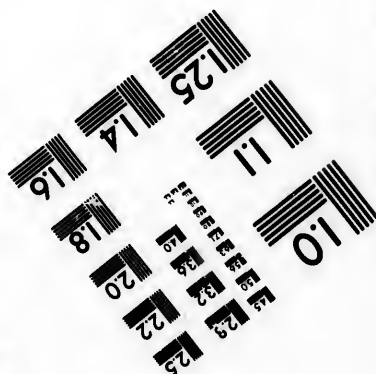
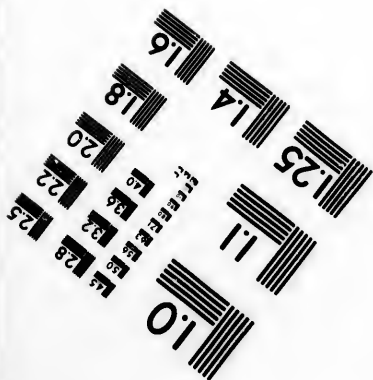
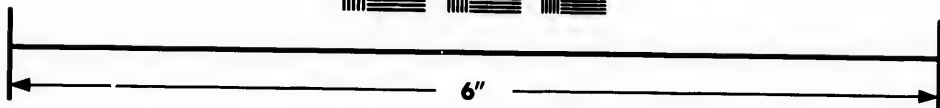
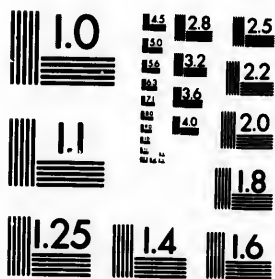


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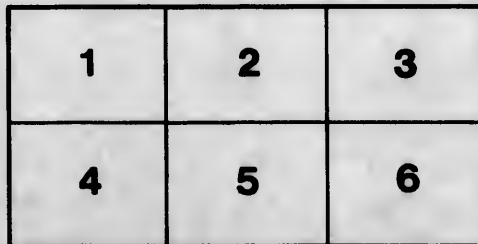
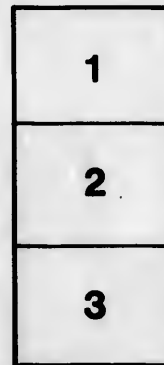
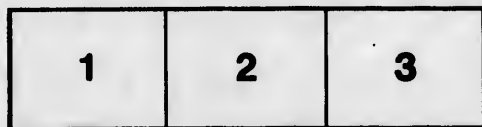
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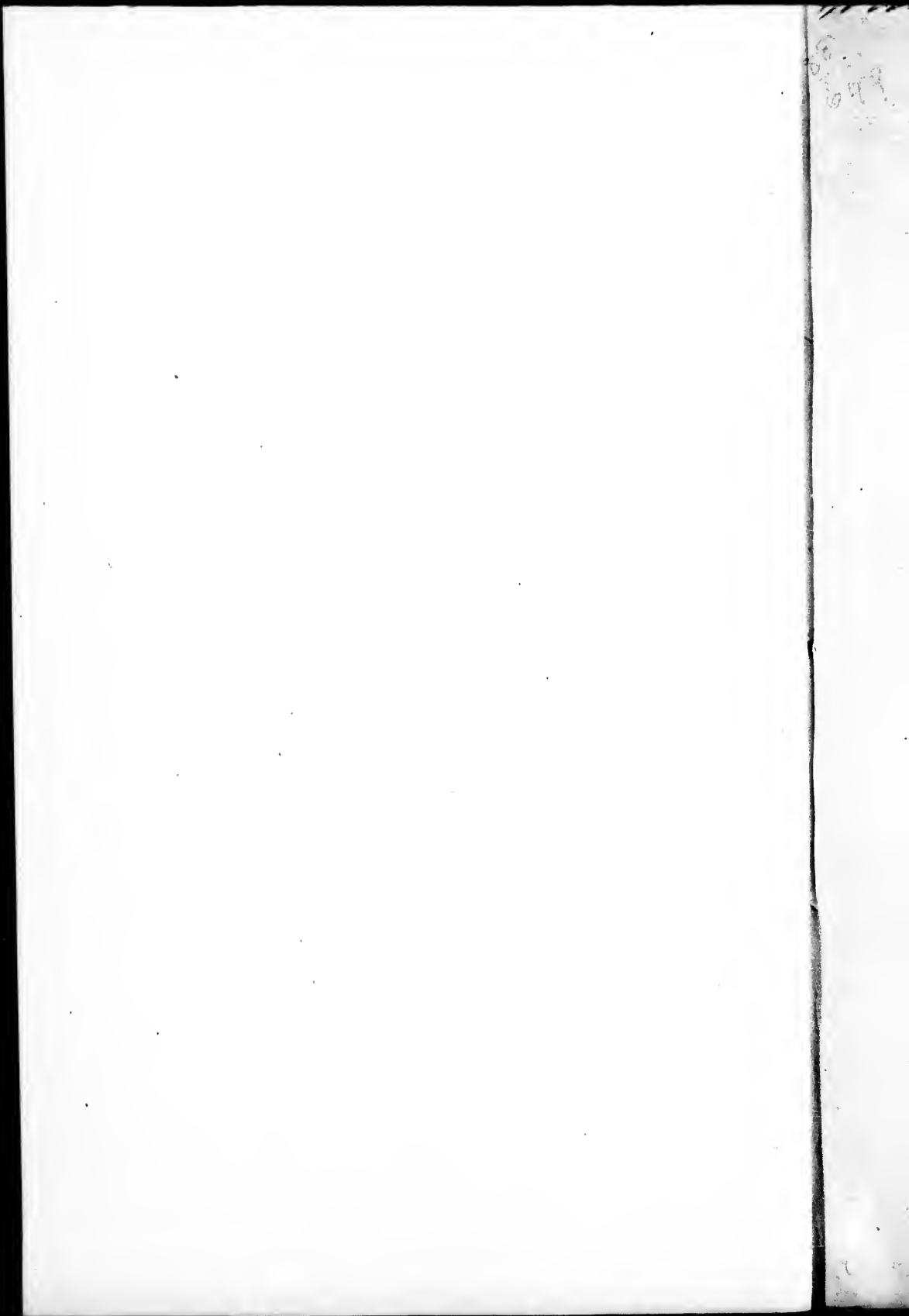
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NO EMIGRATION.

THE TESTIMONY

OF

EXPERIENCE,

BEFORE

A COMMITTEE

OF

AGRICULTURISTS AND MANUFACTURERS,

ON

The Report of the Emigration Committee

OF

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS:

SIR JOHN ENGLISH,

IN THE CHAIR.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
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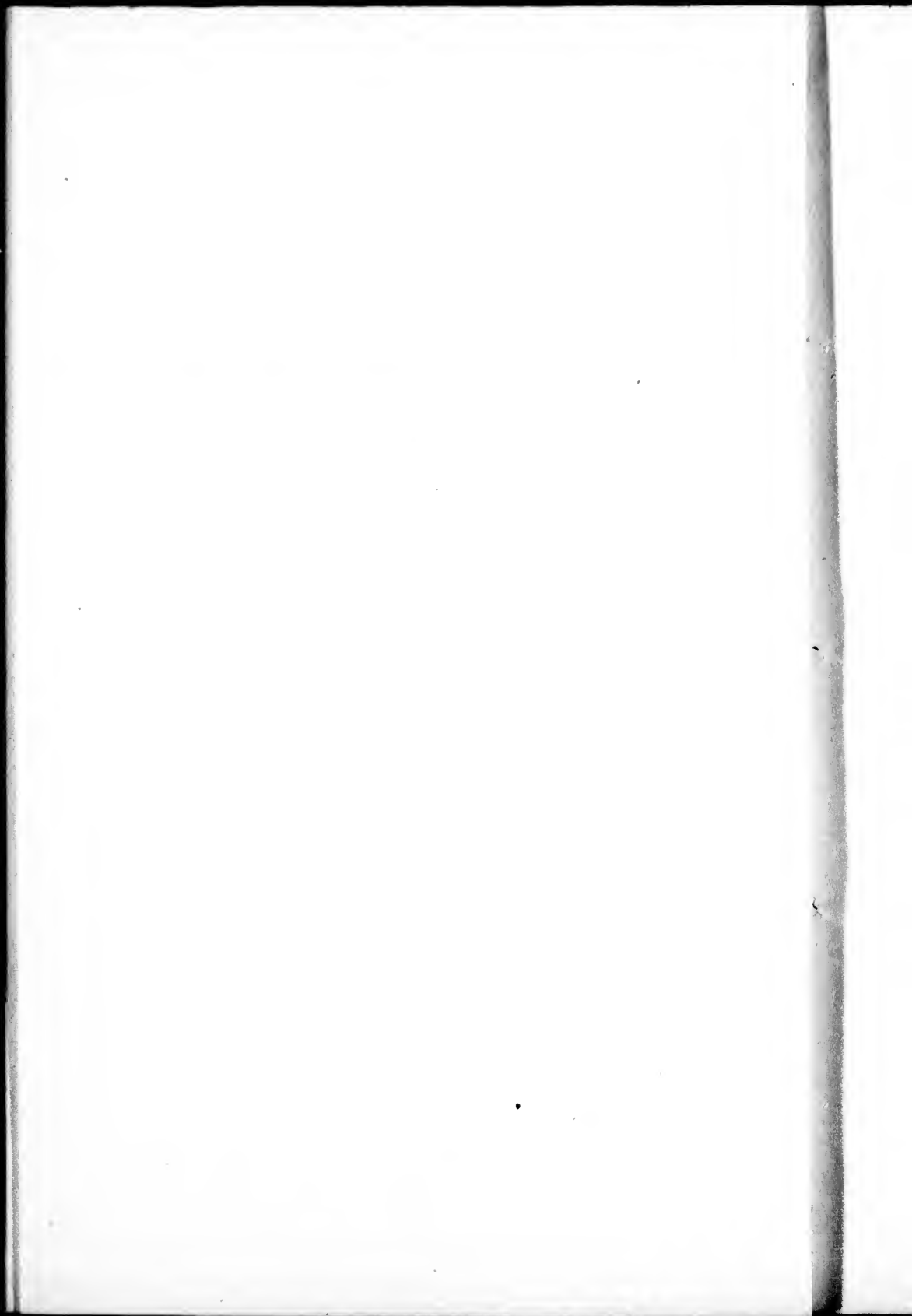
1828.

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TO
THE KING,
THE LORDS, AND COMMONS,
OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF
ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND,

THESE PAGES
ARE DUTIFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR,
WITH
AN EARNEST REQUEST
THAT THEY WILL HONOUR THEM WITH
A DISPASSIONATE PERUSAL.

January 1. 1828.



Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd can never be supplied.

* * * *

Good heavens ! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That tore them from their native fields away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round their homes, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For scenes like these beyond the western main.

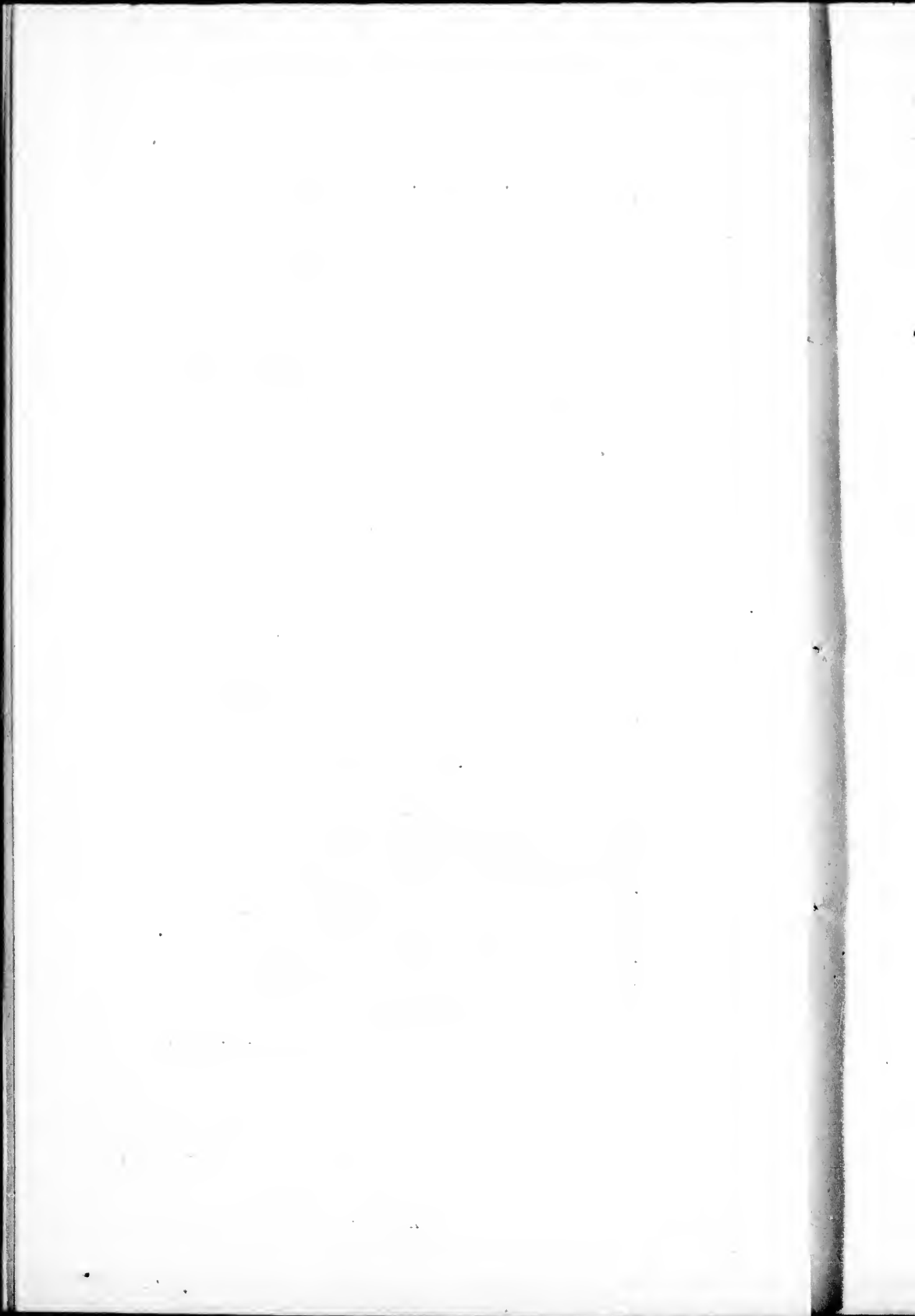
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E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land:
Down, where yon anchor'd vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Slowly they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.

