

**Report addressed to the Marquess Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland /  
by Elizabeth Fry and Joseph John Gurney, respecting their late visit to that  
country.**

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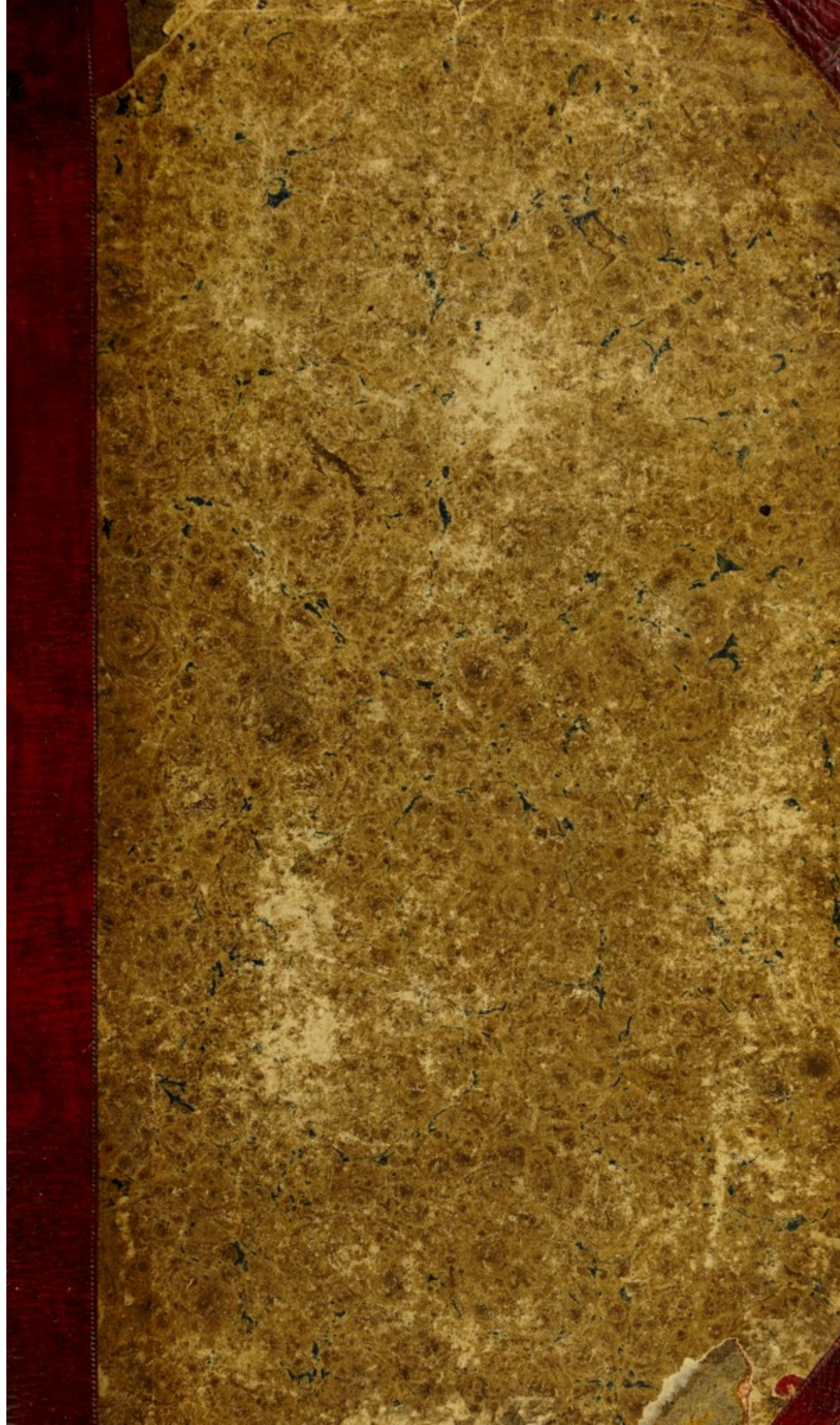
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# REPORT

ADDRESSED TO

THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY,

LORD LIEUTENANT OF

IRELAND,

BY

ELIZABETH FRY AND JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY,

RESPECTING

THEIR LATE VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY.

