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It is the Youngest State that makes the Oppressor. - Tacitus

No 468

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1830

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TOBACCO.

To the Editor of the Dublin Evening Post.

SIR—The following is taken from the votes and proceedings of the House of Commons of the 8th of April:—

"That there shall be levied, collected, and paid for and upon every pound avoirdupois, of all manufactured tobacco of the growth or produce of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, an excise duty of one shilling and eight pence, to be paid by the grower or producer thereof."

On Thursday last the House of Commons having resolved itself into a committee upon the tobacco duties, the foregoing is their reported resolution. Such a resolution, if carried into a law, will prove prohibitory of the growth of tobacco in Ireland, and consequently extinguish that infant but interesting branch of Irish industry.

During the last Session of Parliament, Ministers were about to introduce a Bill to assimilate the laws in Ireland to those of Great Britain, with respect to the growth of tobacco, the effect of which would have been a prohibition in Ireland under severe penalties, but a well timed remonstrance induced the Government to abandon the proposed measure.

In consequence we then supposed a more liberal policy would prevail, that the exploded practice of prohibition had been banished our legislation; that the great measure of the Relief Bill would have been followed by measures of national amelioration; and that our unemployed population would have opened to them every source of occupation.

Great then, indeed, was our surprise when the resolution at the head of this letter had unfolded the contemplated measure of the Government, which in effect is the same as the abandoned bill of the last Session of Parliament.

It would appear some wayward destiny still awaited our country, when the very men who had laid the basis of her future welfare and prosperity, by a misconception of her interests are about to blight their own act; and check the course of national improvement.

But it is only a misconception, and such a one as the conflicting interests and the nature of official details may have produced among men in public station. I therefore acquit the Cabinet of any thing like a hostile feeling towards Ireland, being persuaded of their disposition to do all that is useful and practical for her welfare.

Under this impression I feel it to be my duty to exhibit the impolicy of the proposed measure, and the great advantages that will arise from a lenient and judicious protection of the infant culture of tobacco in Great Britain and Ireland.

Heretofore the culture of tobacco was scarcely considered as one of the agricultural resources of these countries, from the impolitic and restrictive nature of our laws. That culture is now about to be legalized for the general welfare of the United Kingdom; and to reap advantage to the revenue and the country from the proposed alteration, it must be extended and encouraged rather than oppressed by fixed regulations.

It is impossible the culture will increase under the contemplated duty, which affords no remuneration for the outlay of capital required in the erection or modification of ovens, for the curing process, or the losses or casualties arising from the inexperience of the planters. This duty should be laid on by gradual or successive augmentations, as the culture may become extended or secured; and if it should never rise to the proposed amount—if the consumption is to be increased so as to prove beneficial to the Revenue, or a wide spread source of occupation to the People.

The impolicy of high duties is now perfectly understood, and the late returns made to Parliament give simple illustration of their injurious effects on the Revenue. It is only necessary to refer to the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Revenue arising in Ireland, for a proof of the beneficial effects of the present enormous duty on Foreign Tobacco, to be satisfied of the necessity of a different policy with regard to that of native growth. The Parliamentary Papers alluded to give the following results:—

In the years 1810, 1811, and 1812, the quantity of Tobacco on which duty was paid in England and Wales at two shillings per pound was 41,616,633 lbs. with a population of ten millions, and in 1820, 1821, and 1822, at a duty of four shillings, but 33,081,167 lbs., when the legal consumption in the ratio of the population of the former period, ought to have been fifty millions of pounds:—

In Ireland in the years 1810, 1811, and 1812, the consumption of duty paid tobacco was 21,612,332 lbs. with a population of four and a half millions; and for four years ending 1823 at four shillings per pound, the quantity on which duty was paid only amounted to 2,933,341 per annum, with a population of seven millions—and for three years ending the tenth day of October, 1829 the annual average quantity upon which duty was paid at three shillings per pound was 4,073,353 lbs. being an excess of 1,080,000 lbs. in favour of the lower duty.

A further reference to these documents will show that while Ireland for three years ending the 31st January 1812, paid duty on 31,612,332 pounds of tobacco, when the population was only four and a half millions, for three years ending 1st October, 1829, with a population of seven millions, duty was only paid on 12,229,060 lbs., whereas the increased consumption in the ratio of the increased population, ought to have been 40,221,403 lbs., which at a very low duty of nine pence per pound would have produced a larger revenue than the present duty of three shillings per pound!

Taking the average consumption of tobacco in England, Wales, and Ireland, for the years ending 1812, at 24 per lb., as given by these documents, with a population of thirteen and a half millions, we would have an annual consumption of 43,000,000 lbs., according to the ratio of our

present population; and that quantity, at the then standard duty of 2s. per lb. had it been continued, would produce a revenue of 4,300,000l. per annum, when the total revenue derived from tobacco in the United Kingdom, at 2s. per lb. only amounted to 3,793,000l. for the last year—being a loss of 1,530,000l. per annum by the alteration of duty.

Such being the injurious effect of raising the duty, we may infer, it is only a law standard that will restore the consumption to its natural limit; and to promote the consumption, our native tobacco should be supplied at a rate that will force it into use with the mass of our population, whose taste is formed to that of foreign growth. It appears the contemplated duty is to take place on all future grown tobacco in the United Kingdom, which embraces the growing crop. Such a measure having an *ex post facto* operation, was not expected when individuals embarked capital on the faith of the existing law, and have made expensive preparations for the crop of this season.

The duty, therefore, should not be pressed this year, but the measure should be made to have a prospective operation; and, in my humble opinion, for some years to come, the duty should not exceed six pence per lb. while, at the same time, the duty on foreign leaf should be reduced to two shillings per pound, which was the standard of 1812. Such a duty will satisfy the commercial interest who clamour for a reduction, and by a system of co-operation, and an union of exertion, bring the influence to bear upon the treasury. Such an arrangement would be likely to give satisfaction to all parties, and must inevitably increase the revenue, and the employment of the people through tobacco cultivation.

