To The Rt. Hon. G. O. Trevelyan
with the Author's Compliments

GREAT BRITAIN

AND

THE UNITED STATES,

AND

THE IRISH QUESTION.

A Contribution to Current Politics in the WESTMINSTER REVIEW, *of October*, 1883.

BY

J. BARR ROBERTSON.

NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB,
CHARING CROSS, LONDON,
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THE

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Art. I.—Great Britain, the United States, and the Irish Question.

IN the United Kingdom the bearings of American experience on matters pertaining to Ireland are so little known or considered, and in the United States the Irish question is so very imperfectly understood, and is frequently so entirely misrepresented, that we propose, in the following observations, to discuss the issues presented, with the expectation of showing the merits of the case from the point of view of American democratic principles, and of the political policy of the Liberal party in the British Islands.

There is an Irish question in a sense in which there is not an English, or a Scottish, or an American question. It is a something which touches on the form of existence of the nation, and not on mere subsidiary changes or ameliorations. There is a national discontent as contrasted with what may, in general terms, be called national content in England and Scotland. There is a condition of high tension as between the Irish people, their feelings, their laws, and their condition, whereas in England and Scotland there is comparative equilibrium between the people and their expectations on the one hand, and the realities of their life on the other.

To this, however, there is in Ireland a marked exception, and that is the province of Ulster, which in many places, and in most respects, approximates to the condition of the sister island.

Houses of the Oireachtas

So that Ireland does not all show complete divergence from English and Scottish conditions; it has one link that exhibits an intermediate state of things, and thus the Irish question is in some degree stripped of its apparent simplicity and completeness. But it is fortunate that the uniformity of political and social tension has thus been broken, as it offers a contrast of conditions on the same soil, and will thus enable us to get a glimpse of two differentiated civilizations developed out of the same system of law and government.

What the Irish question really is, it would be very difficult to define with any degree of precision, because there is a good deal of it in the air, and in the imaginative minds of Irishmen. Perhaps the real issues are much more limited than Irish patriots would have us believe. We shall have to cross a wide gulf if we are to bridge over the wild ravine that separates the political child of imagination from the dark leaden-grey type which prints, "Be it enacted," &c.; but it will be our task to try to indicate the lines of thought on which final conclusions must be based, and final judgments pronounced. And here we venture the statement that Irishmen have contributed very little in the way of suggestions towards the amelioration of the condition of their own people. They have kindled in the atmosphere of Irish public opinion the apparently unquenchable fires of ferocious hostility and bloodthirstiness against that historical personage, "the hated Saxon." In all this they have shown the great imaginative qualities of the Celt for both good and evil, the fierce unreasoning ardour, the wild echoes of poetry and romance, and only now and then the calmer reasoning of men who deal with facts and not with fancies.

Among nations as among individuals, however much the gift of imagination is to be prized, it rarely leads to those practical ideas, to that cautious sagacity, to that complete adaptation of means to ends from which material success in the world, and accumulations of wealth, usually result. The imaginative mind is sanguine and visionary, though sometimes far-seeing; but in its neglect of time, place, and circumstance, it is continually in danger of failure in the more practical arts of life to which the great majority of the people must devote themselves. The world owes much to those who have the gift of imagination, far more than it ever will, or indeed ever can, repay in kind; but it is well for a nation if this marvellous gift is not too generally distributed in a high degree—that is, it is well if there is enough to give birth and expression to new ideas, without such excess of it as would leave too few persons of practical capacity to carry the ideas into effect. In Ireland the imaginative faculty altogether dominates the national character, thus seriously interfering with practical success; while

on the other hand, the English race have very marked practical qualities, but are singularly deficient in imagination.

Now there is no doubt that in Ireland, as in every country in Europe, England and Scotland included, there has in the past been a vast amount of misgovernment and of systematic injustice, and there is still a great deal of reconstruction to be accomplished. Yet the last half-century has witnessed the advent of Catholic Emancipation, the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts, the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the passage of the Irish Land Act of 1870, and now the great Irish Land Act of 1881 which, with some imperfections still to be remedied, nevertheless stands forth as one of the most momentous steps in the legislation of Europe during the present century. To these and numerous other minor measures specially affecting Ireland must be added a host of very important changes in every department of social and political administration, such as the Education Act, the Ballot Act, the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, and the various measures for the reform of Parliamentary representation, which have applied to Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. No country in Europe can show such important legislative benefits as have been conferred on Ireland during the last half century, and no country in Europe can in an equal degree hope for the continuance of the beneficent policy under which the Irish people are now working out their destiny. Why then, it may be asked, has there lately been such discontent in Ireland?

To explain this a variety of reasons may be adduced. It is perfectly certain that the Irish have been as well off during the last ten years as at any previous period, and that they are now better off than ever before.* The discontent of recent years

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* "The improvement since 1841 (in Ireland) surpasses the progress made in any other country in Europe. This has arisen in great measure from the emigration of peasant farmers, whose labour was so ill-directed that in 1840 it took sixty-seven Irishmen to raise food for 100 inhabitants. The farms are now larger, labour is more productive, and the value of farm-stock compared with population is £10 per inhabitant, or double the ratio of Europe. Comparing the farm-holdings of 1841 with the present, we find:—

	1841.		1879.	
	No.	Ratio of Total.	No.	Ratio of Total.
From 1 to 15 acres .	563,000	... 84 per cent.	... 232,000	... 43 per cent.
Over 15 acres . .	127,600	... 16 „	... 298,818	... 57 „
No. of Farms	690,600		530,818	

"The holdings under fifteen acres have diminished 60 per cent., while the farmers over that area have grown almost threefold."—*The Progress of the World*, by M. G. Mulhall, London, 1880, p. 130.

The following figures are taken from an Article in the *Fortnightly Review*, for June, 1883, "A New Exodus," by Sydney C. Buxton, M.P., p. 876:—

is not therefore due to any new grievance, although bad harvests may have produced exceptional distress, as they have always done in a greater or less degree. The cause is to be looked for in the imaginative character of the people, in political agitation and its effects on the minds of an excitable race, and largely in that spirit of human progress which has been found altogether irresistible by the despotic governments of Europe, and even by the Czar himself in the last quarter of a century.

It is evident that with improved legislation comes the desire for further improvement, and with an amelioration of the physical conditions of life comes a desire for still greater comforts. In every country the education of the people becomes more and more an object of promotion and supervision by the Government, so that there are arising everywhere higher ideas of life and a higher standard of intelligence, and these in their turn bring a demand from the poorer classes for a larger share in this world's goods as the minimum of civilized existence. No reasonable man can doubt that immense political and social benefits have accrued to Ireland in the last quarter of a century, and such being the case it is grossly unjust to impute to the British Government or to the mythical "hostile Saxon" of Irish diatribes, a desire to misgovern Ireland, when the Statute Book shows such a long list of unjust laws abrogated, and of just and generous laws enacted for the benefit of the Irish people.

In the United Kingdom the vast increase in the number and circulation of newspapers and other forms of cheap literature, the greatly extended means of communication, the rapid strides that education has made, the increased political power exercised by the masses of the people, the development of postal facilities and the establishment of the telegraph, the influence of emigration and of foreign travel in spreading greater intelligence amongst those who remain at home, the increase in wages and the higher standard of living, all these and numerous other causes have gradually built up a power in the masses of the people of the British Islands that must be reckoned with both

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CONNAUGHT.

	Total Holdings.	Between 1 and 5 acres.	Per cent. of Total Holdings.	5 to 15 acres.	Above 15 acres.
1841	155,600	100,209	64·3	45,400	9,200
1851	116,600	18,400	15·7	49,200	49,000
1881	119,700	15,200	12·7	49,900	54,600
1881 compared with 1841	Decrease 36,100	Decrease 85,000		Increase 4,500	Increase 45,400
	23·2 %	85 %		10 %	493·4 %

These figures of Mr. Buxton's and Mr. Mulhall's speak for themselves beyond the possibility of contradiction.

by British statesmen and by Irish political leaders. In former times such a power did not exist, the absence of intelligence and of effective organization, even though there were great political leaders, rendering it impossible that the mere moral sense as to unjust laws and indefensible conditions could have the all but irresistible potency that it possesses in the present generation.

A few years ago Mr. Gladstone's reference in the House of Commons to the masses of the people as the same "flesh and blood" as the Members of that honourable body was received by the Conservatives and by the aristocratic organs in the press with derision. Such views were a new and dangerous evangel in the eyes of those who have driven the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount out of their churches, and substituted instead the gospel of fashionable and aristocratic pseudo-piety. Yet to-day such a remark would not be regarded with the same contempt, because ever since then the privileged classes and their satellites have been hearing more and more loudly the warning note of a resolute people with whom they cannot now afford to trifle.