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SECOND EDITION.

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DUBLIN:

JOHN CUMMING, 16, LOWER ORMOND-QUAY, AND  
D. F. GARDINER, WESTMORELAND-STREET.

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1827.



# ADVERTISEMENT

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R. GRAISBERRY, Printer.

13th December, 1827.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE visit to Ireland which forms the subject of the following Report, occupied us during the spring of the present year. The report was presented to the Lord Lieutenant and some other members of the Irish Government, after our return home, in the Summer. Several corrections have since been made in it, and it is now presented to the public, solely from the hope that some of the remarks and suggestions which it contains, may be found of practical utility to a people, in whose temporal and religious welfare, it is impossible for us not to feel the warmest and most affectionate interest.*

EARLHAM, NEAR NORWICH,

*Eleventh Month, 1st, 1827.*



# REPORT

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## R E P O R T.

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It is with great deference that we avail ourselves of the Lord Lieutenant's obliging permission, in now laying before him a concise statement, of some particulars connected with the Prisons and other Public Institutions in Ireland, which occupied our attention during our late journey through most parts of that country ; and that we also venture to communicate to him, in pursuance of his polite request, some of our reflections respecting the state of the population in general.

Before, however, we enter upon such a statement, we feel ourselves bound to express our gratitude to the Lord Lieutenant, and to other individuals connected with the Irish government, for their great personal kindness towards us, and for their liberality in affording us every facility in the prosecution of our objects. Although we had no pretensions to it, except on the ground of our sincere desire to promote the welfare of our fellow-subjects, we have met with the most obliging attention both from himself and from other members of the government ; and the prisons and other public institutions have, without reserve, been thrown open for our inspection.



It may also be proper for us to premise, that we came to Ireland principally for the purpose of paying a religious visit to the Society of Friends, of which we are members. The examination of the prisons and other establishments was a collateral, and, in some respects, a subordinate object; and it will therefore be no matter of surprise to the Lord Lieutenant, that this examination was by no means so complete or extensive, as might, under different circumstances, have been reasonably expected.

We have, however, during a journey of three months' continuance, inspected upwards of forty prisons, of various kinds, including about two-thirds of the County Jails; and, in addition to these, we have visited the principal lunatic asylums, and many of the infirmaries, houses of industry, and other establishments for the relief of the most distressed and afflicted part of the population.

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We will, in the first place, take the liberty of submitting to the Lord Lieutenant a few remarks on the subject of the PRISONS OF IRELAND.

The salutary effects of the care which has, of late years, been extended to the subject of prison discipline by the government and legislature of the united kingdom, have, for some time past, been very obvious in Great Britain, where the prisons have undergone a very extensive improvement; nor have those effects been less remarkable in Ireland.

When it is considered that, not many years since, the prisons of Ireland were signalized as the abodes of filth and wretchedness—for this is the report we have been accustomed to hear of their former condi-



tion—it must afford the Lord Lieutenant great satisfaction to know, that now they are very generally kept in a state of cleanliness and order,—that a right classification of the prisoners is, to a considerable extent, effected—that much successful labour is bestowed on their instruction—that their diet is almost universally both sufficient and unexceptionable—that the provisions made for the maintenance of their health, and for their comfort and benefit when sick, are ample and effective—and, lastly, that fetters are rarely used in any prison in Ireland.

In adverting to the progress which has been made in that country, in the promotion of prison discipline, we wish more especially to notice the excellent system adopted (with improved regulations under the late Act of Parliament) for the *superintendence and inspection* of the prisons: we allude particularly to the Local Inspectors, and the Inspectors General.

It is obvious that nothing is more indispensable to the order and discipline of a prison, and to the welfare of its inmates, than the frequent inspection and judicious superintendence of persons who are wholly independent of the officers resident in the prison itself. Such persons are the Local Inspectors; and we think it evident that their almost daily visits to the prisons, their free and frequent communication with the prisoners, and their exercise of an authority independent of that of the Governor, have been attended with the happiest results; and it is gratifying to observe that the efforts of the Governors of the jails, and of the Local Inspectors, are in general combined—in a manner agreeable to both parties—for promoting the welfare of these institutions.