To estimate that duty and the extent to which that employment may go, it is necessary to calculate the probable consumption under the diminished duty. In the ratio of the present population of the kingdom of 23 million of souls, the consumption as has been stated, would now be 43 millions of lbs. wt. of tobacco per annum, had the duty been suffered to remain at 2s. per lb. Now, if native tobacco were chargeable with but 6d. per lb. and became mixed with foreign leaf in the manufacture, that tobacco would be sold in the competition of trade to the consumer, at 13d. per lb., and such a price would induce in the country, that produce consumption, which distinguishes those parts of the continent where the use of tobacco is not limited or opposed by taxation. If we be allowed to judge of that inducement by the habits of the Dutch and Germans, it would be ten times that of the standard of 1812; but admitting it to be only three times that quantity, how will the account stand as to revenue and employment in a few years. An increase of three times that amount would give, say 130,000,000 lbs. as a consumption of native and foreign tobacco in the kingdom. Of this quantity 100,000,000 lbs. might be of native growth, which at 6d. per lb. duty is 2,500,000l. If a duty of 2s. per lb. on the remaining 30,000,000 lbs. of foreign leaf for the use of the opulent and luxurious is 3,000,000l., making a total revenue from tobacco of 5,500,000l. sterling, which will continue to increase with the increase of population. The advantage does not rest here—smuggling would be suppressed—the American and Dutch Companies for the illicit traffic and introduction of tobacco into these countries, would dissolve their lucrative partnerships—the coast-guard establishment, which costs 4,000,000l. per annum, might be dispensed with, and their duty confined to the constabulary of the country. All these great advantages to the revenue are no longer hypothetical, but established on official data contained in the report of the Commissioners alluded to.

The other great advantage of employment presents a still more favourable aspect to the humane legislator; one hundred millions of pounds native tobacco, would require on the average of the State of Maryland, 100,000 English acres of land for their production, and 500,000 persons of different ages for their cultivation for nearly six months of the year, allowing five persons to a family, and two persons old or young from each, whose labour, in the state of the Irish poor would support the rest, we have 250,000 families supported, or an entire population of 1,250,000 souls. Again, what would be the benefit of a diffusion of so much money paid in wages? The cost of labour and preparation is nearly 15 per cent, which gives a sum of 1,500,000l. of capital annually distributed amongst an unemployed population. In a country situated like Ireland, such a diffusion would give a new impetus to industry, and that money would revert through various channels to the public treasury, whose now all is poverty and embarrassment.

Fortified by these statements, it is impossible that a government that has done so much for Ireland will disregard the public voice in a cause so just, if raised in time to avert the rash and precipitate measure with which we are threatened.—Let the agricultural interest of Ireland and of Great Britain, direct their immediate attention to this subject while time yet remains for remonstrating against the gross impolicy and injustice of the bill about to be founded on the resolution at the head of this letter.

I feel I have already trespasses too much on your valuable space, but one word more, and I have done. By the sixth article of the Union, it is permitted the Imperial Legislature to regulate and amend the internal duty arising from any article of the growth, produce, or manufacture of Ireland; but it is provided that such additional internal duty shall be just and reasonable. Now, a prohibitory duty is neither just nor reasonable, and its imposition must be considered as an infraction of that great fundamental law. The right of Ireland, to grow tobacco, is secured by that great compact; and I am sure Ministers will maintain that Act rather than consent the people, by a disregard of Irish interests, that it is to a restored national Legislature they must look for protection

under the paternal sway of which such a resolution as has been the subject of commentary would have never found a place on its Journals.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient Servant, THOMAS BRIDGEMAN.

Piltown, Drogheda, April 11.

SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

On Monday a most numerous meeting of this Society was held, pursuant to adjournment from Saturday, in the Parliamentary Intelligence Office, 26, Stephen Street, Dublin, at three o'clock.

THOMAS CLONEY, Esq. in the Chair. On taking his seat, Mr. Cloney said he had been maligned and vilified by the base portion of the press of this country. These taunts he despised, and he would not now have noticed them only for the purpose of detaching his adherents to publish any charges they could substantiate against him. Cheers. He had the good fortune to enjoy the confidence and esteem of Protestants as well as Catholics, and this confidence he would fearlessly assert by never, in a single instance, violated. Cheers. No man could truly impeach his character, and he again called upon the base press which slandered him to publish their charges, and if they could to prove them. Loud cheers.

Mr. Dayer then read the minutes of the last meeting.

DUBLIN CORRESPONDENT OF THE MORNING HERALD.

Mr. O'Connell—I beg, Sir, to call the attention of the meeting to the base conduct of a portion of the English press, which employs every means to malign and slander the people of Ireland. This is a system that has long been going forward. The London Morning Herald has always in pay some base creature, whose duty it is to furnish his about the population of this country. These creatures have often been contradicted, but although more than one English Paper copies the lies, not one of them publishes the refutation. I am quite satisfied what I now say in reply to the most atrocious falsehood that ever was published upon any people, will not be copied into the London press. I am not surprised at finding the lie in question published in the Morning Herald. Thomas, the proprietor of that paper, wrote to my lamented friend, Mr. Bric, who had been one of his correspondents, complaining of his furnishing accounts of the good traits of the Irish character, and telling that nothing would go down with the English and reports of the Irish, the ignorance, and the bad feeling of the Irish nation. These were, literally, the words of Thomas—and the latter is still in existence. Hear, hear.

