lands were enjoyed according to the law of gavelkind, which rendered all the land tenures uncertain. By this law the common was divisible among the family groups, on the principle of relative equality ; practically the stronger got the larger shares. When death threw lands vacant, the chief, as trustee for the sept, assumed the whole lands, and re-divided them—a partition called a gavel. Had the arts of agriculture been known, they could not have been exercised to any great extent under a system which, constantly changing the occupancy of lands, rendered it uncertain whether the labourer would enjoy the fruits of his labour. The consequence was that the people were mainly shepherds or herdsmen.

"With such customs and laws, the Irish were in the rear of most of the peoples of Europe. No doubt, in some parts of France and Germany, in Finland, Sweden, and Norway, races were to be found quite as low. But the majority of the European races were almost as far ahead of the Irish, as the Irish of to-day are of the Maoris. The forms which make the real distinctions between nations are organic, hidden as it were under the surface. And European society generally rested on a framework of a higher type than the Irish—a superior family and political system, with superior laws of property and succession. Superficially viewed, the races of the Continent may have appeared quite as barbaric ; they may have been more lawless and turbulent. Moreover, as these races were mostly pagan, it is easy to understand how, in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Irish, burning with the zeal of recent conversion to Christianity, and possessing some schools of Christian learning, might appear to be in advance of them. Missionaries from Ireland were carrying the new light into the dark places in which paganism was still enshrined. Her music and poetry —products of Keltic genius—were celebrated. Her sons were distinguished by wit as by piety. All these were distinctions bespeaking a species of superiority. Yet might they all of them have been presented by a nation of even still lower organisation. The really distinctive marks of inferiority remained ; common property, the gavel, tanistry, an imperfect system of kinship. Most of the Europeans had left these behind. Even the Kelts of Britain had got rid of them under their Roman masters, and were separated by a gulf from their congeners of Ireland. At the time of the Roman Conquest they were probably lower in the scale. Cæsar found among them customs which throw light on the Irish institutions. But it was their good fortune, for four hundred years, to be under the influence of the most advanced civilisation the world then knew. To this day the Irish have not received an equivalent training. They were long left to work out their own advancement: and unfortunately for them, Christianity, which for a moment seemed to make them superior to their pagan neighbours, from incidents attending its introduction, did much to

stereotype their laws and customs, and to render a spontaneous onward movement next to impossible."[1]

All that need be said on McLennan's summing-up is that he does not quite rightly discriminate the importance of property laws in determining the grade of a people's civilisation. It may be that only by way of a system of individual property can a primitive people reach a high civilisation; but it does not follow that wherever such a system is introduced the civilisation rises. And inasmuch as common property is in the end the highest Utopia of civilisation, there might have been a fair degree of civilisation alongside of it among the pre-Christian Irish, as there was certainly much brutality and barbarism with individual property among other nations. In any case, be it remembered, a measure of common property in land, with periodical division by the chief, is exactly the state of things described by Cæsar as existing among the Germans of his day. If it was bad for Celts, it was bad for Teutons. As a matter of fact, the institution has often been cited by Teutophiles as a proof of the idyllic beauty of primitive Teutonic life. But gavelkind is not really equivalent to community of property, as McLennan himself shows: it was a system which excluded the advantages alike of private property and of corporate cultivation, and practically frustrated progress in agriculture. Thus the early Irish were bad agriculturists, as were the Teutons in the time of Cæsar and of Tacitus.

For the rest, tanistry obviously was a system lending itself to strife; but it would be difficult to point to any northern people at that time in which, under whatever system, strife was not chronic. Tanistry was in fact an expedient to prevent military disaster through the sudden death of a chief: the "brennus" or commander in the campaigns of the Gauls seems always to have had a tanist with him; and in time of war the arrangement may have been very useful, though in times of peace it may have stirred strife. In any case, it should be remembered that alike among the English before the Conquest, and under the feudal Normans for long afterwards, desperate civil war was constantly breaking out. No people that I can remember has ever found for itself a short cut from barbarian militarism to orderly government.

What is clear is that Christianity, as usual, did nothing in itself to promote the necessary development; and on this head

[1] J. F. McLennan's *Memoir of Thomas Drummond*, 1868, pp. 190-192.

the facts must be squarely opposed to the prevailing Catholic delusion:

"The Brehon or ancient Irish laws had been reduced to a written code, under the immediate authority of St Patrick, or of one or other of the persons who have been rolled up into the Saint. They included gavelkind, tanistry, and the law of the Eric or money compensations for murder. And such was the veneration of the Irish for the instrument of their conversion to Christianity, that they reverenced the code as much as the religion. Patrick's law, as they loved to call it, was declared to be unalterable; and with that code no people could advance beyond a state of comparative savageness.

"Such was the social and political state of the Irish when their relations with England commenced. The septmen—rude herdsmen, probably not long settled from nomad life—are represented as living, on the whole, in a miserable condition, borne down by the exactions of their chiefs and kings—'cuttings and cosheries' and 'coyne and livery.' Beneath them were the Betaghs or slaves, in a condition still more wretched. Above them were the chiefs, exercising lavish hospitalities at the expense of their inferiors; constantly intriguing against and quarrelling with one another. In the palaces of the greater chiefs was maintained no small degree of luxury, and even of barbaric splendour."[1]

That is to say, the condition of the Irish was very much the same as that of the Teutonic nations at the same period, and later. Modern research is now making havoc of the German theory of the "free institutions" and "common tenure of land" of the early Teutons; and it is pretty clear that whatever their system of tenure they had slavery and poverty among them when they migrated to England, and that they did not escape them there. The question is whether the Irish were progressing between the time of their Christianisation and the English connection. Historians ready enough to say a good word for the civilising effects of Christianity have decided that they were not, that on the contrary they had greatly retrograded. Green writes that in the reign of Henry the Second the civilisation of Ireland had

"fallen far below the height which it had reached when its missionaries brought religion and learning to the shores of Northumbria. Learning had almost disappeared. The Christianity which had been a vital force in the eighth century had died into asceticism and superstition in the twelfth, and had ceased to influence the morality of the people at large. The Church, destitute of any effective organisation, was powerless to

[1] *Id.*, pp. 192-3.

do the work which it had done elsewhere in Western Europe, or to introduce order into the anarchy of warring tribes. On the contrary, it shared the anarchy around it. Its head, the Coarb, or Archbishop of Armagh, sank into the hereditary chieftain of a clan; its bishops were without dioceses, and often mere dependents on the greater monasteries. Hardly a trace of any central authority remained to knit the tribes into a single nation."[1]

It would be difficult to find a more decisive negation of the current formula that Christianity is a civilising force. Yet the churchman probably overstated the backwardness of Christian Ireland. As McLennan suggests, it is easy to over-estimate the value of the early "learning"; and it is very certain that the religion of the eighth century was just superstition and asceticism, like that of the twelfth. We must carefully hold the balances between Irish claims which recoil against Ireland, and English claims which ignore comparative tests. Above all we must note how much is due to the irruption of alien barbarism. McLennan puts it thus:—

"The Irish were then, as they have often since proved, their own worst enemies. There were other enemies, however, with whom they had to contend. They might live peaceably, if they would, in the midland, and on the coast to the north and west. But on the south and east were points of terror and danger. These were the towns—almost the only places in Ireland worthy of the name—all in possession of the Danes.

"The Danes had now been firmly planted for upwards of three hundred years on the land. Had the tribes united, they might have swept the scourges of God into the sea, as afterwards they often might have swept the Anglo-Normans. But they were not united, nor capable of union for more than a moment and a single success. So the scourges remained, finding the coast towns convenient ports of departure on their predatory excursions by sea, and safe retreats from the tribesmen on occasions of despoiling them. Resistance to the same invaders had in England established the monarchy. In Ireland, no political benefit had accrued, as a set-off to the centuries of suffering. At the end of the Danish period, as at its commencement, there was still the pentarchy, and in the separate kingdoms the same low order of political organisation. On the other hand, the presence of the Danes checked the course of social improvement.[2] Indeed, if those

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[1] *Short History*, p. 431.

[2] [Here there is perhaps room for doubt. The Danes in some respects could give an object lesson to the Irish. See above, p. 133. And it is not easy to see how any social improvement could have arisen save in terms of foreign

writers are correct who take such high ground as to Irish civilisation in the sixth and seventh centuries, we must hold the Danes to have been a cause of social retrogression. The presence of such an enemy, it can be believed, may have had such an effect."[1]

This view may be held alongside of a moderate estimate of the civilisation of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries. Some retrogression there may have been; and there certainly appears to have been no progress; but the retrogression can hardly have been very great.

