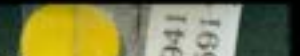
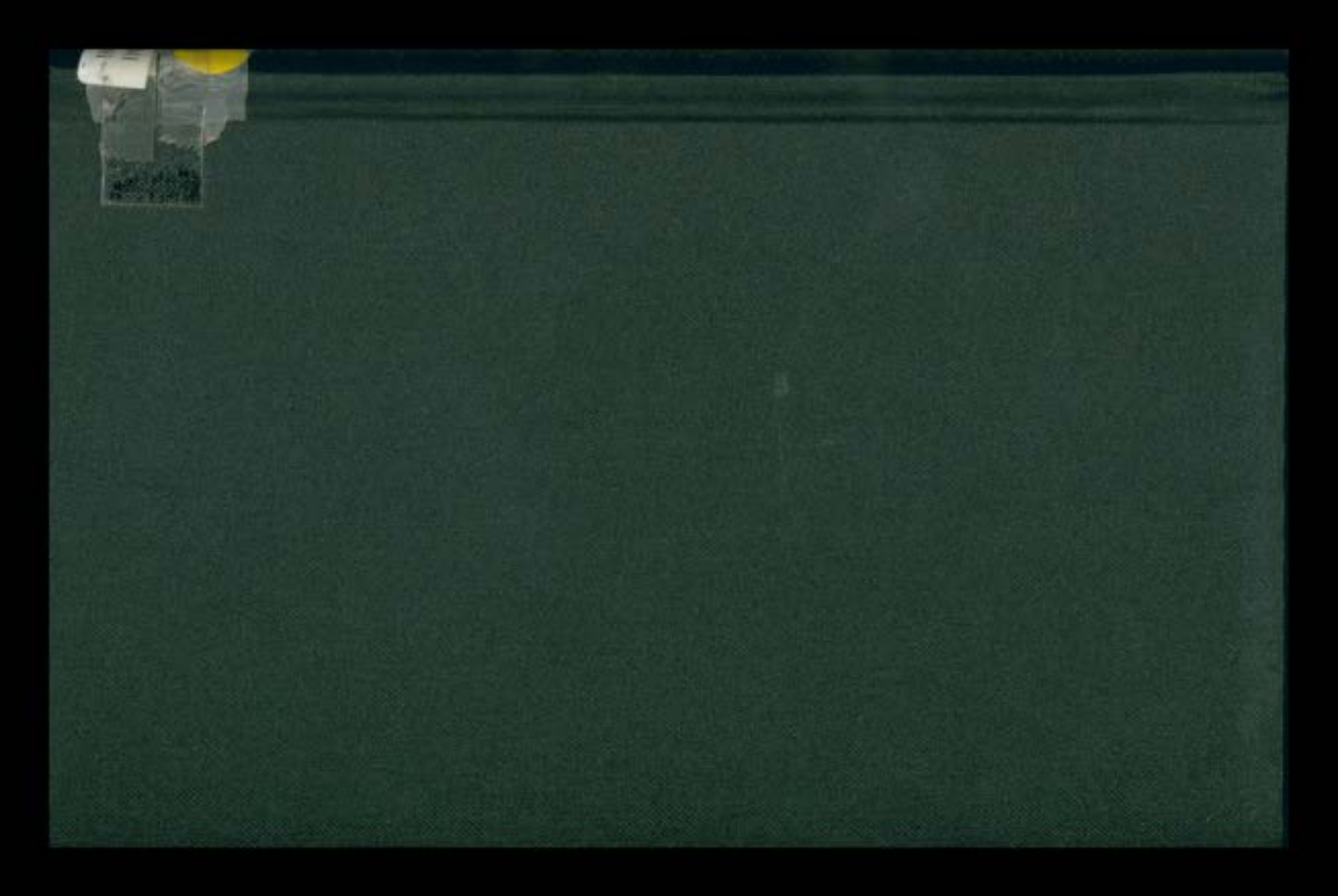


IRISH DISTRESS AND ITS REMEDIES ◆ J.H. TUK



IRISH DISTRESS AND ITS REMEDIES.

THE LAND QUESTION.

A VISIT TO

DONEGAL AND CONNAUGHT

IN THE SPRING OF 1880.

BY

JAMES H. TUKE,

Author of "A Visit to Connaught in the Autumn of 1847."

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PREFACE.

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ERRATA.

Page 68, 5th line from top, *for* "Lenane" *read* "Leenane."
" 77, 3rd line from bottom, *for* "(the poor-rate is 9s. in the £)" *read* "(the poor-rate is 4s. 6d. in the £)."
" 88, 9th line from top, *for* "Carraroe and Maam Riots" *read* "Carraroe and Maam Riots of last winter."
" 111, 9th line from bottom, *for* "(of 10 per cent.)" *read* "(of 10s. per cent.)."

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that it would be unwise to attempt any extended organisation for this purpose, seeing that already two very influential Committees had been formed in Dublin for the relief of the distress. The need for further information on account of the conflicting statements as to the extent of this distress, was, however, very strongly felt by the Committee. This, and the deep interest which the writer of the following pages has for many years taken in the Irish question, led him to the conclusion that a visit to the distressed districts of the West, especially to those which he had seen during the "Great Famine," might be of

PREFACE.

DURING the Irish Famine of 1846-7 the Society of Friends took a very active and prominent part in the administration of funds for its relief, and money or food to the value of £200,000 was dispensed by its Central Relief Committee in Dublin. When during the past winter the first intimation of the distress in the West of Ireland was received, a small Committee was formed in London to consider whether it was right and needful again to take up the work. The result of these inquiries led this Committee to the conclusion that it would be unwise to attempt any extended organisation for this purpose, seeing that already two very influential Committees had been formed in Dublin for the relief of the distress. The need for further information on account of the conflicting statements as to the extent of this distress, was, however, very strongly felt by the Committee. This, and the deep interest which the writer of the following pages has for many years taken in the Irish question, led him to the conclusion that a visit to the distressed districts of the West, especially to those which he had seen during the "Great Famine," might be of

service. It was then his privilege to accompany his much-honoured friend the late William Forster during a portion of his arduous visit to the West of Ireland which extended throughout the whole of the terrible winter of 1846-7.

Although no general subscription was raised, a few of the writer's friends generously placed in his hands a small fund for distribution in cases of peculiar suffering or sickness, or for objects outside the scope of the Dublin Funds. The kind permission was also given by the Duchess of Marlborough to inform her Committee of any localities which either had been overlooked or needed further help, of which the writer availed himself in several instances. His acknowledgments are also due to the Committee of the Dublin Mansion House Fund for the assistance given him in various ways towards the prosecution of his inquiries.

In addition to the knowledge acquired as to the actual extent of the distress, much information was also obtained bearing upon the social condition and general circumstances of the Irish people, the results of which were from time to time forwarded to the Committee in London, and in part printed and privately circulated. Some letters also were inserted in the *Times*. It has been thought that the information thus obtained has a further value, and may tend to throw some light upon portions of the very difficult and complex problems which the country is called upon, as far as practicable, to solve.

In reporting the conversations or opinions of those whom he met during this visit, or in offering any suggestions on the questions involved, the writer is not conscious of being unduly biased by any political or class prejudices. It is his earnest wish to bring to bear upon the subject the knowledge gained in his earlier or later visits to Ireland, combined with the familiarity with questions affecting the land which a long residence in an agricultural county, and his experience as a country banker may have given him.

J. H. T.

HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE, *June*, 1880.

IRISH VISIT—1880.

CHAPTER I.

DONEGAL.

DUBLIN, *February 20th.*—I left home in the evening of the 18th for London, and on the 19th crossed to Kingstown. Whilst in Dublin I had an interview with the Lord-Lieutenant, and am indebted to his courtesy for letters of introduction from the various departments of the Government to the local authorities in the country. The Duchess of Marlborough also favoured me with an interview, and entered most heartily into the objects of my visit. I was much impressed with her deep personal devoted interest in the work into which she has thrown her whole time and energy. Various apartments in the Castle were given up to the business of the Fund, of which the Duchess is the heart and soul. In one the Ladies' Committee, with endless piles of letters and correspondence, were at work in a most businesslike fashion. In another Lord R. Churchill and the Honorary Secretaries were earnestly labouring. I was shown the various arrangements, involving an immense amount of detail and correspondence, which the Committee had made for carrying on their operations.

At the Mansion House I was introduced to several members of the Committee presided over by the Lord Mayor, and was shown, with the greatest courtesy, the details and mode of carrying on the work of the Mansion House Fund. As at the Castle, so at the Mansion House, all other objects seemed subservient to that of administering to the greatest advantage the funds at the disposal of the Committee. It was interesting to find that so many gentlemen actively engaged in professional or other work were giving up a large portion of their time to this very important service. No one without some experience of similar work can form an estimate of the

vast labour and amount of detail necessitated by an incessant correspondence extending over all the world as regards the receipt of money, and to almost every parish in at least one-half of Ireland as regards its distribution.

The plans of action of the two Committees have from the first varied considerably. In the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee, the *Union* is made the area over which operations extend, and the Chairman of the Union is appointed Chairman of the Committee, and is the individual with whom the Dublin Committee corresponds. To him is intrusted the duty of distributing to local Committees in the Union the allotments of money made from time to time. In the Mansion House Committee local Committees in each parish are usually selected. This plan has the advantage of directness and of sending the relief at once to the point at which it is required, which sometimes is not so promptly done by the other system; but, as will be seen, there can be little supervision of the lists of the local committees, and at times too much depends upon the opinion, or good nature, or easiness, of an individual, which is to some extent corrected by the supervision of the Union Committee on the Duchess of Marlborough's plan. The experiences of my journey confirm me in the opinion that the Union system is the least liable to abuse, which, with the best intentions, it is difficult to avoid. Some Unions are, however, too large, and require to be subdivided, each part having a Committee in direct communication with the Dublin Funds. From the Honorary Secretaries of both Funds I received circular letters of introduction to the various chairmen and secretaries of local committees, which were the means of giving me a welcome wherever I went, for which I cannot be sufficiently grateful. I was joined here by my nephew, H. T. Mennell, whose experience in the relief of distress during the Franco-German War will be invaluable.

22*nd*.—At Enniskillen I visited the workhouse, wishing to see how it appeared as compared with the year 1847, when I saw it in the most terrible and painful state—the inmates, then 700 in number, suffering from fever and dysentery, and the whole place so loathsome that it was with the greatest difficulty I over-

came my repugnance to enter it. It is situated on an eminence on the banks of the Erne, commanding lovely views of this fine district, and the shortest way to approach it is to cross one of the little inlets of Loch Erne which run in and out in all directions. I was ferried over by a tidy Irish girl, who had a gold locket of ample size and a chain to match. She used her oars to the little boat most admirably. At the workhouse I found a most intelligent master, and the house in as perfect order as the best English workhouses, and with but half as many inmates as in 1847. All was as clean as possible—only one more able-bodied man and about twenty more who were infirm were in the house than last year—showing that in this union, at any rate, there was no unusual distress. It is indeed a well-to-do district. The poor-rate is not more than 10d. in the pound. The master strongly advised paying the poor small farmers in the impoverished districts for working on their own farms. He said, "Every shilling in this way would be as good as twenty shillings which were only given;" and that "good country roads were much required, and ought to be made to every townland, at the expense of the county."

23*rd*.—We left Enniskillen early by train (a single line) for Ballyshannon. The railroad runs through a beautiful country, with most charming views of the lake. The long detentions at the numerous stations allowed opportunities of speaking to the police constables, who in Ireland attend to the arrival and departure of every train. They are a smart, well-informed set of men, and, as we found in 1847, are able to give, in a few words, the information wanted. "They have no object in not speaking the truth" (as an Irish friend of mine said), "and you can depend on them." At Kesh the police constable stated there was no distress; but, he added, "Some of the people hear relief is being given in other places and they think they ought to have a share." At Pettigoe, a thriving little town, most of the property belongs to Sir J. Leslie, "who is a good landlord, giving his tenants time to pay their rents." There is a Relief Committee here, and one or two townlands were reported by the police constable as "very badly off." He said that "in one townland there is not a meal of

potatoes left. There is no employment of any kind for labourers. There are no labourers, in fact, for all are small farmers, each having from four to ten acres, with a bit of mountain land. The people in this district are very well behaved; during seven years he had only seen one drunken man in Pettigoe on a Sunday. No withholding of rent if they had it to pay, and no agrarian disturbance of any kind. A large Scotch sheep farm in the neighbourhood was of no use to the people in giving work. Work ought to be demanded for relief given."

At the next station, Belleek (where the Belleek China works are situate), we were informed that there was great distress in one or two townlands in the neighbourhood; but as we had booked to Ballyshannon, we went on, and called on some of the gentlemen on the Ballyshannon Relief Committees, who gave us much information. "The assistance they have had has been very useful, but some families are placed on the lists who ought not—it is most difficult to avoid this. The small tenants of four to five acres are always in want (no doubt worse this year); work ought to be demanded for relief given. Farms of about five to ten acres can never be profitably worked; a man must have fifteen acres of arable land to be able to stand a bad year or two—such men often do well. A man ought to make £4 or £5 a-year by his poultry." Ballyshannon had raised £150 to £160 this year for the poor, and about as much last year. Being again told of the great distress near Belleek, and that no one had visited the district, we decided to retrace our steps. Before leaving we met with two gentlemen, Mr. Paterson and Mr. Simpson, who were inspecting the country for the Liverpool Fund. They had been through Donegal, and gave us much information. Great suffering existed in some parts visited, and others not seen by them needed visiting. The Liverpool Committee almost confine their operations to assisting in useful works, and to providing seed-potatoes or oats, when supplemented by local subscriptions. Mr. Paterson and Mr. Simpson had a very strong impression, from all they had seen, that the owners of land are doing very little for the poor, and that they even object to applying for money for public works, on the ground that it would be charged to the poor-rates, half

of which fall upon the landlords. It is fair to say that it is thought that many landlords are very poor, but this is not the case with all. The Liverpool Committee offered here (Ballyshannon) to give £100 towards the improvement of the Pier if the town would raise the same amount. The Liverpool fund amounts to £8,000.

The general appearance of Ballyshannon is wonderfully improved since 1847, when the destitution was awful and the poor-house (now not half full) * was crowded with inmates, and the death-rate fearful.

At Belleek—most beautifully situated at the outlet of the waters of the Erne, which rush wildly through a rocky channel, crossed by a little bridge as you enter the village—we found a small hotel, well appointed in every way. It was recently erected for anglers who come for salmon-fishing, paying £6 10s. a week for the sport, but being allowed only one fish, out of their takings, per week. Close by stand the newly-erected handsome buildings belonging to the Belleek Pottery Company, which gives work to hundreds. Finding the districts in which the suffering was stated to exist were two or three miles further up the valley, we drove on at once, calling by the way on the poor-law guardian, who is also a member of the Relief Committee. He was not at home; "gone out for the evening to the Protestant clergyman's, a mile or more away." So we drove two or more miles further, through a poorly-cultivated land, and at last, after passing through the beautiful grounds of a non-resident proprietor—"too poor to do anything for the people"—we found ourselves at the house of the Protestant clergyman, with whom was the poor-law guardian.

They stated that the want of the little farmers on the mountain townlands was very great indeed; they had little or no resources; the potatoes were all gone, and but for the "Relief Funds" many would be starving. Nearly all the tenants in some townlands were receiving relief, 2s. 6d. and 5s. worth of meal per family. The potatoes had utterly failed, and they had no seed and no means of buying it, and no employment; even

* The poor-rate in the Union varies from 6d. to 1s. 3d.

the presentment at the Baronial Sessions for a much-needed road giving access to these townlands had been thrown out by a majority of one, the landlords nearly all voting against it. Some of the small farms were pointed out, for which £4 to £5 a year is paid—narrow strips of poor mountain land, three to five acres, with a run on the wild mountain behind for a cow or two, on which, as our informants stated, at the best times the people could only "eke out a very miserable existence." Yet, strange to say, such is the craving for these plots, that in ordinary times a tenant could have sold his tenant-right for from £20 to £30. Unhappily for us the day was now drawing to a close, and we could not cross the lovely little lake which lay between us and these little farms, which, from its shore, ran up far into the waste moorland.

No one (we were told) *refuses to pay his rent who can do it*, but the farms are highly rented. The estates are encumbered, and the landlords are unable to do anything. As we had heard, the presentment for the very road so much needed to give access to these lands, and the making of which would have given the employment which is so much wanted at this time of distress, were thrown out by them. No landlord had paid or was able to pay anything towards assisting the poor in this district; even the interest of the mortgage on the estate in one case was hardly paid. It was nearly dark when we again reached our quarters at Belleek.

24*th*.—Early this morning we called on the secretary of the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund for the Belleek district—a well-to-do tradesman, postmaster, Clerk to Petty Session, &c.,—who showed us the long lists of little farmers now receiving relief, chiefly on those lands we had seen—a saddening list of families, on the verge of destitution, and who, so far as the Poor Law and the gentry are concerned, would apparently have been left to perish but for the assistance given by charitable funds. Here, as elsewhere, we did all we could to impress upon the local committees the vital importance of demanding work in return for food given to the *able-bodied*, even if that work is upon their own little farms. The pressing question really is—How can the land be cropped for the coming season? The Government measure,

"Nolan's Bill," for the supply of seed-potatoes or oats, to be repaid in a short term, through the medium of the Poor Law, is unpopular, from the feeling of the better class of farmers and guardians, that if the instalments are not paid, the burden of repayment will fall upon them, and this they say they cannot stand and will not vote for. The Poor Law in the poorest districts in fact becomes inoperative from the unwillingness of the guardians to tax themselves. The secretary (agreeing with the idea of the importance of employing the men on their own lands) very truly observed "Yes, we are just sowing seeds for another famine if we do not get the lands sown." Speaking of the heavy indebtedness of the people to the shopkeepers, he said, "We wore into it, and wore into it without knowing. I have over £1,000 owing to me which I don't expect to get back, and shall lose as I lost nearly all in the old famine." He feared some shopkeepers might take advantage of the relief tickets, and take part for "the old horse" (old debt). But, he added, "I tell them, I shall leave that quiet in the stable."

Then we had the great pleasure of seeing the Belleek China Works, and meeting the intelligent and enterprising owner and manager, Mr. Armstrong, who, with his partner, has put £40,000 into these works. The "water power" of the outlet of the lake, the felspar, which constitutes 73 per cent. of the china turned out, and the cheapness of labour, were the inducements twenty years ago for establishing the works here. They are now giving employment and good wages, from 9s. to 40s. or more a-week, to a large number of people, representing 1,000 persons in all, and these works prevent the town of Belleek from being on the relief list. In addition to the many pretty little articles of Belleek ware familiar to all, the great turn-out of the place is now in sanitary ware of all kinds. Jennings' and Tylor's sanitary ware, and Maw's inhaling bottles, &c., are made here. Mr. Armstrong is a most ingenious and energetic man, and it did one good to find one man really solving the question of Irish misery and discontent by giving full employment at good wages, and combining with this a strict and intelligent oversight of his people. Whilst we were going over the works a man came

up to show him some work he was modelling. "Yes," he said, "as good as I could wish it; it is perfect." And, as the man went off, Mr. A. said, "Seven years ago that man came to me at 5d. a day, and now he is earning 35s. a-week, and on the 1st of April will earn £2 a-week." I asked, with some interest, his views on the land question. "The *little farms* are the curse of the country; no man can really live on them in the best times; they are miserable homes, and there can be none of that moral respect, without which no real improvement of the people is possible. That is at the bottom of it all. It is to the improvement of the *home* that we must look, and my people bear witness to the good influence of the works in that way; mothers coming and begging for another child to be taken." The Irish girls have great taste both in working and painting, and we saw many beautiful specimens of work, superior to any I had ever seen before. Mr. Armstrong considers *there is an absolute need for relief*, but spoke of the great difficulty of discriminating; and mentioned a curious instance of a gentleman who was guided to some point on the road by a ragged-looking man, to whom he gave a shilling, and who, as he was afterwards told, could have lent him £1,000! Mr. Armstrong also spoke very strongly of the importance of demanding work from all able-bodied men who needed relief.

We left, most heartily desiring the prosperity of the works—a bright spot in the neglect and suffering around. But, though this is an exceptionally good instance, it would be wrong not to notice that, except in the very small farms, there are signs of real and permanent improvement in the country. As we drove back to Ballyshannon, I could not but recall the miserable objects I saw one Sunday morning in 1847, digging over the bare ground for a chance potato, and the corpses of the dead carried, without ceremony or funeral, to the grave. From Ballyshannon, nearly all the way to Donegal (a most beautiful drive along the lovely Bay of Donegal), the improvement was marked. One village looked poor, and no doubt was so. At another a fair was being held; and certainly the farmers were quite as well dressed as any small farmers would have been in England. Trade was bad, "no one could pay," we were told,

and cows were difficult to sell at £3 10s. to £5 or £7. But the change in the cattle was wonderful; the long-horned, ragged beasts have disappeared, and neat, tidy little beasts have taken their place.

At Donegal I found that our old friend John Hamilton, of St. Ernan's, who worked so zealously in 1846-7, was in Scotland. He is now eighty years of age. I called on the Protestant rector. He had none of his congregation on the Relief lists; but he said employment and food were much needed by many. At the hotel we met with three priests, who, with rolls of cases of those needing relief, most appalling to look at—I fear rather an indiscriminate list of nearly all their people—had come in to attend the Relief Committee, With them we had much talk. "All the evils of the country were the result of *want of fixity of tenure*, and of the want of power on the part of the Irish people to rule their own country." Differing from most, they thought the *smallest* farms would pay if the holders knew that they were secure of their improvements, and were not likely to have the rents raised at any moment. "The Bright clauses—blessings on Mr. Bright for them—were the only bit of good legislation England had given to Ireland." On saying I knew Mr. Bright, they exclaimed, "Oh, then, indeed, when you next see him give him the blessings of three Irish priests for his good work; he has done more than any other man for the country."

Then we drove, in the long evening, about eighteen miles to Killybegs, hoping to obtain some rest; but here, at half-past nine or ten that night, we were asked to meet the Relief Committee, then sitting, and heard from them the most serious tale of distress we had yet listened to.

25th.—The Relief Committee of Killybegs consisted of all the clergy in the town—rector, priest, and Presbyterian minister, and also tradesmen. They appeared thoroughly in earnest. Out of 600 families in the parish, they had 450 cases on their books, say 2,000 persons out of 3,100, at a weekly cost of £70 to £80. The greater part are holders of small portions of land, from 15s. to £3 or £4 rental, scattered over the wild mountain district round Killybegs. Many formerly gained something of a livelihood by fishing, but the fish have nearly all left the

Bay: where cod and ling abounded a few years ago they are now scarce; and mackerel have disappeared, so that the combined loss of fish and potatoes really leaves them destitute. Doubting the necessity for so many being relieved, we called the attention of the Committee to the very large number of families on their lists; but after many inquiries, and subsequent visits to families assisted, I cannot say that it is larger than is proper; at any rate, one-half of the population about Killybegs needs help. The fact is, the small farmers, paying from 15s. to £3, £4 or £5 rent, are permanently on the verge of want, and usually in debt for one year's meal, though the rents are fairly paid. During the past three years the bad crops and the failure of potatoes have plunged them deeper and deeper into debt, so that many a man owes £30 or £40 or more to the shopkeepers. This year the shopkeepers, alarmed by the total failure of the potato, have declined to give more credit, leaving the majority of the small farmers without any resources. There is no employment for the people, and the extreme dampness of the climate and the want of proper drainage, prevent, in many cases, their being able to cultivate the land at present. I was very glad to hear that cultivation all round Killybegs was fully as forward as usual. This, I think, is in part owing to the wise resolution of the "Relief Committee," "that no relief should be given to able-bodied men except for work done—on their own lands or elsewhere." We were glad to hear that a new road was being surveyed in the neighbourhood, which would give some employment.

In the meantime, it is absolutely necessary that they should be assisted, and it is unhesitatingly said that had it not been for the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund, which gives assistance here, many would have died. It becomes a very serious question whether the assistance needed can continue until the new crop of potatoes is grown and fit for use.

We called this morning upon Mr. Brooks, the Chairman of the Duchess of Marlborough's Relief Committee for the large Union of Glenties. Mr. Brooks lives in a house beautifully situated at the head of one of the numerous inlets of the lovely Donegal Bay, and is agent for several of the

proprietors in the district. He mentioned one property, with a rental of about £8,000 a-year, in which the rents did not average £5 each, and, in this parish, the rents of a portion of the same property did not average £3. Many of the rents due last November were not paid; but the landlords do not appear to evict any tenants. The value of the Tenant Right on these petty holdings is enormous, and it was curious to hear how completely Mr. Brooks recognised this right when speaking of the tenants "*as selling their farms*"—just as we should in England when speaking of the fee-simple. He told me that in ordinary times the tenants "sold their farms" (*i.e.*, their tenant right in the farms) for from £30 to £100, according to their size and rental. And in the after part of the day, a man who pays £5 12s. 6d. a year told me that he had given £125 for the tenant-right upon the twenty-two acres he held!