In the United States the people are so powerful politically, that no one man, however apparently eminent, counts for very much; but in this country we have inherited feelings and ideas that cause us spontaneously to range ourselves under the banner of the leader representing our principles with enthusiasm and devotedness, and a great deal is left to his individual discretion, though, of course, he is in large measure controlled by the Cabinet that comes together, not by election, nor by individual choice of the Prime Minister, but by a joint process of natural selection and of self-assertion. It is a survival from despotic and oligarchical times, though it cannot long escape modification. The position of leader offers, however, a splendid opportunity to a truly great man, though there are but few such to be found in any age. Fortunately for us we have at present a Prime Minister of extraordinary genius, and possessed of an influence in this country that has rarely, if ever, fallen to the lot of any British statesman. It is scarcely necessary to speak, even to Americans, of his distinguished characteristics, his encyclopædic knowledge, his wide scholarship, his remarkable oratorical gifts, his perfect sincerity tinged with religious asceticism, his sympathy with the down-trodden and the unfortunate, his passionate devotion to the cause of justice and to the amelioration of the condition of the masses of the people.

In the United States Mr. Gladstone's character is better understood than even in this country; and certainly the marked distinction between the characteristics of the late Lord Beaconsfield and of those of his great rival, or, more precisely his great superior, is much more accurately drawn in the daily conversations

of the American people than in those of the English people, even of many of Mr. Gladstone's own followers. There is in the American atmosphere such a remorseless solvent of all pretence, show, and sham, such a contempt for pomp and pageantry, and what we call national glory, that there is little or nothing of the glamour of such things thrown over the American mind; whereas it is practically impossible for even the most enlightened and least prejudiced Englishman entirely to free himself from the influences of the confusing atmosphere in which he lives. The idea of the well-informed American is that Lord Beaconsfield was a man of remarkable genius, endowed with a fertile and subtle imagination, with boundless audacity and courage, aiming solely at personal power, and therefore bending all his great faculties towards that end, leading a party that he in the main despised for their want of intelligence and of ideas, making the worse appear the better cause, prophesying the direst ruin from the measures of his opponents, and then bidding for power by offering far more extreme measures. In brief he was regarded as an oriental magician, playing a simply selfish and brilliant part, without much regard to means or ends.

Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, is regarded in the United States as ardently working towards the chief object of all government—namely, towards the triumph of justice to all classes, and thus very specifically towards the welfare of the poorer classes, whose interests and rights have in past ages been most seriously neglected, and indeed to a very great extent ignored. The consequence is, that the Americans, with faculties unobscured by anomaly and custom and fashion, sympathize with Mr. Gladstone as the apostle of democracy, the advocate of the "flesh-and-blood" theory of the white races, and one of the greatest exemplars of constructive powers of statesmanship that this country has produced.

We may remark here, however, in passing, that the greatest figure in English public life to the American eye is that of Mr. John Bright. He, however, has been content to find himself like a Saul among his fellows, a head and shoulders above all the rest; and thus we might say that Mr. Bright has been the unrivalled leader in the field of ideal politics, with earnest temperament, generous enthusiasm, undaunted courage, the greatest orator perhaps of this age, and he has led the people out of the Egypt of political disability through the wilderness of doubt, discouragement, and fierce hostility and denunciation, into the promised land of political power and influence, whilst the privileged hosts of Pharaoh have been mostly drowned in the Red Sea. Mr. Bright has thus, by leading this invincible crusade in favour of liberty, brought us much closer to the

American people than we ever were before, by making a very long stride towards popular government. But he has never cared for official life, and so, in saying that he has been the great leader in ideal politics, we do not mean to impute that his ideas were not practical, because they have nearly all been made law: we merely wish to point out that he has left to others, and particularly to Mr. Gladstone, the great practical work of constructing and carrying through Parliament those important measures which were necessary to give effect to the principles advocated by Mr. Bright and by his coadjutors and followers throughout the country.

Now, the Irish owe to Mr. Gladstone, both for what he has intended and for what he has accomplished, more than to any statesman in any period of their history. He has performed herculean labours for them, such as, indeed, it is very doubtful if any other man in this country had the requisite knowledge and experience, and the individual ascendency and intellectual power to effect. The Irish Land Act of 1881 is an entirely new departure in the land laws of civilized countries. Notwithstanding all the pretensions and claims of the Irish leaders in the last ten years, neither Mr. Parnell nor any of his followers put forward any such sweeping programme as Mr. Gladstone embodied in this Act. They brought forward abundance of cases of hardship and cruelty, overpowering reasons why a change should be made, but they did not formulate any practical remedy for the evils they complained of. It was Mr. Gladstone, with the support of the Liberal party, who cast aside all half-measures, and brought in a Bill embodying these three conditions of agricultural tenancy, which ultimately became law—fixity of tenure, power of free sale of tenant-right, and fair rent to be determined by courts to be instituted for the purpose. We need scarcely remark that no such measure as this would have been passed by the American Congress. The people of the United States would not have tolerated such an interference with the laws of contract as it involved. No member of Congress could be found who would propose anything so indefensible from the American point of view.

The law in every State in the Union gives more complete powers of eviction to the landlord than the Irish law gave, and no American landlord would have dreamed of permitting arrears of rent to accumulate to the extent which was the custom in Ireland. Eviction would have been swift, sure, and complete in any State of the Union, without the slightest feeling on the part of the landlord that he was guilty of any inhumanity or injustice. We do not pretend to say that in thus evicting under conditions even of hardship to the evicted, he would have been doing an act

of injustice; we are contending simply that the American landlord evicts his tenants with more swiftness and more certainty than has ever been the case in Ireland. He says, in brief, that his contract with the tenant entitles him to so much money or produce, at such time or times, and he must have it or the tenant must quit. Indeed the law of contract is rendered inviolable by the highest mandate in the Republic—by the Constitution of the United States itself.

But while we repel the suggestion that any one has the slightest claim or right to interfere with the due fulfilment of any lease or contract in the United States, we have a right to ask what justification there is for the attempt, on the part of some American newspapers, not under Irish influences, to incite the Irish tenantry to secure, by legal or illegal means, the abrogation of the law of contract in regard to Irish holdings? Is it that in the generosity of their hearts some Americans are overflowing with the most fervid humanity towards distant people whom it is the most earnest object of their lives to benefit at somebody else's expense? Not more than twelve months ago, a Senator, speaking in the Senate at Washington, upbraided his colleagues, more particularly those from New England, for welcoming with generous enthusiasm four millions of slaves to liberty at the expense of their Southern owners, and of then welcoming with equal fervour the Chinese to California, though the shrewd New Englanders had practically driven the Chinese from North Adams, where they for a time had succeeded in establishing themselves. It cannot be doubted that if Americans had been landlords in Ireland, they would have resisted the Irish Land Act with all their energy.

It will, therefore, be seen that we have not a much more exalted opinion of the republican landlord of America than we have of the Irish landlord. They both acted on the same principle, and a very good one—namely, to get all they could from their property. If, indeed, there is a question of generosity, it is the rule with the Irishman and the exception with the American. The reason of this is not far to find. The Irishman is dealing with very poor people, and therefore the occasions on which he is tempted to be generous, or, more correctly, is morally compelled to be so, are very numerous, are, in truth, part of his every-day life. The American of the Northern and Western States, on the other hand, is dealing with well-to-do, self-reliant, and energetic people, who, except on rare occasions, are quite able to take care of themselves, and are in no need of the daily forethought and forbearance of others.

But this law of contract, under which both American and Irish landlords acted, was found by a Tory Commission to be a failure

so far as Irish tenants were concerned, and the party of progress decided that if that law was a failure, then they must provide in its stead a law that would be a success under the conditions in which the law of contract had failed. The evil was not in any antiquated laws that might have been easily remedied by borrowing a few clauses from the Code of the State of New York, because the American law of leases and of eviction was more favourable to the landlord than the Irish law. But there was an element in the case of Ireland that marked it out from the United States, England, Scotland, and the rest of the civilized countries of the world. To say that the law of contract was a failure, was to say that the Irish tenants were too weak a race to hold their own against their landlords, and also to say that the Irish landlords were too strong and too able a race for the poor peasantry of the country to contend with them on the ordinary basis of demand and supply. In every other civilized country the tenants had been fairly able to defend themselves.

But here were the agricultural tenants of Leinster, Connaught, and Munster confessedly altogether at the mercy of their landlords, confessedly too feeble and too incapable of organizing and of helping themselves, to be left to the immemorial law of civilized society which the leading nations of the world had come to regard almost as a law of Nature. Not the inadequacy of the law therefore, but the weakness and incapacity of the race in practical matters, constituted the true difficulty, and that is the reason why they failed to defend themselves, and why they failed to work out or to propose any practical remedy. It will readily be expected therefore, that, in dealing with a race deficient in practical expedients and endowed with an over-abundance of imagination, the great majority of the landlords, though with many honourable exceptions, were beyond all doubt unduly oppressive and extortionate, though they did not exceed their legal rights. But the Liberal party, aroused by the helplessness of the tenants as against the landlords, and instigated by the determination to put an end to this injustice, inaugurated their crusade against excessive rents, and against the system of eviction, which ultimately led to very decisive success.

