we cannot conceive what a community can gain by ridding itself of the most valuable portion of its members, and retaining the burden of the aged, the women and children, whom those younger members of society supported. As the latter are the only class who emigrate, we should have imagined that, for the good of Ireland, the Commissioners would have discouraged emigration. Far from this being the case, we have seen in the preceding sections, that, for the establishment of hospitals and asylums, only a local tax has been proposed, which would not and could not be paid ; whilst, for the encouragement of emigration, the imposition of a tax is recommended, in which Great Britain would participate, and this tax would be paid.

The only possible resource, in the unhappy state of Ireland, is one partially expressed in the following section.

SECTION XXII.

WE further propose, that the Poor Law Commissioners shall be authorized to borrow monies from the Exchequer Bills' Commissioners of the United Kingdom, for the purposes of emigration, or for defraying the expenses of any buildings that they may think necessary to have erected in Ireland, and to secure the repayment thereof by a charge upon the national rate.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners here propose the only remedy which in our opinion would tend to lessen, nay even to terminate, the evils under which Ireland labours,—namely, to transport capital into that country; not, as the Commissioners propose, with a view to favour emigration, but on the contrary, to impede it, and to give employment to those who would have emigrated. If this capital were employed in reclaiming bog-lands and waste tracts, and cultivating them in farms of two hundred acres, Ireland would, in less than four or five years, furnish subsistence proportioned to its population, and there would no longer be such cases of distress and misery to occupy public attention: they would disappear in a natural course of things, or at least a great proportion of them.

SECTION XXIII.

WE propose that arrangements for carrying on emigration shall be made between the Commissioners of Poor Laws and the Colonial Office, and that all poor persons whose circumstances shall require it shall be furnished with a free passage, and with the means of settling themselves in an approved British colony to which convicts are *not* sent. We propose too, that the means of emigration shall be provided for the destitute of every class and description who are fit subjects for emigration; that depôts shall be established, where all who desire to emigrate may be received in the way we shall mention; that those who are fit for emigration be there selected for the purpose, and that those who are not, shall be provided for under the directions of the Poor Law Commissioners.

REMARKS.

A false theory admits only of false means of execution. The Commissioners, for the emigration they propose, here speak of depôts—forgetting they have previously stated that not one exists in Ireland, and that the money necessary to erect them would be far better employed in cultivating the land, and procuring better crops.

SECTION XXIV.

WE also propose that the laws with respect to vagrancy be altered. At present, persons convicted of vagrancy may be transported for seven years ; our recommendation is, that penitentiaries shall be established, to which vagrants when taken up shall be sent ; that they be charged with the vagrancy before the next quarter sessions, and, if convicted, shall be removed as free labourers to such colony, not penal, as shall be appointed for them by the Colonial Department ; but that the wages of all able-bodied adults amongst them shall be attached in the colony until the expenses of their passage be defrayed, and that those who may be unfit for removal to a colony shall remain for such time in the penitentiary, and be there kept to such work, as the court shall by law be authorized to appoint. "

N.B. By such provisions as are suggested in the two last sections, all poor persons who cannot find the means of support at home, and who are willing to live by their labour abroad, will be furnished with the means of doing so, and with intermediate support, if fit to emigrate, and if not, will be otherwise provided for ; while the idle, who would rather beg than labour, will be taken up, and the evil of vagrancy suppressed.

REMARKS.

The Commissioners forget that it has been previously proved, that the laws respecting vagrancy could not be put in execution for want of agents and of buildings, and that it would require a great many years to construct penitentiaries of modern invention. With respect to non-penal colonies, as they are called, these would be insufficient to give occupation and subsistence to that multitude of vagrants with which it is proposed to people them. It appears that Great Britain and Ireland are better able to fulfil this task than any colony.

SECTION XXV.

It appears from the evidence before us, that the poor who have occasion to borrow small sums of money have in general to raise them at exorbitant interest, and that when they are obliged to purchase any necessaries they stand in need of on credit, they are compelled to pay double, or nearly double, the market price; we therefore recommend that there shall be a loan-fund established in each district, and that it be administered according to such regulations as the Commissioners shall approve.

REMARKS.

Nothing can be more humane and wise than the proposal to lend small sums to the poor without usury, and even without interest, to enable them to purchase food at the current market price; but this measure is always regarded as a novel one, and unsupported by any experience to ensure its success! A religious order in each district would not sell the food which they gathered in at twice the market price, nor even at its marketable value,—they would give it. This is a fact which has been known for ages in the countries where these orders have been supported.

SECTION XXVI.

By the Act which “establishes Regulations for preventing Contagious Diseases in Ireland,” parishes are authorized to appoint officers of health, who are empowered and required to apprehend all idle poor persons, men, women, or children, and all persons who may be found begging or seeking relief, or strolling or wandering as vagabonds within any parish or place, and to direct and cause all such idle persons, beggars, and vagabonds, to be removed and to be conveyed out of and from such parish and place, in such manner and to such place as the nature of the case may require; and any justice of the peace may upon his own view, or upon the complaint of any churchwarden or officer of health, commit any such strolling beggar or vagabond, or idle poor person, to any Bridewell or House of Correction, or other public place of confinement, for any time not exceeding twenty-four hours previous to their removal or departure out of such parish. Although the Act thus provides for the apprehension and removal of beggars, vagabonds, and idle poor persons, men, women, and children, it provides no place to which they may be removed, and therefore it is of no effect.

We recommend that the provisions of the Act be revised; that the powers which it confers upon vestries be transferred to the Board of Guardians of each district, and that officers of health shall be elected by them for every parish within their jurisdiction; that it shall be a further duty of the officers of health to grant tickets of

bitants of their parish who may, on behalf of themselves, or of themselves and their families, demand such tickets from them, and also, where necessary, to procure means for passing such persons to the depôt; that it shall also be their duty to pass all persons whom they may take up under the provisions of the Act already referred to, to a penitentiary; that it shall also be their duty to cause all foundlings to be sent to nurse to some remote place, under such regulations as Parliament may think proper to appoint, and when of a suitable age, to cause them to be removed to an emigration depôt, from whence they may be sent to an institution in some British colony, which shall be appointed for receiving such children, and training and apprenticing them to useful trades or occupations; and that they shall be authorized to provide in like manner for all orphan children; and that the funds for these purposes be raised by local assessment.

We further recommend, that provision shall be made at each depôt for receiving such persons as may present tickets of admission to it from any officers of health; that such persons shall be there supported and set to work until the period of emigration arrives, subject to such regulations as the Poor Law Commissioners shall appoint for the purpose; and that, if any such persons shall be found from age or infirmity unable to emigrate, they shall be provided for in such manner as the Commissioners shall direct. We recommend that any persons who may enter the emigration depôt, and who may afterwards withdraw from it without discharging such expenses as may have been incurred with respect to them, or who shall refuse to emigrate, shall be subjected to the provisions we

REMARKS.

In this, as in the preceding Sections, the Commissioners forget they have before proved that there exist no such depôts as they allude to. It seems therefore, that before appointing all the forms under which mendicants who propagate contagious diseases should enter, it would be necessary for these buildings to be erected ; and as they propose only local taxes for this purpose, which no one is able to pay, all their projects of legislation are for the present entirely visionary.