Another curious fact in connection with these little farmers on the West Coast, is their intimate connection with the United States. I was told that there was hardly a family in the district who had not one or more members in America, and that from thence the funds came for the purchase of the tenant right. From the general poverty of the times this value is just now very much reduced; men who have given £30 to £100 would now not be able to sell at all, or only for a small sum. The man who gave the £125 for the tenant right told me he had earned the money in America in seven years, and that he could not obtain half this sum now for the tenant right. "But," he added, with emotion, "this is my last year here; it's no use, a man may as well lie down and die—we are beaten—everything is against us; there are no roads you see to the land—the bit of turf from the bog (about a cartload) takes me two days to carry upon my back; I shall take my wife and family away to Ameriky again." When I asked him why he had come back before, and bought the farm, he replied, with bitterness, "*Nature binds a man to his own counthrey*—but I can't stand it any longer." What true pathos and sentiment there is in these men!

In the afternoon we walked with a guide into the mountain farms around, ordering the carriage to meet us on the road to

Kilcar and Carrick, where we intended to stop for the night. The afternoon was wet and blustering, and the moorland farms looked dreary enough; however we pursued our way up one boggy path and down another, or over tracts of wild country, from one little district or townland to another, calling upon many tenants, whom our guide knew to be destitute, and who are on the Relief List. Here are a few specimens:—

(1.) John Kearney—has "two cows' grasses," pays £3 16s. 8d., and county cess on the valuation at 2s. 9d. in the £. The poor-rate is 2s. 6d., but his valuation being below £4 he does not pay any. He could have sold his tenant right "for threescore of pounds, but now it is not worth five." He seemed to have no stock of any kind, except six or seven fowls, which gave a few eggs worth 6d. a dozen, and the cat which, like the people, is invariably found crouching round the fire. He had two daughters, fine grown-up girls, doing nothing whatever! We advised them to go into service, telling them what good situations they could obtain.

(2.) Patrick Burns holds four cows' grasses, pays £6 a-year, and owes 9s. 6d. county cess. "Has neither cow, nor calf, nor ewe, nor lamb, nor baste that treads the earth;" "only ten fowls which left a few eggs." He owes three years' rent. His son had gone to America; he sent him the first 30s. he earned, leaving himself only two dollars. Then he sent £3, but he had not heard of him since November. "It's all truth, yer honour." He had a loom and was sitting at it as we entered, but there was neither woof nor warp, he was only mechanically moving the frame backwards and forwards. Then he told us how, one after another, his family had died, and how he had gradually got lower and lower, and that had it not been for the meal given away he would have had nothing to eat. But, added the daughter, "We must not grumble." It is touching to hear how patiently they bear their want. Another family, six or eight in number, cowering round the fire—very poor—"had neither cow, nor calf, nor lamb, nor ewe, nor aught that walks the earth." "Only the cat," I said, which caused them all to laugh; "Yes, we must keep that."

Other families, some with the father or other member of the

family ill, were also visited. The willingness of these people to send their children to school was strikingly shown, when we offered to give them help in this way and a little clothing to allow of their going backwards and forwards. These cases where the head of the family was ill or unable to work, as in that of a man who had lost his leg, would undoubtedly be relieved by the Poor Law in England, but the Poor Law here is in fact inoperative as regards out-door relief. The guardians do not incline to tax themselves, it seems. The children in these cottages are many of them very pretty; one of them, Catharine McBriarty was a singularly fine child, and most desirous to go to school. Though we saw no starvation, so common here in 1847, we could not feel sufficiently thankful that the aid given by the Funds had arrived in time to avert anything like the terrible suffering and death of that year. As we were leaving these mountain lands to return to the high road a woman, apparently well-to-do, called us back to see her daughter, who was ill. She opened a little door, and in a miserable room half filled with potatoes (the only good ones we had seen), was a poor delicate-looking bedridden woman, partially paralysed, whose husband had gone to America and "forgotten her," as she said, and who was now, with two or three children, wholly dependent upon her mother. The room was dark and wholly unfitted for a human being, yet here the poor woman had to lie "from month's end to month's end," dependent upon others. We gave in this, as in some other cases, a little help, which was most gratefully received; but in no case except this was there the slightest approach to begging. Always a simple, pleasant welcome was given us, some offering us their hand, others a seat, as we entered, and all treating us with the simple well-bred courtesy which is so marked a feature in the character of the true Irish peasant.

It was growing dusk as we reached the high road, and whilst waiting at a "National School" our carriage passed us unnoticed, and, but for the kindness of a man whom we had been talking to, might have gone on for miles. As it was, we had a walk of half-a-mile before we overtook it, and were heartily glad of shelter, as the rain fell heavily. In passing

through Kilcar we thought the people looked more destitute and emaciated than any we had seen, but as it was late we deferred our visit. A drive of ten miles through a very cold and miserable country brought us to our destination—Carrick Bridge.

26th—Carrick Bridge, Glencolumbkill.—After a very stormy night, the rain still falling made a walk rather difficult among the cottages in this neighbourhood and towards Tielin on the coast. The population in this district have been largely dependent upon fishing, and as this and the potatoes have both failed, their circumstances are deplorable. The district of Glencolumbkill is about ten miles square, and inhabited by a small farmer and cottier population, whose rents vary from 15s. to £2 or £3, or, in a few instances, amount to £5 or even £10—the average of the whole parish, I was informed, not exceeding 35s. The cottages are even less suited for human habitation than those we visited yesterday at Killybegs. Four rough stone walls, often without any plaster, covered with thatch, 12ft. by 15ft. or 18ft., constitute the home of a family of five, of ten, or twelve persons. The floors are the stone of the rocky hill-side upon which the dwelling is built, and the smoke from the peat fire on the hearth, after filling the house, finds its final exit either by the door, or the hole in the roof which serves for a chimney. There is usually one small window; but as you stoop to enter the low door the blinding smoke for some time prevents you from seeing the inmates, who are usually cowering over the peat or ling embers. When you have become sufficiently accustomed to the dim interior light, you find, perhaps, in addition to the family, that a cow is lying in one corner, and that there may be a loom, at which some native cloth is made, or heaps of fishing-nets—now useless, alas—and, gradually, as you further explore the recesses, you see the miserable heap of rags which constitutes the bed, on which, it may be, a hen is quietly laying her egg! Or perhaps you find some old crone, the grandmother of the family, worn and dirty, whom you hardly distinguish from the heap of rags on which she is lying. In a few we found the women busily engaged around the little window, embroidering handkerchiefs, or beautifully-worked

ronts for babies' frocks, for the Belfast market, at which work they earned the magnificent sum of 1d. per diem. Imagine such work at such a price, under such circumstances—smoke, dirt, semi-darkness, cows, hens, men, women, and children around them in a space of 12ft. by 15ft. or 18ft.—and who can say that Irish women will not work if work is given them. Large quantities of fish were caught here a few years ago, but the fish seem to have left the coast, and the large curing-house erected by a Belfast firm is closed. Hence destitution is so general that 600 out of the 800 families in the district are upon the Relief list, receiving per week in each family at the rate of half a stone of meal per head. This costs about £100 a-week, and it is thought will have to be continued at the same, if not at an increasing rate, for five or six months, until the potatoes are ready. When one contemplates the wide area over which this relief must extend, the prospect is indeed a most serious one. In fact, wherever the cottier or small farmer at a rent of £5 a-year or under exists, there also exist destitution and want. The normal condition of this very large class in the West of Ireland is one which is at the best scarcely above want. I fear there is hardly a population in any part of Europe whose external condition is less favourable; and yet the people generally are healthy, and the children are handsome and well formed.

In the afternoon to the village of Glencolumbkill, a wild drive of six or seven miles, rendered still more so by the rain, snow, and heavy squalls of wind. The views on the coast, with the huge waves of the Atlantic dashing up the sides of the rocky cliffs many hundred feet in height, were magnificent. A turn in the road brought us to the house of Dr. Thompson, the Protestant rector of Glencolumbkill, who is working most zealously for the people. On the road and around his house we saw a number of men very busily at work in spite of the rain. They received either 9d. a day wages, or 6d. where the families received an allowance of meal. Dr. Thompson represented to us the great willingness of these men to work. "They will crowd for it at 6d. a day." When they came up for their small pay we saw them receive it with the greatest thankfulness.

Dr. T. calculates that but for the relief given eighty per cent. of those around him would be wanting food. There is no wool left, so that the people cannot spin or prepare yarn for their coarse woollen fabrics. Hence, in part, that fearful want of clothing for the children and of bedding or blankets. The poor-rate here is 2s. 6d. in the £, and the county cess (collected from the smallest holdings) 3s. 9d. to 4s. in the £. Dr. Thompson doubts the advantage of the present small-farm system. In looking over the County cess collector's book, I noticed that whilst in one parish about one-sixth of the valuations were £4 or over, in others a much smaller number were as high. Hence the actual number of tenants paying the poor-rate is very small—probably only the chief landlord, the Protestant and Catholic clergymen, and a few of the larger farmers. Here is a list of annual valuations for the poor-rate taken from a page in the collector's book :—

£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
2	1	0	0	15	0	1	5	0
1	0	0	1	10	0	1	5	0
0	15	0	1	10	0	0	5	0
1	5	0	1	10	0	3	10	0
2	0	0	1	0	0	1	15	0
0	15	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
1	5	0	0	15	0	0	5	0

On returning to Carrick Bridge we met in the hotel an inspector of the constabulary who offered to give any information in his power. He thinks the relief is very well administered, and spoke of the great length of time he feared it would have to be continued, and the great strain it was upon the very few living in the district, and who were able to attend to it. He doubted whether it would be possible for these to continue their work for the six months it would probably be needed. Father Kelly, the Roman Catholic priest at Carrick, is working very hard, and gave us many instances of actual distress. He mentioned two crazy women, mother and daughter, who lived in the most fearful state of destitution. They thought everything was bewitched, and had pulled off and burned the roof of the cabin, and gradually pulled down the walls to look for the witch. They were now left with only a

heap of stones behind them, and with no covering over their heads. They had no fire except that kept up from fuel supplied by the neighbours. They had no bed, and were not able to lie down in the small space left for them amongst the stones. In this condition they had lived more than a year. Some funds were supplied by a son in the police. Where are the Poor Law administrators? one asks in vain. Father Kelly said he believed many people would have died had it not been for the Relief Funds. Mr. Musgrave, a Belfast merchant, who purchased and owns most of this property, and built the good hotel we are staying at, is giving some work, making roads, &c.

27*th*.—Left early for Kilcar. Called on the Rev. Patrick Logue, whom we found almost overwhelmed with the amount of work and extent of distress. Kilcar we think is, as a whole, the most destitute parish we have seen. The faces of the people are more like the "Famine" faces than those in any other place; 500 families, out of 650 in the parish, are receiving relief, and others are begging to be put on, and will need to be, he fears. "Many are looking for it. They have no seed—some ate all their potatoes as they dug them up. Average holdings are about one acre of arable, with some 'cows' grasses.' Many families lying on the bare stone floor, with hardly any bedding—he had bought some blankets himself—a grant of blankets would be very useful indeed; clothing for the children to enable them to go to school much needed. The fishermen had no boats and no tackle; little work was given (except the making of one road), and there was no harbour to protect the boats or fishermen. Much work might be done if means were forthcoming; at the best of times they cannot *live* on their present small holdings, but there is plenty of waste land which wants cultivating and which they ought to have, as the land is for the people." He thinks this much better than going to America, though quite admitting the present holdings to be insufficient. Father Logue has no one in his parish except the Dispensary doctor to help him or consult with; the burden is terrible; scarlet fever is prevalent, two died in one house, and many are ill; some other fever cases. In the whole

parish only two cases in which out-door relief was given by the guardians. As an instance of poverty he mentioned seeing a poor woman bringing up salt water from the beach to boil her meal in so as to give it a salt flavour. We offered 100 blankets, which he said would be most valuable.

From Kilcar we returned to Killybegs, and took the opportunity of calling at St. Catharine's, upon the Protestant rector, who is a member of the Relief Committee. He thinks there are too many cases on the list. He is not able to attend often, and our previous visit made us think the list a fair one. We arranged with his daughter that she should form a little Committee of ladies in connection with the Dublin Ladies' Committee for knitting, and with Mr. Rogers to attend to the distribution of 100 blankets, to be sent from Dublin for the most infirm and destitute.

From Killybegs we drove to Ardara, over a better class of country. By the way we stopped at a National School; only five grown-up boys — a pupil-teacher's class — were there. We heard them read part of "Goldsmith's Deserted Village." One boy especially was very intelligent; quite a politician. He had no doubt the farms would be better cultivated if the farmers owned the lands.

At Ardara we met Mr. Brennan, secretary to the Relief Fund Committee, and with him the priest's curate. They informed us that 450 families out of 1,100 were on the list; £45 to £50 needed weekly; local collection, £70 to £80; no resident proprietor; Mr. Murray Stewart, living in Scotland, the sole proprietor; nothing done by him to employ or help the people; four-fifths of the tenants under £4 annual rating; are likely to have about £600 expended on roads under presentment in two baronies; parish very wide, extending over twelve miles; two Protestant and two Roman Catholic clergymen working on committee; clothing for children much needed, also blankets. Called at the Protestant clergyman's, Mr. Crawford, but he was from home. We saw his wife, who stated that clothing was much needed, and that she would be very glad of help in the way of wool and knitting. We promised 100 blankets.

Then on to Glenties, a poor town with a poor inn. In 1846 Glenties was in a terrible plight—the people dying by hundreds, and the poorhouse a pesthouse. Four hundred and fifty families, out of about 1,200, are now receiving help.

28th.—Met the Clerk of the Union at the workhouse. There are 162 inmates, of whom only two men and five women are able-bodied. Last year there were 145 inmates. The total number receiving *out*-door relief in the union is 124 persons, being an increase of 63 over last year. The population of the union of Glenties is (or was in 1871) 38,000, and the total valuation is £20,280. The number of holdings above one acre is 6,333, giving little more than £3 annual value per holding for the whole union; whilst the average acreage per holding under cultivation last year (1879) was—of oats and barley an acre and a quarter, and of potatoes not an acre and a half! This union extends from Killybegs to Dunglow, a wide area of not less than fifty miles by twenty, and is undoubtedly the poorest and most distressed union in Donegal. It includes Killybegs, Kilcar, Carrick, Glencolumbkill, Ardara, Glenties, and Dunglow. The Clerk of the Union estimated that there could not be less than half the population, probably more, now receiving help in the union from the Relief Funds. This would give about 20,000 persons—say 4,000 families—who may require help until the potato crop is ripe in August or September—that is, unless labour be given by the employment of the people in improving the land and making roads, harbours, &c. This union has set a good example to others in Donegal by applying to the extent of about £6,000 for works of this kind. Under the recent Act, the guardians have also purchased for distribution 300 tons of Scotch Champion potatoes, at a cost of £3,125. No one is to have more than 4 cwt., costing £2, about enough for one rood of ground. The above quantity is at this rate sufficient for 1,500 tenants. As the Clerk said, "If the people have no seed-potatoes and oats supplied, the prospect is simply awful: famine worse than in 1847 will then come." In 1847, 36,000 persons

were employed on the Relief Works, and nearly 2,000 were in the workhouse and in other auxiliary buildings. This workhouse was then in a horrible state, the people lying on the bare floor, with one rug to six or seven persons, and the death-rate most fearful; many were even leaving the house, preferring to die outside rather than within its plague-stricken walls. And here again let us say that it appears probable, and the opinion is confirmed by many with whom we have conversed, that had it not been for the timely relief given by the Duchess of Marlborough's and other Funds, the people in these impoverished districts must ere this have been dying on all sides. All honour, then, to those who, foreseeing the impending crisis, gave the warning cry in time. That which, next to the seed question, impresses us most deeply is the fact that, unless some vigorous out-door relief system be adopted, the supplying of food by the Relief Committee must be continued for a long time. Is it possible for private funds or for volunteer associations, committees, individuals, whether in Dublin or in the distressed districts, who are now labouring night and day for the succour of the people, to continue for five or six months longer their self-denying labours?

At Glenties we were informed by a clerk in the Bank that the amounts on deposit were not less than usual, and that they did not appear to be doing much less business! He thought it quite possible that one or two, having small deposits, might be receiving relief. They regard such deposits as almost sacred, and will even borrow money for a short time rather than touch them. Of course such persons are abusing the charity, and on detection their relief would be stopped; but the difficulty of making a perfect selection is indeed great, when all alike are so very poor, and so intensely close about their money matters—"fearing to appear to be doing well lest their rents should be raised." In this Union of Glenties the yearly valuation of which is only £20,280, there are more than 8,000 "ratings" or holdings, including those under one acre. Probably not 1,000 of these are at £4 each, or above the amount which constitutes a rate-

payer. The poor-rate on all ratings below £4 is collected from the landlord.*

A thriving, well-to-do man in the town spoke very strongly of the injustice of raising the rents upon those who had reclaimed land. He gave his own case as an instance. Some years ago he had taken a plot of bog; had drained, fenced, cultivated it, turning the wilderness into a tidy little farm. For this land he had been paying £2 a-year, but some little time after he had brought it into cultivation his rent was raised, and now, although the landlord had not expended a shilling on it, he was paying—as he said, almost with tears—nearly four times the original rent. We hear the present system complained of on all sides, both by the poor little tenant and the well-to-do. He thought "fixity of tenure" would make a very great difference. The little farmers "needed example, teaching, encouragement, and to know that the rents would not be raised for improvements."

Around Glenties there is a large amount of stocking and glove knitting, and there is an extensive warehouse in the town, where the people obtain the yarn they knit, generally receiving at the rate of 1s. per dozen pairs of socks. In some cases it may be more, in others less; as a woman said that at Dunglow, where the same firm have a depôt, she received 2s. 9d. for two dozen pairs. The woollen gloves, with coloured plaid backs, so much worn at present in England, are made here by thousands: 3s. per dozen pairs is paid. The reason for the low price is that the hand-made has to compete with the machine-made; yet low as is the pittance the women gladly earn it. As we drove in the dull wet evening to Gweedore, we saw women, five, six, or seven miles from that place, returning

* As showing the poverty of the farmers, we were informed that, at the last fair at Glenties—

Pigs of the value of		£360,
Beasts	„	£80,
Sheep	„	£30 to £40

changed hands. In ordinary years, as much as £3,000 to £4,000 worth would have been brought to market. This confirms the figures obtained from Gweedore.

with their small earnings, and with fresh supplies of yarn for another week's or fortnight's work.

At Dunglow, twenty miles from Glenties, where we stopped for the horses to bait, we saw crowds of women, none of whom looked to be in want, waiting at the depôt for the supply of yarn.

We were heartily glad when, at the close of a drive of nearly forty miles over this wild tract of land the lights of the Gweedore Hotel came in sight. The little farms, lying among the granite rocks, look as if they had been pelted with enormous stones, the huge masses or boulders of granite being scattered over them in all directions. The labour exerted by the people in reclaiming their little patches must have been enormous. Could they have done more if they had been their own? Some were narrow strips of land, a few yards in width, extending nearly a quarter of a mile, and carefully fenced with stones taken from the land. At Gweedore we had the pleasure of finding Howard Hodgkin, who had arrived a few hours before from England.

I must not omit to mention that, in a very wild, exposed position on the road, we met Major Gaskell, one of the inspectors of the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund, who was returning from a visit to the Island of Arran. He took shelter in our carriage from the biting wind, and we had nearly an hour's talk. His inquiries had extended over most of the ground we had seen, and we were pleased to find that his conclusions coincided with ours, save that we thought Killybegs, which we had carefully examined, needed more help than it had received. We were glad to hear him say that he would make an additional grant. He is much impressed at the thought of the probable long continuance of the need for supplies, and the great want of bed clothing or blankets among the people.

29*th* was spent at Gweedore; busy with letters to Committee. H. T. M. met at Bunbeg the Rev. R. Carson, Secretary of the Relief Committee, and Mr. McKeown, who is also a member of the Committee.

In the evening we had an interview with the indefatigable parish priest of the district of Gweedore, who resides at Derry-

beg, about three miles distant. Like the other members of the Committee seen in the morning, he spoke in very strong terms of the cruel nature of the distress pervading his district. Out of about 1,000 families, 600 are now receiving food, and, before summer, 200 more will need help. The holdings are extremely small: hardly any one is rated at £4. Rents very low. On one estate a list of seventy-six tenants was shown me, sixteen of whom paid 15s. a-year, forty-nine between 10s. and 15s., and ten from 5s. to 9s. Many of these are "new cuts," *i.e.*, tenants recently settled, who hold quantities of bog-land varying from one or two, to ten or fifteen acres partially reclaimed. I was sorry to hear that the process of subdivision was going forward on Captain Hill's and other estates. Some holdings are valued as low as 2s. 6d., making the amount collected for the county-rate 1½d., and many pay from 3d. to 6d.

In addition to the failure of the potato crop, the men, who go *en masse* to Scotland for the harvest, had returned last year without any earnings, and some had even to borrow money both for going and returning. On the average, two men or boys from each family go in this way. In ordinary years, a sum of about £8,000, averaging £8 for each family, is the result of this movement. This pays both the rent and the debt at the store for the previous year's supplies, which it is, unfortunately, the custom to owe. In ordinary years the younger boys and girls also go to other parts of Ulster, "The Laggan" (as it is called), on hire for the summer months, and the wages they bring back amount to nearly £8,000. Last year both resources failed. Thus this parish alone, containing about 6,000 persons, was poorer by £16,000 than in ordinary years. The seed question is considered of the utmost importance, and if seed be not supplied, the consequences will be terrible.

We met here the inspector of the constabulary, who spoke in the highest terms of the conduct of the people in his district. There is little or no crime, very little drunkenness, and great chastity among the women. Probably the Ulster tenant-right has an influence in preventing agrarian outrages. He spoke of the multiform duties performed by the police, and of the education which the men needed to enable them to know

and to carry out the law in relation to those duties. The population in this parish appears to be increasing, and, owing to the demand, the holdings have in some cases unfortunately been subdivided. It may have been an exceptional case, but, as an instance of the extraordinary sum paid for the good-will or tenant-right, we had pointed out to us a plot of ground the rent of which was 7s. 6d. a-year, for the tenant-right of which £90 had been paid. Another plot, rented at 10s. had been sold for £80. The average price for tenant-right of the small holdings is from £30 to £40.

VISIT TO MEENACLADDY.

March 1st.—That "March comes in like a lion" sometimes, is abundantly proved by the violent storm—tempest, in fact—of wind, rain, hail, and snow, which is sweeping over this wild country. Errigal and other portions of the mountain range are covered with snow. As we had arranged last evening to meet the Roman Catholic clergyman, and visit with him some districts which were stated to be in great want, we set off after breakfast for Derrybeg, calling at Bunbeg, the commercial centre of the district. The great store and mill here were erected by the late Lord George Hill, whose noble exertions for the people on his estate stand out in bright contrast with the apathy of surrounding proprietors. At the store we found a large trade doing in eggs—many people bringing in two, three, or half-a-dozen, which were either sold or exchanged for the articles needed, at the rate of 7½d. per dozen, a higher rate than was given near Killybegs, where it was only 5d. or 6d. The weekly export of eggs from this store alone is about 740 dozen—realising £12 per week. This sum has to be divided among many hundreds of small cottiers or farmers, who never eat eggs themselves. It is only the very poorest who have no hens. About 1,000 pairs per month of socks and stockings of very fine quality are also made here, chiefly we were informed for the London market, the yarn being given out as at Glenties. The work is paid for at a higher rate than there, as the quality is so much better,

About £10 per week thus earned is, as in the other case, distributed among hundreds of persons. Mr. McKeown, who rents the mill and store, is an active member of the Relief Committee. He stated that he had over £4,000 owing to him, for meal or other articles, by the little cottiers and farmers around, the whole of which he had no doubt would be repaid if good times came again. His relatives—who are working hard for the poor at Burtonport, a few miles distant—had £10,000 owing them for meal alone, which they had allowed the people to have on credit. The credit system is indeed universal here. At all times most of the people are in debt to the storekeeper, who is the little banker of the district, and no doubt charges "full rates" for his small loans.

