THE COMMERCIAL RESTRAINTS OF IRELAND.

We take the following review of the commercial situation in Ireland, from the *American*, a new and able journal published in New York:—

"Some human agency," says Lord Dufferin, "must be accountable for the perennial desolation of a lovely and fertile island, watered by the fairest streams, caressed by a clement atmosphere, held in the embraces of a sea whose affluence fills the noblest harbors of the world, and inhabited by a race—valiant, generous, tender—gifted beyond measure with the power of physical endurance, and graced with the liveliest intelligence," and, he might have added, successful in every country but their own.

A British author answers the riddle propounded by the Irish one.

"We English," says Mr. Carlyle, "pay, even now, the bitter smart of long centuries of injustice to our neighbor Ireland. Injustice, doubt it not, abounds, or Ireland would not be miserable. The earth is good, bountifully sends food and increase, if man's unwisdom did not intervene and forbid. It was an evil day when Strigul first meddled with that people. He could not extirpate them. * * England is guilty towards Ireland, and reaps at last, in full measure, the fruit of full fifteen generations of wrong-doing."

The history of Ireland under English rule is indeed but little else than a history of injustice and oppression. But in the study of that sad story, undue attention has been paid to the political, religious and agrarian aspects of it, to the exclusion of any other of at least equal importance. Why is Ireland so poor, in spite of natural advantages? Why has England thrice, and Scotland twice as many occupations for their people as she? Why do a people who obtain competence, and even fortune, in other lands, not succeed at home? What is the reason of that "disproportion of the opportunities of employment to a population," which Lord Dufferin points to as the fundamental cause of her wretchedness? There is no better answer to these questions than is given in an old book that appeared a little more than a century ago. *The Commercial Restraints of Ireland* (1779) is the testimony of an unexceptionable witness. Its author, Mr. Hely Hutchinson, Provost of Trinity College, was, it is true, a scion of a patriotic stock, the barons of Donaghmore. But Mr. Froude singles him out as the representative of good sense and moderation. Among the public men of his time, next to the Earl of Clare, he may be said to be the hero of that misbegotten epic, *The English in Ireland.*

Mr. Hely Hutchinson's book is said to be one of the rarest in economic literature. It was suppressed by the Irish government on its appearance, and the few copies which escaped the proscription bring great prices. It is said that a thousand pounds was once publicly offered for one, and offered in vain. What the sycophants and placemen, who were the majority of the Irish Parliament of that day, found in it worthy of their wrath, it is hard to see. The book is nearly all matter of fact; the author's sentiments are loyal; his attachment to Protestant Ascendancy and the British connection are pronounced. It is as if Sir Stafford Northcote had ordered the suppression of ready reckoners and multiplication tables, lest any one should see through his last budget. Our author carries the commercial history of Ireland back to the time of Edward III. He shows that the Plantagenet and the Tudor kings, whatever their sins in other respects legislated for the industries and commerce of Ireland as for those of England. In Elizabeth's time, indeed, the exportation of wool was forbidden, on the ground that it had to be spun and woven at home. But no attempt was made to exclude Irish wares from the English markets. The bad policy began with Wentworth, the ill-fated Earl of Strafford, whose seven years of Irish viceroyalty ('632-9) were spent in sowing the seeds of hate for both countries. He did his utmost to discourage the woolen manufacture in Ireland, but laboured to promote that of linen, which was at that time spread over the country, instead of being confined mainly to the north. After Strafford came an era of confusion, disaster severity and civil war, in which Ireland lost nearly half a million of her people, and all her interests were prostrated.