* * * *

While shuddering still to face the threatening deep,
They stop to gaze, and oft they turn to weep !
The good old sire, the first, prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and sigh'd for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond solacer of his hapless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose ;
And kiss'd her smiling babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear ;
While her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

Deserted Village.



REPORT

OF

The Committee appointed by the AGRICULTURISTS and MANUFACTURERS of the United Kingdom, to take into consideration the Report of the EMIGRATION COMMITTEE of the House of Commons, and to examine evidence on that, and other subjects connected therewith.

It is with feelings of the most awful nature, that the Committee here present to their Constituents the Report, which they were appointed to prepare on some of the most momentous subjects of a temporal nature that can occupy the attention of the rulers of any state. The farther that your Committee have proceeded in the investigation, the more fully have they become convinced of the solemn responsibility of their undertaking. They have found that there are qualifications required in them, of which, had they been before fully aware, they would scarcely have had the temerity to have accepted the appointment. Having, however, accepted of it, they determined, by the blessing of Divine Providence, to fulfil their assigned duty without shrinking from the task, and without favour or partiality.

The greatest difficulty which your Committee have encountered has been in entirely ridding themselves of all prejudices and pre-conceived opinions, and in proceeding straight onwards in a direct course, unbiassed either to the one side or to

the other. It may be here necessary to state, that your Committee have, throughout, endeavoured to recollect that they are accountable agents; accountable, not only to their earthly constituents, but accountable more especially to their heavenly Lord and Master; without whose especial blessing, they have felt that all their endeavours would but be labour lost.

Relying, then, on that wisdom which is from above, your Committee proceed, after due consideration, to report the result of their labours, and subsequent deliberation.

After a very serious, and frequent perusal of the Third Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, your Committee are compelled to differ from them in opinion on many important subjects connected with the emigration question. Your Committee are fully convinced, that, in the wise plans of Divine Providence, rich and poor must always exist in all civilised states. They are likewise convinced, that each class must have their appropriate rights, duties, and privations; that rulers are essentially necessary, and that obedience to rulers is absolutely indispensable. Rulers, however, have likewise imperious duties to perform. To them is committed the welfare of the whole, and this can only be effectually promoted by an impartial apportionment of protection and support to every class, who, to the utmost of their power, endeavour to contribute to the general prosperity. This, your Committee are convinced, is not only due to each individual of the state for his personal benefit, but that it will, likewise, be found, ultimately, to promote the interest of the whole collectively. Whenever one class of subjects are, from peculiar circumstances, over which they could have no controul, reduced to a state of excessive sufferings, which may terminate in their destruction, but which, at the same time, admit of relief, it appears to your Committee to be the bounden duty of the rulers, and the interest of the state, so far to equalise the sufferings of each class, as shall serve to preserve the existence of all in the land which gave them birth; at any

rate, so long as they continue disposed to remain therein, behaving themselves peaceably, orderly, and, so far as they can, industriously.

The land that maintains the rich in their riches, should, at any rate, secure a maintenance for the poor, in their poverty. But while the rich men of Ireland are draining the land of its wealth, to be lavished away in other countries, the poor of Ireland are reduced at home, in their native land, to a state of absolute starvation. The whole of the evidences examined by the select committee on this subject, represent the state of the poor there as beyond measure, almost beyond conception, wretched. The condition of the most forlorn savages that have ever yet been met with, was far superior to that of the poorest of the Irish; of those who, in the course of the present improving system of the land proprietors, are turned out by hundreds, nay, in some instances, by thousands, from the wretched cabins of their forefathers, to seek a spot of unoccupied bog, on which to starve and die. While the residence of the savage is fully equal in shelter and convenience to that of the poor Irishman, *he* has the right, and the power of appropriating, if he pleases, the most fertile land around it, to his own use, and to fetch his food, unmolested, from the mountains, the forests, the streams or the ocean, at his pleasure. The poor Irishman, on the contrary, though he may see thousands of the wild tenants of the earth, the air, or the water, around him, dare not appropriate *one* of them to his own use, even were he, his wife, or his child, dying for want of food. Nay, he has no *right* to set his feet upon the quaking bog, to which, as a last refuge, he has been driven.

Your Committee are convinced, that this is a state of suffering to which no class of the orderly inhabitants of such a country as Ireland ought either to be driven, or be suffered to remain in.

Your Committee were exceedingly anxious to obtain the best evidence, and the best advice, that could be had, to enable them to form a correct opinion, not only respecting the

real state of the poor of Ireland, and the best mode of improving that state, but, also, respecting every measure, and circumstance, that could bear upon the general improvement of the condition of the poor in all parts of the United Kingdoms. Your Committee have thought themselves favoured, in a peculiar manner, by having been directed to the examination of a distinguished witness (**EXPERIENCE**); the result of which examination, seems to have left them without the necessity of resorting to any other. In presenting the testimony of this witness, along with this Report, your committee feel assured, that they shall be found to have fully succeeded in furnishing the whole of the information required. In doing this, your Committee beg leave to observe, that they have, eventually, found scarcely any reason to differ in opinion, from the witness, in any one particular. There may be, and are, several points on which your committee might have examined him more particularly, and minutely, but it would only have been enlarging the Report to an unnecessary length; more especially, as there can be no doubt but that the subject will be fully discussed, ere long, in the legislative assemblies of the nation, when the evidence of **EXPERIENCE**, your Committee trust, will be more attended to there, than it ever yet has been.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Monday, December 17, 1827.

SIR JOHN ENGLISH, IN THE CHAIR.

EXPERIENCE called in and examined.

1. **Y**OUR name is Experience?

It is.

2. Have you made Political Economy in general, the object of your frequent consideration, and particularly those parts of it which more immediately affect the interests of the lower orders of society?

Political economy, particularly as it affects, in an especial manner, the real welfare of the poor, I have, for a great many years, made my frequent study, and that in each of the United Kingdoms.

3. Have you perused the third report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the subject of emigration?

I have read it with the utmost attention.

4. Will you be so good as to say what are your general impressions on the subject?

The general impressions which the reading of it has left upon my mind, are, on the whole, of an unfavourable nature.

5. Mention some of the instances?

I do not, in the first place, think that the committee consisted of men free from self-interest, and previous bias and prejudice. I therefore think that the subject could not receive either a fair investigation, or an impartial decision. They appear to me to have too much considered the lowest classes as goods and chattels, at least as beings not possessed either of those rights or of those feelings, which I conceive they do possess in common with the other classes of His Majesty's subjects.

The tendency of their questions seems generally to suppose that the higher classes have a right to dispose of the lower, in that way which may best promote the exclusive welfare of the former : and even on that subject, they do not, therefore, appear to me to have been possessed of liberal and just ideas ; the interests of the two classes being, in my opinion, inseparably connected. They seem, too, to have taken it for granted, that whatever measures were necessary to be taken to ameliorate the condition of the poor, must be of that description which must not affect the rich. They do not appear to me to have considered sufficiently the labouring classes of society as a part, an essential part, of the body politic ; or, if they do, it is as a part, which, when the frame is disordered, may exclusively be purged and bled and blistered, to restore health and strength to the whole. They appear to me to have imbibed a very great proportion of the absurd ideas of the principal evidence whom they examined, Mr. Malthus. To him, and to his theoretical, his erroneous notions on almost all subjects connected with political economy, I have, from the first of his promulgating them, been strongly opposed.

I have found, that when the clergy leave the direct line of their professional duty, to wander in other paths, they become, almost invariably, bewildered themselves, and, if they then attempt to guide others, generally lead them wrong.

I have discovered, in a long life of continual observation, many reasons why this must be almost always the case. That the doctrines of the professor should have excited considerable attention, and have obtained numerous proselytes among the higher classes, is by no means surprising. Men who think little, and have but little to do, are always ready to embrace any novelty ; especially if it be a novelty that flatters their self-consequence, and seems to increase the distance that separates the higher from the lower classes of society ; and more especially if it be one that appears to put the latter more entirely into the power of the former. I shall, probably, in the course of the evidence which I may be called upon to give to this committee, have several opportunities of explaining in what instances, and for what reasons, I differ in opinion from the learned professor.

6. Do you not believe, that a country may become so situated as to make it for the interest of both the higher and the lower classes, that a considerable proportion of the latter should emigrate to some other country ?

To what situation a country *may*, by circumstances be

reduced, I will not take upon me to say; but this I do say, that *I* have never yet known a country so situated, but that by proper measures being taken, it would have been more for the interest of the whole, that all the honest, orderly, and industrious inhabitants should have remained in that country.

I have no hesitation in saying farther, that emigration should be the last resource of a wise and powerful state; and that all the higher classes ought first to afford every requisite assistance to them, before the lowest are driven, by absolute want, to leave the land of their birth; and I farther affirm, that it would be the *interest* of all the other classes so to contribute.

7. You do not, then, think, that any one of the three United Kingdoms is in the situation to render such emigration desirable?

Most decidedly, no. On the contrary, I am sure that either Scotland or Ireland may be brought to maintain, fully and easily, twice the number of inhabitants which it now does. Nay, it may do this, not only without ruin, but with proportionably increased prosperity. This, however, must be by degrees, and by the most spirited, disinterested, and magnanimous exertions of all classes, under an enlightened and vigorous administration. High as England now stands, pre-eminent over all the other states of Europe, she is but yet, I apprehend, in the infancy of that prosperity to which she might attain; nor does there exist, I conceive, any insurmountable obstacle in the way of either Scotland or Ireland, advancing with equal speed in the same course. This, however, will require the conquest of strong prejudices. It will require the relinquishment of many injurious practices, and the submission to some restrictions by the higher classes. Where, however, the prosperity of the state, and the preservation of thousands of the subjects of the state are involved, such trifling mortifications are unworthy of notice; at any rate, the least of two evils, where there is so great a disparity, certainly ought to be chosen. This advance in improvement and prosperity, is completely out of the question, if the marrow and sinews of the state, *i. e.* her most industrious inhabitants, are compelled, or even induced, to forsake her, and to transfer their most essential services to the aggrandizement of other, and perhaps rival states.

8. Supposing this to be true, may not a great part of the suffering lower classes in Ireland be absolutely famished, while these desirable regulations are arranged, or attempted to be introduced?

There ought not *one* so to perish. Long before arrangements could be made for transporting thousands of miserable beings to other climes, the present relief may be afforded. Indeed it has been proved by witnesses before the select committee, that any emigration, at all practicable, would not diminish the general distress in any sensible degree, even at first, and in the end not at all. In England, any unusual distress can now scarcely be said to exist at all, and the little that there is, is fast disappearing; but it is certainly, in part, still prolonged, by the wretched inhabitants of Ireland fleeing hither to escape from starvation. To Ireland relief should be instantly afforded; a portion of it should be, as a temporary resource, raised by the separate parishes there, and double the amount of what each parish engages to raise, should be added to it by this country. This would make it easy to Ireland; equalise, in a great measure, the burthen upon each parish, and prove a stimulus to them to exert themselves to the utmost of their means.

This country has been long deriving from Ireland a great part of the support which she could ill spare, and of which she ought never to have been deprived. We owe her, then, in her necessities, at least such nourishment as will preserve her from either perishing, or being driven to despair and rebellion.

9. Why do you think that a system of emigration, as proposed by the select committee, would not be a desirable measure for Ireland?

I conceive that it is never desirable, either for states or for individuals to do wrong.

It is decidedly wrong to compel, by any means, a meritorious class of the natives of any country to leave the land of their birth. It must be recollected, that it is only the honest, the industrious, and the able-bodied, that the invitations and inducements to emigrate are held out. These, surely, are the persons whom, of all others, an enlightened state would most anxiously endeavour to retain at home. If an absolute necessity existed to thin the population of the country, it ought to be the idle, the dissolute, the debauched, and dishonest, of whom the rulers, if acting wisely, would wish to get rid. On every account, both of justice, mercy, and policy, this ought to be the case.

Imprisonment at home, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, makes the delinquent worse; while, by being thrown in another country, among new connections, and new practices, there is a strong probability that the culprits may relinquish their old habits.

Let emigration, or transportation, be a punishment for crime, and I think it may be so far rendered useful to the country; both by getting rid of offenders here, and locating them in some of the colonies, where their services may be sold to old settlers, for as much as their outfit *need* to cost, while the probability is, that reformation would be produced to their own great advantage. These observations apply to both sexes.

Those who can talk lightly, as, I must confess, I thought the select committee did, of the benefit which might arise to landed proprietors, from the emigration of some thousands of the most useful and respectable families from among the lowest class, but little consider, I suspect, the horrible misery which must be induced before such families are brought seriously to entertain thoughts of leaving, for ever, the land of their forefathers, the society of all their living friends, and the graves of all those whom they once knew and loved. — “An Irishman, an please your honour, has a soul!” Ay! and he has a heart, and a feeling one too, even though he be poor!

10. What do you conceive is the principal cause of the much greater distress that prevails among the labouring classes in Ireland, than among those of, perhaps, any other country?

Most decidedly the non-residence of landed proprietors on their estates; nay, their non-residence in the kingdom. To talk of any permanent and highly effective amelioration of the condition of the labouring classes in Ireland, without a very considerable alteration in this respect being effected, is totally useless. In fact, without it the state of the poor must inevitably become worse every year. No other country in the world ever experienced this evil in the same degree.

11. But do you not admit, that every innocent person in a free state ought to be left to go where he likes, and spend his money as he pleases?

I do not think so; nay, I know that it is contrary to the welfare, and incompatible with obedience to the laws of these kingdoms, that he should have that liberty; excepting with certain restrictions, and on certain conditions. The king on the throne cannot leave the realm and live where he chooses. The highest officers of the state cannot do it; — no man, under particular circumstances, can do it. In all civilized societies, in which particular privileges are confirmed and enjoyed, there must be particular restrictions and regulations enforced, which may seem to abridge the liberty of particular individuals, but which in reality are essential to the best

interests of the community. The privileges of security of possession of landed and personal property, and of conveying it to descendants, and even to others, is not a natural right; therefore the power which creates, grants, and secures the privilege, can say, that it shall only be enjoyed on certain conditions. Nor is there any hardship in the case whenever the general good of the community requires it. Now, in Ireland, so imperious is the call of the welfare of the country for regulations, to effect a more general residence of land-proprietors on their estates, that, without it, thousands, nay, perhaps, hundreds of thousands, must be compelled either to leave their country, or perish at home, or the country itself be thrown into a state of confusion, rebellion, and massacre. Now, what comparison can there be between the misery arising from this, and the inconvenience of a few affluent men being compelled either to live a certain portion of their time on their own estates, among a tenantry who would almost adore them, and surrounded by wealth and abundance; or, if they preferred it, selling such estates for such prices, as they would fetch when offered with these restrictive terms attached to them? Surely no one can, for a moment, entertain a doubt on the subject.