In making this mention of the Local Inspectors,



we do not forget the *boards of superintendence* to which they, as well as the Governors, are subject in point of control, and to which every case of difficulty must be referred. Thus a useful and salutary check is maintained, and we are not aware that any more effective system could be adopted to ensure a proper care, over each particular jail in Ireland.

With regard to the office of the Inspectors General, whose duty it is annually to examine the whole of the prisons, we apprehend that experience has amply proved its practical importance. Very valuable have been the exertions of the present Inspectors General, Major Palmer, and Major Woodward, in promoting the maintenance and extension of a right system of prison discipline throughout the island. We feel personally much indebted to these gentlemen for the facilities which they have afforded us ; and for the zeal and assiduity which they have evinced in assisting us in the formation of Ladies' Visiting Associations.

We now beg leave to submit to the Lord Lieutenant a few observations respecting these Associations, which have been found very useful both in England and Ireland. About ten years ago, a number of benevolent women formed themselves into a society, for the purpose of visiting and instructing the female prisoners in Newgate, in London. Their efforts were kindly patronized by the magistrates of the city and also by Government, and have been regularly continued since the Association was first instituted. The result has been a decided change in the state of that prison. The numerous females confined there, were once in a condition of the utmost disorder and confusion, and their imprisonment for one crime was the sure preparation for the commission of others.



Now, under the care of the visiters, they are regularly instructed, constantly employed, decently clad, and cleanliness and order are prevalent amongst them. The number of returns to the prison is materially diminished, and many cases have occurred of established reformation in individual prisoners. Regulations have also been formed under the care of the Association, and with the sanction of Government, for the maintenance of the same order among the female transports, during their voyage to New South Wales ; of which the good effects have been already felt in the colony. The success which attended the effort thus made for the benefit of the female prisoners in Newgate, soon led to the formation of committees of visiting ladies, in connexion with other prisons in the metropolis and various parts of England—and similar good results have, in many places, arisen from the attention thus directed, by females, to the most depraved and afflicted of their own sex.

We are happy to inform the Lord Lieutenant, that long previously to our visit to Ireland, Ladies' Associations were formed for visiting the female prisoners, in several of the prisons in Dublin, and in those at Dundalk, Armagh, Carlow, Cork, Clonmel, Galway, Sligo, &c. These associations have produced in several places an extensive improvement among the female criminals in Ireland. It was most striking to us, in visiting the jails, to observe the contrast between the state of the prisoners visited by Ladies, and that of those who enjoyed no such privilege. The order, decency, and civilization, prevalent among the former class, afford an ample evidence of the salutary influence which it is in the power of well educated women to exercise over these degraded and unhappy



females. Nor will it be improper for us here to add, that the labours of the visiting ladies are greatly assisted by the Matrons, who for the most part reside in the prisons, according to the express direction of 7 George IV, cap. 74, and who in general appeared to us to have been selected with both care and judgment.

As it was greatly our desire to add both to the efficacy and to the number of these associations, (an object in the prosecution of which our efforts were kindly sanctioned by Government,) we ventured to procure a meeting of Ladies at the Richmond Bridewell, soon after our arrival in Dublin, when committees of visitors were appointed for several of the prisons in that city, and a Central National Institution was formed, of which the Marchioness Wellesley undertook to act as the Patroness, and with the Committee of which the associations in different parts of the Country have agreed to correspond. Thus a harmony of effort and uniformity of system will, we trust, be ensured, greatly to the advantage of the cause in which so many benevolent Ladies are found willing to engage. In the formation of this National Institution we have received the most cordial and effective assistance from the Inspectors General.