But whereas religion had done nothing to promote Irish civilisation, it was at length to do something that should decisively hinder its progress. In the words of McLennan:

"The primitive Irish Church was Christian, but not Roman Catholic. Though, in 1152, a synod of its clergy acknowledged the See of Rome, no Peter's pence seem to have been paid, and Rome was dissatisfied. In 1154 Pope Adrian IV., as 'King of all islands,' by a bull granted the lordship of Ireland to Henry, for the express purpose of 'broadening the borders of the Church.' As his authority had two years previously been acknowledged in Ireland, his simple object would appear to have been to fill the Church coffers. The interests of Rome jumped with the ambition of the Normans. It was decent, however, that greed and rapine should cloak themselves with an ostensibly noble purpose, and none could be more excellent than the extension of the Faith. Let the Irish take what comfort they can from the fact that the Conquest and its train of evils had such an origin."[2]

To make the picture complete, we have to note that the Danish coast cities were now also Christian, and that, in their hostility to the native Irish and their Church, these cities "applied to the see of Canterbury for the ordination of their bishops, and acknowledged a right of spiritual supervision in Lanfranc and Anselm."[3] It is fair to add that the Irish had given the English King pretext for invading them in the Pope's name, inasmuch as they carried on a slave trade in kidnapped Englishmen; but let us also remember what this testifies as to the condition of England itself, where men kidnapped their fellows and sold them into Irish slavery. Further, we must remember that the English "Strongbow" was a "broken man" who went over in the pay of the native King Dermot. The

influence. On the other hand, the Danes as a matter of fact played a most destructive part as regarded the monasteries, which were the centres of Irish culture, such as it was.]

[1] *Id.*, pp. 193-4. [2] *Id.*, p. 195. [3] Green, p. 432.

question now is, what has the English connection done to develop Irish civilisation?

It is admitted by all historians that for centuries after the first contact under Henry the Second no good was done to Ireland by the English connection, but only harm. Whatever Mr Balfour may mean by asserting that England brought order and civilisation into Ireland, he cannot pretend that it did so during the Middle Ages. McLennan rightly says:

"It is important that the primitive state of the Irish should be understood, because it was preserved almost unchanged till near the beginning, and, in some parts, even till near the end, of the seventeenth century. In the long interval between the landing of the Anglo-Normans and the final suppression, by James I., of the Brehon law, no organic improvement whatever had taken place. The sept system was still in force, with gavelkind and tanistry, and all the other impediments which it presented to progress. The political system, such as it was, had crumbled beneath intestine feuds and the pressure of the English enemy: instead of the five provinces of the earlier time there were ninety 'regions' in Ireland—beyond the Pale—under absolutely independent chiefs. If, then, the nation of the tribes has been trained to respect the settled order of government, or laws and institutions of a type higher than its own, this has been effected within comparatively recent times." [1]

Now, this fact alone, rightly considered, is the confutation of Mr Balfour's pretence. Nothing worse could have happened to Ireland, left to itself, than to remain wholly unprogressive for four hundred years; and no amount of civil war could work more awful evil than was wrought under Elizabeth on behalf of Protestantism. The Papacy, which as we saw literally gave Ireland away to England, would not in ordinary course have stifled her nascent civilisation as it tended to do higher civilisation in general. But the power of England was even what the Papacy itself proved to be in distracted Italy—"a stone in the wound." The curse of the English connection was that Ireland was neither conquered nor let alone. The Anglo-Normans were not the people to civilise or improve any other race by contact with them. Europe has perhaps never seen a ruling race less gifted with the Roman power of orderly administration. Their brutality lashed into fierce and undying resistance the virtually English people of Lowland Scotland, who might easily have been amalgamated under the first Edward if only his officials could

[1] Work cited, pp. 194-5.

have ruled provincials with decent judgment. But there was in the feudal Norman a barbaric recklessness, a puerile insolence, which wholly unfitted him to wield Roman rule. Prince John, who to more than average Norman ability joined a more than average Norman offensiveness, made himself so intolerable to the Irish chieftains that his father had to recall him. Soon afterwards, the Saxon and Norman elements, joining to secure constitutional freedom in England, wrung from John the Magna Charta; but there was no thought in England of a Magna Charta for Ireland. She was left to stew in her own juice. The English of the Pale naturally tended to become Irish; and so John made war on them and exiled the leading barons. But the reestablished Pale, cut off from native Ireland, cut off by sea from England, remained as before a fountain of national disease. It still tended to become Irish; and if only England had stood aloof the island would in time somehow have shaken down into a stable system, as systems then went. England, however, must needs chronically exert herself to keep the Pale English, professing horror at the "degradation" of the English in Ireland, but caring not a jot for the native Irish. So Ireland was reinvaded with reformative intent by Richard Second, who might have set up a real English rule if he had not immediately had to look to himself at home. His work was left barely begun. Then for several generations English distractions left Ireland to gravitate again towards the primitive and comparatively healthy barbarism, the condition from which, in normal course, a native system would tend to arise. The Pale shrank mile by mile towards Dublin, the last English foothold. But then came Henry Eighth, with his hands free enough at home to allow him to "reconquer" Ireland, that is to say, to give the English element there just vigour enough to renew the old inflammation, the old clash of forces, to an extent that made real settlement hopeless. At the hands of Henry came the most clinging evil of all —the erection of a religious division in addition to that of race. Peace was now not to be even planned for. So much more of evil was religion to do. Ireland was always having to be "reconquered," by invasion, by massacre, by beast-like ferocity, by brutally stupid expulsion of natives, by settlements of English and Scotch, by penal laws against Catholics, by laws against Irish trade, by one atrocious wickedness or another, down to our own era of convulsive and senseless Coercion Acts, the end of which is at hand. She was reconquered under Henry, under Elizabeth, under Cromwell, under Pitt; recolonised under James

and under William; commercially repressed under William and Anne and the Georges; administratively coerced under Victoria by Liberals and Tories alike; bedevilled and misgoverned by all for lack of the root principles of pacific statesmanship; till at length the Liberals, driven to admit that the problem is finally insoluble on English lines, have resolved to let the Irish settle it on their own.

Let us once more listen to McLennan's analysis of the process of the disease set up by the English intervention:

"The four centuries which followed [the Conquest] were centuries of constant feud and slaughter between the invaded and the invaders, of wrongs and retaliations ever increasing with the lapse of time. They were centuries in which the Anglo-Irish and the Irish were both being brutalised by their conflicts—in which, at least, they were receiving the worst possible training for future peaceable cohabitation. The peoples were in effect all the time enemies, living under different laws and government. The law of England was 'by law' established within the Pale; practically there was no law but the will of the stronger. There were at one time within it nine Counties Palatine—unmitigated despotisms. Beyond these, the rule of a rude aristocracy, unrestrained by the presence of sovereignty, was a virtual anarchy. Outside the Pale were the tribes—their laws, language, and customs all unchanged. There was one main source of the never-ending conflict between the races, namely the land, which the barons were there to take and the Irish to defend. When the barons were united, they held what they took; when they fell out, the Septmen regained their own. And the area of the Pale was always broadening or contracting. Sept and tribal wars—wars with the barons—baronial wars, in which the Septs took sides — were the stock incidents of the miserable drama. On an unusual parade of English power, the chiefs hurried to do homage—lip submission, over with the danger which evoked it.

