

hall table ready for departure; not a moment is to be lost. His toilet is hasty enough, but not speedy; for in his eager desire on retiring to rest to have everything ready for the morning, he has generally packed up his brushes and comb, or some other indispensable thing, which has to be disinterred from the portmanteau. He generally shaves over night; but, if not, I tremble for his throat, since I know with what imprudent rapidity he is performing that operation in his dressing-room.—*James Payn: Holiday Talks.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

INDUSTRIAL IRELAND.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—As the young men who in the future will rule Canada are readers of your journal, and as so many attempts have been made to mislead the public on the Irish agrarian question, I venture to state a few little-known facts collated from recent reliable authorities.

First, as to the quality of the soil of Ireland. Mr. Parnell has stated in one of his speeches, addressed to a meeting mainly comprised of Irish farmers, that, taken altogether, the farmed land of Ireland is ten per cent. more fertile than the farmed land of England. Mr. Parnell is the owner of two Irish estates, one comprising some of the best land in the country, the other of far inferior quality. He has also seen a great deal of both countries, and, therefore, on such a point, is a reliable authority. From his zero valuation of the rents of other landlords, his cue would have been to have made exactly the opposite statement—rents being much higher in England—but he well knew when he spoke that too many people were acquainted with the facts of the case to make it safe to depart from the truth.

On his basis, then, the farmed land of Ireland ought to produce on the average per acre ten per cent. more than that of England. What are the facts?

In the London *Economist*, the leading financial and statistical authority in England, there have been published two very minute and valuable statistical valuations of the agricultural yields in England and Ireland, the last appearing in its issue for January 12, 1886.

It appears by these two valuations that, leaving out mountain-land, bogs, and commons in both countries, and in a similar manner deducting for seed and agricultural horse-keep, England—the less fertile of the two countries—produces £1 11s., or \$7.54 more per acre of net saleable produce than its more richly endowed sister-land. As, deducting mountain-land and bogs, there are upwards of thirteen millions of farmed acres in Ireland, this represents for that country, when compared with England, an annual loss of £20,150,000, or about \$98,000,000.

Why is there this fearful annual loss? If any of your young statesmen readers would like to look at this question from all points of view, they should read the two small twenty-five cent volumes, published by the London *Times*, entitled "Home Rule," where they will find a vast number of letters from all sorts of persons, giving, among other subjects, very full information as to the agricultural condition and lackings of Ireland.

In addition, a Mr. Robert Dennis has very recently written a valuable book, "Industrial Ireland" (published by Murray, of London; price six shillings), which gives "a practical and non-political view of Ireland for the Irish." With a vast amount of information in it, it yet lacks one essential, like so much of what Irishmen have written and spoken—he does not go to the root of the matter. It puts one in mind of the story of the play of "Hamlet" with the character of Hamlet omitted. No point is made of the total want of security for investments in land in that country; also the absence of personal security, and the interference by Mr. Gladstone with the rights of property and the laws of Political Economy. We cannot repeal such laws; we can break them, but not alter them. But the facts he gives, coupled with this legislative partial confiscation and the absence of personal security, with all that such conditions mean, to a great extent explain to reflective and unprejudiced minds the great annual loss of \$98,000,000.

Take, for instance, the hay crop. It appears from statistics that, on an average of fifteen years, the crop of hay in Ireland averages two English tons (nearly two and a quarter Canadian) per statute acre. In England the average is one and a half tons. In Ontario, on an average of four years, not quite one and a third English tons. Mr. Dennis (p. 19) speaks of "the disgraceful way in which it is mismanaged in Ireland." It is a fact, though well-nigh incredible, that the Irish farmers have not yet learnt the simple art of compressing hay for carriage by rail, and that, for want of this knowledge, thousands of tons are annually left to rot, which in Liverpool would fetch £4 per ton. Some few years ago the Midland Railway Company of Ireland got from America four of the most improved trussing machines. They sent them through the country, and tried to instruct the people in the trussing of hay, but they would not learn. That was when hay, unsaleable at the place where grown, would have been eagerly bought for £4 a ton in Dublin. The machines are now lying idle.

Then, with regard to the butter trade (p. 32): "So far as soil and climate go, Ireland, as a dairy-farming country, is favoured far beyond any of the countries of Europe," yet (p. 36) Irish butter fetches the lowest price in the London market—Danish, German, Belgian, French, and Swedish all fetching far higher prices (the prices are given). "In Ireland the methods of sixty years ago are employed to-day; the cows are half-starved in winter." "The result is that the average yield of an Irish cow, which ought to be two hundred pounds of very superior butter per annum,

is only one hundred and twenty-three pounds of very inferior butter." "The preparation of butter is performed after a fashion that hardly bears relating." "You may at any time walk into the house of an Irish farmer and find the milk placed all round the bedroom to set for cream." "Eventually it finds its way to the market, either in lumps tied round with a cloth or in a dirty firkin."

