the action of the fire. This was the proper time to commence the interrogatory.

Palæstrion, the porter-slave of Aurelia's house had been necessarily a witness of the numerous visits paid by Metellus Celer to the Grand-Vestal whilst the latter was the guest of the Emperor's niece, and he must have surprised some facts tending to prove the alleged intimacy, or, at least, must have learned those facts from the conversations of the other slaves.

The patient must be made, at all cost, to reveal these facts. One of the pontiffs and the scribe approached.... But why repeat the questions asked of a wretch whose will, conquered by the most atrocious pain, must necessarily succumb, and whose life, besides, was fast ebbing. The pontiffs obtained all the avowals they wanted. Palæstrion merely replied yes or no, according to the nature of the question — When they released him from the iron chair, the poor slave was dying. His body was but a mass of carbonized flesh. They threw him in a corner where he soon expired.

Ravinus then passed to the rack upon which Musitius lay, still senseless. A turn of the screw, which distended painfully his limbs, soon awoke him from his torpor.

Gellia had been confided to the care of one of the aids. She had not yet recovered from her swoon, but the pressure of the clogs on her ankles soon revived her.

(To be Continued.)

THE LAND QUESTION OF IRELAND

(FROM TIMES SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

No. 18.

SKIBBEREEN, Oct. 15.

Being desirous of seeing a part of this county which unhappily acquired a sad celebrity during the events of 1846-7 and which, I felt assured, would in some particulars illustrate the land question of Ireland, I resolved to pay a visit to the place, and to examine carefully the surrounding neighborhood Leaving Cork by railway, I passed rapidly from the civilized outskirts of the wealthy city into a region of hill and poor upland, divided by numerous sluggish streams, which, if properly drained, ought to be the conductors of plenty along the adjoining valleys, but which, uncontrolled by the art of the engineer, at present on either side of their course, mark their way by forming worthless morasses. It is disheartening to traverse districts like these, and to reflect what co-operation and industry might effect in clothing them with fertility; nor in many of these instances would it be necessary to pray in aid the help of the State; for, wherever an outfall is easy and at hand a comprehensive system of arterial drainage is not required to carry off the waters and to relieve the soil from superfluous moisture I saw, however, no attempts at draining; and, on asking the reason, received for answer the pertinent and sufficient remark that most of the landlords in that neighborhood did not care to improve their estates, and that the tenantry, having no hold on their lands, were satisfied to leave them in their natural condition. After leaving Bandon—still known in Munster as the Protestant Derry of the South, but long ago invaded and filled by the flood of the Roman Catholic Irishry—the landscape wears a more pleasing appearance; you pass trim farms, and a few fine seats; and you reach the valley of fertile lowlands enriched by the gentle stream of the Bandon. A tract, presenting in a peculiar degree the signs of industry and high cultivation, here at once attracts an observer's eye; and you see with delight well squared fields, neat slated houses, and prosperous holdings stand out conspicuously on the face of the landscape This is a part, and one of the best parts, of the magnificent estates of the Duke of Devonshire; and the whole country side tells the same tale of his just and princely qualities as a landlord although unfortunately he is an absentee. It is impossible to deny great and serious as are the mischiefs of non-resident ownership, that properties of this class are those in which, in many instances, the Irish tenant receives most liberal and fair treatment, and good management is most evident; nor is it difficult to discover the reason. A territorial magnate, as a general rule, is too wealthy or too gently nurtured to be of a harsh or exacting disposition; and as, in a large majority of cases, the great absentee proprietors of Ireland have also considerable estates in England, they naturally adopt an uniform course of honorable and right-minded dealing towards their tenantry in both countries.