"The conflict of the laws was, perhaps, as productive of bad blood as the conflict of the land; at least, the native historians have made rather more use of it to keep alive the English hatred of England. A Septman who slew an Englishman was, by native law, liable only in the Eric—a money payment to the relatives of the slain. By the English, however, if they caught him, he was hanged, in defiance of the Cain Patric. By English law, on the other hand, to kill an Irishman was no murder. He was an outlaw and enemy of the Crown. To break a contract with him was no wrong; he could not sue in the English courts. The slaughter of the Irish and seizure of their property were acts rewarded by the Government. They helped to give the substance where there was little beyond the name of dominion. So the Irish were plundered and massacred at will, subject only to the

restraints imposed by the fear of retaliation. Five of the Septs, more fortunate than their neighbours, were treated differently, being allowed the benefit of the English law. A common defence in charges of murder was that the murdered man was of 'the mere Irish,' and not of the *quinque sanguines*—the five favoured bloods. It might be imagined that the Septmen in love with the Cain Patric were beyond the law because they chose not to come within it. This was not the case. To get rid of the disadvantages of their position, they repeatedly petitioned for admission to the benefits of English law, and were always refused.[1] The petitions, indeed, were uniformly treated with contempt. To have granted them would have been to abandon the privilege of oppression. Even the Irish within the Pale were not yet within the law. They were the subjects of special enactments which practically excluded them from its protection. By a statute dated 1465, for example, anyone might kill 'any person GOING TO rob or steal, *having no faithful man of good name or fame in his company in English apparel.*' This, of course, exposed every Irishman to be killed at the discretion of any Englishman. It should be stated, however, that by the next Act of the same Parliament, the Septmen of the Pale were directed to take English names, and to wear English apparel."[2]

Here we have conditions of strife and anarchy so factitious, so abnormal, that no nation in the world could have thriven under them. To say, as even McLennan does, that the Irish if united could have driven the aliens into the sea, is to ignore the great fact of the case—the presence behind all of the preponderating power of England, inevitably used to maintain so much of the Pale as sufficed to keep Ireland divided against itself. The half-savage Irish were at the worst little worse in their divisions than the highly-civilised ancient Greeks, who first showed the world how far self-government was possible. They were the victims of a vast misfortune.

To say, in face of all this, that what civilisation Ireland has attained is due to England, is, I repeat, to exhibit either hardy "hypocrisy" or—what is probably the matter with Mr Balfour—essential incapacity to understand the processes or the laws of political growth. His formula is the formula of an empiric. He puts together the two premisses: Ireland was barbarous when England began to intermeddle: she is now partly civilised; and he draws the conclusion: Therefore she has England to thank for her civilisation. It is the absurdest case of *non sequitur*.

[1] [On this point, see above, p. 139.]
[2] Work cited, pp. 198-200.

Had Ireland been left alone, she could easily have become more civilised through non-English influences than she is at present; and she could not conceivably have suffered from any other hands such horrors as she has done at the hands of England. Mr Balfour absurdly assumes that she would have remained exactly as she was in the time of Henry the Second. She could not possibly have done so, any more than England has done. English civilisation has developed under pressure of the general forces of European culture: Irish civilisation would of necessity have developed to some extent under the same forces. The greatest strides of European progress have been made since the invention of printing; and printing would have affected Irish life as it has done English. One of the greatest impulses to European commerce for thousands of years was the colonisation of North America. Ireland, left to herself, would naturally have profited by American trade in a high degree. The fact that English and Irish passengers for the United States embark for the main passage at Liverpool, and not on the west coast of Ireland, is one of the standing evidences of how the chances of Ireland were deliberately frustrated by English and pro-English action. It is not a hundred years since Irish trade was relieved of the wicked English laws made to repress it; for when Pitt in 1785 wisely strove to make an end of them, he was baffled by the Irish Parliament itself, which represented merely the land-owners connected with the established Church, who cared nothing for Irish manufactures, these being mostly carried on by Papists and Dissenters. And it is just sixty-five years since Irish life was relieved of the wicked sectarian laws framed in the interests of English Protestantism.

English wickedness—that is one half of the story: English blundering, that is the other half. The extent of the blundering might alone suffice to dispose of the idle boast that the English race has a special faculty for politics. No country in Christian Europe, not even Russia with Poland, has such a colossal failure standing to its account. Brutal Englishmen saw long ago—the sentimentalist and idealist Spenser saw—that the only way to make peace in Ireland was to make it either all English or all Irish. English statecraft never got further than to introduce enough of the alien element to keep Ireland for ever distracted under English supremacy. And the English supremacy has wrought in addition to other desperate evils the profound economic evil of drawing the land-owning class to England, so that a large share of the produce of Ireland—what she was

allowed to produce—has for generations been exported as sheer tribute. Now, a self-governed country situated as Ireland is, if its landowners went voluntarily to reside in England, would be led in natural course of policy to deal with that evil by specially taxing rental; and a self-governed Ireland, under a democratic system, would infallibly legislate in that direction. Such legislation was eagerly proposed last century.[1] But the old Irish Parliament was a mere preserve of the landowners, who ruled in their own interest; and the predominant English landowning class has since ruled Ireland according to its own class policy, from which Ireland has suffered immeasurably more than England has done, owing precisely to the special factor of absenteeism.

I am well aware that all the evils wrought in Ireland by bad government have been terribly aggravated by the blind multiplication of the people: I have elsewhere pointed this out in confutation of the one-sided doctrine of Mr Henry George, who refuses to see the force of the law of population. But I will here add, on that head, that in all reasonable probability overpopulation in Ireland would never have run to the extent it has done if the Irish people had been left in modern times to deal with their own land question. Of all the senseless catchwords of English race prejudice the most execrable is that which alleges the innate recklessness of "the Celt." Parental and other prudence has nowhere been more rigorously practised than in France; and English prejudice, as represented by Tennyson, sees "the Celt" personified in France whenever Frenchmen do a foolish thing that England does not happen to be doing at the moment. For that matter, however, the fact that Englishmen have any given state of things inside their own doors has never hindered them from exclaiming at the same state of things among their neighbours. Within the past six months we have had endless head-wagging in England over the "corruption" revealed in France by the Panama scandal, while we have had on our own hands at least three scandals of the same sort, all of them gigantic, if singly less gigantic than that of the Panama undertaking, which is simply the greatest because France is unhappily the most parsimonious and investment-seeking nation.

Mr Balfour was loudly applauded by his followers, as was to be expected, when he protested against English politicians going about denouncing England. That is none the less the best service an Englishman can do to England, in connection with

[1] See the *Wealth of Nations*, B. v., ch. 2, M'Culloch's ed., p. 405.

the Irish issue; and we shall never put our politics on a scientific basis till we have substituted for the childish and vulgar habit of national self-praise the habit of national self-criticism. Mr Balfour's plan is the immemorial method of the empiric, fooling his hearers with elementary flattery, and turning all history to the account of the most puerile instincts. To tell in plain English what England did to Ireland under Elizabeth, and under Cromwell, is to tell one of the most awful tales of blood and devastation that human history retains. The bare recital of the facts haunts one like a nightmare. Again and again we read of systematic massacres of men, women, and children; but that is next to nothing in comparison with the rest. It is the ever-recurring picture of subterhuman misery among the survivors that burns itself in on the mind—the picture of tribes of human beings driven to die of slow hunger in the wilderness, like wild beasts; of gaunt wretches, unable to stand erect, crawling out of ditches to feed on corpses by way of change from feeding on weeds. Englishmen have in the past recorded these things without a thought of remorse for bringing them about; and at the very time that these Irish horrors were happening, or still fresh in memory, Englishmen were vociferous in denouncing the cruelties of the Spaniards and the Dutch to the lower races who fell into *their* clutches. "Creeping hypocrisy" could not go further than blatant national self-righteousness had done in these matters. The nation which has wrought the wickedness has ever had a hundred words of abuse for the victim against one word of self-reproach. If there were any utility or any sense in keeping up national animosities, Irishmen might well hate England with a desperate hatred; and the wonder is, not that they have so hated her, but that so many of them have been so soon able to put the old passion aside. They have learned or are learning the lesson that national animosities are only the reverse side of the old insane ferocities which gave rise to them; and that to hate our fellow creatures because their ancestors injured ours is to approximate to the ethical standards of the dead wrongdoers. And the lesson would be learned still more rapidly on the Irish side—that is, on the Irish Nationalist side—were it not for the fatuity and the prejudice displayed on the so-called Unionist side in England; in the speeches of Mr Chamberlain, who vituperates the men with whom he once caballed against his own colleagues; in the speeches of inept aristocrats like Sir Henry Chaplin, the very types of the political incompetence that has created the Irish problem; in the speeches of perverse

partisan leaders like Mr Balfour, who elect to be the political hewers of wood and drawers of water for fanatics in whose religion they can only sham belief, and for dullards in whose ideals of life they can only wearily affect to share. It is strictly accurate to say that there are not now more than two prominent Unionists in Parliament who ever exhibited the true spirit of union towards Ireland in the days—as late as ten years ago—when some of us still vainly hoped that England might learn to treat Ireland in Parliament as an integral part of the Union. The men who now call themselves Unionist are almost invariably those who are incapable of real unionism. All things considered, we shall be wonderfully lucky if, with such a dead weight of unreasoning prejudice among us still, we can so much as cut the knot of the Irish problem by Mr Gladstone's measure, leaving the loose ends to be dealt with later.

