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MGR. DUPANLOUP'S GREAT SERMON. ON BEHALF OF THE IRISH POOR. (Continued.)

Well, brethren, those are the men who die of hunger! I have now, my brethren, to tell you of the misfortunes of Ireland. And what shall I say of them? Is it a formidable accusation I am about to urge against a great and illustrious nation? No; I am about to tell the simple truth with the most extreme simplicity; or, rather, it is not I who will detail it to you; it is from my adversaries, if such I have, that I shall take it. I will invoke here no other than their own testimony. I spoke from myself when celebrating the qualities of that noble Irish race. I was carried away, and have perhaps, spoken at too great length. But on the question of her misfortunes I will get the very men to speak, who, from amongst her rulers have lifted up in her cause the voice of conscience justly touched; and I will do it in the name of her long ages of suffering, in which it is impossible to deny a compassionate sympathy, in the name of Europe, in the name of universal humanity, the sad and indignant witnesses of her wrongs. Who can complain of my words? England surely cannot, since those whom I bid speak to you are her greatest and most illustrious citizens. But allow me to say that I have been astonished, and justly so, at the strange rumors and refutations forwarded beforehand of a discourse which I had not uttered. What does this mean? and why all this fretful uneasiness? Have you, then, so much to fear? Ah! there is in this question but one real ground of fear, a thing alike inevitable, sovereign and inflexible; a thing which alone really acquires men, or condemns them inexorably: it is truth. What, then, is the truth regarding the wrongs of Ireland? What happens and what do men suffer there yonder in that little isle separated from us by the stormy ocean? The simple truth—the terrible truth—here it is. That there is a people on the earth whose life-blood, during three centuries, has been running out drop by drop, who are dying daily, by slow degrees, in the horrid agony of misery and hunger, in the face, and at the hands of a mighty nation! And this in Europe! in the full sun-light of Christianity, and in the middle of the nineteenth century! Behold the truth! If it is not the truth, I accept, or rather I call for and court the fullest contradiction. I will hand over to publicity, not only to the publicity of this immense audience, but if possible to the publicity of the whole world, every word which I am about to pronounce, and will have this printed to-morrow. I shall be but too glad to find well-founded contradictions. In every detail in which I can say I have been mistaken, I shall joyfully do so. The human conscience will be lightened so much at least. But if what I say, or rather what they themselves have said be the truth? Well, let the rulers of Ireland know it—this truth can no longer be silent—it can no longer be tolerated. It is time, full time, that the human conscience put an end to a spectacle which it has been powerless to prevent. I commence. And before entering into the main points in the details, let me present to you the unexceptionable testimony of the best informed English writers— "I ask whether there be upon earth any Christian or civilized people so beggarly, wretched and destitute as the common Irish, and if, nevertheless, there is any other people whose wants may be more easily supplied from home." Thus spoke, in 1734, an Anglican prelate, Berkely. That to which the Anglican prelate bore testimony more than a century ago, an illustrious warrior, the Duke of Wellington, with that accent of generous compassion which is the inheritance of true valor, proclaimed in our own age in the English House of Commons: "There never was a country," he exclaims, "in which poverty existed to so great a degree as in Ireland." What must that misery be which could enable a bishop, a Catholic one it is true, the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare, as a witness in the investigation ordered by the House of Commons to say— "It is a frightful state of society; and when it is considered, it fills me with so much pain and horror, that I frequently prayed to God, if it were His will, rather to take me out of life than to leave me to witness such evils."