In the course of our visit to a considerable proportion of the County Jails, it was our anxious endeavour to regulate the proceedings of the Ladies' Associations already formed, so as to impart an increased efficacy to their useful efforts—an end which could only be obtained by a systematic division of labour; and through the kindness of our many friends, we were enabled to institute new associations in several towns—viz. Trim, Belfast, Carrickfergus, London-



derry, Omagh, Enniskillen, Roscommon, Maryborough, Limerick, Wicklow, Wexford, and Waterford. And now we may conclude our report on this part of the subject, by expressing our earnest desire that similar Institutions may be formed without delay in connexion with all the remaining County Jails, and other principal prisons in Ireland—that the great work of reformation from *vice to virtue*, from *idleness to industry*, and from *profaneness to practical religion*, may go rapidly forward—and that the Ladies who engage in these associations, may persevere in maintaining that diligence, zeal, impartiality, and unanimity, which can alone be the means, under the blessing of Providence, of crowning their efforts with success.

At Dublin and Cork, the ladies who visit the prisons have formed subsidiary institutions—in Dublin, called the Shelter, in Cork, the Refuge—for the reception of females when discharged from prison. There they are kept in voluntary confinement, and under close and judicious care, until situations can be procured which are likely to ensure their future maintenance and respectability. The importance of these institutions is very evident ; for it too often happens that the unfortunate female, on her discharge from prison, is unable to find any friends to protect her, or any situation for her maintenance, and is thus almost compelled to revert to her old habits, in direct contrariety to those virtuous desires which her visitors may have implanted and nurtured. We venture to request the Lord Lieutenant to consider whether the grand Juries of the respective counties might not be recommended (on a proper plan being laid before them) to present a small annual sum (say from £50 to £100) to assist the Ladies' Association of the



district in the maintenance of a shelter or refuge for destitute female prisoners, on their quitting the jails in which they have been confined. Such a provision would be the means of confirming the newly-acquired virtue of many a wretched criminal, and would, in the end, we trust, be found even an economical arrangement—curtailing expense, by the diminution of crime.<sup>1</sup>

We will now take the liberty of requesting the Lord Lieutenant's attention to several particulars connected with the general system of Prison Discipline in Ireland, which appear to us to be well worthy of consideration.

We apprehend that the great objects of that discipline are, first, to prevent the criminal from *growing worse* ; and, secondly, if possible, to effect, in his character, a *real improvement*. Now, in order to these ends, his sleeping singly—in a solitary cell—is a point of almost indispensable importance. It is, therefore, a circumstance extremely to be regretted, that the crowded state of most of the prisons in Ireland, including several of a very modern date, precludes the possibility of such an arrangement. The consequence is, that in some of the jails the prisoners sleep two, and only two, together, contrary to the Act of Parliament ; and that in others, three, or even more, are crowded into single small beds. We are aware that the only complete remedy for this evil would be the erection of many additional sleeping cells ; and this, in some cases where the jails are new and already

<sup>1</sup> It is with great satisfaction we state that some steps have been taken in Dublin towards the establishment, by private subscription, of a refuge for *boys* on their discharge from prison—an object which all must allow to be of great interest and importance.



very extensive, is scarcely to be expected. In the meantime, however, we would take the liberty of suggesting, that the use of *hammocks* instead of *bedsteads* (or, in some cases, *in addition* to them) would afford the means of placing three prisoners in a single sleeping cell, in a manner far more convenient and harmless than that which is at present usually adopted. Hammocks are already used in the Richmond Bridewell, and in some others of the prisons in Ireland, and, as it appeared to us, with very good effect.

We believe that, were prisoners kept in perfect solitude during the night, and were the opportunity thus afforded them of sober, and often painful, reflection on the misery produced by their crimes, they would be more likely to profit from the various efforts made in prisons for their improvement, and would less frequently be found disobedient and refractory during the day. We are happy, however, to observe, that for such conduct, the punishment universally inflicted is solitary confinement, under judicious restrictions, and for a limited period—and that whipping, which we conceive can seldom fail to harden and degrade its victims, is banished from the prisons in Ireland. This we conceive to be a signal evidence of the enlightened views of the Irish Government.

It is a very pleasing circumstance that most of the new jails are so constructed, as to allow of that classification of the prisoners, which is required by the Act of Parliament. It ought, however, to be remarked, that it is not always desirable, or even safe, to classify prisoners *precisely* according to the crimes for which they are committed or convicted. Not unfrequently it happens that the most hardened criminals are imprisoned only for misdemeanors, and very young



offenders for acts of felony. Hence arises the necessity of a discretionary power in the hands of some person in authority, with regard to the classification of prisoners—which we apprehend would be quite consistent with the *spirit* of the Act of Parliament—and such a power, we conceive, might be lodged, with great propriety, in the hands of the Local Inspector, subject to the approbation of the Board of Superintendence.