In nine cases out of ten, those restrictions would be more truly beneficial to the landed proprietor himself, than it would be to the most miserable of his tenants. It would, too, in most instances, conduce to the general welfare of the United Kingdoms. I am very sure, that we should be conferring happiness, or, at any rate, lessening misery, by compelling the degenerate and unworthy sons of the British isles, who forsake her shores to enrich other states, to spend a greater portion of their time at home. We should not only be doing this, but we should be preserving the morals, the constitutions, the reputations, perhaps the lives of themselves, their wives, and their children. Would it not then, be a wiser, a more humane, and a more just plan to compel all these, or a majority of them, to reside, at least, a portion of every year on their estates, than to compel those who were born on those estates, who would willingly remain and spend their strength and their lives on them, to transport themselves, their wives, and their children, to other lands, and to other connections: probably to perish by the way, or to lay their bones in unconsecrated ground, in the depths of antediluvian forests? Could the most unthinking, hardened, and obdurate advocate of emigration, witness one hundredth part of the misery attendant upon it, he would not, I am certain, long continue to advocate such a measure.

It should be recollected, that though the poor of Ireland have not, like those of England, an inheritance secured to them by the same power and laws which secure the possessions of the rich to *them*, the laws of humanity ought to suffice to preserve them from perishing for want in their native country, the produce of which is, in a great measure, engrossed by aliens or natives who have forsaken it. The poor, having no representatives in the counsels of the nations, are more especially thrown upon the care and protection of *all* the members of the senate. Were those members actuated by proper motives, and directed by enlightened principles, they would be convinced that self-interest itself would induce them to make the welfare of the poor a primary consideration.

12. Do you conceive that Ireland possesses within herself the means of affording sufficient employment and maintenance for all her present population?

I conceive that there is not, probably, another country in the world, by nature, so calculated to sustain an abundant population. It is one of the most fertile of all others, abounding with almost every requisite to facilitate agriculture, as well as extensive manufactures and commerce. Its air is salubrious, and its general aspect lovely.

13. What, then, do you apprehend is the reason that, with all these advantages to constitute a flourishing kingdom, it should be far inferior in prosperity to others which possess much fewer requisites, and that it should now be alarmingly retrograding?

I have already fully stated that the principal reason is the non-residence of landed proprietors. Their absence necessarily withdraws capital from the country. The withdrawing of capital necessarily prevents the increase of confidence. Confidence is essential to the high prosperity of any state; but especially so to that of a commercial and manufacturing state. Confidence is wealth; it is, while it exists, the same as specie. Whatever of confidence is withdrawn or withheld from circulation serves to impoverish. Confidence cannot exist but where there exists the utmost conviction of stability and security. Capital, confidence, and security, therefore, are essential to the advancement of any state in commerce and manufacture. The absentee landlords withdraw an immense revenue from Ireland. This reduces capital; the want of capital produces want of employment, and, consequently, poverty; poverty causes misery, inquietude, and turbulence; these destroy confidence and security, and not only prevent capitalists from resorting thither, but drive those away to other countries who otherwise would remain. This

absence of capital not only thus prevents Ireland from becoming a commercial and manufacturing country, so as to employ its population, but it also prevents it from affording employment to its inhabitants in agriculture. The soil which is cultivated, generally speaking, is wrought in a very slovenly and unproductive way; while immense tracts of country, capable of being made productive land, are suffered to lie nearly useless. By statements laid before the select committee, which have not been disputed, there are nearly five millions of acres capable of cultivation, which are lying thus unproductive. Is it just, is it politic, that the industrious population of a country, thus situated, should be driven, by starvation, to transport themselves and their families to other lands in search of farms and of employment? Must there not be some radical defect in the laws of a country where this is the case?

14. Can you state any other reasons than want of capital and confidence, which prevent all this waste land from being cultivated, while there are so many able-bodied men, who are willing to work, without employment?

In most cases this uncultivated land is not individual property; it is common land, or land on which there are various claims. It is generally almost impossible to satisfy, or to bring to coalesce, all those who possess these claims. The expence, too, as well as the trouble, in obtaining and working an enclosure act, is so great as almost generally to deter in Ireland from the attempt.

15. Do you conceive that any mode exists, or could be devised to remove these obstacles?

There can be no doubt of it, if the legislature could clearly see the necessity, and were earnestly desirous of accomplishing the measure.

16. Can you state any plan by which you think the object might be attained?

I would propose, that commissioners should be appointed (by act of parliament, of course), who should begin, in the first place, with those waste lands most capable of cultivation, in the districts in which employment was most wanted. They should ascertain all the claims on such land; they should fix a price to be allowed to each claimant, and that price should be immediately paid to them. The land would then belong to the state. The commissioners should then divide the land so bought into lots, which lots should be sold by auction to the highest bidder, on condition of its being brought into a state of cultivation within a limited period.

On such lands (some bogs, for instance), which might

require a general drainage, a rate should be established, to be paid by each purchaser of land towards the expence to be incurred in effecting the drainage, commissioners being appointed for the purpose. No expence in deeds of conveyance ought to be incurred, the award of the commissioners giving the title. In short, the expence ought to be defrayed by government where the sales of the lands proved insufficient. I am, however, persuaded, that the sale of the lands would, in general, more than pay the purchase of the rights, and cover the expences.

17. You have stated, as your opinion, that it is indispensable for the prosperity of Ireland, that the landed proprietors should reside at least a considerable portion of their time in the country. How, and in what degree, do you conceive that this ought to be done?

This appears to me to be so momentous a question that I must beg to be permitted to consider the subject till tomorrow.

You are at liberty to do so.

Tuesday, December 18, 1827.

SIR JOHN ENGLISH, IN THE CHAIR.

EXPERIENCE called in and examined.

18. Are you prepared to inform the committee how, and how far, in your opinion, the landed proprietors in Ireland ought to be compelled to reside upon their estates?

The condition to which Ireland is now reduced is such, as I apprehend, was never experienced by any other nation; I therefore do not possess that knowledge on this subject which I do on most others; if, then, I now speak hesitatingly, I hope that I shall be excused.

I have before stated my conviction, that the future prosperity of that suffering kingdom must depend upon the residence of the landed proprietors in the country. On this depends the quantity of capital which will be there employed; and the advantageous manner in which it will be so employed. On this, too, will depend the degree of stability, and security, which will be attained, and, consequently, the degree of confidence which will be produced and put into circulation. On this, likewise, will depend the extent to which manufactures and commerce will be established and carried on, as well as the progress which will be made in cultivating wastes, and

improving in agriculture in general. On this, then, it is evident, will primarily depend the prosperity, if not the existence, of Ireland. The disease of Ireland is a vital one: it has been neglected, and trifled with too long; nothing less powerful than the strongest remedies can now reach the seat of the disorder and effect a cure. While we continue trifling with the complaint, the patient may go mad, or die. There *is a remedy*, — there is but *one* — that must be applied freely, and it must be applied soon, or even *that* may be too late. You may cut off a limb, but you would not, by that, effect a cure; and, recollect, if you were afterwards to apply the only remedy, and succeed, that valuable limb, once severed, could never be replaced. Ireland has been bled too much already. Bleeding and lopping off of limbs do not always succeed.

The measure, which, in my opinion, is the only one that can effectually benefit Ireland, though an unusual one, is neither dangerous nor violent. It would, I am persuaded, be found, in general, beneficial to the landed proprietor himself in every respect. His property, and, nine times in ten, his happiness would be increased; Ireland would not then long be, as it now is, a dreary, half-cultivated, half-depopulated country; without either good roads, good inns, good society, or friendly communication; a country in which the peace and safety of families are continually in danger; where wretchedness, misery, beggary, and villainy, meet the eye, the ear, or the heart, at every turn. Ireland would then soon resemble England: in many respects it would be greatly superior. And who would be the sufferer by this change? Not the land owner, whose property was doubled or trebled by it; whose rents were regularly paid, instead of not being paid at all; who was called upon to live a part of his time among tenants, so grateful for their improved condition as to be almost ready to worship him, for there are not more grateful beings in the world than Irishmen. Among respectable neighbours, all, like himself, privileged to witness, to partake of, and to increase the new-born happiness of all around them.

Surely these are not the men who would have cause to murmur or complain; nor are these measures that can be considered as tyrannical or oppressive by any party, especially when it is considered that they are to remedy an evil of so much greater a magnitude.

19. By what means do you propose that the residence required shall be enforced; and to what extent carried?

I would propose, that every proprietor of a hundred acres of land, or upwards, in Ireland, should be required to reside

at least four months in the year in the country: that on his failure of so doing, he should be subjected, during the ensuing year, to the payment of treble taxes of all kinds; the collector to be entitled to one per cent. on all the extra taxes so to be collected by him: and further, I would propose, that on the continuance of non-residence during three successive years, the estate should become the property of the next heir, and be regularly transferred to him by deed, subject, of course, to the same conditions. To these general enactments, exemptions, under specific circumstances, by the approbation of the lord lieutenant, should be allowed. I would farther propose, that any land-owner should be allowed to dispose of his land in any way that he pleased, subject only to these regulations; and that the incumbent of entailed estates should, likewise, be allowed to sell, through the agency of the commissioners, who should apply the proceeds to the purchase of other lands, subject to the same entail, in England or Scotland. These are regulations which have suggested themselves to my mind, as being likely to be practicable and effective. I must beg leave, however, again to state, that on this subject I am not qualified to speak, as on others, with certainty or full confidence.

A great part of the landed property in Ireland has formerly been seized, and transferred to others, by much more violent and oppressive measures than these, greatly to the detriment of the prosperity of the country, and the happiness of the people.

Let it be kept in view, that these comparatively legal, mild, and easy measures, are demanded by imperious necessity, and are intended and, I trust, calculated to insure the future advancement of the country in every respect, and the consequent happiness and true elevation of all its people.

Ireland would, I am persuaded, then, not only rival England, both in manufacture, commerce, and agriculture, but in many instances would excel her. Each country, however, would, while it served itself, benefit the other. Ireland, in becoming a source of supply, would, at the same time, become an extensive mart of consumption for the manufactures of England. Great Britain would then be enabled to drive the rest of Europe, in most instances, from the market of the world. I am speaking now, on the supposition that such regulations shall hereafter be enacted on the subject of manufactures in the United Kingdom, as are called for by the (at present) injured interest of both employers and employed. On this subject, on which I am fully qualified to speak con-

fidently, I shall, probably, be hereafter examined by the committee.

20. You perhaps think, then, that if these or some such regulations were adopted in Ireland, there would be no necessity for any part of her honest and industrious poor to emigrate, or for any measures to be taken to stop the farther increase of her population?

I most assuredly do, and on this head too I can speak decidedly. One of the most preposterous, mischievous, and, I think I may add, wicked propositions, that ever was forced upon the public notice with so much success, was that of preventing, by legal measures, honourable matrimonial connections, among any class of subjects, in any civilised state. The conception of the result of such a measure, if adopted and carried into effect to any great extent, is really dreadful. A more tyrannical, as well as impolitic proposition, could scarcely, I think, be invented. Whoever dares attempt to dispute the commands, and counteract the declared will of God, is acting with something worse than folly. Others may imagine, but *I know*, the horrible consequences which always result from such attempts. I have known, — I will not say thousands, — but I have known millions, of such matches as have been proposed to be prevented, proving among the most happy, as well as the most beneficial of marriages. I have known the children of such prolific, and, as it would be thought, indiscreet and unallowable connections, rising to the highest offices of the state, in the church, in the army, and in the navy; — nay, I have often known the offspring of such marriages to possess infinitely more strength of understanding, of body, and of mind, than the heirs of hereditary titles and honours. These occasionally occurring circumstances, out of the question, I know that the children of such nominally imprudent marriages very frequently become respectable, useful, members of society. A young couple will generally struggle hard with an increasing family. Life, at least early life, is full of hope; and it has been shown before the select committee how very little will suffice to support, if not to satisfy, nature. They look forwards to brighter days, when their children will become helps, and they happily do not always look in vain. I have discovered that the most wretched, and the really most imprudent matches, are not those of the very poorest, — they are oftener made among the *very richest*. God has not taken that especial care exactly to apportion the number of each sex to each other, either to keep them apart, or to encourage promiscuous intercourse. I suppose, if man

possessed the means, we should have some wiseacres attempting to alter this proportion, as being too productive.

21. But do not you conceive that population left to itself has a tendency to outrun the requisite means of subsistence?

I believe, — nay, I know, — that an increasing population, if not checked by improper human restrictions, will always increase the supply of food in the requisite degree. I do know, that impolitic and unjust laws may prevent this, but in that case it is the laws of man and not the laws of God, or nature, that are to blame. Ireland, even now, ill as it is cultivated, and many as are the millions of acres that are uncultivated, exports the product of her soil in great abundance to other countries, while her children at home have not even enough of the coarsest food to sustain nature. Something must be wrong here, where there is a famine amidst abundance. The increase of population, however, instead of being checked by this starvation plan (as if to set all the wise speculations of man at defiance), has been in a greater proportion than in England itself.

If two thirds of the product of any country be the property of absentees, and sent to them to other countries without any return being made, the population in such a country need not increase, as in Ireland, to get speedily beyond the means of *proper* subsistence. This, however, has nothing to do with the means of increasing subsistence, which a wise and merciful God has provided for. There is no race of men that will work harder; there is no race of men that can subsist upon less than the Irish can. Ireland, then, if dealt fairly by, would not be the first to be eaten up by an overwhelming population, especially when it is considered that it is capable of being made one of the most productive countries in the world. Ireland is capable of being made to afford abundant maintenance to more than twice its present number of inhabitants. If, as hath been affirmed, he is one of the best friends of his country who makes two blades of grass, or two ears of corn grow, where only one would have otherwise grown, we must not look for such friends among the checkers of population. Necessity is not only the mother of invention, but it is likewise the father of active exertions. Necessity naturally springs from increasing population, and it will, if not strongly counteracted, soon provide sustenance for that increase.