EPILOGUE.

A PROGRAM FOR IRELAND.

SINCE 1886 it has become clear that the English Parliament cannot be looked to for any solution of the Irish problem save that which is a solution on the English side—the letting Ireland manage her own affairs. As Mill put it thirty years ago, "the difficulty of governing Ireland lies entirely in our own minds: it is a difficulty of understanding."[1] That lack of intelligence is palpable still, and it will long subsist, inasmuch as the interest of the rich idle class is bound up with the misunderstanding of other people's. England, with her enormous industry resting on a basis of vanishing coal, is still too far from being face to face with the fundamental facts of her existence to permit of her people being driven to put it on a scientific footing. With Ireland, the case is different. She has been only too long at handgrips with nature not to know, throughout her population, exactly where at least half of her problem lies. And it may be hoped that when the Irish people get Home Rule they will approach the solution.

Inasmuch, then, as Home Rule is the indispensable first step, any program for Ireland must include a Home Rule scheme; and as the failure of Mr Gladstone's is in large part due to its own faults, it may be worth while to offer an outline of another.

§ 1. *A Federal Constitution.*

The obviously indefensible point of Mr Gladstone's plan is the illogical relation it would create between Ireland and the imperial Parliament. On his lines there are open only the alternative courses of (*a*) excluding all Irish representatives from the imperial Parliament, while taxing Ireland for imperial purposes, and (*b*) admitting Irish members to the imperial Parliament, in any number to be agreed upon, thus permitting Ireland to have a share in controlling English and Scotch home affairs while

[1] *England and Ireland*, p. 47.

Englishmen and Scotchmen have no control over those of Ireland. Between these hopeless alternatives Mr Gladstone helplessly oscillated. He had seen long ago the desperateness of the problem, when he declared that it would pass the wit of man to devise a Home Rule scheme which should escape both difficulties; and it is one of the illustrations of the demoralising influence of the hand-to-mouth habit in politics that he later turned his back on his own avowal and protested that the solution was tolerably easy. As all the world knows, his solution was only an impossible proposal from which he had to make a humiliating retreat—the proposal that Irish members should in perpetuity go in and out of the imperial Parliament according to the nature of the business being done: a thing possible as a temporary expedient in an emergency, but out of the question as a permanent arrangement. Such are the shifts to which a statesman can be driven for want of general principles.

The dilemma is of course set up by the presupposition that the Parliament at Westminster is to remain the general legislature for the rest of the country after Ireland is separately provided for. Mr Gladstone would not face the logical conclusion —that the central Parliament must be reconstituted when a subordinate Parliament is created. He cannot have overlooked this solution—the establishment of a true Federal Constitution for all the parts of the United Kingdom, giving a subordinate legislature to each, and putting over them a new central imperial Parliament, to which each province shall send representatives in proportion to its weight. He knew that a scheme of federation was actually said to have been contemplated by the Liberal leaders as a solution of the Irish problem fifty years ago.[1] It must be that he recoiled from an undertaking so vast, craving rather a course not too long and arduous for his closing years. The ambition thus to heal an ancient breach, as a last task before the end come, is indeed a high and a worthy one; but the destinies of nations cannot fitly be shaped by such velleities. Mr Gladstone's well-meaning haste has come to nothing: his scheme stands discredited on its merits; and the cause of Home Rule cannot make headway until a better be framed. There were not wanting signs, before Mr Gladstone's resignation, that a number of his colleagues saw the Federal solution to be inevitable, and that he had become aware of their conviction. But no such scheme has been officially formulated; and it is important that the Irish people should turn its agitation to the desirable end, by way of putting the Nationalist

[1] *Special Aspects of the Irish Question*, p. 294.

cause on a fresh footing. If the Irish members continue to recoil from such a systematic policy, on the score that it is their business to get Home Rule speedily, and not to reconstruct the entire British Constitution, they will but doom themselves to impotence and leave the whole matter to be dealt with by another generation. There is no escaping from the fact that Mr Gladstone's Home Rule Bills were both bad measures, in respect that they struck respectively on the two horns of the dilemma above stated. Several of his colleagues have let it be seen that they have little heart to fight for ever on unsound ground. It is for the Irish Parliamentary party then to accept the unalterable, and recommence the campaign on lines that can be fought without flinching. The greater task, logically laid out, is more feasible than the smaller, laid out in defiance of reason. The immemorial disease of Irish life is not to be cured without long travail; and to refuse to attempt to do the work systematically and coherently is simply to show unfitness for all leadership therein.

Let us posit briefly the main gains that will accrue to a systematic settlement by way of a Federal Constitution for the United Kingdom.

1. The arrangement will leave no opening for fresh agitation or extension of claims; whereas a Dublin Parliament with one hand tied by arbitrary vetoes, looking always on the free action of a British Parliament not so hampered, would infallibly strain at its tether, and struggle for further powers. Under a Federal system, the legislatures of all sections of the composite State will have exactly the same powers and lie under exactly the same limitations.

2. If Ireland were put on a footing analogous to that of the colonies, she would be encouraged by the very nature of the arrangement to demand as much independence as the colonies possess, and above all their right to tax imports. Under a Federal system, free trade between all sections of the Federation is a matter of course.

3. Under a Federal system, the imperial Parliament will be specially charged with the enforcement of the obligations of each of the federated provinces, whereas the position of the present Parliament, with a Dublin Parliament subordinated to it and striving to elude its control, would be almost hopelessly difficult.

4. No sense of grievance could be felt by the other provinces; whereas, were Irish members to sit at Westminster under Mr Gladstone's second scheme, the grievance of the British popula-

tion would be as intolerable as that of the Irish people would be under his first scheme, which taxed them for imperial purposes yet gave them no voice in imperial affairs.

As for the prospect of realising such a program, it may be remarked that not only are there no weak points in the position such as left Mr Gladstone's open to unanswerable criticism, but a number of politicians now on the side of Unionism have avowed that they could not resist a Federal scheme as they have resisted Mr Gladstone's. What is no less important is the gain of power that would come of throwing nearly all the main forces of Liberalism on one line; for the movement against the House of Lords would be literally embodied in a movement for Federation, since there could be no House of Lords under a scientific constitution; and the movement for Welsh Disestablishment would be equally embodied in a Welsh claim for Home Rule.

§ 2. *Provision for Ulster.*

Next to the crux of the retention or exclusion of Irish members, the most assailable point in Mr Gladstone's Home Rule policy was certainly the Ulster difficulty. Before he adopted a Home Rule policy, those of us who discussed the theory on its merits often put to Home Rulers of old standing the question how the principle would work for Ulster. The result was invariably quite unsatisfactory: the problem had not been thought out; and the questioner was usually led to the conclusion that for Home Rulers nationality was defined by sea-beach. Either they admitted and postponed the Ulster difficulty, or they flatly declared that Ulster must be coerced if need be. This was a sad outcome of the principle that peoples ought to decide for themselves how they should be governed, and that alien rule should be forced on none capable of self-rule. It is perfectly clear that if Irish Catholics have a right to object to English rule in Ireland, Irish Protestants have a right to object to Catholic rule. One does not say they have as good reasons: they cannot have; for England has actually misgoverned Ireland for ages, while Catholic Ireland has never yet had a Home Parliament at all. But the Home Rule principle does not admit the question of sufficiency of reason; it insists on the right of every people to choose; and the Ulster Orangemen choose as emphatically as do the Catholics.

The one-sidedness of the Home Rulers, however, is very well balanced, ethically speaking, by the one-sidedness of the Orangemen. Perhaps no party in modern times has taken its stand

more undisguisedly on injustice. The Home Rulers, English and Irish, do propose that Orangemen should have equal rights in an Irish Parliament; the Orangemen expressly declare that they will not only not have Home Rule for themselves, but will, if possible, prevent the Catholics from having it. What they resent as an injustice to themselves—alien authority or partnership—they would brazenly enforce on their neighbours. Whatever may be the solution of the difficulty, this tone cannot be listened to by principled Radicals. The inspiration of Orangeism is primarily mere religious hate; that lies on the surface of the boasted fraternisation of Ulster Radicals and Tories. Never was there a better illustration of the law that men must love to hate, fraternise to fight. But, all the same, popular religious hate is a factor that must be carefully reckoned with, especially in the politics of backward and fanatical communities like those of Ireland. The Orangemen, whatever the orderliness of the 1892 Convention, are many of them blatant and violent men. But legislation must take account of the existence of blatant and violent men; and there are plenty of them in the Home Rule party.