The projected railway from Cork to Skibbereen comes suddenly to an end at Dunmanway, and you are obliged to drive the rest of the journey. At this point you begin to enter the region of the western highlands of Cork, and the look of the country is wild and peculiar. The road now winds through heather crowned hills, their slopes dotted with the little houses and field plots of a humble peasantry, or it opens on to extensive tracts, that here and there rise into jutting eminences, or sink into frequent narrow flats, watered by petty rills in endless succession. On the bare summits of the ranges of hillocks the rock crops out in numberless spots, and has a withered and uncouth aspect; but down their sides, and in the spaces between, the soil, bles ed by the gentle airs and soft rains of this southern clime, is bright with a vesture of the richest green; and the lowlands beneath, in many places, are evidently of admirable natural fertility. The traces of human industry, however, are but seldom apparent upon the landscape; the habitations of the occupiers of the soil are few in number and, almost always, mean; whole breadths of country remain unenclosed and untouched by the hand of man; over thousands of acres brushwood and gorse encroach on what ought to be fine grassland; and, above all, the lines of the numerous streams that, on a considerable margin along either bank, could easily be changed into meadows and pastures, are usually spongy and lonely marshes. The general character of the scene is that of dreary and not pleasing solitude; and what adds to its melancholy features is that occasionally you meet desert spaces, on which, amidst blotches of rank vegetation, you still see the marks of ruined dwellings, and on which you hear that a dense population had once been crowded in spreading villages. Now and then, however, you light upon a spot where amid the desolation usual around, you see distinctly the signs of improvement, where fences divide reclaimed fields, where sheets of verdure are free from stones, where the sour moor has been made fertile, where the slated farmstead rises from a neat garden, where everything has the interesting look of enterprise and successful industry. My conductor, to a casual question, said, "Those are farmers who hold by lease; wherever there is a lease you can easily see it;" and I can assert that his observation was verified by my own inquiry, and that in the rare instances where along this way you found an occupier in possession of a lease, you saw at once the evidences of better cultivation. The consequences of this security of tenure were especially conspicuous in the case of one small tract on the road side, marked off from those immediately around by the neatness of the dwellings upon it and by the comparative excellence of the agriculture. This is part of the estate of Mr. M'Carthy Downing, now M P. for the county of Cork, a gentleman who, having risen to eminence and made a considerable fortune as a lawyer, purchased largely in the Landed Estates Court, gave almost all his tenants leases, and deservedly enjoys the reputation of being a judicious and liberal landlord.

After a long drive through scenery of this kind, you reach the little town of Skibbereen, lying along the banks of the winding Ilen. This theatre of the darkest tragedy that the famine of 1846 witnessed now shows few traces of the awful past; it seems a tolerably thriving place, though not in a special way progressive. It is the only town of any size in the neighbourhood, and, as I understand, is a pretty good market; but, except that it has a rather fine convent and a market-place of respectable extent, its public buildings are without interest. The country around for many miles, though not picturesque upon the whole, is nevertheless extremely suggestive to a student of the Irish land question. Towards the sea it rises in many spots into irregular chains of craggy hills that seem to fence out the near Atlantic, and that show like masses of stony billows, prolonged in a continuous roll, as you look over the lines of their crests; but, here and there, it spreads into valleys or settles down into flat lowlands on which vegetation expands richly, and streams speed on their way to the ocean. On the landward side it is of the kind which I have already endeavoured to describe, expansee, broken by rugged hillocks, and stretching drearily to the horizon, yet, all through, divided by fertile spaces and channelled by waters that run slowly through morasses they ought to render fruitful Throughout the whole region the higher lands seem to break out into deserts of rocks; and these peep on in numberless places even in the most fertile spots beneath; so that agriculture on a large scale would be extremely difficult upon such areas, and wherever they happened to be cleared and reclaimed the work of improvement would be distinctly apparent. In the intervals between the barren tracts, and wherever the soil is kindly and rich, you see occasionally little farms and homesteads, and now and then a considerable dwelling rises from the midst of an extensive enclosure. The signs of husbandry are, however, few; the lands under corn are very small; and the face of the country is generally that of rudeness, as yet unsubdued by man, and yet capable of very great improvement The whole region, with its stony breadths, yet its frequent nooks of admirable fertility, seemed to me exactly of such a kind as would repel the capitalist farmer, yet singularly adapted to be the domain of a hardworking and vigorous peasantry, who, secure in their possession of the soil, would be able gradually to call out its resources.