The policy of England since the establishment of her *poor rates*; *i. e.* since the commencement of the rapid increase of her prosperity, instead of encouraging emigration among her people, has always afforded a welcome asylum and field for

exertion, to all the ingenious outcasts of other nations. At that time she had an abundant, a vagrant, a starving population; she, too, had her millions of acres lying waste*, which her people had neither the spirit nor the skill to bring into cultivation. To foreigners she was indebted for rendering the fens of Lincolnshire, and other large tracts of land, both productive and salubrious. England had then the wisdom, the humanity, the magnanimity, to make a permanent, a certain, and an efficient provision for all her children:— if they could work, she compelled them to do so; if they could not, and had no other resource, she compelled them who had property to maintain them. From that time she has never ceased advancing in strength, in respectability, and in prosperity; and though, like a mighty inland lake, she has had the waters of innumerable rivers and streamlets pouring into her on all sides, she has never yet overflowed. Her exhalations have risen, and have been dispersed by the breath of heaven, over the lands of the whole globe, fertilizing the most distant regions by their renovating influence. The blessing of Almighty God appears evidently to have accompanied, and remained with, that most humane and Christian-like provision for the poor;— I trust that I shall be hereafter afforded an opportunity of entering more at large into the nature and effects of our poor laws, as they have been here administered during much more than two hundred years, because I conceive that they occupy a most essential relationship to the present question.

22. Do you conceive that the establishment of a system of poor laws any thing similar to those of England would be desirable in Ireland?

I not only consider such a measure desirable, but I have long known and declared that it was one indispensable to the advancement of that country in prosperity, and to the prevention of extreme misery to the poor there. Even the enforcement of the residence of landed proprietors would, without poor laws, fall far short of producing all the good effects that are both desirable and obtainable.

23. Similar ones do you mean to those of England?

In a great measure so. No other laws that ever were enacted have sustained the fiery trial which they have done. The furnace was not only heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, but that heat has been kept up during almost two centuries, with unabated violence, and yet, they

* During the last century nearly six millions of acres have been inclosed and cultivated in England.

remain unhurt; nay, they will come out, I will venture to say, at the last, not only purified, but greatly increased in value.

They have been assailed, calumniated, and derided, by all degrees of the people, from the lowest shopkeeper to the highest dignitary and statesman. The wise and the foolish, the knave and the true patriot, have alike been opposed to them. Every man, when he became a legislator; every minister, when he assumed the reins, was arrayed against the poor laws, and determined to amend or discard them. Most of those legislators have in their turns set seriously to work in the attempt. Many of them have persevered in preparing some amendment in the house; some have even succeeded in getting their proposed bills passed into laws. But where are those amending laws now? They are either repealed, become a dead letter, or are found to be mischievous. The poor laws of England remain, at this day, in all their essential clauses, exactly as the reign of Elizabeth left them. If stronger evidence of the merit and true wisdom of any laws, than has been here afforded in favour of the English poor laws, can be adduced, I shall be glad to know what that evidence is. No one can speak on this subject with the confidence that *I can*, and on no subject can *I* speak with greater confidence than on this.

I shall only propose one or two alterations of the poor laws for Ireland, as being likely to make the assessment bear more equally on the separate parishes, to be more productive, and to be more easily collected. I would, in the first place, propose, that commissioners should be appointed with powers to levy a shilling rate on all property rateable, as in England, to the poor fund; and this, as often as circumstances should demand. The rate should be collected in each parish by the overseers of the poor, and be transmitted to the commissioners within three months from the making of the same. Instead of the occupants being chargeable with the rate, it should be paid, *in all cases*, by the owner of the property. I would then propose, that each parish, as in England, should make, and collect its own rates, as often as such should be required and allowed by the magistrates, but never more than sixpence in the pound at once. That as soon as the sixpenny rate was collected, the overseers should be authorised, by sending at the same time the proper vouchers to the commissioners, to draw upon them for twice the amount of the rate so raised, so that only one third of the money paid in poor rates would be raised in each parish for itself, while two thirds of it would be furnished from the general national fund. By this means any very great inequality of burden on different parishes would be avoided. Every rate should be fully completed within

three months after the passing of the rate, and nobody should be liable, if not proceeded against within that time. This would always make the rate fully productive; it would save much expense and trouble in the collection, and prevent litigation from mistakes. These are all the important alterations which I have to propose from the English laws. I hope that I have been able to make myself understood, and that the advantages of such alterations will be evident to the gentlemen of the committee.

23. Did you not before propose, that advances should be made from the *English government* towards the relief of the Irish poor?

I did; but that was only as a temporary expedient, till other regulations could be adopted, and the poor laws enacted and put in operation.

24. Do you not conceive that the English poor laws, by which from six to eight millions sterling have been collected and expended within the year, are a very oppressive burden to the country, and that they tend materially to retard its advancement in prosperity?

Generally speaking, I do consider, that the English poor laws, as I have before stated, have conduced very greatly to *increase* the prosperity of the nation. Nor are they calculated, *if duly administered*, to produce injurious consequences. That the pressure of the poor laws has, at times, been a very heavy burden to particular parishes, and to particular classes, is undeniable. The regulations which I have proposed are intended to prevent that being the case, to the same extent in Ireland, and, perhaps, it may be right hereafter to adopt the same plan here. The poor rates, however, are so far from being a loss to the nation, that *I know* they have been the means, hitherto, of constantly enriching her. The money is never expended out of the kingdom, and the oftener money circulates within it the better. A labourer or mechanic paying poor rates, must, and does, receive more wages than he would do if he had no rates to pay; a manufacturer who pays rates must lay on more profit on his goods than he otherwise would, and he does so; the merchant the same: so that for all manufactured goods *exported*, a greater sum is paid and brought into this country than otherwise would be, and the country, of course, is so much more enriched. I am aware, that if this caused the goods of English manufacture to be too high for the market, it would lessen the demand; that, however, has not yet been the case, nor is it likely to be, if government will but prevent all *prejudicial combinations*, and not themselves interfere and impede

the free course of trade. The interference of the legislature with restrictions and regulations is always prejudicial.

The poor laws are injurious if they are suffered by the maladministration of them to conduce to idleness. Of themselves they are so far from doing that, that their first object is to promote industry. No able-bodied man, who can get work, can demand relief, nor can he demand any thing but work and a maintenance. When he is furnished with the latter without the former, it is neither his fault nor the fault of the poor laws. All the stagnations of trade and manufacture in this country have hitherto been of a temporary nature. The time may always be confidently looked forwards to, when increased demand will again arrive. Is it not, then, prudent to afford the workmen temporary relief? nay, would it not be madness to do otherwise? It is the interest of the state to retain the men, at whatever expence, without whom that returning demand could not be answered. If there be danger of the poor rates themselves raising the price of manufactured goods too high, what would a want of workmen do, when the required hands were gone to other rival states, to assist them to drive us from the market? Short-sighted, indeed, would be a policy like this!

25. But are there not instances where, from peculiar circumstances, almost the whole of one class of artisans are at once thrown out of a particular species of employment never to return? for instance, the hand-loom weavers, whose art is now almost wholly superseded by the power looms?

Such instances must of necessity occur in a thriving, ingenious, and spirited manufacturing country like this, when any great and unlooked for improvement has been invented, or when, from change of fashion, or other circumstance, any particular article ceases to be used. In these cases, there is no way but to leave the workmen, who are thereby thrown out of employment in their usual way, to obtain it as soon as they can in some other. In such cases the advantage of our poor laws are evidently and strongly displayed. Here is a resource at once ready, and fully equal to preserve the sufferers from either perishing or emigrating. In general, the improvement which throws them out of employment, though it may do the same work with a fourth part of the hands, increases employment by increasing demand. This was particularly the case with the spinning jennies. Thousands of common spinners were thrown out of work by them at first, and yet, in the end, thousands of workmen more were employed by them, than ever were by the common spinning.

The buckle trade, which, forty or fifty years ago, em-

ployed very many thousands of ingenious artizans at great wages, was in a short time almost entirely lost, seemingly for ever. The workmen, however, by degrees got other employment, and though, in both these instances, the complaints, as at present, were loud and deep, they soon ceased either to be heard or uttered.

Important improvements in machinery have been, and probably always will, in this country, be greatly advantageous, *i. e.* if the inventors and employers be duly protected. The capital, and the spirit of enterprise and speculation are here so superior to what they are in other countries, that we are enabled to avail ourselves of any great improvement in a tenfold degree. We thereby get the start in all markets, and are enabled to keep it. But discourage improvements in machinery, — permit or wink at combination among workmen, — or encourage emigration, and you strike at once at the very root of our superiority. A *wise legislature* in this country would start at the bare idea of diminishing population; — their object would be to increase demand, by every means in their power; — not by timid, or half measures, but by daring to obey the dictates of unprejudiced wisdom, without partiality or respect of persons; — neither deterred by calumny, nor influenced by a desire of obtaining popularity or the favour of the great.

26. But do you not think, that wages of labour are now in general much too low, and not a fair remuneration for the time, and ingenuity of the workman?

To talk of wages being too high, or too low, is to talk foolishly. They are, and must always be regulated by circumstances; *i. e.* unless improper means are resorted to, to prevent their natural course, in which case mischief is always the consequence. To talk of regulating wages, unless you had the power of regulating demand, is worse than absurd; it is injurious. No master can be compelled to give more than he can afford, or more than what is then the market price of labour. If he be deterred from having it on those terms, he will not have it at all, and the consequence is, that the market price falls still lower, because the demand is thereby lessened. All combinations, then, among workmen, are not only unjust, but are always in the end injurious to themselves. A country that is desirous of advancing in manufacture, and keeping competition from the markets, must use every method that is just to be able to undersell others. When demand has thereby been increased, there can be no doubt but that the price of labour will unavoidably rise in proportion. Workmen will be wanted, and every manufacturer, who

wants workmen, must give the then advanced market price for them. All that legislators have to do, in these cases, is to take care that both workmen and masters are protected from the bad effects of combinations. *In no case, is it allowable for two or more persons to combine to prevent some other person from obtaining any thing on the terms which he could have done, had they not so combined.* I have been the more anxious to impress these sentiments (truths I call them) upon the committee, because I know their great importance, and because I know that very mistaken ideas on the subject are entertained by many legislators, who, without perhaps being sensible of it, are biassed by popular feelings and declamations to favour the self-interested views and intentions of the ignorant and mistaken workmen; and that, clearly to the injury of the latter. I am, however, so far from thinking that high wages, generally speaking, are advantageous even to artizans, that I *know* that they are not so; they neither add to their religious and moral conduct, to their health, usefulness, and respectability, nor to the happiness of either themselves or their families. A man's service rendered to the state is in proportion to the marketable value which his labour has created. The man, then, who earns a guinea by six days' labour, is twice as serviceable to the state as the man that earns the same in three days, because the former will procure twice the marketable value that the other will for his guinea. The probability, too, is, that the latter will not even work three days. Hence a great part of his time is, as I well know, spent in profligate, often wicked, company and practices. His wife and children are neglected and miserable, and, in manufactures that will admit of it, are compelled to work all the week, whilst he, probably, will not in that case work at all.

The scenes that are daily, or rather nightly witnessed, by those who reside in large manufacturing towns, when trade is good, and provisions cheap, are revolting beyond description, nay, beyond imagination.

That the health of the workmen must, by these practices, suffer greatly, would be conceived, if it were not proved, in all instances, by the annual statements, that the mortality is always much greater at such times than in seasons of both bad trade, and even of scarcity; while the births, too, are diminished in proportion. The sullen dissatisfaction which is at those times evident, both in the countenances and conduct of the workmen, bespeaks the absence of every thing like happiness, while the continual attempts to increase, by unlawful and oppressive means, the price of labour beyond all

possible bounds, are as injurious to themselves and their country as they are to their employers.

If the foregoing are the consequences of a flourishing trade, when all the population are kept at home, what would be the case if a vast number of the most orderly and able bodied men had been induced, by mistaken statesmen, to emigrate, at great expence, to other countries? Loud as is now the outcry of want of employment amongst the cotton spinners and weavers, and of the great influx of Irish, it is not much more than two years since advertisements were issued from Stockport *, and other places, inviting the Irish to come over. In a state so extensively manufacturing as this, perpetual fluctuation in demand must inevitably be continually occurring; and if legislators are to undertake to make corresponding regulations, they will not only find sufficient employment, but rather more than sufficient; for by the time that their enactments to suit a want of demand have been brought into operation, an increased demand may have rendered those measures not only unadvisable but utterly impossible. "*Leave Trade and Commerce to themselves,*" ought to be written in large capital letters over the heads of the Speaker, and the Lord Chancellor, in the two Houses of Parliament.

Wednesday, December 19, 1827.

SIR JOHN ENGLISH, IN THE CHAIR.

EXPERIENCE called in and examined.

27. In stating, that the legislature, by interfering with trade and commerce, generally produced mischievous consequences, did you mean to allude especially to some particular instances?

Not directly so, though many such might be enumerated. A striking one occurred during the former part of the last year, when a slight panic, which had seized the commercial world in London, from the stoppage of some banking houses, and the failure of several speculating companies, but which would, in all probability, have soon subsided, was raised to the highest pitch, and attended with the most dreadful consequences, by the interference of the legislature.

One of the most impolitic and uncalled for measures was

* They stated that they wanted five thousand workmen; while new mills were built on every side.

resorted to; a measure which nothing short of impending destruction could warrant, was adopted, and, consequently, all confidence in the commercial world was taken away, and confidence there is equal, while it continues, to specie. The effect was most lamentable; fortunes without number, and in several cases lives were sacrificed by it; nor have those effects yet ceased to be felt. I mention this instance, which, as being so striking, and of such recent occurrence, will serve strongly to support my assertion. Trade and commerce in this kingdom are so widely extended, so universally operating, of such vast magnitude, and, at the same time, so fluctuating in their nature, that no general laws can be beneficially applicable to them, either in all places, or at all times. It is impossible but that very embarrassing circumstances must frequently arise, both in commercial and manufacturing concerns; such, however, will generally, in the end, best right themselves.