If it were permitted, there would be erected, without the imposition of any tax, ten monasteries, where all these miserable people would meet with hospitality, before the taxes had afforded the means of building a single depôt, which in fact is only a prison destined for the innocent.

SECTION XXVII.

MEASURES RECOMMENDED FOR INDIGENT PERSONS.

BESIDES these several provisions, we think, as we have stated, that provisions should be made by law towards the relief of the aged and infirm, orphans, helpless widows with young children, and destitute persons in general.

There is, however, a difference of opinion amongst us as to the best means of so doing; some think the necessary funds should be provided in part by the public through a national rate, and in part by private associations, which, aided by the public, should be authorized to establish mendicity-houses and alms-houses, and to administer relief to the indigent at their own dwellings, subject, however, to the superintendence and control of the Poor Law Commissioners; while others think the whole of the funds should be provided by the public, one portion by a national rate, and another by a local rate, and should be administered, as in England, by the Board of Guardians of each district.

We give in the Appendix (H.) to this Report the reasons stated for each opinion; the majority of us think that the plan of voluntary associations, aided by the public in the way we shall subsequently mention, should be tried in the first instance.

REMARKS.

We must let the reader into the secret of the difference of opinion which exists among the Commissioners. They consist almost entirely of Protestants, and the few who are Catholic, not having lived in a free Catholic country, are unacquainted with the resources which an unmarried priesthood offers to society in favour of the poor. It is therefore no matter of surprise that they all agree in not engaging the services of the priesthood in

ever do not agree respecting the laity whom they would employ. The majority of the Commissioners wish to retain for the Protestants the great influence which they have hitherto enjoyed, and desire that the associations which shall make voluntary contributions should dispose of the public contributions. But in Ireland the only rich classes are the Protestants, who are in sole possession of the land and of all government places; they alone, therefore, are able to make voluntary contributions.

The minority of the Commissioners, on the contrary, desire to counterbalance the influence of the Protestants by that of the Catholics, of whom in fact the country may be said to consist; and this minority requires that the contribution levied upon the public should be placed in the hands of guardians of the poor, elected in the new method, which has been explained, and which is already in operation in England.

We have no further remarks to offer upon the propositions of the Commissioners until we come to Section XXXIV; the Parliament having rejected all these recommendations, and organized municipal authorities, in whom all the power is centred, under the control of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

SECTION XXVIII.

MODE OF LEVYING THE POOR'S-RATES.

WE recommend that the Board of Guardians of each district shall hold its first meeting at such time as the Commissioners shall appoint, and shall then prepare an estimate of the several sums which will be required within the ensuing year for the several purposes for which the district shall be bound to provide ; that the estimate shall be transmitted to the Commissioners, who shall have authority to vary or affirm it, and to add to it the portion of the national rate which the district ought to bear ; that the Commissioners shall then make an order on the Board of Guardians to levy a rate for the purposes of the estimate, as varied or affirmed and added to as aforesaid ; that the Board of Guardians do levy a rate accordingly ; that the same shall be charged as follows, that is to say, one-third on the occupier of each house or tenement of land above the value of 5*l.* in respect of his occupation, and the remaining two-thirds in respect of the beneficial interest therein ; the whole to be payable in the first instance by the occupier, who, if he be not the proprietor, shall be reprimed as to the two-thirds payable in respect of the beneficial interest as follows ; that is to say, if the rate be 1*s.* in the pound on the annual value, he shall be entitled to deduct 8*d.* in the pound from whatever rent he pays to his immediate landlord ; and if such landlord be a lessee, he shall be entitled to deduct the like poundage from any rent which may be payable by him, and so upward where

there are several lessees. We further, however, recommend that, if the immediate occupier be a tenant-at-will or from year to year, and hold a tenement of less value than 5*l.* a year, he shall be entitled to deduct the whole rate from his own immediate landlord, who shall not be entitled to deduct the 4*d.* in the pound payable in respect of the occupation from the person, if any, under whom he may hold.

SECTION XXIX.

WE recommend that the Poor Law Commissioners shall be authorized to allot the existing infirmaries and other buildings erected at the public expense for the relief of the poor, to such districts as they may think proper, charging such districts for the same, in aid of any other districts that may have contributed to the expense of erecting them, such sum as shall appear equitable; and also that they be authorized to use such of them as they may think proper as national institutions.

SECTION XXX.

WE have anxiously considered the practicability of making the rate payable out of property of every description ; but the difficulty of reaching personal property in general by direct taxation, except through very inquisitorial proceedings, has obliged us to determine on recommending that the land should be the fund charged in the first instance with it.

Having, however, had reason to believe that the landed property of Ireland was so deeply incumbered that a rate of any great extent would absorb the whole income of some of the nominal proprietors if it were to bear the entire charge, we thought it right to communicate with the masters of the Court of Chancery upon the subject, and from the facts which they stated to us, it appears that the average rent of land is under 1*l*. 2*s*. 6*d*. the Irish acre, being equal to about 14*s*. 2*d*. the English ; that the gross landed rental of Ireland amounts to less than 10,000,000*l*., that expenses and losses cannot be taken at less than 10 per cent, nor the annuities and the interest of charges payable out of land at less than 3,000,000*l*. a year ; so that the total net income, as already stated, is less than 6,000,000*l*.

We therefore think that the incumbrancer should be called upon to bear a proportional share of the burden. The security of his investment is bound up with the productiveness of the land and the well-being of its inhabitants ; and if, in order to insure those objects, an expenditure becomes necessary, such as we have pointed out,

those who profit by the increased safety of their funds (who, in point of fact, receive, in many instances, nearly the whole rent, and may therefore be almost considered as landlords) have no right to complain, if the individual, who perhaps receives but a minute portion of the rent, be not made liable for taxation as affecting the whole. The rate of interest in Ireland is six per cent., a rate which in the present times can only be obtained from distressed landlords. It will be in the power of persons now receiving that rate of interest, if indisposed to let their loans remain out on their present security, when charged with the proposed incumbrance, to call in the principal at any time. But should they feel disposed to do so, they could not easily find an investment for the money again to better advantage.

Then as to incumbrancers who receive a less rate of interest; if they choose to call in their money rather than allow the rate out of it, and the borrower be content to pay the difference rather than repay it, a new arrangement can be made between the parties, by which a higher rate of interest may be given, so as to make up the amount of the rate; for we do not contemplate such a rate as would exceed the difference between the interest obtained on good security in general and six per cent.

We therefore recommend that persons paying any annual charge in respect of any beneficial interest in land shall be authorized to deduct the same sum in the pound thereout that he pays to the poor-rate, as in the case already put of successive lessees.

SECTION XXXI.

WE recommend provision to be made that the original rate shall never be raised by more than one-fifth, unless for the purpose of emigration, save by the authority of Parliament.

SECTION XXXII.

WE now come to the course to be pursued with respect to voluntary associations.

We propose that the Poor Law Commissioners shall frame rules for the government of all associations that may become connected with them; that each association shall before a certain period in each year transmit to the Commissioners an estimate of its probable expenditure and of its funds for the year ensuing, specifying the particulars thereof; and that the Commissioners be authorized to award such grant to it as they shall think proper.