In a similar manner, he goes through the various industries of Ireland, and shows a most deplorable state of neglect and apathy. Even in the export of live cattle to England, through the slovenly way of doing it there is an annual loss of £1,000,000 (see p. 24). With reference, evidently, to the 200,000 small farms, he shows (page 141) "that for at least six months in the year, the Irish peasant, man and woman, boy and girl, is idle."

(Page 16.) "The Irish know next to nothing about the rotation of crops. Hundreds of tenants go on planting year after year precisely the crop their fathers planted before them. They have no notion of giving the land a rest or a change. Irish agriculture has been described as the most barbarous in Europe, because of the small number of crops that are cultivated. The English farmer goes through the regular rotation of wheat, turnips, oats, mangolds, barley, vetches, hay, clover, and so on, but of this sort of farming the Irish tenant is absolutely ignorant. One of the first necessities in effecting any real improvement in the condition of the people who live upon the land is to teach them their business." (The italics are mine.)

As showing one of the evils of the very small farms in Ireland, it is proved in the *Economist* for December 4, 1886, that on the rented lands in Ontario, on an average, two men raise from the land in net saleable produce £104 0s. 4d. per head, but on the Irish small farms the average is only £28 6s. 8d. per head; in both cases rent, etc., would have to be deducted from these figures to show the net profits.

Your readers should especially note this fact, that in England farmers are tied down by their landlords to cultivate properly—if they don't do so they are evicted. This is one of the reasons why, with an inferior soil, the English farmer averages £1 11s., or \$7.54 more of net saleable produce per acre. But in Ireland, since the interference in 1868, and Mr. Gladstone's Land Act of 1880, the landlord practically can't interfere. Even before 1868 it was only at the risk of his life. Now, he is obliged in most cases to look on rentless, with folded arms, while his property is being deteriorated. If there had always been in Ireland the same protection for the rights of property and person that there has been in England, the lazy and the bad, and the majority of the very small farmers, would have been got rid of, and the rest compelled to cultivate the land properly, to the great benefit of themselves and the whole nation. With regard to the small farmers, instead of half-employing their time in netting a trifle per week, they would have been compelled to earn in other countries from three to five times as much. There is much truth in the Irish bull, "I will be drowned, and no one shall save me."

Trench shows in his "Realities of Irish Life" (there is a cheap 20 cent edition), that improving landlords in Ireland have always been hated, and often their lives have been attempted. There was a curious case reported in the New York *Herald*, by its special correspondent in Ireland, during the year of scarcity (1880), where a landlord had built improved cottages for his tenants, but his life would have been endangered had he persevered. This was corroborated by Land League authorities, with whom the special correspondent consorted. The tenants grieved for the genial warmth of the cow, the dung-heap, and the close quarters of time-honoured arrangements.

Considered in all its bearings, the interference of Mr. Gladstone with admitted laws of Political Economy and the rights of property, as recognised in all civilised lands, is the strongest instance at the present day of the evils arising from tampering with well-recognised principles. With regard to improving the condition of Ireland, it is an exemplification of Dickens' satirical description in "Little Dorritt" of the Government office—"How-not-to-do-it." For statesmen, a high degree of common sense, combined with principle, is of vastly more value than the greatest oratorical gifts lacking those qualities.

To reward such violence, dishonesty, laziness, and unthrift by the freedom from the payment of just debts and the gift of property belonging to others, and, in direct opposition to Divine law, to discourage law-abidingness, honesty, industry, and thrift, is to injure the well-being of a nation both physical and moral. Like all such infractions of law, they result in great suffering. It is mere mockery to call such statesmanship Liberalism. It is the liberalism of the "Unjust Steward." Mr. Gladstone has made permanent in Ireland a lazy and wasteful small-farm system (five to fifteen acres), and to such farming applies the description of the Highlander's gun, which, as he said, only wanted a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel to make it a really good weapon.

The special correspondent in Ireland during the year of scarcity, of the Radical *Daily News* reported the request of an old Irishwoman, who, unthinking, set forth the *reductio ad absurdum* of Gladstone's Land Act Legislation—"If the Government would only give us the land for nothing, and also the money to carry on the farm, we could manage to get along."

The preceding facts and reasons go to prove that above all things it is necessary for the statesman to adhere to the laws of Political Economy, and to protect property and person. The absence of these conditions has reduced Ireland to its present poor and discontented condition. The carrying of them into force, in spite of all clamour, by some resolute statesman, will make of that country one of the most prosperous nations in Europe. Until the advent of such a man we shall continue to see chronic poverty, suffering, discontent, and more or less of lawlessness.

Yours,

FAIRPLAY RADICAL.