DONEGAL — 1889 — J. H. TUKE

DONEGAL

Suggestions for improvement of Congested districts and extension of Railways, Fisheries, &c.

BY

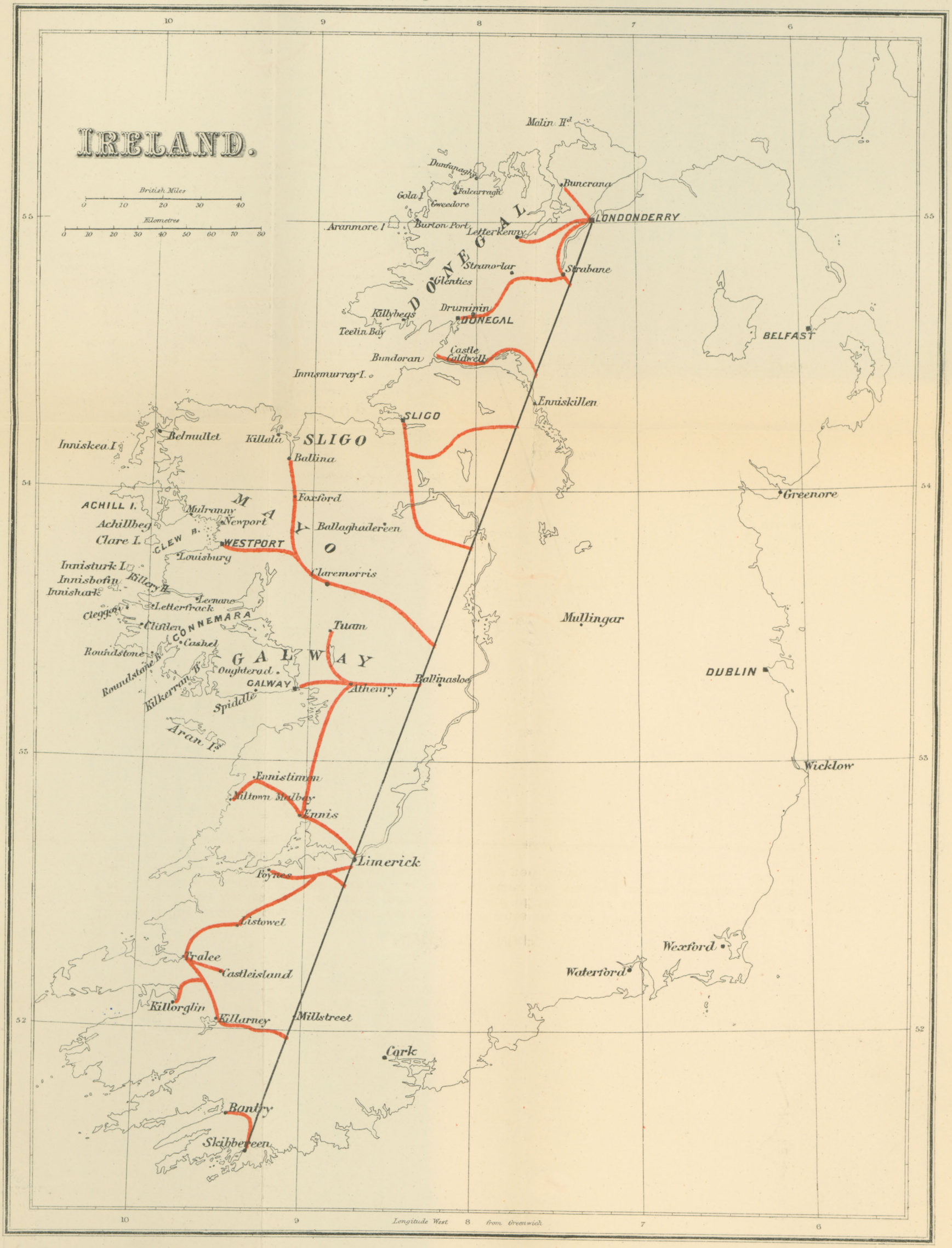
J. H. TUKE

1889

ONE SHILLING

NOTE TO MAP.

The black line from Londonderry to Skibbereen roughly divides the poor Western districts of Ireland from the Eastern. These districts comprise rather more than a third of the area of the island, and contain one fourth of the population, viz.: 1,370,000 persons. In order to show the want of railway communications in these districts, the only existing railways have been marked by red lines. Their total length is 450 miles, being little more than one sixth of the total mileage in Ireland.



THE

CONDITION OF DONEGAL.

LETTERS

Reprinted from "The Times" of May 20th, 28th, and June 29th, 1889,

WITH FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR THE
IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS OF IRELAND,
AND PROMOTION OF LIGHT RAILWAYS, FISHERIES, &c.

BY

J. H. TUKE.

WITH A MAP.

"If England does not raise Ireland—Ireland will sink England."—EARL FITZWILLIAM.

"No state of things can be worse than that in which there is but one industry—Agriculture; and one employment for capital—Usury."—DEVON COMMISSION REPORT.

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J. 4.

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PREFACE

It has been suggested to me that the publication in a pamphlet form of the letters recently addressed to *The Times* might be of service in further directing public attention to the subjects discussed.

I also take the opportunity which is thus afforded, to add a paper privately circulated in 1886 containing suggestions for the permanent improvement of the congested portions of the West of Ireland. The map attached to the "Suggestions" indicating the great need for the extension of Light Railways or Tramways into the West of Ireland, is also given.

Since the publication in *The Times* of the second letter, advocating the extension of Railways into the congested districts, the Chief Secretary for Ireland has brought forward a Bill for this object, which for comprehensive grasp of the needs and circumstances of these districts, as well as for generous boldness in dealing with them cannot be too highly commended, and which demands the gratitude and warm support of every true friend to Ireland.

The Bill may need some amendments in Committee, but in its chief provisions it lays the keel or foundation for those who may desire to build upon it for the future regeneration of the West of Ireland.

In its liberal provisions for the peculiar condition of society existing in the congested districts of Ireland, Mr. Balfour's measure contains nearly all that I have for many years desired, and urged as the essential preliminary to any efforts which may be made permanently to remedy this unhappy condition.

J. H. T.

Hitchin, July, 1889.

THE CONDITION OF DONEGAL.

No. 1.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—The assertion recently made in the House of Commons and reiterated elsewhere of the existence of "widely-spread destitution and distress prevailing in the county of Donegal, and the necessity for steps to be taken to avert a famine," has led me once more to visit this remote district of Ireland.

Donegal has always had a peculiar interest for me. It is the portion of Ireland which I first visited in the season of her direst necessity. I spent some weeks here in the terrible famine winter of 1846-7, assisting my friend, the older William Forster, in his noble efforts to relieve the existing distress, and to promote the formation of local relief committees throughout the West of Ireland. Since that period I have at various times visited Donegal, and spent some weeks there in the spring of 1880 assisting to relieve the distress which at that time existed. Since 1880 I have (excepting the year 1887) spent a portion of each year in the West of Ireland, and was engaged for two months, in 1886, in distributing seed potatoes on the islands and coasts of Mayo and Galway.

I have thus had special advantages for forming an opinion upon the existence or otherwise of any peculiar destitution at this moment. Everywhere I have been received in the most friendly manner by persons of all shades of religious and political opinion, and, having no political object to serve, have heard opinions on all sides freely expressed on the existing condition of the people.

In this visit I have had the advantage of the company of my friend Major Rutledge Fair, who until recently held the post of Local Government Inspector for this county, and who so ably assisted me in the distribution of seed potatoes in 1886.

In speaking of any destitution or need for help in the county of Donegal, let me remark that, like Ireland, Donegal must be divided into east and west. In the eastern half the idea of special destitution or distress would at all times be scouted. In the western half evidences of poverty are, unhappily, at all times present among a very poor population, five out of six of whom are attempting to live on petty holdings of land at or under £4 annual valuation.

My inquiries have therefore been confined to the two very large unions of Dunfanaghy and Glenties. These unions extend from Dunfanaghy on the north coast, to Killybegs on the south, thus comprising the whole western coast of Donegal. This wide area is seventy-five miles in length by twenty to thirty in breadth, and contains a population of 54,000 persons, the Poor Law valuation of the two unions being £31,949, or about 12s. per head.

In these districts I have made minute inquiries into the condition of the people, and more especially inspected those portions of the union of Dunfanaghy which were pointed out to me as the poorest and most likely to need help. It is in this union that Falcarragh and Cross Roads are situated. The answer, then, after more than a fortnight's very careful inquiry, is to my mind clear and distinct.

In these two unions it must be admitted that the crop of potatoes for the year 1888 has undoubtedly been deficient. This deficiency varies in different portions of the same parish and even on adjoining townlands. Thus it is difficult to measure the exact deficiency. In some places the crop is said to be one-third below the average, in others only half a crop, and in some the deficiency is said to be even greater. On the other hand, on well cultivated and good land the crop is said to have been an average one. Naturally the failure is most complete on the poorest lands and on those which are cultivated the worst. This failure would undoubtedly have been very serious had it not been for three causes :—

1. The unusually large potato crop of the year 1887, which enabled the people to keep a much greater number of pigs; these, when fed, were sold in October last at high prices (say £3 to £4 apiece). Many of the small tenants had two or three pigs each.

2. The extraordinary increase in the price of cattle and sheep, the numbers of which also appear to be unusually large. The value of the class of cattle raised in these districts has nearly doubled since

the autumn of 1887. Young stock then worth £2 are now selling at £4. Sheep have also increased in value fully 40 per cent.; sheep which eighteen months ago were not worth 10s. are now selling at 15s.

A reference to the Agricultural Statistics for 1888 shows how great the increase in numbers has been of all classes of cattle in the two unions of Glenties and Dunfanaghy (in the latter of which Falcarragh and Cross Roads are situated). The figures are as follows:—

——	Year 1887.	Year 1888.	Increase.
Pigs	5,589	8,823	3,244
Cattle	36,654	40,368	3,704
Sheep	58,796	69,873	11,077

3. Careful inquiry shows that the amount of money brought into the country last year by the migratory labourers, both by the children from the "Laggan" and the men from Scotland, was considerably above the average of late years, and as this affects almost every family in the district it is of immense consequence. In addition to these three sources of income, the oat crop last year was large, and I was informed that the price and demand for kelp were last year very good, good kelp realising from £3 10s. to £4 per ton; but this latter industry only affects those who live on the sea-shore.

These causes have combined to place in the hands of the tenants a larger amount of money than for many years past, and have happily compensated them for the undoubted deficiency in the yield of potatoes.