A writer in the Edinburgh Review, commenting on these words of Dr. Doyle, added: "A thousand statements to the same effect might be produced, but unfortunately they are not necessary. The poverty and wretchedness of the Irish people are too glaring and obvious to be called in question. They are admitted by every one who has ever been in Ireland, or conversed with an Irish gentleman, or read a book having any reference to that country." And this misery of a rich and fertile country, this misery so heartrending that a prayer is addressed to heaven for death rather than witness it—what is the cause of it? English writers themselves accuse the legislation which so long weighed on the country. The avowed end of that legislation, as well as the favorite dream of the English historian, Leland, who acknowledges it, was the extirpation, that is to say, as he expresses it, the extermination of the Irish race. The greatest English historian, perhaps the greatest writer that country has produced in our times, who was three times member of the administration, who twice sat as cabinet minister, and who, as the reward not less of his literary superiority than of the services he did for his country, was made a peer of the realm so shortly before his death, Lord Macaulay makes use of this terrible expression— "The harshness of those odious laws was aggravated by a still more odious administration; for, bad as the legislators were, the magistrates were still worse." And at the beginning of his history Lord Macaulay forecasting his subject, thus expresses himself— "It will be seen how Ireland, crushed by the domination of race over race, and of religion over religion, continued, it is true, a member of the realm, but a withered member, which all who fear, and hate England point to with a finger of scorn." Now listen to another testimony— "Such jobbing, such profligacy—so much tyranny and oppression—such an abuse of God's gifts, such a profanation of God's name for the purpose of bigotry and party spirit, cannot be exceeded in the history of civilized Europe, and will long remain a monument of infamy and shame to England. . . . The great misfortune of Ireland is, that the mass of the people have been given up for a century to a handful of Protestants, by whom they have been treated as Helots, and subjected to every species of persecution and disgrace." Who wrote these lines? An enemy of England or of Anglicanism? No. An Anglican canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, one of the most distinguished writers in the Edinburgh Review, Sidney Smith. Then, relative to the frightful legislation which England hung round the neck of Ireland, entering into details, the same Anglican writer adds: "The sufferings of the Catholics have been so loudly chanted in the very streets, that it is almost needless to remind our readers that during the reign of George I. and George II., the Irish Roman Catholics were disabled from holding any civil or military office, from voting at elections, from admission into corporations, from practicing at law or physic. A younger brother, on becoming Protestant, might deprive his elder brother of his birthright; by the same process, he might force his father, under the name of a liberal provision, to yield up to him a part of his landed property: and if an eldest son, he might, in the same way, reduce his father's fee simple to a life estate. A Papist was disabled from purchasing freehold lands, and even from holding long leases. . . . And any person might take his Catholic neighbor's horse by paying £5 for it. If the child of a Catholic father became a Protestant, he was taken away from his father, and put into the hands of a Protestant relation. To those who would object here, "But this old legislation has been done away with," the same writer would answer with Lord Macaulay, "Yes, but the spirit to which it gave birth still remains." Above all, its consequences, the deep and frightful wounds which it has inflicted on this unfortunate country, are still there: commerce, industry, agriculture, have been, and that for ages, smitten down by it. Up to 1699 Ireland had a foreign commerce in the article of cloth, and sold her products cheaper than England. What did the British Parliament venture to propose? It presented an address to William III., begging him to suppress this industry of Ireland. "Wherefore we most humbly beseech your most sacred Majesty, that your Majesty would be pleased, in the most public and effectual way, that may be, to declare to all your subjects of Ireland, that the growth and increase of the

woollen manufactures there has long been, and will be ever looked upon with great jealousy by all your subjects of this kingdom, and if not timely remedied, may occasion very strict laws totally to prohibit and suppress the same." The king answered that—"He would do all that in him lay to discharge the woollen manufactures of Ireland." And soon afterwards acts were passed in the Parliament, the object of which was to oblige the Irish to send their wool to England to be manufactured in Yorkshire; and from that time forward the English manufactured their cloth in peace, and sold what they liked to foreigners and to the Irish. In truth there is but one word which could here qualify such language, such acts, such laws! That word I will not utter. What shall I say on the navigation laws?—On the absolute prohibition of all direct commerce between Ireland and the colonies?—No colonial product was allowed to enter Ireland before it had shipped in an English port. Thus Dean Swift, writing on these laws, said: "The conveniency of ports and havens which nature hath bestowed so liberally upon this kingdom, is of no more use to us than a beautiful prospect to a man shut up in a dungeon." These laws, I am aware, have since been repealed, because the English no longer needed them; but when commerce and industry are thus stricken down, trodden out, who can deny that they are crushed for ages? When the capital of industry, commercial currents, privileges, arms, strength have been carried elsewhere, they are not brought back in a day. In order to achieve that, time and prodigious efforts are necessary. Ireland is making these efforts, but under what difficulties and what fetters. In the meantime her population is perishing from misery. What shall I say of agriculture, what of landlordism, in Ireland? One only word. Irish Catholics do not possess their country. Under Elizabeth and Cromwell ten-elevenths of the Irish soil was wrested from the Catholics, and divided among Protestants; hence, to-day this enormity, that English and Scotch Protestants, who scarcely form a sixth of the population, are masters of seven-eighths of the land. And what kind of masters? The Times, the most considerable journal in England, and perhaps in the world, not long ago, and what is still more deserving of notice, since the repeal of the old laws, the Times of the 27th February, 1847, said:—"Property is there ruled with savage and tyrannical sway. The landlords there exercise their rights with an iron hand, and neglect their duties with a brazen effrontery." It is the Times which further said:—"But we must see it nearer, this misery: we must enter into some details." M. Gustave de Beaumont.