There is also another lie far from the same kind to the same effect in Dublin, and can be seen by any one who chooses. My dear and worthy friend, poor Bric, of course, refused to comply with the request, and that very day he furnished his account. I will do Thomas the justice to say, he still continued Mr. Bric as his correspondent, and paid well for his contributions. Where shall I find such pure souls as poor Bric?—Oh! I am wrong—these are, I am proud to say, as pure and worthy young gentlemen in the present rising generation, as ever lived and blessed an age. But there are also miscreants without talent, without principle or honour, who are satisfied to drag out a bare existence upon the profits of proscribed minds—wretches who pander to the passions of another country by the vilification of their own—cowardly scoundrels, who shrink behind the cloak of secrecy and make their anonymous correspondence the poisoned instrument with which they would stab every honourable and independent being in society. One of this infamous class has been lately traducing the Catholics of Dublin, and even maligning the Protestants. I find in the Herald a pirated correspondence, purporting to be written from St. Peter's church, and dated from hour to hour, for the purpose of giving the audacious falsehood some local effect. It begins by stating, that 'the Catholics are more unindulgently avowing their hostility to the Established Church.' It accuses us of hypocrisy. Now, this is false; we are not, and never were hypocrites on this point or on any other. We mean the Catholic body—never did and never will conceal our dislike at the way in which we are taxed, for the purpose of adding to the overgrown wealth of the richest church in the world. But we are not hostile to the church itself—it is against the bloated establishment that we complain. Is it not plain that if the Catholics were hostile to the church, they could have the necessaries of life—bread—clothing—by their mere vote? Hear, hear. The writer goes on to say that 'O'Connell, who lives in the parish, and his partisans, will create a great commotion here tomorrow as was never known against the church, and will bring a fire-brand amongst the people.' There is one truth in this paragraph. I do reside in the parish; but events have already proved now utterly false—what a tissue of malicious misrepresentation is the rest of the communication.—Hear, hear. I did not go to St. Peter's vestry, nor did I intend to go. My friends, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dolan, asked me to go; but I refused, because I am opposed to the Vestry Act, and my attending and voting under it would be virtually sanctioning what I mean to condemn in another place. Fact on fact I find that Archdeacon Torrens was struck dumb at the proposition—a laugh—and that several Protestants declared their determination to oppose it. If I am rightly informed, the worthy Archdeacon still retains the use of his tongue, and only one Protestant opposed the motion. Hear, hear. The Catholics of that parish pay 5,000l. to the Established Church, and I think it would have been no harm

if even 100l. were voted to them out of it.—Hear, hear. I know it would conciliate much in favour of the establishment. The Vestries are now over, and as a lawyer, I assert not three items in any general vestry in Dublin were legal. If Gouliard's exposition be right, and it must be so; for he says the King is the head of the Church, and being his Majesty's Minister, he could not, of course, be mistaken; but if it be right, there can be no question as to the illegality of the late Vestries. Yes, Sir, this communication is from beginning to end a gross falsehood—a base perversion of fact—an infamous misrepresentation of occurrences—an outrageous slander upon the Catholics and Protestants of St. Peter's Parish—a calumny having no foundation, but in the profligate and vicious mind of the depraved wretch who penned the deliberate untruth. If the Morning Herald be honest, they will dismiss the miscreant at once, and if not, they will retain him. If honest, they are bound to copy the contradiction, and to publish the refutation. I have said this much to caution the people of England against the poisonous food which the lying correspondent of the Morning Herald would give them. Cheers.

Mr. Lawless—I rise to vindicate my friend Mr. Thomas, who, I regret to say, cannot defend himself—he is paralyzed.

Mr. O'Connell—I wish his tongue were loosened his press paralyzed. A laugh.

Mr. Lawless—The letter which Mr. O'Connell alludes to was a joke. I would as soon plagiarise my poor friend Bric as any man; but I assure Mr. Thomas wrote in just. I know no London paper which is so characterized for impartiality as the Morning Herald. It gives every man fairly and impartially. When in 1825 I had occasion to promulgate opinions that were not very popular at the time, the columns of Thomas's paper were open to me. They are open to every man, of every party. I know Thomas intimately—and at his own table I heard him complain of my politics and my religion.

Mr. O'Connell—They ought not to quarrel with you Jack for your religion. A laugh.

Mr. Lawless—I must O'Connell's religion.—Laugh. My friend O'Connell is astonished at Thomas allowing him to get into the Morning Herald. He ought to know that the richest portion of the Irish press trades and lives on lies. They measure their price by the length of their lies. Mr. Lawless then condemned the junior members of the bar who succeeded from the public cause, and concluded by saying he was one O'Connell's observations would be accurately reported here, and copied into the Morning Herald. Cheers.

Mr. Finn, in alluding to the late Vestry meeting in Peter's Parish, and they had been frequently caught with soft words, and Archdeacon Torrens by that means got his measures quietly carried. But the Catholics had a power at the appointment which they did not usually often exercise; and in his opinion they might, if they chose, throw the whole appointment on the Protestant parishes—this, however, was not a course which he would recommend, though at the same time he would urge them to the practice of those powers with which the law has invested them.

Mr. Redmond said, that on that occasion his friends and himself had acted under the conviction that the first want of the country was unanimity; and he had thrown out some observations for the purpose of producing that desirable ruling, which he thought so fully reciprocated, that if the state of the law had justified the grant applied for by his friend Mr. Dolan, it would have been cheerfully conceded to him. That the law did interfere was not the fault of the petitioners; and, in evidence of their willingness to contribute, he had since received a subscription from an individual of that parish, whose name he was not at liberty to mention, for the purpose contemplated by Mr. Dolan's motion. With respect to the statement in the Morning Herald, he could say, his friend Mr. Dolan had no intention of introducing the measure half hour before he submitted it to the Vestry. He disagreed with Mr. Lawless in thinking that the press was bound to publish falsehood; the dissemination of an evil nothing could justify; and therefore he would say that the Morning Herald was deeply and grossly guilty in having a person here to pander to the corrupt appetite and prejudices of some of its readers.

Mr. Finn moved that Mr. Millor, of Carlow, be admitted a member.

IRISH TOBACCO DUTY.