This deficiency has, of course, compelled many families to use Indian meal several months earlier than in ordinary years. But it must be borne in mind that Indian meal at all times forms a staple portion of the food of the people, and the price this year has been usually low and the quality excellent.

This estimate of the condition of the people is further confirmed by the fact that, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the debts due to the shopkeepers (always large) have not increased. In some cases I was assured that they have been considerably reduced, showing that the tenants have paid cash for the provisions which they required to purchase.

Let it not be supposed that Indian meal is the only article which is purchased at the shops. The large quantity of tea, sugar, flour, and white bread now consumed is, to my mind, an extraordinary proof of the change in the economic requirements of the people that has taken place since I first visited these districts in 1846-7, when potatoes and a little oatmeal were their sole diet, and when hardly a store or shop existed, except in the towns.

On a large number of the estates in these unions I find on inquiry that the rents due in November last have been well paid. On the other hand, there are marked exceptions to this, and, chiefly on the estates of the smaller proprietors, many of the occupiers have not paid rent for four or five years or more.

I have purposely avoided referring to one large estate in this district, around which a violent storm of controversy is at this moment raging. I have carefully visited many portions of this estate, but fear to add anything which might increase this unhappy controversy and tend, in however small a degree, to lessen the chances of an amicable arrangement of this grievous dispute, injurious as it is to the interests of the owner and ruinous to the occupiers if persisted in.

Another reason which influences me to this course is my strong desire to divert (if this be possible) the public mind from the merely political aspects of the questions which affect Ireland in order to direct it to the consideration of such measures as are essential for the economic improvement of the congested districts, not only of Donegal, but of the whole of Western Ireland. Without such measures all hope of any permanent improvement in their condition is delusive.

Referring again to the main object of my visit, it is a real satisfaction to me to be able to say that there appears to be no need at this moment for anxiety or for exceptional measures of relief in these districts. When I look back to the winter of 1879-80 and to the spring of 1886 on the Mayo and Galway coasts, I cannot but contrast favourably the present state of these districts with the distress which then undoubtedly prevailed. I have not denied that there has been a failure to a considerable extent in the potato crop of 1888, and have, I hope, conclusively shown my reasons for thinking that relief measures are not now needed. At the same time I consider that the distribution of seed potatoes which has been

made in portions of Donegal from a fund in the hands of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe cannot fail to have been a useful and very timely aid to the smaller class of tenants, whose crops are always the poorest.

Let me say that I have never once heard the word "famine" spoken of as applicable to these districts, nor has it ever been stated to me that "widely-spread destitution" exists. That among a population always poor some may have felt more keenly than usual the pinch of poverty, or have not been able to sow as large a breadth of potatoes as in other years, is not improbable, but this, I believe, is the worst that has occurred or has been suggested to me. I have been extremely struck and gratified by the very strong opinion against relief in any other shape than as payment for actual and useful work done, expressed by the Roman Catholic Bishop and clergy of the diocese, and indeed by all whom I consulted. This healthy tone has, no doubt, arisen from the deep sense which exists of the demoralisation which has attended almost all past measures of relief. "Better far," said a very thoughtful priest to me, "let the people suffer a little than do anything which would make them more dependent on others for help." Although I am thus able to state that at the present time no exceptional distress prevails, still I cannot avoid pointing out that even in the present year had it not been for the causes already specified there would undoubtedly have been a most serious risk of widely-spread distress. How this has been averted I have endeavoured to explain. Briefly, the fact that so large a proportion of the population is attempting to subsist upon small patches of wet bog land, impoverished by constant cropping, coupled with the total absence in the district of any paid labour for the male population, must ever make the chronic condition of these congested portions of Ireland a source of anxiety and alarm.

There is another point which has a most important bearing upon the chronic condition of the people—namely, the fact that the population of the poorest portions of these unions is considerably higher than it was before the great famine in 1846. This is the more noticeable when it is remembered that the population of Ireland as a whole has decreased more than 33 per cent. in the same period, and that the population of the county of Donegal

has fallen from 296,000 to 206,000 persons. In three of the largest and most populous parishes in the unions referred to the increase is as follows:—

——	Year 1841. Population.	Year 1881. Population.	Increase.
Tullaghobegly (Falcarragh and Gweedore)	9,049	9,636	587
Templecrone (Rosses and Dunglow) ...	9,842	11,525	1,683
Lettermacaward	2,475	2,547	72

These are the only parishes in the county in which the population has increased.

In some of the townlands in the above parishes this increase is still more striking:—

——	1841. Population.	1881. Population.	Increase.
Annagarry	384	636	252
Cloughglass	18	86	68
Drumnacart	25	115	90
Brinlack	313	471	158
Glasserchoo	54	209	155
Meenacladdy	162	215	53

How this increase adversely affects the present condition of the population may be shown by the statement that whenever it was mentioned to me that a townland was specially needing investigation I almost invariably found, on reference to the census returns, that the population was now larger than in 1841.

While, however, deprecating any measures of present relief, I feel strongly it is incumbent upon me to urge that it is the duty of the State without further delay to take whatever steps may be needed to open up the country—by the extension of railways and the development of fishing, or any other industry which may be possible. Surely, also, some plan might be devised in these districts for the periodical or annual introduction and sale on cash terms of fresh seed, both of potatoes and oats. No greater boon, nor one more desired by the people, could be conferred. Should the present

season prove, as it threatens, wet and cold, the consequences resulting from a combination of bad weather and inferior seed might bring about a really serious crisis; and, further, it is evident that, though the people have been able to meet the present difficulty, the recurrence of a second deficient harvest this year would put too great a strain upon their already slender resources.

The length of this letter must prevent any further reference to the chronic condition of these unions or to any fuller notice of the details of the measures which appear needed to improve and develop these wild districts.

The admirable reports and suggestions of the Royal Commission on Irish Public Works of 1887-88 really contain almost all that needs to be said upon this subject, but Blue-books are not read, and I shall be grateful if you will allow me in a further letter to state what appears to me to be required in the districts from which I write.

I am, yours faithfully,

J. H. T.

Gweedore Hotel.
May 14*th*, 1889.

THE CONDITION OF DONEGAL.

No. 2.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—In my letter in your issue of the 20th I asked permission to state in detail the measures which I advocate for permanently improving the condition of the western unions of Donegal. Before doing so I wish to refer for a moment to the omission in my former letter of any allusion to Poor Law relief as a test of poverty. But owing to the practical absence of outdoor relief and the objection on the part of the people to enter the house it is impossible to consider Poor Law relief as a real test of poverty in these and similar districts. Only the sick and friendless will consent to enter the workhouse, and outdoor relief is also confined to cases of sickness or infirmity.

Consequently out of a population of 54,000 in the two unions of Glenties and Dunfanaghy, the number of persons relieved in April, 1888, and 1889, were as follows: Indoor.—April, 1888, 119; April, 1889, 115. Outdoor.—April, 1888, 74; April, 1889, 90.

The deficiency in the potato crop in 1888 once again forces us to consider what are the measures needed to develop the resources of the country, and, if possible, to mitigate in the future the chronic poverty which exists.

Referring to the suggestion in my previous letter that the introduction of fresh seed, both oats and potatoes, is much required in West Donegal, it is useful to point out that since the distribution of seed potatoes in the congested districts of Mayo and Galway in 1886 the potato crops there have been most prolific and singularly free from disease, and upon all sides it is admitted that the condition of the people has improved. I think provision should be made for the supply of improved Scotch seed potatoes, and for this purpose I would suggest that depôts should be established where, under proper supervision, small quantities of seed—say, from 1cwt. to 4cwt.—could

be purchased at prime cost, to be paid for on delivery, by any of the small cultivators of land in the neighbourhood.

Everywhere I have found this proposal welcomed by all experienced persons, including numbers of the small tenants. The expenses attendant upon the distribution might fairly be borne by the Government, but it should be laid down as a rule that no seed is to be given except for cash.

The primary measure, and that upon which the success of any other remedial legislation depends, is, beyond all doubt, the development and extension of the railway system. It is everywhere stated to be the measure preliminary to all others for opening up the country.

It is impossible that the fisheries can be extended or increased in districts which are twenty-five to forty or more miles from a railway.

Fish, when caught in quantities, can hardly be sold at any price. Witness what occurred ten days since at Dunfanaghy on the north coast. Haddock have been unusually plentiful, and large numbers caught. In the absence of easy and rapid communication with the railway at Letterkenny, the price obtained was at the rate of 12s. 6d. for twenty-four dozen—about ½d. each for fish varying from 2lb. to 6lb. in weight! This is an instance, in passing, of what constantly happens, and probably accounts largely for the want of energy and enterprise on the part of the fishing population. I am perfectly satisfied that if higher prices could be obtained it would immediately stimulate this most important industry.

The prices of all kinds of agricultural produce would also be increased, especially eggs and poultry, which are at present sold at ridiculously low prices. The quantity of eggs exported from these districts is a very important item; eggs are selling at 6d. per dozen and (as is the case in Normandy) all the small tenants keep fowls, the number of eggs is much larger than is generally supposed. At the above price the value of the eggs sold in the Dunfanaghy Union and carted, at a cost of 30s. per ton, to Letterkenny, en route to Londonderry and England, is estimated at over £10,000 annually.*

Spring chickens, the size of grouse, were selling at 4d. to 6d. each. At the same period (May) the price of eggs in the London markets was 1s. per dozen, and of fowls 1s. 6d. to 2s. each.

* A sum nearly equal to the annual valuation of the whole Union.

There is also a concurrence of opinion that these poor district could ill afford to bear any addition to the present very high local taxation which might result from the payment of a guarantee for the construction of a railway, although such a guarantee might easily be borne in the more wealthy portions of the county. This is needful to recognise, as many persons favourable to the introduction of railways stated they should be opposed to their introduction if they caused any additional taxation. The Government must, I believe, be willing to make the railways irrespective of the amount of guarantee, or be content to limit it to a very low figure in the unions of Dunfanaghy and Glenties, which contain 54,000 persons, one-fourth of the population of the entire county—the Poor Law valuation of these unions being £32,000, one-ninth of the valuation of the Co. Donegal.

The Royal Commissioners, in their report on railways, suggest that the *maximum* rate of guarantee should not exceed sixpence in the pound—a most valuable recommendation, which allows a latitude most necessary to be used in dealing with impoverished unions in the West of Ireland.

There is also a preponderance of opinion that railways, if introduced, should follow the coast line, where the main population exists. The centre of Donegal is a wild, mountainous district, with a very sparse and widely-scattered population.

