

Britain—there being then in Ireland near 1,000,000 of holdings on 13,500,000 of acres of arable surface. And of these holdings, one seventh did not exceed three acres; one third consisted of from 1 to 50 acres; not one twentieth were above 50 acres each; and two-thirds, at least, were wretchedly cultivated.

If we look to the circumstances of the population of that period, our results are not less remarkable. While the English upper-classes have long been the wealthiest in the world, few of the Irish were even out of debt, and numbers were hopelessly embarrassed. While the English middle classes have long been surrounded with comforts, Ireland can scarce be said to have had a middle class. And of the few that even then existed, the means were so slender, that often the Irish merchant was poorer than the English clerk; and the Irish farmer would have been thankful for the food which English servants threw away; while the entire agricultural class, representing seven-tenths of Ireland's substance, were fast sinking into poverty. How, then, shall we compare the lower classes of both countries—the starved Irish peasant in his wretched hut, with the happy English hind in his cheerful cottage?—More than three-fourths of all the dwellings in Ireland were at that period built of mud. Near one-half of all the families in Ireland lived in dwellings of but one apartment each. Two-thirds of that entire population lived by manual labour, and subsisted on potatoes. Near one-third were out of work, and in distress thirty weeks in a year; while not less than one eighth were paupers, or on the very verge of pauperism.

We think no one can read these statistics without being able to account for all the horrors of the famine of 1847. No prosperous country could be utterly prostrated by the failure of one crop—least of all the potatoe—for no prosperous country depends upon it. It is the staple food of poverty or sloth. That nation must have been foundering which such a calamity could so completely engulf. The above statistics demonstrate that Ireland was foundering—that the people were already so impoverished as to be unable to bear any additional privations; and many of them, indeed, so sunk in the gulf of wretchedness, that the least rise of its waters was sure to overwhelm them.

The census of 1851 has accordingly shown the disastrous effects of the famine upon Ireland. Ten years before, the population was 8,175,124. At the same rate of increase which had marked all previous decennial periods, it should at least have been 9,000,000 in 1851; and many believed it had reached that number in 1846. Yet it was found to be only 6,515,791—thus revealing the astounding fact, that in five years the population of Ireland had virtually decreased *ten millions and a half*, or near one-third! This number is within about 370,000 of being equal to the entire population of Scotland. We have only, therefore, the almost total extinction of the Scottish nation, in order to form some estimate of our loss. Moreover, in the year 1841 there were 1,381,360 dwellings in Ireland. According to the census of 1851 the number was then reduced to 1,115,007—showing that in the meantime, no less than 266,353 of all the habitations of the country had been levelled to the ground! We find, from the same source of information, that this dreadful clearance has chiefly taken place among the small farmers—the humble class so graphically described by the poet, whose little plot

“Just gave what life required, but gave no more.”

In 1845 there were as already stated, near 1,000,000 of holdings in Ireland; and of this number, those which contained from 1 to 50 acres each, amounted to 310,436, and supported 1,562,250 individuals—more than one-fifth of the population. The census of 1851 has revealed the awful fact, that near three-fourths of this entire class have been swept away—there being then but 92,618 holdings, supporting 519,768 individuals! We find, moreover, that of all the holdings which are under 15 acres each, one-half have disappeared, involving the clearance of 1,500,000 souls. All in a few short years! yet even now, the depopulation goes on as rapidly as ever. Who that has a heart can read these details without emotion? NEAR TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THOUSAND DWELLINGS SWEEPED AWAY! And in these the pulse of affection once beat warmly; for nature has endowed the peasant with feelings as well as the prince. To these, the poor man proudly brought his bride. In these they, no doubt, spent years of contentment, cheered amidst their sorrows by each other's love. There the mother has smiled over her infant's cradle, and perhaps wept over its coffin too; and the hardy father has had his toils beguiled by the innocent prattle of his little ones. And there, too, have they often knelt around their dying embers, and in their own humble way and simple strains presented their evening prayer to heaven.

#### THE FAMINE.

Such are the general statistics of our depopulation—the brevity of this sketch forbids minuter details. It is enough to say, that of the above 2,500,000, the famine destroyed about 1,000,000, and emigration has removed the remainder; and let any one imagine, if he can, the scenes of woe embraced in these fearful figures! During the horrors of 1847, our country was transformed into a grave-yard and lazaret-house. It was quite common to see the people staggering like drunken men along the roads from the utter exhaustion of nature, their faces and legs being swollen with hunger! and pages might be filled with the bare record of cases the most affecting, of starvation, pestilence, and death. Let us just present the reader with an instance or