Leaving Bunbeg, where we had a little shelter, we encountered the full force of the blast as we made our way over the wild roads by Derrybeg (where we picked up Father McFadden) to the townlands of Meenacladdy. This townland stretches over a wide extent of wet bog-land, bounded on the west by a wild rocky coast, against which the waves of the Atlantic were dashing half-way up the cliffs in huge masses of foam; on the other side the bog-land extends towards the mountains of Donegal, whose slopes were covered with the snow recently fallen. Imagine, over this wild waste, little dwellings scattered at wide intervals, some of rough stone and some of mere peat sods, scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding surface; add to this the blinding squalls of sleet or snow which swept over it, and some idea may be gained of the district we explored. A few of the dwellings were, of course, on the road-side, but the access to many was over the wet bog where there is no road. I doubt not we must have presented an amusing picture, as, with the priest at our head as guide, his long coat flying in the wind, we jumped from sod to sod to avoid deep holes of mud, or over ditches filled with water, not without failures in our unwonted attempts. Of the destitution and misery found in these bog-dwellings, I feel, after a lapse of twenty-four hours, that I can hardly bring myself to write. It is not merely the unusual distress of to-day, arising from the causes which I have enumerated, but the every-day life, the normal condition of hundreds, nay thousands, of families on the west

coast of Donegal, and of many other parts of the west of Ireland which oppresses me. But on this normal condition—this every-day contest with existence and hardship—I must not dwell here. The question involves considerations and issues too vast for any hasty notes. But let me put down, if I can, the condition of a few of the dwellings we entered.

(1.) A turf dwelling, near the road, which my friends, who were not acquainted with the West, could not believe was a human habitation. The end of the house towards the road was not more than four or five feet high, but, as the ground sank rapidly on the other side, you were able to find an entrance through a low doorway. Within, at first, all appeared dark, the peat smoke which filled the room blinding us. When a little accustomed to the smoke, we saw, by the light which strayed in through the opening in the roof where the smoke ought to have gone out, but did not, a woman and several children crouched around a small fire. There was neither chair nor table in the place; probably one small stool was all they possessed in this way. The bedstead was covered with a little ragged coverlid, beneath which some straw was spread on the wooden frame; the children, or others who could not find room upon it, lay down on the bare rock or earth of the floor, in the thin clothes they wear all day, with a little straw or hay beneath them. The family had no resources left; had it not been for the "meal" they must have starved. The man, who seemed an industrious fellow, was working on the bog, in spite of the weather, seeking to cultivate a little ground for the coming season. He had "no baste left, neither cow nor sheep, only three or four fowls." He had been to Scotland for the harvest last autumn, but had come back without earnings, and now, in debt for meal and rent, he was beaten.

(2.) A widow and family of five children; a stone-built dwelling, but without any article of furniture except the bedstead and little cradle. There was more light in this house than in the other, and this perhaps made the bareness and wretchedness even more evident. There were even no fowls left to provide the few pence for the salt or other trifling article to eat with the weekly allowance of meal.

The woman, whose husband had been dead a few months, looked ill and weak, and was suffering from ophthalmia. In her arms was her last infant, a thin and sickly one, with hunger in its face, crying, no doubt, for the nourishment which the allowance of meal could not give. The only clothing on this and three other very young children consisted of small calico shirts, given them by the priest, which barely covered the upper part of their bodies, and showed how thin and poorly nourished they were. Why is not such a family cared for by the Poor Law? may again well be asked. But, as no outdoor relief is yet given, miserable and suffering as she was, the poor woman could not bear to give up her house and "bit of land," hoping to hold it on for "better days," when her children might take it.* Since the husband's death the neighbours had helped her to crop it; and what a miserable "bit" of land it was—covered with weeds and almost drowned with water, a rood or two reclaimed from the bog by past years of labour.

(3.) A small turf cabin, ten by twelve. One very decent-looking young woman alone in it; barely room to stand upright; all around wild, uncultivated bog, on a patch of which her brother was turning over a few sods, hoping against hope, as it seemed, to prepare a plot for the coming season. They had no resources, no means; no help but the meal.

(4.) A small stone dwelling, with a large family, grandfather and grandmother, married son and daughter, with many children. In addition to the family were some fowls and a cow. The old man, of "fivescore," very thin, almost bent double, was sitting over the fire, and beside him, on a miserable bed, was the old dame, almost needing, as the priest thought, his final ministrations. Among the family was a fine strong-looking lad of eighteen, who only wished he had means enough to get out to America. They had a few potatoes left, the size of

* This poor woman, and many other tenants whose rents are unpaid, have, subsequently to our visit, been served with processes (County Court summonses) for non-payment of rent due for one or two years, but it is satisfactory to add that no evictions have taken place. "Benjamin S. J. B. Joule, of Manchester, Gentleman," is the plaintiff.

walnuts, but this was all there was; no work, and but for the meal they must starve. They would gladly work if they had it, but there is none, except on their own lands, which were as forward as usual.

(5.) Another large family. Father, mother, and children, and some neighbours, all, excepting a woman who was knitting, crouching in idleness around the fire. In the single bed was an old woman, the mother of a former wife, suffering from distressing asthma, whom the family kindly cared for. They slept on a little hay or straw on the stone floor. Here again the same sad, sad story. Nothing left, no work; must starve but for the "meal." One more instance out of many and I must stop. "Do you see yon cabin on the bog?" said the priest. For some time, though gradually becoming accustomed to these bog dwellings, we could not make it out, but at length we saw the smoke issuing from what appeared to be a small heap of turf sods. Again scrambling across the bog, we found the worst of even these miserable dwellings; worse, if worse could be, than the bog-holes of Erris, with which I was familiar in 1847. Imagine an old man and an old woman living in a hole scooped out of the bog nearly three feet below the surface, and not more than six feet square. There was no door and no chimney, and the rain was finding its way into the hut through the only opening, about three feet high, which gave egress both to the smoke and to the dwellers in the hut.

As we returned to a little cluster of houses on the road nearly the whole grown-up male population and many children surrounded us. They were all in want; all told the same story; no work; no earnings last year; and now what is to become of them? If work is not provided, food must be given to keep them alive, and seed potatoes, too, to allow of their cropping their miserable lands.

There was a more depressed tone among these people than I had before seen. Even in the houses of the few who were rather better off we found the same hopeless tone creeping over them. This was shown in a house in which we took shelter on our return to a point where our conveyance was in waiting. What a house it was!—what an interior for a Teniers!

A single room, probably twenty-four by fourteen feet, containing, in addition to the large family of sons and daughters, four cows and a pony, a dog and poultry. But this man was in debt, and had no means of living unless by selling his cattle, which are now much reduced in price. Probably £3 would be all he could obtain for the cow, and we were told that from 7s. to 10s. each was all that could be obtained for the little sheep they have here.

Information subsequently obtained shows that there are thirty-seven small tenants in this townland of Meenacladdy whose total rental is £88 a-year.

Twenty-seven of these have 144 acres (thirty-six cows' grasses), for which they pay £55 a-year, in sums varying from 15s. to £3—the greater number paying about £2 a-year, and one only as much as £4.

The quantity of land held by each varies from half a "cow's grass" to two cows' grasses, and is usually one and a half. The cow's grass is about four statute acres. It will thus be seen that these little holdings vary from two to eight acres, English. The quantity under cultivation rarely exceeding half these quantities, sometimes even less; the remainder being either grass or uncultivated. The annual valuation for the Poor Law for this 144 acres is £44 5s.

The ten remaining tenants have what are called "New Cuts," *i.e.*, land more recently taken from the bog, amounting to eighty-eight acres, for which they pay 10s. to 36s. each, or £13 in the total. These do not appear to be valued for the poor-rate. The greater portion of this,—held in four, six, or twelve acre lots,—is unreclaimed bog, accounting for the very low rental, about 3s. per acre. Some tenants have not planted more than four cwts. of potatoes and six stones of oats this year. In addition, the whole of the thirty-seven tenants have grazing rights over 465 acres, upon which large numbers, both of cattle and sheep, have been fed in ordinary times.

By returns furnished to me it appears that in "the good times" the quantity of stock thus fed in the townland was extraordinarily large, amounting to 248 head of cattle, including a few ponies, and 920 sheep!—the cattle varying from two to ten, and, in rare cases, fifteen to eighteen per tenant, and the sheep from ten to fifty, and, in one or two cases eighty to one hundred per tenant.

Nothing can show more strongly the loss sustained and the present extreme poverty of the district than a comparison of the foregoing

figures with the following, viz., that there are now only sixty-nine head of cattle and 127 sheep remaining, as against 248 and 920 respectively! I give the particulars in the Appendix.

The "New Cuts" being taken from the bog or mountain-land over which the old tenants have been accustomed to graze their flocks, a strong objection is felt to the practice, which diminishes their rights whilst adding a little to the rental of the estates. In this instance it will be seen that one-fifth (eighty-eight acres) of the mountain-land has thus been gradually taken from the village rights. The extraordinary diminution in the amount of stock held cannot fairly be attributed to this cause; but whilst having some effect, must have arisen from losses in the wet season, and the gradual reduction in the stocks caused by sales to pay debts, purchase food, &c., in the three past years. Both the large amount of stock stated to have been held in past good years and the very great diminution must, I think, be exceptional. My informant, who obtained these returns for me, says:—

"It is a very startling document, in my mind. The people have been wonderfully pulled down in circumstances in the lapse of a few years. Some years ago the inhabitants of Gweedore generally, as well as those of Meenacladdy, enjoyed very extensive rights of grazing on the adjoining mountains and moorlands. This right or privilege begat a remarkable thrift in the way of providing stock. The young folks who had been at hire, and the men who had gone to England or elsewhere, put their earnings to buy sheep or cattle. The yearly increase in the stock, the profits from wool and its manufacture, and the profits from buying young cattle, grazing them for a season or two, and then disposing of them at a considerable advantage, constituted the happiness and prosperity of those simple peasant people. The land was never remarkably fruitful, and *the arable* possessions of the people *were never sufficient to give them a subsistence*. These rights of grazing have been gradually lessened or taken from them by the landlords. "New Cuts" have been made, and tenants for them obtained, against the counsel of all who had the interest of the people at heart, and the people have been gradually compressed into very small limits, and thus they have fallen from a state of comparative comfort to a state of abject poverty. This is true of every part of the whole territory of Gweedore, as well as of Meenacladdy, and I take it to explain the otherwise, to me, inexplicable document I enclose."

In some portions of this barony presentments for small relief works have been passed, but none in this particular district. We encouraged the priest to start some useful labour on roads, &c., at once, to employ some of the people, and left him £50 for this purpose, feeling satisfied that this was the best way of helping them, and of breaking through the listless depression, amounting almost to despair, which seemed settling over them. It seems scarcely needful to add that this property belongs to a non-resident proprietor. We were told that he had given no assistance to his wretched tenantry.

We visited the National School in the village (Meenacladdy)—twenty children in attendance—the inclement day keeping some away. As we entered a class of girls was reading with remarkable correctness. Some of the children were very poorly clad, and we were told that the want of clothing prevented the attendance of many. There are four schools in the Gweedore district, for which a grant of bread, as given at Carrick Bridge, would be a great boon. Where all are so poor there cannot be any danger of those receiving help who do not need it.*

2*nd*.—Machery, near Dunglow, was visited by H. T. M. and H. H. It is a small hamlet on the sea-coast, where the Rectory is situate, four miles away from the church, which is at Dunglow. It contains forty-five families, of whom forty are on the relief list, receiving a regular distribution of meal at the usual rate of half-a-stone per head per week.

The cabins are fully up to the average, and tolerably tidy; bedding and clothing are better than in the most distressed places we had visited (*e.g.* Teelin and Meenacladdy). The people had a more hearty and vigorous appearance, as if they had not been reduced so low as in some other places before the relief came. They were, however, all very poor, and are now completely dependent on the "meal." They own less live stock than in any place we had seen. Their holdings are exceedingly small, many have no land, their chief employment being the making of kelp. Large quantities of sea-weed were stacked or spread along the walls,

* On representations being made to the Duchess of Marlborough this and further aid were most kindly given.

and the beach presented a lively appearance, with numbers of the people watching or gathering the seaweed, which after the heavy storms of the last few days was being fetched by the incoming tide. The seaweed is chiefly collected during the winter, but cannot be turned into money until the summer, when it is dry and ready for burning. The price is now extremely low, so that it brings in but little.

A little in-shore fishing is carried on. Coracles are the boats employed, and during the stormy winter many of these frail craft had been damaged and rendered useless. One poor man had just been up to the Rectory to beg for some *brown paper* to mend his boat with. A more enterprising man, the Rector told us, had built for himself a good wooden boat, and had done extremely well ever since, and was much better off than his neighbours. The harbour, or bay, is safe and sheltered, and the Rector (Rev. S. E. Burns) thought that if funds could be got for a few good boats, which could be built by the men* themselves, it would be of great and permanent benefit to them.

The women are excellent knitters. Mrs. Burns had given them a better class of stockings to do for her than the Glenties firm give out, and paid them 6d. a pair for making. A new rectory has just been built, and some work is likely to be given in wall building, &c., round the rectory garden and ground.

Near this place (Magbery) some Glebe lands had been nominally sold to the tenants at nineteen years' purchase. The history of this transaction, which has been much discussed, appears to be that a man in the neighbourhood, who had some money, came forward and offered to lend, at 4 per cent., to the tenants who had the right of pre-emption, the money needed to buy the land, saying that he could get it from the Commissioners. He afterwards told them he could not so get it and must charge them 10 per cent. They then signed agreements with the Commissioners to buy, which were accepted. The money-lender then brought round a deed for them to sign, making over to him all their rights of pre-emption, which he handed to the Commissioners, and they conveyed the whole to him. The Rector had written on behalf

* Assistance was subsequently given, and three boats built by the men.

of the tenants, stating that they were entirely ignorant of the contents of the deed, but no redress could now be obtained. The unfortunate men, therefore, are in no sense proprietors, but merely the tenants of the money-lender, with agreements to pay him 10 per cent. on the purchase-money, or more than double their old rents, which they are now quite unable to pay and have not paid.

The difficulty arises from the provision of the Act, which obliges purchasers of holdings under £50 to pay down the whole purchase-money, and of lots between £50 and £100, half the value, whilst larger purchasers need only pay down one-third of the purchase-money. Whether wisely or not, this almost debars the very small holder from purchasing his holding, or throws him into the hands of a money lender.

GWEEDORE TO DUNFANAGHY.

3*rd*.—We drove through a wild country, chiefly moorland, running up to Errigal and Muckish, the highest points of the Donegal Highlands. Reached Glen Gortahork, where another priest, of the name of McFadden, resides. It is a lovely situation, overlooking an arm of the sea. He was from home, but his sister, Miss McFadden, was quite willing to employ the women with knitting. Visited the National School; 190 present—boys and girls—very much crowded; want biscuits. At Cross Roads, Falcarragh, we met almost the only resident proprietor on the coast since leaving the town of Donegal, Mr. Wybrandt Olpherts, of Ballyconnell, whom I remembered calling upon with William Forster in 1847. He kindly invited us to lunch at his pleasant house. Met the priest afterwards, and the other members of the Relief Committee. Dispersed into three parties, and in this way visited over thirty families in a very poor district, "Nixon's Land." This was bought some years ago by a clergyman, who is non-resident. The rents were much raised, and the right of pasturage on the mountain lands much curtailed. Tenants, much exasperated, shot at him. "He had some teeth extracted," as the people say; no sympathy with the landlord.

Rents very high, and cabins, many of them, most wretched. Great want of clothing and bedding. Numbers of grown-up girls wanting employment. Cabins too filthy to describe. Children sleeping on the floor; could not go to school for rags. Nothing to eat but the "meal." Some not on the list appealed to be put on it. Even the most wretched of these cabins, with land, would, however, fetch £20 for the tenant-right. In this district of Cloghaneely, 380 families were being relieved; 200 more ought to have relief if there were funds in hand. £35 to £40 a-week needed.

Lands divided to an extraordinary extent. On some strips not wide enough for the cabins to be built straight, they had to be placed edgeways! These strips of land were nearly a quarter of a mile long. Poor-rate 2s. 3d in the £. My guide was Mr. Wilkinson, Clerk to Petty Sessions, and agent for the "Iron ore diggings"—an oxide of iron found in the soil here, and used for purifying gas in London and Liverpool; 8,000 tons, costing here about £3,000, are dug yearly, and 200 persons are employed. 2s. to 3s. or more per ton are paid to the landlord for mineral rights, and about 7s. to the tenants, which includes carting to the harbour.

Here, as elsewhere, the people are greatly in debt. "The land alone will not keep the people." "They are too thick on the ground," said the priest, one of the few who advocated emigration. He thinks emigration absolutely needed. As in other places, the people go to Scotland, and the girls and boys to the "Laggan," for work during the summer, often bringing home £10 each. Clothing, and a little help to send the men off as in ordinary years, much wanted. Mr. Olpherts insisted strongly upon the need for seed-potatoes. He had pressed hard for money on this account from the Dublin Funds. He thought unfavourably of the peasant-proprietor scheme, whilst the priest was very strongly in favour of it. He was sure the people would improve; mentioned some little farms, bought from the Church Commissioners, which were doing exceedingly well; "eleven stacks of oats grown where only four were before." A man cannot bring up his family on less than ten or fifteen acres, as there is no employment to be had. Let me again

notice the terrible want of clothing in this neighbourhood; families of six or more (some of nine) in rags, and without bedding. I must not omit to mention one house where the floor was sanded and looked tidy and swept. On my remarking it, the man replied, "Yes, we like to be clane." They were fairly well to do; a large family with many idle girls, and they were gradually eating up supplies. Few potatoes left, and only a few pigs seen in the whole district.

The approach to Dunfanaghy is quite pleasing, from the improved character of the farming and buildings. Mr. Stewart, of Ards, is the proprietor. Mr. Murphy, who is a great authority on land questions, is his agent. Landlord non-resident, and, excepting the agent's salary, the rents (about £8,000 a-year) for the most part go away from the district. The old inn (Stewart's Arms) has not improved; dirty bedrooms, and on asking for fires the girl said, "Gentlemen say it's better without, as they do smoke so." How well I remember the damp peat, and their "smoking so" in 1847!

Met Dr. Murphy, who has charge of the dispensary, from whom I learned that the area of the Union is ten by fifteen miles; population 6,000. 1,727 persons (343 families) are on the Relief sheets. More will have to be added, chiefly small farmers, whose farms are generally larger than those we have seen, say £6 rentals; real distress among these, and, although the crop of potatoes was good, many of them have eaten it, consuming even what was needed for seed, and now they are selling their cattle to enable them to obtain food and pay rent. Mr. Ramsay, a tradesman, confirmed this; "people needing help, and much in debt." "The whole stock and household goods together belonging to the *small* farmers in this parish would not be equal to their debts." This union has adopted the "Seed Potato Act," but it is thought they will buy a cheaper class of potatoes than the Champions. The landlords are poor, and not able to help their tenants. Local subscriptions to the extent of £28 had been raised in Dunfanaghy. There is a general absence of actual sickness, but a low condition and breaking out of skin disease, betokening low diet, &c. The people immediately around the town of Dunfanaghy are fairly well to do; and it is

the country districts lying towards Muckish and Creeslough which are so much in want. Dr. M. offered to take us there next morning, as he had to visit that portion of his district, and see patients at the Creeslough Dispensary. The Irish dispensary system is very valuable, and absolutely necessary, as the medical men could not visit the scattered cottages. Dr. M. thinks some would have died of starvation if no relief had been given. About one-fourth would require help in purchasing seed-potatoes. Half a barrel of seed would plant two or three roods, say ten cwt. for half an acre.

4*th*.—We regretted not having seen the Glebe lands bought by small proprietors which were mentioned to us yesterday, and thought it desirable for H. H. to go back to Falcarragh and see them,* also to inspect a village below Muckish on Lord Leitrim's property. So he retraced his steps thither, while we joined the Doctor on his rounds. In the first portion of our drive, the land was well cultivated, and in better-sized farms. Passed Mr. Stewart's (of Ards) demesne and house; a fine situation, superior farm buildings, everything in good order under Mr. Murphy; the owner does not reside there; the shooting and two or three rooms in the house let in summer at the rate of £500 a-year; the rabbits yield another £500. There is a very large quantity of bog wood about here, chiefly pine, which is very useful for fires. Mr. Murphy has planted a large number of trees on the estate, which it was a pleasure to see. Planting is very rare here. Why is this so? Leaving the more cultivated district, we found much destitution. The people, as we were told, were very poor, and were eating up their resources. Some are cottiers, *i.e.* people who have a house and garden or small plot, say half to one acre and no more,—but they are chiefly small farmers. Want of clothing here, as elsewhere, very great. One very sad case may be quoted, a small farmer with about fifteen acres, a Protestant, who had been in good circumstances. A year or two ago the family were well dressed; children at school; and the older ones in the church choir. Now, the man is miserably dressed, and his

* *See* article on Peasant Proprietors in August No. of *The Nineteenth Century*.

family, six or eight children, in rags. They crowded around a miserable fire, cooking the stirabout and Indian meal cakes; all more or less affected with skin disease, very bad, and infectious, the result of low diet; all looked thin, pale, and wretched, and evidently wanted nourishment. "It's no use prescribing," said the doctor; "it's nourishing food they want. What's to be done?" "Well," said the man, "I've sold the bullock to pay the rent, and the bit of corn for meal, and even the goose the wife sold for some little thing; and I've only the wee bit cow and little calf left and the pony to till the land. What can I do? I suppose," he added, in a desponding tone, "I must sell them also, and go into the workhouse." A little help enabled the doctor to prescribe some mutton broth and a change of food to oaten bread for a few weeks to come. It is most painful to see cases of this kind, and for one seen there are probably hundreds unseen. Dr. Murphy is a great favourite, and in one cabin to all his questions the old woman replied—"Yes, dear; yes, Doctor, dear." Some women came out of their doors as we drove up the wild country road, evidently wanting to see him, and he stopped most kindly and prescribed for several, so as to save them walking a mile or more to the dispensary at Creeslough; but it was nourishment, not medicine, the people needed. Here we found a number of persons, all simple cases, wanting advice. We called on some very poor, wretched people in the village, as bad almost as any we had seen. Here our conveyance was waiting, and, after promising some help for the Clothing Fund, we took leave of Dr. M., wishing him the success which, in every way, he well deserves. A few miles further, after a very long pull up hill through a wild pass, the country changed to bog, and looked miserable enough. One cabin which I entered looked most desolate and tumble-down—almost a ruin. In it were three little children standing round the fire. This *seemed* a very bad case, the desolate hut on the miserable waste, with scarcely an article of furniture, and the bedding of the worst. Presently the woman entered, and I found, spite of the misery around, that her husband was a care-taker for Lord Leitrim, earning 18s. a week, but living at Milford, which cost him 10s.; whilst she had the 8s. to live on!

At Kilmacrenan, a miserable village, we called for a few minutes on the parish priest, McBride, an old feeble man. He told us there were 137 on the relief list out of 320. 'As bad or worse than 1847, I think," he said. "Some families with fifteen to twenty acres almost starving, and more will come in; no work to be had, and no money in hand for relief."

Nearing Letterkenny the aspect of the country changed, and we found ourselves in a well-cultivated district of fair-sized farms, very pleasant to see after the miserable Glenties and Rosses. The town, also, looked fairly clean, and much improved since 1847. Haggarty's hotel is very good; a number of gentlemen connected with the projected Letterkenny Railway were dining there. They were annoyed with Lord Redesdale for throwing out the bill last year on the ground of its being a narrow-gauge line, and thus leaving Letterkenny without railway communication. Probably in a poor country like this a cheap narrow gauge is more suited for its wants than a wider one would be. The employment which would have been given if the Railway Bill had been passed would be invaluable at this time. We called on Dr. Logue, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe, the Chairman of the County Donegal Relief Committee, a superior, energetic man, who is devoting himself to the administration of the Fund. This Committee is chiefly in connection with the Mansion House Fund, but has also received large sums from the United States. They distribute the funds over nearly all Donegal, granting about £1,500 a-week. In addition to this, large sums, probably amounting to another £1,000, are granted to certain districts from the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee and other sources, making £2,500 a week for Donegal alone. With Dr. Logue we talked over what we had seen during our journey, in which he seemed much interested, and kindly listened to one or two suggestions we made in reference to the administration of relief.

Dr. Logue considered that £4,000 per week was required in Donegal to keep the people in fair health, for the half-stone of meal allowed scarcely keeps a man above starvation point, and men cannot work on this alone. He said that in Donegal County they had over 70,000 persons on their lists. What an army

to feed! Clothing and bedding were also most sadly wanted. The people had not been able to buy any for two or three years, hence they were in a wretched condition, and he strongly pressed for good old clothing for the men, women and children. Speaking of the loans made by the Government to owners of land, he thought they ought to have been granted to tenants also. "The tenants would have willingly borrowed at 1 per cent. (as the landlords have) for the drainage and improvement of their farms. This, he said, was an important point, and would have given labour to many, and should have been attended to."

5th.—After some deliberation it was arranged that H. T. M. and H. H. should visit Fannet and Rathmullen, while I made other inquiries at Letterkenny. They therefore left after breakfast; and I called on the Secretary of the Central Relief Association, a tradesman, and with him went through the lists of all the parishes,* that were receiving assistance—forty-one in all—with

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* Donegal (Co.)