Unfortunately, however, the occupiers of this tract, *at the time of the crisis of 1846, had been for ages* a poor, struggling race, who, under the domination of landlords rather more improvident or harsh, as a body, than usually had then been the case in Ireland merely vegetated on the land as tenants at will, and without encouragement to their industry, eked out a bare and precarious existence. The space suitable for the production of corn being scanty on these unenclosed wilds, they were confined to the potato alone for food; and, under the stimulus of that treacherous root, they increased in the soil in prolific swarms, their numbers being further augmented through the facilities afforded along the coast for fishing. An immense population had thus grown up; and in those days, I am told, their dwellings were seen aggregated in rude hamlets on most of the spots that could be called fruitful, their ill-trained labour, nevertheless, in spite of every disadvantageous circumstance, carrying slowly forward a kind of improvement over the rough and stony wilder nesses around. The potato blight came; and in a few weeks these wretched multitudes, flying from the soil which had denied them their poor subsistence, flocked into the few towns in the neighbourhood, and, huddled into masses of starvation, appealed hopelessly to charity for succour. Skibbereen was the centre of these terrible scenes; and there, for the space of several months, went on the battle against famine, hosts of victims falling in the deadly struggle, yet thousands, too, being gloriously saved through the exertions of splendid munificence. It is not my intention to describe how, in numberless instances, death closed its vulture wing over perishing sufferers; how fever accelerated the onset of starvation, and fell alike upon high and low; how, day after day, lean and hideous corpses were shot from carts into graveyard heaps; with what mute despair the surviving crowds of misery beheld their numbers dwindle, and received each time, as though it were the last, the dole that scarcely prolonged existence; how, as ever has been in these dire emergencies, human nature, breaking from the restraints of custom, displayed itself in its genuine character, and heroic virtue, pious resignation, self-devotion of the most touching kind, were seen conspicuously with inhuman selfishness, remorseless cruelty, and reckless outrage. *Taceamus de istis, ne augeamus dolorem* Save for a broad, open space in an adjoining grave yard, the unnamed catacomb of the famished dead, the kindly touch of Time has effaced most of the signs of that dire calamity, and we should dwell on it only for the reflections it must suggest to a social inquirer. Yet, to give an idea of the havoc accomplished by that fearful disaster, I may mention that more than one village in this neighbourhood has completely disappeared, blotted out even from official records; and I write with a return before me which shows that the population of three townlands, which amounted in 1841 to 711 souls, had fallen in 1861 to 156, a reduction I suppose it would be hard to parallel.