We propose that the Commissioners shall be authorized to advance for any voluntary association, out of the national rate, the whole sum which may be necessary for the building and outfit of a mendicity or almshouse for any parish or parishes; and that if such mendicity or almshouse be not afterwards duly maintained, the sum advanced shall be repaid by the parish or parishes for which the same shall be established, by four instalments, such instalments to be levied by the Board of Guardians, and the amount paid over to the Central Board, to the credit of the national rate.

SECTION XXXIII.

WE recommend that the respective Boards of Guardians, and also all charitable associations which may be aided by the Commissioners, shall be required to conform to all such regulations as the Commissioners shall from time to time make for their guidance, and to account annually before them, or as they shall appoint.

SECTION XXXIV.

MEASURES FOR PREVENTING THE INORDINATE USE OF
ARDENT SPIRITS.

THERE are general matters connected with the objects of our Commission, to which we now beg leave to advert.

Among the many causes of Irish misery which have been brought under our notice, one of the most prolific, assuredly the most pernicious, and, we fear, the most difficult to be reached by any direct legislation, is the inordinate use of ardent spirits—its baneful effects are felt by every class. So far back as the year 1760, petitions were presented to the Irish House of Commons from the manufacturers of the liberties in the city of Dublin, sheermen and dyers, workers in silk, in linen, woollen, &c., complaining of cheap spirits, and of the increased number of dram-shops, and attributing the decay of trade to the then greatly increased use of them—“making artisans idle and dissolute;” “inducing men not to work half their time;” to

enter into combinations to enhance the price of labour, “which prevents petitioners bringing goods to market on proper terms.”

N.B. The Commissioners, after having referred to the various laws passed to prevent the retail sale of spirits, prove that these laws have not been carried into execution. They state that the subject is full of difficulty, from the apprehension that any attempt to correct the abuse by means of increased duties would be met by increased illicit distillation, and thus the revenue be injured, without any corresponding benefit being produced to morality. They finally recommend that the subject may be fully inquired into by competent legal authority, and express their hope, that whatever decision may be come to, no question of merely fiscal policy may be suffered to interfere with the paramount object of reforming the moral habits of the country.

REMARKS.

All the evidence received in this Inquiry proves that the great consumption of spirits is a consequence of the state of exhaustion to which those obliged to labour are reduced; and that indeed spirits have become the strongest nourishment which they can take. Experience has proved this fact in England; wherever food has been improved, and where bread has been substituted for potatoes, the consumption of spirituous liquors has diminished in proportion to the population, although the tax upon them has been reduced.

SECTION XXXV.

ADMINISTRATION OF CHARITABLE BEQUESTS.

Our attention has also been called to the constitution of the Board of Charitable Bequests. It consists of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, the Lord Chancellor, the twelve Judges, the Judge of the Prerogative Court, the Provost of Trinity College, the Dean of St. Patrick's, and the incumbents of the several parishes within the city and liberties of Dublin. A Board so numerous cannot be efficient for business, nor is a Board of so exclusive a character, although we are convinced that it acts most impartially, calculated to give perfect satisfaction in administering funds created by the charity of persons of all religious persuasions.

We therefore recommend that the powers of the Board shall be transferred to the Poor Law Commissioners, and that they and their Assistant Commissioners be also invested with all such powers for the purposes of inquiry as have been given to the Commissioners for inquiring into the state of charities in England.

REMARKS.

This Section may give the reader an idea of the legislation which the Protestants have imposed on Ireland. Where is the Catholic, who, wishing to bequeath charitable legacies, would entrust their administration to Protestant archbishops and bishops, to the Chancellor and the fifteen judges, all of whom are Protestants?

SECTION XXXVI.

MEASURES RECOMMENDED FOR THE APPROPRIATION
OF TITHES.

It has been suggested to us, that in the event of any permanent settlement of the tithe question being effected by Parliament, upon whatever principle that settlement should be based as affecting the political part of the question, it might be practicable, without prejudice to any class of persons, to create a national fund that might be made available towards the charitable purpose, for which we think that a national rate must be raised, and which would render such rate much less burthensome than it would otherwise be to the country.

The tithe composition payable for the whole titheable land of Ireland amounts to about 665,000*l.* a year; of this about 555,000*l.* is for ecclesiastical, 110,000*l.* for lay tithe.

The highest value set upon tithe composition has been sixteen years' purchase.

The whole tithe composition, purchased at sixteen years' purchase, would amount to 10,640,000*l.*

A Government annuity of 352,000*l.*, sold at the present price of three per cent. consols, would produce something more than 10,640,000*l.*

Thus, if the Government purchased up the tithe composition, it would pay for it 10,640,000*l.*, and it could raise this sum by the sale of a perpetual annuity of 352,000*l.*

Therefore, if the state purchased the tithe composition, and then vested it in the Poor Law Commissioners, as a

fund for the relief of the poor, charged with an annuity equal to that which the state had to grant in order to raise the money for purchasing it, there would be a surplus of 313,000*l.* a year applicable to the purposes of the national rate we have recommended; while the 10,640,000*l.* might be invested in the purchase of rent charges in Ireland, which would tend to reduce the interest of money, and enable landlords advantageously to pay off incumbrances upon their estates.

The gain, it will be observed, would result entirely from the difference in value between a Government annuity and tithe composition; the former being worth about thirty years' purchase, and the latter sixteen.

It would be foreign to our duties to express any opinion upon the disputed political principles which are at present involved in the tithe question. Without attempting to do so, we think ourselves warranted in submitting the above suggestions as tending to a fiscal arrangement which promises benefit to the country.

REMARKS.

The House of Commons has adopted the idea of the Commissioners, of securing to the English Church the same revenue which it enjoyed by the existing tithe. This met with the greatest opposition from the House of Lords and from the English Church, whom this measure deprives of the chances of increase of tithes by the improvement of agri-

culture. Nevertheless this portion of the act has passed ; but that which destined the surplus to the religious education of the people, according to the respective religious tenets of the various classes, has been rejected most decidedly, because a portion of the produce of the tithes would be appropriated, according to this plan, to educate Catholics. The appropriation of this surplus has not yet been made.

SECTION XXXVII.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON THE HABITS OF THE WORKING CLASSES, AND THE MEANS OF IMPROVING THEM.

WE have now proposed such remedial measures as we hope will tend to ameliorate the general condition of the Irish poor ; but, whatever may be their tendency, their efficacy, under Providence, must depend mainly upon those who possess power and influence in the country. It is only through these that the poor can be put into proper courses of industry, taught the value of comforts, or animated to exertions to procure them. In proportion as such persons are raised high, they have high duties to perform ; they are endowed with wealth and intelligence, not as means of self-indulgence, or for effecting any sordid object of ambition, but as trusts for the good of their fellow-creatures, and which they administer under an awful responsibility. We earnestly hope that this may be felt

and remembered by all who are elevated above the poor, and that they may act accordingly.

Those who are uncivilized cannot civilize themselves; it requires external aid to enable them to improve.

It is shown in the Report of Mr. Lewis, that the Irish poor in Great Britain derive little or no good from increased earnings; but, on the contrary, are sometimes injured by them, unless some superintending care be extended to them, and that if there be, a marked improvement takes place in their mode of life. The following extracts from it are particularly deserving of attention.