At present the line from Letterkenny to Londonderry is the only railway available for North-Western Donegal, and Letterkenny is forty to fifty miles distant from a large portion of the population. The people in and around Glenties make use of the Finn Valley Railway at Stranorlar, whilst the southern districts of the county are served by the railway near the town of Donegal. Both these railway stations are forty to fifty miles from the most distant portions of the Glenties Union.

For the northern and central districts an extension of the narrow-gauge line from Letterkenny is most essential. This line would run *viâ* Kilmacrenan to Creeslough and Dunfanaghy (the most important little town in the north-west), thence by Cross Roads and Falcarragh through Gweedore to Dunglow or Burton Port, more than fifty miles in all.

This would completely open up the most thickly populated districts in the north-west, and, wherever fishing could be carried

out, give a ready means of communication with Londonderry and Dublin, and has the advantage of facilitating the exodus of the people in search of work, and in many other ways benefiting them.

The population thus assisted would exceed 40,000 persons. In reference to this suggestion, the Commissioners in their second report on public works in 1888 recommend the extension of the narrow-gauge line from Letterkenny to Kilmacrenan, and although their recommendation stops there, they point out that the line might easily be extended as I have suggested above.

In stopping at Kilmacrenan the railway would be six or seven miles nearer to the north-western coast, but would practically confer little, if any, benefit. A bolder and more generous policy is needed if these unfortunate districts are to be really opened out and civilised.

The probable cost of this extension would not be less than £225,000 ; a rate of 6d. in the pound would add £650 yearly to the already heavy taxation of the Dunfanaghy Union.

This union now pays a rate of 4d. in the pound as its share of the guarantee for the Letterkenny Railway, forty or fifty miles distant from many of the ratepayers.

I think a rate of 2d. in the pound would be the utmost which, if any is demanded, the district under consideration can reasonably be asked to guarantee.

In the south or south midland districts of Donegal the Commissioners also recommend that the Finn Valley Railway should be tapped at Stranorlar, and a broad-gauge line constructed across the centre of Donegal through a very thinly-populated district to Glenties and thence to Killybegs on the south coast.

With great deference to the views of the Commissioners, I confess that I think this is not likely to prove nearly so useful as the alternative plan (also considered though, apparently after much hesitation, not approved by them), to extend the narrow-gauge line from Donegal town to Killybegs—the most important harbour in the county—and possibly thence to Glenties.

Another suggested line, apparently not considered by the Royal Commissioners, is, I venture to think, entitled to very careful attention. By making a short broad-gauge line of about fourteen miles from Castle Caldwell, on the Enniskillen and Bundoran Railway, to Donegal, and thence to Killybegs, broad-gauge communication

would thus be opened up between West Donegal and England *viâ* Greenore, and fish could be sent daily, without transhipment, by this route.

It has thus a marked advantage over the alternative extension of the Donegal line (upon the narrow-gauge system), which involves a transhipment on to the broad-gauge line at Stranorlar. An Act for the construction of the line from Castle Caldwell to Donegal town was obtained in 1879, but, owing to the disturbed condition of the country at that time, the required capital could not be obtained, and the Act has now lapsed. If the line—*i.e.*, from Castle Caldwell to Donegal and Killybegs—were adopted, a short extension—from a point between the two latter towns—would easily connect the important district of Glenties with this system, and I hope as effectually serve that portion of Donegal.

The total mileage from Castle Caldwell to Donegal, thence to Killybegs and Glenties, would be about forty miles; a somewhat shorter distance than the line recommended by the Commissioners from Stranorlar to Glenties and Killybegs.

[Some objections have been made both in the papers and privately to my advocacy of the extension of the broad-gauge line from Castle Caldwell on Lough Erne to Donegal town, and thence to Killybegs; and it is urged that the narrow-gauge system which will shortly connect Donegal town with Stranorlar and Londonderry ought to be continued from Donegal to Killybegs and Glenties.

There is no doubt considerable force in the arguments put forward for the adoption of this line both on account of the intimate connection of Londonderry with the south of Donegal and on the ground of the smaller cost of the narrow-gauge and of its adaptability to hilly districts. This does not, however, in any way alter my strong conviction of the importance of connecting Donegal town with the Great Northern system, *viâ* Castle Caldwell, even if a break of gauge is needed at Donegal. The benefit of giving South Donegal a second outlet and a direct communication with Greenore and England must be very considerable. In saying this I have no wish to undervalue or appear to lessen the importance of the port and town of Londonderry and highly appreciate the prominent position which it holds in Donegal and elsewhere.

It has also been said that the mileage mentioned by me in

pointing out the advantages of the line from Donegal to Glenties, &c., over that from Stranorlar to Glenties, is not correct. I regret any error on my part, but I am quite unable, after careful examination, to discover how the longer mileage of fifty miles is made up. I trust, however, that all minor differences may be put aside and that a united and determined effort may be made by all Irishmen to ensure the passing of Mr. Balfour's very liberal scheme for the extension of railways in the West of Ireland. Such a measure, if thrown out, is hardly likely ever to be offered again to the country.]

A further most important point which should be noticed is the probability that the ratepayers in the districts between Castle Caldwell and Killybegs would be able to pay the *maximum* guarantee required, while in the poorer districts between Stranorlar and Glenties it is more than doubtful whether any part of the guarantee could be levied. The importance of the harbour of Killybegs cannot, I think, be over-estimated; it is the only safe harbour for large vessels on a rocky and dangerous coast extending over 100 miles between Lough Swilly to the north, and Broadhaven, on the west coast of Mayo, to the south.

The quantity of fish caught in the vicinity of Killybegs is already large, and might be very much increased if direct communication were opened up between Killybegs and the east coast. Its value as a naval station has never been fully recognised, and the construction of a deep-water pier, which could be undertaken at a moderate cost owing to its landlocked position, would render it a harbour of national as well as local importance.

Let me once more say that, while there exists a variety of opinions as to the precise routes which might be adopted, there is none whatever as to the value and importance of the extension of railways into these very neglected districts.

This letter, commenced in Donegal, I have been compelled to finish at home. The delay has afforded me the great advantage of seeing the exposition of Mr. Chamberlain's views, as given in *The Times* of May 23rd, in reference to the crofters of Skye, and of knowing that his far more powerful advocacy is given to measures, whether for Skye or Donegal, almost identical with the suggestions contained in this letter.

If it is possible to grant me space for a further letter bearing on

the social condition of the inhabitants of Donegal I should be grateful.

I am, yours faithfully,

J. H. T.

Hitchin.
May 25th, 1889

P.S.—The development of the Fisheries seems to hold out the greatest prospect of success—and first as to *inshore fishing*. We heard the most distinct and favourable evidence of large quantities of fish being taken along the coast. One instance was mentioned by a gentleman who had provided two boats of a slightly better class than those in ordinary use, which he managed in partnership with the crews. In a short time, notwithstanding the present difficulties of transit, the men were able to earn from £14 to £20 each, and it was thought these profits would have been doubled had the railway transport been possible.

There is a general consensus of opinion that large quantities of fish are to be found on the "great banks," at a distance of from fifteen to twenty miles from the mainland, but at present the want of suitable boats prevents the fishermen from facing the dangers of the terrific Atlantic storms which sweep this wild and rugged coast. Occasionally a few Manx or Scotch boats fish with great success on these banks.

So far as my inquiries extended, there are at present very few (perhaps not half a dozen) boats on the West Donegal coast in which deep sea fishing in any but the calmest weather could be carried out. The great majority of what are called fishing boats are simply undecked sailing or rowing boats of various sizes. It is hardly necessary to point out that profitable fishing under such circumstances is an impossibility, and owing to the want of deep water piers or places of refuge, it would at present be unwise to supply many decked boats of a better class.

After the wasteful expenditure of money on piers in the past it requires anyone to consider, with the utmost care, where deep water piers, other than that at Killybegs, can be really beneficially placed. All I would suggest is, that a survey of a few of the principal fishing

stations along the West Coast should be made to determine where such piers or harbours could be safely constructed. The places suggested to me were :—

Port-na-Blair (near Dunfanaghy),
Burton Port,
Glen Harbour, Glencolumbkill.

All along the coast lobsters are caught in large numbers and sent weekly to Liverpool by steamers. When caught they are placed in cages in the water and are thus kept alive till the steamer passes, but unfortunately fish cannot be treated in this manner and must be sent daily and rapidly to a market.

It must not be overlooked that technical education in fishing as well as in other industries is also much required, and the great success which has attended the Baltimore Fishing Industrial School leads one to hope that some effort will be made to encourage the formation of similar institutions in Donegal.

The other industries, such as stocking knitting, frieze and flannel making, would, no doubt, be beneficially affected by the proposed railways. I was much gratified to notice the large quantities of home-made flannels and friezes in the various stores I visited. At Glenties the very extensive trade in weaving and stocking and glove knitting, introduced many years since and fostered by the Messrs. McDevitt, are too well-known to need any comment from me. Mrs. Ernest Hart and Miss Roberts are also most usefully helping to encourage local industries.—J. H. T.

The following Railways are especially required in the congested districts of ULSTER AND CONNAUGHT.

DONEGAL (NORTH).

1. Continuation of Railway from Letterkenny by Cresslough to Dunfanaghy and Burton Port.

DONEGAL (SOUTH).

2. Railway from Donegal Town by circuitous route to Killybegs, with extension to Glenties. .

3. Extension of Great Northern line from Castle Caldwell or Pettigoe to Donegal Town.

4. Railway from Ballyshannon to Sligo.

MAYO.

5 Railway from Ballina to Killala and Belmullet.

6. Railway from Westport to Newport (short line).

GALWAY.

7. Railway from Galway Town to Oughterard and Clifden (*coast route*).

8. Continuation of Railway from Tuam to Claremorris.

Other short lines are needed in the Southern Counties of Ireland, but in the absence of personal knowledge I do not venture to mention them.

THE CONDITION OF DONEGAL.

No. 3.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—As any attempt to delineate the condition of the congested districts of Donegal would be wholly incomplete without some reference to the social life and surroundings of the peasantry I shall, with your permission, endeavour, as shortly as possible, to indicate a few of the principal features of this social condition, which has so important a bearing upon the economic and political aspects of the present situation. The question, as a whole, is too large and complex to bring within the limits of a letter.