Under the stress of the events of 1846-7, the land system of this neighbourhood may be said to have almost gone to pieces, and society itself was near dissolution. During the awful trial the landlords, as a class, behaved as ordinary men would do; some betrayed indifference to the misery around them, absorbed in thought about their own troubles; a few, terror-stricken at the results of a redundant population neglected and depressed, availed themselves recklessly of the occasion, and swept away the lingering occupiers of their estates; some, in a nobler and wiser spirit, acknowledged that a visitation of Providence imposed on them a weighty obligation, and made large sacrifices to assist the peasantry Among these last I have much pleasure in mentioning the name of Mr. Townsend, now Judge of the Admiralty Court of Ireland; I have heard from the lips of many witnesses of his humanity during the years of the famine, and far and near he has the reputation of being one of the most beneficent of landlords. I am truly happy to be able to report that kindliness and justice have been rewarded in a conspicuous manner around Skibbereen; with rare exceptions the "cleared" estates, thrown into large farms ill-suited to the district or occupied by strangers ignorant of its requirements, have not prospered, and yield low rents; those on which the peasantry have been protected are evidently in a better condition even under an unfavourable system of tenure As might have been expected, the shock given to society in this neighbourhood by the famine was not without clearly marked effects; a great deal of landed property changed hands; and the general result has been that the management of estates in this district displays differences of a most singular kind, within short distances. The majority of the proprietors, I regret to say, have gone on in the old ways, and, either forgetful of what occurred or satisfied that the population stands now at a point at which it cannot become a burden, have done hardly anything to improve their estates, and have suffered the occupiers of them to remain in the helpless position of tenants at will, in some instances much too highly rented. The consequence is that these estates, compared with others in happier circumstances, seemed smitten, as it were, with barrenness and neglect; the peasantry on them do only as much as will enable them to live and pay rent, and signs of that daring industry which requires time for a return with profit are wanting. In these instances the dwellings are usually wretched. Few attempts have been made to clear away the stones that encumber even the rich lowlands; hardly a drain furrows the marshy swamps; and though the landlords say very truly that they are satisfied with their well-paid rents, the resources of the land are not half developed. The situation of a few other estates is wholly and most conspicuously different. Taught by experience, or from some other cause a rather larger number of the landlords in this district than would be considered elsewhere an average—the principal proprietor near Skibbereen, the representative of the family of Justice Townsend, giving a very honourable and striking example—have within the period of the last 20 years granted liberal leases to many of their tenants; and the difference between holdings of this class and those occupied as tenancies at will is really surprising to an eye-witness On these estates you behold the march of improvement going steadily on; the square of green emerges from the stony slope, enclosed and rich with exuberant herbage; the clouds drop fatness on what was a swamp destroyed formerly by these abundant showers; the slated dwelling rises along the hill; a picture of rural comfort and ease dots the face of the generally melancholy landscape. The peculiar character of the lands of the district, requiring intense exertions to reclaim, but often singularly rich when reclaimed, makes the contrast in the highest degree remarkable.

In his evidence before a Parliamentary Committee Mr. M'Carthy Downing pertinently remarked that in his neighbourhood you could see at a glance where a lease did and did not exist. My observation verifies his statement; and, though the effects of security of tenure are visible in almost every part of Ireland, I never saw them so clearly revealed as in some instances in this district. These facts point to a variety of conclusions relating to the land question of Ireland. Taken as a body, the peasantry about here are not apparently an energetic race; you would not call them assiduous in improving, although with exceedingly rare exceptions they alone have done anything for the land, and a careless observer beholding the hovels, the dirt the slovenliness but too common, would pronounce them worthless, idle, incorrigible. Yet look at the very same people in the little holdings on which they have been securely settled, and though some of their habits have not disappeared, though they are not so cleanly and independent as you could wish, and they have too much of the aspect of the serf, still you would call them decidedly industrious, and really successful in their exertions to change and adorn the rough work of Nature. This difference, palpable and distinct, is due to their having certainty of possession; the consciousness that they toil for themselves, not for others, spends them on cheerfully in their labours; in their case, as has been truly said, the sense of property may turn sand and rock into gold. Granted that this population of Southern Munster are not so hardy and vigorous a breed as that which springs from a Tentonic stem, and granted, further, that you cannot expect to lift them suddenly up in the social scale by any device of legislation; yet, when you perceive the obvious effects upon their nature and industrial life of precarious and determinate occupation, of labour exposed to ruinous interference and of labour given free scope and safety, do not doubt that it is rather their misfortune than their fault that so many of them are unprogressive and listless, and do not suppose that they, too, cannot advance under the known conditions required for the advance of humanity. Above all, let us cease to condemn men as lazy, good for nothing, and reckless who, in a great majority of instances, are in a position sure to call out and develope these and kindred vices; and let us not listen to the wretched plea put forward by ignorance or interested prejudice, that, after all, as they have been disturbed but seldom during the last few years, they are practically safe as tenants at will, and they have themselves to thank if they do not prosper. Recollecting the events which succeeded the famine, and the wholesale evictions which then occurred such excuses are really worse than foolish, and even at best they are little more than trifling All experience has shown that certainty of possession is a necessary condition of the well being of an occupier, and to imagine that he can thrive without it, unless he is secured the value of his improvements, is to imitate the example of the besotted tyrant who charged the most energetic of races with idleness because he refused them the very requirements essential to make their labour productive.