Parishes.	*Families.*	*Persons.*
Mevagh	452 ...	2345
Glenvar / Rathmullen	266 ...	1460
Fannet	300 ...	1500
Milford, &c.	270 ...	1350
Conwell, Letterkenny	500 ...	2500
Church Hill, &c.	520 ...	2750
Lettermacaward	497 ...	2519
Upper Temple Crone (Dunglow) ...	400 ...	2000
Lower Temple Crone and Arranmore	1100 ...	5866
Gweedore	600 ...	3000
Cloghaney and Tory Island ...	500 ...	2500
Dunfanaghy	318 ...	1555
Ramelton	230 ...	1160
Stranorlar	220 ...	1010
Convoy	300 ...	1500
Donegal	332 ...	1660
Killymard	190 ...	950
Inver, Mount Charles	420 ...	2500
Killaghtee (Dunkaverly)	321 ...	1280
Carried forward	7,736 ...	39,415

a total of 14,392 families, 72,864 persons. He agreed with me in thinking that perhaps one-fifth might be deducted, leaving, say, 12,000 families, or 60,000 persons, who were actually needing help in Donegal alone. The cost of this, reckoning the allowance of the half-stone of meal at 6d., and five persons to a family, gives 2s. 6d. a-week for each family. That is, £1,500 needed weekly, or £6,000 per month, for probably six months to come, from the Central Fund alone. It is a tremendous question, especially when the numbers are multiplied by ten for the other distressed counties in Ireland.

Afterwards, by appointment, I called on Dr. Logue again. He

Parishes.	*Families.*	*Persons.*
Brought forward	7736	39415
Killybegs	424	2150
Kilcar	517	2500
Glencolumbkill	570	2850
Ardara	430	2150
Glenties	216	1075
Fintown (Glenties)	300	1500
Kiltevogue	180	900
Ballintra, Drumkeen, &c.	219	1095
Pettigo and Belleek	260	1117
Ballyshannon	549	3117
Bundoran	320	1600
Kilmacrenan	240	1230
Fahan	93	460
Culdaff and Glengad	510	2500
Clonmany	340	1765
Moville	160	800
Burt	83	415
Carndonagh	168	900
Malin	200	1000
Buncrana	250	1250
Burnfoot	250	1250
Donaghmore	350	1750
41 *Sub-Committees in the County.*	14,392	72,864
One-fifth *too much*, say	2,392	14,500
	12,000	60,000

received me very cordially, and I said, if he could allow me the time, I wished to ask his opinion upon the all-important question of "remedial measures" for Ireland; adding that what weighed upon me was the thought of the *normal* condition of the people, of which this distress was only an exaggeration. He entered very fully into it and we had a most interesting conversation, for an hour or more, which may be summed up as follows:—"The great want of the people is employment—they are most willing and grateful for it. There are great natural advantages in the country never developed. There is good water-power, which would turn any number of mills, but no use is made of it. There is any quantity of waste land wanting draining and reclamation, and any number of hands to do it. The Government did not attend to any of these points; the French system of looking after the people was needed, taking large works into their hands for the good of the people, and lending them money for improvements on the security of the lands. The true way was to remove, 'to scatter' the people, from the spots too thickly peopled, and, after making the larger improvements needed, to place them on good-sized farms, not less than fifteen or twenty acres. A man can live on this quantity, not grow rich, but on fifty acres he can become rich. They wanted security of tenure, or, best of all, to place the people in the position of peasant proprietors. He knew France well, and was always surprised when he returned from France to notice the contrast in the two modes of Government—the interest in and care for the people in France. The English Government never steps in for the help of the mass of the people." "It is 'a tax gatherer' only. Englishmen do not feel safe here, but in reality they are perfectly so; for the Irish people, *if properly treated*, are most kindly and grateful. They might be scattered over Ireland, as in many counties there are large tracts of land wanting cultivation. The English Government does not realise the value of a well to-do contented people *here;* they spend any quantity of money over Zulu or Caffre wars,—a small portion of which, if spent in Ireland, would purchase, and drain, and reclaim thousands of acres, and give homes to a well-to-do people, and all would be repaid, too, by the people in the course of years. The Government does not see the

importance of this, though it is so much better than the subjugation of millions of savage people in Afghanistan or Zululand. The Government of Lord Beaconsfield neglect the golden opportunity at home and would willingly pay all that was needed to transport the whole of the Irish people to America. The employment which would be given in reclaiming the land and afterwards in cultivating it, would almost solve the question of Irish distress. Even the lending of money to the tenants for improvement of land, as at present held, would at once give employment to thousands; for he had noticed a great difference in the way that many men had set to work to reclaim and drain the land since the Irish Land Act had been passed. The Land Act has borne good fruit in this way—land has been improved by many tenants from the sense of greater security for any improvements they effected. If the public good required that the lands now uncultivated should be taken and allowed to be cultivated for the benefit of the people, it ought to be done; how important to make a thoroughly contented people at home, in place of sending them to America. 'Emigration is the only cure English people think of;' but it is the short-sighted policy of idleness; and what have you when they do emigrate? In place of a contented people of eight or nine millions in Ireland, you have a discontented Irish population in America, who, if a war broke out between the two countries, would fight against England by thousands, for no other pay than their food. The English people say the objection to emigration is raised by the Church, because we do not wish to lose the people. It is said because the priests are paid by the people (the pay is 4s. per family yearly), therefore, they object to their leaving. But that is not the reason. We see that there is ample room at home for them, and we see that it is often an injury to them to go to America. Those who go to America lose their simplicity in the great towns, and the women are injured and ruined; and the priests, who cannot follow them in the large towns, write to us here and say, 'Do not let them come.' Then we see that those who return are much injured, their simple ideas are gone, and we think it better that they should retain their simple virtues here, even in poverty,

rather than go away. Then, again, why should Britain lose all these people? She does not even take the trouble to colonise her own dependencies. It is more important to consult the welfare of the nation than the happiness of the individual."

He was sure "that the people would work their land more fully if they had security, or fixity of tenure, *or, best of all, Mr. Bright's plan*—but it would require time. He thought there might be periodic valuations, if fixity of tenure was given. The landlord had a right to the true increase in the value of the land, but not to the result of the tenant's improvements. He knew several instances of men doing well who had so bought land. An instance about six miles off was mentioned, where he had noticed the men draining and reclaiming land. If Mr. Bright and his friends were in power they would soon cause a different feeling in Ireland, and govern it with justice. Mr. Bright understood the wants of Ireland. Clanship was still strong among the people; any landlord who treated the people rightly could soon establish himself as the head of a clan: although the people hardly recognised the feeling, still it was there, deeply seated."

"Nothing was so galling to Irishmen as to have to take to London every application for an improvement; for instance, the railway from Letterkenny to Derry, which was so much needed, was thrown out by some English lord in Parliament because it was the narrow gauge. Personally he was opposed to the narrow gauge, but if the people in the district could not find the money for the other, it was much better to have this than none." Speaking of the absence of drunkenness, he said, "The church last Sunday was full of *men* who had signed the pledge for a year and came to renew it, and the women were also doing the same. The people in this place," he added, "are very sober; I hardly know a drunkard, and the women are very chaste." This confirms the statement made to us whilst at Dunfanaghy, that illegitimacy was very rare, and that if a case occurred the father of the child was looked upon as worse than the woman, and even had to leave the district in consequence.

Afterwards — Boyd, J.P., and the Rev. R. F. Baillie, members of the Relief Committee, called. They well remembered the

old Quaker work. Mr. Boyd remembered William Forster with much pleasure. Money for seed-potatoes and clothing very much needed in places. The guardians had that day adopted the Seed Potatoe Act. There were 43 inmates more in the Union House than last year. *No out-door relief is given.*

5th and 6th March.—H. T. M. and H. H. drove from Letterkenny to Milford. The well-farmed lands of Mr. Stewart, of Ards, were as recognisable as those nearer Dunfanaghy. From Milford the road skirts along the shores of Mulroy Bay, which are well-wooded and most picturesque. There are very few small holdings or cabins to be seen. The scene of Lord Leitrim's murder was passed, at a spot where the road is densely wooded on one side, and a few furze bushes afford shelter on the other, and a short abruptly steep hill necessitated a car going at a walking pace. The Mulroy also is here within a few yards of the road, and the assassins' boat lay ready for them when the deed was done. Some few miles further, parties of labourers employed by the present Earl, at 10d. until lately, but now at 1s. per day, were seen draining and road-making. For some of these works, money has been borrowed under the recent Irish Relief Act. Passing Lord Leitrim's seat of Manor Vaughan, beautifully situated on the shores of the bay, the village of Carrickgast is reached. The houses are mostly of a superior class, and poverty is not obvious. We found the parish priest, Father Daly, in wretched quarters, a mile out of the village. He told us that 490 families out of 700 were receiving relief; that Lord Leitrim was employing 160 men at 1s. a-day; that they did not consider this enough to support large families, and that they therefore gave relief in addition at the rate of a half stone of meal per head per week for every member of a family in excess of three; families of three or under received none. The holdings in the poorest parts of his parish, extending from Carrickgart to Creeslough, are from two to five acres of arable land. Rents are 25 per cent. over the Poor Law valuation.

We visited a number of cabins; from some of which the inhabitants had been capriciously evicted by the late lord. The present Lord Leitrim has permitted the people to return, and it is felt to be an act of great kindness on his part by priest and

people; but to us it appeared of doubtful future benefit, to permit people to return to the cabins which had been unroofed and ruined by the late lord, and to lands which had fallen out of cultivation, and to give no help at the same time to restore either (except, we believe, the gift of a few fir poles for the roofs). The rents, too, are, it is said, to be higher than those paid before; yet such is the extraordinary attachment of the people to their homesteads that they are returning and patching up their miserable dwellings as best they may. The cabins, reconstructed to their own taste by the people, were absolutely windowless and quite dark. One elderly woman, who had been in service at Carrickgart, had come back alone to her ruined homestead, and out of the stones had constructed herself a hovel, in which she was living. It was doorless and windowless, and the size of a pigsty. The distress is great among the people in this townland, and they are all receiving relief. Clothing is very deficient, bedding *nil*. Relief in this district began February 9th. This Union (Milford) has adopted the Seed Act, and notices of a very clear and practical character have been sent out on the subject.

We heard a curious instance of the late Lord Leitrim's capricious, arbitrary treatment of his tenants: In passing by a tenant's holding Lord L. noticed that a good new cabin had been built, in place of the miserable hovel. He stopped and asked how it was that he had not been consulted, and at once ordered his bailiff to pull the chimney down and partly unroof it, and the man was compelled to leave it and live in the old hovel again.

Leaving Carrickgart we crossed the Mulroy into the Fannet, staying for the night at Kindrum. No distress is to be found in the district southwards through Tamney to Carrickgele. The land is good, and the holdings of fair size. Crossing the mountains eastward, a poorer district is found, called Glenva, where we had been told considerable distress existed. We went into some cabins, conversed with the people, and, as far as we could, observed their condition. We should consider it to be very superior to that in the worst districts we have seen. Most had stock, and some stacks of hay or oats left; the houses were better, the stables or cow-sheds being separate. The very

large heaps of good stable manure struck us as proving the quantity of stock; most had one or more horses each, and all the land is ploughed, not "delved." The holdings are chiefly from four to five acres of good arable land, with considerable mountain pasturage in addition—the rents of such holdings £3 10s. to £4 10s. Landlords, Mr. Nolan, Mr. Sinclair, Lord Leitrim, and others.

In three townlands, said to be a fair average—

Of 30 families, 6 were *not* receiving relief.
" 21 " 4 " "
" 13 " None.

What specially struck us here was the grumbling dissatisfied spirit of those we spoke to, and the idea that *all* should receive almost as a matter of right; that the allowance was insufficient, &c.—a spirit widely different from that found where the distress is really acute.

We should think this district, though a poor one, needs careful oversight of its lists. The man who prepared the lists and was acting for the Committee was so little above his neighbours in position and circumstances that he could not act with independence. Clothing was generally good and substantial, and few bare feet were seen. The country improves southward, and decidedly so as Rathmullen is approached. The Rector of Tamney, Mr. Lindsey, reported great distress among the very small holders in the extreme north of Fannet towards the lighthouse. We could not visit this district.

Londonderry, March 9th.—The appearance of the country between Letterkenny and this place is in striking contrast to any parts we have previously seen; good-sized, well-cultivated farms, chiefly twenty to sixty acres in extent, with a larger proportion of stacks remaining about the homesteads than could be found in many English counties. Much correspondence requiring attention, we have remained here two or three days. During this time my friends visited some of the Glebe lands purchased by small proprietors near Strabane. The report of this visit, as well as that of H. H. on the Glebe lands near Falcarrah, I intend to give in a connected form when we have visited other Glebe lands near Omagh. Just before leaving Londonderry, we heard

the startling news of the dissolution of Parliament. Here, to my great regret, my nephew left me, home matters requiring his attention.

Omagh, 10*th*.—Our object in visiting this place has been to inspect the Glebe lands sold by the Commissioners under the Church Temporalities Act, around this town. I have been much assisted in these inquiries by the particulars furnished me by Mr Murrough O'Brien, of Dublin, who takes a deep interest in the question of Peasant Proprietorship.

[The account of the visits paid to the Peasant Proprietors around this place, as well as of those previously seen, will appear as a separate article in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century*, and to this I must refer any of my readers who may take an interest in this important subject.]

CHAPTER II.

CONNAUGHT.

Cavan, March 11th.—In the coffee-room the all-absorbing question of the Tenure of Land was under discussion.

A commercial traveller said that, owing to the depression in trade, not more than half the usual number of travellers were now engaged in the West of Ireland. He gave the experience of his own family as an illustration of the need for "fixity of tenure," or greater security for improvements effected by tenants. His father, who formerly resided in Ulster, had built a corn-mill on land belonging to one of the London companies. When the lease expired, the rent was raised, probably not very highly; but again he built, adding, this time, a flax-mill. Unfortunately for him, the rent was again raised, and the property sold by the company. The purchaser also raised the rent. Aggravated by the sense of injury done him in having to pay so dearly for his own improvements, the landlords having done nothing, he, though considerably advanced in life, determined to give up his holding and emigrate to America. He accordingly advertised his tenant-right in the property for sale, for which he expected to obtain £600. The agent for the owner, in order to oblige a person whom he wished to favour as the future tenant, gave out at the sale that the rent would in future be raised very considerably, and thus he destroyed or lessened the value of the tenant-right to such an extent that the seller only realised a very small sum. This stung the old tenant to the quick, and, aggravated by the fact that, after all, the rent was not raised, he and his wife, like so many others, left their native land with the bitterest animosity in their minds. It was satisfactory to hear that they had done well in America—"much better than they could have done had they remained." What seems strange to an Englishman is that a tenant-at-will, or a tenant, with a

short lease even, should be willing to expend large sums on permanent improvements, on so slender a protection as the Ulster Tenant-right appears to have been. Another man in the room stated that his father was a Donegal tenant-farmer, who had reclaimed a considerable amount of land (30 Irish acres), for which he had paid £10 a-year on a lease, and expected to have to pay £45 a-year on re-valuation. This he deemed a great hardship, as the whole of the buildings and improvements had been effected by the tenant. It is difficult, without further knowledge, to form any sound conclusions from such instances; but they show how keenly alive the minds of the people are to the land question. Nor is this to be wondered at when we consider the enormous proportion of the population who are engaged in agriculture, and which leads so constantly to the expression—"The land ought to belong to the people;"—not without payment of rent, but this rent a fixed one, much like our copyholds in England. A land agent with whom we had some conversation complained that the tenants did all in their power to appear poor. "They lived in filth. They came to the rent audit in their worst clothes. They paid the rent in sixpences or shillings to give the appearance of having collected it with great difficulty, changing their bank notes into coin on arriving at the town. They offered half the amount, having all the time the whole sum in their pockets," &c., &c.

I have been told over and over again that the dread of having an increased rent to pay constantly prevents improvements in the land. On the other hand, I am frequently told that this is an imaginary fear, and that the thing is rarely done. Be this as it may, the above instances go to prove how very real the fear is, and that it operates to a most mischievous extent. It is, I am persuaded, very largely at the root of the wretched cultivation so common here, and the cause of much of the bitterness of feeling existing between landlords and tenants.

"I met a little farmer," said one of the party, "who was returning from England with £11 for his summer's earnings, who told me that he would never go to England for wages if he was free to stay and reclaim the mountain-land he held in addition to the small quantity of arable land cultivated." "Free," that

is from the fear of having to pay an increased rent for improvements solely effected by himself.

Carrick-on-Shannon.—Here, in the terrible famine winter of 1846-7, I joined my much-honoured friend the late William Forster, whose deep sympathy with suffering led him, regardless alike of years, his feeble health, or the inclement season, to undertake his memorable visit to the West of Ireland, extending over several months. Quite apart from the great difficulties of travelling and the wretched accommodation of that period, the overwhelming sufferings and the mortality of the people, and the want of means at hand for their prevention, were most distressing to his sensitive nature.

Contrast this town with its aspect in 1847. It is market day and the streets are filled with well-dressed men and women, who buy and sell their little produce, and give to the passing visitor no idea of want or misery. In 1847, the streets were haunted by famine-stricken men, women, and children, imploring food in vain. Especially do I recall the children, with their death-like faces and their "drum-stick" arms, so thin that they looked as if they might snap in two if you took hold of them. In the overcrowded workhouse dirt, disorder, and death reigned. There were no organised committees for administering relief. Look now at the workhouse, not full, and all its inmates in perfect order and cleanliness, well fed and well cared for. Not that there is no want or destitution now, but well-organised committees in connection with the great Dublin Funds, whose monthly grants amount to many hundreds of pounds, are in constant session ministering, as some think with too liberal a hand, to the wants of the suffering population. Some outdoor relief is also given by the guardians. Ladies' Committees, too, are at work, giving employment in knitting and sewing to many poor women who would otherwise be idle.

Nor is this all. In addition to the ordinary duties of the guardians, the very onerous task of carrying out the details of the "Seed Potato Act," which has just come into operation, tells very heavily upon the chairman and other members of the Board. Large placards were posted on the walls giving a short clear abstract of the Act and the needful instructions to the small

ratepayers who can claim its benefits. The workhouse was besieged by numerous applicants, and, though late in the afternoon, the Board was still sitting, and only adjourned for a short time to return to their work, which lasted to a late hour in the evening. The chairman, Mr. C. B. Whyte, who owns large estates in the town and neighbourhood, is also District Chairman of the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee, and in this double position is devoting the greater portion of his time to the work of administering relief. With him we met Captain Spaight, recently appointed Local Government Inspector. Both agreed in the absolute necessity for giving relief, and said that without the money distributed by the Dublin Funds "many would have starved." The farmers around Carrick, and generally along the banks of the Shannon, have suffered most severely during the last season from the overflowing of the river. The loss could not be estimated at less than £50,000, much of which might have been saved by proper arrangements regarding the drainage of the Shannon.

In the evening we had a call from the Protestant clergyman, who spoke of the severity of the distress in some districts around, although the town was better off. He thought the action of the Relief Committees had done much to allay the bitter feeling and agitation among the people. The value of such work as that of Mr. C. B. Whyte cannot be too highly estimated. It is an instance of the untold benefit which results from a good resident landlord.

From Carrick we drove across the county of Roscommon to Castlerea. On our way we visited several small towns and villages, and entered many cottages of the poor. We had been led to hope that the want of assistance was not so great in this county as in some others; but it seemed to us that the destitution was as severe in some portions of it, as in any we had seen; want of work, want of food, of clothing, of bedding. Many of the cottages were most filthy, and devoid of anything which could be called furniture. The small farmers especially have suffered from loss of stock, many of them having been small dairy farmers, and compelled at a low price to part with their cows, for rent or food. At Ballinameen we were told by Father Carlos that, out of

1,000 families, 660 were receiving relief either from the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund or the Mansion House Fund.

Castlerea is a neat and improving town, and happily has a resident landlord, whose finely-wooded park and grounds, in close proximity to the town, give an air of comfort and well-being which it is refreshing to see. From the clergyman we heard that, whilst in the town no special want existed, many of the outlying parishes in the Union were in real want, and had no work or food except that obtained from the Funds; 200 out of 600 families were receiving help. Here, as elsewhere, clothing and blankets were much needed, and we had the pleasure of being able to give some aid for this object from the funds at our disposal.

Castlerea to Ballyhaunis, March 14th.—As a whole, this district is much better than those we have recently seen. In many places the farms were larger, and we met great numbers of men with donkeys or ponies laden with potatoes or cabbage plants and other produce, which they were taking to market. After leaving Mr. Sandford's estate we came upon the properties of the O'Connor Don and Lord Dillon. The tenants of the former spoke most highly of their landlord, whose lands, they said, were not highly rented. On some of these lands we noticed the great labour which had been expended by the tenants in the erection of fences formed from the great stones which had been removed from their fields; one fence was especially remarked for the extreme neatness and regularity of the work. We entered into conversation with an old man standing near, whose ragged clothing and general aspect gave the appearance of great poverty. He told us that he had once farmed this land, but, growing old, he had made it over to his son-in-law, in whose family he now lived. He had given this man's wife and two other daughters £40 each as their dowries, and now he had nothing left, and was dependent upon them. The practice of giving dowries is very common, even among the poor, with whom marriage is quite an affair of bargain. £100 or £150 was named to us as sums by no means uncommonly paid on such occasions.

At Knock a great crowd, evidently fully convinced of the reality of the apparitions and cures, was assembled in and

around the church. The serious air of the people in the church was striking. The property around chiefly belongs to Lord Dillon, who is a non-resident landlord, and draws a very large sum yearly from the county. The head constable informed us that the tenants were well disposed, and had nearly all paid their rents, having had a liberal abatement of 6s. in the pound. They had no ill-feeling against the landlords here.

At the Ballyhaunis Station a number of men, who looked far from cured, were waiting for the train, though all thought themselves the better for their visit to Knock. The station-master told me that the number of persons who visited the church both from England and Scotland was very large—362 tickets, of 15s. each in the last, and 382 in the present week, had been taken in this way. He added, "When warm weather comes the people will be here by thousands." At the station I noticed that large quantities of potatoes were being sent away to Dublin and other places. The high prices tempt farmers of the better class who have any stock left to sell it. The desire which is so general for a change of seed may induce some of the very small farmers also to sell their own little store and purchase the "Champions" from the Union; and we noticed in the town crowds of men with ponies or donkeys waiting around the depôts from whence the Union supplies were being distributed. The quantity of eggs sent from this and other districts to Dublin or Belfast is very great; fifty large boxes per week, containing 7 or 8 cwt., are sent from Ballyhaunis.

Westport—March, 1880.—Owing to the indisposition of my companion I have remained here for two weeks, making excursions of a day or two and returning again to my quarters. In this way I have investigated a larger number of those places in Mayo than I intended within easy reach of Westport, though prevented from extending my journey to some which are more distant. Part of one day was devoted to visiting Louisburgh and Kilgever, which I had the advantage of doing in the company of Mr. H. A. Robinson, one of the additional Inspectors of the Local Government Board.

Louisburgh, about ten miles from Westport, is a poor, dirty-looking little town, though the handsome, newly-erected

Roman Catholic chapel, seems to indicate some wealth in or around it. Here I found that 520 out of 800 families in the parish were receiving relief. The village of Kilgever had been specially reported upon as requiring help. A relieving officer had been recently appointed to look after it, and with him we went round this miserable-looking place. As he also held the office of sub-bailiff, the man was very familiar with the people, who were quite friendly with him in spite of his visits in another character at other times. The houses are built in a very irregular "higgledy-piggledy" manner among the rocks which stand out from the surrounding bog. The heaps of manure which were piled about the doorway were sometimes almost as large as the cabins themselves, and were in process of being removed to the land. Men, women, and children were most industriously at work, but the result to the visitor was anything but agreeable, and the cottages were in a filthy state from the passing to and fro of the people and the cattle. Even the relieving officer thought it needful to caution the people that they were liable to be summoned for so glaring an infraction of sanitary laws. It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry!

No wonder that in one or two cases I thought that I was entering a very filthy cow-house rather than a human dwelling. The only satisfaction is that the very size of the heaps indicated a greater degree of prosperity formerly, and gave promise for future crops. *Formerly*, I say, for the people now are most of them undoubtedly in grievous want of food, clothing, and bedding. Some of them inquired very anxiously about the seed potatoes obtainable under the recent Act, whilst others were planting their own miserable little stunted potatoes, from which it would be as hopeless to expect a good and healthy crop as a fine race of men from Cretins. As we returned in the evening we saw, in places where the road approached the shore of the bay, hundreds of people of all ages and sexes most laboriously at work bringing in the weed, the women carrying huge loads upon their backs, which the men spread upon the lands. It would be impossible to

witness a scene of greater industry than was being enacted by these "lazy Irish."