We can hardly be audacious enough to assume that if we or our American friends had been Irish landlords, we should have been less extortionate than the rest; any more than that if we had been born and bred in the Southern States and had inherited a plantation and slaves, we should have been abolitionists. There are reasonable expectations and unreasonable ones, and it would have been very unreasonable in us to have expected that most Irish landlords would go about looking for tenants who would offer to pay them less than the rent which other tenants were

willing to give. Such philanthropic landlords as diligently pursued this course would have been regarded with supreme contempt by the average American, because the latter likes to get himself, and to see others get, the very last dollar of what is his by right.

Although the slaveholders had an indefeasible title to their slaves by the Constitution of the United States, and the Irish landlords had their undoubted rights in the institution of private property and the law of contract, yet the people of the Northern and Western States did not accept the judgment of the slaveholders on the subject of private property in slaves, nor did the British people accept the judgment of the Irish landlords as to the sacredness of landed property so far as regarded the position of tenants and the range of rents. Only in an enlightened age can such a question be dealt with, and the cause of the Irish Land Act was not that the tenants were worse off than before, seeing, as we have shown, that the reverse was actually the case, but that the English and Scottish Liberals were more enlightened and more powerful, both in the country and in the House of Commons, than ever before, and that the bold and aggressive ideas of Mr. Bright and his coadjutors and the brilliant statesmanship of Mr. Gladstone had prepared the public mind for sincere and earnest efforts in dealing with the great pending questions of which the Irish land was declared to be the chief. To show conclusively, however, that the failure of the Irish tenants to hold their own was due more to the incapacity of the people than to the state of the law, it is only necessary to point out that in the province of Ulster, where there is a large infusion of Scotch Presbyterians, the custom of tenant-right sprang up in the conflict between landlord and tenant, giving the tenant a claim to compensation for his improvements and for the goodwill of his holding, whereas in Leinster, Connaught, and Munster—Roman Catholic provinces—the tenants under the same system of laws as in Ulster were never able to create or enforce any such customary right.

To interfere by law to redress the grievances of the Irish tenants was only possible during the last fifteen years, as before that time the political power of the people was too restricted, and statesmen were not possessed of the quickened consciences and enlightened minds that great popular agitations have done much to create. So that it is to the vast Liberal constituencies of England and Scotland only as yet beginning to make their just influence felt in Parliament, that justice to Ireland, as embodied in the Land Act, owes its existence. We do not undervalue the services of Mr. Parnell and his Parliamentary and other supporters; but the Land Act was not their work, and if in some respects they helped it, they also used their best efforts to

defeat it, and to embarrass Mr. Gladstone in every possible manner. We entirely sympathize with the Irish people in their efforts to ameliorate their condition, but unfortunately we can but rarely approve of the methods by which Mr. Parnell and his friends attempt to effect their ends, any more than we can commend the obstructive tactics of the Conservatives in trying to defeat just and beneficent legislation.

Without the Liberal party and Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Parnell and his followers would have carried on their agitation in vain, as the patriots who preceded them had done. Modern ideas and the power of the democracy had made such progress that not only was it possible to remove disabilities, but to make great fundamental changes in the principles of the law, and these changes, too, against the direct interests of those who but quite recently were in reality the governing classes. And Mr. Gladstone never stood so high in the estimation of the masses of the British people as when, in the greatest and most courageous act of his life, he struck down the ancient prerogatives of the landlords as being the source of injustice and extortion in Ireland, and decreed that there should be fixity of tenure, and that the law courts, and not competition, should determine the amount of a fair rent.

Yet there is another side to the picture, and one in which sadness cannot fail to mingle. The gain to the Irish tenant was the loss to the Irish landlord; and although we could not have justified Mr. Gladstone if he had held his hand, still we cannot but feel that the Irish landlord was exercising what was regarded, not only in Ireland, but in the United States and everywhere in Europe, as his absolute right—namely, letting his property on the terms which tenants were willing to give for it. He did not compel people to become his tenants, they offered for their holdings in precisely the same way as farmers were doing in the valley of the Mississippi or of the Sacramento. With any other civilized race, the landlord's rights would have remained comparatively undisturbed, but in this age, and in Ireland, it was found necessary to dispute them at the bidding of a higher law than the law of contract, that, namely, of the preservation of society and civilization. But no revolution, even if it is inevitable, can be made without injury, and what might seem injustice. The Irish Land Act undoubtedly inflicted a large amount of hardship on Irish landlords, as their property was valued on the basis of its income, and that Act practically decreed a compulsory diminution of income, and thus a large loss in the selling value of their property. We cannot, therefore, but feel regret that this partial reconstruction of Irish agricultural society should have necessitated a serious loss to the great body of the landlords, many of them

themselves poor people, while, in numerous instances, there were mortgages and family and other charges on the land which the owner, though deprived of part of his income, was compelled to meet in full.*

Turning to the Southern States, we find the negroes in precisely the same position as agricultural tenants in which the Irish tenants were before the passage of the Land Act. In time, as they become more enlightened, and at the same time more numerous, they may also demand fixity of tenure and a legally determined fair rent; but at present the pressure of population is not great enough to force the question into public notice. The negroes are as yet but few in number relatively to the field of labour open to them, the competition amongst themselves for holdings is not excessive, and, therefore, they are able to protect their own interests; whereas, the Irish tenants were so numerous, relatively to their field of labour, that they could not protect themselves from the excessive competition of each other. It is no merit of the Southern landlords that the negroes are few, nor was it any fault of the Irish landlords that tenants were many. But in the case of the negroes the principle of supply and demand works on the whole very satisfactorily, whereas in the case of the Irish tenants it proved a failure, and had to be set aside as inapplicable in the circumstances.

The Irish leaders put forward the claim that the soil of Ireland belonged originally to the Irish septs or clans, and that, therefore, the Irish people ought to be recognized as the owners of it to-day. None but an extremely imaginative race would put seriously forward a claim like this, based on something that was in existence several hundred years ago; and the fact that it should be advanced is a proof of the impracticable views of the race in whose interest the claim is made. The recognition of it would give most of the United States to the Indians, part of it to the French, and

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* A deputation of Irish landlords and others has recently had an interview with Mr. Gladstone to explain the hardships to which many Irish landlords have been subjected by reductions in rent as fixed by the Commissioners of the Land Court, and they have suggested that the Government might materially assist in alleviating these hardships by advancing money on mortgage, or assisting to advance it, through some agency, at low rates of interest. The difference between ordinary mortgage rates of interest and those at which the Government, through some agency, might enable landlords to borrow whose rents have been considerably reduced, would be a very material saving; and, under the circumstances, if the preservation of Irish society has been a subject of such national importance as to compel a reduction of rents by law, that is a very good reason why, having effected that purpose, the Government should, even by law if necessary, alleviate the condition of those landlords at whose expense this inevitable reduction of rents has been made.

to the Spanish, and to the Mexicans and others. No claim could possibly be wilder or more preposterous, yet it does not appear so to the Irish leaders with whom we have to deal. What they probably really mean is, not that any such claim can be revived after a lapse of two or three hundred years, but that as the Irish tenants are very poor, if they could possess the soil they now cultivate they would be richer, and if by some miraculous power they could thus suddenly find themselves the owners of their holdings, then they would only possess what had formerly been the property of their remote ancestors. And they do not discriminate very closely between their desire to be owners and their right to be owners, even if they have to look back some hundreds of years for the mere shadow of such a right. If, on the other hand, any such pretension could possibly be entertained for a moment, why should the present Irish tenants alone be made richer without any compensation to the large number of Irish people who are not tenants, yet equally poor and equally entitled to benefit by the rights of their ancestors if there ever were such rights?

We must take the world much as we find it, with all its statutes of limitations; but while we are bound to accept the conquests, spoliations and confiscations of both ancient and modern times, and to recognize the validity of gifts and grants that were utterly indefensible, and of the land frauds in the United States in recent times, we are equally bound to see that the injustices of the past, which public opinion condemns while public policy palliates and condones them, are not made to inflict manifest and intolerable wrong on the generation to which we ourselves belong. In no country in the world is the principle of title by occupation so thoroughly recognized as in the United States, and a prescriptive title of thirty years there would seem as indefeasible and irrevocable as if it reached back to the time of Columbus.