The knowledge that so many thousands of my fellow-creatures are living on the verge of poverty, in homes which in England we should regard as unfit for human habitation, and which no sanitary authority in this country would allow to exist for a day, has always stimulated me in my efforts to improve this condition and to endeavour to induce those in power to devise methods for its amelioration. How can it be possible to secure a healthy social tone where thousands of people, not only the poorest, but even those in fairly good circumstances, are living in dark hovels filled with smoke, the one living room, with its mud floor, occupied by large families, men, women, and children, who squat at one end around the peat fire, while the live stock, cows, horse, donkey, pigs, and poultry—their number varying according to the wealth of the occupant—are herded together at the other? That an amount of bodily health and freedom from disease, unknown in our great cities or even in our country towns, can exist under these circumstances may well be one of the marvels of the civilised world.

The pure mountain air and the antiseptic qualities of peat smoke must, indeed, be potent agencies in enabling human beings to live and thrive in such surroundings. None the less, it is a condition

which, when once realised, it is impossible to forget or to cease most earnestly desiring to amend.

In a previous letter I have pointed out certain measures specially required for developing the resources and earnings of the people—viz., extension of railways and encouragement of fisheries, technical schools, weaving, &c. ; but in addition to these various industries, which require capital and State aid for their development, it is of the utmost importance that every endeavour should be made by those who guide these people to promote individual effort and habits of thrift, self-reliance, and cleanliness in their houses, &c. The mere cleansing of the houses and the removal of the cattle, filth, &c., from the living room would effect a marvellous transformation, and to some extent remove the aspect of squalor and misery which so forcibly impresses a visitor unacquainted with the habits of the people. Nor is it less important to induce them, by attention to the increased cultivation and drainage of the land, and improvement in the breed and rearing of stock, to make the best use of whatever advantages they may individually possess. It is difficult to over-estimate the benefit which might result if the imperfectly-developed resources of the soil and the unused muscles of thousands of idle hands and arms were made the best use of.

In nearly all the estates in the Dunfanaghy Union, and more or less in Glenties, the people have grazing rights over very wide ranges of rough mountain lands, which, with a little attention to drainage, would feed at least double the amount of stock now kept.

Take, as an illustration, the 800 to 1,000 holdings on Captain Hill's Gweedore estate. The average rent per holding which, in 1887, it was arranged the tenants should pay, is less than £1 per annum.

For this trivial sum (5d. per week) the tenants usually possess from two to five acres of arable (or, rather, digging land, for ploughs are unknown here), and the right to graze their cattle over an area of mountain land exceeding 10,000 acres.

At present the 800 tenants who enjoy the right have, it is computed, at least 2,000 head of cattle and 5,000 sheep.

Is it too much to assume that this wide extent of land might support twice this amount of stock ?

These tenants have, in addition, free right to use all the turf

they can burn, and all the seaweed they can collect, both for manure and for the manufacture of kelp by those living on the sea coast.

On the adjoining estate (Mr. Olphert's) the tenants have generally larger holdings of arable land, and usually of a somewhat better quality; the rents varying from 15s. to £3 10s. per annum on the poorer townlands, and from £3 to £5, or in rarer cases £6 to £8, per holding on the better townlands. The rental of the whole of Mr. Olphert's estate averages about £3 per holding, and ploughs are used on some of the farms. These tenants have also free turbary and seaweed, but pay small sums for the right of grazing—2d. per head, I believe, for sheep, and 6d. each for cattle per annum.

In reviewing the condition of the people thus circumstanced, I cannot conceive that the payment of rent has any material influence in causing whatever poverty exists, or that its absence would remove this poverty. How can the payment of a weekly sum ranging from 5d. to 1s. 8d., or on larger holdings from 2s. to 3s. per week, be the cause of their present condition?

To my mind, the causes of the impoverished state of this class of peasants, whether in Donegal or in other districts similarly situated in the West of Ireland, must be sought for elsewhere. Three causes chiefly must strike the impartial inquirer, which apply equally to Donegal and to other congested districts:—(1) The absence of employment or paid labour for the male population, and in Donegal this is specially the case in the Union of Dunfanaghy and in the northern portions of Glenties. (2) The overcrowded condition and increasing numbers of a population attempting to live on small holdings of land of very poor quality, subject to frequent subdivision. (3) The apparent inability of the people to make the best use of the resources which they possess.

In the absence of paid labour at home, the migration during the spring and summer months, either to the East of Ireland, Scotland, or England, of nearly every man, boy, and girl able to work is, in several parishes of Donegal, resorted to. I was informed by one priest that from his parish, containing about 7,000 persons, nearly 1,000 boys and girls, of ages varying from nine to fifteen, go annually to the "Laggan" (a local term for the eastern portions of the province), and 800 to 1,000 men and boys go to

Scotland and England, for the summer and autumn harvests. The total earnings thus brought home cannot in ordinary years be less than £8,000.

In an adjoining parish the clearance during the summer is so complete that only those unfit for work are left behind—the number of these being so small that the chapels (always overcrowded in winter) are said to be almost empty during the summer months. In marked contrast to this, we find that in and around the neighbouring parish of Glenties the number of migratory labourers is very small, owing to the large amount of wages (several thousands a year) paid by Messrs. McDevitt for knitting, weaving, &c., which, with other work, proves a sufficient inducement to prevent the girls from going to the "Laggan." Another point important to notice is that the farms in the Glenties district are somewhat larger than those in the other parishes referred to; hence some agricultural employment is given, and few of the men are compelled to go to Scotland for work, though a considerable number of single people emigrate to America. The wages earned by the migratory labourers will average from £2 to £4 each for the boys and girls, and for the men from £5 to £8 each for the season. If we take the number of migrants from each family at one man and one child only, the earnings would range from £8 to £12 for the summer work. In other families, two or even three children may seek employment, and thus add proportionately to the family earnings. The majority of the families will also possess and be able to sell annually a "small beast," two or three sheep, and usually two pigs, which together will realise a further sum of £8 or £10, and to these may be added £1 to £3 for the sale of eggs and poultry. There is also some earning from knitting and weaving. Altogether, from these combined sources, the money realised in ordinary years by the majority of the tenants cannot be less than, say, £15 to £25 per annum, in addition to the milk of the cow and the produce from one to one-and-a-half acre of potatoes, the same quantity of oats, free turf, and more or less mountain grazing. These remarks are intended to apply to tenants who hold from three to five acres of arable land.

Looking at this condition as a whole, it may seem one which an English labourer might envy; but it must never be overlooked that the potato crop, grown often year after year on wet bog land, is constantly liable to partial failure; that, when this is the case, no

pigs can be fed; that sometimes, as in 1886, no "price" can be obtained for the small cattle; and that, owing to stagnation of trade in England or Scotland at various times, little wages can be earned by the men. The position of these small tenants is at such times undoubtedly a deplorable one.

These fluctuations have led to the dismal outcries for help which have so frequently been repeated in late years.

Nor must it be forgotten that in these small communities, as well as in all others, a number of either aged or shiftless persons, or of weak families, exist, in which the men or children are unable to go abroad for work or are incapable of properly cultivating even a smaller quantity of land than the average mentioned, and by whom also the "little cow," so important for the family to keep, cannot be retained. Such families, in the absence of employment at home, are thus thrown entirely for their sustenance upon the produce of the small holding, and must at all times be very poor, and in bad seasons on the verge of starvation. As to the exact proportion of this class to the whole it is difficult to speak, for the general aspect of the houses and clothing of the people varies little. But undoubtedly there exists, side by side with a fairly good condition, a very considerable amount of chronic abject poverty, which injuriously affects the condition of the whole community; and, unfortunately, when assistance is really needed for this poorer class, the demand for it is made by the whole. We all know of analogous conditions at home, and how, as at the East End, when public aid is given, the whole poorer population of the neighbourhood is demoralised. How often this demand has of late years been made for the congested districts is only too well known. In the years 1879-80, in 1883, and again in 1886, an urgent clamour has arisen from these districts of Donegal, and once more this spring; but, as I have sought to show, with little or no foundation in fact at present.

It cannot be regarded as satisfactory or desirable to perpetuate a social condition in which it is needful for children, of ages varying from nine to fifteen, to leave their homes during the spring and summer and be employed, chiefly in agricultural work, in a distant part of the country, without oversight or care. Nor, in connection with the migration of the men, can it be otherwise than injurious to the cultivation of the small holdings that the rightful tiller of the ground

should be compelled to neglect the land during so large a portion of the year. Still less can it be regarded as satisfactory that the exigencies of the present system almost compel further subdivision of the small holdings, in order to supply the wants of an increasing population, in districts so constantly liable to fluctuations of season and crop as to make it uncertain whether a portion of the inhabitants can be supported unless public charity comes to their aid.

The uncertainty thus engendered and the influence it exerts upon character is, as might be expected, disastrous in weakening self-reliance and in demoralising the people by the constant hope or expectation of charity.

Whilst writing upon the social and economic condition of the people, it is impossible to avoid all reference to the presence of "the Plan of Campaign" on certain estates in a portion of Donegal which has of late attracted so much attention. I did not find that the tenants, though uniting in the "Plan," and suffering themselves to be moved hither and thither like pieces on a chess-board at the will of the players, objected individually to the payment of rent, nor did they appear to entertain hostile feelings to the chief resident landlord, though undoubtedly strong feeling does exist against "landlordism," whatever this term may convey to their minds. Nor can this cause surprise when we recall the addresses and written appeals made to the tenants, in which their poverty and other evils which afflict them are usually attributed to the existence of "landlordism." Indeed, so far as I could gather, the views upon the land question held by many of those to whom the people look for guidance seemed to me almost identical with those of the Socialist leaders in England. The term "prairie value" with the one takes the place of the "unearned increment" used by the other; and the right of the tenants of Donegal to hold their lands at "prairie value" is demanded with equal frankness, as is the right of the occupiers of ground-rents or other property in London to the "unearned increment" demanded by the Socialist leaders. What the influence of this teaching would be at the East End of London if the social conditions were the same it is not difficult to guess. The difficulty of arriving at any settlement between those who demand "prairie value" on the one hand, and those who adhere to "judicial rents," or reasonable reductions on the other, will be evident. Nevertheless,

many conversations with persons interested on both sides, have made me aware that a strong feeling exists in favour of a speedy settlement of the questions at issue. The leaders of the people cannot shut their eyes to the injury which this long-continued struggle causes both in its moral and material aspects. The influence of the sanction given to the repudiation of a debt in the shape of rent which the tenant is able to pay, does not, as they are aware, end there. I more than once heard the opinion expressed that it would no longer be safe for the shopkeeper to give the usual credit from the fear that the shop debts would stand next on the list for repudiation—a most serious matter for the small tenants, who depend during certain portions of the year upon the shopkeeper for the daily or weekly supply of necessaries, which are paid for with money earned in Scotland or elsewhere or when the sale of the cattle, &c., is effected. It was, therefore, with much satisfaction that I heard, even on the part of some extreme partisans, a willingness expressed that the whole of the questions in dispute should be submitted to arbitration on the basis of sale and purchase by the tenants under Lord Ashbourne's Act—one arbitrator to be appointed by each side, with an umpire to be selected either by the Land Commissioners or as might be mutually arranged. Another suggestion has been made, that the whole of the matters in dispute might, if the parties interested were willing, be left to the arbitration of the Land Commissioners.