It is inherent in human nature for rulers to think that they can control every thing; and as the disposition exists, so the attempt will generally be made. This propensity is not confined to the rulers of states, it extends downward, in full force, even to rulers of the lowest classes. It is not, then, to be expected that it can be easily relinquished; it may, however, be in some degree repressed, or usefully directed.

It was this propensity, I apprehend, which led Mr. Malthus to imagine, that he could regulate the population of mankind better than it is regulated by the *divine* ruler. It was this propensity which induced the legislature to conceive that they could benefit the state by promoting the emigration of thousands of the most useful subjects of these realms to other countries; as if to depopulate a country was to enrich it. To show how completely the wisdom of man is foolishness with God, and how vain the effects of the former to frustrate the will of the latter, I can prove, that the means recommended to lessen the population would probably, in the end, increase it. It was clearly shown before the select committee, by several witnesses, and admitted by Mr. Malthus himself, that (extraordinary as the fact may be) God has not only provided for the due and regular supply of successive inhabitants, but that he has, likewise, provided for the extraordinary supply requisite to replace the unusual consumption of particularly destructive times. Hence, within a little while after every occurrence of such devastating seasons, the general population does not appear to have suffered any diminution, but to have increased, at least, in the *accustomed* ratio.

Though the late war caused almost innumerable young men (the very germs of population) to quit Ireland, never to return, the population of that country, during the progress of the war, increased in an almost unprecedented degree. Nay, incredible as it may seem, the same, or pretty nearly the same, was the case with France, though one would have imagined that a very great proportion of the young men in that country had been destroyed. After all those greatly desolating pestilences and famines, in which the case has been examined, it has been found, that in a short time it could not be perceived that any check had been thereby given to the regular increase of population.* Mr. Malthus himself states in his evidence, after admitting the above facts, "There is one case in regard to Prussia, where a very great pestilence occurred, and where a very rapid *increase* of population took place immediately afterwards. In this case, the effects of the great mortality on the subsequent births, deaths, and marriages, distinctly appear in the lists, and are very remarkable." Now dare either Mr. Malthus, or any one else, presume to say, after this, that *they* could, even if such a measure were desirable, lessen the population of Ireland by any degree of emigration that could be effected? They might cause a great deal of misery, and do a great deal of mischief, and, after all, in the end, *increase* population even in Ireland.

As neither war, pestilence, nor famine, then, are able to frustrate the command of God "to increase and multiply," so neither, it seems, can the very poorest and scantiest supply of food, that will support human nature, do it. It was shown in evidence before the select committee, and acquiesced in by Mr. Malthus, that in those parts of Ireland where the poor wretched beings have nothing throughout the year to subsist upon but a scanty supply of potatoes mixt with water, they not only marry, and have an unusual number of children, but that they themselves are healthy, and that their offspring are lively, active, and thriving, in an uncommon degree. These circumstances are surely enough to set at defiance the speculations of all our *theoretical* political

* John Leslie Foster, Esq., a member of the committee, observes, "I have not a doubt, but that Ireland was more populous at the end of the twenty-five years' war, than it would have been, if they had been years of peace. I beg to observe, that this is not peculiar to Ireland; such was the result upon the condition of Great Britain, and the same thing occurred in France, where there was a still greater subtraction of the population for the armies. The population at the end of the war was greater by five or six millions than at the commencement."

economists. There seems evidently here, to be "a power above the throne, greater than the throne itself."

The farther that man is enabled to search into the hitherto unexamined parts of nature, the more is he astonished at the inconceivable diffusion of sensitive life, and, most probably of enjoyment. How dare he then presume, that he can better apportion the due degree of human existence to any particular portion of space, than He, who can bestow life and due accommodation on as many living beings within the bulk of a grain of sand, as there are human beings in these United Kingdoms? The apportioning of existence comes not within the province of man! But I beg pardon for thus unintentionally digressing from the question of the committee; that, however, I answered pretty fully, in the first place, and, therefore, need not now, probably, say more on the subject.

28 Though you have given it as your opinion, that the legislature had better not interfere in regulations respecting trade and commerce, yet did you not intimate that all combinations ought to be punished by law?

Most certainly I did; and it is a measure vitally important to the unrestrained advancement of both trade and commerce in these kingdoms; most important to the welfare as well as happiness of both masters and workmen. But such laws, — at least such laws as are requisite, — would be no more an interfering with the freedom of trade and commerce, than any other *general* laws are, which restrain all unjust actions and practices. It is, and must be, unjust for any two men to combine to deprive another of any right which the laws of God and his country allow him. Only let these laws and rights be clearly understood and enforced, and there need no combination laws to restrain either masters or workmen from combining. Combinations among workmen are even more prejudicial to themselves than they are to their masters, and worse, perhaps, for their country than for either.

Dr. Murphy, in his evidence before the select committee, speaking of the artizans of Cork, says: "They will not allow a strange workman to come into the city who is not a member of the union. Having the law in their own hands, they persecute and attack him. They will beat him severely, and in some instances they have put individuals to death. I have heard that more than *twenty* have been killed in this manner in the city." Again: "No tradesman can come into the city, without danger of his life, after getting notice to quit from the committee of the trade to which he belongs." Farther: "It

appears to me to have a very bad moral tendency upon the poor. It is very injurious when men of that description are brought together in masses in public houses: when met there they are generally influenced by any person who talks a great deal; such a man is likely to be an idle fellow; and the tradespeople have generally suffered in their morals since the union of the trades was established; even within my recollection there is a considerable change in them for the worse." The evils arising from these vile unlawful practices are, in their consequences, beyond all conception; they strike at the very root of the prosperity of all manufactures. Whatever tends to drive capitalists from trade is greatly injurious to the country. These mistaken and misguided men are doing this most completely. They are rendering the carrying on of any extensive manufacture not only unprofitable, but also exceedingly disgusting, and even dangerous. Hundreds of thousands of pounds, in a good time of trade, are by these bad measures annually lost to the country. Not less, I am persuaded, than a hundred thousand a year is or has been raised and paid by the trade committees throughout the United Kingdom, to maintain their fellow workmen in *idleness*, rather than suffer them to work at the then market price of labour, beyond which no one ought to claim. There is not only the money uselessly expended, but there is the loss of the labour of all those who are induced thereby to be idle; with the loss, likewise, of all the profits which would have arisen from it. Besides this, the men who are thrown idle, are always thrown into bad company; they often become profligate, and seduce others; their health and their morals suffer; and they are probably rendered through life useless, if not baneful, members of society. Numbers of them lose all perception of right and wrong; they degenerate into common incendiaries; bring themselves to consider all masters as tyrants; their vilest passions are easily inflamed; and they are ready to plan or to execute the most flagitious undertakings.

A base love of popularity in some legislators and magistrates, and dastardly fear in others, with, perhaps, mistaken lenity in a few, have suffered this destructive and ruinous practice to have gained a footing in these kingdoms, of which it will now be difficult to deprive it. Masters even dare not prosecute; and, when prosecutions are commenced, magistrates (I speak generally) dare not convict, or, if they do convict, they dare not punish. Hence prosecutions are laughed at among the combined workmen. In every manu-

facturing district there should be a magistrate who is a stranger to the place, appointed by government, before whom all complaints of combinations, either of masters or workmen, should be brought. These should be occasionally changed from one district to another. From resident or native magistrates the requisite spirited exertions are not to be expected. I have seen a great deal of this vile practice and trembling lenity. For the sake of all parties, every practical effort to put a stop to them should be immediately employed. I am afraid that I may have appeared to the committee to have dwelt too long on the subject; but it is one which cannot engage too much of the attention of legislators. The sufferers ought not, in this case, to be compelled to stand, unsupported, the whole brunt of the enmity and persecution of the workmen, for presuming to maintain their rights. They ought to have every facility and assistance which the laws of their country can afford them. I speak now as much for the sake of the workmen as for that of the masters. I speak confidently, for no other possesses the knowledge that I do on the subject. What I have now said is but a faint delineation of the whole truth.

British capital, British ingenuity, British spirit, British enterprise, and British industry, all left free and unshackled, notwithstanding every burden of taxation, might set the competition of the whole world (in most manufactures) at defiance; though it is probable that this country may, in many instances, pay double or treble (nominally) in wages, to what are paid in some others. Let all her people be kept at home; let all her people be employed; let all do their best; and the wages of the workmen, the profits of the master, and the revenue of the state, will, on the whole, be such, I confidently predict, as no one will have any right to find fault with; — they will be such as to raise the astonishment and the envy of the world, which would still have cause to thank, as well as admire, a noble, a just, and a generous people.

30. What effect would the entire prevention of combination have upon the poor rates?

A very strong one to lessen the rates. Combinations keep many who would be willing to work from doing so, because they dare not. The allowance, while it can be made, is by no means sufficient to maintain their families; their furniture, their clothes, and other moveables go by degrees to the pawn-brokers, till they are left almost destitute, and are often reduced to the most deplorable state of distress. Hence the husband and father is sometimes driven to forsake his family, which is, consequently, thrown upon the parish.

Let all combinations be suppressed, and there would be no application, in tolerable times, from able bodied workmen for relief. If there were, there would be employment for them.

31. Do you conceive that it is an eligible plan, in any case, to make up from the rates the deficiency of wages to any workman, who has partial or unprofitable work?

Certainly not; neither do I think that it is *lawful* to do it. The poor rates were not intended for any such purpose. To do it would be opening a door to the entrance of continual impositions. If an able bodied man cannot do without relief, he must be set to work by the parish, and be entirely maintained. On this plan few impostors would apply, and if they did they would soon withdraw.

32. You do not recommend the relinquishment of the English poor laws, under any circumstances, or by any means?

Indeed I do not. If I did, I am sure that I should be recommending the most impolitic, as well as the most unjust measure, that could possibly be recommended. I conceive, that there are no classes of the subjects of England, possessing any rights or privileges, that have them more firmly and justly secured, than the destitute and impotent poor have their right to such relief from their country, as will preserve them from perishing. Yet how lightly is this important right generally treated! While the interfering with any of the established rights of the higher classes, though of the most trifling nature, is regarded with the utmost jealousy and alarm, those of the *poor* seem to be something which, it is conceived, may be annihilated at any time, without ceremony. Mr. Malthus has proposed, by way of getting rid of them effectually, that "no person who may be born after a certain period should be *entitled* to any relief, under any circumstances." A more cold-blooded proposition, or one more revolting to English feelings, as well as more opposed to the true interests of the state, to say nothing of the rights of the poor as established by law, can hardly be imagined. What would the reverend gentleman say to any impious reformer, who should dare to propose that the revenue of the church should be seized, and applied to the paying off of the national debt? or that, at any rate, the livings of pluralists and non-residents should be abolished? or, which is coming to a case somewhat more analogous, that no person inducted into a living, after a certain period, should be entitled to any tithes? I suspect that the reverend gentleman would consider any such proposition as unjust, whatever he might think respecting its impolicy. The hardship, however, in the one case, would

bear no proportion to that of the other; while the rights of the first are as strong as those of the latter — nay, they are stronger. As far as human laws are concerned, they rest on the same foundation; but the laws of God, — of christianity, much more strongly and frequently enforce the former. Perhaps there are not any rights which have been so frequently acknowledged and confirmed, since their first establishment, as the poor laws. Owing to the very circumstance of every man seeming to think that he had a right to abuse, to alter, or to annul these laws, they have been brought more frequently to the notice of parliament than any other whatever; and though, during the last two centuries, no less than seventy statutes, of one kind or other, relating to them have been enacted, those laws have, in all those instances, been acknowledged and confirmed. The poor laws of England, then, may be said to stand on a *firmer* foundation, both by the establishment of man and God, than any other laws relating to property whatever. Is it, then, solely because the possessors of these rights are individually poor and helpless, that the reverend gentleman so coolly proposes that, after a certain period, they shall possess these rights no longer?

Can the reverend gentleman devise any plan, by which, (opposed to the declaration of God,) “the poor shall cease out of the land?” or can he so arrange matters, after that certain period, that poor persons shall not grow old, or become decrepit or helpless? If he can do these things, there may be some plea for his invading their rights. I think the learned professor himself, must be convinced, by this time, that simply preventing the poor from getting married, would not totally eradicate the class of paupers, for even if they did not contrive, *without getting married*, to keep up the breed, still, even *great men*, who, I suppose, *would* be permitted to get married, sometimes, in the revolution of the wheel, become poor; or, if not poor themselves, their descendants very frequently are so. So then, after all, we must have poor in the land still. But I cannot admit, that we have any more right to prevent the poor from getting married (even if it were politic so to do), than we have to deprive them of the rights which the laws of their country have confirmed to them. I should like to see much less of that disposition in speaking of the poor and their rights, than now appears, to treat them as goods and chattels.

Nothing is more clear in the government of nations, than that whatever measures are at variance with the will or laws of God, are detrimental to the real and best interests of the state. Many individuals here, like Mr. Malthus, seem anxious to dispossess the poor of the rights which the com-

mands of God ordain. In this instance, happily, the legislature of this kingdom has obeyed the commands of God, and the country has, in consequence, prospered beyond every other. But, strange as it may seem, notwithstanding this acknowledged truth, and the beneficial results of obedience, Britain, in her colonies, is pursuing a very different system, and experiencing very different results. In her West India islands she is not only daring to set the commands of God at defiance, in not considering the poor and needy, but she has reduced them to, and she is keeping them in, the most inhuman and oppressive state of degradation and misery, that the whole history of the world, from the creation, can furnish an instance of. Here, then, as might be supposed, she has experienced nothing but that disgrace, degradation, disappointment, anarchy, and demoralization, which are the inseparable concomitants of such wicked and impolitic measures.

The statesman who conceives, that a *slave* population can be as beneficial to a state as a *free* population, cannot be possessed of even common understanding. He might as well affirm, that idiots and children would be as efficient as men of sense and strength, merely because they would not, or could not, either rebel or remonstrate. It is inconceivable to what a pitch of glory and prosperity, a really enlightened and vigorous administration might, in the course of a very few years, raise this country, for *they* would discard every thing that was not strictly conformable to the will of God, and, therefore, they would be assured of all their measures being accompanied with His blessing.

32. But do you not conceive that the poor's having a *right* to relief, has a tendency to retard the exercise of spontaneous charity?