two. At Killalla, the famished creatures used to crowd round the house of the Rev. Mr. Rogers, well-furnished with hunger; and men once athletic and muscular, would stand before his windows, take the skin which once covered a brawny arm, but now hung loose and wrinkled, and double it round the bone in order to prove the extent of their emaciation. One woman was found stretched on the bed by the side of her dead husband, and after having just given birth to a poor wasted infant. It was not uncommon to find whole families dead in their cabins together. Nor were cases rare in which the famished creatures became deranged before expiring; and in one such instance, the most awful of all the occurrences predicted against the Jews, was found to have taken place—the delirious mother had fed on her dead infant! Our missionaries were doomed to witness daily the most heart-rending scenes. The Rev. Mr. Brannigan one day observed a man and his wife dozing in a stubble field. He approached and enquired what they were doing. They told him that they had five children, whom they had for a fortnight supported on cabbage and mill-dust, but that they were now actually starving; that for the last two days they had kept them in bed to try to sleep off the hunger; and that they had been out from the early morning in quest of some wild roots, of which they exhibited a handful as the fruits of their protracted labours. Mr. Brannigan was moved, and, uttering some kind words, he handed them two shillings. This relief, coming so unexpectedly on the poor man, weakened as he was by sorrow and hunger, completely unmanned him, and he sobbed and wept in the minister's face; while his wife, still less able to control her feelings, clasped her husband in her arms, exclaiming—“My dear! our children won't die yet.” And yet these are mere samples. How many scenes more tragic still, were enacted during that dreadful calamity, which no chronicle has ever recorded, of whose existence the world never heard, and over which no tears of sympathy were shed, except perhaps by some fellow-sufferers! Nor must we forget that in consequence of the partial failure of the potatoe ever since 1847, many districts have been suffering an annual famine, and have now, therefore almost equalled Egypt's seven years of dearth, without its seven of plenty.

#### EMIGRATION.

For many years a large portion of Ireland's shipping-trade has been more emigration. And its aggregate amount can be best seen from the fact that, according to a late estimate, there are in America 3,000,000 of native Irish, and 4,500,000 more of Irish descent. In other words, America now contains of inhabitants of Irish blood, 1,000,000 more than does Ireland itself! Even previous to the famine of 1847 the annual number of emigrants had in six years steadily risen from 40,000 to 95,000; and since that time it has increased so prodigiously that the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners give the number emigrating in 1851 at 279,600. The daily arrivals of emigrants at the port of New York alone, range from 700 to 1,000 daily, and of these the great mass are Irish. Thus, after flowing westward for half a century, the stream of emigration, so far from diminishing, has swollen into a mighty flood, and the world now gazes on a phenomenon which can only be likened to the migrations of the Gauls or the Huns, or other wandering tribes of yore. Multitudes are flying from their once-loved homesteads, as though Ireland were the scene of some physical as well as social convulsion, to a land which comprises all they can henceforth call a country; deeming even its wild forests an asylum from their woes. They daily hear of the untimely end of thousands of their fellow-emigrants by shipwreck on the passage, or hardships on their arrival; but so far is every other feeling overborne by the one desire to escape, that the most timid brave the deep, and the most infirm encounter the hardships. Of the crowds that thus hurry along in this general “exodus,” scarce one returns save the few who come back from ill health, or indolence, *nulla restigia retrorum*; so that a large portion of the country's business arises from emigration. From it our railways are reaping a transient and ruinous harvest—the numbers continually pouring along the Great Southern and Western routes alone are surprising. And sea-coast villages, at which vessels were never known to touch before, ships now regularly visit for their human cargoes. Churches and chapels ure fast being emptied. The country begins to feel the fearful drain, and faints from excessive depletion; yet on goes the increasing tide, and on it promises to go. In many cases the wail of the emigrants who crowd our ports is not so heart-rending as that of their friends, whom poverty compels to remain behind; and had the people but the means of getting away, whole districts would rise and take their departure. Even the warmest advocates of the clearance-system begin to feel alarmed. Instead of a competition for land, as formerly, there has at length commenced a competition for tenant; and some are seriously speaking of the necessity for parliamentary interference with the emigrant, to save the country from depopulation—it being a matter truly of easy enough calculation, that at the same increasing rate of emigration, a very few years indeed would leave Ireland a lonesome solitude.

Here is a state of things as mournful as it is unparalleled. We refer not so much to the previous dreadful hardships which such a general flight implies; when, by a people proverbially attached to *home*, a Canadian log-hut is now deemed a blessing; when the spell of *country* is so completely broken, that America, once their last resource, is now the goal of their hopes; and what used to be dreaded as a land of exile, is now sighed for as a place of refuge. Nor do we refer so much to the anguish endured by our warm-hearted countrymen when thus torn from