In coming to the conclusion to suggest an attempt to settle the rent difficulties in Donegal on the basis of sale and purchase under Lord Ashbourne's Act, I do so after much careful thought and deliberation.

I have for many years advocated the conversion of tenants who occupy sufficient land to enable them to maintain their families into owners, but the difficulties which surround the conversion of the smallest class of tenants into owners have hitherto appeared to me so considerable as to render it unwise to attempt any extensive application of the Ashbourne Act to them.

The conclusion has, indeed, been forced upon me from a sense of the gravity of the present position and the conviction that a victory for either side on the existing basis would in no sense bring with it a permanent settlement, so ardently to be desired in the interests both

of landlord and tenant. In illustration let me mention that I was informed that no rents had at the time of my visit to Donegal (May) been received by the landlord on the Gweedore estate, although one and a-half year's rent was then due under the so-called settlement, so very advantageous to the tenants, which was arrived at in November, 1887. In advocating the extension of the Act I do not overlook the existence in Donegal and elsewhere of a limited number of very poor townlands, in which little, if any, rent has been obtained for four, five, or even nine years, and which seem almost beyond the powers of legislation in the direction indicated to benefit or deal with. The existing powers of the Land Act are ample, I believe, to enable the Commissioners to deal with the bulk of the properties under review, yet many considerations lead me to the conclusion that, if any attempt should be made by the Government to take up the question of the congested districts as a whole, some special legislation will be required. The rights of mountain grazing, turf cutting, as well as questions affecting drainage, will also require very careful consideration.

Two reasons have frequently been urged against advancing money to the smallest class of tenants—(1) the doubt of the adequacy of the security for the advance and of the ability of the tenants to pay the instalments regularly; (2) that subdivision, being unchecked, would go on with increased force. As to the first, many inquiries made on the spot have led me both to hope and believe that the greatest efforts would be made by the purchasers to insure the due fulfilment of their obligations. Happily we are not left to mere conjecture to enable us to form an opinion on this point. The Land Commissioners have already sanctioned the sale and purchase of similar small holdings in a few cases, one of which is in the centre of the district under review. In this, as well as in other instances alluded to, I am informed on the best authority that the instalments have been paid with the utmost regularity. The townland above mentioned (Lower Beltony) is situated within a short distance of Falcarragh, and formed a portion of the Olphert estate. Its total area ot 263 acres was occupied by thirty-six tenants; the rental was £89; the annuities are £66; fourteen of the holdings were under five acres, thirteen under ten acres, nine under twenty acres; thirty-one were

valued under £4, five over £4 and under £10; the smallest area was one acre two roods, and the lowest valuation 15s. This property was sold three years ago at seventeen and a-half years' purchase, and the annual instalments, which include the purchase of the land as shown above, are considerably less than the former rent—viz., former rent £89, annuity £66. The holdings are in every respect similar to many other portions of the Olphert estate, though larger than most of the holdings on the Hill estate at Gweedore. The annual instalments of these small Beltony landowners have been regularly paid, in striking contrast to the rents of the adjoining tenants, who have joined the Plan. In driving through the district we were suddenly struck by the evidence of unusual care and of superior cultivation of some small holdings of land, and found we had come upon the recently-enfranchised landowners of Beltony. In conversation with the men, who were busily engaged on the land, we found, in spite of an occasional grumble, that they seemed well contented with their position.

"The work's hard, yer honour, but there's pleasure in it," was the ultimate result of our inquiries.

No better illustration could be wished for or furnished of the influence and stimulus of ownership than these lands afforded.

Just beyond these little proprietors we came upon a small estate owned by a lady who is held by her tenants in the highest esteem. When they found that this lady was a friend of ours they crowded around us to shake hands and make us welcome for the "good lady's" sake. "She is a nice woman, yer honour. D'ye see the big wall that she had built to shelter the lands and to give us work? And she made us a road right up into the bog," &c. "Yes, she's a good woman." But as I saw and admired what had been done I confess that I was no longer surprised when I remembered that our friend had shortly before informed us that out of a rental of £200 to £300 a year she had one year only received 4s. 9d. as her share of this sum! How few can afford to own land on these terms! That which struck me most forcibly, however, was that, so far as could be observed, there was no such improvement in the cultivation of these holdings as was so evident on the lands of the small purchasers adjoining them. They were undoubtedly walled in, and the houses, which had been white-washed at the "good lady's" expense, were much neater; otherwise

there was no perceptible difference in the cultivation or improvement of the lands which distinguished them from those of adjoining tenants on other estates.

Let any one who doubts this visit for himself the wild valleys of Upper and Lower Beltony. The Beltony estate is not the only instance, I am glad to know, in which small tenants have become purchasers, and in which the annual instalments have been paid with extreme regularity.

The second reason urged against peasant proprietorship is that subdivision of the land will, when the control of the landlord is removed, still further increase. How small the landlord's power has been in this direction may be inferred from the fact that both subdivision and population have increased to a greater extent in some of those districts than in any other part of Ireland,* and the opinion of those best able to judge (with whom I have conversed) is distinctly in favour of the view that the influence of ownership would tend in the direction of lessening subdivision. The experience gained as to the influence of purchase under the Church Temporalities and Land Acts in Ireland also favours this presumption. The evil of subdivision is, however, one which must be grappled with, whether the cultivators of the soil continue as tenants or are transformed into owners of land.

The question still remains, what influences in the interests of the people can properly be brought to bear upon the congested districts which shall effectually check the further subdivision of the impoverished land ?

The benefits which it is hoped may result from the introduction of railways and the development of fisheries, &c., will be of slow growth, and can, as even the most sanguine are aware, affect only a portion of the population.

A few years ago the word "migration" possessed a peculiar charm in certain quarters, but it will be admitted by those who most warmly supported the movement that the attempt to carry it out ended in signal failure, and I feel assured, although the money voted for this object in 1883 remains untouched in the Treasury, that migration will not again be seriously attempted.

I am well aware that the suggestion of emigration will be

*See Letter on the Condition of Donegal, No. 1.

received with horror more or less real by some among your readers. Nevertheless, for the sake of thousands who to-day might have been living in plenty or even wealth had they not been hindered from availing themselves of the help offered by the Act of 1882-3, I shall once more be bold enough to urge that in the congested districts of Ireland assisted emigration (of, if it were possible, colonisation) shall be placed within easy reach of every suitable family, or even of individuals, who may desire to avail themselves of it, side by side with the other remedies proposed for the social and economic benefit of the people. To ensure the success of any such measure I would urge, among other safeguards, that emigration should be carried out under officers specially appointed for the service, and not by the Poor Law Authorities, in order to avoid any risk of the emigrants being regarded as paupers. To those who doubt the benefits of emigration and its applicability to even the poorest people in these districts, let me recommend to their notice an article in the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1889, containing very remarkable evidence of the comfort and well-doing of a number of families selected from the poorest hovels of Mayo and Galway in 1883-4, given in a letter from the priest who accompanied the people to St. Paul, Minn.* It has been loudly asserted that emigration is "unpopular" and "opposed to the instincts of the people." Even those who say so cannot shut their eyes to what is going on around them, and I do not hesitate to say that the exact reverse is true, and that emigration is most popular. If not, why do thousands leave weekly, and why, in the face of the strongest warnings, do the people fly even to countries where both the language and customs are unknown to them? It will be said why, then, assist emigration further? The answer is that, large as are the numbers going from Ireland generally, the proportion leaving the congested districts is, owing to the poverty of the people, much too small to give the relief which is needed. In proof of this I may say that since the assisted emigration carried on by our Committee ceased in 1885 I have each year received from the congested districts applications representing many hundreds of people who ask to be assisted to join their friends, very few of whom, I regret to say, I have been able to help.

*A portion of this letter is given on p. 46.

There are many other points affecting these districts which may well demand thoughtful attention, but already I have occupied your valuable space at too great a length, and I will only add that I have to ask those who may differ from me in the suggestions which I have thrown out, to give to them as careful and patient a consideration as is possible.

My only object in writing is to propose some remedies for a condition of society in the West of Ireland which all true friends of the people, of all shades of opinion, must lament.

I am, yours faithfully,

J. H. T.

Grindlewald, Switzerland.
June 24th.

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS OF IRELAND, WRITTEN IN 1886.

In this, my eighth visit during recent years to the West of Ireland, I have again been profoundly impressed with the condition of chronic misery—the ever-existing destitution of the majority of the small holders of land. The failure of the potato crop brings this dreadful condition forcibly upon us, and for a time we feel that it is unbearable, and with such kindly aid as is in our power we seek to relieve it, and save the people from the fate which would otherwise overtake them. But this relief, however indispensable for the moment, does not and cannot reach down to heal the permanently impoverished condition of the people overwhelmed with the burden of shop debts and arrears of rent. For this, more continuous and heroic remedies are needed. The fact that the small holdings of worn-out land cannot support the crowded population is no longer a debateable question. It is unanimously borne witness to. From priest, or landlord, or tenant there is but one response: "Without other means of earning money there is no possibility of living out of the land." "The living isn't in it, rent or no rent, yer honour!" And can it be otherwise? Consider Achil, with its thousand families, of whom three-fourths are living on holdings so small that the rental or valuation does not exceed thirty shillings a year each—and few of the remainder exceed £4 a year! Take another instance in Connemara of 1,000 families attempting to live on 1,700 acres of arable bog land, mere patches of soil lying among great boulders.

The time for inquiry or speculation has past; the necessity for action is acknowledged, and the question now is what shall that action be? Is there, or is there not, in these districts any industrial occupation which can be developed or employment given, or must

that employment be sought elsewhere? Looking at the long line of sea coast the answer seems spontaneously to arise: "Surely for those families living on the sea shore is not this employment to be found in the encouragement of the fishing industry? this and no other seems practicable." But even so the question is not wholly answered, for constantly is the inquirer met with the assertion that the terrific force of the Atlantic, and the frequency and violence of storms, render fishing so precarious and uncertain that it cannot, as now carried out, be depended upon for maintenance.