It is by no means perfectly certain that even the Land Act will bring about any special millennium, although in itself it is a most important measure. The question arises whether large numbers of the holdings are not even now too small for anything like contented family life, notwithstanding the immense change since 1841 towards larger holdings that the figures we have already quoted show.* We may protect the tenant against

* Mr. Tuke, who is engaged in the supervision of assisted emigration from Ireland, says in a recent letter to *The Times*, that the emigration he is promoting is leading to larger holdings; and he believes that the Irish farmers themselves have the distinct conviction that, except on farms of a certain size, it is impossible to maintain a decent existence, and that they will, where they have the opportunity, act on the principle of consolidating small holdings.

having to pay £20 when he ought only to pay £15, but can we place him in the cultivation of eight acres where he and his ancestors have been content to settle on four, or of four acres where he has but two? We can promote migration from more thickly to more thinly settled parts of Ireland itself, and we can encourage emigration to the United States or to the British Colonies. But while we do this we cannot fail to be most painfully impressed with the fact that we are having to deal with the Irish in ways that have not yet been found necessary in the case of the peasantry of the poorest and most backward countries in Europe. It is a task of extraordinary difficulty effectually to help millions of people who have failed to help themselves. It will not suffice to attribute this state of things to misgovernment, as Ireland has not been singular in misgovernment. Every country in Europe has suffered from arbitrary and oppressive laws, and in nearly every case to a much greater extent than Ireland has in the last fifty years.

Yet Ireland, an integral part of the home of European liberty, closely bound up with one of the richest countries in the world, and enjoying equal freedom with it though sustaining fewer burdens,* looking across to the shores of the United States and Canada, where all are welcome to equal rights and duties, and seeing from its coasts numberless ships and steamers inviting the poor, the discontented, the ambitious and the adventurous to betake themselves to any country under the sun, we say that Ireland with all its advantages and all these opportunities nevertheless presents a peasantry so weak and helpless that we have been compelled to abrogate in their favour that law of contract on which every country in Europe bases its civilization, under which every other peasantry is able to holdits own, and without which the United States would lose its energy and ambition, and the mainspring of its unrivalled powers of achievement. It is not in remote Scandinavia, or outlandish Roumania, or not very accessible Hungary or Bohemia, that a more generous polity has been forced to exact a more considerate law, but in the green isle of Erin.

Nor does the comparative contentment in other countries arise

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* "It is stated in a Parliamentary paper, issued in the session of 1876, that whereas the existing distribution of representation prescribes England and Wales to return 493 members, Scotland 60 members, and Ireland 105 members, the numbers, if regulated by population, would be 476 for England and Wales, 70 for Scotland, and 112 for Ireland; if regulated by contributions to revenue, 514 for England and Wales, 79 for Scotland, and 65 for Ireland; and if regulated by the mean of the two numbers, 494 for England and Wales, 75 for Scotland, and 89 for Ireland."—*The Statesman's Year-Book for* 1883. London, 1883, p. 200.

from the fact that the land elsewhere is more generally owned by the occupier than in Ireland, and particularly is it not the case in England and Scotland. It may be that the competition of the United States in grain is causing, as it is even in the State of New York and the New England States, lands at one time used for crops to be fit only for pasturage. And we have no doubt that much of the land under tillage in Ireland never was fit for anything but pasturage, and this can only be remedied by a diminution of the population.

Nor is there any valid argument in the charge that the unwise restrictions in trade between Ireland and the sister island deprived the former of the opportunity of being a manufacturing country. As far back as 1785, Pitt offered the Irish Parliament complete freedom of trade, but that corrupt body rejected the offer. With the establishment of the Union, however, in 1800, vanished every impediment to Irish trade with Great Britain; and it is indeed strange that in the eighty-three years that have since elapsed, the inhabitants of Leinster, Connaught, and Munster have not betaken themselves to manufacturing. It is probable that in the absence of coal and iron the conditions are not sufficiently advantageous. At the beginning of this century the great manufactures of the Lancashire and Yorkshire of our day can hardly be said to have been even in their infancy, so much has steam power changed the localities and the conditions of profitable manufacturing. And while the three southern provinces have stood still in this respect, Ulster has taken a decided position in the manufacturing world, in the linen trade, and in shipbuilding and other pursuits.

But for these ancient European oligarchies there is this to be said, that the British Parliament acted with selfish exclusiveness, after the manner of the times in all other countries, while the Irish Parliament was one of the worst that ever found despotic power in their hands and a comparatively helpless people at their mercy. It may, however, somewhat reconcile our outraged feelings in the retrospect when we call to mind that the restrictions on trade between Ireland and England in the last century were much the same in their effect as those which the United States to-day impose on the trade of their citizens with all foreign countries, a policy not for revenue, but conceived in the interest of protection. We can only express our regret that in the eighty-three years during which Ireland has had complete equality with England and Scotland as to trade, so little has been done in the three southern provinces to develop manufactures, and thus give diversity of employment to the people.

We cannot escape the conclusion, therefore, from what we see

in the United States and in the towns and cities of England and Scotland, as well as in Ulster, that there are qualities in the Irish race that render them very much less fitted to carry on the practical business of life when they are by themselves than when they are intermingled with races wanting in the strong points of the Irish character, but possessed of those mechanical and executive qualities in which the Irish are deficient. The age of misgovernment in Ireland, as in England and Scotland, has long since passed away, although in many important respects much of a progressive character has yet to be accomplished. We say nothing of the exceptional legislation at present in operation, as that is the necessary corrective of wild attempts at outrage, intimidation, murder, and revolution, which no civilized government can tolerate, whether in America or Europe.

In the United States, with an unwisely liberal naturalization law, conferring all the rights of citizenship on aliens without a sufficiently long period of probation, there is a decided delicacy, now that the evil is so conspicuous, in bringing prominently forward the facts that show in a very marked degree the inadaptability of the Irish for the responsibilities of the free individual life of the great Republic. No one can glance at the action of the Irish in American politics without seeing that they are as great a danger, in proportion to their numbers, to the smooth working and to the stability of representative institutions in the United States as the Irish in Ireland and in the towns of England and Scotland are to the harmony and the development of free and just institutions in the United Kingdom. When we see the shameless effrontery with which the Irish organize themselves for the purposes of despotic power in the large cities of the Union, when we witness the raw levies of Irish immigrants swearing falsely as to time of residence so as to break through by perjury the too slender barriers that Americans have raised for their own political protection—when we have thrust upon us the glaring evidence that these Irish patriots, pretending to leave their own country because they are oppressed, immediately on their arrival in New York bend their patriotic steps towards those halls where the Irish vote is organized and manipulated, and range themselves under the banner of the most corrupt and unscrupulous party of politicians that ever disgraced the honour and thwarted the interests of a great and generous people, for the purpose of preying on American institutions and subordinating American interests to the selfish purposes of an oligarchy composed chiefly of foreigners,—we feel impelled to do Americans the justice denied to them at home, where there is a strong desire not to alienate the Irish vote by too plain speaking, of pointing out to them that the free and unfettered

patriot of the Irish vote is the greatest enemy of American liberty to be found on their soil.*

Far be it from us to say that there is not an immense number of Irishmen who have accepted the duties and responsibilities of American citizenship in perfect good faith, because it is notorious that such is the case. They have become the adopted sons of a new country, and their pride is to assimilate themselves with the people who have offered them a hopeful shelter and an unbounded prospect for the energies and the intelligence of themselves and their descendants, and they are only too thankful to have exchanged the narrow, cramped and over-populated island of their birth for the broad American continent where ages yet unborn will spread themselves in peace and plenty, and where the poor people crowded out of Europe will long continue to find a haven of rest, and an unclouded vista of new life and new possibilities. To those Irishmen and their descendants who have truly become Americans, and think and act in the line of American ideas, and who have mingled and intermarried with the neighbours who welcomed them, what greater subject for thankfulness than that they have found an appropriate field for intelligence and energies which in Ireland would have been wasted, if, indeed, they had ever been called forth?

But the existence of the Irish vote organized as a separate institution apart from the American vote, and with totally distinct objects for the Irish, is a warning that Americans have an Irish question on their soil much the same in its general character as the one we have here. And if the party of "America for the Irish" were to become numerous enough, those who believe that America is for the Americans, and not for the Irish exclusively, would be under the necessity of abandoning their present indifference, and of organizing themselves into vigilance committees in defence of liberty itself. The ordinary rights of American citizenship are not privilege enough for the Irish politicians. They will not be content with anything less than controlling the governments of American cities, and plundering the people who tolerate their vagaries. In Ireland we do not tolerate too many of such eccentricities, so that patriots of this type have to cross the Atlantic to find the opportunity of carrying out their beneficent intentions.

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* In a late speech in New York, during the dynamite excitement in this country, General Grant referred in the language of displeasure, not to say disgust, common to the great majority of Americans, to the abuse of American soil and of American citizenship, by the Irish dynamite faction and their abettors in the Irish-American Land League, who advocate such atrocious acts against civilized people and civilized Governments as are a disgrace to humanity.'

