

Civi and Social Department.

RELIEF FOR THE DISTRESSED

It is impossible to read the accounts of famine and misery among our fellow subjects in Ireland and Scotland, with which the English papers are teeming, without the most poignant sorrow and soul-felt sympathy. The man who is void of such feelings, or who can suffer political or religious considerations, national antipathies, or the cold calculations of political economy to interrupt their flow, deserves not the name of man.—When humanity calls, every other voice should be silent. But our sorrow and sympathy will be of little use, unless we obey their impulse, by promptly stretching forth the hand of charity and relief. What we intend to do, must be done quickly, for hunger will not wait. For one who is starving now, there will probably be a hundred before next harvest, notwithstanding all the efforts of Government to prevent it.—Private and individual effort will have the most potent effect, and this must everywhere be aroused. The duty of imparting aid to the extent of our ability, rests upon all, high or low, rich or poor. God only knows how long it may be before famine "with its cold gaunt hand" shall lay hold of ourselves. Blest as we now are, with health and plenty, let us not forget that we have no security for their continuance. Let us then do, as we in like case would wish to be done unto. We, of the Press especially, who know the suffering in all its horrid details have a high duty to perform. Many of us (ourselves in the number) have but little to give, but we can do much in persuading those who are better off

We have examined our own ability to contribute in this distressing emergency, and have hit upon the plan mentioned below, which we caused to be inserted in two or three of the Toronto papers, in order that it might be made available as soon as possible.

Those of our contemporaries who will copy the proposal, may perhaps increase the amount for the relief of our starving fellow-men. We have no wish to set a precedent for others. If our paper were established for a political, sectarian, or party purpose, we should not have made such an offer, because we would be felt that it might be open to the suspicion of sinister designs, but as we are just starting in the world, and as we have no party to serve but the public, and no objects but the public good, our own improvement, and if possible an indemnification against pecuniary loss, we could see no impropriety in making such an offer. At all events, we have made it, and are prepared to stand to it, and hand over the money as fast as it comes in. If one person in each of the townships of the Home District alone, were to send us a dozen names, the whole number we offer would be taken up, and upwards of \$300, added to the relief fund, without interfering with other contributions, as more than value would be given in return.

STARVATION!

This awful word no longer suggests imaginary horrors; it conveys to us the fact—the startling fact, that the most terrible of human scourges is now "walking in darkness" through the dwellings, and "wasting at noonday" the vital energies of thousands of our fellow-men in Ireland and Scotland. Many of the wretched victims are not only of the same race, of the same nation to which we belong, but hundreds in Canada may see of the same family. What is our duty? Where is the man who, if he were transported to the bedside of one of the many families at this moment in the last stages of famine, and to hear the languishing cry, "Oh, if our friends in America knew our distress how soon they would help us," could hesitate to administer relief at once, and to the utmost of his power? For the honour of our human nature, we will not believe such a man is to be found in this favoured country. But is the suffering any less, or the duty of relieving it diminished, because we are not there to see it? By no means. The indisputable soul-harrowing fact, would but enter the mind by another sense.

The Editors of the *Canada Farmer* (a semi-monthly journal of Agriculture, Internal Improvements, Literature, Science, and General Intelligence, copies of which may be seen at Mr. Brewer's, 46 King Street,) desire to contribute their mite. Their means are not great, but they have thought of a way in which that mite may be increased. They will give the subscription for 50 copies of their paper for a year, one third to the Scotch, and two thirds to the Irish sufferers, upon the following conditions:—The subscriptions for not less than 12 copies must be sent at a time, and the full price (7s 6d.) must be paid. Upon receipt of the money a check for the amount will be given, payable to the order of the person or persons appointed to receive aid for the relief of the above mentioned distress.—Should more than 50 copies be ordered under the above proposal, we will give the odd half dollar of each subscription, up to the number of 500 copies. A few persons by taking a little trouble may thus enable us to give ten times as

much as we otherwise could do, towards so holy an object.

The names of all subscribers sent us for the above purpose, will be published, to avoid any mistake.

Toronto, Feb. 12th 1847.

EMIGRATION.