If, then, no change comes over the attitude of Protestant Ulster when the Home Rule problem is definitely taken hold of, Ulster must be rationally provided for. It may very well be, of course, that a change will occur: there are signs of one even now, in the dissatisfaction of Ulster farmers with *their* situation, and with the first course of the Coalition Government, which was pledged to the landlord interest. The real interest of the peasantry being the same throughout Ireland, it is only gross religious bigotry that can keep those of Ulster hostile to Home Rule. But religious bigotry is obviously a tenacious passion, and there is plenty of machinery in Ulster to keep it alive and active; and as it is impossible to plan a policy on the mere chance of its rapid decline, we must face the probability of its continuing to sunder the Protestant faction from the Irish population proper.

Shortly put, the question for Radical Home Rulers is, What arrangement is to be made for Ulster? But that question instantly evokes another—How much of Ulster? Ulster is not wholly Protestant. Even in the Protestant towns there are strong Catholic contingents; and some constituencies are predominantly Catholic. Clearly, if Ireland is not a unity, if it is politically only a "geographical expression," Ulster is on the same footing; and if Orange communities in Ireland are to be separately legislated for, so must be Catholic communities in

Ulster. Four out of the nine counties, Donegal, Fermanagh, Monaghan, and Cavan, were in the 1886-1892 Parliament wholly represented by Home Rulers; Tyrone returned two Home Rulers out of four members; Armagh one out of three; and Down one out of four; the town of Londonderry, almost equally divided, returned a Home Ruler; and even in Belfast one was elected out of the town's four members. If those elections be found to represent the lasting state of opinion, those constituencies would on the abstract Home Rule principle be entitled to a share in an Irish Parliament, which they join in demanding; that is, unless it be decided that Belfast and the counties are to be reckoned as unities, and the minority divisions are to succumb to the majority.

It is hard to see, however, how this can be plausibly proposed as regards the counties. A Home Rule section even of Belfast, as of County Down, is theoretically a separate community relatively to the town or the county, just as Orangemen are a separate community relatively to Ireland, or Irish Home Rulers relatively to England. Indeed, when we work out the question of communities, it is clear that, from the point of view of principle, an Orange minority in the Home Rule division of Belfast is logically entitled to cast in its lot with Orangedom. But here we come to the end of the tether of principle, so to speak. We must work on a basis of possibilities; and for the purposes of our practical politics communities cannot be reckoned with in terms of anything less than constituencies. If the Home Rule principle not fully applied, in respect of there being recalcitrants within a constituency, it is because it cannot be.

Here, however, rises the question, If the minority of a *constituency* must succumb, why should not the minority divisions of a town or a county? In the case of the constituency, we lay down a *non possumus*: in the case of the town or the county we cannot strictly so plead; but it is very obvious that to divide a town into different State jurisdictions must be extremely inconvenient, if not insufferably so. Government must finally be squared with public peace; and if we gave a Dublin legislature rule over one quarter of Belfast, thus enforcing a breaking up of the municipality, we should be running the gravest danger of public strife. It would indeed be a practical certainty; and probably no government or party would propose such a division. And here we come to the practical definition of a community for the purposes of this discussion, namely, *A population in which rival jurisdictions cannot be set up without constant danger of feud.*

It is a somewhat unexpected conclusion. To solve a problem of oppugnancies we are forced to a negative definition.

With the counties the case is different. If we contemplate the cutting-up of Ireland into two jurisdictions at all, we may as well re-arrange the shires or provinces, leaving out of the Dublin-Home-Rule jurisdiction Antrim, Londonderry, half of Tyrone, two-thirds of Armagh, and three-fourths of county Down, or otherwise as voting may now go. But here again there will be one source of friction almost incompatible with order. The town of Londonderry would have Home Rule, and the surrounding county something else, unless future elections go differently; and it is difficult to imagine such an arrangement working without quarrels. It would probably be well to leave Londonderry town with its county. Part of county Down, on the other hand, would be under Dublin Home Rule, and Belfast otherwise; but, as it happens, and as might be expected, it is in the south divisions of Down and Armagh that the Nationalists have the majority; and a line drawn across those portions of these counties, and across Tyrone up to the west border of county Londonderry, would leave a compact north-eastern province representing Orange or Conservative Ulster. Some division might indeed be practicable in Londonderry; while on the other hand it might be difficult to divide Tyrone; but such difficulties might be settled by a small amount of compromise on both sides. Such partial compromise would be justified by sheer necessity, which forces the leaving of Belfast as a whole to Orangedom.

Given a real Orange province, then, cut out of and different from the present semi-Catholic province of Ulster, the question arises, What is to be done with it? The first and most satisfactory answer, from the Radical point of view, is that Orange Ulster may be constituted a separate community or State with its own local legislature, on the United States plan; while the rest of Ireland is constituted a separate State, with its legislature at Dublin or wherever else it pleases. (An impartial outsider would be disposed to suggest Cork, which is close to one of the best harbours in the world, and is more essentially "national" than Dublin, which looks to England.) These two province-States would alike have Home Rule; and a comprehensive and logical scheme would empower them both to send representatives to an "imperial" Parliament, created by a reconstruction of the British constitution on a federal system, under which, say, Scotland (or North and South Scotland), Wales, and England (or two or more sections of England) should alike have their local legis-

latures, while sending representatives to an imperial Parliament that should have *nothing but* imperial affairs to deal with.

Some Orangemen, however, declare that they will not accept Home Rule of any sort, and demand that their present connection with England shall be maintained. This attitude is obviously inspired by the religious malice which makes them hostile to the self-government of Catholics by Catholics. They are anxious to be "part of England" primarily in order to spite Catholic Ireland. But it cannot for a moment be admitted that Orangemen have a claim on England to the extent of its keeping up a dangerous source of strife in Ireland. Orangemen indeed hate Catholics about as much as many Home Rulers have been prepared to hate England; but the psychological provocativeness of a specifically alien jurisdiction is more permanent and more intense than that of difference of creed in a race with the same accent and the same name. A Protestant state and a Catholic state in Ireland, with separate state legislatures, could get on much better together than the latter could with an *English* state ruled from London. Englishmen are indeed in a manner bound to see that Orangemen are constitutionally safeguarded against intervention by the Catholic Irish legislature, but that is all. The cry about "abandonment" would be the merest perversity in the face of such an arrangement as is above proposed; and would be entitled to no respect as coming from people who have repeatedly talked of resisting legislation proposed to be carried in the British Parliament. Orangemen would have a clear choice. Either they could be constituted into a separate federal state, independent of the Catholic state, and sending like that representatives to the imperial Parliament; or they could be left *without Parliamentary government altogether*. The chances are a hundred to one that they will not make that choice. Religious malice prevents them from seeing the plain expediency of making Ireland into one state, with one legislature, but it will hardly lead them to deny themselves representative government. The inevitable movement of democracy within Orangedom, once the pretext of danger from Popery is nullified, would force either the establishment of an Orange legislature or coalition with the Catholic state. In any case, the whole responsibility of choice would lie with the Orange faction, who would be left without any show of grievance. The plan of two Irish state legislatures would take the main ground from under Lord Salisbury's appeal, and would cancel the one valid argument against a Home Rule policy as generally conceived. I recollect to have seen, in 1885 or 1886, a scheme

of provincial legislatures for Ireland; but I cannot remember whether in this scheme the provinces were to send representatives to London or to a central Irish Parliament at Dublin. There seems, however, to be no necessity for having anything but one Protestant and one Catholic province; and in that case there could be no superior Parliament save the "imperial."