—Old age, infirmity, sickness, every weakness was condemned to perish. I am not here reduced to the necessity of taking vain oratorical precautions; I have not to fear the mention of proper names. Well, then, there is in France an honorable man, M. Gustave de Beaumont the friend, and one might say the brother, of the illustrious M. de Tocqueville, who visited Ireland in 1835, and wrote an important work on that country. To whoever knows the character of M. de Beaumont, his testimony is beyond suspicion.—Here is the description which he has left us of an Irish parish, the parish of Newport-Pratt, in the county Mayo [Connaught]:—"Among 11,751 inhabitants of this parish, there are 9,538 whose only bed is straw and grass [this straw and grass are not even thrown upon a bed, as 7,531 lie on the ground].—Among 206 persons who compose the little village of Derrylaken [one of the hamlets of the parish], only 39 possess a shelter for the night, the rest perish from cold as much as from hunger. I found in the course of my visits 12 persons who for want of food, had not broken their fast at mid-day." How is the Irishman housed? I have recourse again to the testimony of M. de Beaumont:—"As to their houses, figure to yourselves four dry mud walls, which the rain soon reduces to its primitive state; for a roof a slight thatch, or a few rolls of turf; for a chimney, a hole roughly made in the roof, and most frequently the door of the cabin; the sole egress for the smoke; for furniture, when there is any, a few rough straw chairs, one only bed, made up usually of grass and straw, for the whole family. At the hearth, around a slender fire, are seen huddled together half-naked children; in the middle of them an unclean pig, the only inhabitant of the place at his ease, and his presence is a sign of comparatively easy circumstances; in the cabin where he dwells not, the poverty is extreme." This dwelling, note it well, my brethren, this

dwelling, adds M. Gustave Beaumont, "is very wretched . . . and yet it is not that of the poor: the habitation just described is that of the Irish tenant." I have said enough about this lamentable misery. I must add a word, one only, on another frightful wound of Ireland—Eviction. In the month of November, 1859, two members of the English Parliament, Mr. Maguire and The O'Donoghue, described it to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in the following terms:—"The great mass of the tenants of our country have no legal title to the land they cultivate, and despite old ties and the most endearing recollections, they may be driven from it as easily as the flocks that graze upon its pastures." In a public letter of the Right Rev. Dr. Keane, Bishop of Clones, of 15 of April, 1860, on the state of Ireland, I read:—"According to the law now in force, all improvements of whatever kind they may be, and although entirely due to the labor and pecuniary advance of the tenants, become in case of eviction the property of the landlord." And the Bishop cites the very words of a judge who in some recent cases of odious eviction, feeling himself fettered by the law, declared that he was forced "to administer injustice." What that "hand of iron and front of brass" of which the Times spoke, the landlords, when they please, sweep their lands clear of the poor Catholics. There is a regular force of constables which public indignation has branded with the name of the Crowbar Brigade, and which the first magistrate of the county, the high sheriff, has always the right to call out for executions of this sort; and do you wish to know how they proceed?—This band is often called on to assist with a strong hand in the execution of the sentence of eviction, and whilst bayonets restrain a despairing population, the commander, enters the poor cabin, drives out the inmates, gives the signal, and in a few moments doors, windows (if there be any), walls, roof, all are demolished by blows of iron crowbars. Do you know how many cabins were thus destroyed in Ireland in ten years, from 1841 to 1851, according to official statistics?—270,000! And in one single year, the year 1849, how many families were evicted and thrown out upon the road?—50,000! How much such a system impoverishes and oppresses Ireland, I leave to the following figures and facts to show:— According to official statistics, published in Dublin—I quote again from the Right Rev. Dr. Keane—"the average value of agricultural produce, not including cattle, from 1851 to 1857, amounted to the sum of about fifty millions of pounds sterling. Now, to take a most moderate valuation, and not to estimate at more than one-fifth of this sum the annual loss which agriculture sustains from the present laws, the loss that Ireland sustained in six years amounts to eleven millions of pounds sterling" (two hundred and seventy-five millions of francs.) So much for the impoverishment of the country. Now for its oppression. The 22nd October, 1859 (the period is not remote), an Irish newspaper, the Connaught Patriot, contained the sad list of the tenants that a member of Parliament had evicted from his property. For what cause? For the crime of an independent exercise of the elective franchise. For it must be said in praise of the immortal O'Connell, one of the greatest services he rendered to his country was, to give it a political conscience, which is the reason that for forty years, despite the threat of eviction hanging over their heads, the Irish people have voted with independence.— And listen, gentlemen, to the language of an Irishwoman, whose name I will record—Bridget Prunty,—sublime language, which I hold up to the admiration of freemen of all countries. Her husband, intimidated, was about to sacrifice to the future welfare of his children, his rights and duties as a citizen and a Catholic. "No," said his wife, "think of your soul and of liberty." They evict, therefore, for political reasons; they evict for economic reasons of all kinds; they evict on religious grounds; they evict without any reason at all. No doubt the law, since the war of American independence, no longer imposes on landlords the formal obligation of oppressing tenants, but it leaves them completely at their mercy. But you will say, if the condition of tenants is such as I describe, so uncertain and so hard, the arbitrary power of landlords so absolute, why dispute and struggle for land in Ireland? why do not the Irish adopt some other mode of life? Very well, but I ask you what other mode? I have already told you commerce and manufactures have been extinguished in Ireland, and the mass of the people are of necessity agricultural. To beg, to die of hunger, or to endure as farmers all the tyranny of the landlords, such is their inevitable condition—they do endure it.

