

and a half millions, Ireland contributed, say the Emigration Commissioners, 257,372 out of her population of six and a half millions : that is, our Irish population of one-fourth of the whole, supplies three-fourths of the total emigration ; and the Commissioners further remark that the emigration from Ireland is four times its annual increase—a rate of depopulation which has already strikingly shown its effects, and will probably yet show them more impressively still. Now we are moved by no spirit of disparagement, still less of hostility, in remarking that such an emigration is a vast benefit to those who go, while it leaves us who remain all the stronger. The Irishman, between his priest and his landlord, is little likely to rid himself, while in Ireland, of those traditional recollections and chronic matters of discontent which tend much more to keep up a wasting fever of irritation than a healthy and improving dissatisfaction with things as they are. Flourishing everywhere but in Ireland, it is far better that he should go where he will no longer restrain his powers from their natural activity and effect, or foster animosities which consume his self-reliance and his hope, than stay where he is at once his own worst enemy and our most dangerous weakness. True it is that the Irish go almost universally to the United States ; it is, however, much better for us that they should become citizens of the republic, to their own conscious emancipation, than remain where, rightly or wrongly, they are resolved ever to think themselves enslaved. The really dangerous enemy is he who, left to brood over wrongs, rises up in craft or fury to revenge them ; for whether they be real wrongs, or only those fashioned in his own exclusive world of imagination, free there from the rough test of facts, he is equally unconvincible, implacable and mad. The same man eagerly engaged in the actual business of life, may retain his belief of having been wronged, but his enmity is then comparatively harmless ; for his strength is healthily exhausted on other matters than revenge, and his complicated interests, ever