On one occasion I attended by invitation the meeting of the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee for the union of Westport, Lord John Browne chairman. The intimation had just been received from the Committee in Dublin that it was intended to withdraw the grants for food as early as possible. This caused much alarm, and a very strongly-worded minute, prepared by the chairman, protesting against the withdrawal of food grants, was unanimously passed. As the total number now receiving relief in this union amounts to some thousands it was no matter of surprise that this alarm should be felt. I was struck by the chairman's strong denunciation, on the ground of the demoralising effect, of all outdoor relief from the rates which it was suggested might be given in place of the relief from Dublin. Why the money subscribed by those at a distance should, when gratuitously given, be less injurious to the recipients, than money collected from the ratepayers, it is difficult to understand!

At another time, in company with Dr. Johnston, I visited a village in his dispensary district, a few miles from Westport. From peculiar circumstances this village had not been as well attended to as others, and the people were represented as being in a state of great destitution. The village was a very scattered one. A few of the houses were near the rough mountain road by which you approached the spot; but the valley in which the greater number were situated, was only reached by walking some distance over the adjacent hilly land or bog, which shuts them out of view from the road. Here, without any regular way of approach, so far as I could see, was a cluster of about twenty houses, into most of which we entered. It would only be to repeat over again the same story of wretchedness and want with which, alas, I have become so familiar; but it is a familiarity which only makes me feel more deeply, and burns into my heart the sense of how hard the lot is of hundreds, nay, thousands, of the families of these little Irish farmers. The lands, lying low, were swampy and full of water; the large main drain, which ought to have taken the water away to the sea,

was choked up. The owner lives away and does nothing, probably is not able to do anything. Few rents had been paid; some said they owed one, or one and a-half year's, others more; the lands were highly rented, and very few persons had either money or stock left.

This estate is one which, I fear, is a sample of many small ones, which have been sold by the Encumbered Estates Court. It was purchased some years ago by a mere speculator, who sent down a valuer for the purpose of raising the rents to the highest point. "He doubled them," it is said, but probably raised them from 50 to 80 per cent. This was done without any regard to the question of the improvements or reclamations of the tenants. It was merely looked at as a question of the letting-value of each little farm, without considering the tenant at all. When done, the estate, with its nominally largely-increased rental, was again sold at a large profit, and the rack-rented tenants have grown poorer and poorer, until the calamities of last year have brought them to the utmost verge of poverty. No rents having been paid, processes were served, or, rather, attempted to be served, a few weeks ago. Fifty or sixty police constables were collected to protect the process-server. The people hearing of it, assembled from all sides by hundreds, and, by sheer force of numbers, kept the police at bay, whilst the villagers closed up their doorways with timber, or brushwood, or with the near-at-hand manure heaps. The result was that the police had to retire without effecting their object. I heard afterwards that some processes had been served by the bailiff, and a little rent paid.

Many of the families were seven, eight, or ten in number, and the small weekly allowance of two stones of Indian meal per family was hardly enough to support life. The children, especially, looked thin and wan. Poor as these people are, their kindness one to another is always striking. Of this we saw an instance in a very small hut in which a poor "daft" woman lived alone, supported chiefly by her neighbours. The hut was not more than six or seven feet square, and had recently been very neatly re-thatched by two of her neighbours.

Leaving this part of the village, we proceeded to another group of houses at some distance, and found that the poor people,

mistaking us for the bailiffs, had commenced defending themselves against the invader by barricading their doors, and were busily at work, forking up the manure-heaps, or other articles, to bar the entrances to their homes! When they found out their mistake, and that it was their good friend the Doctor who had come to see them, they seemed heartily ashamed, and could not apologise sufficiently, and the doors which a few minutes before they were ready to defend against all comers were thrown wide open, with a hearty "You're welcome, sir!" I subsequently obtained particulars of the rental and poor-law valuation of thirty-five of these small tenant farmers. These are given in the Appendix, and will be found to vary from £2 10s. to £17; nine of them being £5 or under, twenty-one from £5 5s. to £10 10s., and four above. The total rental of the thirty-five little farms amounted to £268 18s., whilst the Poor Law valuation was £168 12s. It is extremely difficult to obtain any exact data as to acreage. Probably those rented under £6 would represent one "cow's grass," three to four acres arable, whilst others would have two to three cows' grasses, according to rental. These rates are very much higher than on many other estates. These villagers had also the right of grazing over a considerable extent of mountain land. The tenants had among them forty-eight head of cattle, "big and little," and four sheep—the selling value of which would probably not be more than about £160. In ordinary times they had about 127 head of cattle and thirty sheep, worth, probably, £500 or £600.

From funds placed in my hands, food and clothing were forwarded for the most destitute, and children whose rags had kept them from school were again able to attend.*

I also paid a visit to Newport, where I met the Relief Com-

* The figures since forwarded to me show that the cost of supporting fifty-six families in this and an adjacent village, on a weekly supply of Indian meal at the rate of one stone for adults and half a stone for younger children, does not exceed the sum of £9 10s. per week, or £38 per month, for the 294 persons in the said families. In other words, 1d. per head per diem, 7d. per head per week, or 2s. 4d. per month: under thirty shillings a year! Can life be supported in India or in any other portion of the world for less! Some of them, no doubt, had a little milk in addition.

mittee, consisting of the Protestant, Catholic, and Presbyterian clergymen, and the Doctor, who were working together most harmoniously and zealously for the poor of this large district. Nearly 1,000 families out of 5,400 in the Union of Newport were receiving assistance from the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund; and in addition, large numbers had help from the Mansion House Fund. It is almost impossible to ascertain the numbers relieved by the latter Fund, as the grants are sent to each parish instead of to the chairman of the Union as is done by the former. The Union of Newport is heavily in debt, and the collection of the rates is much in arrears. Rates are high, about 3s. 6d. in the £. At Newport, as elsewhere, the amount of work thrown upon the very few residents is enormous, and the strain is now much added to by the preparation of the lists, and the distribution of seed potatoes and oats to the numerous applicants, whether in connection with the Union supply, or those granted to the poorer tenants from the Dublin Fund. In addition to the injury caused by the withdrawal of income, the injustice committed by non-resident landlords, who thus evade all their duties in a time of extreme need, is often adverted to; and I have heard resident proprietors most seriously urge the infliction of a heavy fine for non-residence.

Towards the end of this week I went to Achill Island, a tedious drive of forty miles. Passing again through Newport, the road traverses some very wild country, especially in the neighbourhood of Mulranny, on the shores of Clew Bay. The situation of Mulranny is lovely, and in England would make the owner a fortune as a watering-place. The country for some miles round is covered with huge stones, amidst which, surrounded by high walls, the little plots of cultivated land extend.

The owner of this stony soil was giving some employment on his own estate. Many of the people were very poor, and out of 276 families, 200 (=1,080 persons) were receiving assistance from the two funds. Here and elsewhere in Mayo, so far as I have seen, I must bear testimony to the great industry and labour of the people. At this moment, men, women, and children are hard at work on the little plots of land, or carrying up, for

manure, heavy loads of seaweed, which, happily, is very plentiful. I have thought once or twice, as I have seen them thus labouring, that had it been in France I should have said, "See here what peasant proprietorship does!"

To speak of the people as idle when they have anything to do seems, therefore, unjust. When I say so to my Irish friends, they smile at my credulity and say, "Oh, yes, it is spasmodic." Then when I reply, "See how they work at our English harvest, and take every penny back with them," they say again, "Oh, yes, wait till they get home, and then you will see them doing nothing but sitting over the fire, and amusing themselves with fiddling," &c. And when I say, "Is it not because there is no employment for them?" I am told that I do not understand the people; had I lived among them as long as they have, I should know better. Of course, I do not for a moment profess to think these people perfect, or without many faults, but it seems just to give them their due.

Whilst the horses were waiting at Mulranny, I met a group of twelve strong, hearty-looking girls, on their way to Scotland for work. They had come from the farther side of Achill, and were making for Westport—a walk of about forty miles—to take the steamer, which was to sail next morning. They seemed very cheerful, and, like the Scotch women, were saving their boots by carrying them in their hands instead of wearing them on their feet.

The population of the Island of Achill is estimated at 6,500, of whom 4,500 are on the relief lists, receiving fortnightly a very small allowance of meal (two stones) for each family. The annual valuation for the poor law is about £1,300, and is probably not half the actual rental of the island. The poor-rate is 3s. in the £. I was most hospitably entertained here by my friend Mr. Pike, whose house, surrounded by trees planted by himself, is an oasis in the midst of a treeless waste. Young trees, recently sown or planted, are growing well up the mountain slopes around, showing that it only needs attention to clothe these barren wastes with valuable forests of timber. How much this important work is neglected may be understood when I say that the nearest trees in any quantity which I had seen were those around

Newport, thirty miles distant. Mr. Pike is giving work to over 100 men on his estate, who earn each from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per diem. I was much struck by the hearty, pleasant way in which, wherever we drove, the tenants met or received their landlord. He had a kindly greeting for each, whether man, woman, or child. His estate is 14,000 acres in extent, of which a little fringe, chiefly on the sea-coast, can only be said to be cultivated, giving three to five acres of arable ground each to the 400 little tenants, whose rents vary from £3 to £5. In addition to the cultivated land, each village has the right of stray over a large extent of mountain land for the cattle: for this they pay a small sum per head in addition to the rents mentioned above. As compared with the rents charged in many other places, these seem very moderate. Moderate as they are, the people holding land under these favourable conditions cannot live on the little holdings without some paid labour; and the whole able-bodied male population of Achill, I was informed, migrate annually to Scotland for work. Last year, as in other districts, their earnings largely failed, and this and the failure of crops have brought them down to great poverty, and left them deeply in debt to the shopkeeper for the previous year's supplies. Hence the very large number I have mentioned who are receiving relief in the island. The usual rate of interest charged here by the "gombeen" men is 20 to 50 per cent.!

A few figures with which I was furnished, showing the rentals and amount of stock held by entire village communities, have considerable interest and value for those looking at the economic questions involved in these small holdings:—

Village No. 1.—Forty-seven tenants, whose total rental is £130 a-year, holding 180 to 200 acres of arable land, had 96 cows and young beasts, 138 sheep, and 13 ponies. The grazing on the mountain for the stock, at 3s. per head for cows and 1s. for sheep, adds £23 to the gross rental, making about £3 per holding.

Village No. 2.—Ninety tenants, whose rental is £240, holding about 360 to 400 acres of arable land, had 204 cows and young beasts, 234 sheep, and 23 ponies;

to this the same rate, say £40 a year per head for the grazing stock, must be added, or a little over £3 per holding.

The amount of stock owned by these small tenants will strike a large farmer with surprise, and certainly does not favour the idea that small holdings are incompatible with the keeping of stock. But the serious question still remains, Can these small holdings support the families upon them?

No. 1.—200 acres of arable, with an indefinite quantity of mountain land, has to support 250 persons.

No. 2.—400 acres, and its proportion of mountain land, has to support 450 or more persons.

Is it possible that two English farms of 200 and 400 acres each could together support 700 persons?

As regards the arable land, I was informed that from one and a half to two acres are usually sown with oats on each holding and the same quantity with potatoes, in addition to a little cabbage and turnip. Each farm has also one and a half to two acres of grass or fallow. As regards the amount of mountain or bog land, the quantity is not easily ascertained. The expression, the average of "three sums" per tenant, conveys very little information to an Englishman. Village No. 1 had, I was informed, a range over 2,500 acres!

I was driven over to the Protestant settlement, and told that the smaller farmers on that property were equally indigent and in equal need of assistance. In addition to the employment given by Mr. Pike, he and his family are doing much to relieve the distress. The benefit thus rendered by one resident family is inestimable, and I heard nothing on this estate of the bitter feeling and hostility to landlords, or refusal to pay rents, so common elsewhere.

Leaving the island and coming on the mainland again to the estate of a non-resident landlord, where the people, in addition to being in great destitution, had no one to look up to for employment or help or guidance, I was once more painfully impressed with the grievous injury resulting from the non-resident system. That there are non-residents whose agents make up, or are permitted to make up, for the loss of the presence of the owner is doubtless true; but they are, I fear, very

rare, and usually the business of the agent is simply to receive or enforce the payment of rents.

Near Mulranny, whilst going slowly uphill, a young man walking on the road gathered me a branch of the Mediterranean heath, whose blossoms redeemed by their beauty the barrenness around. The heath brought back for a moment the remembrance of its lovely home by the blue waters of the Riviera. How came it to stray so far away?

The man belonged to the rather better class of farmers, and told me that, in consequence of his father's death, he had left a situation in Lancashire where he had lived for three years. His father had been able to keep thirteen cows, but the bad times had obliged them to sell, and now they had only one left. He pointed out to me the lands he was cultivating, complaining bitterly of the injury resulting from the divisions into small allotments, which were scattered about over the whole townland —a bit here, and another there—saying that it was very difficult to cultivate properly under these circumstances, and that it led to endless quarrels, as often the only access for one tenant was over another tenant's land. His great desire was to emigrate to America, but want of funds prevented him, as it prevented so many others, from doing so.

A car, with two well-dressed young fellows, who were going out to America, passed by us from the town, and in the road a woman, whose bright shawl and dress suggested a Spanish peasant woman, was standing with her arms in the air, chanting or crooning a mournful ditty over the departure of her brother. I also saw a young fellow of twenty, from a similar cause weeping like a beaten child, and crouching at a doorstep by his mother, who was trying to console him. In a doorway opposite a little girl stood with sympathetic tears running down her face.

In addition to the sea-weed so extensively used in this district, I noticed in some farms where this was not to be had, that the practice of burning the spongy top soil was largely in vogue. The small fields were covered with heaps of this earth, to which a lighted peat had been applied, filling the country with dense smoke, out of which the figures of men, women and children strangely loomed. This is said to impoverish the land.

Near Newport I spent a few hours most pleasantly at the seaside residence of my friend Mr. Jonathan Pim. If every Irish landlord would improve his estate and give the facilities and inducement to his tenants to cultivate their lands which he has done, the cry of Irish Distress would no more be heard, and content and well-being would take the place of the social disorder and wretchedness which now abound in these Western Districts. Why is it that the true exercise of the functions and responsibilities which belong to land-owning is so rare in Ireland, whilst, as a rule, it is universal in England?

Whilst at Westport I heard that severe distress existed in some villages situated in a mountainous district about fifteen miles from Ballinrobe. I accordingly drove to Ballinrobe, and met there Mr. Robinson, the Local Government Inspector, together with the Poor Law Guardian and the Dispensary Doctor of these villages. Though prevented myself from proceeding, these gentlemen, accompanied by the Chairman of the Ballinrobe Union (a large resident proprietor), visited the district. From their report I give the following particulars. A drive of some distance, a row of seven miles across Loch Mask, and a walk or ride on ponies of five miles more, were necessary in order to reach the spot.

The three villages together contain about 100 families, paying from £2 to £3 a year each for their lands. There were no pigs left, and very few cows or sheep. The people were many of them without food, and in a most destitute condition as regards clothing. The medical officer of the district had obtained for them a small sum of money in the winter, in answer to an appeal for help in the papers, which was now all expended. Many of the children were seriously suffering from want of nourishment.

Some of the children who attended the Monks' School at the monastery, were also fed, and quite recently, through the representations of Mr. Robinson, a little out-door relief had been given by the relieving officer. This relief had been very strongly objected to when the cases were brought under the notice of the board, and it was partly to satisfy himself of the need for this remarkable departure from the usual practice of the board to

refuse all outdoor relief, that the chairman of the Union offered to join the party. It is satisfactory to know that this visit satisfied him with the action of the officer in giving out-door relief, and led him, at the next meeting of the board, to advocate its continuance; and further, that several of the children most suffering from want of food were temporarily removed to the workhouse to be fed up. In order to afford further immediate assistance to the people, I left a sum of money to be applied in giving employment to the able-bodied, assisting the sick, and giving a meal daily to the children who attended the school. Through the agency of the Dublin Ladies' Committee a supply of clothing was also sent.

At Ballinrobe the workhouse seemed converted for the time being into a storehouse for the seed potatoes and oats, and in the yards around numbers of men were waiting with little carts, and ponies, and asses, to carry away the quantities sold to them under the provisions of the Seed Potatoes Act.

The amount borrowed in this way for the supply of seed varies in every union, according to the liberal or illiberal views of the guardians, and sometimes without much reference to the actual number needing assistance. Hence the allowance to tenants varies in every union from a fair and liberal quantity to a very scanty one. In some unions, from the fear that the union would not have the amount repaid by the poorer class of tenants, strong objections have been felt, and I fear acted on, to allowing any tenants under £4 rating to have seed allotted to them. This, it is needless to say, is a most injurious and short-sighted practice, for if the lands are not sown, the tenants will inevitably require to be fed next year. Many of the poorer class have been assisted by the forethought early exhibited by the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee, who devoted £30,000 to the purchase and gratuitous distribution of seed potatoes and oats. This seed was received with deep thankfulness by the recipients. "The people do not know how to be grateful enough to the Duchess," said a policeman to me, who had been assisting in keeping order at the distribution. "They were praying for her all down the road as they went home with their little loads."

The number of inmates in the workhouse at Ballinrobe was 271, being nine more than last year, and 122 were receiving out-door relief compared with 61 last year. In the various electoral divisions of the union the poor-rate varies from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. What a contrast this is to the terrible famine years of 1846 and 1847, when the deaths in the workhouse were sometimes at the rate of 150 a week; and it was not unusual to find twelve or more infants lying dead by their mothers in the morning, as I was informed by the present clerk of the union, who was also its clerk in those years. No less than 53,500 persons were on the lists of the union for relief for longer or shorter periods; and, in addition to the large grants made by the Treasury and the Relief Associations, amounting to many thousand pounds, the poor-rates rose to an unprecedented sum. The expenditure for the year ending March, 1848, was £31,452.

Doubtless there are some portions of this union needing help; but as a whole it is one which ought to a large extent, I think, under a liberal administration of the Poor Law, to bear the stress of its own poverty. The annual valuation of the union is £60,000, with a population of 31,000. The union of Westport is as a whole much poorer: it has a population of 25,000, with an annual valuation of £31,000. Newport is still worse, the population being £16,000, and the annual valuation £13,000, and the poor-rate 3s. to 3s. 6d. in the £.

Other days were devoted to visiting Ballina and Killala, in North Mayo.

At Ballina I had interviews and much interesting conversation with many gentlemen connected with the Relief Committees, including the Roman Catholic bishop, Chairman of the Mansion House Committee, who informed me that in the diocese of Killala, containing more than twenty parishes, partly in Mayo and partly in Sligo, out of a population of 80,000, 34,000 were on the Relief lists of the Mansion House Committee. From this and the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund large grants had been obtained, which have been sufficient to prevent actual starvation. But the want of clothing and bed-covering is extreme.

In the Union-house, at Ballina, there may still be seen

furniture stamped with the initials S. G., recalling the days of the famine of 1848, when the late Samuel Gurney visited the then bankrupt union, and saved the furniture from seizure by advancing £500, the money needed to pay out the bailiffs.

Killala is a poor, miserable, neglected-looking little town, with a fine round-tower and the ruins of an abbey. It is beautifully situated on a bay. Killala is one of the oldest sees in Ireland. The people were all very busily seeking to obtain the seed potatoes—"Champions;" crowds were in the town waiting their turn. Here and elsewhere the seed is given out at the workhouse, by order of the guardians, and owing to the number of ponies, donkeys, carts, &c., waiting for their supplies, the yards around the workhouse had the aspect of a fair.

It was two o'clock when I reached the town, Archdeacon Jackson was just coming from morning service (it being Good Friday), and had to go at once to the Union-house to superintend the giving out of seed potatoes. As regards clothing, he described the state of the country as beyond description. His wife had gone through the houses in Killala, and could hardly have believed they were so wretched. The people sleeping on wisps of hay or straw, with a guano bag over them; children in a most wretched state; the want of fuel also is very great, and the people, in the absence of peat for firing, are cutting the heather. Living altogether on small supplies of Indian meal is injurious to the people. The projected pier at Lacken would be a great boon; it would at once give employment to a large number of unskilled labourers. I offered clothing, and promised £50 for the pier, per Sir C. K. Gore, Ballina. In the neighbouring villages of Lacken and Kilcomen nearly every one needed help, "not fifteen families who did not require it."

Sir C. K. Gore has a large estate in the neighbourhood of Ballina, and it seemed to me that the fact of there being a resident owner was at once perceptible. The large farm adjoining the beautiful park and ground gives a considerable amount of regular employment. In addition, a number of men are employed in draining—earning 1s. per day each, for which they work willingly. Sir C. K. Gore has returned his tenants 15 per cent. of their rents, which he estimated at half the loss. Most of the rents

were paid. In addition, the tenants are enabled to purchase meal at a low price, and few, if any, of his tenants were on the Relief lists. Col. Knox, the District Chairman of the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee, is also working most zealously around Killala.

At Ballina I had the opportunity of seeing a large number of the Roman Catholic clergy from other parts of North Mayo and Sligo. Their reports of the destitution and want of clothing were most serious. Some assistance in money as well as blankets and clothing was given.

Around Westport there are several other poor parishes or electoral divisions, to which some attention was given. Kilmaclasser is one of these, and as we found Archdeacon Cather felt much interest in it, and that his daughter was very desirous to afford some further help to the sick and infirm, as well as to give work and clothing to the half-naked women and children, we thought we could not do better than place some money at their disposal. Aughagower is another parish to which some assistance was given through Father Stephens, who is working very hard for his people.

CHAPTER III.

GALWAY

March 29th.—My friend being well enough to return home, I left Westport, which had been our head-quarters for a fortnight, and drove by Leenane to Letterfrack, Co. Galway. Part of the journey lay through a property which presented a general air of slovenliness, and gave the false impression that the owner must be on the verge of bankruptcy. One finds it hard to believe that men possessed of property will continue to hold their estates without some attempt at improvement. If they have neither the will nor the heart to exercise the *beneficent* rights of ownership, why not dispose of their estates? No English landlord would for very shame retain an estate in such a condition. Let us imagine that one-fifth of the rental was spent yearly in draining and fencing, and that general "putting the estate in order" which is the delight of an Englishman. What a benefit it would be to the neighbourhood!—affording to the unemployed thousands around the work which they now travel to England to seek for. The wealth Ireland produces would, if a fair proportion was spent in the country, establish a fund to draw from in times of depression—an insurance fund, in fact,—against both poverty and agitation. Employment is the great want of these Western districts. If the owners of the soil do not give that employment which may fairly be expected from them as proprietors, or if they do not allow their tenants the security they need for the proper cultivation and reclamation of their holdings, it cannot but raise questions for public consideration. The promotion of the general weal of the country is of paramount importance, and the Government is imperatively called on to devise the best and most effective means of putting an end to a state of things which is injurious alike to the best

interests of both landlord and tenant, and which is fatal to the well-being of the whole community.

Arthur Young, who wrote in 1778, after showing Irish landlords how to obtain 6 per cent. by the improvement of their lands, says, "Yet, in spite of such facts, do the trifling, inattentive, negligent owners of Irish mountains leave them, as they received them from their ancestors, in the possession of grouse and foxes. Shame on such spiritless conduct!"—Young's "Irish Tour," p. 512.

Shortly before reaching Lenane I inspected Glanagimla, an exceedingly poor little village, containing about sixty families. I did so in company with Dr. Johnson (who was visiting his patients in this district). The rental of the holdings, many of them extremely small, varies from £1 to £5, and the total rental of the village is not more than £130 a-year. So far as I could learn, there were not more than twenty-five cows in the whole village. Many of the people were evicted years ago from an estate on the opposite side of the lake, and allowed to settle here. I visited many of their houses, and found the most marked evidence of destitution: bedding, clothing, furniture—all of the most scanty description. Having so little stock they were very short of manure, and the price here paid for seaweed, so largely used elsewhere, made it doubtful whether any beneficial return would be obtained from it when the land was planted. The cultivation of the lands in this village was much behindhand, the seed-potatoes promised by the Union or the Duchess of Marlborough's committee had not arrived, and it was not to be wondered at that the people were downhearted. I promised a small sum of money to give employment to some of the many idle men in the construction of a pier. In summer, the salmon-fishing gives employment to a number of them.

The rents were much in arrear, but the owner of the village is acting with much forbearance towards his tenants, and had also assisted them in the purchase of meal at a low price. In addition to property of his own, this gentleman rents a large tract of land, and has a flock of 2,500 sheep and a large herd of cattle. He has a neighbour, however, who rents a tract o country said to be 30,000 acres in extent.