It is in the case of districts like these that the advocates of "fixity of tenure" at rents to be regulated by the State, seem to have most to say for themselves. You see whole tracts on which the proprietors have literally never laid out one shilling, as to which they have merely been a burden, from which they have contrived to raise rents, in some instances, high and oppressive. On these you see a race of occupiers who alone have done anything for the land, who have the capacity of doing a great deal more, yet whose energies are numbed and whose lands are kept barren because the circumstances of their tenure are usually incompatible with improvement. And, in striking contrast, you see the results of certainty of possession in the case of a few spots stamped on the face of nature, where, under liberal leases and rents fixed for a term, there is a distinct progress in the social scale. In this state of things you are asked "If landlords choose to be mere rent-receivers ought the Legislature to view them in any other light, especially since the leaving them their existing powers of keeping their tenantry in mere dependence, of arbitrary eviction, and of raising rents, is obviously injurious to the general welfare? And if the mere securing the occupier in his holding for a limited time has such good effects, what by analogy would be the consequences of conceding him perpetuity of tenure? And, as even perpetuity of tenure might be rendered worthless if it were possible to destroy the occupier's interest by rack renting, must not the State, if the concession be intended to be of real use, determine rent by a valuation, and settle a *maximum* rate of it?"

It would be idle to deny that theories like these are not only applicable in a dangerous degree to certain districts of this country, but contain a certain amount of truth. I shall examine the question more fully hereafter, when I review generally the land system of Ireland, but I may now observe that it is only by considering the subject from one point of view, by departing from principles hitherto respected, and, above all, by keeping out of sight the probable results of the proposed measure, that arguments of this kind appear tenable. Grant that a law of "fixity of tenure" and "State rent" would be politic in the case of many estates in Ireland, would it not be impolitic in the case of other estates perhaps as numerous? And if such a law, in many instances—say those of small tenants at will—could, according to some notions respecting property, be reconciled with our sense of right, would it not be monstrous in the instance of capitalist farmers, no matter what the nature of their tenure, of whom many thousands exist in Ireland? Is it not obvious that a law of the kind, from its very nature a general rule, would be in its essence an indefensible wrong? Moreover, if, as may be fairly argued the object of the intended change, legitimate security for the Irish tenant, can be attained by any other process, equitable in its application and working, and less subversive of existing rights ought we not to adopt the less violent remedy, and prefer reform to mere revolution? And what, probably, would be the consequences of converting the occupiers of the soil in Ireland into owners at a quit rent fixed by the Government? Passing by the minor evils that would follow in numberless instances the expropriation of all the landlords of a generation, would not two mischiefs of a general kind, inherent to the scheme, and widely pernicious, ensue almost as a natural result? Would not the periodical revaluation of the "State rent," a part always of these plans, inevitably tend to discourage improvement, since it would make it the interest of every holder of land to have it in as bad a state as possible at certain recurring intervals of time, in all probability near each other? And, without disparaging Irish nature, but taking it simply as it is, would not perpetuity of tenure, as far as we can see, lead ultimately to ruinous subdivision and the creation of whole masses of impoverished occupiers?

It is, however, a very different question whether the state of things that exists in a district like this ought to be suffered to continue as it is; whether the occupiers of the soil ought not to be placed under conditions of tenure so reasonably secure as to protect claims they actually have, and to encourage their industry for the future; whether the laws that regulate their relations with their superiors ought not to be so modified as to promote, and not to retard, improvement. Without indicating here the specific means by which I trust these ends might be attained, within the measure of the reformer's power, I shall merely observe that I am convinced they can be reached without having recourse to expedients essentially unfair and unsound, by keeping strictly within the line of justice by making our legislation in this matter at once respect the true rights of property and yet boldly follow enlightened principles.