The instances that could be adduced to show the ungenerousness and impracticability of the Irish character are overwhelming in number, but we will select two as showing their tendencies in politics. A few months ago a vacancy occurred in the representation of Newcastle in the House of Commons, and the Liberal committee of that city, in search of a candidate, invited Mr. John Morley, who stands in the very front rank with but few rivals in this country as a litterateur and writer on philosophical politics. Lately the editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, and for the last three years the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which has been famous for its enlightened and uncompromising advocacy of justice to Ireland, in season and out of season, with the Gladstone Ministry and against them, we know of no single man, saving Mr. Gladstone, to whom the Irish party were, during the last three years, under such signal obligations as to Mr. Morley. It so happened that the Irish voters in Newcastle amounted to about 2,500, at least, so it was stated in the newspapers, though it is probably an over-estimate; and it was further alleged, that before the election took place, a missive was sent from the Irish Parliamentary party in London, of whom Mr. Parnell is chairman, notifying the Irish electors that they were to vote for Mr. Bruce, the Conservative candidate. Fortunately, however, Mr. Morley was elected by a large majority in spite of the opposition of the Irish voters, of whom, there is no doubt, a large proportion went against him. This is a type of Irish action in the English and Scottish burghs, where so many of them have found high rates of wages and permanent homes. We have, therefore, in every large centre of population, a body of Irish politically unassimilated just as they are in the United States, always uncertain, never acting on any individual convictions, always voting together in obedience to outside dictation, a curse in national and often in local politics, as exercising their electoral privilege without personal responsibility or patriotic interest in the affairs of the country, the supposed existence of which was the chief claim to the extension of the burgh suffrage to householders. Can a free people be created and maintained out of individuals who have not the habits, instincts, or tendencies that lead to individual independence?

The other case that we have selected is that of the Irish vote in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Affirmation Bill of the last Session, which was rejected by a majority of three. This Bill—though drawn really in the interest of freedom and common-sense, and on the admission of Members of Parliament permitting the substitution, not to Quakers only as at present, but to all of an affirmation of allegiance in place of an oath —would have had the effect of permitting Mr. Bradlaugh to take

his seat for the burgh of Northampton, for which he had been three times elected. Now Mr. Bradlaugh, however objectionable in the eyes of the majority of persons his views on religion may be, has always been an ardent supporter of all those Liberal measures for which the Irish members have so strenuously contended, and he is one of the successors of that long line of political soldiers who have fought the battle of civil and religious liberty in this country, to whom the Irish are under great obligations for the liberties they enjoy. But the patriotic Irish members, of whom the Catholic portion owe even their right to sit in the House of Commons to the successful struggle of the Liberal party against the same influences as are now opposing Mr. Bradlaugh's right to sit, had so little of the freeman's love of justice and equality, which is beyond all others the most striking political characteristic of Americans, that they voted unanimously against the Affirmation Bill in order that they might exclude one of their most earnest and most uncompromising supporters. Not only that, but some of these fire-eating champions of justice were so carried away by the splendid triumph of intolerance, bigotry, and tyranny which seem second, if not indeed first, nature to them, that they threw up their hats in the air, and so misconducted themselves in the House as to be publicly charged with gross indecency. Irish patriots are always for themselves, and generally to the exclusion and if necessary to the injury of everybody else. But the Liberal party of this country stand on a much higher platform; they are unswerving in their policy of justice to Ireland, and their conduct would be regarded as infamous if they were not equally unswerving in their determination, so far as in them lies, to do justice to Mr. Bradlaugh.

It is not to be wondered at therefore, if sincere Liberals find it difficult to preserve much feeling of respect for the Irish leaders; and if they see in the acrobatic politics of Mr. Parnell and his friends, not only the action of irresponsible and impracticable men, but of men entirely wanting in sympathy with representative institutions, altogether regardless of the rights of others, and especially dangerous to the growing democracy of this country, to whom the Irish are under the greatest obligations, in whom lies their only hope, but against whom they direct the most malignant hostility. These sentiments are not only those of the progressive classes here, they are exactly the views we have heard expressed by the most active-minded Americans in regard to the policy of the Irish-American politicians in the United States. The Irish leaders have no lot or part in the great progressive movement of the British Liberal party, or any generous ideas in the cause of humanity at large on either side of the Atlantic. Irishmen had but little sympathy with the patriotic efforts on the

Continent during the last thirty-five years, and they were bitterly opposed to Italian freedom and unity, much as those in the United States were hostile to the North and to American unity during the civil war, and strongly opposed to the emancipation of the negro. So that in listening to their patriotic outpourings, we must separate the greater part which is sound from the insignificant fraction which may be sense; and we must also distinguish the alleged atrocious grievances which are dragged up from the ancient history of the last and previous centuries, from the very moderate grievances of the present day which the Liberal party—the friends whom they oppose—are striving to redress.

In 1882 a Bill was discussed in Congress and passed, and then made law by a two-thirds' vote against the President's veto, which practically prohibited further Chinese immigration into the United States. Under the circumstances President Arthur was right in vetoing the Bill, and Congress was right in passing it by a two-thirds' vote, because it was a Bill involving a new principle of public policy, and it was for the representatives of the people, and not the President, to assume the responsibility of its adoption. It involved the greatest departure from the theory of American institutions that had taken place in the annals of the country; and although "delicate questions" were very skilfully avoided in the discussion, on the ground that prudence is generally better than valour, the two examples of the limits of American inclusiveness as to political rights which were before all men's minds and which were present in all private conversations, were the effect of the enfranchisement of the immigrant Irish and of the negroes. Not a single word was heard of adverse criticism as to the enfranchisement of the immigrant English, Scotch, French, Germans, Italians or Scandinavians, nor of course against those Irish who have sunk their nationality and become for good and all American citizens. It is true that there were also strong reasons for the policy of the Bill offered by the classes in California engaged in manual labour and in manufactures; but the question was fought to a great extent on the political ground of the danger in a Republic of races that do not assimilate, and of the desirability of their exclusion as a national policy.

One Republican Senator, speaking in defence of the principle of the Bill, boldly proclaimed that the enfranchisement of the negro had proved a dismal failure in the Southern States, and was a menace to free institutions; but no one ventured to declare, though many thought it, that the creation of a distinct Irish political party for purely Irish objects was a defiance of American institutions, and showed not only that the number of Irish immigrants ought to have been limited long ago, but that

the policy of enfranchisement after five years' residence, though perfectly wise as applied to the emigrants from every other country in Europe, had been a mistake as applied to the bulk of the Irish, however exemplary the conduct of the Irish minority had been. This is a question frequently in the minds of Americans, who are indignant at finding many of those whom they receive as patriots prove to be only vipers; yet it is one always avoided by the American press and by politicians in their public utterances, because it is too late to retrace their steps, and therefore it is wise not to throw into the arena of politics irritating subjects which could lead to nothing but trouble. We can sympathize with the American people when we see an Irish oligarchy mostly immigrants organized for plunder, prostituting the forms of American institutions to the basest and most corrupt purposes. All we can hope for is that the people of the United States will show that forbearance which the Liberal party in this country have so patiently exhibited, and are prepared to exhibit, in dealing with the rule-or-ruin policy of Irish patriots.

It is a strange commentary on the conduct of the Irish members, who are ambitious to guide the fortunes of the free and independent Irish Republic, that during the six years of Tory repression of Irish ideas and Tory refusal of Irish remedial legislation, they were mild as doves and comparatively silent in Parliament, because they knew that the Tories would strike with despotic severity and with exceptional laws; but from the moment that the magnanimous and friendly Gladstone came into power with a Liberal following determined to do justice to the Irish tenants, the Irish members began a course of obstruction of remedial measures for Ireland, and of opposition to Mr. Gladstone and his Government, and caused an immense waste of time by all sorts of preposterous parliamentary manœuvres. They incited the excitable Irish people to such a degree against this friendly Government that there were perpetrated a long series of such wanton, cruel, and brutal outrages, and such murders and murderous assaults as were simply appalling, and a disgrace to any people pretending to civilized life.

We do not say that Mr. Parnell and his friends did not in some commendable way effect a great deal of good, because there can be no doubt that their agitation, in conjunction with the determined efforts of British Liberals, was indispensable to the success of Mr. Gladstone. But we do say that in presence of the greatest political friend Ireland ever possessed, and in presence of the most friendly House of Commons that ever dealt with Irish questions, the Irish members showed themselves to be irresponsible, ungenerous, impracticable and reckless. And one of the greatest difficulties in the path of democratic progress in

the United Kingdom and in the way of the efforts of active reformers, is to be found in the wild and inconsistent views and methods of Irish patriots which here, as in the United States, are altogether subversive of the liberty and equality of a free people. The Americans have refused citizenship to a few paltry Chinamen, and have prohibited their further immigration, thus departing from the all-embracing theory of democratic government till then triumphant, because the venality and unscrupulousness of the Irish and the negroes in politics compelled them to look to national self-preservation; and here the action of the Irish members and of a large body of their countrymen is in the highest degree prejudicial to the progressive amelioration of our institutions, because people in this country, even the most Radical, are not prepared for a glorious and patriotic deluge in Ireland. We may depend upon it the British Radical has the strongest feelings on the subject of national self-preservation, and he never will, even in the name of Irish patriotism, abandon the substance of British liberty for the fantastic will-o'-the-wisp of Irish anarchy.