I do not. On the contrary *I know*, that it has produced, and is producing, a contrary effect. It has elevated the poor in this country in the scale of society, — *i. e.* the very lowest of the poor; those who in other countries are disgusting, importunate beggars, and vagrants, — wretches generally instructed from their youth to importune and deceive. There they are justly beheld with suspicion and abhorrence, and excite nothing but dread and disgust; fellow feeling, therefore, ceases, at least this is the case, in a great measure. Here, on the contrary, in well regulated parishes (and England having paid the price, has a right to have all of hers so regulated), those disgusting traders in beggary are banished. The very poorest are, in their habitations, brought under the inspection of the higher orders. There is a degree of emulation and love of decency excited among them, which does

not exist among the same class in other countries. The two classes are brought more nearly to approximate, and fellow feelings of commiseration are excited, which may be exercised without fear of deception. I here speak comparatively. So far have the poor rates been from banishing voluntary charity, that the very reverse is clearly the case. No country but England has regular compulsory rates acted upon for the relief of the poor: yet in no country do the disposition and active exertions to relieve the poor so strongly exist as here. The amount contributed voluntarily is, beyond all comparison, greater than in any other country. It appears almost to be a favour conferred on the public to point out some new channel in which the stream of benevolence can be directed, so as to reach some objects hitherto neglected.

Ireland has no poor rates, yet a few years ago, when the potatoe crop failed, according to the testimony of witnesses before the select committee, very many thousands must have absolutely perished from want, had it not been for the instantaneous overwhelming benevolence of England, who poured in her tide of charity in such abundance, that the dry channels of exhausted Ireland could not contain it, and a part of it was absolutely returned to the bountiful donors, who seemed half ashamed and half offended on receiving it. Yet England was at that time, as usual, paying poor rates, and voluntarily supporting thousands of charitable institutions. In fact, there can be no doubt that pure and disinterested benevolence is fostered, instead of repressed by the poor rates. Englishmen would never submit to suffer even their paupers to subsist on the scanty means, which serve the poorer classes of Ireland, and even of Scotland, for a maintenance.

Several of the witnesses were asked by the select committee, what was considered by the overseers of the poor, as the least on which a man, his wife and three children, could subsist in England. It appeared from their answers, that ten shillings a week was the lowest that was thought adequate. In Scotland, it seems that much less than that sum will suffice, while in Ireland it was stated, that the same number can subsist for even less than half, and still the children there seem healthy and strong; yet the price of provisions is nearly the same in all the three countries. In Ireland, potatoes are almost the sole food; in Scotland, oatmeal; and in England, wheat flour and flesh meat. Mr. Malthus asserts, that the poor of all countries ought to eat *wheaten* bread. The reason which he gives for it is rather a curious one, *viz.* that in times of scarcity they would be able to live by having recourse to rye, barley, and oats. All this is very

true, and the same would hold good as a reason for their living in general on venison, because, at the worst of times, they could make a shift to subsist on beef and mutton. But this seems sad trifling in a political economist.

The poor of all countries will, of course, live on the best food they can obtain. I can remember the time, when wheaten bread was almost unknown to the English labourers. They now eat little else, nor do either the Scotch or Irish, when doing well *here*, live on either oats or potatoes.

Mr. Malthus asserts, that it has been the introduction of potatoes into Ireland, which has made the people breed so fast. They certainly do breed faster, living on potatoes, than if they could not get even them to eat. But if Mr. Malthus can divine some method by which the Irish poor shall be enabled to purchase enough of oatmeal or flour, I have no doubt but that they will cease to subsist entirely on potatoes. I dare not promise him, however, that, even then, they will not be apt to increase faster than he would wish them to do. I do not know that it can be entirely attributed to the want of poor rates in Ireland, that voluntary contributions to promote the welfare of the poor are so very much fewer, and smaller even in proportion, than here; but they certainly are so. A great part of what is done in that way, particularly for schools, is contributed by this country.

33. Are you acquainted with the poor laws in Scotland, and how far they are acted upon?

It appears that Scotland had the honour of originating compulsory poor rates, and that at a very remote period. These seem, however, either never to have been acted upon, or to have very shortly fallen into disuse. Indeed, they appear to have been so ill digested, so general, and undefined, that, in a country like Scotland, and in times like these, they hardly *could* have been enforced.

There, it appears, all property, both personal and real, is rateable. A residence of three years gives a settlement, either to a native or to a foreigner. There is no power of removal: neither the objects to be relieved, nor the mode or degree of relief, are clearly defined. The sole resource of an applicant refused relief is to the court of sessions. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that laws like these should sink into disuse.

In Scotland, then, it has become the general practice to relieve the poor from voluntary subscriptions. Yet in some of the more populous towns, that mode has been found to be so partial and inadequate, and their general compulsory laws

so impossible to be acted upon, that local acts, greatly similar in their nature to the English poor laws have been obtained.

In Scotland, I should think, even Mr. Malthus himself will allow that the population have room to turn themselves in, and that it has not outrun the means which the country might afford of subsistence. The Scotch poor have long been held up as exemplary to those of other countries.

They have, generally speaking, no demoralizing poor laws (as they have been called), at least, none acted upon, and yet the poor are infinitely worse off than those of England.

Besides the crowds which, during the two last centuries, have annually emigrated to and remained in England, ship-loads of poor perishing wretches have been borne off, across the Atlantic, having sold themselves to little better than slavery, to avoid absolute starvation in their native country. So little are the people, it appears, the better for laws, however well intended, which are vaguely defined.

All these things tend to proclaim the superior wisdom and policy, as well as humanity, of the English poor laws.

England seems to have profited by the errors of her neighbour in establishing compulsory rates for the relief of the poor. Her laws for that purpose were so well digested, so clear, so full, and so operative, that, as no one could misunderstand them, so no one could evade them. They not only *might* be acted upon, but they *must* be acted upon. The claimant could demand (and that in so easy and summary a way) his right, that it could not be refused him; while the nature and mode of relief prescribed were such as almost to preclude imposition and to banish idleness. They preserved all from perishing for want, and totally abolished vagrancy, requiring every able-bodied man to earn his own living. These are the English poor laws; and though, as *human* laws, they have been, in some instances, abused and ill-administered, yet they have, for between two and three centuries, worked well, and with wonderfully good effect. They have been traduced and accused, but never either convicted or legally condemned. The worthy poor have been kept at home by them, and the country itself has thereby been advanced in worth, in prosperity, and in reputation.

In Scotland, as well as in this country, it was formerly the practice to grant licences to the indigent poor to wander from place to place, begging; such beggars being distinguished by badges. This was intended as a protection from the effects of those sanguinary enactments against vagrancy, which, for a time, disgraced both countries. Vagabonds and sturdy beggars, by statute 1 Edward 6th., might be seized and sold

as slaves, being first branded on the breast with a red hot iron with the letter S.; and if any one so branded then absented himself from his owner's service for the space of fourteen days, he should be branded on the *forehead* and adjudged *a slave for life*.

The Scotch poor, formerly at least, could subsist on as little and mean fare as those of any country; yet, during the years from 1692 to 1699, still known by the name of "*the seven ill years*," whole families perished for want. They had then compulsory laws to enforce rates; but those laws were in Scotland not (even on that occasion) acted upon. In England they were, and the people were preserved from so dreadful an evil.

So numerous were the poor in Scotland before so many of them emigrated to England and America, that Fletcher of Saltown asserts:— "There are at this day in Scotland, besides a many poor families very meanly provided for by the queen's boxes, two hundred thousand people *begging from door to door*." What a dreadful proportion of the population of Scotland at that time!

How ill the voluntary contributions supply the place of compulsory rates, appears from a recent publication, "A Letter on the Nature, Extent, and Management of the Poor-Rates in Scotland." The author proves, that, in voluntary contributions, so heavy becomes the burden upon the back of the willing horse, from others refusing to bear any part of it, that, in many cases, local laws for compulsory rates have been resorted to. "This was the case," he says, "in the parish in which I reside; at that period, some of the most respectable men in this part of the kingdom were land owners in the parish, and they exerted themselves with all their influence to prevent the introduction of poor rates. They tried voluntary contributions, but, from the first, some of the heritors would not contribute a single shilling. Soon after it appeared, that the whole burden would have devolved on a few men, distinguished for their public spirit and liberality." This, I conceive, is strong evidence, from what may be called an impartial man, and a man of experience, in favour of compulsory rates, both for Scotland and Ireland. We, in England, I conceive, should now ill brook a return to such a provision for the destitute poor as formerly existed in both parts of Great Britain, and as still exists in Ireland.

I wish to impress, in a particular manner, upon the committee the great superiority of compulsory rates over voluntary ones, whenever the former are regularly and universally adopted; and, particularly, when administered *to the letter of*

the law, as established in England. From my full knowledge of the effects produced by both systems, I am, in this instance, enabled to speak with perfect confidence; and I am the more induced to do so, for the purpose of counteracting the strong prejudices which have long, generally, prevailed against compulsory rates.

Thursday, December 20, 1827.

SIR JOHN ENGLISH, IN THE CHAIR.

EXPERIENCE called in and examined.

34. Are there any farther remarks, which you think it right to make as bearing, even though remotely, on the question of emigration?

Having, since I was examined yesterday, looked over again the third report of the select committee, there appear to me to be several remarks, which it will be necessary to make before I conclude; but there is one which I think should not be entirely passed over, though it is not touched upon there, nor does it, at first sight, seem directly to bear upon the subject of emigration. What I now allude to, is the *game laws*. The English game laws I hesitate not to denounce as disgraceful in the highest degree to any civilized state. They could not exist in a savage state, or they would be disgraceful even to that. Irresistible temptations to vice, by these laws, are held,—unnecessarily held out to the poor, whereby their character is so demoralized, that one third of the gaols (as declared in the house of commons) are furnished with prisoners on charges under these laws. If there be one axiom in political economy more incontrovertible than another, it is, that all governments should, as much as possible, withhold and remove from the people, especially from the lower classes, all temptations to the commission of crime. But, strange as it may appear, the English government, the wisest, as it is said, on the face of the earth, in the present instance, not only permits this irresistible temptation to exist, but it is itself the tempter. The motive (*shame on the motive!*) is, that the members of the legislature, and other rich, or great men, may enjoy the luxury of themselves killing those animals which are to supply their own tables and those of their friends, with a species of food which is not now considered as a rarity any where.

This would be paying a dreadful price for the enjoyment of such sport, if it could not be had without it. But the fact

is, that even this refined and rational amusement might be had, more effectually, without those cursed and guilt-producing laws; without, too, the sacrifice of the morals, the liberty, and often the lives, of thousands of the labouring classes of society, and the consequent degradation and misery of their wives and children.

If the whole country is to be converted into a game preserve, there can neither be sport in destroying it, enjoyment in eating it, nor obligation in receiving it.

The value of game must soon cease to any gentleman, and will only remain with those who dishonestly obtain it, in order to tempt others to the commission of crime, by becoming the purchasers of goods known to have been stolen.

Is it to be submitted to in a country like this, professing to be *Christian*, that men should be sent out with fire arms by night to shoot others whom they may meet with, but who have not, at any rate, been *convicted* of any crime? To such a height is the protecting on one hand, and the destroying on the other, of game, now carried, that armies are arrayed against armies, attacking each other, like savages, in the dark. If this practice be *sport* to the masters of the keepers, it is death, and, in many cases, worse than death, to the latter. Let the game laws be entirely abolished; and let all game be as much the property of the occupier of the land on which it is found, as any of his other property; and then, though poaching will be, in a great measure, abolished, there will always be plenty of game to afford *sport* to *sportsmen*, as well as an abundant supply for their tables, and for their friends, by whom they would then be considered as acceptable presents. The landlord could, of course, always make his own terms with his tenants. This subject is of peculiar importance, as relating to the future condition of Ireland. If that country is ever to be advanced to the state of high cultivation and prosperity, for which it is calculated, the error of the English, in their game laws, should there be avoided.

While, again, as I have stated, looking over the third report of the select committee of the house of commons, I have made extracts of those parts on which I conceived that it would be necessary to remark, with the concurrence of the Committee, therefore, I will now introduce them. The first is, (fol. 6.) "One of the popular modes of treating the subject of Ireland is, to express a wish for the rapid introduction of *capital* into that country. Nothing is more easy than to express a general proposition of this nature; but your Committee would particularly wish to press upon the attention of the house, that the evils of a population furnishing an excess

of labour above the demand for it, contain within themselves a self-producing and self-aggravating principle; and that, so long as no measures are taken to restrain them, they must not only exist, and continue to increase, but by their very existence must prevent the introduction of that capital, which, if introduced, would diminish the redundancy by establishing a greater equality between the supply of labour and the effective demand. Under the present circumstances, the opinion entertained of the insecurity of property in Ireland, arising from the state of the population, must operate as a most effectual discouragement to the introduction of capital; that is to say, no persons will be disposed to establish large manufactories, or to make great agricultural improvements in a country which has been, and may again be, the scene of insurrectionary movements, and where his returns (which alone can insure the introduction of capital,) may, consequently, be affected by such contingency."

These remarks of the select committee, after hearing all the evidence that had been brought before them, do, certainly, most strongly militate against their own recommendation of an authorised national system of *emigration*,—emigration of the most industrious members of a community, which, by their own showing, wants only the introduction of capital to render it flourishing; which capital is kept back by the insecure state of the country, which insecurity is caused by the dreadful sufferings of the people, those sufferings arising from a great part of the product and rental being sent out of the country to absentee landlords.

Would not, then, any disinterested, impartial man, say at once, that the only way to remove the evil was to strike at its root? In fact, there is no other remedy. Emigration, to a very great extent, might (at the cost of greater sufferings,) remove some of the poor sufferers, and, for a little while, diminish the number of mouths requiring to be fed. But it has been shown by Mr. Malthus himself, that, in a very short time, that vacuum would be again filled up. And what would be done, in that case, for Ireland? *Nothing!* Ireland would be still as much wanting capital, nay, more; for the very alarm of a system of depopulation would increase insecurity, and frighten capital away.

The question is — Is Ireland to be saved, or is she to be eventually lost? Nothing proposed by the select committee can tend, in the most remote degree, to prevent her final destruction, or violent renovation. By the passage quoted, the reporters admit this to be the only remedy, they know and acknowledge; but they shrink from manfully recom-

mending it. It is really horrible to hear them calmly asking a witness, if the removal by emigration, of one or two hundred thousands of the poor inhabitants of the country would benefit the landed proprietors? Justice and humanity shudder at it. Had they been as many black cattle, which they were talking about, it might have been allowable. When, however, it is recollected that, as in some measures before stated, all these poor wretches are the natural heritors of the country, who have committed no crime, who are willing and desirous to work for their living, and thereby to benefit their native land; and that the land proprietors, for whose fancied advantage they are all to be thus sacrificed to the impoverishment of their country, are (many of them at least) either aliens born, or have rendered themselves such, and thereby caused the supposed necessity for the adoption of this cruel depopulating system: the man that thinks it would be right to adopt it, cannot be possessed of either understanding or feeling.