MR. MOORE ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

(To the Editor of the London Times)

Sir,—I have never before presumed to claim the high privilege of addressing the public through your columns, unless I had, or believed I had, a personal right to that advantage. The letter which I am about to address to you—or rather to public opinion in England through its highest organ—can have no claim to your consideration except that which arises out of the writer's intimate acquaintance with the subject of which he treats It is because I believe I have some knowledge of that subject—which is not professed by other and abler contributors to the *Mail*—that I venture to submit to the public, through you, my own views of millions of Irishmen on a subject of which you yourself admit and proclaim the momentous importance.

In your last three impressions you have devoted more than three important articles to 'The Irish Question' which has lately assumed proportions more menacing and dangerous to existing arrangements than any that it has yet exhibited since the Act of Union. You allege that 'the revival of a Fenian spirit in Ireland, without any visible cause or favoring circumstances, is just one of those Irish paradoxes which Englishmen find it so hard to understand.' But it appears to me that you approach, more nearly than you are willing to admit, to a right knowledge of the paradox, which must be understood if Ireland is to be governed. You have the silken clue of the labyrinth in your hands, but you fear to find yourself in the presence of the Minotaur. You say:—

'No honest man will deny that it was the outbreak—fitful, scattered, and powerless as it was—in the south, followed by the madder exploit in London which made Englishmen turn to examine what there might be at the bottom of a discontent which vented itself in such murderous freaks; but, had they not found a solid basis of injustice underlying these outrages, the only result would have been an unflinching resolution to repress them. It was seen that the Protestant Establishment was a wrong, and it was abolished. It is now seen that in the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland there is much that is wrong, and it will be removed. Further than this, no violence, even of open war, will induce Parliament to go, or the people to sanction its going

This admission and this assertion from an epitome of the spirit of British legislation, and of the 'sanction' of the British people in the government of Ireland from generation to generation, and from age to age.

In the year 1780 one of the greatest men of modern times, addressing the citizens of Bristol, gave them the following sketch of the disposition of Parliament to go, and of 'the people to sanction its going.'—The subject was the question of Irish trade; and, after describing the concessions of England as 'not the salutary provisions of wisdom and foresight, but things wrung from us by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity,' after describing these first concessions—as you have described the very last—as 'being mangled and stripped of the parts that were necessary to make out the just correspondence and connexion of the two countries .... and therefore of no use,' he went on to say:—

'What was the consequence? The whole kingdom of Ireland was in a flame. Threatened by foreigners, and, as they thought, insulted by you, they resolved, at once, to resist the power of France, and to cast off yours. As for us, we were able neither to protect nor to restrain them. Forty thousand men were raised and disciplined without commission from the Crown.... In this unexampled state of things, which the least error, the least trespass to the right or left, would have hurried into an abyss of blood and confusion, the people of Ireland demanded a freedom of trade with arms in their hands.... The British Parliament, in a former Session, frightened into a limited concession by the menaces of Ireland, frightened out of it by the menaces of England, was now frightened back again, and made an universal surrender of all that had been thought the peculiar, reserved, uncommunicable rights of England .... No reserve, no exception, no debate, no discussion A sudden light broke in upon us all. It broke in, not through well contrived and well disposed windows, but through flaws and breaches, through the yawning chasms of our ruin We were taught wisdom by humiliation. No town in England presumed to have a prejudice, or dared to mutter a petition.—What was worse, the whole Parliament of England, which retained authority for nothing but surrenders, was despoiled of every shadow of superintendence. It was without qualification, denied in theory as it was trampled upon in practice.'

I can add nothing to this vivid picture of English legislation before the Union. The assertion of self-government by the Irish people followed, and terminated the first act of the great drama of British government for Ireland in modern times.