“In all the towns of England and Scotland where the Irish have settled, they inhabit the cheapest dwellings which can be procured; and thus they are collected in the lowest, dampest, dirtiest, most unhealthy, and ruinous parts of the town. In Liverpool and Manchester very many of them inhabit cellars, which are frequently dark, confined, and wet. In the Scotch towns there are not many inhabited cellars; but the rooms in the narrow closes of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Greenock are darker and smaller, and apparently less fitted for the residence of human beings, than even the cellars of the large towns of Lancashire. In these dwellings an Irish family usually occupies a room, or at most two rooms; and frequently, in addition to their own numbers, they take in a single man or woman, or a widow with children, as lodgers. It rarely happens that they rent an entire house or cottage. They have likewise a practice, to a great extent, of living in lodging-houses, in which single beds are let by the week or the night, and large numbers are crowded together in the same room. The state of these houses is usually wretched in the ex-

want of the commonest articles of furniture, the uncleanly habits of the inmates themselves, and the numbers which, without distinction of age or sex, are closely crowded together, they are frequently the means of generating and communicating infectious disease."

"It sometimes happens, likewise, that they retain in the English and Scotch towns the practice which they had learnt in their own country, of keeping pigs in the house. For the most part their rooms are nearly destitute of furniture, and they lie on the ground, the whole family frequently sleeping in the same bed. Many details will be found in the evidence, as to the practice of the Irish of crowding themselves into narrow spaces, particularly in the testimony of the medical gentlemen, who in most cases had made a complete and close inspection of the worst parts of the large towns at the time when the cholera prevailed in this country."

"With respect to *food*, the Irish for the most part use in Great Britain the same diet to which they had been accustomed in their own country. This food, it is scarcely necessary to say, is potatoes and milk, both for breakfast and dinner; the latter meal being occasionally seasoned with a herring, and more rarely with bacon or salt pork."

"On the whole, it appears that, to a considerable extent, the Irish labourers who settle in Great Britain do not increase their comforts, or improve their style of living, in proportion to the increase of their incomes; that they have a fixed standard of existence, little superior to that which they observed in their own country; and that everything beyond the sum which enables them to live in this manner is spent in drinking. Persons not reconciled by habit to the plain and meagre food and the confined lodgings in

which the Irish acquiesce, would imagine that an increase of wages would necessarily lead to an increase of comforts. This, however, is not the fact; the additional earnings are spent in obtaining, not comforts, or even necessities, but luxuries, and luxuries of immediate consumption, and productive of very short-lived gratification. A large number of the labouring Irish in the manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Scotland spend their earnings in nearly the following manner:—On the Saturday night, when they receive their wages, they first pay the score at the shop from which they procure nearly all their articles of food, and their rent, if their room or lodging is taken by the week; and, when their debts are thus paid, they go on drinking spirits as long as the remnant of their wages holds out. On the Monday morning they are penniless; and they then begin a fresh score at the shop for the ensuing week, which is paid off on the following Saturday, and so on in succession.”

“But although a large part of the Irish settlers in Great Britain retain their former habits of life unaltered, and others are deteriorated by their change of abode, and the new relations in which they are placed, yet there are many on whom a beneficial influence is exercised, and whose character and habits are improved. In general, the example of the native working classes does not exercise as powerful an influence on the Irish settlers as might have been anticipated. In their dress and personal appearance, however, they usually make a considerable improvement; the example of the natives being the motive, and the increased earnings affording the means. This is particularly observed in the schools and in factories, where the Irish children, after a short attendance,

soon are able to assimilate their outward appearance to that of others, however ragged and dirty they may have been at the beginning. Mr. Redman, a visiting overseer of the poor of the township of Manchester, after stating that the example of the Irish does not operate to any extent on the English, proceeds to remark, that 'he would rather say, if anything, that the influence of English on the sensible part of the Irish has been to improve *them*; the Irish have gained more in the improvement of their habits than the English have lost by their association with them. I have observed,' he continues, 'in Mr. Braidley's Sunday-school, where about 2000 children regularly attend, that the Irish children, who are dirty and ill-clad at first, after some time improve, and are lost in the crowd; and we never find English children descend to the level from which the Irish have come: the Irish rise, the English never fall. I was for nineteen years in a responsible situation in Mr. Murray's mill, and had the taking-in and giving-out of the work. When I was there, I observed that the Irish improved by associating with the work-people: they became a by-word, and were scouted at if they did not clean themselves and behave like others.'

"I do think," says Dr. Scott (the Roman Catholic bishop at Glasgow), 'there is a difference between those who come from Ireland and the children of Irish born in this country; those brought up from their infancy in Glasgow appear to be much more tidy and cleanly in their dress and persons than those of the same class of life who are grown up before they come from Ireland to this country. I have known several instances of parents returning to Ireland in their old age, from a desire of being buried at home, and taking with them their children reared in

this country ; the old people remained in Ireland, but the children said they disliked the habits and customs in Ireland, and returned again to Scotland in a very few months, and sent part of their earnings here to support their aged parents at home.'

“The regular employment which the Irish settlers find, either in the factories or in unskilled labour, has likewise a beneficial effect in producing habits of steadiness, and keeping them from the various demoralizing pursuits which idleness too often suggests. Many of the Irish in their own country being idle, first from necessity, and afterwards idle through choice ; and having been originally unable to obtain work, afterwards do not seek it.'

“The chief improvement visible in the condition of the Irish settlers in Great Britain is when they live in the neighbourhood of country factories, and are thus placed under the immediate control of their master or his manager. Here they inhabit well-built houses, belonging to the manufacturer himself, who has an interest in the good state of his workmen, who can enforce cleanly and decent habits, and can prevent several families from herding together in one dwelling ; and under these circumstances, as may be seen at Hyde and Dukinfield, near Manchester, and several of the country factories in the West of Scotland, there is a marked improvement in their mode of life. But where speculators have built small houses in bad situations, without proper conveniences, who do not attempt to prevent the accumulation of persons, or even encourage it for the sake of ensuring the rent, and have no check on the tenants, there the Irish settlers retain their old habits unchanged. An illustration of this difference is afforded not only by comparing the condition of

the Irish in Hyde and Dukinfield with those in Manchester, but also with those in Stayley Bridge in the immediate neighbourhood, where the Irish, having been left to shift for themselves, have taken possession of low, confined and unwholesome tenements, which in some cases have been built for their express accommodation. *Everything connected with the state of the Irish in Great Britain shows that their mode of life is very slowly and very slightly improved, unless some civilizing influence descends upon them from above, some external moving force independent of their own volition, as of masters, employers, superintendents, education, municipal regulations, etc. Wherever they are untouched by any influence of this kind, they appear for the most part either to remain the same, or even to deteriorate, whatever may be the amount of their earnings."*

It is very gratifying to us to add the following testimony to the character of the Irish labourers in England, which we take from the evidence of Mr. James Holmes of Birmingham, and which is given in Mr. Lewis's Report.

"The Irish labourers will work any time; the generality are very industrious and very honest. I have some who worked for me ten years, and I never knew anything against their honesty; they are much trusted about houses, and there are no complaints against them. If one among them is detected in a petty theft, the others will avoid him. I consider them very valuable labourers, and we could not do without them. By treating them kindly, they will do anything for you. I would trust them in anything about my house. Before I came to Birmingham, I could not bear the thoughts of an Irishman; now I would sooner have an Irishman than an Englishman for a labourer. An Englishman could not do the work they

do: 'When you push them, they have a willingness to oblige which the English have not; they would die under anything before they would be beat; they would go at hard work till they drop, before a man should excel them. They show as much ingenuity and skill as the same class of the English; they require more looking after; they talk more at work; they don't require more instructing than the English; they only require more looking after to keep them to the collar.'