Mr. O'Connell said, he was unable to draw up the draft of the petition upon this subject today, the address to the people of Ireland having occupied a great part of his time. But the committee, by referring to Mr. Brodigan's pamphlet, would ascertain some important facts which it would be well to have embodied in the petition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was of opinion that Irish tobacco could not be kept out of stock.—This was certainly an error in law, for until duty was imposed upon the article, it was not exciseable, any more than any other agricultural produce a man might keep in his stores or his yard. But the Irish tobacco could not, as yet, be used unless it were mixed with foreign or exciseable tobacco, by which means the revenue was benefited. Leaving the abstract of the duty would increase the revenue; as it would duty a greater cost to the consumer of the mixed article.—Hear, hear. Mr. Lawless, the people of Ireland had a legal right to the free culture of tobacco, as the privilege was granted to their ancestors in 1779, in lieu of the injury they suffered during the three years embargo. The imposition of the duty upon the lone plant, would be a gross violation of that compact, and a plunder of the people's right.—Hear, hear.

Mr. Brodigan's letter will be found in our preceding issues.

On the motion of Mr. O'Connell, William McDermott, of Springfield, Esq. Joseph Albes MacDonnell, of Doncastle, Esq. and John Plunket, of Mount Plunket, Esq. were admitted members of the Society, and loud applause.

ADDRESS TO THE NORTH.

Mr. O'Connell said, that this day week an address was ordered to be issued to the people, calling upon Ribblesmen, Orangemen, and all Irishmen to unite, and forget all past differences, to forgive past injuries, to bury in perpetual oblivion all old animosity, to obey the laws, and to form one grand, inviolable league for the regeneration of their common country. The duty of drawing up that address had been imposed upon him, and most readily did he undertake it.—Cheers. The only enemy of Ireland now was the man who would under any pretence keep alive dissension, and prevent Irishmen of every creed and party from forming a glorious coalition in defence of the sacred rights of their country, which were threatened with utter destruction by the British Minister. Hear. It was this exasperation of feelings—this inflaming of the bad passions of our nature that hitherto kept Ireland enslaved and degraded. The contest was now over—the battle was fought—the bloodless victory of religious freedom was won—all the inhabitants of this land were upon an equality, and it was now high time for men to look to their real interests. Loud cheering. Ireland was poor because she was misgoverned. She was misgoverned, because her sons were divided. Let this case be once removed, and Ireland would again, like the phoenix, rise more glorious from the ashes of the old. Cheers. If a man was degraded as a Christian and as an Irishman, who would not feel ashamed to solicit the friendship, the unity, and the good will of every one of his countrymen. To achieve this great end, the only way was the first object of this Society—was to unite the first. Let the sentiment be often repeated—let a million be in every man's mouth—let it be the exact echo of all to harmonize the discordant elements of the country—and in a little time peace, prosperity, and independence would succeed to poverty, misery, and thralldom.—Hear, hear. It was division that struck Ireland down—division made her the ex-heremite of the foreign Parliament. 'Twas too well understood that national representatives to Parliament had been to one of these had no real connection with Ireland. There were two of them who never saw Ireland, and who knew nothing of her, except that the price of their seats passed through the Bank of Messrs. Labouchere, or the Provincial Banks, into the pockets of the proprietors. For this infamous system there was a remedy—and that was the repeal of the Union. Loud cheers. This, however, could never be obtained unless by the peaceable, united, and constitutional exertions of the entire people; and it was in order to bring about this to which he desired that he (Mr. O'Connell) had prepared in a talk long draft of an address to the country, which he would read and then move to be referred to the committee for discussion. Hear, hear.

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

Can you the blood of our fathers, the blood of our country, the blood of our religion, the blood of our love of the land and of the land?

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN.—The Society of the Friends of Ireland, of all religious denominations, address you on subjects of the greatest importance to the peace, prosperity, and freedom of Ireland—upon subjects involving your most valuable temporal interests, and which are not problems when we speak, affecting your eternal, never-ending doom. Upon these important and vital subjects we request your serious and patient attention. Let the suggestion of bad positions be suppressed—let the voice of party be silent—listen to us with calmness and deliberation. If what we advise be consistent with common sense, and above all, if it be conformable to the divine precepts of our blessed Redeemer, cherish and adopt our counsel. If what we advise be wrong in principle, or pernicious in practice, reject that advice; remember that your rejection will be of no value, unless it be the result of sober investigation and of dispassionate judgment.

But whether you adopt or reject, be, at all events, quite convinced that our motives are pure and disinterested—our advice to promote harmony and mutual affection is as honest as it is honest—as sincere as it is benevolent. We seek for—we want nothing for ourselves as individuals—we anxiously desire every thing that can effect good for Ireland. Our object is simple and single—we most earnestly aspire to promote the peace, the prosperity, and the constitutional freedom of old Ireland.

It is not the interest or advantage of any one party, of any one sect or persuasion that we cultivate, it is the interest and advantage of all the people of Ireland, of each and every party, and of all religious denominations.

Neither do we address ourselves to any one party, sect, or persuasion—we address ALL the people of all Ireland.

We address the Protestants as well as the Catholics—the Presbyterians as well as the Quakers—the Methodists, as well as every class of Protestant dissenters.

We preach to all peace and all good will—we recommend to all harmony and affection—we would promote amongst ALL benevolence and Christian charity.

We call upon each and all to forget past feuds—to obliterate past dissension—to bury in eternal oblivion all past insults and injuries, and we gladly repeat our motto; and we conjure all to unite in mutual benevolence and Christian charity.

Why should animosity and ill will continue to subsist. The Catholic has nothing more to desire as a Catholic. The Protestant has nothing more to withhold as a Protestant. There is now

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SELECT COMMITTEE FOR IRISH POOR.