At Letterfrack I looked with much interest at the house built in 1849, by my friend the late James Ellis. The trees which he planted in great numbers have nearly surrounded the house, and hide from the passer-by the view of the garden in which my friend so delighted. The land around did not look so well cared for as when last I saw it under his management, and in portions of the grass land which he reclaimed the rushes seemed to be gradually resuming their sway. When James Ellis went to Letterfrack, the police-barracks, one or two houses and a few cottages were the only buildings in the place; now it is a thriving-looking little town. He combined in his character the qualities which always seem to me needed to govern Ireland and cure its maladies—justice, kindliness, firmness, industry. His belief that the exercise of these qualities, would benefit Ireland, led him in rather advanced life to leave his comfortable home in Yorkshire, and settle in what was then regarded as an almost unknown country. Here he and his wife lived for many years, until ill-health compelled them to return to England, not however before they had effected an entire change in the aspect of the property, and exercised a moral influence in the district, the effects of which are distinctly recognised and felt to this day. I had not been long in the village before I heard this:—"The people still pray for good Mr. Ellis. He is always called good Mr. Ellis. Yes, he was a true friend to the poor; but he never gave anything to the men who could work, unless they did something for it. He employed the people in reclaiming the land, or he would set them to pick up the stones to build walls, or the children to gather flower or roots for his friends. He was always teaching them the great lesson of work." "To this day," said Mr. Mitchell Henry's steward, "I can tell Mr. Ellis's boys; those he brought up are the best labourers I now have, and the best of the old men, too, all learned to work under him. He was the man for improving Ireland."

The extensive reclamations of land made by Mr. Mitchell Henry, M.P., at Kylemore in this neighbourhood, has attracted much attention; and as the question of reclamation is one which is of great importance in view of any remedial measures for the country, I devoted a day to visiting the estate. Mr. Mitchell

Henry, to whom I had an introduction, was from home but his intelligent steward, Mr. McAllister, most obligingly accompanied me over the whole estate, and gave me information on every point I desired. To those who are acquainted with Connemara it is needless to speak of the beautiful situation of the Castle on the borders of the Kylemore Lake, or of the timber and well laid-out gardens which surround it, so striking by contrast to the wildness of the country around. Compared with many Irish properties the estate is not large; it was doubtless purchased because of its beauty as a residence, and the valuable fishing in the Lake.

There are thirteen townlands, containing about 13,000 acres,* a large portion of which is mountain land. This accounts for the small annual valuation, amounting to but £740.

The nature of some of the mountain land may be judged of by the fact that one townland of 300 acres is valued at 1s. 9d.! and another townland of 100 acres is valued at 7d. It was no doubt a question of how many goats would graze on the mountain which decided this value. At the foot of these mountain slopes there is a considerable valley, in which the land which has been reclaimed, or in process of reclamation, is situate. Upwards of 600 acres have been brought into cultivation, and about 60 acres are now added yearly. The portion reclaimed near the Castle is very deep bog, so thick that cuttings nine or ten feet in depth had been made for the chief drainage. The principal drain in this part is utilized as a small canal for the

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* In 1841 the population of the thirteen townlands was 1,368, with 231 families; in 1851, after the decimation of the "Famine," it was 565, with 106 families; since which time there has been a steady growth, and in 1871 it was 1,061, with 152 families. The extraordinary diminution in the famine years is most marked. As we were returning from our visit to the more distant farms, we picked up an old man of eighty, who had walked some miles, and he pointed out the roadside graves of many who had been found dead, and buried where found in those dreadful days. He pointed out the remains of a village the whole population of which had been swept away. Sometimes a whole family had been found dead, and the house thrown down upon them was the family tomb.

conveyance of peat, or stones for the road, or lime and other materials for the land. Into this the smaller drains run. The peat dug out of the drains was stacked for fuel, and the sub-soil of limestone is used chiefly to mix with the peat soil. The subsidence in the ground after cutting these drains was remarkable, being often several feet. Some of the land which was bog last year had, after drainage, been ploughed or dug up into ridges, planted with potatoes, and was expected to produce about six tons to the acre. The manure used was chiefly super-phosphate, at three hundredweight to the acre. In addition to potatoes the ground which had been longer reclaimed was said to produce excellent crops of oats, as well as turnips, &c. Some of the ground had been laid down in grass, either permanently or for a time. In the permanent grass I noticed a tendency again to grow rushes.

As to the cost of the reclamation the steward thought that £10 per acre would cover the drainage; there is then the paring of the ground, the liming, and ploughing and digging to be added, nor must the heavy cost of making roads be overlooked. From first to last the cost cannot be much, if at all, less than £20 per acre. It would, however, be unfair to regard this as a proof of the actual cost of reclamation of land under other, or in all, circumstances. Here the object is the improvement of the estate adjoining the residence, into the cost of which the owner probably does not look more minutely than into that of the plantations which have been, or are, in course of formation in other parts of the estate. The farm buildings and dairy are on a large scale, admirably arranged. A large number of milch cows are kept, chiefly Kerry, Ayrshire, and other small breeds. Alderneys do not answer well. In covered stalls a large number of calves are reared, and a number of beasts are constantly being fatted. The whole of the beasts are fed under cover, no manure being made in yards, as it usually is in England and other places. There is excellent machinery, and everything is on the most complete scale. About 300 head of cattle, and 1,000 sheep are grazed. In addition to the dairy cows and young stock reared, a number of old cows and bulls are purchased lean from the farmers around, and fed up for the markets.

At a distance from the house there are two other farms—about 150 acres each—with well-appointed buildings and sheds and neat farm-houses. Here much the same course has been pursued; but as the land has been longer reclaimed, and some of it is of better quality, they had more the appearance of ordinary well-cultivated, well-appointed farms than the other lands. The letting value of these farms would probably be from 15s. to 20s. per acre. Two light Alderney bullocks were used in ploughing and harrowing, and answered much better than horses. Wages were about 1s. 6d. and 2s. a day. The employment given must be of the greatest value to the neighbourhood. I was informed that, in various ways, £1,000 had been paid in the past three months for labour.

Whilst in Connaught I had heard several times that the tails of a number of Mr. Mitchell Henry's cows had been cut off. I was glad to find that the statement was not confirmed. But the houses of a number of tenants who had paid their rents had been slightly injured as a mark of displeasure from those who had combined not to pay theirs. These I noticed in passing. There are about 150 small tenants on the estate, and they certainly are not highly rented. Mr. Mitchell Henry is assisting some of the tenants to drain their own lands, and paying them wages for the work done. It is deeply disappointing that tenants who are so liberally treated by their landlord, and to whom so much work is given, should be found combining together to refuse their rents. Whilst it may be hoped that the number is small who are acting in this way, no more striking proof can be given of the injury resulting from the extreme doctrines which have of late been so widely taught in some quarters.

One farm or townland on the estate, of 470 acres (80 acres of which were arable, and the remainder mountain or bog land), was let for £45 a-year, on a long lease, to five tenants. The arable land for each tenant varied from thirteen to twenty-six acres. One of the tenants to whom I spoke said he had ten beasts and thirty sheep. He seemed a very industrious man, and was busy planting Champion potatoes. I was told that all these tenants had reclaimed a considerable quantity of land, adding year by year to the arable land. What more could be desired?

The steward had no doubt this would be the result generally in Ireland if the tenants felt assured that they would not have to pay increased rents for making improvements, or for taking larger quantities of land into cultivation.

Notwithstanding the amount of work given at Kylemore, I was surprised to find that 600 out of 750 families in the district which includes Kylemore were upon the Relief lists. That this number, spite of very great poverty in certain townlands (as Renvyle, for instance), is larger than it ought to be, must, I think, be clear. Unhappily there is no united action here on the part of Catholics and Protestants such as I found in every other place I have yet visited, but a bitter feeling of hostility, which I am told prevails more or less throughout the west of the County of Galway, and which has led to much difficulty and controversy in connection with the Dublin Funds.

April 1*st*, 1880.—Drove over a very wild, stony, desolate region, covered for many miles with boulders and large granite slabs and stones along the shores of little bays, and near which were scattered many villages and houses scarcely discernible at times from the huge rocks against which they are sheltered. It seems incredible that any sustenance can be gained at all amidst this wilderness of rock, rivalling Petra in its barrenness, and which, at any rate, would seem only to afford food for goats; and yet here, in some places, a large population exists. Not less remarkable is the price which they pay for their miserable holdings. Around Errismore, we went into many cottages with the most filthy exteriors and entrances, but with a little space swept clean around the fire. In one, a woman who had a clean face, I thought must have been in England, and, on my inquiring, she said, "Yes;" and where? "In York, your honour." They were extremely poor. Some families had a little store of potatoes and others none; in one house—where there was a very good-looking woman, in ill health, and a handsome, merry daughter—they were just pulling out their hidden store of potatoes. *They had not tasted a potatoe for months*, and these the woman had been saving, as she thought "the great famine was coming again." Thanks to the meal given away this had been averted. On one estate we found that the rents, which previously seemed high,

had been raised 4s. in the pound about two years ago. Thus holdings which gave 1½ to 2½ acres of oats and about as much of potatoes, with a wild mountain run for a cow, calf or pony, had been raised from £5 5s. to £6 6s. For the seaweed they had to pay 1s. per load for all above four little horse loads. Some paid more rent, others less. When the kelp trade was good these people might earn sufficient to enable them to live, but it is impossible now that iodine is made more cheaply from Peruvian earth, which very much lessens the demand for kelp, or even causes its manufacture to cease in some places. In past times £10,000 to £20,000 a year was paid along the Galway coast for kelp, the making of which much benefited those who had seaside holdings, and helped to keep up the rents. Anyone who will look on the map of Galway, at the district south-east of Clifden, will be struck with the numberless small lakes and little inlets of the sea, which seem to have almost as large an area as the land. These are all surrounded by the huge stones which I have described in this "Region of Desolation."

At Roundstone, a little town very pleasantly situated on a bay opposite the Island of Inishnee, there is a fairly comfortable hostelry, which, with its small bed-rooms, opening out of the sitting-room, and wooden trough beds, reminded me of an Alpine inn. Here Mr. Brady, the able and indefatigable Fishery Inspector, was holding an inquiry concerning the proposed pier in the bay, which would be of great value, and give much work to the people. I had a long talk with him about other piers, especially those at Killala and Lacken. Great difficulty exists in obtaining from the authorities a speedy settlement, and an order for the payment of the money after the details are arranged. Many works which, at this moment especially, would be of the greatest value in giving employment, might now be in progress but for these vexatious delays. Here, too, I met with a parish priest who has charge of some extremely isolated hamlets situate among the Connemara mountains,—so remote that the relieving officer had never heard of the place, and the people there were equally innocent of the existence of the Union-house or of the Board of Guardians! Mr. Robinson visited

them some weeks ago and found them very much in want,—a people who *had nothing but four bare walls* for their houses, and laid down on straw or heather with the cattle in their hovels. Could the external conditions of human existence be worse? These little mountain farmers usually had four or five cows or young beasts and twenty or thirty sheep each, and were paying £6 to £8 a year each for their holdings, with large wild mountain ranges for their cattle. The Glendalough Hotel, which we reached about dusk, is beautifully situated, and a favourite resort of anglers, of whom we found several who had fished with little success.

April 2nd, 1880.—Left early for a long day's journey, partly along the well-known Connemara road from Clifden to Oughterard, from which we turned off at right angles, passing through a district, if possible, more inhospitable looking even than some parts seen yesterday. At length, after a slow progress of over twenty miles, we arrived at Rosmuck, a village on the shores of an inland bay. The priest was from home, but expected shortly. He and the dispensary doctor are the only people in a very large district who could in any way attend to the people. Mr. Robinson, who accompanied me, was well known here as in all the remote corners of his district, and had not long ago been obliged to sleep on the floor of the vestry, on a shake-down provided by the hospitable priest. After hunting up the recently-appointed Relieving Officer, a rough boat was at last manned by five men with three oars, to row us over the inlet to the little village of Camus. I wish I could produce that rocky coast and wild miserable village, or rather introduce it into England for a while, so that English people might realise how, in these remote places, so many thousands of people are living. Half-a-mile away, and I will venture to say no one would think it possible that any human being could live or even find foothold on this rock-strewn shore; but, by degrees, you see the little "smokes" arising, and here and there little dark strips of land, which show that the ground is being prepared for the potatoes they *hope* to obtain, for they have none left to plant. Then you see peering above the rocks little dark heads of men, women,

and children, who, attracted by the unusual sight, come out of their cabins to reconnoitre. As you walk among them on landing, they watch you with curious eyes: they do not beg, and cannot answer your inquiries, for most do not understand, and few can talk, English. They are a race of wild people, poorly clad, and living with the cattle in their houses, often lying on the damp ground on hay like them. No distribution of meal had taken place last week, and several families were sitting round small quantities of the smallest (old) potatoes I ever saw, and with nothing else to eat with them. In one house which I entered three children, under one covering, ill with fever, were lying on the ground: others also were ill.

For these miserable places among the rocks they were each paying from £4 to £8 a-year. This would seem incredible at any time. No wonder that none had paid their rent last year. I heard that the agent had talked about evicting them, but I think had deferred his intention. We gave a little money to the most destitute, which was gratefully received. Then we had rather a long row back, for we had walked two miles or more from the landing-place, and the tide being against us, compelled the boatmen to take a long détour through the rocky channel of the inlet.

On our return to Rosmuck we met with Father Kane, who is looking well after his people, but has not had much help so far. Out of 365 families in his parish, not more than fifteen were able to support themselves. I left him a sum of money to assist in giving a little work, or in helping some of the sick.

April 3rd.—At Oughterard I have been glad to have a quiet day. Visited the workhouse, and had a call from the clergyman and Mr. I. P. O'Flaertie, the Secretary of the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund. I regret to find that there are so many needing help here. I had hoped this was a better district, but want turns up everywhere. The poverty of the Electoral Division of Camus, which we visited yesterday, may be judged of by the fact that the annual valuation for the Poor Law is only £236, for an area of 8,857 acres (the poor-rate is 9s. in the £), and for the townland of 839 acres the annual valuation is £3 10s. Out of the 365 families in the parish there are not fifteen who do not

now require help. The township of Canus has fifty-six houses. Another division in Galway, Kilcommen, has 14,843 acres, and is only valued at £161 = 2¼d. per acre. The whole of the Union of Oughterard is valued at £15,000, with a population of 19,000, and has an area of 172,696 acres. Mr. Berridge, who purchased from the Law Life Assurance Company a large portion of the Martin estate is the largest owner. Canus and Rosmuck belong to him. He is non-resident, and, so far as I could hear, does nothing for his tenants. We were travelling nearly the whole of yesterday through his neglected estate. I had a long conversation with a police-constable in charge here. He thinks the agitation is quieting down, and that the people do not care about Davitt and his followers, from whose advice no benefit has resulted; but they are very warm supporters of Parnell. He thought the people who could pay their rents had generally paid. He spoke very strongly about the extent of the distress around Oughterard, and said that in November last he had been engaged in collecting the returns of the stock and crops in the country for the Government, and that he had been extremely unwilling to accept the statements made to him of the great reduction in the number and quantity of the stock or other crops; but he had tested them in several ways, and felt quite sure that the statements were correct. He thought the usually well-to-do farmers felt the strain very severely, and that it would be wrong to compel them to sell all their stock before allowing them "the meal."

I parted here with Mr. H. A. Robinson, the Local Government Inspector for this district, whom I have been fortunate enough to have as a companion for the last few days. His deep interest in his work, and intimate acquaintance with the country and the condition of the people, have been of great service to me. As he has been attacked on various occasions as being too young for the important service he is engaged in, I think it due to him to say that I consider any Government is to be congratulated which can obtain at this moment the services of a young man who undertakes with so much zeal and ability the very onerous duties which fall upon him. It needs young men to bear both the physical and mental strain which the work of

supervising the Unions of this extensive district in Mayo and Galway involve.

I had hoped to have been able to extend my journey to other portions of Galway as well as to the south-west coast; but after six weeks' constant travelling I do not find myself equal to the task.

Monkstown, Dublin, April 10th.—The great and unexpected political change which has swept over the country since I commenced this journey has brought with it many minor changes, and amongst these, one which men of all shades of politics cannot fail to regret—the retirement of the Duchess of Marlborough from the post to which she has with equal wisdom and liberality devoted herself. As we recall the prescient letter, issued in the closing days of last year, which, like the storm-signal, foretold the coming disaster, and the various steps which have been taken to avert it, whether in the formation or oversight of the local committees, the distribution of grants or the subsequent partial withdrawal of food grants and their substitution for the all-important supply of seed-potatoes,—it is impossible for me as a witness to withhold my humble tribute of admiration and regard. In a short interview which I had with the Duchess of Marlborough she expressed her unabated interest in the work, and her deep regret in not being able to carry it on to its close, and informed me that she had already made arrangements for placing the remaining funds in the hands of trustees so that they should be usefully disposed of.

During the earlier portion of my visit an estimate which I made that 600,000 persons were either needing or in receipt of some amount of relief in the seventeen Western counties which form the "scheduled districts," was objected to as being much in excess of the actual numbers. Subsequent information and the experience of the Dublin Committees seem to prove that this number was below the actual figures, and that the actual numbers cannot have fallen far short of one million out of the population of 2½ millions in the districts named.

As the actual demand for help is as great now (April) in most of these districts as it was during the winter, and the prospect of its becoming less, until the recently-sown crops are

ready for use, must mainly depend on causes of which it is difficult to estimate the value, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the members of the Mansion House Committee are deeply impressed with the increased responsibility of their position arising from the inadequacy of their Fund to meet any increased demand which the withdrawal of the other Fund may throw upon them.

Their operations have throughout extended over a wider area than the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund, and the necessity of gradually withdrawing from the wider area, and confining their assistance to the more impoverished unions, has strongly claimed the consideration of some members of the Mansion House Committee. The contrast between the comparative wealth or poverty of unions receiving assistance within the scheduled districts, has often struck me as demanding more consideration than it appears to have received.

In meeting the Committee of the Mansion House Fund, I ventured to call attention to this subject, and to the importance, as it seemed to me, of carefully reducing, or even withdrawing, the grants, in some unions which might be called wealthy in comparison with others, whose need was so extreme as almost to amount to famine. Especially in the face of what I feel assured must be the long continuance of the demand for help, does it seem important that the gradually lessening resources should be husbanded with strict care. Being requested to put in writing the data upon which my remarks were based, I addressed a letter to the Committee, after my return to England.

The great difficulty in carrying out the suggestions made, of wholly withdrawing from the (comparatively) richer unions, within the distressed districts, is much increased by the system adopted in Ireland of levying the poor-rate upon each electoral division, according to the actual needs and expenditure of such electoral division, instead of upon the whole union, as in England. Thus it happens that the poorest parish, is the one which is most heavily rated to the poor; and thus, in comparatively rich unions, districts exist which need help equally with those in unions which are much poorer as a whole. In any future changes in the poor-law in Ireland it would, I

feel persuaded, be a great advantage to assess the whole union, or even the county, equally for the relief of the poor. The difference in the rate collected in the various electoral districts of the same unions varies in some cases from 6d. to 1s. 6d. or 2s., and in others from 10d. to 4s. in the £, and even in one case from 2s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. in the £.

The last amount is no doubt most unusual and probably arose from the very low valuation of the electoral division—which in this case was about £240—whilst the actual rental must have been double or treble this sum.

For various reasons it appears very important that there should be a re-valuation of land in Ireland, for the purposes of taxation. The present valuation goes back to 1846-8, and is usually much below the present value, and in many cases appears to have very little relation to it. The result is injurious in many ways—thus I have frequently come upon instances where the tenement valuation is not half, and in some extreme cases not one-fourth the letting value or rental, and it certainly is more often than not 25 per cent. below. Hence in part, arises the idea common among the tenants of Ireland that their rents are unduly high, and from being so very much higher than the poor-law or "tenement valuation," that they ought to be brought down to its level. As a rule I should not be disposed to consider the rents unfairly high—that they are so in some cases may well be believed;—but the variation in price for apparently the same quantity and quality of land in different districts is so great that it is very difficult to form an accurate opinion on this important subject. There is one other aspect of this question which deserves attention, as being an Imperial one. The income-tax in Ireland being assessed upon the old valuation (tenement valuation) of 1846-8, and not, as in England, upon the actual rental, it would appear that Ireland pays an income-tax upon about two-thirds only of the rental actually derived from land, whilst England pays the tax on the actual rentals. In this way it is estimated that the landed interest of Ireland escapes the payment of the income-tax upon a sum which is computed at not less than four millions and a quarter! The figures are, present valuation, £13,769,000, which would be raised

to £18,000,000 if the re-valuation approached more nearly to the present value or actual rental. Looking at it in this light, it is not surprising that I have heard strong objections advanced to any re-valuation! But there is also another point of view from which the low valuation acts injuriously, in giving the impression that the poor or other rates are much higher than they are in England. Raise the annual valuation of a union, or electoral division to its true position relatively to an English union, and the rates which look so high to-day, of 3s. or 3s. 6d. in the £, would drop to 2s. or 2s. 6d., and much less in some cases.

The remarks which have been suggested, in connection with the difficulties felt to exist on the part of the Mansion House Committee in effecting any very exact selection of the districts most needing relief, must not be allowed to divert attention from the beneficent results of the operations of this and other Funds. No words are, I believe, too strong to express the boon which they have conferred upon the country. But for the timely succour given, the suffering and mortality would have been terrible indeed. For, surprising as it may appear, the increased expenditure under the Poor Law does not give evidence of the severity of the strain, although a number variously estimated at from half to one million persons have been assisted by the private charity of the Funds, at a cost of nearly a quarter of a million, for the past three or four months.*

Nor is it, I believe, possible to overstate the actual need of the thousands of small farmers and cottiers, who have thus been enabled to tide over a period of acute poverty, arising, not merely from a loss of crops—the money value of which is estimated at over £10,000,000, and of which one-half is considered to represent the loss in potatoes alone†—but also from the almost entire failure of money wages usually earned in

* Now fully half-a-million—June, 1880.

† In the admirable summary prepared by the Registrar-General, Dr. Grimshaw, the actual figures are:—Depreciation in money-value of crops in Ireland in 1879, as compared with 1878, £10,014,788; of which the loss on potatoes alone amounts to £4,238,484, the crop being estimated at 22,273,520 cwts., as against a ten years' average of 60,000,000 cwts.!

England or Scotland by those who annually visit England or Scotland in search of the work they cannot obtain at home. This latter loss, which falls almost exclusively upon the smallest tenants, cannot be less than a million, and may be much more. England then, as well as Ireland, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Dublin Committees for the zeal and earnestness which has been displayed in the faithful administration of the funds entrusted to them.

How heartily these efforts have been seconded by the numerous local Committees or individuals in the distressed districts the reader of the foregoing pages will have seen, showing with what assiduity the resident gentry and clergy of all denominations have, in a vast majority of instances, united in the careful administration of the grants or supplies placed at their disposal: and whilst it may seem invidious to refer to any class in particular, it is only just to point out that where a population is so largely Roman Catholic, the brunt of the burden has, in many places, necessarily devolved upon their clergy, who, often single-handed, have had to sustain that burden alone. I willingly avail myself of this opportunity for expressing my grateful sense of the kindness and hospitality which have been shown me, and the ready manner in which facilities have everywhere been given me in the prosecution of my inquiries.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITION OF CONNAUGHT.

It would seem impossible for any one to travel for some weeks through the distressed districts of the West of Ireland without frequently asking why it is that a condition of society should exist there which is so unsatisfactory to all parties concerned, and which differs so widely from anything that can be found in other portions of the United Kingdom. It cannot be denied that this condition is one which vitally affects the well-being, not of Ireland only, but of the whole United Kingdom. In the attempt to answer this question for myself, I venture to offer some considerations upon the causes to which, as it seems to me, this unhealthy condition may chiefly be traced, and also upon the various remedies which have been or are proposed for its benefit.

These considerations will form a fitting close to these notes.

There is a very marked change in the political and social atmosphere of the counties of Mayo and Galway when compared with Donegal. In the latter, with rare exceptions, there was little agitation or openly expressed bitterness towards landlords, and the number of police is small, and their duties not very harassing. In the former it is entirely the reverse, agitators and agitation are rife, and an almost military occupation exists.

The return of Mr. Parnell from America was signalised by a general illumination in the town, and even in remote villages and hamlets, where the police supposed no strong political feeling existed. In the towns, speeches more or less violent were made on the Sunday evening after his return, and bands and tar barrels caused a great stir among the people. At Ballinrobe a drunken orator commended Charles Stuart Parnell, as "the *only honest* man in Ireland;" and at Westport several speakers

addressed a large and excited audience from the window of our hotel.

But this is of slight moment compared with the deep-seated sense of discontent which pervades many districts of Mayo and Galway. At Westport the agent for the largest proprietor, who also acts for others, rarely if ever leaves his house unless guarded by two policemen armed with double-barrelled guns loaded with slugs; and his son, who is equally protected, is thought to be a special object for vengeance. This is in consequence of his having shot a man who was one of a party that fired upon his father and himself whilst driving on the road. At Ballinrobe again I noticed two armed policemen walking up and down the town together. "That is how we do it in Mayo," said the gentleman, a large landed proprietor, who was with me; "those men are following some bailiff up and down the town from house to house." If it were not for the police, I was told on one occasion, the people would rise in some districts against the landlords, or rather their agents; for the bitter feeling is generally against some agent who is supposed to carry out his duties with little consideration for the tenant and much for the landlord. In Mayo alone I was told there are 800 to 1,000 armed policemen, and as many more in the County of Galway, stationed there to protect the land, or rather the lives of the landowners.

