

A. It potently combined with other causes to drive the people into exile. By withdrawing larger masses of money than ever from the country, the means of employing and supporting the people at home were still farther reduced. They were therefore compelled to emigrate in greater multitudes than before.

Q. Was the expulsion of the Irish people considered a desirable object by the English?

A. It had always been so, and was so still. We have seen that in the 16th and 17th centuries the Irish were thinned out by massacre and by the deliberate destruction of their food. In modern days they are thinned out by the wholesale abstraction of the national wealth which their hands have created; a system which, by depriving them of the natural and legitimate fund for their industry, renders their native country incapable of supporting them.

Q. What is the sole effectual remedy for those monstrous wrongs?

A. The restoration to Ireland of her native parliament, on the basis of a free popular constituency. A resident Irish legislature, freely chosen, is the only body competent to develop the resources of Ireland for the benefit of her own inhabitants, and to protect the national wealth from being carried out of the country by our powerful and unscrupulous neighbour.

Q. On what plea do English statesmen justify the inordinate abstraction of Irish money?

A. On the political incorporation of the two countries by the Union. This Union, they say, has made Irish and English "one nation;" and, as they are thus identified with each other, there is no more injustice in spending Irish money in England, than in spending Yorkshire money in Sussex or Cumberland.

Q. What is the plain meaning of such a plea as this?

A. It means that having robbed Ireland of her parliament, they are thereby entitled to rob her of her money.

Q. What do you infer from such a plea?

A. Clearly that Ireland requires political distinctness to protect her interests, since the obliteration of that dis-

tinctness is used as a pretext for confiscating huge masses of her public revenue and private income.

Q. What were the Corn Laws?

A. Laws imposing duties on corn imported from foreign countries into Great Britain and Ireland.

Q. Were they advantageous to England?

A. They were abhorred by the manufacturing classes in England, whose bread was rendered dearer by the tax. They were upheld by the landlord interest, both in Great Britain and Ireland, as being calculated to secure high rents by keeping up the price of corn.

Q. Were they advantageous in any way to Ireland?

A. To this extent they were advantageous, that as almost the sole industry of Ireland was agricultural, the high price of agricultural produce brought more money into Irish circulation than could be expected if the market value of corn should fall.

Q. Were the Corn Laws repealed during the continuance of the Irish famine?

A. Yes; and one of the arguments for repealing them was, to give "cheap bread to the Irish."

Q. How did the repeal of those laws affect Ireland?

A. They lowered the price of corn, and thereby threw 1,105,609 acres of arable land out of cultivation, as the price of the grain no longer repaid the cultivators. The labourers, whose occupation was gone, followed the myriads of emigrants who had crossed the Atlantic.

Q. Were the Corn Laws just in principle?

A. No: it cannot be right to tax what ought to be the ordinary food of man. Under a domestic parliament, the abolition of the Corn duty would not have injured the Irish population. As the matter stood, however, that measure operated to lower the price of one of the chief articles that Ireland had to sell; a loss the impoverished country could ill bear.

Q. To what extent have all the concurrent causes of which we have spoken, thinned out the Irish nation?

A. A parliamentary return, obtained by Sir Joseph M'Kenna when member