Extracts from the evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the state of the Irish Poor: Mr Rickman recommended an equal tax of ten per cent. to be imposed on all the landed property of Ireland; to be levied only in case the occupier shall fail to prove that one-tenth of the net amount of his rent has been expended by his landlord, in some improvement of the land so occupied—in effect, that the proprietor, in concert with his tenant, shall thus expend one-tenth of the clear rental, during a limited term, say seven or ten years, unless under special circumstances, it be not practicable, or not advisable further to improve his own land, in which case he shall be permitted to pay his 10th into the Bank of Ireland, receiving a moderate interest for his money, until the sum shall be beneficially applied in furtherance of the same object, producing a higher rate of interest when specially appropriated thereto.—What was not elsewhere expended, to be appropriated to bog and mountain improvement, (free of incumbrances for a term of years,) and upon this point he made various suggestions—such as the employment of sappers and miners, to the reclamation of the peasantries in drainage, &c.; the rejection of the English Enclosure Act, as fraught with serious expense and litigation; and the allotment of a summary decision for site and boundaries, similar to that of the memorable Committee of Judges, appointed to decide after the fire of London in 1666; “summarily, et sine forma et figure iudicis, upon the difference between landlords and tenants,” &c.

To avoid false returns of rents, Mr Rickman suggested that the lease or tenure of the tenant for such attempt to mislead, should be vacated, the occupier always to be empowered to deduct this one-tenth land tax from the proprietor.—He estimates, that as the rental of England and Wales amounts to 30 millions, that of Ireland ought to be fifteen millions, so that her proposed land-tax might be 15 millions a year, which at one pound per acre would drain all the real bog in one year, if entirely so applied. If one third were only applied, the drainings would be accomplished in three years, and would, in the process, tempt into activity all the dormant capital of the United Kingdom, when the result would be the development of all the great natural resources of Ireland.

Mr John Dyas, an extensive farmer, holding above seven hundred acres, near Kells, County Meath, and collector of the County Cess, went into much detail relating to the condition of the peasantry of that part of the country, and their whole system of husbandry. Thousands of them, most able and anxious to work, were, he said, the greater part of the year unemployed—the people were depressed—it was one tenant in twenty who had sufficient capital to improve the land—the rents were too high—the taxes were too high—and every thing looked bad. “You have stated,” said one of the Committee to this witness, “that many thousands of persons are unemployed in your neighbourhood, and those able-bodied men capable of labour, and desirous of obtaining it? They are as able and as fine young men, and as willing to work, as any men living; and all I wonder is, that we have not more robberies, and more destruction done in the country; and I have often lain down in my bed, and wondered at all the creatures around me, who were out of employment, that could not get work, and that were idle all the winter, what would become of them.” When it is considered that the barony of Upper Kells contains an agricultural population, exceeding twenty thousand persons, some idea may be formed of the extent of their distress. Mr Dyas, having acted as a Commissioner under the tithe valuation act, described the operation of that bill as having somewhat relieved the small farmer holding from ten to twenty acres, and thrown the burthen on the extensive landholder. He explained, however, that notwithstanding the provisions of the act, by which the tithe composition rent is payable, in the case of a new lease by the landlord, he only knew one man who insisted on his right by law, and obtained the allowance; such was the tyranny exercised over the tenants, that the burthen was still thrown on the occupier. Both county rates and church rates were likewise very high, he said. He thought a law which would in future leases relieve the occupying tenant from Grand Jury taxation, would be a great benefit.

To raise the unemployed into a condition of obtaining subsistence, he mentioned various projects which had been talked of, such as the canal formerly intended from Negan to Kells, down to Virginia Water, and into Lough Ramser. This, if carried into effect, would greatly improve the markets, and materially serve the Counties of Cavan, Westmeath, and Longford. He suggested an income tax on any man who had over 500l a year, to be applied to the relief of the poor.—Nothing, he said, would be received as so great a blessing by the poor as employment, and if that were provided by the formation of canals, new lines of road, reclaiming waste lands, &c. immense advantage would be felt throughout the country. He thought such an income tax, as he had suggested, to be the only means of effectually getting at the rich landlord, and the nobleman and gentlemen in England, who had large properties in Ireland, which they spent elsewhere, without affording adequate employment to the poor on their estates. This assessment might, he thought, be fully administered by local committees of respectable individuals, always acting under the control of some person to be nominated by the Government, to prevent an intimation of the road jobbing propensities of the country gentlemen; for instance, one inspector in each parish, and then one in each barony. In answer to questions who her it would not take a great number of years to carry into effect these suggested public works, and what was to become of the poor afterwards, Mr Dyas very properly replied, that the country would, at all events, be very materially improved, and the people themselves better instructed in useful arts, and well regulated industry.