It is very difficult for an Englishman to realise such a condition of affairs, or to conceive it possible in an English county. Take Norfolk, for instance, which has nearly the same area as Mayo—1,356,000 acres in the former against 1,376,000 in the latter—whilst the population of Norfolk, 438,000, is not far from double that of Mayo with its 246,000. Leaving Norwich, Yarmouth, Lowestoft, &c., out of consideration, let us imagine that in every small town or village of 300 to 5,000 people of that agricultural county companies of armed men were stationed in barracks, varying in number from five to fifty, whose duty it was, by day and by night, on foot and on horseback, to patrol the country; 800 to 1,000 men are thus employed in Mayo, while 236 rural police constables suffice for nearly double the population in Norfolk. What would dull Swaffham, Wal-

sham, Fakenham, or peaceful breezy Cromer think of such semi-military occupation? Let us also imagine that, here and there, in some wild and out-of-the-way place, you find a "hut" (temporary barracks) erected for a handful of men, marking, like the cross in the old highwaymen times, the scene of some recent outrage or attempted murder. Further, to complete the picture, let us remember that there are men, yes, and even a woman, it is said, who dare not cross the street of the town, or pay a visit, without the terrible penalty of an armed following.

Mayo was one of the proclaimed districts, and has been the centre of the great wave of anti-rent agitation which last autumn swept across the country and which has been productive of so much evil fruit. The districts around Claremorris and Swinford seem especially disturbed, and it may be noted that there is hardly a resident landlord in these districts, and that therefore the people are more left to themselves than is the case where a good resident landlord exists. Here, too, the misery of the population has been very marked, and the absence of men of independent position or judgment is most seriously felt in the administration of the Poor Law. The difference in the disaffected state of the people in North and South Mayo further illustrates this. In *South* Mayo, from Westport eastward, the chief landlords are nearly all non-residents—five or more—whose total rentals taken out of the county cannot be less than eighty thousand a year.* Captain Knox, at Ballinrobe, is an honourable exception to this, and he, as Chairman of the Union, and also of the Relief Committees, is working hard in that district. It is in South Mayo that the great seat of disturbance exists, and where, as I have noticed, the largest body of police is quartered, and where there are many men who dare not stir out of their houses without their escort. In North Mayo a less hostile spirit as a rule exists. Many of the landlords are resident, and exercise a

* In Connaught 427 owners of 1,111,000 acres, the annual value of which is £283,000, are non-resident; whilst 925 proprietors with 1,750,000 acres, of an annual value of £632,000, are resident, or partly resident, in the province. In Ulster 517 owners of 1,400,000 acres of land, with an annual value of £778,000, are absentees, whilst 1,259, having 2,100,000 acres, and an annual value of £1,355,000, are resident.

beneficial influence over their poorer neighbours and tenants. Sir C. K. Gore, Colonel Knox, and others, are instances of this. Nor must it be overlooked, in reference to the disaffected condition of Mayo, that it was in this county that the greatest number of evictions occurred in 1846-50; thousands were thus turned out of house and home, and the records of the Famine year have left a tale of suffering and sorrow which will not be soon forgotten.*

The attempted process-servings in this and the adjoining county have frequently been resisted by force. Fifty or sixty policemen have had to encounter large mobs of people, men and women, and have been compelled to retire from the scene. I have referred to one village which I visited, about three miles from Westport, which had been the scene of one of these encounters. In this instance, I believe, there had been little, if any, *withhold-ng* of rent, it was absolute poverty which prevented payment, for many of the people had pawned their shawls and clothing, and were, so far as we could see, without other food than that supplied by the "Committee." So far as I know, none of these persons have been apprehended for interfering with the police in the execution of their duty; but in the neighbourhood of Castlebar, the "Kilvine Rioters," both men and women, were convicted at the Castlebar Assizes, for violently resisting the police, whilst we were at Westport. The sentences were intentionally very heavy, viz.,—three men were imprisoned for twelve months, with hard labour; one for nine, three for six months; two women were sentenced for six months, with hard labour, others three months, with hard labour; two little boys to two months; and others, men and women, to three, six and twelve months. And it is thought that these sentences have had a deterring effect in other cases, as we heard of processes being served on Lord Sligo's and other pro-

* The Census (in round numbers) of the population of Connaught shows the following remarkable figures :—

	Inhabited Houses.	*Population.*
1841	243,000	1,418,000
1851	169,000	1,100,000
1861	163,000	913,000
1871	153,000	846,000

perties around Westport without difficulty. The families of the "Kilvine Rioters" are now supported by the Land League.

Nor is the county of Galway less disaffected. I have heard from several residents statements of the alarm and agitation through which they passed last winter. Many were in fear of their lives, or of having their houses burned down; and, as I have before said, it is thought by some that an agrarian revolution would have taken place had it not been for the constabulary. The Carraroe and Maam Riots, in which hundreds or thousands of people resisted the police who were protecting the process-servers, are too well known to need recounting. I met one of the inspectors of police who was present, who told me he thought if they had not charged at the moment they did that the people would have closed in upon the handful of police and by sheer force of numbers disarmed and trodden them down. As is was, thirty men and women were more or less injured by the bayonet, and several police, one of whom had hot coals thrown, not upon his head, but down his back. That this deep-seated disaffection is only partially quenched may be learned by the fact that within a few days a little yacht was burned down to the water's edge for some offence given by the owner, and to-day the Inspector of Police, who had luncheon at the hotel, was engaged upon an inquiry into a case of reported shooting at a man *last evening*,* within half a mile of this town (Oughterard). The Inspector himself took a loaded pistol out of his pocket before sitting down, which he said he always carried with him.

It cannot be doubted that this is sufficient evidence of a very serious state of society, which under the evil influence of certain men can at any moment be fanned into a flame. It is thought that many of the outrages are not committed by the poorest people, though the resistance to the police in process-serving is often undoubtedly so. The murderous attack upon the agent and his son, already referred to, which resulted in the death of one of the would-be murderers, arose in connection with a grazing farm of considerable size near Ballycroy, the lease of

* Written at Oughterard.

which fell in. The original rent of £10 was advanced to £32, and the owner of the lease declining to pay he was ejected. Such is the statement, and hence he induced persons to lie in wait for the agent with the deliberate intention of killing him. Such attacks, if they can be reached, ought to be punished most severely. A gentleman who visited the spot with the police the day after the affair, found the places where the men had spent the previous night in the heather, and two or three empty whisky bottles, cartridges, &c., &c.

Whilst condemning to the utmost such atrocious crimes, the question still remains to be solved, How can they be prevented? "Put more police in the county," is the answer of some, "erect a hut for four or five policemen where an outrage occurs and charge them on the district itself, so that it may *feel* the inconvenience;" a useful reminder no doubt, but certainly not a remedy.

"It is very hard to have to pay the police tax. See, Sir, I have to pay 6s.," said a woman to me one day, "a man had better be quiet and pay his rent." So far good, but the murderers are never found, and a reward of £500 for conviction or £200 and free pardon for information of accomplices have produced no result in the above case. Law is in fact set aside and agrarian crime respected and unpunished. The agrarian outrages in Connaught alone have increased four-fold in the past year, and are probably more numerous at this time in this province than in the whole of the three other provinces of Ireland together. And what is even more serious is the fact that not more than one in five of the offenders are discovered or punished. This applies solely to offences connected with the land, for as regards other crimes they are less frequent than in England, and as readily punished. And still the question remains, How can this almost universally disaffected tone be changed into one of content and loyalty?

From all I have heard the position seems to me *one of the greatest gravity*. It is, whoever may have said it, "the question of the day," and I cannot believe that any Government can long exist without having it forced upon them. It seems, therefore, essential to the right government of the people to know really what they consider their grievance, and, if it be a real one, to see in what way it may best be remedied; but if there be no real

cause for complaint, then the disorder should be put down with the firmest hand. Society is imperilled at the present moment, and the demoralisation which leads men to sympathise with murder and murderers cannot but be viewed with alarm and with the deepest thoughtfulness. That the *Land Question*—whatever this may mean—is, in the minds of nine-tenths of the people, the cause and centre of it, cannot be doubted. Talk to whom you will—except it may be a few of the owners of land—and you find but one answer. "The land is for the people, and they must have *fixity of tenure*, and the power to enjoy the fruit of their labour." "*Fixity of Tenure*," let me say, is much more advocated than *Peasant Proprietorship*. It is clearly seen that a poor tenantry have not as a rule the two capitals required both to purchase and to farm the land, and they would be content, if a clear simple law of fixity could be arranged, to leave the landlords with the fee, having tenants under certain fixed conditions with an assured fixity of tenure. "What is wanted," said the Bishop of K—— to me, "is to have a Government valuation of all lands made upon the basis of the value of all agricultural produce for the past seven or ten years, such valuation to be absolute for say a period of ten years or more, and at the end of this time to have a re-valuation based upon the results of the past period, and rents either raised or lowered accordingly, but without any reference to individual improvements." Others say, make a valuation to-day on the above basis which shall be fixed for ever. This would seem to me unfair to the landlords, *unless* under the expectation that the rents would rise in value on account of their *being paid with regularity upon a property improving each year by the industry of those most concerned*, so that the estate, instead of selling as it now does in Ireland at twenty to twenty-two years' purchase on the rental, would bring thirty to thirty-five years' purchase as it now does in England.

That a landlord would in many cases absolutely object to this, as reducing him to the position of a holder of rent-charge, with no power over the portion of his estate let to tenants, except so far as non-payment of rent or non-fulfilment of certain conditions gave him power, I can well understand. On the other hand there are landlords who, feeling very strongly the present position of their

property, would, I believe, welcome any well-arranged system which would ensure peace and contentment. One very serious objection, so far as I can see, to the carrying out of this plan is the danger of driving away the good landlords who are now in the country. This would in every respect be a calamity. Others say, that the passing of the Land Act has, in fact, made the tenants masters of the position, and that they are indifferent as to future legislation. There are also points relating to subletting and subdivision which must be most carefully and jealously guarded. For no one can doubt that the minute subdivision of land with *no other source of income* to the holder of the small plots is one of the great evils which surround the land question. And in connection with this part of the subject it is of *the utmost importance to realise the fact that farms under* ten, fifteen, or twenty acres of land, according to its quality, are too small to support a family. It matters not whether a man has fixity of tenure, or being a peasant proprietor has no rent to pay, he cannot, unless he has some other source of income, live and bring up a family on the small farms under ten or fifteen acres of land which form so large a proportion of the holdings in the West of Ireland.

This table shows these numbers very clearly, and also the remarkable changes produced by the famine and still going on in Connaught and Ulster. The totals are, in round numbers—

		Under 5 acres.	*5 to 15 acres.*	*15 to 30 acres.*	*Above 30 acres.*	*Total Holdings.*
Connaught Farms	1841	100,250	45,400	5,800	4,360	155,800
	1851	24,730	49,200	28,800	20,100	123,000
	1871	24,550	50,050	32,700	22,270	129,600
	1878	22,425	48,350	33,470	29,300	126,500
Ulster Farms	1841	102,200	99,600	25,200	9,650	236,700
	1851	36,650	85,170	57,600	37,800	217,300
	1878	36,930	73,600	56,800	41,070	208,500
	1878	35,400	69,200	56,200	42,080	203,060

And in considering this very large number of small occupiers —70,775 out of 126,500 in Connaught holding under fifteen acres—the most serious difficulties at once present themselves, the remedies for the removal of which must be taken into consideration.

The fact that there are Unions in the West in which the annual value—according to the valuation for the purpose of taxation—does not average more than £4 to £5 per holding for the *whole* Union, will give some idea of the large number of small tenants in such districts. On one estate of £10,000 a-year, in Donegal, the agent informed me that the average rents were not more than £5 per holding, and in the part of the estate in which we then were, not more than £3.

The question of how to deal with these small holdings is undoubtedly a problem of extreme difficulty. That they are, in many sea-coast districts of the West, so thickly clustered together, where the stony nature of the land appears to forbid any improved cultivation of the soil, adds materially to this difficulty. Without employment as labourers, and without additional land to cultivate, the only remedy appears to be emigration, or migration to other districts of Ireland. That both means might be properly employed for lessening the burden upon the land in many places, and so leaving larger holdings for those who remain, admits of no doubt. Both should, I think, be encouraged.

It is well known that the Roman Catholic clergy have, as a rule, strongly objected to emigration. A large number of those with whom I have conversed are, however, now convinced that it is a remedy which is absolutely needed. "Why," as the Bishop of K—— said to me, "should we object, if they can obtain one acre of good land in America, which is worth twenty in this country?" Nor must we overlook the circumstance that in America a man, if unable to purchase land, is certain to find employment. On the other hand the "scattering" of the people, *i.e.* the placing them upon grazing or uncultivated land, to be reclaimed in part at the expense of the State, is the favourite doctrine of many. "It is not, as you English say, because we object to losing our pay with our flocks that we object to emigration, but it is because we see that the women lose their morality and the men sink down lower and lower in the great American towns that, as their clergy, we object to emigration; and if you saw the letters we have from our brethren in the United States you would not wonder at our

strong objection.* It is only the resource of an indolent and unpatriotic Government that brings emigration forward as a cure for our present evils, whilst all the time there are millions of acres of waste land which only need the employment of the wasted labour which abounds, to make it fruitful, and give the needful means of living to our people."

There is much force in this remark, for in what civilised country of the world do we see so much uncultivated, undrained land lying waste, apparently courting cultivation; and, on the other hand, so much bone and sinew lying idle, waiting for employment? That the two elements might to some extent profitably be brought together admits of no doubt, but the important question whether any large scheme for the reclamation of bog lands, such as has often been advocated, could be profitably effected, demands fuller investigation.

The reclamations of land in Galway and other places show that it is possible to effect this reclamation, but the cost at which it has been effected seems to indicate that they would not be a commercial success.

But whilst the nature of the ground, or the closely-packed population, forbids any hope of permanently benefiting the population in certain districts except by emigration or the withdrawal to other parts of Ireland, there can be no doubt that there is a very large class of small holders of land who *rent, in addition to the cultivated* land they crop from year to year, larger quantities of mountainous or bog land, the quality of which is almost identical with that under cultivation, and which, if the holders felt assured that they could without increase of rent

* To this objection I have frequently urged the practicability and importance of making arrangements beforehand for the emigrants, so that on their departure from the seaport, as well as on the voyage, they might be cared for, and that, upon landing especially, they might at once be placed in good hands. Surely, with the wonderful power for organisation and the numerous Orders possessed by the Romish Church, it would be easy, without delay, to appoint efficient agents, whose duty it should be, on the landing of the emigrants in the New World, to give them information as to where work could be most readily obtained, or lands purchased to the greatest advantage.

or danger of disturbance bring it into cultivation, would be added to the arable land, and thus by degrees give them farms sufficiently large to maintain a family. Look at the evidence of this in the Peasant Proprietors, who have purchased their land under the Church Temporalities Act,* and at the instance of tenants on leases at Kylemore, p. 73.

And this I believe to be the true way by which tens of thousands of acres could, by slow degrees, be brought under cultivation, and thousands of little farms could be increased and made large enough to support the families which, on the smaller holdings, maintain at present a precarious existence in prosperous times, but when the harvest is bad or the potatoes fail, are obliged to look to the Poor Law or the Relief Committee for support.

But to give to the tenants the certainty that there would neither be increase of rent for improvements effected by themselves, nor danger of disturbance so long as rents are paid, brings me again to the much-debated question of—How can this be effected with justice to both landlord and tenant? The answer I must leave to abler hands to determine; but of one thing I am perfectly assured, that it is absolutely needful to face the questions which are involved in it, for the present relations between landlord and tenant are so strained that it is impossible to tell at any moment what may arise to snap them asunder. Unhappily, the words of the Commission of 1847, presided over by Lord Devon, still remain true, and are almost prophetic in their tone, where it says, "that the safety of the country and the respective interests of both classes call loudly for a cautious but *immediate* adjustment of the grave questions at issue. . . . In every district of the country we find that a widely spread and daily increasing confusion exists; and it is impossible to reject the conclusion that, unless they be distinctly defined and respected, much social disorder and national inconvenience must *inevitably be the consequence.*"

It is extremely difficult for an Englishman to realise the intensity of feeling which exists on the land question in Ireland, and in looking for some of the causes which have led to this, we

* See paper contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1880.

shall find that it is due to a large extent to the overwhelming proportion of the population which is engaged in agriculture. To nine-tenths of the population of Connaught the possession of a bit of land is the sole means of existence. Of manufacture there is none; and (the majority of farms being too small to need hired labour) of agricultural labour there is very little. Take away from the tenant his little holding, and nothing is left to him but the workhouse. Except in some of the towns there is not even an unoccupied house which a man could hire if he obtained work apart from his holding. Hence the tenacity with which the holding is retained and defended. They are like shipwrecked sailors on a plank in the ocean; deprive them of the few inches by which they "hold on," and you deprive them of life. Deprive an Irishman of the few feet of land by which he "holds on," and you deprive him of all that makes life possible. For the workhouse—distasteful enough to an English labourer—is simply unendurable to an Irish peasant. That this is no mere sentiment is often impressed upon the visitor who enters the cabins of the people, where it is so common to find some infirm or aged person dependent on the kindness of the family for the miserable subsistence he obtains, and who in England would, without doubt, have been sent to the workhouse long before. Who would wish to lessen this kindly feeling, or break down the almost insurmountable repugnance to the workhouse?

The small amount of pauperism in Ireland when compared with England is very remarkable. In 1878, 85,000 persons were relieved in Ireland, at a cost of £990,000; whilst in England nearly *748,000* persons were relieved at a cost of *£7,688,000*. Taking the population of England at four times that of Ireland it will be seen that pauperism in Ireland is not half what it is in England, in proportion to the population, and is even 12 per cent. less than in Scotland.

But there is also another feeling which is still less understood in England, and which operates, if possible, with deeper intensity upon the mind of the Irish peasant. It is this, that the Irish peasant believes that he possesses an inalienable right to the soil; that the landlord is not the sole owner,

but that he has with the landlord a joint ownership—a "joint proprietorship,"* not simply in the little plot of land on which he has built his hut, but, jointly also, with other tenants, communal rights of stray, or grazing, over the mountain or bog-land of the townland. I am here speaking of those who may be regarded as the old and natural tenants of the soil, who have lived there for generations, and by whose industry whatever there is of cultivation in the land, whatever there is of building on the estate, has been effected. We have *no analogous condition of the land in England*, and to seek for it we must go back to the position of the original English copyholder. There we find that the "customs of the manor" grew up side by side with the growth of improvements, and fully protected the outlay and expenditure of the tenant and prevented any harsh or capricious action on the part of the lord.† In Ireland it has been otherwise. There have been no corresponding "customs of the manor." The improvements effected and the land reclaimed have, as a rule, been regarded by the landlord as a reason *ultimately* for an increase

* *See* Report—Lord Devon's Commission.

† The following statement (prepared for me by a legal friend) shows how jealously the rights of the tenants have been guarded in England:—"In cases where litigation has arisen between a lord of a manor and a copyholder, in English manors, it has been the usual practice of the Courts to construe the customs of the manor strictly against the former. According to usual custom in manors which are called 'Fine Arbitrary' the lord is entitled to a fine upon the death of a tenant, or upon the alienation of the property by him; but the amount of such fine is never allowed to exceed two years' value of the premises to a single tenant, and after his death the lord must hold three Manor Courts at the customary intervals (usually not less than a year), and give notice of his claim at each, before he can take legal proceedings to enforce payment. In case of alienation the lord has (apart from special custom) no remedy for enforcing payment of the fine during the lifetime of the tenant who has disposed of his interest, unless the purchaser, for his own protection, seeks to be admitted as tenant in place of his vendor; but such purchaser, or any number of such purchasers from him, can, as against the lord, remain in undisturbed possession of the copyholds without making any payment by way of fine until their original vendor has died and the necessary three Courts have been subsequently held."

of rent. That there are many estates on which no raising of rents for improvements effected has taken place does not affect the argument or alter the fact that in many others these rights have been overlooked, or disregarded, and the rent raised to an extent more or less commensurate with improvements SOLELY brought about by the tenants. In Ulster the long-existing custom of "Tenant Right" has, to a considerable extent, protected the tenant, and caused—can we doubt?—to a large extent, the greater prosperity and tranquillity which are so evident in that province.*

That this tenant right has at length been legalised in Ulster, and an approach to it extended, by the Land Act of 1870, to the other provinces of Ireland, is well known. Of its operation in Connaught it is too soon to form a judgment, but doubtless it is felt by many landlords to have deprived them of the power of speedy eviction, and in other ways lessened their power over the tenant. On the other hand it is undoubtedly felt by many tenants to have given them a firmer hold of the land, and has, I was told, led to a considerable improvement in its cultivation.

Perhaps, apart from the wretched condition of the people and their dwellings in the West of Ireland, the fact which most impresses itself upon the mind of the traveller is, that nothing is made the best of, that the resources of the country are never really developed: muscle, energy, land, water, natural resources, beauty of scenery, all are more or less wasted for want of a wise and right direction and the use of capital and skill. The neglect and unwisdom of the owner, and the ignorance and supineness of the tenant, are everywhere patent.

You stop and exclaim with surprise, if you come upon a well-built cottage with a pretty garden (I am speaking of the West), such as is common in every English village; or make a note, if you see a well-drained, well-cultivated farm, which you would pass unnoticed in any English county. Still more are

* This view is also taken in the Report of the Commission of 1847, presided over by Lord Devon, where it states "that the comparative tranquillity of the North of Ireland may mainly be attributed to the existence of the Ulster Tenant Right."

you struck with surprise, almost with astonishment, if on many large estates you find any trace of ownership beyond the park wall which surrounds the "demesne." Within its pale there may be that which is common in every estate in England, the sense of care and attention. Without, you step at once into a "beggar's land," and throughout its vast acres you may fail to discern any indication, whatever may be his wealth, that the owner is not as poor as the tenants appear to be.

You notice sites among the lovely mountain scenery which would make the fortunes of a dozen Scotch hotel keepers; or on the sea-coast situations so beautiful that you wonder that, in spite of the prevailing lethargy, no attempt has been made to create an Irish Barmouth or Llandudno. It cannot be doubted that Ireland possesses within itself the means of its own social regeneration. Still less can it be doubted that the bitter cry of distress, the political unrest and discord, the angry, defiant menace, the murderer's uplifted arm,—all spring from one and the same source. And that the source is poverty; poverty springing from want of employment; a want of employment arising from the undeveloped resources of the country, which await the magic touch of industry and capital.

And, as it seems to me, the pressing question still remains,—What further can legislation effect to promote this great and most desirable end so as to prevent, not merely the ever-recurring periods of distress arising from the failure of crops, but to raise and ameliorate the permanently miserable and disorganised condition of the people?

That plenty and contentment can be made to take the place of want and turbulence by mere Acts of Parliament; that social order and employment can spring up at the bidding of the statesman, however able and conscientious, it is idle to expect. The evils have been so long existing; the sore is so deeply seated, and has assumed so malignant a form, that even "heroic treatment" may fail to produce any immediate benefit. All that can fairly be expected of any Government is, as it seems to me, to lay down great principles of treatment which shall surely, although slowly, cure the maladies and build up a sound and healthy system.

Leaving metaphor, what, then, is there which can practically be done? It must seem empirical even to attempt to answer this most serious question, and if I do so it is with a deep consciousness of my own inability rightly to grapple with it.

Before doing so, let me say that I confine my remarks chiefly to the West of Ireland. With the East, with land let on ordinary terms, or on lease, as in England, I do not profess to deal. It is with the tens of thousands of small farmers always on the verge of want, whose condition is a blot upon our common humanity, and an excuse, if not a plea, for the wildest schemes proposed for its amelioration, that I propose to speak; those whose families have lived on the same lands for generations, who have reclaimed whatever land has been reclaimed, and cultivated whatever is cultivated, and built whatever is built of home or out-buildings, and among whom the present privation is rife, and borne, let me say, with a submission which is touching to witness.

CHAPTER V.

REMEDIES.

KEEPING before us the pressing question of what further can be hoped from legislation, it seems important, before making any suggestion as respects the future, to review the Remedial Measures which have already been applied.

Those who remember the Famine of 1847, or have made themselves acquainted with that period, will be well aware of the strenuous efforts which were then made to effect the passing of the Encumbered Estates Act, and can recall the high hopes which were then entertained of the benefits likely to result from its operation—efforts and hopes which were largely shared by the prominent members of the "Relief Committee of the Society of Friends." They strongly advocated the passing of this measure, and to a member of this Committee, who devoted a large share of legal knowledge and skill to the settlement of its principles and details, the first judgeship of the Encumbered Estates Court was offered and declined.