The terrible affliction of famine is sweeping, like a pestilence, over Ireland and parts of Scotland, spreading disease and death on every hand. The immediate cause of this terrible visitation is the failure, almost general, of the potatoe crop. Millions in Ireland and thousands in Scotland have long subsisted on the scantiest amount of food that would support human life. A superabundant population, or a defective system of tenure, checked agricultural improvement, and compelled the mass of the population, in many districts, to rely for subsistence almost entirely on the potatoe crop. That crop failed, and general starvation followed as a necessary consequence. The calamity in itself does not prove the existence of a superabundant population; though it does prove the insecurity of a large mass of the population relying for subsistence on one crop, and especially the potatoe crop. That there is a surplus population in Ireland, is generally admitted without question. The same may be said of Scotland and of England. Political economists assume that in a country where the labour market is overstocked, wages will sink below the point at which the labourer can support his family, and the population will be thinned off by starvation and death, till the demand for labor equals the number of laborers. This rule is supposed to apply to times of average plenty; and a partial or general failure of a crop which produces famine, must always aggravate the calamity. Emigration, the safety-valve for letting off the superfluous population, will mitigate the evil. It will at least afford relief to those who emigrate. Whether it can be made to reduce, sensibly and permanently, a redundant population, is a question yet to be proved; for we are not aware that any nation has been permanently benefitted by emigration; and that it can be made a panacea for national distress, is, we fear, extremely doubtful. Let us see what amount of the population of Britain would require to be drawn off to produce any beneficial effect upon the remainder. The amount of surplus population cannot be easily estimated. We might reckon as such, all who are subjected to the periodical infliction of famine. But this calculation would be merely arbitrary, for the famine is often artificial. Ireland generally produces more than enough to feed all the inhabitants, not meanly, but well; and while thousands are starving, the food is being shipped out of the country. This shows something sadly wrong, but we repeat it does not show a redundant population. There can only be a redundancy, strictly speaking, where the soil of the country does not produce sufficient for the subsistence of the inhabitants; nor in all cases even there, for a large portion of the inhabitants may be employed in producing manufactures, which are exchanged for the agricultural productions of other countries. If the three millions who are periodically driven to the verge of famine, were drawn off by emigration, a redundant population could no longer be ranked among the causes of distress. But there would be great difficulty in thus reducing the population; and even if this could be done, emigration would afterwards have to be systematized and rendered continuous to keep the home population, with respect to numbers, in a non-progressive state. At present there is an annual emigration of about one hundred thousand persons from the British Isles to various parts of the world; and yet the actual increase of the population over the number of deaths and the amount of emigration, equals one thousand a day, or three hundred and sixty-five thousand a year. Add to this the number that annually emigrates, and we have an annual increase of population, amounting to four hundred and sixty-five thousand, or nearly half a million. The emigration of half a million persons would only reduce the present population at

the rate of thirty-five thousand yearly. Even at this unexampled rate of emigration, nearly a century would elapse before the present population would be reduced three millions. If each vessel were to take five hundred passengers, and make two trips every season, the service of two hundred and fifty emigrant ships would be required for nearly a century, during which time, fifty millions of human beings would be conveyed from the British Isles to every part of the world. Half a century would thus whirl by before the beneficial effects of emigration would be sensibly felt upon the population of the Old World. We are forced to the conclusion then, arrived at by statistical data, that emigration, except it extend to more than half a million yearly, cannot be employed as the sole remedy for national distress.

Against a system of emigration on such a colossal scale two serious, if not insurmountable obstacles exist: the ships and money that would be required. The first would require some years to overcome it; and as to the last, it would require such an enormous drain as a revenue of fifty millions a year, with all the existing demands upon it, could not bear.

But if, of the three millions who are annually driven to the verge of famine, one million and a half were to emigrate, the labour and food that were before divided amongst the greater number, and which kept them from starvation, would suffice to support in a state approaching to comfort the lesser number, who would remain behind. This, however, would do nothing beyond supplying their mere physical wants.

The permanent remedy for the social evils of Ireland, must be sought in other means. Emigration may be used as an auxiliary in curing the disease; but, if it alone were depended upon, the patient would sink under the treatment. Ireland must be better cultivated; her waste lands must be subjected to a skilful system of tillage, and her seven millions of acres, now reserved for pleasure grounds, must be ploughed up and made to yield labour and food for the population.

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

In publishing the proceedings of the Directors of the Provincial Agricultural Association, with the circular which they have transmitted to the various Agricultural Societies in the Province, we feel bound to express our regret, that such an unbusiness-like document, couched in such indefinite language, should have emanated from that body. The Agricultural Societies are asked to give a sum of money "to enable the Provincial Society to fulfil their great object of improving the agriculture and manufactures of the Province." The particular manner in which the Board intend "to fulfil their object," should have been honestly and definitely stated, and the various societies in the Province should not have been called upon to vote their funds for a purpose of which they are left profoundly ignorant. The Agricultural Societies have always voted their money for the purpose of improving agriculture, and if the Provincial Society have an object in view which cannot be attained by the Local Societies, the former in asking money from the latter are bound to state definitely the purpose to which they intend to apply it. It will be our business, in guarding the interests of our subscribers, to watch closely the expenditure of the funds entrusted to the Provincial Society.