This shows what may be done with the Irish of the humbler class by looking after them and treating them with kindness: "By treating them kindly they will do anything for you." Such is the evidence, not of an ardent Irishman, who might be carried away by the impulse of strong national feelings, but of a cool, honest, English tradesman, who "could not bear the thoughts of an Irishman" before he had experience of what the nature of an Irishman was.

But it is not in England only that we see the happy effects that may be produced upon the Irish of the labouring class by attention to them; there are in Ireland landlords who think of their tenants, and whose estates appear as green spots in a desert.

We must here observe that absentee landlords may in some degree compensate for their non-residence by putting in their place and stead active agents, who will feel that it is their duty not merely to compel the tenant to pay his rent, but to take care that he may be enabled to make it.

There are such agents in Ireland; and where there are, the tenants are comfortable, and the landlord's rent is secure.

The employment of agricultural stewards too is now

becoming general; they mix continually with the tenantry, and reform both their cottage economy and their husbandry. This is a most beneficial practice, and we augur infinite good from it.

Upon the whole, we think there is a rising spirit of improvement in Ireland; but it must be stimulated by sound legislation, or it cannot speedily relieve the country from the lingering effects of the evil system of former times.

What ought to be done, we trust will be done; the improvement of Ireland is of the deepest importance to every part of the United Kingdom; at present, with a population nearly equal to half that of Great Britain, she yields only about a twelfth of the revenue to the state that Great Britain does: nor can she yield more until more she has to yield. Increased means must precede increased contribution; and to supply Ireland with these is the great object of our recommendations. We anxiously hope that they may conduce to it, and that Ireland may at length become what Sir William Temple so long ago stated that under good government she might be made, "one of the richest countries in Europe, and a mighty increase both of strength and revenue to the Crown of England."

(Signed)

Rd. DUBLIN.

D. MURRAY.

JAMES CARLILE.

F. HORT.

JOHN CORRIE.

J. W. L. NAPER.

W. B. WRIGHTSON.

KILLEEN.

A. R. BLAKE.

J. E. BICHENO.

APPENDIX I. *

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE RELIEF OF THE POOR.

I. *BECAUSE* there are, and must necessarily be, continually arising, many cases of real destitution which cannot be relieved by a compulsory assessment without bringing claims upon it to an unlimited extent. The attempt was made in England to meet all cases of distress by a compulsory rate, and the consequence was, that in one year the rate amounted to the enormous sum of more than 7,860,000*l.* sterling; and, besides the oppressive amount of the assessment, it did much evil in pauperizing a large portion of the labouring population of that part of the United Kingdom.

II. *Because*, although such cases of distress might, and probably would, be relieved by spontaneous charity, yet the leaving of such cases of distress to be relieved by the operation of undirected benevolence inevitably leads to an extensive vagrancy. If it be generally known that there are many cases of real distress, for the relief of which there is no public provision, the humane naturally listen to applications made to them individually; the consequence is, that the idle and dissolute avail themselves of this facility of obtaining a maintenance without labour. They invent tales of distress, and exhibit appearances of extreme poverty and misery; their artifices prove too frequently successful, and the land soon swarms with va-

* Relating to Section XXVII. of the foregoing Report.

grants. This is the state of Ireland at the present moment. On the most moderate computation, the amount of spontaneous alms given in that part of the United Kingdom, chiefly by the smaller farmers and cottiers, is from 1,000,000*l.* to 2,000,000*l.* sterling annually; but being given without system, or without inquiry, to the good and the bad, the really destitute and the pretenders to destitution receive alike their maintenance out of the earnings of the industrious, to their great impoverishment, and to the great injury of the morals and good order of the kingdom.

III. *Because* the most direct and effectual, if not the only means of avoiding these two great evils, namely, an extensive and ruinous pauperism, created by an attempt to make compulsory provision for all cases of destitution, and an extensive and equally ruinous vagrancy, created by the want of a public provision, is to endeavour to bring voluntary alms-giving under regulations and system, so as to direct it to the relief of real distress exclusively.

IV. *Because*, if this be not effected, if voluntary charity be altogether left out of view in any public provision for the poor, those who regard it as a religious duty to relieve the poor, and who find enjoyment in the exercise of such charity, will continue to give without discrimination or system, and thus render it impossible to put a stop to vagrancy. Even the profuse provisions made for the poor by the English Poor Law did not prevent the formation of a multitude of voluntary associations for charitable purposes, many of which impaired the industry of the people, and increased among them the indolent and dependent spirit of paupers.

V. *Because* the best means of systematizing and regu-

lating voluntary alms-giving is to hold out the offer of a measure of public aid for all voluntary associations based on certain principles, and governed by fixed regulations, approved by a Central Board. By the offer of such aid, benevolent persons interested in the relief of the poor will, we doubt not, be induced to form themselves into associations for that purpose, and will persuade the charitably disposed to give their alms through them; seeing that by so doing the amount will be increased, whilst the best assurances will be afforded that every precaution will be used for detecting imposition, and relieving only those who are really in distress.

VI. *Because*, while a fund thus founded upon voluntary contributions would provide effectual relief for those who are really destitute, the very nature of it would debar the poor from establishing legal claims upon it, since the contributions to a voluntary fund being wholly spontaneous, the contributors could at any time withhold them if an attempt were made to compel an appropriation of the joint fund contrary to their instructions.

VII. *Because* a Central Board in constant communication with a number of Local Committees would be furnished with the most effectual means of diffusing information and inculcating just principles respecting the relief of the poor.

The great cause of the extensive mendicancy which drains and impoverishes the small farmers of Ireland is their want of system and good judgment in bestowing relief. It is given by them without discrimination, without regard to the character, nay, without even knowledge of the circumstances of the applicant: this indiscriminate and profuse distribution of alms never fails to bring for-

ward multitudes to avail themselves of it, claimants possessing no real title to such relief. Whereas, if these humane persons could be brought to systematize their liberality, to make arrangements for giving only where relief was really needed, they would at once learn to husband their own funds, and avoid giving encouragement to the daily increasing body of unprincipled vagrants who are kept from habits of industry by their mistaken generosity. Now the administration of public money granted in aid of voluntary contributions would procure for a Central Board the most favourable opportunities of enlightening the public mind on the subject of relieving the poor. It would place them at once in friendly and influential communication with a great number of benevolent and respectable persons, and thus enable them widely to diffuse through all ranks of society (and particularly through that rank of society which needs it most) interesting information and wholesome principles on the subject; and from the diffusion of such information, and the general adoption of such principles, the very best results might be confidently expected.

VIII. *Because* the example of an organized system of relief for the poor by voluntary contribution is afforded in Scotland, where it has been eminently successful.