The Restoration put Ireland under the rule of the greatest and best of her viceroys, James Duke of Ormand, "whose memory should be revered by every friend of Ireland." The periods of the viceroyalty (1662-9 and 1676-85) were times of great advance; "to the year 1688 Ireland continued in a most prosperous condition. Lands were everywhere improved; rents were doubled; the kingdom abounded with money; trade flourished, to the envy of our neighbors; cities increased exceedingly; many places of the kingdom equalled the improvements of England; the kings revenue increased proportionally to the advance of the kingdom, which was well established in plenty and wealth; manufactures were set on foot in divers parts; the meanest inhabitants were at once enriched and civilized: and this kingdom is then represented to be the most improved and improving spot of Europe. I repeat the words of persons of high rank, great character and superior knowledge, who could not be deceived themselves and were incapable of deceiving others." The "envy of our neighbors" was chiefly aroused in England and took shape in hostile legislation. In 1663 the importation of Irish cattle into England was prohibited, as was afterwards that of Irish beef and hides. And even in 1667, when the Irish, out of compassion for the sufferers by the London fire, proposed to send over some of their kine for food, it was successfully resisted as a trick to re-open the cattle trade. The revolution of 1688-92 put a period to the era of prosperity, but in the years 1792-9 Ireland rallied from the injuries of civil war with wonderful elasticity. Exports increased, while imports rose no farther, and the country seemed likely to retrieve her past losses. But 1699 was the turning-point. The outcry was raised that the Irish woolens were driving the English out of the markets of Europe; that the Irish should confine themselves to the linen manufacture, which was properly theirs, and not take up this new (?) industry. The complacent Irish Parliament—the Protestant Ascendancy Parliament which called itself that of Ireland—passed laws prohibiting the export of Irish woolens to any part of the world except England, and England followed up the blow by imposing prohibitive duties upon their import thither. As our author shows, the woolen trade was, after agriculture, the chief Irish industry of that day. Its ruin was the ruin of the nation, and a ruin, inflicted at England's bidding and insistance, by a faction which claimed to be the nation. No other parliament met till 1703, but by that time these patriotic legislators had learnt what was the effect of their work upon the country at large. In their address to Queen Anne "they set forth the vast decay and loss of its trade, its being almost exhausted of coin, that they are hindered from earning their livelihoods, and from maintaining their own manufactures, that their poor are thereby become very numerous; that great numbers of Protestant families have been constrained to remove out of the kingdom and that their foreign trade and its returns are under such restrictions and discouragements as to be then become in a manner impracticable." They voted "that, by reason of the great decay of trade and discouragement of the manufactures of this kingdom, many poor tradesmen were reduced to extreme want and beggary;" and expressed their hope that "they may be allowed such a proportion of trade they may recover from the great poverty they now lie under." This confession of disaster and failure on the part of the Ascendancy faction is confirmed by the uniform testimony of all observers. "At the passage of the fatal Act," says Dean Swift, "our trade was glorious and flourishing;" and he proceeds to depict the calamities it inflicted in the cessation of commerce and the breaking up of manufactures, the rise of the rent of land through the excessive competition the dismissal of skilled labor back to England. "We are apt," he says, "to charge the Irish with laziness, because we seldom find them employed; but then we don't consider that they have nothing to do." He refused, on a public occasion, to drink "the prosperity of Ireland" because "he never drank to memories."

Our author, looking back on the eighty years of Protestant ascendancy which had passed since this act of wicked selfishness, asks: "Can the history of any other fruitful country on the globe, enjoying peace for four score years, and not visited by plague or pestilence, produce so many recorded instances of too poverty and wretchedness, and of the reiterated want and misery of the lower orders of the people? * * * If the intellectual endeavors of the representatives of those poor people to give them employment and food, had not left sufficient memorials of their wretchedness; if their habitations, apparel and food were not sufficient proofs, I should appeal to the human countenance for my voucher, and rest the evidence on that hopeless despondency that hangs on the brow of unemployed industry." He passes in review the wretched years of the next half century, and depicts the poverty and the suffering as authenticated year after year by official utterance. "For above forty years after making these restrictive laws, Ireland was always poor, and often in great want and misery." This period shows "that a country will sooner recover from the miseries and devastation occasioned by war, invasion, rebellion, massacre, than from laws restraining the commerce, discouraging the manufactures, fettering the industry, and, above all, breaking the spirit of the people." To add insult to injury, the English made great professions of fostering the Irish linen trade, and spent a pittance every year in bounties. And whenever the wretched condition of the country was brought forward, as a reason for doing something to better it, the viceregal answer always turned on the promotion of the linen trade. This poor compensation for national ruin had some degree of prosperity; indeed, "the success exceeds our most sanguine expectations. But look into the state of the country; you will find property circulating slowly and languidly; and in the most numerous cases of your people, no circulation of property at all. You will frequently find them in want of employment and of food, and reduced in vast numbers of instances, from the slightest causes, to distress and beggary." And among the linen manufacturers themselves, the Presbyterians of the north especially, emigration to America was a "malady" which "appeared at many different periods during this century." "They can no longer stay 'where hope never comes,' but will fly from these 'regions of sorrow.'"