This is everywhere evidenced by the statements made as to the loss of boats and nets, involving a constant need for costly renewal of materials. The frequent interruptions and delays in the sailings of the gunboats, detailed by the Admiralty to assist in the distribution of the seed potatoes this spring, proves that even for powerful vessels the stormy coast is no imaginary hindrance to the development of the fishing trade. Nor should it be overlooked that doubts are in some quarters entertained as to the presence of fish in large quantities at a short distance from the shore. It is even said that the fish, formerly plentiful on the coasts of the islands of Arran and Boffin, have disappeared. None the less it is, as has been said, the one industry which appears to open a door of hope for the employment of such of the families as are living on the sea coast, and as such is it not imperative that an attempt should be made to develop it to the utmost? With the uncertainty which surrounds the whole question, and the cost and extent of any investigations conducted on a scale large enough to be really exhaustive, it seems evident that no private individual or company can be expected to undertake them. Further than this, investigations ought to be made simultaneously at various places on the coasts, and to be effectual should be carried on over a lengthened period, and might involve an outlay of some thousands of pounds. The funds necessary can alone be looked for from the State, and in pointing to the Treasury as the source it may not be amiss to remind objectors that for years past at short intervals, these districts have been and even now are the recipients of grants and other measures of relief from the Imperial Exchequer, which might no longer be needed should the investigations prove satisfactory and result in the profitable establishment of fisheries.

On the other hand, if these investigations proved unsatisfactory,

and that (as some fear) fishing on the West Coast of Ireland cannot be made a profitable industry, the fact would be ascertained, and the mouths of those who believe in its success and who are loudly denouncing the Government for their indifference to the question would be stopped.

To ensure success, let a Commission of Inquiry be at once appointed by Parliament—wholly without reference to politics—largely composed of practical and experienced men, who shall be empowered to obtain the paid services of practical fishermen, accustomed to all kinds of sea-fishing. These men should be sought for, whether engaged on the East Coasts of England or Ireland, and especially from among those engaged in the similar districts on the North Coasts of Scotland. But the question ought not to be allowed to stop here. In the event of the Report of the Commissioners proving encouraging, powers should be sought and a grant obtained to initiate and establish fisheries on a considerable scale.

The grant should be large enough to defray the hire or purchase of a number of larger or smaller boats and steam trawlers, to employ and train the men and make use of the boats now engaged in fishing, and to establish fishing schools at intervals along the West Coast similar to the successful schools at Baltimore, Co. Cork.

Surely, a grant of £100,000 to a Commission so constituted—barely the annual cost of 1,000 police-constables—might be of incalculable benefit.

To those acquainted with the districts another difficulty will at once present itself. In what way is it proposed to place your fish, if caught, in markets where at all times a price can be obtained? Largely, probably, by means of steam carriers. But not wholly so; and the necessity for making the "Tramways Act" of 1882 a reality in place of a sham is at once made evident. The powers needed for the construction of the light railways which would bring the West Coast within easy reach of the main lines of railways which intersect Ireland, exist, but are a dead letter. For this Act as it now stands is no more applicable to the districts concerned than would be an Act enabling the impoverished East Enders to build houses for themselves which omitted to lend or find the money required.

A glance at the accompanying map (to which I bespeak attention)

will at once prove how impossible it is for any industry to be successfully carried out in districts which lie thirty to sixty miles from the nearest railway, and especially so for the one industry of the district which deals with a perishable article like fish.

It is not, however, for this alone, as I have often pointed out, but for every other consideration, essential that the State should step in and provide the moneys needed for the formation of the steam tramways or light railways, which are required if these districts in the West of Ireland are to be easily governed and their slender resources developed. The value of such connections would be readily understood by the existing railway companies, with whom probably arrangements could most beneficially be made for their construction. The details I do not attempt to enter into, further than to again place my conviction on record that one of the first steps in the direction of any permanent improvement or amelioration of the condition of the West of Ireland consists in the introduction of means of ready access to the civilised world.

Unhappily the statement of that which is needed to improve and raise the condition of the wretched tenantry of the West does not end here. In advocating means for the extension of the fishing industry, it will at once be evident that the numbers situate on the sea coast, although very considerable, are a portion only of the thousands of destitute tenants living on lands under £4 annual valuation who are placed at a distance from the coast.

Two measures have at various times been warmly advocated for the relief of the West of Ireland—Migration and Emigration. Apart from other objections or difficulties the costliness of the former has always appeared to me a sufficient reason why it can never be carried out on a scale extensive enough to attain the object in view, viz., the relief of the congested districts. Nor, I may add, for the permanent benefit of those migrated.

Twenty acres of land is by a sort of common consent taken as the minimum quantity upon which a family can obtain a decent livelihood in the West. But to buy the land and to place a family without capital upon twenty acres of land worth cultivating, with a decent house and barn, and to supply one of these with the capital needed to cultivate and stock the twenty acres, must involve an outlay of at least £400, and more probably £500 a holding. For

every 1,000 families so placed the outlay would be £400,000 to £500,000, and to produce any appreciable effect upon the congestion it appears needful to remove ten times this number, involving many millions in an attempt to give a bare maintenance to a few thousand families upon borrowed money—the interest, *i.e.*, rent, of which it would in many seasons be impossible for them to repay.

Four years ago a Migration Company obtained £50,000 under the Arrears Act for this purpose, but hitherto there is no evidence, so far as I am aware, of the migration of a single family from the congested districts.

With a similar amount the Committee with whom I had the honour to be associated, assisted, clothed, and placed more than 1,000 families with their friends, in positions to obtain work, in the Colonies and United States.*

Their success has been attested by the numerous letters, the large sums of money sent home to friends and relations, and the reports of those who have visited them in their new homes. Not less striking is the evidence given by the numerous prepaid passages sent to Ireland by emigrants, to enable a sister or brother or father or mother to join them in the land of plenty. These, alas, are sometimes rendered useless and returned to the sender, owing to the extreme poverty of the recipient, who is unable to find the needful clothing and fare to the steamer. These cases frequently came under our notice during this spring. Thirty or more such persons it was our happiness to send rejoicing on their way this year, most of whom had passage tickets which had been held three, six, or nine months, and in one instance, where a mother who had sent for two of her children, the year allowed was within a week of expiring.

Whatever percentage may be deducted for failures among the emigrants it is extremely small compared with the successes, and no unprejudiced observer can, I think, doubt that whether as regards the immediate or future benefit of those who require assistance, emigration is infinitely to be preferred to migration as a cure for congestion. The difference in the cost is, as it has been shown, enormous ; for every 1,000 families placed on lands in Ireland, £400,000 or £500,000 would be required, whilst for a like amount, no less than ten times the same number of families, or 50,000

* *Vide* Reports of Tuke Fund Committee, 1882-4.

persons, could be placed in a position to earn large wages in the Greater Britain of our Colonies, or in the United States.

But it may be said, the position of the migrated family on their twenty acres in Ireland must be superior to that of the family who, by emigrating, earn wages as labourers in various occupations. To those who have followed the fortunes of a number of emigrants, witnessed the change in their condition, and noticed in how short a time the savings which flow from the high wages obtained have enabled many to become the owners of freeholds of sixty to 120 acres of land, without debt or loan of any kind, it may well be doubted whether, even on this ground alone, the position of the emigrant is not vastly superior. Those who are acquainted with agriculture in England are well aware that the man who farms twenty acres of ordinary land under ordinary circumstances barely raises himself above the position of a well-paid labourer. There is no hope for him that at some future day he or his sons will, by their savings, be able to acquire the land they are toiling upon.

It must not, however, be overlooked that in many quarters Colonisation is strongly urged in preference to Emigration; and it is important to consider how far its claims are superior to the latter.

(1) As to the cost (as it has been often shown), £150 (to £200) is needed to place a family upon the 160 acres of land offered free by the Canadian Government, and £200 to £250 for sixty to 100 acres in such of the Australasian Colonies as make grants of land at a low or nominal price.

The cost of placing 1,000 families as Colonists would, therefore, be, at £150 per family—£150,000, as against the £400,000 or £500,000 needed for migration, or the £50,000 for the emigration of the same number.

The difference in cost between colonisation and ordinary emigration, great as it is, ought not to be allowed at once to influence the judgment in deciding against the merits of the former.

It is well-known that various proposals have been made by the Canadian Government and other bodies, for placing some thousands of Colonists upon free grants of land in the North West Territory. With the uncertainties which attend any great experiment it is, perhaps, not wholly to be regretted when dealing with the fate of a large number of families that the larger schemes were, from various

causes, allowed to drop. On the other hand, it would have been of the greatest service in assisting us to judge of any more extended scheme, if a portion of one of the liberal proposals made by the Canadian Government, some years ago, had been tried.

It is at the same time important to recall that two small experiments, conducted with every care and precaution, for the well-being of the Colonists, have not succeeded as regards Irish Colonists:—the one under the charge of * Bishop Ireland in his colonisation villages in Minnesota, and the other under Mr. John Sweetman, of Currie, Minnesota.

The cause of failure in both cases appears to have been the same. The Irish Colonist, taken from his petty holding in Ireland, was not fitted by his previous habits and education for the new and strange conditions under which he was placed. The solitariness of his position, the tall prairie grass which almost prevented his seeing the boundary of his own square of sixty or eighty acres, became intolerable. The inability at once to adapt himself to so novel a life, and to await a future result, combined with the large wages which were offered him for labour, led him in the majority of cases to give up his land in disgust. The conclusion of the earnest men who sought by these experiments to assist in solving the question of Irish distress has resulted in their changing their system, and in taking no settlers who have not £100 of their own.

This is very similar to the circumstances under which Lady Gordon Cathcart's experiment with a few Scotch crofters has been carried out.

In thus stating the doubtful results of past efforts to colonise with poor Irish tenants, I have no wish to discourage some further attempt, provided the Colonists are accompanied by competent advisers or superintendents. Indeed I wish strongly to urge, that using the experience of the past, a further experiment in colonisation should be made with twenty-five or fifty selected families to be placed on lands in the North-Western Territory or in Western Australia (if suitable land can be obtained there).

In the experimental stage of colonisation as regards the class

*It must be understood that I do not refer to the migration of Irish or other families from the Eastern States to Bishop Ireland's Western villages. This has, as a rule, been very successful.

under consideration, it must, I think, be evident that it cannot *at once*, if ultimately, be depended upon for the relief we require.