Scotland is distinguished from Ireland in having a public system of relief, administered by overseers recognised by the law, to whom applicants for alms can be referred; and it is distinguished from England in that its system of relief is founded upon the voluntary contributions of the people. The effect is, that there is not in that part of the United Kingdom, as there is in Ireland, an extensive, exhausting, demoralizing mendicancy; nor, as in England,

a still more extensive and ruinous public pauperism. The avoiding of both of these opposite evils is the very test of a successful treatment of the poor.

IX. *Because*, although the persons entrusted with the care of the poor in Scotland have, in support of their claims upon the public for contribution, a law which empowers them to obtain a compulsory assessment in aid of voluntary contributions, and although the fear of such compulsory assessment may, and probably does, in some instances, increase the amount of voluntary contributions, yet we conceive that the offer of public aid to voluntary contributions is more than an equivalent for the want of such a law.

X. *Because* a voluntary contribution is more likely to be economically administered than a compulsory assessment: the voluntary contributions are administered under the eye of the contributors, who have it in their power, if they disapprove of the administration, simply to withhold their contributions; a check upon profusion much more effectual than the power of preferring complaints against an official person. This inference is borne out by the example of Scotland, where there is the most marked difference, in point of expenditure, between those parishes which are under assessment and those in which the poor are relieved solely by voluntary contributions.

One of the most remarkable features of the Scottish system is the effect of very small sums in keeping parishes free from mendicancy; the Elders, who administer the parish fund, are expected to take into account whatever means applicants may possess of contributing to their own maintenance, whether by their own labour, or by just claims on relatives; they are expected merely to aid each

resources, not to supersede them; and this economical system has been found sufficient to prevent the necessity of assessment through three-fourths of the parishes of that country. The experiment of an exclusively compulsory system in England is equally instructive. Every precaution was adopted to prevent the poor-laws from being profusely administered, or the money improperly expended; the overseers' accounts were checked by the magistrates, and from them an appeal was opened to the quarter-sessions, but all in vain; the assessment continued to advance steadily, and with the rapidity of a conflagration, till it threatened to involve all property in one common ruin.

XI. *Because*, in a country so comparatively poor as Ireland is, it would be an unnecessary and improvident waste of available funds to disregard the voluntary contributions of the people, which are now given freely, and to attempt to make provision for the poor exclusively from a compulsory rate.

XII. *Because*, in a country in which the educated classes bear so small a proportion to the uneducated classes, it would be improvident to disregard the assistance of those persons who are disposed voluntarily to bestow their time and labour for the relief of the poor, and to attempt to fulfil the whole of that important duty by means of paid officers. The chief object to be attended to in relieving the poor, is making inquiry into the real condition and circumstances of all applicants for relief. If this be neglected, or imperfectly fulfilled, in the administration of either a compulsory or voluntary fund, the consequence must be mischievous. The history of the poor-laws of England, in the administration of which relief was

given to applicants with little or no inquiry, and the history of vagrancy in Ireland, in which alms are spontaneously given also without inquiry, show that the effect has been equally disastrous. The chief superiority of the Scottish system in those parishes in which there is no assessment is, that the administrators of the voluntary fund are required to make themselves intimately acquainted with the state of the applicants; and this, from their numbers, they are able to do. And one cause of the instant increase of pauperism, and consequently of expense, in parishes in which there is an assessment, is, that the same accuracy of inquiry is not made.

XIII. *Because*, although it has been urged that a system which has succeeded in Scotland may not succeed in Ireland, and that there are circumstances in the condition of Ireland which would certainly cause it to fail, yet the experiment of voluntary contribution, aided from the public purse, having been tried with considerable success in one description of aid provided for the poor, namely in the education of their children, we are entitled to infer that it would succeed equally well in other descriptions of aid.

The mode in which we recommend a provision to be made for the poor, namely by founding it upon voluntary contributions, is entirely analogous to the mode which has been adopted in establishing the national system of education. In that system a certain contribution is required on the part of the people towards providing school-houses, maintaining masters, and procuring suitable books. On this contribution being made, they are permitted to apply to the Board for a grant of public money, not to supersede their own contributions, but in aid of them. Protestants and Roman Catholics are invited and encouraged to

act together : but their doing so is not made a *sinus quâ non* to the success of an application, Protestants being permitted to apply without the concurrence of Roman Catholics, and Roman Catholics without the concurrence of Protestants. Many persons might have anticipated a complete failure, on the ground that few or none would be found ready to come forward with voluntary supplies. The reverse, however, has been the result of the experiment : and the history of that system of education furnishes, in almost every particular, an argument *à fortiori* for the success of the system which we propose, for aiding the people to support their own poor ; for example :—

1. As the offer of assistance from a public fund has called forward applications more than sufficient to absorb the whole of the Parliamentary grant* for the education of the poor, much more is the offer of such assistance in relieving and supporting the destitute likely to excite a desire in the people to avail themselves of the offer, and to bring forward applications for a much larger amount ; for, however much the people may be interested in the education of their children, they are unquestionably much more so in the relief of the poor. While comparatively little was expended by them for education till they were encouraged by the offer of public assistance, it is computed that the small farmers and cottiers of Ireland cannot distribute much less than from a million to a million and a half sterling annually in food to beggars.

2. As persons have been found in the most destitute parts of the country to superintend the building of

* The Parliament had granted £40,000.

school-houses, the choosing and paying of masters, much more will persons be found in the same parts of the country capable of managing funds for the relief of the poor obtained among their neighbours, aided in a certain proportion by a Central Board. A compulsory rate for the relief of the poor is necessarily thrown into the management of the gentry of the country. In many districts there are no resident gentry, nor any persons that could be prudently selected to manage a compulsory assessment for the relief of cases of destitution where the objects cannot be very accurately defined, nor effectual guards provided against abuse; whereas, by the proposed system, that class of the community who now chiefly support their own poor, namely the small farmers, would be allowed an influential share in the management of their own voluntary contributions, and the aid received from a public fund would only give sufficient influence to the Central Board to assist in directing them, and to check any occasional misapplication that might be made of the united fund. It seems indeed preposterous to reject the plan of affording public aid to voluntary funds on the presumption of a total want of public spirit and benevolence on the part of the gentry of Ireland, and yet to calculate on a yet greater amount of public spirit in the same persons for the administration of a compulsory system of relief. It is to be hoped that gradually, if not immediately, a class of persons may be raised up for administering relief to the poor analogous to the Elders in Scotland, whose labours have been so highly beneficial in that department of public duty.

3. The new system of education has been in operation for several years, without occasioning any increase of religious animosity, but, on the contrary, has tended rather to allay such feelings; much more, therefore, may we expect that a similar system for the relief of the poor may be conducted not only without any exacerbation of religious animosity, but with a healing and uniting influence. In the process of education religious jealousy is much more likely to arise than in giving relief to the destitute. In conducting a system of education it is extremely difficult to exclude all occasions of jealousy from the operation of instructing children; but in relieving the destitute, whatever causes of jealousy might arise among the different persons employed, none could be occasioned by the mere administration of pecuniary relief. Any attempt indeed to place the Roman Catholic poor under the exclusive guardianship of Protestants, whether clergy or gentry, would unquestionably increase religious animosity; but an offer of assistance towards supporting the poor of all denominations, without reference to their religious denominations, would be still more likely to bring them together on a friendly and confidential footing. It may be pleaded that Protestants are to a very considerable extent at least hostile to the system of national education, and it is not to be denied that such hostility exists among very many Protestants; but the chief reason which they give for their dislike of the system is one that would not enter into a plan for the relief of the mere bodily wants of the poor: for, however much some may conceive it to be their duty not to give education to those

who refuse to read the Bible, there must be very few indeed who would be disposed to make such a test a condition of receiving pecuniary aid.