Care ought always to be taken to maintain, *in chapel*, the same classification of the prisoners, as exists in the prison itself; and especially to effect such a separation there between the male and female prisoners, that they may not see each other. We are sorry to observe, that, even in some of the new jails, this obviously important subject is not at present secured.

It is notorious that in many of the older jails, it is impossible to classify to the extent required by law. Wherever this is the case, the only possible remedy ought to be speedily adopted, namely, that of additional buildings, or what is in general found far preferable, entirely new prisons. For the erection of new prisons, where required, the provisions of 7 Geo. IV, ch. 74, afford important pecuniary facilities—the money being, in the first instance, advanced by Government, and afterwards repaid by the counties, in half-yearly instalments. The effect of these provisions is now conspicuous, and new jails are either already erected, or in progress, in many of the Irish counties. Amongst the counties where such buildings are still obviously required, our late journey enables us to particularize Meath, Antrim, Armagh, the Queen's County, and Kildare. The jails at Carrickfergus, at Naas, and at Maryborough, more especially, are of so extremely defective a construction, that the objects of



a right prison discipline can scarcely be effected without their *demolition*. We are informed that the same thing may be said of the jails at Castlebar, Mullingar, and some other places, which we had not the opportunity of visiting. We have pleasure in understanding, that in some of the counties we have thus taken the liberty of mentioning, arrangements have already been entered into with a view to the erection of new jails.<sup>2</sup>

While it is, undoubtedly, very desirable that a right and sufficient *classification* of prisoners should be still more general in Ireland, we apprehend, that by far the most extensive as well as dangerous evil existing in the prisons, is the too general *want of employment*. Among the female prisoners, indeed, (especially when under the care of Ladies' Associations,) sewing, knitting, spinning, and washing, have, in various instances, been successfully introduced. But it is a lamentable circumstance, that with but few exceptions, the male prisoners throughout Ireland—whether tried or untried—and when not engaged in school, in chapel, or at their meals, are left in a condition of absolute idleness. Can it be doubted, when prisoners are thus destitute of occupation, and are associated in large numbers, that the consequences are of the most injurious description? Can it be doubted that their conversation is of a degrading and corrupting tendency—that they spend their time in plotting new enterprises of guilt—that they are gradually, but certainly, becoming yet more deep in crime, yet more dangerous to the community at large?

<sup>2</sup> Since the delivery of this Report we have been informed by the Inspectors General, that new jails are in progress, or have been determined on, in the following counties, Meath, Westmeath, King's, Queen's, Kildare, Cavan, and Down. It is earnestly hoped that the counties of Armagh, Antrim, and Mayo, will speedily follow the example. These new jails, it is expected, will all afford accommodation for the solitary sleeping of the male prisoners.



With regard to untried prisoners, we are well aware, that without a breach of law and a sacrifice of the principles of common justice, they cannot be put, against their will, to any hard or irksome labour; but occupation might *sometimes* be found for them of a nature which would be at once salutary and profitable. Those who have been accustomed to handicraft business, might, in most cases, be safely encouraged and *assisted* in working at their trade, though deprived of their liberty. We do not forget the *peculiar* difficulties which attach in Ireland to the procuring of profitable employment for the inmates of jails. But these difficulties may, by watchfulness and perseverance, be often overcome, and wherever they *are* overcome, there the demoralization of untried prisoners will be, to a great extent, prevented.

In Section civ, of 7 Geo. IV, cap. 74, it is enacted, "that the keeper of each and every prison in Ireland shall have full power and authority, and he is hereby required, to keep every poor prisoner in such prison to work of such kind as the Grand Jury or board of superintendence, or in their default, any three justices of the peace, respectively, shall direct and appoint by any order, to be made for that purpose: provided always that no person shall be put to hard labour who has not been convicted of *some offence, and sentenced to imprisonment for the same.*"

From this section it might be supposed, that the keepers of prisons in Ireland are empowered to put to hard labour, all poor prisoners who are sentenced for any offence, to a term of confinement. Now although such a construction of the act is evidently inconsistent with its general tenor, and could not, perhaps, be safely adopted in practice, it is much to be regretted that



the proportion of tried prisoners in Ireland, who are engaged in hard labour, is at present so extremely small, that this method of discipline can scarcely be said to have received a fair trial.