The details of this tyranny would be dreadful. I spare you the recital of them. I have before my eyes words and facts absolutely incredible. I will cite to you but one only:—"One day a tenant came to complain to his landlord (the name of the landlord is now before my eyes, but I will not mention it) that his exactions had reduced him to the last stage of misery. 'You might as well,' he said, 'cut off my head at once as treat me so.' The landlord replied, 'I won't cut off your head, but I'll shave you as close as possible.'" I do not mean to say here "ad uno disce omnes," but I ask is it possible to find a parallel to an arbitrary law like this, which delivers up unhappy tenants, bound hand and foot, into the power of a master? As long as this frightful state of things, and the complete subjection of the Irish to their landlords, continues, let me be no longer told that the laws are abolished; that the Irish are emancipated; that they enjoy all the liberties of England. In truth, the first of all liberties, liberty to live, they have none. No. And as to liberty of conscience, they have it also without doubt; but in reality, what takes place in these "workhouses," where hunger crowds together the poor Irish people? It is the Bishop I have just quoted who tells the fact: "The Catholic children in the workhouses of England are subjected to the influences of a proselytism which does not even take the trouble of having itself concealed." And if a landlord wishes to banish from his land the tenant who does not send his children to the Protestant school, is it not a fact that he has the right as well as the will to do so? It is a fact that he never puts this right into execution? I could not read without the deepest emotion of my soul, a word spoken in all the sincerity of his heart by a poor Irish peasant:—"They asked me," said he, in judicial evidence, "would I send my children to this school. I said I would not. Some time after I got a notice to put me out of my land. Then I sent my children to school: I was afraid, for I had a large weak family; but I soon took them from school. After that, a bit I did not do me good, as I knew I had been acting contrary to my conscience and to God." What oppression does not this one word reveal in the mouth of a poor father driven by hunger to a weakness which he cannot forgive in himself! It was his lot to die either of hunger or remorse; he chose the hunger for himself and his children. Well, at least, if the bodies are to die, the souls shall live! In the month of November last, amidst torrents of rain and sleet, in the wild mountains of Partry, sixty-nine unfortunate beings were flung headlong on the high road. I do not now discuss the question whether or not their refusal to go to the Protestant school was the cause of their eviction. It is denied this day; it is the affair of a Lord Bishop, not mine. As for myself, though I have no doubt whatsoever on the subject, I will not mind to give it a contradiction. I close the matter with these words of the Times:—"These evictions are a hideous scandal, and the Bishop should rather die, or fling himself on the charity of his diocese, than be guilty of such a crime." I take the naked facts of these sixty-nine persons being flung adrift, without fire or home-stead, in the depth of winter. Among them was an old man of eighty years of age and a woman of seventy-four. The old couple were inconsolable, and broke out into groans and lamentations. "Ah!" exclaimed the poor woman, "behold me, three score and fourteen years, now without a place of shelter in the world, who never yet harmed mortal, and that often sheltered the homeless and poor—what have I done to merit this fate?" The old man—listen, gentlemen, to this word, and see what an amount of sublime faith there is in the heart of those poor Irish—the old man replies: "Peace, agra, the passion and death of Christ was more than this." Whatever may be said of these things, "No," cries out Macaulay, "no artifice can blot out the stigma of persecution which disgraces the Established Church." "I do not," says he "speak in anger, or with a view to excite anger; I do not speak with rhetorical exaggeration; I express with calmness and deliberation, in the only proper terms, an opinion which I formed many years ago, and confirmed by all my observations and reflections, and which I am ready to support with arguments, when I say that, of all the institutions which exist in the civilized world, the Established Church in Ireland seems to be the most absurd. . . . Now, where does the church of a small minority enjoy such privileges? . . . In this country alone we see a society of 8,000,000 of men supporting a church of 800,000." Sydney Smyth expresses himself in terms still more forcible:

Edinburgh Review, Dec. 1826. Leland, iii, 166. Speeches of the Right Hon. J. B. Macaulay, M.P., corrected by himself. London: Longman, 1854. These are cited in the Travels of Arthur Young. See the historical introduction of M. Gustave de Beaumont, third period, c. 1.