But we must not be misunderstood: we are far from calling in question the purity of the Directors' motives; we only hope that they will in future use language a little more explicit.

A meeting of Directors took place at the Warden's Room, in the Court House, in this city, on Wednesday last. E. W. Thompson, Esq., in the Chair.

By the Treasurer's accounts it appeared that the sum of £417 10s. 1½d. had been received to the credit of the Association; of which £359 7s. 7d. had been expended at the Fair held at Toronto, in October last; leaving a balance in hand of £58 10s. 6d.

Of the sum received, £180 had been obtained from the different District Societies, as follows:—Home, £100; Prince Edward, £25; County of Durham, £25; London, £10; Victoria, £10;

Collarbo, £10; and the remainder from subscriptions and receipts on the days of the Fair.

In addition to the balance in hand, there will be available for the ensuing year £50 from the Gore District, £50 from the Johnstown District, and uncollected subscriptions £25; together with the subscriptions and contributions for this year.

The following circular was adopted, to be sent by the President of the Association to the various Agricultural Societies of the Province:—

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Provincial Agricultural Association, held at Toronto on the 17th of February, 1847, the attention of the Board was particularly directed to the best means of enabling this society to fulfil their great object of improving the agriculture and manufactures of the Province. For this purpose the Board desire to possess themselves of the intentions of your society of —, as to whether your society is willing to contribute a portion of its funds towards that object, and to what amount. It is the intention of the Provincial Society to call the attention of Government to the subject of agricultural improvement and encouragement, so soon as the Provincial Parliament meets, and the views which Government may be inclined to entertain will, in all probability, be regulated in a great measure by the support which District Societies may incline to give to the General Association. Your immediate attention is requested to this communication, and an answer as early as possible addressed to me.

(Signed) E. W. THOMPSON, President.

A memorial was adopted to be presented to the Governor in Council, and the Legislature at the ensuing session, praying for a grant of money in aid of the funds of the association.

The prize list was then settled, and will be published in due time. The next fair, it will be remembered, is to be held at Hamilton, in October next.—Globe.

PLANK ROADS.

On the advertising page will be seen a notice, that application will be made to the Legislature at their next Sitting, for a Charter, Incorporating a Joint Stock Company, to construct a Plank Road from the Kingston road, East of Gates's Tavern, through Scarborough, to Markham Village (Reesorville), and thence to Stouffville.

It would seem that the people of Markham and Scarborough, are determined to help themselves to a good road. The following communication is from a resident of the former Township:—

For the *Canada Farmer*.

The people of Markham, and of the Townships Northward, have long felt the want of a good road to Toronto, that being the principal market for their agricultural produce.—Years ago, they earnestly and very justly complained, that the Kingston road, east of Toronto, was not directed far'ner northward, so as to afford a more general accommodation to the people of the surrounding country, and at the same time, to shorten the distance from Toronto to the Highland Creek, and thus lessen the expense of its construction.—In order to effect this, no pains were spared by the inhabitants to forward petitions to Parliament. But all to no purpose, and in spite of their remonstrances, the road was run not only close to the Lake Shore, but to a great extent parallel with its crooks and turns. The question of the Kingston road having been thus settled, and the Commissioners authorised to raise by debentures £5000, to be invested in the improvement of the Markham road; it was commenced, and about a mile of it planked. Two or three years having elapsed without any further movement being made towards its completion, an inquiry was instituted to know why the sum was not raised and appropriated by the Commissioners; nothing satisfactory however was elicited. Thus it remained until the last Session of Parliament, when several petitions numerously signed were forwarded, praying that the Road might be placed under the controul of the Board of Works; but no more difficulty was experienced in disposing of these, than of former petitions. The people at length became tired of looking to the "collective wisdom" for assistance, and have determined to try the strength of their own powers, relying upon the means which a kind Providence has placed within their reach. But little doubt is entertained at the present time that it will be accomplished, as £2,600, have been subscribed within a few weeks, in shares of £6. 5s. each, and through the activity of A. Barker, D. C. and others, the list is fast being filled up by those who just begin to feel their hitherto dormant powers. Verily "experience teacheth wisdom."

OBSERVER.

Markham, Feb. 20th, 1847.

STATISTICS OF SLAVERY.—A Paris newspaper furnishes the following census of slavery:—In the Brazil 3,000,000 slaves; United States 2,700,000; Spanish Colonies 800,000; French Colonies 250,000; Dutch, Danish, and Swedish Colonies