The great experiment of native legislation in Ireland was only allowed a few years of trial, when 'England wrested from us in a moment of our weakness that which we had extorted from her in a moment of our virtue.' During those few years what were the effects of that experiment in the social and material progress of Ireland? I will not enter into the gloomy region of statistics in proof of our material progress; but there is one fact too brilliant and glorious to be denied or evaded An American correspondent on Irish politics, writing to you from the congenial meridian of St Petersburg, informs you that nothing can be more like than the characters of the Catholic Irish and the Poles; nothing more similar than the history of the two nations under Russian and English rule. I will not question the truth of the comparison between the two Governments

'Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi!' But there is one phrase in your correspondent's letter which caps the climax of his comprehensive ignorance. 'Poland,' he says, 'has produced fewer great men than even Ireland.' During the half century in which Ireland was engaged in her struggle for independence, and in its fruition, there lived a greater number of illustrious men of Irish birth than any country ever produced, out of the same number of educated men, since the days of Athens. In the Senate Burke, Sheridan, Grattan, Flood and Plunket. At the bar Plunket, Bushe and Curran. In the ranks of literature Sheridan, Goldsmith, and Moore But a few years ago the two last survivors of this race of giants were the two greatest subjects in Europe—Wellington and O'Connell. These are records that no interpolator can falsify—these are statistics that no ingenuity can distort.

The national experiment of self government in Ireland, which in so short a time had brought forth so much genius and so much glory, came to an end in the year 1806, and England undertook again to try the experiment of governing Ireland. The first question that has to be considered is,—Has that experiment been successful? The second is,—Has Parliament duly endeavoured—have the British people sanctioned Parliament in endeavouring to make it so?

After 29 years of admitted and protracted injustice arising out of British prejudice, perverseness, and folly, the election of a proscribed man for an Irish county and the danger of civil war induced the legislature and the people reluctantly to consent to Catholic Emancipation But further than this, no violence, even of open war, would induce the Legislature to go, or the people to sanction its going' I am old enough to have heard this confession and this assertion, standing when a schoolboy in the House of Lords and learning my first lesson in politics, from the first soldier of the age.

Since then the history of this experiment has exhibited one monotonous record of perverse denial and ignominious concession—a denial of 'the salutary provisions of wisdom and foresight; concessions 'wrung from it by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity.'

On my part I may claim the merit, if merit it be, of giving a full trial to that experiment. I remained out of public life for years rather than consent to advocate a repeal of the Union, of the necessity or expediency of which I was not then convinced In my election contests in 1845 and 1847 I was put to considerable cost, which I might have avoided by a small concession of my convictions The first time I ever spoke in Parliament was on a Coercion Bill, in the debate on which Sir Robert Peel made what appeared to me a very remarkable declaration—Speaking of Mr. Sharman Crawford, and of the measure of tenant-right which he had proposed, he said,—

'I assent to the justice of the principle which I understand him to contend for I think that the tenant, particularly in Ireland, where he has to bear expenses which the tenant in this country does not bear,—I admit that the tenant who has improved the property has a just claim for compensation against the owner of the land. . . . But I am not sanguine enough to hope that the best devised measures can tell immediately on the present condition of Ireland, or can relieve us from the duty of taking immediate steps with respect to assassination and the conspiracy of assassins.'

On the faith of that declaration, which appeared to obtain the general assent of the House, and which I regarded as an understanding between the Legislature and the people of Ireland that immediate steps for the repression of outrage would be followed by 'salutary provisions of wisdom and foresight' for the redress of grievances out of which outrage rose, I spoke and voted in favor of the preliminary measure of repression. By my vote I incurred the disapprobation of a majority of my constituents, while, for expressing a hope that measures of relief would accompany coercion, I incurred scornful censures which you may remember, and which I think you will now confess I did not deserve.