There are numerous remedies suggested for the poverty of the Irish tenants and people generally, and the three principal are peasant proprietorship, emigration, and the introduction of manufactures. In so far as these or any other remedies are feasible and can be furthered, it is certain that the Liberal party will do everything they can in reason for the benefit of Ireland. There is nothing easier than to offer suggestions in critical circumstances, but here, as in the United States, it is one of the most difficult things to suggest some real method by which poor people can get more than they possess. So far as peasant proprietorship is concerned, we have but little belief in its practicability in Ireland, although it is an alluring name, and its beneficent influence under other circumstances has been proclaimed by the most eminent economic authorities.

In examining the question of peasant proprietorship it is necessary to bear in mind that the recommendations of the system by John Stuart Mill and others were made as an improvement on precarious tenure, no compensation for improvements, and excessive rents; and, certainly, peasant proprietorship offers great advantages over such conditions. But the Liberal party have just given to Irish tenants fixity of tenure, fair rent by valuation of the Land Court, and power of sale of tenant-right, and those terms secured by positive enactment are much more satisfactory than peasant proprietorship. If a tenant is to become a peasant proprietor, he must have the margin of money necessary to secure the farm. Irresponsible politicians may exercise their ingenuity in devising schemes of annual payments

by which a tenant will become a landlord in twenty-five, or forty, or fifty or more years. But while it is easy to conjure with figures, it is exceedingly difficult to conjure with facts. There is no trouble in getting a formula for annuities that will convert on paper the Irish tenants into landlords in any number of years one pleases. Nor is there any difficulty in showing the Regent Street or Broadway shopkeepers and warehousemen how, by paying a larger sum annually than they do now in rent, they may, in a given number of years, be owners and no longer tenants of the properties in which they carry on their business. But there is something wanting besides the formula, and that is, money; and manipulate figures as we may, no capitalist or public body would be wise in advancing on an Irish farm the full amount of its selling value, any more than a London Mortgage Company or a New York Trust Company would advance on a Regent Street or a Broadway property the full amount of its selling value.

The tenant converted into a peasant proprietor must pay more annually for perhaps fifty years—that is, far beyond the term of a working life—than he does now as a tenant; and therefore this farmer, who is so poor that we have had to change the Irish land laws to protect him, is expected to be rich enough not only to pay the fixed fair rent, but to pay an annual instalment in redemption of the price of his farm, so that whatever happens to the poor tenant who has undertaken to become a peasant proprietor, this at least we know, that he would be better off if he had no such annual instalment to pay. Then he must take not only the chances of good and bad harvests, but also a rise or fall in the value of the property itself. After having paid instalments for many years he will be in danger of a fall in land, wiping out the value of all that he has paid.

If he is a tenant, on the other hand, he is adjudged to pay a fair rent calculated to yield perhaps three or four per cent. on the selling value of the land, and so long as he pays that, he cannot be dispossessed except for some reason deemed by the Court to be sufficient, and then only on receiving large compensation, amounting to seven years' rent, if the rent is £30, or under. If through failure to pay his rent he is evicted, he can sell his tenant right to the landlord, or to some other tenant. At the end of fifteen years the rent is subject to re-valuation either by the court or by consent, between landlord and tenant, so that these periodical re-valuations make him a permanent tenant at a rent which is re-adjusted every fifteen years, so as to be always fair and equitable in changing circumstances as to profit on cultivation. This system is very much preferable to peasant proprietorship, as it is practically proprietorship with no

possibility of eviction except for some unusual purpose which the Courts approve of, and which carries large compensation to the outgoing tenant, so long, that is to say, as the tenant pays a fair rent, which is equivalent to saying that the nominal landlord holds a mortgage for the full value of the land; and so long as the tenant pays about four per cent. interest or less, on this full value, he cannot be ejected. If the tenant were a proprietor, and had paid one-quarter of the purchase-money in cash, it is hardly too much to say, that the interest he would have to pay on a mortgage for the three-quarters would be greater in amount than the rent he now pays to the landlord for the holding. It is almost unnecessary to remark that the danger of foreclosure of mortgage, and consequent loss of the holding would be much greater than the danger of eviction is now, because the tenant only pays a fair rent, whereas in most cases the interest on the mortgage would be excessive and ruinous. The result of establishing peasant proprietorship would be that the interest payable on mortgages would be far larger than the legal fair rent payable to the landlord, and we should ultimately be called on, in justice to Ireland, to pass an Irish Interest Act providing that the interest on mortgages of holdings must not exceed three-and-a-half or four per cent. Already we know that the local money-lender in Ireland is regarded as one of the curses of the country; and deliberately to establish, or even encourage, a system that would throw the tenants of Ireland from the system of the fair rents of the landlords into the extortionate and relentless grasp of the local usurers, would indeed be an act of extraordinary folly. We have already given the Irish tenants practical proprietorship without any payment, and with interest at a very low rate in the form of rent; and as these are by far the most favourable terms of occupancy for a poor people that have yet been devised, peasant proprietorship is altogether undesirable because an easier, more profitable and more appropriate system has already been introduced.

The next remedy suggested is emigration, and this is generally regarded as offering more grounds for hope than any of the other suggestions. By adopting a very extensive system of emigration, a great deal of present good might be done; although it is difficult to find remedies that are not accompanied by great drawbacks. Those most willing and anxious to emigrate from poor surroundings are generally those who, on account of their superior intelligence, energy, and ambition, are most needed at home. But to withdraw population from the more crowded districts would undoubtedly be a great service both to those who go and to those who stay, and it would have the very important advantage of enabling insufficient holdings to be added to, and

thus of helping to bring about a condition of comfort and contentment among the peasantry. But if the departure of large numbers should have the result of only again stimulating the increase of population, then in a few brief years there would be a recurrence of all the present evils. If it could be rendered certain that an extensive system of emigration would, by diminishing the excessive numbers, bring about a higher degree of permanent comfort and a higher standard of living among the Irish people, which they would not permit themselves to sink below, then hardly any expenditure by the Government that might be necessary to carry out such an emigration scheme would be too great.

But it would be unwise to expect that even emigration will achieve very marked results where such a vast change has to be effected. The danger is that with a people who have for so long endured such a low and poverty-stricken scale of living with comparative equanimity, the temptation when they are better off to so increase in numbers as gradually to relapse into their former wretchedness, will be too great for them to resist. A man may change his trade or his religion, but to expect that millions of people are going completely to change their character, would be an extremely sanguine forecast. No race that ever lived could suddenly take the fullest advantage of the opportunity of rising to a higher condition of social life, though selected individuals might, and the Irish temperament is one of those least likely to be kept at a high degree of tension in new circumstances, even if the peasantry were once raised to a greater degree of comfort. But it is right that no reasonable means of increasing their present or permanent welfare should be left untried, and therefore emigration should be undertaken by the Government. If it does not effect all the good we could wish, it will at least produce considerable amelioration in the condition of the people.*

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* Nothing could more clearly show the virulent animus and the utterly irresponsible character of the Irish politicians in the United States than the late visit to President Arthur of a deputation from the Irish American Land League headed by Mr. Sullivan, of Chicago, its President, to urge upon him the danger to Americans and their institutions of the arrival at New York or Boston of a few pauper emigrants from Ireland. Not the American people born on the soil, not the poor American mechanic or labourer who might look askance at the flooding of the labour market on which he depended for his daily bread, had any complaint to make, any ungenerous or unsympathetic feeling for the poor Irish glad to find their way to a land of hope; but the leader of the organized Irish patriots in the United States and some of his followers rushed from Chicago to Washington in hot haste, not to denounce the dynamite ruffians, not to urge precautions against corruption and fraud, but to insist that the power of the United States Government should be

The next suggestion of a remedy is of the investment of English capital in manufacturing in Ireland, and in the drainage and reclamation of bogs and swamps. This would be very desirable as a means of employing labour and of diversifying industry. But what Englishman or Scotchman with his capital safely in this country would care to remove it to the three Southern Provinces of Ireland, with a very doubtful prospect of profit, when he reads almost daily in the press the speeches of the Irish leaders, breathing out threatenings and denunciations against the British people, and inciting the Irish populace, on whose co-operation and labour British capitalists would have to depend, to hatred and to confiscation? What Northerner, in the days of the Ku Klux and the Bulldozers would have deliberately transferred his capital from his northern stronghold to districts in which these lawless hordes were a law unto themselves, and a terror to the people within their reach? We very much regret that manufactures do not exist to any extent in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught; but in the present lawlessness and unfriendliness of the people, there is no possible inducement for manufacturers to betake themselves to these provinces. We have already referred to the great manufacturing activity of Ulster, where there is a more thrifty, self-reliant, and energetic population, with a large infusion of Protestants; but we see no hope of a similar state of things in the other provinces, which are almost altogether Roman Catholic, so long as the popular ideal of government is anarchy; their ideal of security, lawlessness and intimidation; their ideal of liberty, despotism by the small clique to whom they give unlimited and irresponsible power, and whose advice, often misguiding and dangerous, they implicitly follow. Capital will not flow either from England or the United States to Ireland so long as there is no peace, no security, and no stability in the Irish people themselves; but if the time ever comes when the Irish leaders are wise men, and the people are

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invoked to send back to Ireland about twenty of his own poor countrymen and countrywomen, whose independence in the United States could in all probability have been secured by the gift of the amount of money that it cost to take that deputation from Chicago to the White House and back. No wonder the Irish in Canada were at a loss to understand the motive for such inhuman conduct against their own race, whom they pretend to be anxious to assist and to raise to comfort and independence. This is but a poor augury for the treatment that the Irish people would receive at the hands of the leaders of the Irish Republic if such a thing were possible, which happily for them it is not. President Arthur has the gift of exceeding good sense, and as long as he is in office it is safe to say the American Government will do nothing unjust, unfriendly, or undignified; and few men in America are more likely than he to take such ebullitions of spite and rage with calmness, and equanimity, and to rate them at their true value.

willing to abandon political turbulence and welcome industrious capitalists, there will be some hope of benefit to the people from this source.