Down to the declaration of Parliamentary independence in 1780, it was penal to export to Europe a handful of Irish wool, or a yard of Irish cloth. The wool was smuggled out of the country. "The impracticability of preventing the pernicious practice of running wool is now well understood. Of the thirty-two counties in Ireland, nineteen are maritime." And this lawless trade found its complement in the smuggling of French wines and brandies, in which the wool was paid for, and whose piety was an injury to the Irish people, especially the gentry. Nor can the ordinary excuse for Irish poverty be alleged as regards this period. The Catholic majority were not turbulent. They were simply quiescent. From the treaty of Limerick in 1691 to the rise of Whiteboys in 1762, the Irish people made no efforts at resistance. Even penal laws, which have aroused the indignation of the whole civilized world, were passively submitted to. The spirit of the nation seemed broken by its disasters. And of the Whiteboys our author says, "they appear in those parts of the kingdom where manufacturers are not established, and are a proof of the poverty and want of employment of the lower classes of our people." The viceroy recognized the fact, and said from the throne, "that the means of industry would be the remedy. * * * To attain this great end, the Commons promise their attention to the Protestant charter schools and the linen manufacture * * * Long established usage had given these words a privilege in speeches and addresses to stand for everything that related to the improvement of Ireland."

In 1754 there occurred a brief period of prosperity, due to temporary and exceptional causes, which did Ireland more harm than any year of distress had done. The debt was paid off, the treasury was full, but the old habits of economy were abandoned by both government and people. The tide had turned at last, and this sanguine people were to be prosperous forever. Then came a crash in business circles, and empty treasury, and still deeper wretchedness and hopelessness. But the mischief done was permanent. The English got the notion that Ireland contained vast resources which a wise government might develope, without restoring the woolen trade or creating any other. The poverty of the country reached its height during the American war for independence. Since 1770 the emigration from the north had been wholesale. A keen sympathy existed between the people of the countries. Both had been brought to ruin by the vexations and exhaustive commercial policy of their common oppressor. Both insisted on political independence as a means to profit by their natural resources. The saying that "revolution begins at the belly" was true both of the American revolt of the uprising of the Irish volunteers.

Here our author deserts us. With his pathetic pleadings for the restoration of Irish industries by the hands of their destroyers, we have little concern. The end he aims at was soon to be reached, in ways he could not foresee, and of which, perhaps, he did not approve. Should his book ever be reprinted, some other hand should write the continuation of the story, and show how the Irish parliaments, when emancipation from English control, initiated a process of industrial developments beyond precedent in the history of the country; and how that development was checked and destroyed by the restoration of English rule. We, like our author, are looking back upon eighty years of English rule in Ireland, and, let us hope, are, as he was, on the verge of a great change in the direction of Irish independence of action. Once more the whole country is awakening to a sense of the need of freedom of action, as the first steps to the restoration of national prosperity. The methods by which Ireland has been kept poor differ, it is true, from those which were pursued during the eighty years of the Protestant Ascendancy, but the difference is more in the form than in the substance. The tyrannous dictation of a legislature which put down Irish industry, has given place to what Burke calls "the tyrannous power of capital" A country which had been thrust out from any share in the industrial growth of the sister Island, whose capital had been wasted and its people kept in enforced idleness for nearly a century, until the very habit of manufacture had fallen into desuetude, was invited, nay, forced back into that world of unlimited competition and Free Trade, which is the Englishman's paradise but has proved Ireland's purgatory. And with what result? Councillor Butt furnished Judge Byles, for his *Sophisms of Free Trade*, with the figures which tell the miserable story of the ruin of Ireland's nascent industries in the decades which succeeded the Union. Behind these dry figures is the story of a nation's industrial despair, its deepening poverty, its reduction to that uniformity of occupation which makes rackrents and merciless evictions possible, and which constitutes the fundamental evil of Ireland's economical situation. The people were driven back upon the land, to struggle with each other for its possession. There was nothing left for them but to grow potatoes or to emigrate.

The power of the purse has finished what the power of the sword began. Each in its turn has proved strong enough to keep this richly endowed land poor, to drive her people across the sea to build up the wealth of every land but their own. But the wrong has not been without its Nemesis. It has made Ireland the nightmare of British politics; the one problem for which there is no solution. And it has made her no less the mockery of England's boasted financial wisdom, the country for which her economists can find no road to prosperity, the land which has received, as Mr. Disraeli said, greater benefits from famines than from statesmen. To Irishmen in America these facts should appeal very strongly. They have voice and vote as regards the financial policy of their adopted country. Shall it be cast so as to give their condonation of the wrongs which have blighted the country of their birth? Shall it be cast to expose the rising industries of the new world to the treatment which destroyed those of Ireland? This is the issue of the present political campaign, and it is an issue that should not be overlooked nor despised. If American Irishmen follow the blind leadership of former years they will but assist to perpetuate the essence of the very wrongs of which they so loudly, so justly complain. If they but reason out their place, their power and their interests, they will vote for those principles and that party which realizes to them the best measures of their hopes, in the wisest legislation for the industries and labor by which American Irishmen live.