It will be necessary, however, on the plan proposed, to have a clear understanding as to what are to be imperial affairs and what are not. On this point Home Rulers have been much wanting in clearness. They often allude to "local" affairs as if these consisted mainly in municipal and county administration. But local government in a system of Federal States would include the making of land laws, and, if the American example is to be followed, marriage-laws and criminal laws. Difference of laws in these matters is a grave drawback; but the line cannot be drawn short of some such devolution of legislative power on the States if the arrangement is to meet Irish needs. The vetoes of Mr Gladstone's original Bill were reducible to no consistent principle; and it would be bad statesmanship to set up a constitution which the mass of the Irish people would be constantly burning to alter. All that the English and Irish aristocratic party can reasonably ask for in the matter of the land laws is that there shall be provision against confiscation of landlords' rights; and this may be effected by a previous purchase transaction on the lines of Mr Gladstone's proposals. If the "English majority" will not trust an Irish Parliament to deal fairly by landlords, their alternative is to employ English credit as Mr Gladstone proposed. But the policy of Ireland, to be permanently successful, must go beyond mere purchase of landlords' rights and provision for the transfer of ownership to the tenants. The events of the past twenty-five years have shown that, though the creation of peasant proprietorship fifty years ago might possibly have enabled the peasantry to meet the new situation, a system of transfer which presupposes a regular power of payment on the tenant's part is practically sure to break down. Were it only for that reason, another solution must be found if Ireland under Home Rule is not to be merely miserable with a difference.

§ 3. *Nationalisation of Rent.*

Even if, indeed, there were a fair prospect that in a generation the present tenants might carry through a process of purchase which should make them owners of their farms, it is not at all

likely that Ireland would then be at an end of her agrarian troubles. It is indeed odd that any one should suppose so. A system involving five hundred thousand small proprietors is of course much more conducive to national happiness than a system which keeps the land in the hands of a thousand landlords with five hundred thousand tenants, provided that under the small-proprietor system agriculture is not worsened, and that the standard of life is not lowered by multiplication of families and holdings. And we may suppose that, despite the influence of the priesthood, the Irish peasantry, like the French, would be gradually led by simple proprietorship to restrain their families and so avoid the progressive reduction of size of holdings to absurdity. In Ireland, however, the reform, so long delayed, will be extremely hard to begin; and there would be for a time a strong tendency to cut up farms under the new system as under the old. Such subdivision infallibly means misery; and such misery means the purchase of broken men's lands by others. Thus the cutting-up process would be followed by one of estate-making. And even without widespread subdivision, in the absence of a law forcing the divison of estates that are above a certain size, the normal process of capitalism tends to the creation of large estates. Under a system of peasant proprietary, there would be no hindrance to the purchase of various holdings by any one man who could persuade the holders to sell; and the simple fact that farms vary in quality would further tend to bring about the old inequalities. Men with large families to provide for, sufferers from sickness, men with bad luck in live stock, would tend to lose their property, and others would acquire it. In France at this moment, under the law of equal division of the property of parents among children, it constantly happens that a peasant farmer has to borrow money to pay to his sisters and brothers the value of their share; so that, though the statistics are hard to get, it is notorious that the French peasantry in general are an indebted class. In a country where there was a tendency to capitalistic farming, such holdings would be very apt to be sold. It would only need, then, a generation or two to produce in Ireland a number of new rich landowners, who would let their land to tenants as did the old; and the agrarian problem, supposing it to have disappeared in the interim, would reopen. For what mining and manufacturing industry is in England, that agriculture (including pasturage) is in Ireland—the main source of the subsistence of the nation; and as industrial trouble is inevitable in England, pending the coming of a scien-

tific social system, so agrarian trouble is inevitable in Ireland, pending the creation of a scientific land system.

Now, it is a much easier matter to settle the land problem on scientific lines, howbeit not on a final footing, than it is to reduce the industrial problem to any scientific footing at all; and it is relatively easier still when, as in the case of Ireland, the public intelligence has already been brought to contemplate a sweeping measure of land purchase, by State action.[1] It only needs that instead of turning its effort to the creation of peasant proprietors, the State should retain all property in the land, and make the farmers and cotters *its* tenants, giving them not only the security of tenure which they need but the further security that their rents shall never become impossible for them in respect of bad seasons or unforeseen competition.

That is to say, the State should fix the rent due from each holding, first, on the basis of the market value of the farm under the existing laws before the commencement of the State's ownership, and afterwards, year by year, on the basis of the average prices of (1) market produce, or (2) of the produce special to any district or class of farm; or (3) in respect of new outside conditions, such as the rise of towns, roads, and railways. The rent, in short, should be on a sliding scale. In this way and in this way only is it possible to prevent chronic strife, and the chronic ruin of thousands of cultivators. As the rent would be fixed each year with regard to the variations of market prices from the level at which it was first fixed by valuation, and to the variation of the advantages of site, the same tests would apply everywhere, and tenants who were specially industrious or specially skilful would duly profit by their industry and their skill. This may not be the final principle of remuneration in human affairs; but it is an immense advance on the existing system; and if a still higher scheme is ever to be reached, it can the more easily proceed from such a basis. In the meantime, the nationalisation of economic rent would leave in full play all the individualistic forces which would work for the fullest utilisation of the land. Wherever tenants choose to undertake special improvements of a durable kind, they can and indeed should be

[1] "To say the truth, all parties are agreed *in petto* upon the necessity of abolishing landlordism. It is only a question of settling who shall have the credit of doing it, and how it shall be managed so that neither the landlord's creditors nor the public exchequer should suffer too much by that unavoidable liquidation." (M. Philippe Daryl, *Ireland's Disease*, author's Eng. ed., 1888, p. 213.)

bought up by the State at a valuation. Thus there need be no discouragement of any species of improvement whatever, though the final property in improvements, and the right to raise rents on account of these, would still vest in the State. If under this system serious inequalities still arise, they will at least not take the form of large estates; while the community will still have at its command the machinery of taxation of incomes. Should it be found that Mr George's principle, of making the economic rent the "single tax," works to the general advantage, well and good; if not, other taxation can be applied. Indeed, while the State is paying off the purchase price of the landlord's rights, it clearly must retain the present system of taxes. The "single tax" will be possible, if ever, only when the burden of purchase is cleared off.

Under a system of rent-nationalisation, it will be observed, security of tenure will be carried to the highest possible point without involving any risk of injury to agriculture. As rents will be fixed on a regular principle, any man's inability to pay will obviously mean either special misfortune on his part—which would be matter of common knowledge, and so would constitute a case for charitable leniency on the part of the State—or incompetence. In the latter case, he will be identifiable as a bungler who would have gone bankrupt if he had been the owner of his farm; and his removal will be an evident expediency.

For the rest, as the fixing of rates of rent will be a public matter, like the fixing of taxes, and the proceeds will be national revenue, there would be no risk under such a system of the tenants cheating the State. It will be to the interest of each to see that every one else pays his due. And to this end, perfect publicity should be given to the whole procedure.

§ 4. *Promotion of Agriculture and Industry.*

In the special circumstances of Ireland, however, an Irish Parliament would do well to attempt more than the maintenance of agriculture at its present level. It is certain that the land can support a larger population than it does, and it is to the immediate interest of all to create the possibility of such maintenance. Provision can also be made, without any infringement of the principle of free trade between the sections of the Federal State, for the promotion of industry, the necessary complement of the promotion of agriculture. Given such provision, the hitherto perpetual pressure of relative over-population—a pressure

at work even in years of actual depopulation—would be for the time relieved, and the people could be lifted to the higher standard of comfort which is the first ground of security against future relative excess of numbers. Over-population means simply excess of persons relatively to the *available* resources. Let the available resources be speedily increased, and the over-population is absorbed, with a chance of not re-appearing as such. It should be a main part of the business of an Irish Parliament, then, to stimulate and outstrip the "natural" growth of Irish agriculture on its new footing by special means.

And it happens that both the need and the feasibility of such promotion of agriculture is being freshly recognised among politicians of different parties. Just after the headline and first paragraph of this section had been written, there appeared in the *Times* the following item of news :—

"A noteworthy occurrence affecting Ireland is the publication of the report drawn up by Mr Horace Plunket's 'Recess Committee,' which, composed of men of various opinions, has been considering the welfare of the country. This recommends the establishment of an Irish Governmental Department of Agriculture and Industries. Whether the suggestion be carried into effect or not, the work of the committee will nevertheless be memorable, since it has achieved the rare feat of bringing into practical unanimity a collection of Irishmen of all parties and beliefs."