Frequently the cry goes forth that the Irish Republic is at hand, and many are carried away by the glamour of a name which they regard as identified with a sort of millennial institution. Amongst the Irish in the United States the delusion is even more general than in Ireland, because as they are not willing to mingle on equal terms with the rest of the world, and as they are not numerous enough to secede and set up on American soil the free and independent Irish Republic, they are anxious for the time when that invincible institution shall be established on the soil of Ireland. And in the imaginative ardour of hope they hold enthusiastic meetings and pass resolutions of undying hatred to England and Scotland, and stipulate for the early establishment of their republic in Ireland, because there are at least a hundred Irish-Americans waiting to offer themselves from patriotic motives for the presidency of the Irish Republic, and probably twenty thousand more whose ambition does not go beyond the position of a Cabinet Minister, or General, or Admiral, or Ambassador, or Judge, and if these are filled up, then of tide-waiter or constable. But the Irish here are also dreaming of seals and red-tape, and drafts on the Bank of the Irish Republic, and official dignities, and are not likely to give way even to the trained politicians of Tammany Hall.

In spite of the ridicule with which Americans are wont, in private and sometimes in public, to treat the extravagant pretensions of Irish patriotism, they have, no doubt, a decided liking for anything that bears the name Republic, and for this reason they have a sort of indefinite floating belief that there might be something good even in an Irish republic. We quite understand the charm to the American ear of the talismanic word Republic. But there is something more important than names: there are the things that the names represent; and though the name of the Irish Republic may bring up mental foreshadowings of some sort of beneficent institution, a consideration of what it would really be, will show that it could hardly fail to prove the greatest calamity that ever overtook a generous though misguided people. Let Americans imagine what would be the result of the city of New York being placed under the sole government of Tammany and Irving Halls, so that the "Irish idea" should be absolutely supreme. Why, the prospect of such a thing would be regarded with alarm and horror. If the supposition were to be made that the inhabitants of Brooklyn were for some cause or other to carry on the city government of New York, there would be no such fear and trembling, because, although, of

course, New Yorkers prefer to manage their own affairs themselves, yet they have ample confidence in the decency, commonsense, and conscientiousness of the American people, and they would trust the inhabitants of Brooklyn and, we daresay, those of London, Liverpool, or Glasgow, under circumstances in which they would utterly distrust the Irish-American politicians.

In New York the Irish have no special grievances against the American inhabitants except the one for which the Irish vote is specially organized—namely, that Americans are so unkind as not to give the Irish patriots all the public offices. Yet we have never heard a single defence of the conduct of the Irish organized vote, and we have rarely heard this important subject referred to without a wish being expressed that this method of systematically perverting the procedure of democratic government could be swept away. A republic with universal suffrage is in American estimation a very good thing; but is the republicanism of the Irish in New York and other large cities, and the universal suffrage as concentrated to be bought and sold in the Irish vote, a republicanism or universal suffrage that can be regarded by Americans with approving eyes?

It cannot be concealed that the preponderating opinion regarding the Irish, arrived at with due deliberation by Americans after seeing their conduct under the most hopeful and most favourable circumstances in the United States, is that they are deficient in the qualities requisite for a republican form of government, and in appreciation of public rights and duties; and that they are sadly wanting in that sentiment of justice essential to freemen by which each guarantees his own rights by respecting the rights of others. Their narrowing tendency to clanship for exclusive and selfish political purposes, and the readiness with which they place themselves and their votes at the beck and call of some leader without judging of his acts or his motives, and without any regard whatever to the general welfare, are fatal to the existence of the conditions out of which democratic institutions spring. Liberty exists in Ireland not in consequence of any self-governing qualities in the people, but because the British Government, in all circumstances, and at all hazards, maintains law and order. Liberty exists in New York and the other large cities of the Union, not by the co-operation of the mass of the Irish voters, but in spite of their worst machinations in the abuse of the forms of republicanism to selfish and unpatriotic purposes, which, if they could be effected, would lead to the subversion of liberty itself.

Yet some Americans, though we have met but few of this class, have been so carried away by Irish rhetoric, that they are anxious for the establishment of the Irish Republic. They expect

to see Ireland regenerated by the waving of green flags and by brass bands playing Irish patriotic airs. If they could only see the name of the Irish Republic on the map of the green isle, then they think liberty, peace and prosperity would be assured. But it would be an irretrievable misfortune for the Irish people. There are no elements among the poorer people out of which to form a republic in the agricultural provinces of Leinster, Connaught and Munster, and the middle classes and the wealthier classes would be uncompromisingly opposed to it; while the people of Ulster will never be foolish enough to cut themselves off from connection with a great empire, from participation in a great trade, from being citizens of the greatest commercial country in the world, with all its advantages, in order to be the denizens of a small, poor and insignificant Republic of five millions of people, half a million of whom ought to emigrate for the benefit of the rest. The history of the Irish Republic, even if it could be founded—which, however, we regard as utterly impossible—would be confiscation, intimidation, terror, assassination, civil war, and in twelve months or less the British Government stepping in at the call of humanity. If New York has no confidence in the honesty of purpose or in the political methods of the Irish political voters to whom it has extended a friendly welcome, where they ought to appear to the very greatest advantage in the midst of a Republican people, what can we expect the political leaders to do in Ireland with a poor, ignorant and helpless peasantry?

Americans are justly proud that their magnificent domain has been the chosen refuge of the social exiles of Europe, those who believed that their labour and talents could there bring greater prosperity and happiness than in the overcrowded countries of the old world. But amid all the diverse races that have betaken themselves to that land of hope, there is but one that has not assimilated itself under the banner of American political citizenship, but one that has abused the rights and duties of hospitality, but one that has set up an organization for the purpose of counteracting the free play of republican institutions, but one that has organized systematic fraudulent naturalization and systematic fraudulent repetition of votes in different districts, but one race that has done everything in its power to gain its own exclusive and selfish ends at the expense of the great American people; and it is for the politicians of that one race that some Americans are ignorantly and thoughtlessly claiming the right to form an independent Irish Republic, where they may carry out at the expense of a large body of poor, ignorant and industrious Irishmen who are quietly pursuing the even tenor of their way, much as the great mass of Americans are doing in their own

country, the same course of destructive and despotic policy, and of unscrupulous attacks on free institutions as the political leaders of the same race have done and are now doing in the United States.

We have said there are no elements in Ireland out of which a Republic with any pretensions to stability or durability could be formed. We cannot regard the present erratic Irish leaders and their unreasoning and irresponsible followers as fit material out of which a real Republic could be created, even if we were convinced that they were a majority in Leinster, Connaught, and Munster. The party of progress in England and Scotland are willing to support the Irish people in all reasonable legislation. But we have ample notice that the aim of the Irish leaders is to find in an Irish Republic the opportunity for a policy of intimidation, outrage, confiscation, and revenge, and we are bound at all hazards to avert any such danger. This is the deliberately expressed policy of the Irish leaders, both here and in the United States, of which they have given us abundant warning, because they like to take all mankind into their confidence.

Perhaps Americans sometimes overlook the principles on which even their own government is founded. Politics is a practical art, at least in the domain of legislation, and it is customary to deal with political questions as they arise. The American Republic is based upon the principle that the majority of the electors must everywhere rule. This is the cardinal principle of the democratic system. But questions will arise as to the interpretation of this republican principle, and strangely enough it has, in the United States, been subjected to a tremendous test. In 1861 the Southern States formed themselves into the Southern Confederacy, and proclaimed their independence of the other States of the Union, on the ground that in accordance with democratic principles each State had sovereign rights by which it was independent of every other State and of the United States Government, and that the majority of the citizens of each State were therefore at liberty to act in their sovereign capacity. In pursuance of these assumed paramount rights the Confederacy adopted a flag, issued money, levied taxes and customs duties, and performed other acts of sovereign prerogative. Although many Southerners were opposed to secession, and still more were opposed to war, no one doubted that the majority of the people in the seceded States were in favour of secession and of the Confederacy.

