

tude. We stand aghast like the well-fed Mr. Bumble when the half-starved Oliver Twist dared to ask for more. Ireland is a sort of Cerberus with fifty mouths, and when we have thrown a sop to one there are forty-nine still hissing and clamoring to be supplied. We are quite sure that the people are incorrigibly thankless, that their discontent is a chronic disease, that the grievances of Ireland are like the peat of its own bogs, rising to the surface again almost as fast as the upper layers are removed, that the Irish patriot is a rabid demagogue trading on imaginary wrongs, that priests and jesuits are the secret contrivers of disaffection, that the Celt is naturally an unruly and pugnacious animal which no reasonable Government can control, and that Ireland must be held down with a strong hand and the first sparks of sedition trampled out with iron heel. So we settle the difficulty, or rather dismiss it from our minds.

Has our reader gone through the terrible indictment of English misgovernment and English cruelty contained in Fronde's history of "The English in Ireland?" Has he considered the effect which centuries of suffering are likely to have produced on a susceptible people's mind? Has he tried to make allowance for that inheritance of hatred which is the only possession that their English masters have never been able to wrest from the Irish peasantry? Has he tried to realize the feelings of a nation whose memory is laden with stories of intolerable wrong? Does he think that a few homœopathic doses of just dealing will suddenly heal this long accumulation of disease? *Ireland is to-day England's humiliation, because it has been the sphere of England's greatest sins.* And swift, spasmodic moods of repentance and partial acts of long delayed justice are not able suddenly to undo life long wrongs.

It is the one great moral lesson which George Eliot has set herself to teach this generation, that the worst consequence of wrong-doing is that it puts insuperable difficulties in the way of doing right, and that Nemesis follows on for years, though a changed heart has removed the ground of offence and bitter repentance has besought its favor with tears. We are proving this with regard

to the Irish, and, if we could keep it more constantly in mind, it would, perhaps, make us more lenient and charitable in our view of their discontent. But let us not flatter ourselves that we have at length done justice to Ireland, and that its present complaints arise only from the memory of ancient wrongs. Let our reader visit the western parts of the island, where the present agitation has its centre, and he will speedily be disabused of that fancy. He will find hundreds of square miles of fertile land lying almost barren, towns like Galway and Westport literally tumbling to pieces, able-bodied laborers standing idle all day with miserable rags on their backs and gaunt famine in their faces, crowds of women and children on the verge of starvation, unroofed cabins hardly fit for pigs, where human beings are cowering for shelter, with the rain and snow drifting and filtering down upon them, and general beggary and squalor and wretchedness the like of which no other country in Europe, not even excepting Turkey, can show—and my lords and gentlemen the natural protectors of these people, the owners of the land, the drainers of its produce, unseen for years on their estates, and spending all that they can squeeze out of the soil in the shape of rent on the luxurious and often riotous living of foreign cities. Is it surprising that the Irish peasantry should be a little sceptical about the rights of property, and should fail to understand the grace of meek submission? Is it surprising that they cannot realize the beneficence of the law which protects these gentlemen in the neglect of every duty, and can do nothing for the crowd except to keep a posse of armed constables in every village to overawe them?

We do not hint at any interference with the rights of property, for we know that in the long run such interference would produce more miseries than it would remove, but we demand that our statesmen shall take up the Irish land question, not with tender and gingerly hands as heretofore, but with a determination to make some radical change and to recognize tenants' rights as well as landlords' privileges. And we plead still more for the uprising of a moral sentiment which shall inflict its scorpion