IRISH ORATORS.

Grattan, Curran and O'Connell.

There is an old man with stooped shoulders, long, thin arms, the sparest figure, haggard face, lips firmly set, an eye with the searching glance of a gray eagle—that is Henry Grattan!

What of him? He had a great cause, a great opportunity, a great genius. The independence of Ireland the cause; the embarrassment of England with her colonies the opportunity. With the magnitude of both his genius was commensurate. He was equal to his friends—as he himself said of his rival, Henry Flood—and more than equal to his enemies.

When he spoke, the infirmities and deformities of the man disappeared in a blaze of glory. His eloquence was more than human. "It was a combination of cloud, whirlwind and flame." Nothing could resist it; nothing could approach it. It conquered all and distanced all. Like the archangel Raphael, it was winged as well as armed.

His intellect was most noble; his heart was not less divinely moulded. Never did so much gentleness, so much benignity, so much sweetness, so much courage, so much force unite before in one poor frame.

The brighest event of Irish history is the great event of that great man's life. If the brightest, let us refer it to his genius, his spirit, his ambition. "He never would be satisfied so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland had a link of the British chain clanking to his rags." Thus he spoke, moving the Declaration of Independence.

The last time he appeared in the Irish Parliament was at midnight. He had come from his sick bed. They gave him leave to sit whilst he addressed the House. Men beheld before their eyes a sublime transfiguration. "I rose," said he, "with the rising fortunes of my country; I am willing to die with her expiring liberties."

Had Henry Grattan been at that hour inspired with the republicanism of Wolfe Tone, his character would have been complete.

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There is a dark, dwarfish figure, with a brown, rugged cheek, a short, flat nose, and upturned, earnest face, and eye swimming in black lustre, hands upon the hips, the awkward body swinging to and fro, looking as though it were convulsed—that is John Philpot Curran!

Who, knowing anything of Ireland, has not heard of him? Who, having read the story of her wrongs and martyrdoms, has failed to love that loving, gallant, glowing nature? Who at all familiar with the marked features of his time will refuse to him an exalted station and the most generous homage?

In a period conspicious for its wit his was the brightest wit of all. At a time when the most exuberant hospitality prevailed his was the most genial nature that flowed and sparkled at the social board. In a crowded school of orators, each one of whom was prominent and towering, he stood, if not the foremost, second only to the foremost.

When corruption was let loose he stood unpurchasable and inviolate. In a reign of terror he was dauntless and invincible. "You may murder," he exclaimed one day to the armed ruffians in the court-house who threatened him with their bayonets, "but you cannot intimidate."

In the midst of devastation he was a guardian spirit and an immortal saviour. From the beginning to the end he clung to the fortunes of his country, gave her his love, his labor, his thoughts, his gayety, his sorrow, the inspiration of his courage, the exhilarating warmth and splendor of his genius—gave them all to her in the fullest measure.

Closing our hands in prayer, and bending in reverence beside the tomb, one regret alone may escape our lips in the contemplation of his career—that he did not die with those whom he strove to save.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

On a broken ledge of granite, against which the green waves of the sea seem to have worked for many a long day, and in the shadow of a mountain clad in purple heath, and over which the mist is passing, there stands, as though it grew out of it, a massive figure—arms folded, stoutly-limbed, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, erect, well set, staunch, massive as the granite, small head, small, gray, twinkling eyes, flexible small lips, features suffused with humor, yet, under the laughing surface, betraying a lurking sagacity and purpose, and a consciousness of power—it is O'Connell!

Why say more? He himself uttered these words one day in the spring of 1843:

"I find that my humble name has penetrated and become familiar along the Carpathian Mountains, and I verily believe the autocrat of Russia has heard of him who now addresses you. Portugal has heard of it. Spain has felt it. It has been talked of in the mountains of Hungary. Coupled with it, the woes of Ireland were heard of from the sources of the Missouri. From the waters of the Ohio, from the summits of the Alleghanies and the wooded banks of the Monongahela—in every part of that vast continent, from the forrests of the Canadas to the morasses near New Orleans—with my name is mingled the cry for the restoration of the liberties of Ireland."