The Encumbered Estates Court undoubtedly effected a great and useful purpose during the first ten years of its existence in liberating a very large amount of property from insolvent owners. But many of those who took the most active part in its establishment must often have been conscious that, to a great extent, it has failed to secure all the benefits expected from it.

The reasons for this are, I think, not far to seek. Its promoters were occupied too exclusively with the idea that land, when liberated from insolvent ownership and sold to other proprietors, would necessarily fall into the hands of substantial owners, who would employ their capital in the development of its resources, and thus give the needed employment to the

people on the estates. Pursuing this single object, they fell into the fatal error of ignoring too much the tenants' interests in their holdings. It is notorious that the rights of the tenants were disregarded, and that this disregard was the occasion for grievous wrong in numerous instances, sometimes when the tenants were evicted without compensation to make room for new comers, and sometimes when the rents were raised by the new purchasers, with entire disregard to the peculiar position of the Irish tenant. It has often been noticed that the rack-rented estates are generally not the estates of old Irish proprietors, in which the rents are for the most part moderate in amount, but estates purchased under the Act by speculators, who have resold them, after increasing the rental enormously.

The promoters of the legislation of 1847-8 also committed another fatal mistake. They missed perhaps the widest opportunity which could ever have occurred of enabling the tenants themselves to become the owners of their own holdings, not only without injustice but probably to the great pecuniary benefit of the landowners whose estates were sold under the Act.

It is difficult to overestimate the benefit which would have resulted socially and economically, if this great opportunity had been made use of for raising up all over Ireland a proprietary of tens of thousands of larger or smaller farms owned and tilled by men who had the keenest interest in their improvement and further reclamation. If 6,000 proprietors have been added during the ten years in which the "Church Act" has been in operation, converting the purchasers, as a clergyman told me, from "agitators" into "Conservatives," what vastly larger results might have been effected through the more extensive sales under the Encumbered Estates Act during the thirty years which have elapsed since it was passed!

Hence came the necessity for further legislation. The Land Act of 1870 was needed to supply the two fundamental omissions of the Act of 1846-7.

(1.) As regards the rights of the tenants—the Act of 1870 recognised for the first time by law the long-ignored though persistently-maintained Ulster tenant-right. And also, in districts in which this valuable custom had not been so success-

fully upheld, the Act substituted for it, a recognition of the interest of the tenants by, firstly, giving them a right to the value of their improvements on the termination of their tenancy; and, secondly, by securing to them compensation for disturbance by their landlords in case of an ejectment from their holdings for any other reason than non-payment of rent.

(2.) As regards the lost opportunity of allowing the tenants to become purchasers of their holdings, tardy amends were made by the Bright Clauses of the Land Act, following the precedent set the year before, by the encouragement given in the "Church Temporalities Act" to the tenants of the Glebe lands to become purchasers of their holdings.

This legislation was no doubt highly beneficial, and it may well be asked, Is it not sufficient? Why disturb the settlement then made? Are not the disastrous effects of the famine merely exceptional, and when they have passed away would it not be wise to allow the landlord and tenant to adjust their position to the existing law? If the legislation of 1870 be upheld as final, and if the law be strictly enforced, will not the present agitation gradually die out?

The answer to this is to be found in the state of Ireland after the seven years, during which this policy has been avowedly pursued. Either the Act of 1870 was on wrong lines, or it requires still further adaptation to the needs of the case.

In the West of Ireland the tenants complain that the needed sense of security for their capital and labour is still wanting, and law and order are not yet maintained. Never at any time were the cries of "*fixity of tenure*" and "*no landlords*" so loudly uttered.

The question therefore remains and cannot be shirked: "What are the remedies?" Ought not Parliament to recognise whatever is substantially just and sound in principle in these demands, and thus, by other legal reforms, arrest a policy of wild revolution?

Over and over again I have heard the Land Act spoken of by landlords as an unjust and mischievous measure, and as being injurious to, if not destructive of, the rights of proprietorship, inasmuch as it has lessened the power of the landlord to evict

or otherwise deal summarily with his tenant. On the other hand, I have heard many others, belonging to or connected with the tenant class, who have spoken of its provisions as just and highly valuable, and as having already exercised an important influence in giving to the tiller of the soil a greater sense of security, and thus encouraging an improved and extended cultivation.

Opinions so strongly held and so diverse seem to indicate that, whether for good or evil, this Act has, in principle at least, gone to the very root of the question: and the testimony of both landlord and tenant shows that it has materially increased the security of the tenant. To the beneficent results of the other branch of the legislation of 1870, *i.e.* the experiment of peasant proprietorship, I have already referred in the foregoing pages, and have treated this subject more fully in an article in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century*. However limited the results may be, so far as they go it cannot be doubted that the position of the tenants of the Glebe lands who became owners has been improved. It is my belief that in a steady persistence on the lines adopted in the legislation of 1870, in both its branches, lies the only chance of reconciling the conflicting claims of landlord and tenant; although I am aware that to speak of the Land Act as a successful remedial measure is to many landowners, who regard its principles with abhorrence, equivalent to calling a poison wholesome food.

Firstly; as to the tenant right. The object of the Land Act of 1870 was, and the object still should be, to secure to the landlord and to the tenant their just rights, including their proper shares in the increased value which the industry and capital of the tenant may have given to the land.

The Land Act of 1870 recognised that the tenant had an interest in the land in which he had invested his labour and capital, as the Agricultural Holdings Act has also done in England. And if the Irish Act seems to give more than the English Act to the tenant the reason is, as has so often been pointed out in these pages, the almost universal practice of Irish landlords to let to the tenant the mere land, *leaving to him the erection of*

buildings and fences, the drainage and reclamation, and everything that is needful to convert it into a farm—a relation of tenant to landlord the very reverse of that which obtains in England.

The principle being thus conceded in the Irish and the English Acts, the lines of its further extension in practice alone are in question.

Nowhere are these lines better defined, or more clearly laid down, than in the Report of the Devon Commission in 1847:—

"The LANDLORD has the undoubted right to the inherent qualities of the land, as well those that are latent and not yet called into productive activity as those that are already developed and made profitable; and this right must extend up to the highest state of production of which land is capable.

"Thus then the inherent qualities of the land are the distinctive property of the LANDLORD.

"The TENANTS' equitable right to a remuneration for his judiciously invested labour and capital is not likely to be disputed in the abstract. This property is undoubtedly his own. If it be employed on the estate of another person, and with that person's concurrence, it ought still to be respected and preserved to him. And if their intercourse or joint co-operation should for any reason terminate, it ought not to be without a just settlement of the account between them."

"Thus, then the labour and capital which a tenant may employ to call these qualities into activity are the equally distinct property of the TENANT."

How is it possible that the justice of this description of the points at issue can be doubted either on the part of landlord or tenant? How then does it happen that upon a question which is so largely one of mercantile consideration, any hesitancy should exist as to the principle? Is not the Irish landowner in great measure in the position of the merchant with the raw article to sell and the tenant in that of the manufacturer? Or in a position more analogous still to that of the owner of property

which contains coal or minerals, and which, not having himself the capital or skill to work, he leaves to lessees to develop? Looking at it in this aspect, can it be said that the relative position of the tenant to the landowner in Ireland is one which is conducive to the best interests of either; and can it be supposed that, if a similarly unsettled condition existed in any branch of either the mining or manufacturing interests in England, means would not soon be adopted to secure arrangements more to the benefit of both? It has sometimes seemed to me that the Irish landowner, looking too exclusively to that which he deems his *rights*, has shut his eyes to the evils which this exclusive view produces; so that while he condemns all legislative interference on the part of the State, he overlooks the evils which arise from the present relations of landlord and tenant, or attributes these evils to other causes; forgetting that in this mercantile transaction, as in all others, no permanently satisfactory relations can subsist which do not include equal regard to the interests of both parties.

Unhappily this condition of the West of Ireland is not merely one of recent occurrence. Famines or outbreaks of turbulence have too often called attention to it during the past fifty years. The almost unanimous verdict of both statesmen and writers has condemned the existing relations of landlord and tenant. No words can be more striking than those used in the Report of the Devon Commission, already quoted:—"The importance and absolute necessity of *securing* to the occupying tenant in Ireland some distinct mode of remuneration for the judicious permanent improvements that he may effect upon his farm is sustained by *a greater weight of concurrent evidence than any other subject which* has been brought under the investigation of the Commissioners." "The want of some measure of remuneration for tenants' improvements has been variously stated as productive, directly or indirectly, of most of the social evils of the country."

Nor less true and worthy of all consideration are the following words:—"It has been shown that the master evil, poverty, proceeds from the fact of occupiers of land withholding the investment of labour and capital from the ample and profitable

field for it which lies within their reach on the farms they occupy; that this hesitation is attributable to the reasonable disinclination to invest labour or capital on the property of others, without a security that adequate remuneration shall be derived from the investment."

Though the agriculture of Ireland has been greatly improved since 1847, there are still many places to which the strong animadversion of the Devon Commissioners in their Report will apply, "that the characteristic tillage of the country is most barbarous and unprofitable, and that the introduction of the more profitable courses of cultivation must be impracticable until the *requisite preparatory* improvements of the soil shall have first taken place." After pointing out that the evidence before the Commissioners showed that this "requisite preparatory" improvement "offers the most profitable return for money or labour invested in it that can be imagined," the Report adds that, "so far as the small working farmer is concerned, these lucrative operations may be carried out *without the investment of money capital, but merely by the judicious application of time and labour of his family which are now wasted, whilst he is complaining that employment cannot be had.*" Leaving the smaller class of farmers, the Report points out that even as far as regards the larger farmers, although they have "the same ample opportunity of employing labourers on similar works, with a certainty of the most profitable results, still often *no effort is made;*" because, 1st, "The farmer is not certain of being permitted to reap a remunerating benefit from his exertions; 2nd, Because, if a tenant-at-will, he may be immediately removed from the improved lands after having invested his labour or capital, without receiving any compensation for what he has done, or his rent may be immediately raised to the full value of the improvements thus effected."

If it is urged that such cases seldom occur, the Report replies "that it does not require many such to do infinite mischief in this respect; a single instance in a large district would naturally paralyse exertions to an incalculable extent." After speaking of some evidence, adverse to the benefits resulting from land held on long leases, the Report, adds: "These facts do not impugn

the broad and intelligible principle that before any man can be expected to invest wealth on his neighbour's property he ought to have distinct security as to the way in which that wealth is to be returned to him with reasonable profit. Many persons of the most upright intentions are surprised if a tenant should hesitate to expend large value in labour, &c., for improvements, which may require several years to draw back from the land, although the following year this outlay might *legally* be appropriated by the landlord. The world would be more surprised at the folly or indiscretion of a man, not being a tenant, who would place his money at the arbitrary control of another without either bond or security for its repayment. The evidence proves how unfortunate it is for *the proprietor's interest*, as well as *that of the tenant's*, that the closest mercantile calculations and rules have not been observed in the mutual dealings of these classes, and to the omission of them may be traced that derangement and these numerous adverse claims which surround the whole subject" (Report of Commission of 1847, p. 158).

It was to remedy this state of matters that the Act of 1870 was passed, and this Act is recognised in previous pages as having done much good.

Surely these clear statements of the Devon Commission embody principles which are of universal application, and in accepting them as a fair and just statement of the relative position of both landlord and tenant it may seriously be asked—first whether there has been a *sufficient* recognition of the tenant's position which these principles require? Second, whether the neglect or unwillingness to recognise these principles has not, to a certain extent, been the cause of, or reason for, the present cry for "fixity of tenure," with or without a due recognition on the tenant's part of the rightful position of the landlord.

Whatever alterations may be needed in the Land Act to carry out these principles into practical operation, so as to secure the just rights of the tenant, are, in my opinion, the true and legitimate means of meeting the cry for "fixity of tenure."

Secondly, there remains the further, and to some extent rival, cry of "no landlord;" the only possibly reasonable interpretation

of which must be the purchase by the tenant of the landlord's interest. From any other point of view it simply means robbery, and as such merits no hearing.

The results of past experiments in this direction are decidedly encouraging. Mine is not the only evidence which enables me to speak favourably of its general success, and the influence which the possession of land exercises upon the purchaser. We have the more important testimony of Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Murrough O'Brien, and others, who take a deep interest in the question. Hence I cannot hesitate to advocate, as one of the remedies for the existing evils an extension of Peasant Proprietorship; not that the results prove it to be beneficial in all cases or circumstances, nor that I would pretend that it can be a panacea or universal remedy for Irish distress. It must not be forgotten that proprietorship, whether peasant or otherwise, necessarily involves possession of sufficient means to become a proprietor in addition to the requisite capital required for the cultivation of the land; and to place smaller or larger tenants in the position of heavily encumbered owners would only be to add to one of the evils with which Ireland is already afflicted, viz., the possession of land without the capital required for its proper cultivation.

But that the principle is applicable to the existing difficulty in tens of thousands of cases, it seems impossible to doubt. Why should not the hidden hoards and smaller or larger deposits in the banks for which the owner now receives a mere bagatelle of interest, be invested in the land? That the possession of land by thousands of owners would at once act as a stimulus to exertion, and, by so doing, would unlock capital and employ a large amount of labour, there seems every reason to believe. Whether looked upon from its commercial or social advantages, it seems, then, of the utmost consequence to promote Peasant Proprietorship. But in using the term "Peasant Proprietorship," I think it ought most distinctly to be recognised that the principle must not be confined to the smaller farms, as is so strongly advocated in some quarters. As a rule, neither the soil nor the climate of Ireland appear to allow of very small holdings being held beneficially in the absence of other employment.

It is quite possible that there are instances where the soil is exceptionally good, or the vicinity of a town enables the owner to cultivate as a market-gardener, in which a small holding may be made to support a family in comfort; but as a rule, and having regard to the extreme moisture of the climate of the West of Ireland, and the present imperfect cultivation and ignorance as to the best methods of cropping the land, this cannot be attained.

At the same time it is a most important to recognise the great benefit which results to the small owner of land who has other employment, in being possessed of his own freehold, for from this small holding the thrifty and industrious man may rise to a larger one, and the mere possibility of this cannot but inspire him with hope and energy.

The lines on which it may be possible for the State further to aid the tenants to become purchasers of their holdings without injustice to the owners of land or any infringement of their rights have been so clearly laid down by Mr. Bright in his speeches that I need not enter into further detail on the subject.

EMIGRATION AND "SCATTERING."

It must, I think, be admitted there are a very large number of tenants in the West of Ireland for whose circumstances no land legislation of the nature adverted to can be considered a remedy. So far as I have been able to form an opinion the evidence is adverse to the idea that the occupancy of very small farms is, or can be made, *without other employment*, a benefit to the tenant. Such, for example, are the people whom I have described as existing on the stony wastes in the south-west of Galway. To the dwellers at Camus or Carraroe, with its five-and-twenty miles of alternate huts and boulders, neither peasant proprietorship nor "fixity of tenure" can be expected to prove remedial measures, and if it be objected that these are exceptional cases, it would not be difficult to bring forward many other localities of which, in varying degrees, the same might be said. For these the only available means of relief, in the absence of employment, appear to be "emigration" or "scattering." The latter remedy, the placing of the people upon a few of the

thousands of acres of unreclaimed land in other portions of the country, is one which sounds very tempting, and is entitled to very careful consideration on the part of those who may be called upon to legislate. The data upon which any judgment can be formed appear to me at present to be wanting. It may be sufficient to point out that it is a remedy which, when the drainage, reclamation, and the length of time over which it would be needful to support the families are taken into account, would be found to be very costly, and when effected would leave the tenant, or owner, in a poorer condition permanently than would have been the case if he had emigrated. There is also the important point in favour of emigration, that apart from the facilities of obtaining land abroad, employment in a variety of trades can readily be obtained.

Whatever then may be the merits of "scattering," I cannot think at this moment that its claims can compete with emigration. It may be urged that the natural forces at work, now drawing thousands monthly to seek a livelihood in another land, are sufficiently powerful, and do not need any legislative interference to stimulate them. The misfortune is that not reaching down to the poorest they leave behind the weakest, and that whilst thousands of fairly well-to-do and able younger men and women are leaving their native country, those whose position most demands relief are left behind. That which seems to me to be needed is that under careful and systematic supervision *families* should be assisted to emigrate from overcrowded parts of Ireland, and that this oversight should not end in Ireland, but should be continued under the charge of properly qualified agents in Canada or elsewhere, whose object it should be to give assistance in the selection of land or in obtaining employment for the emigrants. The withdrawal of families from the crowded districts would have the double advantage of leaving more land for those who remain. Assistance to emigrants under "careful and systematic supervision" seems, then, to be one of the remedial measures for Ireland.

SALE AND TRANSFER OF LAND.

Most intimately connected with, if not underlying, all plans tending to increase the number of owners of the soil, is the necessity for "simplicity of legislation" in all matters affecting the sale and transfer of land. For, whilst the rich man may afford the luxury of a long bill of costs, the poor cannot; and it cannot be doubted that the expense and delay, as well as the uncertainty connected with the purchase or sale of land will continue to prove, as they do in this country, a constant bar to the free interchange of ownership. Whilst it may never be practicable to come down to the perfect simplicity of sale and transfer practised under the tenant-right system in Ulster, which consists merely in the seller's receipt for the purchase-money and the buyer's entry on the land, this simple plan is certainly a model which may well be aimed at. If this "selling of the land," as the Ulster tenants call it, was hedged in by all the vexatious delays and expense connected with the sale of land in fee, we cannot doubt that both the price of tenant-right would be reduced, and the number of transactions materially lessened. The reforms recommended by the Select Committee of 1879," in the "registration of titles," need careful consideration. Treat landed property, so far as practicable, as an every-day article of commerce, and can there be any uncertainty that the value will rise, and an immensely increased number of sales take place? "Free trade in land" must undoubtedly be regarded as one of the remedial measures demanded by a country almost wholly dependent upon the land.

Nor ought the cost of stamps and the other expenses of conveyancing to be overlooked. The loss to the revenue could be but small if the present stamp duty (of 10 per cent.) were remitted or lessened in cases of purchases below £500. And with regard to legal charges it would be desirable (pending the establishment of some simple system of registration) that the Bill lately introduced by Lord Cairns, and having for its object the remuneration of solicitors in noncontentious matters, by a fixed percentage, should be passed into law as speedily as possible.

Questions of even greater importance arise in considering

the practice of the courts, and the duties payable to Government upon the devolution of land, whether under a will or an intestacy. It is important that in cases of intestacy the law of primogeniture should be abolished, and the descent of land assimilated to the rules regulating the distribution of personal estate; but more than this is needed. A simple and inexpensive process of administration should be placed within easy reach of the people, through the agency of the Civil Bill Courts (Ireland). Under an Act passed in 1873, a widow or children of an intestate whose personal estate does not exceed in value £100, and who reside more than three miles from the Court of Probate in Dublin, are entitled, upon payment of a few shillings, to obtain, through the registrar of the Civil Bill Court for the district in which the intestate resided, the necessary grant of administration, and the benefit of this Act has since been extended to the children of poor widows.

The advantages of a well-considered extension of this Act, both in England and Ireland, would be incalculable. Our English County Courts, under an Act passed in 1865, can deal with nearly all matters under the value of £500, upon which an application to the Court of Chancery would otherwise be necessary; and it would be merely an extension of this principle to give the Irish Civil Bill Courts a concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Probate in Dublin in cases both of Probate and Administration up to the same amount (£500).

In Dublin it would also seem desirable to make provision that these small landowners, who necessarily have the faintest knowledge of the subject, shall be entitled to claim from the District Registrars the assistance they need, either to obtain Probate or Administration, as they can now obtain it under the Act of 1873, in cases of intestacy.

The fostering hand of Government might, with manifest advantage, be given in aiding the carrying out of light, cheap railways in the poorest districts of the West, so as to bring the produce within easier reach of a market.

In conclusion I venture to urge the paramount importance on Imperial grounds, of dealing in a comprehensive spirit with

the various questions at issue. Apart from Ireland, the whole, course of legislation seems in danger of being obstructed. The much-needed attention of Parliament is diverted from the vast millions under our rule in India or the Colonies. Time cannot be given to the many important European questions which ever demand the most thoughtful attention. Purely English affairs are in danger of being overlooked. And why? In order to give way to a microscopic examination of Irish discontent, begotten of Irish want; in order to listen to the imperious demands for legislative interference and assistance which come to us from little more than one-half of the population of Ireland, a number barely exceeding three millions of people. For it is unjust not to recognise the fact that a large portion of the country is well-to-do and contented, and greatly increasing in wealth and population.

Can it be supposed that if this strong cry came to us from the same number of persons in England—the county of Yorkshire, for example—that remedial measures would not be at once attempted?

Amidst the general gloom and acknowledged difficulties which surround the Irish Question, may not the facts that the numbers to be dealt with are so comparatively small, and that, in looking back for a quarter of a century, we may discern a marked improvement even in the West of Ireland, be some encouragement to those who may be called on to attempt its solution?—a solution based upon the principles of justice, which shall, when the smoke of party politics has cleared away, be acknowledged by all parties to have built up the social edifice, and given order in the place of anarchy, and plenty in the place of want.

Nor less, to my own mind, is there ground for hope that this great end may be attained, from the circumstance that the important office of Chief Secretary for Ireland has been undertaken by one who, in addition to the distinguished abilities which have placed him in the front rank of English statesmen, brings to the task the willingness to hear all sides of a question, true sympathy with humanity, and a deep sense of duty. It is an emergency so serious, that it becomes the duty of all well-wishers to their country, whether in or out of Parliament, to

throw aside all mere party or class prejudice on the one hand, and, abstaining from all unreasonable demands on the other, strenuously to unite in applying remedies, which shall so promote the well-being of Ireland as to make it possible for her Union with England to be a source of strength and security, instead of one of weakness and danger. Then, and then only, can she take her true place in the Councils of the Nation, and become, in something more than name, an integral portion of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

APPENDIX No. I.

STATEMENT showing the amount of stock now held by small tenants on a townland in Donegal, compared with the numbers held in some former years :—

No.	The number of Head of Cattle grazed usually on the Meenacladdy Townland.	The number of Sheep usually Grazed by Tenants.	The present number of Cattle grazed by Tenants in Meenacladdy Township.	The present number of sheep grazed by Tenants in Meenacladdy Township.
1	15	41	1	0
2	6	20	4	7
3	6	40	1	0
4	4	10	1	2
5	9	40	4	2
6	6	20	2	1
7	16	80	5	3
8	9	25	3	2
9	10	20	1	0
10	9	30	1	6
11	9	32	6	10
12	8	25	4	3
13	7	20	1	3
14	11	50	2	5
15	8	17	1	2
16	8	20	2	6
17	18	100	1	0
18	7	20	1	4
19	2	10	1	3
20	4	18	1	0
21	8	25	6	8
22	7	25	1	3
23	10	30	4	1
24	10	40	5	20
25	7	20	1	3
26	7	20	1	0
27	7	15	0	3
28	6	15	2	5
29	4	30	2	10
30	4	10	0	0
31	5	10	1	0
32	2	20	0	0
33	1	0	0	0
34	8	30	5	15
	248	928	71	127

APPENDIX No. II.

RENTS and Government Valuation of thirty-five small farms near Westport:—

No.		Government Valuation. £	s.	d.		Rent. £	s.	d.
1	...	3	3	0	...	5	0	0
2	...	3	3	0	...	5	8	8
3	...	3	13	0	...	10	17	4
4	..	2	15	0	...	5	14	8
5	...	5	10	0	...	9	4	3
6	...	5	10	0	...	9	1	6
7	...	2	5	0	...	3	6	1½
8	...	6	0	0	...	8	0	0
9	...	7	10	0	...	11	17	4
10	...	4	14	0	...	7	2	2
11	...	4	14	0	...	7	2	2
12	...	2	7	3	...	4	4	5
13	...	2	7	0	...	4	4	5
14	...	6	10	0	...	10	0	0
15	...	12	0	0	...	17	0	0
16	...	5	5	0	...	6	5	0
17	...	5	5	0	...	6	14	6
18	...	4	10	0	...	6	1	6
19	...	5	0	0	...	7	0	0
20	...	9	10	0	...	13	2	2
21	...	5	17	0	...	7	16	0
22	...	5	15	0	...	6	15	0
23	...	4	10	0	...	6	0	0
24	...	4	10	0	...	7	3	10
25	...	4	5	0	...	9	15	0
26	...	6	7	6	...	10	3	6
27	...	6	15	0	...	10	15	0
28	...	3	7	6	...	5	19	4
29	..	4	18	0	...	8	0	0
30	...	3	7	6	...	5	14	4
31	...	1	5	0	...	2	10	0
32	...	3	15	0	...	6	7	0
33	...	2	10	0	...	4	6	0
34	...	3	10	0	...	8	0	0
35	...	1	10	0	...	7	0	0
		£168	12	0		£268	18	0