For this it would therefore appear we, for the present, are thrown back upon the ordinary assisted emigration.

If one conclusion is more deeply impressed upon my mind than another as the result of our three years' work in assisting emigrants from Ireland, it is the necessity for the most careful and deliberate consideration of every step taken in the work. The responsibility involved in even facilitating the departure of those who were so anxious to leave, has ever seemed to me a most serious one. Their future good or evil must ever be borne in mind, and it cannot too often be repeated that mere assisted emigration without the closest consideration as to the fitness of the emigrants, the opportunities for obtaining employment, and the suitability of the destination chosen by them, may prove a curse instead of a blessing. None the less it is my happiness to believe that granted these considerations, and this personal care, emigration has proved to multitudes of poor Irish men and women a boon of the highest magnitude.*

What, therefore, seems to be needed for the relief of these districts is the establishment on a PERMANENT BASIS OF AN EMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, *which, with a competent staff, and the co-operation, if possible, of a voluntary committee, combined with systematic and careful oversight at the various ports of departure and arrival, shall from year to year, and not spasmodically, deal with all applications for assisted emigration, and advise or make grants in each case as may seem for the best.*

In thus advocating three measures for the relief of destitution in the West of Ireland—Encouragement of the Fisheries, Extension of Tramways, and Emigration or Colonisation—I do not overlook that many other plans may with advantage be employed, nay, must be, before the desired end can be obtained. But whatever these may be—"Technical Education" and "Encouragement of Native Industries," or an extended system of Arterial Drainage—as giving employment to the people, I must leave them to their special advocates to promote to the utmost.

Amidst the clash of political warfare by which we are surrounded,

* In confirmation of this see letter from Rev. M. Mahony, C.C., of St. Paul Minn., received since the above was written, giving a report of the remarkable well-doing of a number of Connemara emigrants sent out in 1883. See p. 46.

the advocacy of simple economic measures for the relief of the chronic condition of the West of Ireland will, I doubt not, be received in some quarters with indifference, and in others even with a contemptuous smile. If so, let me say that I have purposely omitted all reference to other parts of Ireland, and the measures so hotly contested by statesmen and politicians on either side, upon the issue of which so much depends for the future good or evil of Ireland, and if of Ireland hardly less of Great Britain. In this issue no one takes a deeper interest, or more ardently desires a wise, comprehensive, and liberal settlement of the all-absorbing and all-important controversy than I do.

But in the portion of Ireland under consideration, it must, I think, be admitted on all sides, that the evils which affect the people can alone be removed (if at all) by economic measures, and not by political changes, however wide their scope. Under whatever form of Government Ireland may in the future exist, these evils will perpetually confront it, and demand a recognition and solution. It is a peculiar condition of society demanding special measures, specially adapted to it. It is one which "no citizen of the United Kingdom can venture to think he is not deeply interested in," and the Government which most fully recognises and accepts its responsibility in this light, and deals with the evils in a really comprehensive and liberal spirit, will prove to be the most stable and permanent, and cannot fail to win the confidence and attachment of the people

J. H. T.

REPORT OF SUCCESS OF EMIGRANTS FROM WEST OF IRELAND.

Assisted by the Tuke Committee in 1883, *given in a Letter from Rev. Father Mahony.*

Under date of St. Paul, November 5th, 1888.

I think I am entitled to have an opinion worth hearing as to the condition of the "Tuke Emigrants" to Minnesota. I had pitied—not barrenly—their condition at home; I travelled with many of them the whole way from Galway to St. Paul; I was with them, trying to help them through their home-sickness and the troubles of their start in life at this side. And since then, frequently visiting them in their homes, or meeting them in the streets, or meeting their several pastors, I have been able to inform myself as to their condition and progress, and I can say they have been lifted to quite a new life, benefited every way, and are right along doing better and better. I might mistrust, as being rather too favourable to the change, my own impression if it were not backed on every side by those of pastors with continuous opportunities for observation. But particularly and most notably it is backed by Bishop Ireland, who declares lately that the change in their condition, and in themselves and their prospects, in every way is positively marvellous, and that "they have become a most valuable and important addition to the community." That Minnesota has been a land of fulfilment is very tellingly shown by the numbers who have every year kept coming on from Toronto and other places in Canada and from Ireland, encouraged by the good accounts and often helped by the prepaid passage tickets of their friends in St. Paul.

The continuous growth and improvement in the twin cities, St. Paul and Minneapolis, these late years, have been occasioning an unlimited demand for just the sort of labour and service suited to immigrants from Ireland—common labour for men and boys, and housework for girls. With streets in every direction to be opened and graded, or widened, and again and again cut through for sewer-pipes, water-pipes, gas-pipes, there has been every year, from the opening of spring until well into winter, work for every comer who could handle a pick or a shovel, and never at less than a dollar and a half a day, and during part of the time a

dollar and three-quarters and even two dollars a day. Even in the winter, when no more grading of the roads could be done, men got a dollar and three-quarters a day for only clearing off the snow and ice from the sidewalks and the street-car tracks. In St. Paul particularly the "Ice Palace" has served to prolong work and keep up wages all through the winter. And at the same time that there is work for men out of doors there is also a constant demand for females indoors, in private families, hotels, boarding-houses, laundries, at wages ranging from eight to sixteen dollars a month for ordinary housework. In this line the demand is always in excess of the supply. So the Irish emigrants could not but find it well for them to be here. Really, even a little nurse-girl, only able to wheel around a perambulator, *might support all alone a large family.* . . . . And as none of the emigrant families are without some wage-earners, and most of them have several, they have been taking and saving such sums of money as no outsider could have a notion of till he calculated them, or some accident revealed them to him. Where the ordinary impression may be to the contrary, it is usually a case of more developed "acquisitiveness." As contrasted with an American artisan's neat house, and even with a Scandinavian, or German, or poor Polish immigrant's interiorly home-like shanty, the "Connemara's" home is deceptive. It is often bare, unpartitioned, unplastered, unpapered — such as his former poverty, or abiding fear of "a rise" of rent upon any show of "style," has trained his soul, without any æsthetic torture, to look at and live in. And sometimes when benevolent people, whether on the part of the city or some private society, go in quest of objects of charity, they can get accommodated, of course. But let not even the priest expect to get to know and note down what, when the occasion arises, can be produced from the red box or the rafters, in rolls of greenbacks or deposit certificates for hundreds of dollars, and beyond. Flour, bread, meat, groceries, and the common sort of wearables, are comparatively very cheap; of even the beer this may be said, that it is "werry fillin'" at the price, a dollar for a ten-gallon keg. So that if the Irish immigrants do not, after a couple of years, like others coming as poor as they are from other countries, own their houses and lots, free of all burden of rent for ever, it is because they do not set their minds on doing so. They are afraid, traditionally, of putting their savings anywhere but into the stocking or the bank. Being so accustomed to rent, they easily fall into renting still, and come in a few years to have paid out in rent for the passing use of a house as much as might have bought it outright or built one free for ever; and again, seeing limitless ground lying idle around them or growing weeds, they cannot readily see the benefit of paying some hundreds of dollars, it may be, for a few square feet of it. They have on this account missed splendid opportunities. Even now, however, the poorest may begin to own their little places by aid of some safe building society. By the end of 1887 a good number of the assisted emigrants had bought and owned their houses and lots; and, after their example, and favoured by the continuous good wages and the temporary set-back in the price of real estate, doubtless a great many more will have done so by the end of this year.*

This *landed-proprietorship*, with all that it involves, is a great means of incorporating them into the social and civic life of the rest of the population. This is

* "P.S.—Nov. 8th, 1888. They have done so; one of them assured me yesterday: 'There's hardly one now but what has got a lot in some shape.'"

being done right along, even with the old. The close balance of the two political parties serves to hurry it up. The meetings for church services, with the more old-settled and the natives, have strong influence in this direction. The young men or "the greenhorns" need but a short time to get, in dress and speech and look, into "the hang" of the country; the young women still less; it is marvellous how they brighten up and improve every way. With hardly an exception the girls of "the Connemaras" are respected and trusted and treasured as wives or domestics. So with the little girls of the several families, even where their brothers are slovenly, or loafers and bad, they are cleanly and bright, and eager to go to school and church and Sunday-school, and everyway the peers of their American coevals, or ahead of them, as I thought. In even the most poor-looking shanties there are abundant supplies of the very best kind of food: sacks of wheat-flour, loaves of the whitest bread (home-made and baker's), butter, groceries of the primest brand, meat, even fresh butcher's meat—more meat, and more belief in it, and more of the butcher's labour in it, than is good for the people's pockets and health. Not in the best hotels have I been able to sniff the full "Oolong" aroma as from the black porcelain teapots in the shanties of the "Connemaras." That these want the "best" is well known to the grocers, and it is got for them. I have no doubt they spend for groceries three or four times as much as others. The vast improvement in their condition is often heartily adverted to by the emigrants. They are not merely satisfied, but "enthused" with the change. If any wish to see again Old Ireland it is as American tourists.

It would add unspeakably to the comfort and the start in life as well as the constant earning-power and the social standing of emigrants if, before leaving Ireland, they were posted on how to do and live and work here. Surely it would be possible, easy even, at fairs and pattens and church-service gatherings, by plain speech and object illustrations, to instruct the vast numbers destined to emigrate on how to do at this side, the males and the females in their several lines; how to get about building and fixing up a shanty, to manage the American stove, to cook and keep house economically. The pork gone for, and fetched from the butcher's at eight or ten cents the pound, could be bought in a dressed hog for three cents, or alive for two. And so of other things. The actual exhibition of the extra handful of heavy dollar-pieces to be secured in one month by handiness in cooking, baking, laundry-work, &c., would wake up many an otherwise heedless girl to become in no time a proficient in all these, and able at this side to get anything she chose to ask in wages and general treatment. And so for other kinds of crafts. The genius of this country and the dearness of labour call for "all-round" handiness. Dull German and Scandinavian boys will in a week or less qualify themselves to run a steam-heating engine, and thereby have open to them chances of forty-five dollars a month when, without this bit of knowledge, they would have to take only ten or fifteen dollars, or even be idle. Last spring, on a building in front of my house, Scandinavians and others were getting in the several lines of work from two dollars fifty cents up to seven dollars the day, the last for plain brick-setting; two Irishmen were at the painful, dangerous hod-carrying for only one dollar fifty cents. Women sometimes fall into the habit of daily beer-parties, for want of something to do, whilst they might have—only they have never comtemplated the thing—regular rounds of little jobs at scrubbing

and housework, and earn even more than their husbands. It is only some time after reaching America that they learn how other women do, and how they might do, but meantime they have settled down into doing nothing, and they stay there. And the drink, in view of the immense numbers always coming to America, and the all-in-all-ness here of sobriety, of total abstinence even—all the drink of the old country ought to be made bitter and nauseous, as with aloes, so as to utterly disgust and wean people from all desire or taste for it ; or, better yet, the grain wasted to make it should be saved to stop hunger and the chronic wail of distress ; and the manufacture of the worthless, mischievous thing should entirely cease.