Mr Browne, the distiller, of Limerick, was next examined as to the wages which were paid to his workmen at the distillery, and in procuring turf and fuel at a bog near Castle Connell. When asked his opinion as to any improvement in the agriculture of the country, as manifested in the quality of grain, he replied that he did not think the improvement in the quality had kept pace with the other cultivations; neither had the poor farmers, for want of capital, availed themselves to any great degree of the better kind of machinery; with the farmers of capital it was otherwise. As to the operation of taxation as a damper to the national improvement, he said the coal tax most certainly prevented the increase of manufactories, and that on foreign timber likewise prevented the better building of the habitations of the people; the duty on Baltic timber being heavier than on American, persons mostly used the latter, which decayed sooner, and did great injury to houses and manufactories. In the exports and imports of Limerick, there had been a great increase of late years. Mr James Butler Bryan, the Barrister, of Eccles-street, Dublin, was examined. He had been originally of the Medical Profession with Surgeon McDowell, and had opportunities, as his family had property in the Liberties, of seeing the condition of the lower classes, which was most wretched. He was a member of the Relief Committee to assist the weavers during temporary distress, and he described their plan of operations. The present condition of the Irish poor was, from his observation, most miserable—he alluded particularly to the Counties of Meath, Kilkenny, and Tipperary, and their distress he chiefly attributed to the exaction of high rents. The rental actually paid by occupiers in Ireland, he estimated at 9,000,000l. annually, about one third of which went to absentee, who invested (as he was informed by an eminent banker) about 1,000,000l. a year in the British funds—subtracting that amount from the labour of the people. He was examined at some length as to his opinion whether the poor's rate had a tendency to raise or lower the wages of the labourer, when he eventually admitted the general opinion to be, that it raised the value of labour. The poor rates in England, he thought, were a great cause of the outlay of capital, but he was unable to explain why there was a great demand for labour in those parts of Scotland where the poor rate was the most trifling; or in Lancashire where the rate is smallest. Employment upon useful works he looked to as the best source of improvement for this country; he admitted that Grand Jury presentments were paid by the occupying tenants, who were in very depressed circumstances in general; but he thought he had a plan which would obviate the evil of the present mode of presentment—it was this:—That Government might appoint engineers for each province, to lay out, plan and superintend public works, such as making piers, harbours, removing the bars of rivers, improving inland navigation, &c. to be approved of by the Grand Jury. That any pauper having no means to maintain himself, and using no ordinary or daily trade to get a living by, may be sent (on application) to the district or other works, by the overseers or guardians of the poor, and his wages charged to the township wherein he was born. That any parish, or number of parishes in concert, may purchase waste or other land, and may institute public works, provide materials, and find employment for their poor. That all Grand Jury presentments for roads, &c. before they are passed, receive the approval of the district engineer, and be executed by the parishes belonging to the parish wherein the works lie. That the assessment on each township, for the wages of paupers on the public works, be apportioned between landlord and tenant, according to valuation, under all leases. That all disputes arising from this assessment, &c. may be settled by arbitration or umpirage. That as some persons dread an excessive pressure of the assessment in particular places, the labour rate may not exceed a certain poundage for a certain period on the valuation, then with power to present for the residue. That the Clergy of all denominations might contribute according to their receipts. Parishes might be empowered to assess themselves for the impotent poor. In his further examination, he had no doubt, he said, that the effect of a compulsory provision for the poor would be the lowering of rents by the landowners, who would desist from exacting high rents, if in the end they had to pay the wages of paupers, and prefer to expend their money more among their labourers, and thereby develop further the great natural resources of Ireland. In reply to a series of interrogatories relative to the probable demand upon this compulsory provision, he expressed his opinion that it might amount to the employment of 100,000 men, at an expense of £1,825,000, which added to the £800,000 of Grand Jury assessments, would diffuse a state of industry and comfort over families comprising 500,000 individuals. The selection from paupers applying for employment he should leave to the overseers, and for permanent overseers he should like in the south of Ireland to have the Catholic and Protestant Clergymen; annual overseers ought to be likewise nominated by the Parishes. All these offices should be gratuitous. With reference to our local and Charitable Institutions, he spoke highly of the Mendicity Society, and thought the medical provision for the sick poor was generally sufficient at present—fever in Ireland was prevalent, but always, he believed, superinduced by want, and after a scanty crop of potatoes. On the 21 of April, Colonel Page, of Bock-shire, was examined. He stated himself to be well acquainted with the English system of poor laws, from having practically assisted in their administration under Mr Sturges Bourne's Act. He had visited Ireland last summer, seen the principal towns of Munster, and been as far north as Belfast and Armagh; his main object was to examine the condition of the poor. The great difference which struck him between the frame of society in England and Ireland was in the absence of the intermediate links of society, and the existence of the middle class of yeomanry. The great difference he observed was between the very rich and the very poor—the extreme opulence and magnificence of the one, and the extreme poverty, misery, and wretchedness of the other. He mentioned the amusement with which he saw a population of

38,000 souls living on 36,000 acres of land at Carrickmacross, upon the estates of Lord Balfour and Ferrers. The effects of the subdivision of holdings caused extreme misery. He mentioned the various causes which were stated to him; being in operation, to reject the small cottier; namely, the Subletting Act, the disfranchisement of the forty shilling freeholders, &c. He said fifty or sixty years ago, and not long since, of the estates of Lady Sutherland, this plan of subletting was in full force, still the appearance in Ireland was, that it did not convert the cottier into a labourer, but into a pauper.

Should you consider it would be open to any objection, if the Grand Jury had the additional power, under proper check and control, of appointing additional infirmaries, if they thought fit? From what I have heard of the Grand Jury, it is not desirable to give them much more power than they seem to have; their character is not very good. In looking to Ireland his decided opinion was, that a compulsory provision would lead to a fair apportionment of the burden upon all classes of Society, according to their means of bearing it, and he had heard in Dublin that only one seventh of the rich of the metropolis pay for the support of the mendicity. In the case of a compulsory assessment, a portion of the subscribers might, he thought, manage their funds; he thought a fair compulsory assessment decidedly the best plan, and he saw no reason why it should not be well administered, for there are very intelligent and active men in Dublin, and every city in Ireland; I have seen in the counties of Cork, and Waterford, and Limerick, many very excellent men, and in Dublin the same—some of them are Quakers. Having stated your observations with respect to the charitable establishments in Ireland, supported by local taxation, has any plan occurred to you, by which the condition of the people could be raised? That is the very problem this Committee is to solve.

Do you conceive that any plan for the introduction of the Poor Laws, as known and practised in England, would be advantageous to Ireland, and effectual in improving the condition of the people? The great difficulty at present in the actual state of the population; if the population were I should say in a healthy state; if there was not such an immense mass of misery and mendicity, I should say the English Poor Laws, with the exception of one clause of the 41st of Elizabeth, would be very useful in Ireland. I give this opinion with very great diffidence, because I do not know enough of the real state of the poor in Ireland. He then proceeded to state that beyond the relief of the aged and impotent, and cases of urgent distress, he would not go—but he would empower the parish to give relief to able bodied men, if necessary, either in money or in work.