XIV. *Because* that, although the system of providing for the poor by means of voluntary associations, aided from the public purse, and constructed on well-digested principles, may not succeed at once in every part of the country, yet that, so far as it does succeed, it will tend to bring the population into a sound state with respect to the poor; and that it will, we trust, gradually work its way over the face of the island, and probably supersede in many places, as the Scottish system does so extensively, the necessity of a compulsory rate. Whereas we are convinced, that although a compulsory rate might be rendered general more rapidly, and be administered by artificial means, it would every day become more difficult to manage, and tend to bring the country into a worse state than our Inquiry has found it.

XV. *Because*, although it has been pleaded that, if the foundation of a provision for the destitute were made to rest upon voluntary contributions, many of those who ought to contribute would not do so, and especially that those landed proprietors who are not resident, or who do not contribute, would be altogether exempted from the expense of such provision for the destitute; yet as the Commissioners recommend that the whole of the extensive remedial measures proposed by them for providing labour for the able-bodied poor, and generally improving their condition, together with the whole relief and support of the sick, the lame, the blind, and the deaf and dumb poor, are to be provided for by compulsory assessment upon the holders of interests in land, that besides this, the aid,

which they propose should be given to voluntary contributions from the public purse, must be obtained from the same class of the community, we believe that there is no valid foundation for the objection. On the contrary, we believe that the requirements of a voluntary contribution, as the foundation of that department of relief to the destitute which is contemplated by it, will amount only to the inviting of every class in the community to bear their reasonable share in this good work, furnishing them with the opportunity of doing so with advantage, publicly recognizing their benevolent gifts, and providing, by means of a regularly organized system of public charity, for certain classes of the destitute, whose relief could with safety to the community neither be provided for by compulsory assessment, nor left to the undirected spontaneous benevolence of individuals.

XVI. The preceding reasons rest on an assumption that the plan of making the support of the destitute poor contingent in a greater or less degree upon voluntary contributions, holds out an almost assured prospect of success in its results.

We are, however, disposed to say, that, even if our hope of success were less strong than it is, we should still recommend that at least the experiment be made, and for these reasons:—

First, if it should fail, after a fair trial, no evil consequence would follow.

And, secondly, we conceive that the administration of a voluntary fund, aided from the public purse, would have comparatively little tendency to impair the independent spirit and industrious habits of the poor, and, as we confidently anticipate, that the remedial measures recom-

mended in our Report will greatly lessen the number of persons requiring relief, it is of much importance to bestow such relief as may be urgently required in a measure as little as possible injurious to the character of the persons receiving it, that they may not be unfitted for embracing those opportunities of providing for themselves by their own industry, which, we doubt not, will gradually open to them.

RICHARD DUBLIN.

D. MURRAY.

JAMES CARLILE.

F. HORT.

JOHN CORRIE.

W. B. WRIGHTSON.

A. R. BLAKE.

J. E. BICHENO.

APPENDIX II.

REASONS FOR DISSENTING FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF RAISING FUNDS FOR THE RELIEF OF THE POOR BY THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM, AS RECOMMENDED IN THE REPORT.

HAVING given to the subject that full and anxious consideration which its importance so imperiously demands, we feel ourselves called upon to state the reasons which prevent us from concurring in the recommendation, "That provision be made by law towards the relief of the aged and infirm, orphans, widows with young children, and destitute persons in general, through the establishment, in the first instance, of voluntary associations."

I. *Because* all experience teaches that the greatest misery and want, often amounting to actual starvation, are found to exist where the infirm and indigent of any great community are left totally dependent on the precarious charity of the wealthier classes of society.

II. *Because* in Ireland, a country where private benevolence is eminently conspicuous, and where voluntary charity abounds, we still find the poor in a state of unparalleled destitution.

III. *Because*, in the lamentably distressed state of the Irish poor, any system of relief to be effectual must be comprehensive, uniform and prompt, while the very constitution of voluntary associations proclaims that their operations must be tardy, and, circumstanced as Ireland

is in the distribution of her population, must be partial and precarious.

IV. *Because* it is notorious that many contributions, in name voluntary, are frequently obligations of the severest character. The pressure of such a tax must be unequal: the class least removed from want would furnish, as it now does, the largest number of contributors, and to the greatest amount; while the wealthier classes, resident as well as absentee, would in a great measure be exempted from the liability of contributing in proportion to their wealth, or even from contributing at all.

V. *Because*, viewing the peculiar state of society in Ireland, the extent to which religious zeal prevails, as well as the influence it must exercise, we consider the difficulties attendant on the raising of a voluntary fund in the first instance,—and of an impartial distribution of relief in the next,—all but insurmountable. The two great classes of the community—the wealthy proprietors and the great bulk of the population, are so widely separated in feelings and in opinion, it can hardly be expected that the local managers, of whatever religious persuasion, will attract such confidence towards their judicious choice of objects and impartial distribution of the funds at their disposal as is indispensable (even supposing all other motives for withholding contributions to be removed) to the success of voluntary associations.

VI. *Because* it is unhappily too true, that where voluntary associations for the relief of the most helpless poor have been organized and directed with great skill, and a degree of perseverance which the purest benevolence could alone support, these institutions have not only failed in providing for the necessities of their respective districts,

but in inducing the majority of wealthy proprietors and inhabitants to contribute to the support of institutions so meritorious, and so freed from even a suspicion of blame.

VII. *Because* the Mendicity Institutions of Dublin, Limerick, Newry, Birr, Sligo, Waterford and Londonderry, as well as the voluntary poor's fund established in some of the rural districts, afford strong proofs of the efficiency of the support afforded to these institutions; for, although they have not totally failed, yet their subscriptions are falling off, and they are by no means adequate to the relief of the objects they contemplate.

In London, of the most prosperous, "The Committee find the subscriptions stationary; persons of property are to be found who either refuse to subscribe, or give sums very disproportionate to their means, and in consequence the funds fall very far short of the demands on them."

VIII. *Because* the present mode of establishing and maintaining dispensaries where the public contribution depends upon the formation of a voluntary fund, strongly exhibits the partial workings of the system. These institutions have been too frequently established, less with a view to the wants of the poor, than to making a suitable provision in a favoured district for a well-educated medical practitioner. The evidence shows that dispensaries do not exist, either in number or in distribution, adequate to the necessities of the population. If the rich refuse or neglect to subscribe, the poor are left totally neglected; if, on the other hand, the contributions are liberal, then the district is taxed more in proportion to the amount subscribed by wealthy, and often interested individuals, than with reference to the fuller relief of the objects of these institutions.

IX. *Because*, referring to evidence given on this subject before Committees of the House of Commons, it appears, that in the administration of such voluntary funds, managers have been charged with partiality in the selection of objects of relief, private feuds and jealousies have taken place, and subscriptions have gradually, but very sensibly, decreased in amount.