We take the liberty of suggesting to the Lord Lieutenant the propriety of some alteration in practice, and if necessary, *in the law*, on this subject : for we doubt not he will agree with us in the sentiment, that it is much better for the public interests, as well as for the criminals themselves, that convicts under sentence of imprisonment, should be obliged to pass the chief part of the day in labour, than that they should continue in a state of corrupting idleness. In order to this end, a more general use of the *Tread Wheel* would, we think, be desirable. Every jail ought to be furnished with one ; and the wheel ought, in all cases, to be large enough to receive the average number of male prisoners under sentence of confinement. It ought, moreover, to be divided into as many compartments, as will ensure the continuance, during hours of work, of the classification required by law. This machine may be applied to a variety of useful purposes, such as the grinding of corn, or the raising of water ; and whenever it can be so far rendered profitable as to afford some small earnings for the prisoners, such an encouragement will, we believe, enhance, rather than diminish, the benefit of the system ; but even where it is found impossible to apply the power of the Tread Wheel to any object of profit, it will still be found useful as a means of occupation and discipline—of preventing idle association—of deterring from crime, by rendering the punishment of imprisonment irksome and unpopular. Long and extensive experience has, we believe, af-



forded proofs, that where the Tread Wheel is brought into full operation, there the number of commitments is materially diminished. We may also observe that *when the allowance of food is sufficient for persons so employed*, this species of labour is found beneficial to health as well as to morals.<sup>3</sup> In thus venturing to recommend a more general use of the Tread Wheel in Ireland, we have a view exclusively to male prisoners. We are glad to find from the Inspectors General, that those of the other sex are never subjected to this mode of discipline. It is much better that female prisoners should be occupied under the care of the ladies who visit them, with employments of a feminine and domestic nature.

Before we quit the subject of the Tread Wheel, we wish to advert to a circumstance, which cannot fail to be very striking to any one who inspects the jails in Ireland, and whose visit takes place, as ours did in part, immediately after the assizes. We allude to the imprisonment of the *illicit distillers*, who, notwithstanding the late diminution of the duties on spirits, are still very numerous in many of the northern and western counties of Ireland. These persons, being charged with a bailable offence, are at large, until the time of their trial; but no sooner do the Assizes occur, than they are sent to the County Jails *in vast numbers*, for a term of imprisonment, as enjoined by law. The consequence is truly lamentable; for in the first place, the sudden accession of so large a number of prisoners throws the whole system

<sup>3</sup> Few objects are of more importance in prisons than establishing *uniformity of discipline*. Every Tread Wheel should therefore be provided with a gyrometer, by which the number of its revolutions may, from time to time, be ascertained. The velocity of the wheel and the number of steps of ascent during the different months of the year, should be regulated so as to produce this uniformity.



of discipline into confusion, and exposes the managers of the prison to the utmost difficulty ; and in the second place, these persons who are convicted of an offence only against the revenue laws, and are not in general vicious characters, cannot be otherwise than fearfully demoralized, (to the unspeakable injury of themselves and the public) by a long period of total idleness, and in some instances, of dangerous association with criminals of a deeper dye. Probably the Irish Government is already alive to the necessity of some alteration in the law, on the subject of these distillers ; for instance, of punishing their offence by fine, rather than by imprisonment : but the point to which we are anxious, at present, to solicit the attention of the Lord Lieutenant, is this—that while imprisonment continues to be the punishment allotted to this prevalent offence, it ought, if possible, to be connected with *hard labor*. It is highly probable, that if these illicit distillers, when convicted, were *uniformly* put on the tread wheel—even for a single month—the offence would soon be most materially diminished, and perhaps in the end entirely extirpated.