Will it not be found, that setting poor people to work upon the waste estate which other people have been employed on before, unless you can increase the consumption, is giving to one what you take away from the other? No—because I have seen a great deal of improvement in England in consequence of the Poor Laws. In my opinion, I conceive that the state of our roads, and the improvements in a state of 1840 years, have been a great deal owing to the distress of the times, and the necessity of employing the people by those who must support them if they did not employ them.

In the modification of Poor Laws you have alluded to, would it be desirable to create a right on the part of the poor to demand and receive a relief? That relief now exists in England and Scotland. Referring to a new county, applying for relief to any modification of poor laws to be introduced into Ireland, should you wish to create a right on the part of the poor to demand and receive relief? I should wish that the system should be assimilated in England, Ireland, and Scotland; I consider the system in Scotland to be the best, the three countries being under the same Government, let the system be exactly alike as you can, but you must either abolish the system in England and Scotland, or apply it to Ireland.

Supposing no poor law existed in England, or Scotland, and you were to devise a plan for the introduction of the poor laws into Ireland, would that involve a legal right, on the part of the poor, to demand relief? One cannot answer an hypothetical question when there is the fact standing in the face; in England they have the virtual right, and in Scotland they have a declared right, in the barony parish of Glasgow, viz.: “That a pauper in Scotland is not a beggar of charity, but the creditor of a fund, of which the Kirk, Session, and Heritors are accountable trustees.”

He then went on at considerable length to explain why he thought it advisable the Irish poor should, under certain limitations, have a legal right of relief—that is, within the classes expressed in the Act of Elizabeth, namely, “the lame, impotent, old, blind, poor, and not able to work.” Have you paid any attention to the emigration of the Irish poor into this country, and passing Irish vagrants home? In Bock-shire and Wiltshire it falls very heavy on the county rates; but I am a willing admirer of the Irish labourers into England. We cannot do without them; our harvest could not be got in in Berkshire, without the Irish labourers—nor in Wiltshire.

The conduct of those labourers was generally very good; they did not quarrel in the country, as they did near London. Mr Mahony was examined—He is a decided advocate for a modified system of poor laws. This Gentleman, on entering the Committee the second time, addressed the Chairman, and said, that as he saw by the Irish papers, Mr O'Connell was complaining in Dublin of his having been examined in his absence on a former day, contrary to some expectation of Mr O'Connell, that he was to be apprised when he (Mr Mahony) was to appear for that purpose. He had now to request that the Committee would postpone his further examination until Mr O'Connell's return, as he had not the least desire to escape from that gentleman's interrogatories—on the contrary, this was exactly the subject upon which he should court them. Several of the Members of the Committee declined Mr Mahony's application, and proceeded with his further examination forthwith, declaring that they had nothing to do with Mr O'Connell's movements or speeches in Dublin.

A BILL FOR THE RELIEF OF HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS PROFESSING THE JEWISH RELIGION.

[Note.—The words printed in Italics are proposed to be inserted in the Committee.] Whereas, by the operation of various laws, His Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion are subject to certain restraints and disabilities; and whereas, it is expedient that the same should be removed, and the subjects of His Majesty, professing the Jewish religion, be placed in the same state and condition, as to all civil rights and privileges, as His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects: May it, therefore, please your Majesty, that it may be enacted, and be it enacted, by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of this Act, it shall be lawful for any of His Majesty's subjects, professing the Jewish religion, to have and enjoy all such and the same civil rights, franchises, and privileges, and to hold, exercise, and possess such and the same offices, places, employments, trusts, and confidences, as the subjects of His Majesty, professing the Roman Catholic religion, are now by law able and competent to have, enjoy, hold, exercise, and possess, and under the same restrictions; provided always, that His Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion shall, in all cases in which His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects are by law required so to do, take, in the same manner and under the same conditions herein-after mentioned, and subscribe the oaths set forth and appointed in and by an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament, intituled, “An Act for the Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects,” and make and subscribe the declaration prescribed by an Act passed in the sixth year of His Majesty's said reign, intituled, “An Act for repealing so much of several Acts as impose the necessity of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a qualification for certain offices and employments.”

Provided always, that if further enacted, that when any of His Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion shall take the said oaths or subscribe the said declaration, the words “on the true faith of a Christian” shall be omitted.

And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that whenever any of His Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion, shall, at any time or times hereof or hereafter, be required to take the said oaths, appointed and set forth in and by the said Act, passed in the said last Session of Parliament, or any other oath or oaths, and the said party professing the Jewish religion, in like manner as Jews are admitted to be sworn to give evidence in Courts of Justice; and the same shall be deemed a sufficient and lawful taking of such oaths on all occasions whatsoever.

And be it further enacted, that from and after the passing of this Act, His Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion shall be and become subject and liable to such and the same incapacities, disabilities, and penalties as His Majesty's subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion are now subject and liable to by law, and to no other incapacities, disabilities, or penalties whatsoever; and that the oath herebefore referred to, being taken in manner aforesaid, and subscribed by any person professing the Jewish religion shall be of the same force and effect, for the relief and exemption of the person taking and subscribing the same, from any disabilities, incapacities, or penalties whatsoever, as the same oath would be for the relief and exemption of a person professing the Roman Catholic religion, if taken and subscribed by such person in the manner directed by the said Act of the last Session of Parliament; and that the oath hereby authorised to be taken by persons professing the Jewish religion, shall be administered, recorded, and certified by the same person, and in the same manner respectively as the last-mentioned Act the oaths thereby authorised to be taken by persons professing the Roman Catholic religion are directed to be administered, recorded, and certified.

HEADS OF A BILL. To regulate the Importation of Arms, Gunpowder, and Ammunition into Ireland, and the making, selling, and keeping of Arms. The preamble recites that the Act 3 Geo. 4, c. 4, as to importation of arms, &c. will expire with the present Session, and enacts as follows:—No ordinance, arms, gunpowder, &c. shall be imported without license from Lord Lieutenant or Chief Secretary of Ireland under this Act, (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 1.)