To no one was this publication[1] more noteworthy and more welcome than to the present writer. It provides, from a wide knowledge of the subject, and from a ripe reflection on the practical problem, a demonstration of the need for and the feasibility of a State promotion of agriculture and industry in Ireland, where he had been about to undertake the thesis with extremely imperfect qualifications, mainly on lines of economic theory and analogy. It is now, happily, unnecessary to do more than refer to the Report in question as a perfect store-house of information and argument, to summarise its proposals, and to point to its political significance. It is first of all to be remarked that the proposal for a State Department of Agriculture and Industries follows upon a movement, begun a few years ago by Mr Horace Plunket, for the development of coöperative methods among Irish farmers, which has already led to great improvement

[1] *Report of the Recess Committee on the Establishment of a Department of Agriculture and Industries for Ireland.* Dublin : Browne & Nolan. Belfast : Mullan & Son. London : Fisher Unwin. Price 1s.

in Irish dairy produce.[1] Thus it is from an organisation with the best means of knowing what can be done by private initiative that we have the weightiest plea yet made for State aid to industry in Ireland.

Taking agriculture to begin with, we find the Recess Committee proposing to promote (*a*) normal agriculture by means of a system of Travelling Instructors, Experiment Stations, and Agricultural Laboratories, all of which may be applied in connection with and furtherance of the movement of coöperation now being guided by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society; and (*b*) a variety of other field and cottage industries in which instruction could be given by the same means. In this connection it is to be specially noted that attempts were actually made in Ireland in the last generation (1838-1848) to improve agriculture by means of model farms and travelling teachers; and that the effort was frustrated by the opposition of the English Treasury, which then stood for the principle of unqualified *laissez-faire*, then the ruling economic doctrine in England. Thus, after ages of direct oppression of Ireland, involving the deliberate destruction of her industries, England in the name of Liberalism blindly wrought her fresh injury by refusing to permit of the special measures needed to counteract the results of the wrong-doing of the past. At every step, it would seem, the English hold on Ireland must needs prove a curse, ignorance continuing to do evil even when the will to do it has ceased. And it may here be said that, though the Recess Committee's Report carefully abstains from suggesting anything like State control of the land, it points to the need and possibility of developing certain Irish resources which are not likely to be greatly developed save under State auspices, seeing that to do so means competition with the State-aided output of other countries. These resources are mainly :—

1. The improvement of the existing flax-culture.
2. Creation of beetroot-culture and tobacco-culture.
3. Improvement of pig-breeding and rearing.
4. Substitution of a dead-meat trade for the cruel and wasteful transport of live cattle.
5. Promotion of the poultry and egg trade by improved means of transit.
6. Promotion of market-gardening by horticultural schools, and by rewards.

[1] For a sketch of this movement see the article *The New Irish Movement*, by Mr Standish O'Grady, in the *New Review*, December, 1896.

7. Reforesting and reclamation of waste lands.
8. Development of the sea fisheries, of oyster culture, and of inland fisheries.
9. Utilisation of water power, so abundant in Ireland.

In regard to every one of these items it may be affirmed that a Home Rule Government, with a national land system, could and probably would do far more than is likely to be done in the imaginable future by a Ministry of Agriculture and Industries under English auspices. The English and Scotch unpreparedness for State aid to industry is so great that nearly all of the small existing schemes, such as stations for fish culture, are regarded with disfavour by many members of Parliament. Foreign competition, indeed, is goading the commercial class out of its *laissez-faire* into a more and more emphatic demand for the extension and improvement of technical schools; but this very fact is a warning that, under English auspices, Irish technical instruction would be kept relatively backward, when it is pressingly important that it should be as efficient as possible. On technical instruction would largely depend that development of (10) Cottage Industries which is so necessary in agricultural Ireland, where there are only some 240 days in the year in which a man can work upon the land. Such industries have been developed to a wonderful extent in Würtemberg, by a method of productive technical instruction under State management. But who believes that an English Department would in the near future develop industry as has been done by the Government of Würtemberg?

So with the development of the dead-meat trade, and of the poultry and egg trade. In regard to the former the Report observes[1] that "*The difficulties in the way of organising this trade will be less formidable when the country is more in command of its means of transport, by land and sea.*" Now, there is very little prospect of any great development of Irish means of transport by land and sea save through a measure of either nationalisation or State subsidisation of the railways, so as to bring about their unification. The need for such unification has long been felt; but nothing short of a gigantic Syndicate can bring it about without State interference; and a State does ill to encourage gigantic Syndicates. Were Home Rule established, on the other hand, a measure of railway nationalisation could be carried far sooner than we are likely to carry any measure of the kind in England. As regards sea transport, again, there might very well

[1] P. 19.

be enough influx of capital under Home Rule to establish by private enterprise the shipping needed; but here again provision could be made against future industrial difficulties by setting up such a system of State shipping as exists in Norway, the profits of which would go into the public treasury.

Finally, as regards reforesting, reclamation of waste lands, and development of the culture of flax, beetroot, and tobacco, it is abundantly clear that English control is so much sheer hindrance to progress, as compared with the possibilities of advance under Home Rule, especially under an ideal of land-nationalisation. English public opinion is not within measurable distance of such measures of land reclamation as have been carried out in the French *landes* and in the shallow waters of Holland; whereas a Home Rule Government would readily follow such leads, and would not defer to English prejudice and precedent. English supervision would represent all the inertia of English habit—the habit of industrial *laissez-faire* in a country where *laissez-faire* could for a time work with special facility by reason of the historic and natural conditions, differing as they do so profoundly from those of Ireland. It is further morally certain that a mere Department of Agriculture and Industries under English auspices would be hampered at every turn by the jealousies of English parties. Conservatives would tend to oppose every grant made by a Liberal Ministry; though their leaders when in power might propose larger grants; and Liberal human nature would hardly be equal to helping Conservatives to reap a harvest of credit in such circumstances. Only a Home Rule Government could have the necessary financial freedom. And that the financial problem could be best handled in Ireland is finally made clear by the virtual admission of the Financial Relations Committee,[1] in its recently published report, to the effect that after all the denials of Liberal and Conservative financiers in turn, Ireland has since the Union been heavily overtaxed. It has taken generations to bring us to this admission. Now that it is made, it should surely be followed by the national admission that Irishmen had better be left to manage Irish affairs.

In this connection, it only remains to point out that all the possible forms of progress indicated in the Recess Committee's Report, however beneficial they might be in the near future if conducted on an individualistic basis, would in course of time develop for Ireland on a larger scale the ultimate social problem.

[1] See this summarised in the article *The Financial Grievances of Ireland*, by Mr J. J. Clancy in the *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1896.

All forms of individualistic improvement whatever tend in time to come under the control of capitalism; and supposing Ireland in the next twenty years to make the most satisfactory progress in agriculture by means of coöperative methods, and in industry by means of systematic technical instruction, it is reasonable to surmise that in twenty years more the gains would be seen in process of being turned to the advantage of invested capital, which could soon compete triumphantly with the coöperation of small farmers and small producers. Then would arise on a wider scale than before the old strife of capital and labour, grown all the bitterer by reason of the new growth of wealth and the past growth of well-being. There is no evading this law of industrial evolution save by controlling the conditions under which it comes into play. Hence the profound importance of providing for Ireland now in the spirit of statesmanlike foresight, rather than in that of simple opportunism. The Recess Committee are not at all to be censured for adapting their demonstration to the prevailing political ideas. Indeed the special value of their Report lies in the fact that it represents an appeal to no faction whatever, but sets forth what needs to be done and what can be done in Ireland irrespective of the assumptions and ideals of either Home Rulers or Unionists. But when their part is done, and admirably done, it remains for political students to take into account all the factors in the problem, and to scheme for Ireland accordingly.

It is, indeed, an obvious matter for the consideration of practical politicians that if capital has been withheld from Ireland in the past on the score of her political unrest, it will tend in the future, under the same auspices, to be withheld on the same ground. The Irish Americans are not likely to pour in capital while the English ascendancy subsists; and English capitalists are not likely to come freely forward in the face of a continued struggle for Home Rule. And the struggle for Home Rule will surely continue. It has now become something of an axiom that a political aspiration once aroused in a nation is not likely to die of prosperity, though prosperity may weaken or end movements arising from temporary industrial distress. Therefore whatever gain may accrue to the spread of coöperative agricultural methods in Ireland will in itself, in all probability, tend to the strengthening of the Home Rule cause. Everything points to that central principle.