The question then came up as to whether the Northern and Western States should accept the decision of the majority of the Southern people, and recognize the independent status of the Southern Confederacy, and it was decided to deny the doctrine of

State sovereignty, and to oppose the wishes of the majority of the Southern people as involving the dismemberment of the Republic. The Constitution of the United States, promulgated when the then existing States contained only about three millions of people, distinctly provided for State sovereignty; but in 1861, when the Union comprised thirty-one and a half millions of people, of whom twenty-seven millions were whites, a higher law was called into being, that, namely, of the preservation of the unity and indivisibility of the American Republic. It is true that the passions, prejudices, convictions, and interests that clustered around the institution of slavery gave birth to a form of social life and of civilization incompatible with the civilization of the North and West. The South felt itself perpetually menaced in its special institution by the other States, which were hostile to slavery and earnestly engaged in efforts to oppose its spread and effect its abolition. In the single Federation there were two antagonistic bases of society and of politics, in two distinct geographical divisions, and never were two separate nations more fiercely arrayed against each other, or, seemingly, more utterly irreconcilable than the North and the South.

The Southern States did not separate for the mere purpose of having an independent government, but to protect against the most manifest danger that institution of slavery which they had inherited, with which all their interests were bound up, and in which their wealth in great measure consisted, and moreover that institution which was consecrated in their minds not only by the traditions of their country but by the fiat of the United States Constitution. Yet in spite of the Constitution, in spite of the opinions and interests of nine millions of white Southern people, in spite of American law, in spite of the republican principle of the will of the majority, the Northern and Western and Pacific States practically set all these aside, and proclaimed the principle that the preservation of the Union was paramount to all other considerations. The Republic could only be rent in twain if the whole power of the North and West proved insufficient to maintain it. The people of the North would not tolerate the idea of a slave confederacy on their borders, hostile and aggressive, which would inevitably lead to endless disputes and troubles, and to wars subversive of both progress and liberty, while it would dispel that dream of national greatness which had always been one of the favourite themes of American patriotism.

We need not recall the terrible struggle that ensued, that tremendous war in which slavery perished for ever, and the doctrine of State sovereignty received a crushing defeat; but while we draw a veil over this inevitable conflict as one of the saddest pages in human history and the most mournful in the

annals of civilized nations, we have at least the gratification of feeling that the great American Republic was preserved, and we believe that a generation has arisen in the South who feel thankful that the great cause of fratricidal strife has been removed from their midst for all time.

The people of the British Islands cannot tread in the path of a greater or more illustrious example. They are willing to do justice, and more than justice, to the people of Ireland. There is no institution like slavery to interfere with a united and harmonious policy; but it will never be tolerated by the democracy of England and Scotland, and certainly never by the aristocracy, that an independent Republic or any other separate form of Government shall be set up in Ireland to suit the views of two and a half millions of people, even if so many, out of a nation of thirty-five millions. Even if the Irish leaders were the wisest of men, even if their institutions were totally different, as was the case in the Southern States, we should even then consider as the Northern States did, the unity of the kingdom as altogether paramount. If they were wise men they would not wish an independent Irish Republic, because they would see in the growing democratic power a security for justice, if that is the real object at which they are aiming, and in England and Scotland and the wide range of the outer British Empire, embracing nearly three hundred millions of people, one of the most magnificent fields for the labour, the intelligence, and the talents of an increasing and comparatively poor people.*

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* Since this article was written, our attention has been called to a volume of 470 pages on the "Irish Question," written by an American author after a a most exhaustive examination on the spot, and after hearing the views of the principal of the Irish political leaders. We extract from the English reprint the following passages, as we believe they exhibit the only conclusion at which an impartial and comprehensive mind can arrive—namely, that even from the American point of view the English and Scottish Liberals are the true friends of Ireland:—

"The reforms that the English Liberal Party have already brought about, revolutionizing in many respects the old order of things, the promises of further changes in the direction of giving the people larger rights and liberties, the extension of the right to vote, the reform in the grand jury system and in county government, the changes that will break up the great feudal estates and abolish the laws that have kept the land in the hands of a small class, the well-known design of Mr. Gladstone to extend and enlarge the powers of local governments, and the general tendency among the Liberals to favour reform and progress in every direction will suggest, I think, to most Americans the conclusion that the English Liberals are, after all, the true friends of Ireland, and much more likely to promote the objects that the masses of the people desire, and that are needed for the peace and prosperity of Ireland, than the Conservatives. Would it not be far wiser for the Irish party in Parliament to support the Liberal party earnestly and fairly in its efforts to promote these reforms, than to hinder and embarrass it, and so delay business as to excite the

What a misfortune, what an injury it would be to permit an independent Republic to be set up, and thus cut off the Irish people from British citizenship, from those numerous careers at home and abroad in every walk of life, in which the Irish find that ample and remunerative occupation which does not exist in Ireland, and which cannot be in any extensive degree created in that country! As every one knows, the Irish swarm in the great towns and cities, and are found everywhere welcomed and successful at the bar, in the press and literature, in art and science, in the civil services, in commerce, both here and in all our dependencies. What does not Ireland owe, and how much more may it not owe in the future, to the fact that her sons are citizens of a great empire in which every career from the highest to the lowest is open to them?

What sort of a figure would even a New England Republic present if its sons were debarred from the citizenship of the United States? The people of Scotland who send fifty-one Liberal members to the House of Commons to support Mr. Gladstone and only nine Conservatives, and are thus far in advance of England, though not of Wales, in the liberality of their opinions, might be thought to have much stronger reasons for setting up an independent legislature than the Irish have. The Scotch won and preserved free institutions because they had the qualities that enabled them to do so, in spite of their immediate proximity to a rich and powerful neighbour not always friendly, and they are deprived of legislation that an independent Scottish Parliament would undoubtedly grant because of the less liberal and less progressive English members, and also because of the obstructive tactics of Mr. Parnell and his friends; but does any sane man suppose that the Scottish people could be persuaded into having even forced upon them such a fanciful absurdity as an independent Scottish Republic?

But the Irish people, that is those of the three Roman Catholic Provinces, never having really won for themselves free institu-

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indignation of the English people, hinder conciliatory measures, and create a demand for such rules of procedure in the House of Commons as seriously endanger the rights of free discussion and the privileges of minorities in representative legislatures? . . . . Under the old system of land tenure the tenants were accustomed, sometimes with reason, to attribute their misfortunes and hardships to the landlords. Under the more favourable provisions of the new laws the fault will generally be with themselves rather than with the landlords, if they are not more prosperous. . . . . The old passions and prejudices, the hatreds and distrusts, will [not?] die in a day. Designing men will, for generations to come, be able to profit from them, for the advancement of their own personal and political ends, regardless of the welfare of the people."—*The Irish Question*, by Professor David Bennett King (of Lafayette College, U.S.) London, 1882, pp. 316–318.

tions, and having much less capacity for self-government than the Scotch, are anxious to find in some high-sounding catch-word a solution of difficulties which are well-nigh insoluble, and which their seclusion under an Irish Republic would only increase and intensify. If the Irish are badly off now with the whole field of an enormous empire in which to pursue their fortunes, what would they be as separately a poor people in a poor country depending on themselves and their own island or rather on the three poor provinces, for Ulster will never sacrifice the substance of British citizenship for the shadowy scarecrow of Irish Republicanism? It is difficult for the rising and irresistible democracy of this country to have any sympathy with the impracticable and irresponsible ideas of the Irish leaders. The party of progress cannot change the climate of Ireland so that its foggy and wet days will give place to the sunshine of California; they cannot keep the population of Ireland from increasing to excess; they are not responsible for the cultivation of crops on land that is only fit for pasturage, nor for the existence of bogs and barren land, or the occurrence of bad harvests; they are not responsible for the agrarian outrages for which the only remedy in Ireland, as in the United States, is something akin to martial law; but as their power increases year by year, they become more and more responsible for wise legislation to meet Irish needs, and they will assuredly be responsible that no attempt at an Irish Republic shall ever isolate Ireland and make the people more helpless than they are at present, or place in a part of a neighbouring island a hostile and revengeful Government of a faction. The British Radicals have strongly supported the principle in regard to Irish affairs that a policy of strict justice is the only effective remedy; but here, as in America, in time of danger or disturbance, force is the only immediate resource so long as unscrupulous and irresponsible politicians dangle before the eyes of an imaginative people hopes of an Irish Republic which will no more be tolerated by the British democracy than the Southern Confederacy was by the democracy of the Northern and Western States. The people of the British Islands are gradually drawing nearer to the people of the United States, because we are gradually increasing popular liberties in this country; and as the democracy of England, Scotland, and the North of Ireland sympathized with the assertion of the principle of the indivisibility of the American Republic, they confidently look across the Atlantic for encouragement in their earnest efforts to do justice to Ireland and to maintain the indivisibility of the United Kingdom.