The utterance of these words was no fictitious ostentation. His own importance he did not exaggerate. None will dispute it. His bitterist enemies admit it. The celebrity of his name was measured by weeks and continents.

His power within the country of his birth was equal to the notoriety abroad. No man, at any time, in any country, was endowed with greater. His was the *only legitimate* kingship in Europe. If he had not drilled regiments, he had an impetuous and overpowering people at his back. If not the *master of the ordnance, he was the ruler of* the avalanche. It would have come had he breathed a syllable. A stroke of the eagle's wing, they say, will dislodge it from the Alps.

Why say more? It is necessary to justify these words? this estimate of that man's power? this assertion of his absolute capacity?

A very eminent critic, writing in the French language—writing of Mirabeau, Dante, Guizot, Thiers, Lamartine—has said this concerning him:

"O'Connell has been likened to Demosthenes. O'Connell uses simple phrases and simple constructions. Herein the two are both alike. But O'Connell has a pathos unknown to the Greek. Demosthenes is the statelier—O'Connell the more varied. The Athenian often made men pale with terror, or silent with deliberate fury. O'Connell oftener made them laugh, and shout, and love him, and go along with him and with his cause."

Nothing within the range of human capacity, in the way of revolution and administration, was to him impossible. He might easily have recovered the confiscated prerogatives of 1782. His dominion far exceeded that of Henry Grattan, though his military rssources were less ostensible. Had he willed it he would have been crowned in 1843 and his dynasty established. Imbued with loftier admirations, he could have thrown the crown to moths and worms, and, like Washington, have inaugurated the sovereignity of his people under the code and banner of a republic.

Yet, failing to do so, and failing in other instances, he did much for her before the sun of life and intellect moved downwards from the zenith; and, dying, bequeathed a memory to his country which contributes largely to that stock of wealth which no laws can confiscate, no adversity deteriorate—a memory which even those who differed from him most and censure him most harshly will be solicitous and jealous to perpetuate.—*T. F. Meagher.*

LAND LAWS IN BRITAIN.

If crime in all its phases is being discussed perhaps it was never discussed before, the laws which regulate the purchase and tenure of land are coming in for even still more attention. The present system prevailing in the Old Country and elsewhere, it is very evident, is doomed. The hand writing is on the wall, and all who are wise will peacefully and pleasantly accept the inevitable and prepare for the change. The Gladstone Ministry is pledged to bring in a satisfactory and comprehensive measure, either next session or as soon thereafter as possible, and it will, we believe, be true to its promises. The antiquated and absurd restrictions on the free interchange of land, instead of now being regarded as they used to be, with a sort of abject awe, as though they were the very incarnation of wisdom, are meeting with scant courtesy and no forbearance. They are felt to be so radically unjust and indefensible, that no one has a word to say even in their excuse. And when things come to that point change is at the door. Entail, primogeniture, complicated titles in defensible, power given to dead men to control the movements of the living, or to look up property in enforced barrenness, with much else which the wisdom of our fathers devised, are too bad for even an apology for perpetuation. There is no need, it is felt, for laws being passed with a view to throw real estate into the hands of a few. It has a natural tendency in that direction, even when left to the ordinary course of events in fair open buying and selling. If there is to be any exceptional legislation it is better to encourage disentegration than accumulation.

Then the question of tenant right is becoming more and more a burning one. It is all well enough to say that it should be left to the operation of free covenanting, or the bargaining of individuals in the way they think most beneficial to their own interests. It is now felt that such a principle will not always hold good. The weak have often to be protected from their own weakness, and from the exigencies of their own poverty. A reasonable bargain can only be made when there is relatively an equality of position and a fair amount of power to denounce the unfair and to resist the oppression. But this has not been the case with every farmer in Great Britain. In very many instances they could not help themselves. They were as dumb "bound thralls" as Gurthe the swineherd. They were glad to let their landlords absorb at the end of their leases all the capital they had put into the soil, and to pay interest on that very capital in the shape of enhanced rents. They could not help themselves. Their poverty and not their will, compelled. But it was not right on that account, just as sometimes the weak have to pocket wrongs and the dependant have to endure expression without protest, though the high-handed oppressor is not approved of on that account. The whole philosophy then of the relation of landlord and tenants stands a good chance of being revised and changed, till it be brought more into accord with the eternal fitness of things. And why not?—*London (Ont.) Advertiser.*

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