This will more fully appear, when it is considered, that the other alternative, that of compelling land proprietors to either a partial residence, or a sale of their estates, would not only supersede the necessity of the cruel and impolitic measure proposed, but would very soon pour capital into the country, create confidence, establish manufactures, promote agricultural improvements, give birth to useful projects, and, by furnishing full employment for the population, render the people contented, peaceful, happy, and grateful.

Yet all these, most assuredly, would this one regulation effect: and, let it be remembered, that it would be a regulation by which no one class of the people would be injured; but, on the contrary, those who alone could be averse to it, would, in reality, be the greatest gainers.

The next extract which I have made, is fol. 6 & 7. "A reference both to the evidence taken before your committee, and to the evidence already presented to parliament by the committee appointed to consider the state of Ireland, will prove, that many of the most alarming insurrectionary movements have either originated with tenants dispossessed of their farms, or have been materially aggravated, in their extent and duration, by the discontent and wretchedness of this class of the population; and it must be obvious, that, so long as the population remains in this state, it must, at all times, furnish abundant materials to be worked upon by turbulent or designing individuals, at any period of temporary discontent. The evils of a redundant population, with all the incidental consequences, have been universally felt and acknowledged; and various suggestions have been made for this partial relief."

Here is a population, goaded almost to madness by oppression, and absolute want of food to keep body and soul together; driven or led to insubordination, robbery, and murder. It is not pretended that their sufferings are the result of any misconduct of their own. They are willing to work, and to work hard, for a bare maintenance for themselves and families, which they behold perishing before their eyes. If, then, there be a remedy within the reach of any possible exertions and sacrifices, for such dreadful and unmerited sufferings of some of the most useful subjects of the state, is not the government of that state bound, by every tie, human and divine, to make those exertions and those sacrifices? That such a remedy does exist, that such a remedy is within reach; nay, that such a remedy will be found to be easy and effectual, has already been shown; nay, it has been affirmed (I believe truly) that it would be beneficial to all parties, and to both kingdoms. Is it not, then, astonishing, that a committee, appointed by that government, should be so short-sighted, so inhuman, and so impolitic, as to recommend measures, which would prove in the end so far from benefiting the country, and removing the misery and insubordination complained of, that they would in every way injure the country, and increase the dreadful affliction of the people? For all these lamentable excesses, for which so many poor wretches have suffered by the laws of the country, I cannot but consider the government as more guilty than the culprits whom they convict and punish.

It is totally impossible to conceive a population reduced to a more deplorable state, than that of a great part of the lowest class in Ireland. Their bodily sufferings are almost unexampled, while to those are added the grossest ignorance, brutality, and wickedness, the result of that oppression. All this is the consequence of a most unjust, cruel, and destructive system, exercised on a lovely and fertile country, and on a noble, manly, and high-spirited people. The country had been conquered, and its richest territories had been portioned out, the prey of foreigners, who only sought to enrich themselves by draining them of the product of their fertility, even to the very dregs.

Equally extraordinary with the foregoing is the third extract, which I shall give from the report of the select committee, fol. 7: — "Your committee cannot too strongly impress upon the house, that between two countries so intimately connected as England and Ireland, two different rates of wages and two different conditions of the labouring population, cannot permanently co-exist. One of two results appears to be

inevitable. The Irish population must be raised towards the standard of the English, or the English depressed towards that of the Irish. The question, whether an extensive plan of emigration shall, or shall not, be adopted, appears to your committee to resolve itself into this simple point, Whether the wheat-fed population of Great Britain, shall or shall not be supplanted by the potatoe-fed population of Ireland?" Now, with all due deference to the wisdom and humanity of these gentlemen, I presume to affirm, that the question resolves itself into no such "*simple point*," — I say, and I am sure that I am right in so saying, that it rather resolves itself into a very different *point*, viz.—Whether the potatoe-fed population of Ireland shall not, by means that are practicable, easy, and unobjectionable, be raised to that — nay, beyond that, of the wheat-fed population of Great Britain?

Is there a human being in existence, whether he be English, Scotch, or Irish, possessed of either heart or understanding, who would hesitate a moment about which should be done? for that the *latter*, at all events, is practicable, is most certain. But the fact is, that these committee gentlemen set out with a full persuasion on their own minds, that *emigration* was the grand succedaneum, and they seem never to have suffered themselves, for a moment, to contemplate any other.

In corroboration of my opinion on this subject, I will here produce that of Mr. Malthus himself. He is asked by the select committee, (see fol. 10.) — "What is your opinion of the capability of Ireland to become a very rich and flourishing country?" He answers, "*My opinion is, that it has very great capabilities; that it might be a very rich and very prosperous country; and that it might be richer in proportion than England from its greater natural capabilities.*" If really these gentlemen of the select committee will not *now* be convinced, I must conclude, that they would not be convinced even though one should rise from the dead to assure them of the fact. How Mr. Malthus, after the decided opinion as given above, of the capability of Ireland to be advanced to a state of riches and prosperity even greater than England, can advise the depriving her of the most effective instrument for the production of such a desirable event, viz. her industrious population, is totally incomprehensible. The utmost that ever could be expected from such a measure, would be the preserving of her in existence, struggling with all her complaints a few years longer, till, perhaps, in a paroxysm of despair, she should make a desperate effort to relieve herself, and either perish in the attempt, or succeed in effecting the most complete emancipation. England had better not drive her to the trial.

The select committee were not ignorant of the dreadful misery, which is generally experienced by the poor wretches who are driven by want to the last resource of human suffering, — emigration. They themselves give an extract from the Albany Advertiser, Sept. 1826, of which the following is a part: — “The picture of distress which these emigrants present on their arrival here, is almost indescribable. The consequence is, that they are next seen begging through our streets in the most loathsome and abject state of filth and misery. Some provision must be made for these wretched beings, though it is hard that the burden should come upon this city (Albany), as it seems to be at present, for it has lately become their chosen thoroughfare, as they are pouring upon us from the north as well as from the south. Hundreds are drifted down the northern canal, to meet hundreds more floating up the Hudson, and all of them are found in the same destitute condition.” Is this a state to which the honest, industrious subjects of a country, capable of being made to surpass England in riches and prosperity, ought to be driven?

To me, who know the evil consequences which must every way result from emigration, it is afflictive to learn, from the evidence of the Lord Bishop of Chester (see fol. 235.), given to the select committee, as chairman of the London committee for the relief of the manufacturing districts, that that committee had agreed to appropriate twenty-five thousand pounds of the fund subscribed throughout this kingdom, by desire of His Majesty, for the relief of artizans, distressed by the temporary stagnation of trade, to promote the *emigration* of such artizans or labourers. Nay, farther, that they only agreed to do this on the express condition, that fifty thousand pounds *more* should be added, from some quarter, for the same purpose; thus depriving the objects whom it was their duty to relieve, of twenty-five thousand pounds of the money which had been subscribed for that purpose, while, at the same time, they were applying that sum, and twice as much beside, viz., in the whole, seventy-five thousand pounds, to deprive this country of thousands of that class of her people who are the very life-blood of her prosperity, — of whom, only a short year before, there were not enow to answer the demand, and who, by the time they would be shipped off, would probably be wanted again. At the very time that the Lord Bishop of Chester, and the London committee, were making this horrible, and, as I conceive, unauthorised misapplication of the charitable fund with which they were entrusted, I do know that one very extensive and populous manufacturing parish, which had subscribed and remitted a very considerable sum

to the London committee in hopes of having it repaid ten-fold, to be distributed among their greatly distressed population; were refused a single farthing, even of the money which they had themselves sent up; while, I believe, that more than a hundred thousand pounds was sent for distribution into the diocese of Chester.

This circumstance, I think, strongly corroborates my former assertion, that legislators and churchmen seldom do good by interfering with trade or commerce.

35. Are there any farther remarks which you have to make relative to Ireland, emigration from whence seems principally to have been recommended by the select committee?

There are a good many desultory ones which have been suggested by the perusal of the evidence adduced before the committee. The principal, and the most painful one is, that, dreadful as the state of the poor of Ireland has long been, it is daily becoming worse, not only from the increase of population, but, what is still more deplorable, from the practice pretty generally adopting by land owners and their agents, of destroying all the cottages upon their estates, and thereby casting the wretched inhabitants, whose forefathers have, perhaps, for ages possessed them, to seek a living, or die of want where they can. The cold-blooded calculations made on this subject, as regards the *interest* of the land owners, are, beyond measure, appalling and sickening. It seems, indeed, that the fear of Captain Rock and his system (see question 2609) is almost the only *bar* to the practice becoming very general. Many of the landlords and their agents *dare not* turn their tenants off, and, if they did, no others dare enter. Is the violence of the people under these circumstances to be wondered at? or is there any probable termination of it to be expected, but either by a better system being speedily adopted, or such a general insurrection of the people as will soon determine the question the one way or the other?

David John Wilson, Esq. says to the question 2618, "Do you consider that the main cause of the distress of the lower orders arises from redundancy of population?" "*I won't say that. I won't go so far as to say that; because, if that population were distributed throughout the country in a judicious manner, I think the country more than ample to support it, not only in comfort, but in comparative affluence with the present state.*" What might be the effect of a judicious distribution of these poor wretches seems not to have been tried; but many injudicious means have been, and their effect experienced; for instance, John Maskham Marshall, Esq. says, in answer to question 4185, viz., "Was your own property very much

overpeopled?"—"Very much. I got rid of *eleven hundred*, and have still sufficient. Many of them acquired settlements on the estates of the adjoining proprietors, but having no means of acquiring an honest livelihood, they have been *necessitated* to resort to thieving and vagabond habits for support." This is one of the many striking instances that occur in that report of the dreadful consequences that do and must arise from this depopulating system. Another witness says (see question 4323), "We now discover that *dairy cows* are more profitable than *cottage tenants*." I cannot but think that those cottager tenants might retort, "We should find *wolves* and *hyenas* less cruel than *absentee landlords*."

I am aware that landlords have suffered as well as tenants from the forsaken and wretched state of the country; but the fault and the remedy rest with the former and not with the latter. The same witness states, in answer to question 4328, "A small farm which had been let about the year 1760, almost as a gift, to an old servant, consisting of six acres of good land; when it fell out of lease, about three years ago, the population amounted to *thirty-six* persons. That farm is now in the possession of *one* individual, who has built an excellent farm-house upon it, and lives respectably and comfortably. What has become of the *thirty-six* persons *who were all removed*, I know not." What a strong outline sketch is here presented to the reader for him to fill up, of unfeeling ingratitude, excruciating sufferings, and ruinous devastations! However comfortably the single occupier might live, one can hardly conceive that the proprietor, if he knew any thing about the matter, could feel quite so comfortable.

Sir Henry Parnell, Bart., himself a member of the select committee, in reply to several questions, (see fol. 451.) "I think that one reason, why the progress of clearing estates will be slow, arises from the general resistance of the occupying tenants to that practice, and the means that they possess of deterring landlords from carrying their intentions into effect. * * * I believe that there exists naturally in Ireland, so strong a dislike to quit the land upon which a man is born, and such peculiar notions of right and occupancy amongst the people, that a great part of the resistance is owing to these causes; but I believe that the main cause of resistance arises from the people not seeing any other means of providing for their subsistence, than by keeping possession of their land. * * * I am very certain, that the distress has risen to such a height as greatly to increase crimes. The communications that are made to me, make it quite clear, that they are almost driven to the

necessity of supporting existence by pilfering, and by acquiring food in every sort of irregular way. * * * I have received letters of late, which induce me to believe, that this not only contributes to produce an indisposition among absentees to return to Ireland to reside there; but that it contributes very much to induce those gentlemen who are now resident to become absentees. I have received a letter from a nobleman, who has always been resident on his estate, in which he says, 'What can we do? Landlords will not relinquish their rents, and, of course, a contest will ensue between them and the people. Government must take their choice between insurrection and emigration; one cannot look forward without dismay; a residence in Ireland is becoming a burden too great to be borne; it is bad enough living in the midst of distress; (while) any attempts to relieve the people only bring shoals of wretched beings from other places; what must it be in districts (and this will soon be the case every where) in which, in addition to this, the gentry are living in daily apprehensions of their houses being attacked and their families destroyed?' What an appalling picture of wretchedness and consequent crime is here presented, as correctly drawn from nature by the hand of a master! Strange, that it should never have occurred to this worthy nobleman, who had always resided upon his estate, (and I am persuaded would have found the residence no hardship, but for the circumstances mentioned,) that if other large landed proprietors were to do the same, all this deeply deplored misery would be at once done away with, and gentlemen, instead of being driven by *fear* to become absentees, would soon be drawn by the cords of *love*, to return from all other lands, to their own too long slighted, forsaken, and injured country!

Friday, December 21. 1827.

SIR JOHN ENGLISH, IN THE CHAIR.

EXPERIENCE called in and examined.

36. Is there any other subject affecting the condition of the poor, and bearing on that of emigration, on which you wish to be heard?

There is *one* so important as to surpass in interest all those which have hitherto engaged the attention of the committee. I am sorry, that on this subject *I* have not enjoyed those

peculiar advantages so fully as on many others, or, so as to enable me to speak decidedly, and without hesitation. I am the more concerned on that account; because the subject (RELIGION) is, as far as regards Ireland, attended with *unusual* difficulties; and is, at the same time, of vital importance to her permanent prosperity.

It renders it the more difficult to discuss the subject of religion with calmness and impartiality, and at the same time with candour and boldness, because there is no other (strange as it may seem) on which the passions and prejudices of mankind are so generally and firmly enlisted. The committee, however, having called upon me for candid advice on every subject affecting the welfare of the poor, I should be guilty of the basest dereliction of duty, were I either to mislead them, or shrink from stating my sentiments with honest freedom, on a subject infinitely more important to the well-being of the poor than any other, yet, at the same time that I do it with boldness, I trust that I shall do it with the simplicity and humility which the subject demands and inculcates.