Persons may land arms for personal defence, on registering the same at the port, (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 2.) Arms, &c. imported without license forfeited, as also the importing vessels; penalty on Importer £500, on master of vessel £200, (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 3.) Offenders may be arrested and bound before Justice of Peace with motives. No person in Ireland had gunpowder, cannon, or ordinance, without annual license of Lord Lieutenant, &c. under this Act. (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 4 & 5.) Penalty £500 and forfeiture of gunpowder, &c. No person, not licensed as a manufacturer, shall sell gunpowder without annual license (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 5.) Penalty £50 and forfeiture of gunpowder, &c. Licenses (under this or any former Act) may be suspended on notice to party licensed from Chief Secretary, &c. (3 Geo. 4, sec. 7.) Affidavit of shop in selling gunpowder during suspension of license, £500 and the gunpowder. Maker of or dealer in gunpowder selling to a licensed dealer, shall endorse the quantity on the buyer's license—(3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 9.) Penalty £20. Penalty on selling more than two pounds weight to unlicensed persons, £100. Penalty for selling more than two pounds within two months to unlicensed person. (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 10.) Cannon, arms, gunpowder, &c. shall be removed without license. (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 11.) Seizure of arms, &c. illegally removing. Penalty, forfeiture of arms, and £500.

PROVISIONS FOR PERSONAL DEFENCE OR SPORTING.

No gunpowder may be kept by persons not authorized to carry arms. (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 12.) Makers of arms in Dublin and Cork may send out arms without license for removal. (3 Geo. 4, c. 4, sec. 14.) Penalty on licensed persons procuring gunpowder for unlicensed persons, £200 and forfeiture of license. Gunpowder makers, within thirty days after commencement of Act and afterwards monthly, shall return accounts of their stock, &c. to Chief Secretary; and keep books without accounts of sales, &c. to be inspected, and stock examined under orders of Chief Secretary. Penalty on trader, &c. £50 and forfeiture of license. Penalty for not making returns, &c. £100. Licensed manufacturers may send gunpowder in the day time to their offices or the King's stores, with a manifest only. Penalty on fraud by manifest, £500, &c. Lord Lieutenant may revoke any license under this Act. Commencement of Act, from end of present Session; continuance, seven years—and may be amended.

CAUTION TO CORN DEALERS.

A novel species of imposition has been carried on without detection against some of the merchants in Belfast, trading in the above named articles, which has lately reached the ears of the writer hereof, and can be verified on oath as follows:—Two or three persons have been in the practice of purchasing oats in a weekly market, about 22 miles distant, and selling them in Belfast at some times less than 6d the cwt. more than they paid, while the carriage would cost a shilling at least. It was matter of surprise to the neighbours how they could thrive on such an unprofitable traffic; but appearances indicated prosperity, and the secret would have remained undisclosed, but for one of the party disputing with the others on the distribution of the proceeds of a late journey, when a dissolution of partnership ensued. They took each a cart, with suppose five sacks filled, having an empty one or two of the same description in common. The grain was sold, a ticket of the price and weight of each was received; the single ones started separately to deposit the load in the stores of the purchaser; on the way, each was met by a companion with an empty cart, on which he received a sack of grain from the other—the oats were emptied on the heap—the five sacks counted, an empty one having been in the mouth of one of the four full ones, and the carrier received payment for the whole. The same trick was practised by each of the party in succession, and the three returned joyously homeward with the price of four sacks above the number they had brought filled to market.

HORRIBLE AFFRAY AND LOSS OF LIVES AT BALIBOROUGH.

By a letter dated the 13th inst., from Moyle, we have received an account of a sanguinary conflict having taken place in the town of Baliborough, on Easter Monday, in which the loss, we regret to state, is estimated at ten persons killed, has been from thirty to sixty wounded. It appears that a market day being a holiday, and that Easter Monday being a holiday, it was attended by considerable crowds from all parts of the surrounding country. Our Correspondent goes on to state as follows:—In the course of the day several persons were beaten, but no serious occurrence took place until about half past four o'clock, when a fight commenced so suddenly that it appeared as if the entire town and all the persons in the market were concerned in it; the police were called upon, but they, unfortunately for all parties, were very few in number. They endeavoured as much as in their power to repress the multitude, but without success, and had to fly several times to the barracks from the quantity of stones thrown at them by the combatants, and they were also severely beaten with sticks, swords, &c. &c. The police then loaded their carbines and fired upon the crowd, who returned the fire with large volleys of stones. The conflict became general; two men, one of the name of Reilly and another of the name of Clarke, were shot dead upon the spot, by the police, and several others were wounded. I dare say in the course of the night not less than ten must have died by the wounds they received from the shots and bayonets of the police, which were applied to keep the multitude from inclosing them. The shopkeepers' windows were all smashed, and the standings of persons who sold goods upon the street were in a moment wrecked to pieces, to supply the parties with sticks. The conflict lasted with great heat for about two hours, and had it not been for the interference of John Danelly, Esq., a Magistrate, who resides near Baliborough, and who had been sent for, and the Rev. Philip O'Reilly, Parish Priest of Baliborough, the effects would have been dreadful. I think the loss may be estimated at about ten killed, and from thirty to sixty wounded.

A Medical Gentleman who resides in Baliborough, stated that he had in the course of the evening thirty persons in his house, a great many of whom he feared were mortally wounded.

As a proof of the effects which Temperance Societies are beginning to operate on their adherents, it may be mentioned that a gentleman in this city has warned away one of his tenants from a shop in Saltmarket, for no other reason than that he retailed ardent spirits. He has also several times refused to let as a spirit cellar another shop in the same street belonging to him, and positively asserts that he would rather have them empty than prostituted to such base purposes as the selling of whiskey.—(Glasgow Chronicle.)

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TO THE EDITOR.

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