X. *Because*, while the history of Ireland affords so many proofs of the failure of every scheme depending on the voluntary contributions of individuals, whether set on foot for the purposes of colonization, instruction or charity, though recommended by associations of great landed proprietors, and aided by whatever assistance could be derived from strong religious and political feeling, we cannot flatter ourselves that, in the absence of such powerful allies, the simple dictates of benevolence can reasonably be relied on to secure the fulfilment of so important a duty as the support of the helpless indigent of a whole nation.

XI. *Because* no system of relief dependent on voluntary contributions could create a reasonable hope of success, without some plan or modification of the system of settlement; and we confess we cannot contemplate any modification of that system which could possibly lead to the curtailment of the privilege of free migration hitherto enjoyed by the Irish poor, a privilege which the evidence of a former Report proves to have afforded not only a means of support to the industrious labourer, but the only hope of existence to a class too numerous and too virtuous not to be objects of the deepest interest to every benevolent mind.

XII. *Because*, considering that the principle adopted in England, and recommended for the regulation

government of the workhouse-system, must in a great degree be applied to the annuity-system of relief, being to afford the means of support according to the lowest scale, we feel convinced not only that ample room will be left for the exercise of private benevolence, but that in a country where the class of wealthy resident inhabitants forms so small a proportion of the population, the privations of the helpless, infirm and destitute will still be but little removed from a state of want.

XIII. *Because*, although we readily admit that there are districts in Ireland in which voluntary societies might be

which would afford ample means of constructing a local administration for the management of a poor's fund, still we feel satisfied that, in the present state of society, and under the existing distribution of the population, such a system cannot be either comprehensive or uniform; we are therefore of opinion that the fund should be obtained by an assessment wholly, and not partially, compulsory; and that it will be most efficiently managed by elective boards of guardians, as in England, directed by responsible public officers, whose proceedings shall be subjected to the strictest public scrutiny.

CHARLES VIGNOLES.
J. W. L'NAPER.
KILLEEN.

REMARKS

ON THE NEW SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, EXTRACTED FROM A WORK BY MR. DEVEREUX*.

THE REV. MR. SADLIER, a member of the Committee on National Education, in a letter addressed to the Rev. H. Seymour, dated January 10th, 1832, agrees with me, that the real object which is proposed, in establishing these liberal schools, has been to make Protestants, or to increase the number of the members of the Established Church; that the means employed in the first instance to act upon the Catholics entirely failed. "I am perfectly convinced," says he, "by the experience of many years, that the Roman Catholic peasantry will not receive religious instruction except from their clergy,"—that it is consequently necessary to attempt other systems of proselytism; and he adds,—“We must believe firmly, as on truth, that a people who are instructed will gradually, and perhaps entirely, rise superior to their errors;” which, in Protestant language, is as much as to say that they will abandon gradually the Catholic religion.

The reverend member of the Committee on liberal education here appears to be penetrated with an ardent desire to see us united to the Established Church. But we must do him justice—he rejects all coercive means, and adds, “No one would rejoice more than I should at the conversion of our Catholic countrymen to the doctrines of the Established Church, and no one desires more ardently to make the utmost efforts and to devote his life to the ac-

[* Retranslated.]

accomplishment of that work than I should, if I believed it practicable. Being convinced that it is not so at present, I wish to do the best to prepare for its accomplishment at a future time, by instructing the people, and cultivating relations of amity and of good understanding between Protestants and Catholics. I regard the plan proposed by the new Committee of Education as one of the best means of attaining the first and the third of these objects."

This is exactly what I have said, that the establishment of the new Committee on Education was the best means that could be found to ~~extinguish~~ gradually the Catholic religion; and this proves that I have been right in maintaining that it is with this object that these *liberal* schools have been established, and that the Protestant members of the Committee "are disposed to make the greatest efforts for the accomplishment of this work."

We have ~~that~~ the best evidence possible to show that the Committee has been established "as one of the best means" of undermining our religion, for such is the declaration of the member of this Committee the best acquainted with the intentions of the Government. The Catholics of Ireland owe no little thanks to Mr. Sadlier for these honourable admissions, but I doubt whether he will receive the same thanks from Lord Plunkett, Mr. Blake, Mr. Stanley, &c.

It is not superfluous to remark to our countrymen of all sects of the Christian religion, that Mr. Sadlier, a member of the Committee, admits, in his letter to the Rev. R. J. M'Ghee, dated January 9th, that "in these schools,

under the superintendence of the Commissioners, which the Catholics allow their children to attend, the school-master may be a deist*.”

[* The author, like most controversialists, is quite ignorant of the principles of his opponent. The unfairness of his argument consists in making two contradictory charges, and shifting them from time to time as suits his object. First, that Protestantism is a mass of discordant sects, no two of which agree together. Secondly, that a thing which is true of one Protestant sect, is equally so of all; whereas, according to his first charge, the fact of a Protestant sect holding any one thing, should be a proof that no other hold the same.

The error against which every loyal Englishman wishes to see Papists delivered is, that any priest, no matter whether a bishop of Rome, or of Dublin, or of London, has any right to absolve the Queen's subjects from their allegiance to her. This is a practical question: polemists may dispute about the immaculate conception, the intercession of saints, &c. &c., and it may be convenient for Romanists to turn aside to such questions, and so evade the real pinching place; but this is the question which makes all Protestants know that it is not safe to give men political power who believe in such a maxim; and Papists know well that they are suffered to profess a loyalty *in partibus infidelium*, which they dare not avow in Rome; they know that no preacher would be suffered in Rome who should declare that the Pope had not power to absolve subjects from oaths of allegiance, to make incest lawful, &c. &c.

The error of the system of education was, not that it intended to make the children members of one sect in preference to another, but that it endeavoured to conduct education really without any religion at all: yet to represent it as a meditated attack on the sect of Rome alone, is a gross perversion of the object of the Government and of the Commissioners.—[ENGLISH EDITOR.]

LETTER

from Mr. Devereux to Dr. Forster, on the necessity of religious education for the happiness of old-age.*

ALLOW me to call your attention to one point of physiology intimately connected with the subject of which you have treated,—that it is necessary early to give children religious impressions. I have discovered this fact in pursuing my researches upon the means of rendering old-age happy. It is a well-known principle that the impressions of childhood are recalled to mind in old age, whilst those of manhood are effaced. It is one of the means by which God, in his goodness, prepares us to receive constantly the action of religion. For if the child, as soon as he stammers the first words, is occupied with religion, the hope which he conceives of being immortal, the animated pictures of heavenly bliss, the end of all trouble, the eternal hallelujahs of the saints, will form the object of his first thoughts, and, through the effect of the law which we have mentioned, the consolation, the support of his old age, and the foundations of a happy death, will be derived from the ideas which during childhood shall have filled his mind. As, in proportion as the child grows up, his pleasures are associated with the festivals, the fasts, the vigils, and the holidays of the church; as he hails with a holy joy Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, and the other days of devotion and holiday, so the old man recalls, with his first pleasures, the great events of sacred history, and he descends the steps to the grave with his spirit warmed and quickened

[* Re-translated.]

by the images which he has pictured to himself of the road that conducts to heaven. If, on the contrary, a false philosophy, and the execrable doubts which follow it, enter into the mind in childhood, what will recur to the spirit of old age but doubts?

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(4272)



PRINTED BY RICHARD AND JOHN E. TAYLOR,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.