§ 5. *Education and Religion.*

It remains to consider the most thorny of all the problems of Irish administration—that of the course to be taken with the Churches, whose action and attitude on education constitute the special difficulty of that case. It is not at all likely that the suggestions here made will be acceptable to either the English or the Irish majority; and they are thrown out rather by way of completing the outline of a rational program than with the hope of seeing them adopted. For religion in Ireland is a twofold force of hindrance, inasmuch as it sunders men who would otherwise readily agree on a political solution, and further prevents agreement on any plan for the sorely needed schooling of the mass of the people. It is safe to say that all nations are under-educated; but Ireland is to-day under-educated relatively to other countries,[1] inasmuch as the claims of the Catholic Church and the jealousy of Protestantism concur to prevent an effective system of State education. Even in England, the feud of Church and Nonconformity is a constant danger to popular education: in Ireland it is a standing obstacle. It is true that the school attendance and the number of schools latterly increase, despite the decline in population;[2] but though the annual grants to primary schools are proportionally greater for Ireland than for England and Scotland,[3] the results were certainly not better. For much of this backwardness the blame has properly lain, in the near past, with the Irish Education Board, which carefully made the schools anti-national;[4] but whatever be the causes,

[1] In London in 1891 the proportion of men who signed the marriage register with marks was 3·7 per cent.; and of women, 5 per cent. In Ireland in 1890 the proportion was 20·4 men and 20·9 women. This represented progress since 1874, when the figures were: 30·1 men and 36·4 women.

[2] In 1886 there were 8,024 elementary schools under the Education Commissioners, with 490,484 scholars: in 1891 there were 8,346 schools, with 506,336 scholars. In 1834 there were only 789 national schools, with 107,042 scholars. In 1859, with a population of about 5,800,000 there were 5,496 schools, with a nominal attendance of 806,510. But at that time the whole number on the registers was taken. The average attendance would be about 600,000.

[3] The grants for 1892 were: England, £3,498,078; Scotland, £546,997; Ireland £969,853. It is to be noted, however, that Ireland is relatively very poor in other endowments. The elementary schools in England in 1891 received from rates, fees, donations, and other sources, £4,480,162; those of Scotland, £654,036, and those of Ireland 128,637.

[4] See Mr Fox's *Key to the Irish Question*, pp. 186-187. See also above, p. 174; and compare *Modern Ireland*, by an Ulsterman, 1868, pp. 271-303, as

the fact is that to-day the Irish people, though constantly spoken of as anxious for education, possesses relatively little, and is, as above noted, little given to reading, even in its own history. This holds true of the Protestant and Catholic populations alike: indeed, if both sides really studied their history instead of living on garbled and envenomed traditions, the religious bitterness could not subsist as it does. While it remains, however, it seems to make impossible even such a compromise on religious education as has subsisted in the Board Schools of England. Catholics will accept neither simple Bible-reading in the schools nor simple secular teaching: Protestants of course will tolerate neither Catholic nor secular teaching. The minds of the children are made the battleground of the fanaticisms of their parents, priests, and presbyters. For the time being, there exists a working compromise of a very peculiar kind, which might even suggest, when separately considered, a possible disappearance of the religious difficulty, as regards the schools. In the schools under the National Board of Education, religious instruction is given for one hour each day, and the nature of the teaching varies according as Catholics or Protestants preponderate in the district. For each school the Board appoints a Patron, who may be either a private individual, such as the landlord of the property, or a school committee; and the Patron in turn, if an individual, may either act directly as school manager or appoint a local correspondent as is done in the case of a committee. If the Catholics are in the majority in the district, the Patron is Catholic and the religious teaching is Catholic; and *vice versa;* the pupils belonging to the minority-sect being withdrawn from religious teaching. This state of things prevails in the case of all schools under the Board which were built and are still retained by denominations, and in the other "non-vested" schools belonging to localities. In the "vested" schools, on the other hand (those built by Government grant) the local clergy of each denomination are entitled to have access to the pupils of their creed during the hour for religious instruction; but in these also the tendency seems to be that Protestants and Catholics aggregate in different schools.

This arrangement, though it must in a number of cases exclude children of both sects from all religious teaching, seems to give sufficient satisfaction to permit of its continuance; but it is difficult to see in it a tolerable permanent solution. The segrega-

to the official treatment of O'Curry; and Gustave de Beaumont, *L'Irlande*, 7e édit., i. 319-320, as to the distrust established in the past by Protestant proselytism.

tion of children everywhere into virtually denominational schools is in itself very undesirable from the point of view of good citizenship ; and seems to promise an endless stimulation of the sectarian spirit in the future. It is hard to see a practicable way out of such a deadlock ; but on the whole the best plan seems to be the extension to all schools alike of the system in use in the vested schools. It is bad enough that the different clergy should have to get leave to teach the children of their flocks different creeds for one hour a day ; but it seems better that this should be so than that each school as a whole should be under the control of either a Catholic or a Protestant as such. Already the National Schools are so far unsectarian in principle that they are all open to children of all creeds. It remains to establish all round an unsectarian management ; and to this end a Home Rule Government would do well to establish for the schools in general the system of control now applied to the "Model" Schools of the Education Commissioners, which are managed by the Inspectors for the districts in which they are situated. On such a footing it may be possible to raise education above the level at which rural use and wont would fix it, and to set against the religious tradition of separateness the civic example of unsectarianism. There would still remain, of course, the problem of the specifically sectarian schools, which would present in Ireland the same difficulties as it does in England. For these it is difficult to see any ultimate solution save that of the State taking over the whole burden of maintenance, paying to the previous owners a sum down for their property, and guaranteeing to the sects concerned the same right to teach their dogmas for one hour a day as is given in the other national schools.

Under such a system, the clergy of all denominations would be in a certain indirect way servants of the State ; and it would be hard to suggest a better palliative for the present antagonisms of the sects than the frank adoption of the French plan of a Budget of Cults, under which the clergy of *all* sects possessed of a certain minimum of registered adherents should receive a fixed stipend from the State, which in turn ought either to receive, under one or other of its departments, all fees for burials, marriages, and christenings, or to enact that these functions be performed gratuitously for all citizens who desire it. Here, of course, there is the maximum of unlikelihood that the proposed solution will be adopted. Once upon a time the Catholic clergy were grateful for the proposal that they should be salaried by the State. To-day, in view of the small stipend that the State must

needs fix if it gave any, they would perhaps look askance, even if the Protestants consented to an all-round arrangement; while even if the Churchmen agreed, rationalists—few as they are in Ireland—might protest. To the latter, the present writer would say that in France the system of State payment all round seems to restrict the political power of the priest more than would any other arrangement. This, of course, is not a recommendation of it to the priests of other countries; but those in Ireland may even now reflect that unless Ireland is to remain a complete exception to the ordinary course of intellectual development in Europe, their successors of a generation hence may be glad to get from the State a moderate stipend, while the State may then see much less reason than now for granting it. The Irish clergy of to-day have been described by an impartial foreigner as "a corporation greatly enamoured of its comforts, endowed with good incomes, and whose sleekness forms a striking contrast with the general emaciation of their parishioners."[1] It seems possible that when the parishioners grow less emaciated the priests may grow a little more so. At present they are increasing in numbers while the population decreases; and doubtless their incomes are on the increase also. "It is generally admitted," says M. Daryl, "that each of these priests, with his church and his house, cannot cost much under £300 or £400 a year. That would give about £1,200,000 coming annually from the pockets of those labourers and servant girls. *The tithe was never so heavy.*"[2] An outsider may take leave to predict that a prosperous and educated Ireland will not go on paying its priests as a battling and starving and one-idea'd Ireland has of late done those who helped to organise its agrarian and constitutional struggle for self rule. It is probable that the "British majority" will see fit, in any Federal constitution it may accept, to insist on the veto against all religious endowments, preferring to count on the decline of Catholicism from the spread of culture, without considering whether Protestantism is not equally likely to decline in Britain, as it has done in Germany. Meantime, clerical incomes are just as much a drain on the total resources of the community as they would be if paid directly by the State; and they will probably increase before they decrease. Hence the expediency, in the eye of sociological reason, of an arrangement under which the burden will tend to be minimised, while yet preventing that state of impoverishment on the part of the clergy which would tend to make them specially active for a

[1] Daryl, *Ireland's Disease*, as cited, p. 220.
[2] *Id.*, p. 229.

revival of fanaticism. It is the bare historic fact that religion has wrought more evil in Ireland than in any country in northern Europe. The more reason, theoretically speaking, why Ireland should in her own interests attempt the control of religion. But we have, of course, religion itself to reckon with, and that will doubtless long avail to ward off a reasonable solution of its own problem.

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