In addition to the foregoing very interesting summary, Father Mahony gives a detailed report of visits recently paid to over fifty of our Connemara families in or near St. Paul, from which I select the following cases :—

No. 1.—T. F., notwithstanding that he brought with him from the old country a good deal of sickness in his family and a rather feeble constitution in himself, has already reached a quite independent position. His three girls, aged 21, 15, and 14, had places in the Ryan Hotel, one at fourteen dollars and the other two at twelve dollars each per month, with their board. One of his boys was what would be called down east and in the old country "on service," but is not called so here ; he was "hired out" with some gentleman in the city for fourteen dollars a month and board. And the boy worked by the day, at one dollar twenty-five cents per day. T. F. himself had constant work, summer and winter, at one dollar fifty cents per day. With his own and the young people's earnings he had bought, for 650 dollars, a lot and house. This house is thirty feet by twenty feet, has four or five separate compartments, snugly plastered, and comfortably and even neatly furnished ; the front parlour an esquire need not be ashamed of. The house and furniture were insured for a thousand dollars.

No. 2.—A. O'D., with his three or four sons and one daughter, lives in the same block as T. F., in the north-western side of St. Paul. They have been doing very well. The girl helps the mother to keep house, and the boys and father work out. For about four months of the year they had been getting each two dollars a day, and the day, it should be understood, is from 7 A.M. to to 6 P.M., with an hour off for dinner. In the shorter days of winter, work ceases at 5 or 4.30, and the pay drops to one dollar fifty cents or one dollar twenty-five cents. The O'D.'s had bought two lots, costing one 600 and the other 500 dollars, and had built and furnished a good story-and-a-half-house, twenty-four feet by sixteen feet, besides the kitchen. The young people's rather surprising backwardness in English at the start has been disappearing before the influence of the night-schools and other means of education. They are remarkably temperate and even "teetotal." And this is everything.

No. 3.—M. O'D. and his family have done bravely from the start ; own—and in a good part of the city, too—a lot and house, and have saved considerable money. They paid, a short time ago, the passage to St. Paul of a cousin, T. F. He, after his arrival, met a bad accident on the railroad, and had not yet got damages.

No. 4.—T. S. was still renting the house he occupied. Two of his daughters had married. The wages of himself and his unmarried children amounted altogether to 116 dollars the month, and were constant. Two of the boys worked in a shoe factory. This family is a solid acquisition to the Republic.

No. 5,—M. M'D, with a family of only young children, shews how rapidly a poor man, even only a labouring man, can attain independence. At the cost of seventy dollars he got himself a roomy house, with good yard and shed for his cows. From the milk of these—and their grass costs him nothing—his wife, besides keeping the family in milk and butter, sells eight quarts a day. The combined earnings of man and wife are sometimes over sixty dollars the month. They have bought a lot for 500 dollars, and are on the high road to wealth. They educate their children too.

No. 6.—T. L., wife, and six children first went to Pembroke, Canada, where he got work on the railroad at one dollar fifty cents the day, and his wife at washing at from seventy-five cents to a dollar the day, besides, on many a day, two dollars' worth in kind. But, with kindness on every hand and all sorts of prosperity, she was lonesome, and they came to St. Paul, where the eldest boy makes fifty cents a day, and the father, labouring for the city, nine or ten dollars the week, not missing four days in the twelvemonth. He is already "independent."

With him went to Pembroke: T. C. gone to Pittsburg, T. D. gone to Pittsburg, T. M. gone to Pittsburg and back to Ireland—though in Pembroke they had all found the utmost kindness.

No. 7.—T. O'T., wife, and six children, the younger ones going to school, the eldest son and the father making together from eighteen to twenty dollars a week throughout the year, and saving a good deal of money.

No. 8.—P. T. H. is a "section boss" on railroad, with forty-five dollars a month and house free. He has bought a lot, and has quite a deal of money.

No. 9.—M. M., constant work at one dollar and fifty cents the day; has bought his lot and a house.

No. 10.—S. A. originally sent to Waseca, went to St. Paul, and from there, through the influence of Father K., went and settled on a corner of the latter's father's farm in Goodhue County, where he has had steady work, a comfortable home, and excellent educational opportunities for his children. He has been very lucky.

No. 11.—J. D. owns his lot and house in Waseca, and, with his boys M. and T., has constant work on the railroad at one dollar twenty-five cents, making, the three of them, one hundred dollars a month. His nephew C., who has married one of the Connemara girls, has the same kind of work and pay. The two youngest children go to school and are very bright. The whole family are "doing very nicely," Father C. says.

No. 12.—M. D. went with his family to a place about four miles from Waseca; there he now owns forty acres (freehold), and a house; his girls B. and M. have been very steady and helped him right along, whether at home or working out at eight or ten dollars a week. The boys get constant employment as hired helps to farmers around or at home, and have become bright dashing young men, peers of their best American coevals, and are going to be owners of fine homes, every one.

M. M.

FURTHER EVIDENCE ON EMIGRATION

Showing the benefits accruing to the districts from which the Emigrants were selected.

In my evidence before the Royal Commission on Public Works, 1888, I pointed out that great benefit had accrued to the districts in the West of Ireland, from whence emigrants had been assisted by the Tuke Committee in 1883-5. Thus in Clifden Union, in the Co. Galway, containing a population of 24,000 persons, from whence over 2,000 emigrants were assisted, large sums have annually been received by their friends. In 1883-4 it was estimated that £2,000 had been received, and since that time the amount has annually increased, so that in 1888 the amount was estimated at £8,000. One gentleman told me that all the tenants on his estate received sums varying from £2 to £12. Some of the money is sent by girls to bring out a father or mother, and especially their sisters. Two girls had sent £20 to their mother, others had sent £40, and in one case even £70 had been received by the parents of a girl. A large number of persons are leaving this year (1889) wholly or in part assisted by their friends and 500 emigrants, chiefly single persons, left Clifden Union last year.

As showing the benefits conferred upon the districts in the consolidation of holdings, from which the emigrants have been sent, the following extract from a letter from Belmullet, dated June, 1889, gives striking proof: "I visited Tip a few days since. It is quite a strange thing to see a relieving officer there now. Out of the thirty-two houses there, before the 1883 emigration began, twelve only remain; nearly all the people there are now comfortable, they have large crops, each man having two and some three and even four holdings taken up and added to his own which formerly belonged to our emigrants. The houses also are now nearly all built of stone instead of sod as formerly and are much improved."

Tip is situated in the Belmullet Union, and was looked upon as the poorest portion of the poorest union in Ireland.

J. H. T.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

FIFTH EDITION.

IRISH DISTRESS & ITS REMEDIES.

Price 1s. By post 1s. 2d.

LONDON : RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.
DUBLIN : HODGES, FIGGIS & CO.

MR. RIDGWAY begs to call attention to the following important Notices of the First Edition of this pamphlet, published August 1st, 1880 :—

"IRISH DISTRESS AND ITS REMEDIES."—Under this title Mr. Tuke has published a most moderate, most instructive, and most suggestive pamphlet. Lord Monteagle, in a letter to the *Times*, confessed that Mr. Tuke's pamphlet influenced his vote in favour of Mr. Forster's Bill. It is not improbable that a good many of those who voted against the Bill would have been similarly influenced if they had taken as much trouble as Lord Monteagle to master the facts and consider them less passionately. We are not surprised that Lord Monteagle was impressed with the strength of the case made out by Mr. Tuke, quite incidentally, in favour of Mr. Forster's Bill. The facts were all collected before Mr. Forster's Bill was thought of ; most of them, indeed, while the late Government was still in office. We have called attention elsewhere to Mr. Tuke's article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the question of a Peasant Proprietary in Ireland, and therefore we need not now dwell on his discussion of the same subject in his pamphlet.—**Spectator**, August 7, 1880.

Mr. J. H. Tuke, who visited Connaught in 1847, in connection with the relief expedition of Mr. William Forster, the father of the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, has published, through Mr. Ridgway, an account of the journey over the same ground, with a similar object, in the spring of the current year, which, as appears from the recent debates in the House of Lords, is attracting much attention. The facts and observations assembled in this little volume are of peculiar interest at this moment. They have a distinct bearing on the question which Parliament has, for a time, at least, determined. . . . Mr. Tuke's clear and impartial evidence. . . .—**Pall Mall Gazette**, August 4.

On any question connected with Irish Distress Mr. Tuke possesses singular claims to deferential hearing. During the terrible famine of 1846-7, he was over here as the Agent of the Relief Committee of the Society of Friends when they distributed £200,000, and he was associated in the work of relief with our present Chief Secretary and with his father. Mr. Tuke, as well as Mr. Forster, learned then a great deal connected with the social misery of Ireland and with the causes of the misery. Not the least important part of this seasonable and well-considered expostulation is that he treats the Irish particular question on Imperial grounds, and shows that the interests of every dependency of Great Britain are in some sense directly involved in the equitable settlement of Land Tenure in Ireland.—**Freeman's Journal**, August 3.

Mr. Tuke's pamphlet . . . . is characterised throughout with deep sympathy for Ireland, and an earnest desire to get at the root of the evils from which the country suffers. There are innumerable facts in the pamphlet which it is important to make known as widely as possible in view of the announced intention of the Government to legislate shortly on the whole intricate subject of the Irish Land Question. Mr. Tuke's testimony as that of an entirely unbiassed observer is of the highest value, and we trust to see it repeated before the Royal Commission, &c.—**Irish Times**, August 2.

When any great subject occupies for a continuance the public mind, or when the public are held face to face with some great public crisis, it generally happens that some one published commentary on the situation takes hold of general attention, and produces more effect than anything else in the formation of opinion. Mr. Tuke's pamphlet on the condition of Ireland deserves to take this position at the present juncture. Written absolutely without prejudice—except prejudices against people being starved or left in remediable but unremedied misery—this pamphlet tells an unvarnished tale of the present woes and permanent disadvantages of Ireland. No one can read it without feeling that Mr. Tuke . . . is an absolutely truthful witness.—**Liverpool Daily Post**, August 14.