No remedial measures followed, but 'Clarendon's rebellion' did. Parliament was called upon to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and I am ashamed to confess that I still adhered to the shameful experiment of trusting to Imperial legislation. I voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. I stated that I did so in the full reliance that peace would be the herald of justice. I was again censured by both sides, and, as I am now compelled to admit, with perfect justice

In 1850 the Queen visited Ireland. She found us steeped in poverty to the very lips, but in that poverty she found a wealth of welcome. A gallant and chivalrous people recognized the truly Royal virtues and graces of an illustrious lady, even though 'the emerald gem of the Western world' was set in her Crown. If you will refer to your columns at that period you will find that you hailed the welcome and farewell that the Queen received at Kingstown as a pledge of peace and reconciliation between the two countries.

What was the message of reciprocal goodwill that was presented to Ireland by Parliament and the English people in return for the olive branch that the dove of England had brought back to the ark? 'The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.' A Bill of pains and penalties against the religion of the Irish people—passed by Parliament and 'sanctioned' by the English people—with a universal outpouring of intolerant hate, expressive of the worst passions that 'darken the human reason and harden the human heart.' Let any just man pass an honest judgment on the expressions of public opinion in England at that time, from the scurrilous follies of the Bench of Bishops down to the burning in effigy of the Blessed Mother of God in the heathen towns of England, and say whether it would be reasonable to ask the Irish people to say, with the poet, that—

'We loved her the more when we heard
'Such tenderness fall from her tongue.'

But the resources of our endeavour to try the experiment of Imperial legislation were not yet exhausted. The people of Ireland in 1852 returned to Parliament a body of representatives pledged to the policy of 'independent opposition.' That is to say, that, regarding the existing Church Establishment and land laws of Ireland as the most prominent features of miscule in that country, they pledged themselves to give a constitutional opposition in Parliament to every Government that might refuse to grant an equitable settlement of these questions The Catholic people of Ireland, from one end to the other, agreed to suspend every other mode of protest, and give one more constitutional trial to the experiment of Imperial legislation In furtherance of that object Mr. Serjeant Shee introduced a Bill into Parliament for the amendment of the land laws; and, in the utterance of a '*vox clamantis in deserto*'—as Mr. Gladstone has, with almost inconceivable profanity, designated the precursors of his own impersonation of a political Messiah—I myself ventured to propose a motion upon the Irish Church Establishment. Mr Serjeant Shee's motion was met by a series of fraudulent professions and pretences on the part of successive Governments; and, in the discussion of the Irish Church question in the House of Commons, Lord John Russell, on the part of the Government of the day,—referring to some observations of mine on the abolition of prelacy in Scotland,—suggestively remarked that when the Irish people showed the same amount of hostility to the Established Church that the Scotch had displayed in resisting the prelacy—that is to say, as soon as they had cut the throat of the archbishop,—it would be time to consider their national grievance!

On the failure of Mr. Serjeant Shee's Bill I persuaded the 'Tenant League' and the tenant farmers of Ireland to consent to a modification of their claims, and in their name I brought a Bill into the House of Commons more moderate in its provisions than the coming government is at all likely to be; and introduced it in a speech which, for me, was admitted to be characterized by great moderation. It was read a second time by a considerable majority, but was prevented, by Lord Palmerston's special interposition, from being even considered in committee. I do not wish to embitter or complicate this important subject by any reference to the mode in which the policy of 'independent opposition,' the last trial of Parliamentary government, in which the Irish people have placed their faith, was resisted by the people's enemies, and betrayed by those whose hands were 'in the same dish' with the people. The people have borne their cross, and are waiting the resurrection

From that time forth they have had all faith in self seeking friends as well as in selfish enemies, and trust to nothing but 'God and their right;' to nothing but the resources of their own manhood, and the opportunities that Providence and circumstances may place at their disposal. Out of a true faith in the one and a false calculation of the other 'The Fenian insurrection' was brought forth, and died stillborn. In the same true faith, and in a convinced reliance on the justice of its cause and the strength of its opportunities, the national organization that now reigns in Ireland will work out the destiny of