Religion is the bond which unites man to his Maker. It is the medium of all communication between them. It is the road by which alone the former can pass to the latter. It is, likewise, the most effectual promoter of right conduct amongst all the different classes of society, as well as the most certain advancer in worldly prosperity and securer of earthly felicity. Religion, then, one might naturally think, would be the never failing bond of union among mankind, making men, not only to be of one mind in a house, but in a kingdom. Alas! he who should really think so, must have had but little intercourse with what is called the Christian world.

Religion, or the name of religion, has been made the pretext for more national, and personal enmity, more persecutions, more horrible cruelties between states, between communities, nay, between members of the same neighbourhood and family, than, perhaps, all other subjects of contention whatsoever. Religion, instead of being like a fountain of pure water, flowing continually, at all seasons, with unabating copiousness, from the foot of the granite rock, refreshing the fertile plain through which it passes in its way to the ocean, to which the herds and the flocks can at all times resort for refreshment, and with which the weary and fainting traveller can assuage his thirst, or the stripling and the child enliven and invigorate themselves with safety; instead of being like this, it resembles the torrent collected, amidst tempests on the mountain top, which, dashing from rock to rock, foams and roars, and threatens destruc-

tion to whatever is opposed to its turbulent course. Neither the temple, the palace, nor the cottage is safe from its resistless power. Even man and his works are often swept away by its violence from the face of the earth.

Nothing serves so strongly to display the evil tendency of corrupt human nature, as the constant attempts which man is making to change the nature of that, whose every part is lovely, and whose whole is perfection. Instead of letting religion remain as it came from the hands of its Divine Founder, the bond of love and union among mankind, and the connecting link between man and his Creator; a pure principle operating in the heart, and producing the blessed fruits of a holy, peaceable, and useful life; instead of letting it remain thus, man has converted it into an instrument wherewith to gratify all the evil propensities of his nature, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." When principles and practices such as these, are substituted for the pure, simple, and spiritual religion of Jesus Christ, is it to be wondered at that the fruits of such a corrupt tree should be bad? Is it to be wondered at, that the heathen, instead of exclaiming as of old, "See how these Christians love one another," should now say, "Behold how the Christians *hate* one another." On observing and considering these things, one is ready to proclaim with the poet, that

"Religion's pomp is the grace of art,
 She dwells not in walls of stone,
 But flees afar from the hollow heart,
 That worships in form alone.
 Though the notes be grand, and the forms profound,
 Though kings may consecrate,
 She scoras the purple and the ground,
 Where no heart-offerings wait.

Give me the Temple of earth and sky,
 With the purple of pride forgot;
 When the soul springs upward exultingly,
 And the trick of art is not.
 By the craggy rock on the sea-beat shore,
 To the music of the wave;
 Or nigh by the foaming torrents' roar,
 Where tall pines darkly wave.

Or give me the smiling green wood side,
 With the singing of the stream;
 While the winds, that o'er the dark woods ride,
 Soft whisper the *Holy Name*.
 When nature is worshipping around,
 In harmony of praise,
 With chearful heart, and with gladsome sound,
 HIM of Eternal days."

Unhappily for Ireland, religion, from peculiar circumstances, seems there to be likely to continue a never-failing source of rancorous hatred, contention, and other most injurious consequences. There the religion of the state is not the religion of the people. Harmony never can prevail where the majority are in subjection to the minority. In religion this must always be most strongly perceived. In Ireland, the majority of the nation are not only compelled to the expensive support of a splendid religious establishment of which they cannot partake, but also of one which they believe to be fatally erroneous. Over and above this, the large national revenue, which is now appropriated to the maintenance of the religion of the minority, was originally contributed to support the religion of the majority, which was then the religion of the state. Of this they were dispossessed (as formerly of the kingdom,) by the right of conquest.

That a portion of a people, situated as the catholic majority are in Ireland, should be dissatisfied, is inevitable; that they should be perpetually seeking opportunities to rid themselves of the humiliating and soul-harrowing burden of contributing to support, as they conceive, the predominance of error to the repression of the truth, is to be expected; nay, that they should seek to recover their long lost possessions is not to be wondered at. Here, then, is a great difficulty and hinderance, as regards Ireland, in effectually ameliorating the condition of the lower classes, by far the greater number of whom are Roman Catholics. To conciliate, and thereby remove, as far as human means can do it, this difficulty, the protestant ascendancy is loudly called upon by every claim of justice, of humanity, of religion, and of sound policy. To what length the concessions ought to be carried, I am not qualified to determine; it is a new case. Nothing, however, I am sure, but what would endanger the safety of the state ought to limit those concessions.

37. Are there any other observations which have occurred to you as necessary to lay before the committee?

Since I was last examined, my attention has been called in an especial manner to "The 15th Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state of the Courts of Justice in Ireland." The further observations, which I now wish to make, have arisen from that investigation. I am very certain, that there exists, at this time, in all classes throughout England, a sincere desire of serving Ireland, and that, a *disinterested* desire. Nevertheless, a *desire* alone will not answer the purpose; nor will any measure, I am more and more convinced, short of those before recommended by me, prove effective.

Poor Ireland seems always to have been unfortunately

constituted and situated ; — too large and powerful to submit, unresistingly, to become a province of England ; too near to be suffered to remain independent, unmolested and at peace ; and too little, too weak and too divided, to be able to maintain her independence by force of arms.

As soon, therefore, as England felt herself strong enough, the conquest of Ireland, under our Henry II., was attempted, and partially effected. Since that time (though long possessing chiefs and petty kings of her own,) she has never become an independent kingdom, but she has never ceased to feel that she ought to be free, or to make partial and ineffectual efforts to become so. These efforts have frequently led to the most horrible excess of cruelty and oppression. The stronger power not only found it desirable to suppress this continual annoyance, but likewise found it convenient to have the disposal of the confiscated estates of the rebellious chiefs, who were often, it is very clear, driven, or induced, to rebellion, for the sole purpose of forfeiture. After the reformation in England, religion became the plea for farther persecution and confiscation. During the usurpation of Cromwell, a bloody contest was waged between the old English occupants and the new comers, claiming and enforcing settlements. After the Revolution, during the reign of William III., unhappy Ireland was more fully than ever subdued, and a much greater portion of her territories portioned out by a strong military government among the favourites or partisans of that monarch, aliens to Ireland.

I have thought it desirable thus briefly to state these few well-known facts, to show the impossibility, as before stated, of Ireland, under such circumstances, being ever likely to maintain a large population while her revenue continued, in a great measure, the property of aliens, and expended by them in other countries. I have, farther, been induced to do this to account for the great deterioration, which, from the Report alluded to, has evidently taken place pretty generally *among the remaining resident gentry.*

This circumstance has been urged as a proof, that the poor of Ireland, ill as they are off, would be still more so, had they *more* resident gentry among them. It will be easy to show, hereafter, the fallacy of this attempt.

At present, I will endeavour to make it appear, from the Report, and my own knowledge, that such deterioration is the fact. In the first place, I will beg leave to state the evidence of several sub-sheriffs on the subject ; this evidence may be the more readily admitted when it is considered that they are, in a great measure, accusing their own body. Mr. John

Burke, under-sheriff of Mayo, states, that "of six embarrassed persons who are enabled to evade process, four are magistrates." Mr. John Cuthbert, under-sheriff of the county of Limerick, states, that "among the persons in the county of Limerick who had been able to avoid the execution of writs against them, there were many in the rank of gentlemen, considerably more than twenty, and among those, seven or eight were *magistrates*." He farther states, that such persons appear to be living at great expense, with establishments of their own; and that they avoid the arrest by constantly keeping their doors closed. He is then asked, "Are *many* of the gentry of the county of Limerick so circumstanced?" He replies, "On my oath, *I consider the majority*." Mr. John Smith, under-sheriff, county Galway, states, that though he does not recollect above seven or eight instances in that county, of persons so enabled to set the law at defiance, four of the number are magistrates.

"How," it may be asked, "how are they enabled to do this?" It is stated in evidence, "by favour of the sub-sheriff;" (the office of high-sheriff being little more than nominal) for which accommodation they pay him a commission, or, in other words, *bribe him*.

I will now, with permission, recur to the character and conduct of *grand juries*, the nature of whose duties is very extensive in Ireland. To them are referred all matters relating to the making and repairing of all roads, bridges, gaols, court houses, prisons, adjudging insurrectionary compensation, the appointment of county officers, and their salaries, and a great variety of other matters; yet are all their consultations, as well as their determination come to, *with closed doors*. The magistrates are appointed to enforce these decrees, without any right to dispute them. The grand jury are appointed by the high sheriff, and, of course, from the class of gentry. The evidence given before the commissioners, goes clearly to prove the very great and shameful abuse of these powers by grand juries, and that almost generally. I do not take into account the evidence of self-interested or prejudiced witnesses, but rely solely on that of those who evidently wish to speak most favourably of them.

From all these it appears that the selfishness, not to say dishonesty, of grand juries, in the expenditure of the public money is, beyond all conception, disgusting and injurious. Jobbing, as it is called, is, indeed, now too common to be much noticed; *i. e.* making, or professing to make, public roads, either where none are wanted, or where they are never made at all, or made in a way to be little better for making,

and all this for the purpose of giving a job to persons indebted to them for rent or otherwise. Nay, in some instances, domain or garden walls have been built with the money granted by presentment.

The tyranny of the resident Irish landlords, generally speaking, is in this country, in these days, almost incredible. This they are enabled to exercise from the power which they possess of *immediately distraining for even current rent*. By this means they can and do compel their tenants to work, either for themselves or others, at the prices which they (the landlords) fix, or, indeed, to do any thing that the landlord pleases. Mr. Nimmo, the civil engineer, on being asked, "Has this practice existed to a considerable extent?" answers: "I believe it is universal, both in the south and in the west, and that by very humane landlords. I believe that it exists from Cape Clear to the Giant's Causeway, but chiefly in Munster and Connaught." By this means, too, they are compelled not only to give their vote at elections, as commanded by their landlords, but even to swear to having a vote when they know that they have none. Nay, such is the abjectness to which they are reduced, that it is no uncommon thing for them, not only to solicit favours from their landlords *on their knees*, but also to return thanks in the same position. One respectable witness on being asked, "Do you think that that submissiveness arises from fear or respect?" answers, "I think that it is carried beyond proper respect. I think that they have been unused to fair dealing from the upper orders, and that when they get it they are astonished and gratified beyond measure!" It, indeed, seems, that if the *demoralization* of the lower orders were the object pursued by the higher, they could scarcely have effected it more completely. Mr. M'Carthy, a magistrate resident in the county of Cork, says, "In several instances a disregard to an oath has been encouraged both by the Irish gentlemen, and, I must say, the Irish clergy of both persuasions, for electioneering purposes."

Thus debased and oppressed below the condition of the serfs and villeins of the worst of feudal tyrants, is it to be wondered at that they are thought unentitled to that justice which the higher orders can obtain, or that the magistrates, who are among their oppressors, should refuse it to them? Not only subornation, but *compulsion* of perjury, seems to be far from uncommon. Dr. O'Brien says, "They consider themselves as the slaves of their landlords; they consider that they have no free will, and on occasions of elections I have myself witnessed the tears of these poor creatures going to the county

town to give their vote against what they called their consciences."

A very strong and general impression rests on the minds of the lower orders of the Irish, that there exists no law for them beyond the will of the magistrate. This can only have arisen from its being generally found practically true. The evidence adduced before the commissioners proves this to be so. Major Warburton, a soldier and a magistrate of a different character, states, that "While I was at Kilrush I appointed three days in each week to hear complaints; and I assure the committee, that sometimes the people would stay till ten o'clock at night, and come again in the morning. I have had hundreds. I have known some come thirty miles, passing many local magistrates." Mr. O'Connel says, "I never knew a complaint of an officer in the army who was a magistrate." The sale of justice, or rather injustice, by what are called trading magistrates, *i. e.* those who sell it to the highest bidder, has become so notorious, that it has of late years been recommended by government, through the judges, that "*hall door justice*" should be discontinued to be administered, and that the magistrates should only act when three or four together, in what is termed petty sessions.

Now all this dreadful misconduct of the higher classes of the resident land-owners in Ireland, *viz.* the sub-sheriffs, the grand juries, and the magistrates, has been adduced by the advocates of absentism, to prove that the lower classes are really better off (I am sure I do not know how they could be *worse* off,) than if they had them all living among them. They instance, too, the tenants upon the estates of the Duke of Devonshire and Earl Fitzwilliam, as being better off than those of by far the greater number of resident land owners. They admit, for the fact cannot be controverted, that it is impossible to conceive a state of greater wretchedness than that of the lowest classes in Ireland at this time. They admit, too, that capital and confidence are essential to any effectual and extensive improvement in their condition, and yet they advocate the withdrawing of capital, and the consequent banishment of confidence. These gentlemen cannot perceive, that it is the non-residence of almost all the most opulent and most respectable land-owners from the country, that throws all these offices of trust and importance into the hands of the profligate, the unprincipled, and the needy land owners, who, unchecked by the proximity, the observation, and the example of higher and better characters, can exercise their cupidity and tyranny with impunity. In fact, the present system is almost as injurious to the interests of the landlords, as to

that of the tenants. I should apprehend, that the advocates of absentism themselves will hardly affirm, that even the tenants of the Duke of Devonshire, or of Lord Fitzwilliam, would not be still better off, were those noblemen resident a great part of the year on their estates. What, then, would be the improved condition of those who reside on the estates of highly opulent and respectable absentee land-owners, who leave their estates entirely to the unchecked *mis*-management of middle-men, were *they* to change their impolitic system. The fact is, that the state of society in Ireland, in consequence of the dreadful poverty and oppression of the lower classes, has become so uncomfortable and so unsafe, that even the greater part of the native proprietors are thereby driven to reside in other countries. I can, however, tell these gentlemen, that there are still, even at this day, highly opulent and respectable characters, both gentlemen and noblemen, who have always been residents, and on whose estates the tenants and labourers are as orderly, as industrious, as respectable, and as comfortable, as the same classes are in England. I know, that during the late disturbances, the most disturbed districts were those where there *were* resident proprietors; and can this be wondered at, after we have seen the character and conduct of the generality of the *now* residents? Let the conditions, the character, and the conduct of resident proprietors be changed, and the whole of them live on their estates, and we shall soon see the attachment of their tenants return, for there is not on earth a more grateful people than the Irish; though, I trust, that they will not then think it necessary to go down upon their knees to *man* to express their obligations.

THE END.

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