*A regular jail dress* for prisoners, is one of those provisions which is found to promote not only cleanliness and comfort, but order and discipline ; and even security against escape. Such a provision, though almost universal in England, is, we observe, but very partially adopted in Ireland. We are quite aware, that the vast number of prisoners is calculated to discourage every effort of this description, and also, that the lowest part of the population is much habituated to insufficient clothing. Nevertheless, in visiting several of the prisons, we could not but feel that it would serve the purposes both of humanity and



civilization, were some of their inmates *more decently clad*. We apprehend that very sufficient prison dresses may, in the present day, be procured at an extremely cheap rate. And why should we not promote at once, both economy and reformation, by employing the male prisoners in manufacturing the materials, and the females in making up the dresses?<sup>4</sup>

We will now venture to offer a few observations on a branch of prison discipline, which is fraught with a peculiar degree of interest and importance—we mean, *elementary and religious instruction*. It is a most satisfactory circumstance, and one which reflects great credit on the Boards of Superintendence, Local Inspectors, and Inspectors General, that there is scarcely a jail in Ireland in which a school is not maintained, for the instruction of its unhappy inmates, in spelling, reading, and writing. These institutions appeared to us to be in general well conducted, and it is obvious, that they serve many useful purposes. They are the means of occupying the time, employing the thoughts, and cultivating the understanding, of very many wretched persons, of whose crimes an almost total ignorance is the frequent parent. In some instances, the schoolmaster goes from ward to ward: in others, a small apartment is set apart for a school-room, and the several classes of the prisoners come to it in succession. The latter plan we deem to be preferable, as imparting to the system a greater formality and regularity, and we beg at the same time to express our opinion, that the schoolmaster ought to fill no other office, but devote his whole time to the duties of instruction. The women prisoners, who are

<sup>4</sup> The Inspectors General inform us that they are likely to make great progress this year in establishing regular jail clothing.



generally far less numerous than the men, may very properly be taught by the Matron : and, among both the male and female prisoners, monitors from among themselves may, with much advantage, be employed as assistant teachers.

To civilize and cultivate the minds of ignorant criminals—to raise, in any degree, the standard of their intellect or their taste, is a work which will not fail to produce beneficial results. Those who have been brought under a refining process of this description will not so readily, as before, yield themselves to the guidance of impetuous passion and brutal violence. They will become susceptible of superior motives ; they will be raised in the scale of being. On these grounds we consider it very desirable that small libraries should be kept in jails, for the use of the prisoners, consisting of harmless and moral, yet entertaining publications, which would excite and occupy their attention out of school-hours. The little books published by the Kildare Street Society, consisting of voyages, travels, small histories, &c. are precisely of the description to which we allude. There are few of our public institutions in which these works might not be made useful.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that even the elementary instruction of poor prisoners ought to have a tendency to their *religious improvement* ; for this, and this alone, is the effective step to a *reformation of conduct*. On these grounds, we were much gratified by observing, that in several of the prisons the schools are conducted under the patronage, and on the system, of that truly noble and catholic institution to which we have just alluded—the Kildare Street Society. The Holy Scriptures are read in these schools



without note or comment. While the system thus pursued precludes all religious instruction of a sectarian, and much more of a *proselyting*, nature—the prisoners are led to a knowledge of those fundamental truths of our common christianity, on which depend at once their moral reformation and their eternal salvation. In the House of Correction at Belfast, this plan is followed under the sanction of the Roman Catholic Bishop, Crolly, and there are others of the clergy of that denomination, who unite with their Protestant brethren on the same liberal and christian footing.

We cannot, however, conceal the deep regret we have felt in observing, that some of the Roman Catholic clergy who act as chaplains in your prisons have thought proper to pursue a different course, and in some instances, have succeeded in entirely preventing the reading of the Scriptures in the prison schools. Thus have they banished the most powerful instrument which Divine Providence has put into our hands, for the instruction and correction of depraved characters. In using these expressions, we speak from long and attentive observation. Among the numerous instances of moral improvement which have happily taken place among the female criminals in Newgate, in London, there is not even a single case which does not appear to have been derived, more or less directly, from the daily perusal of the Holy Scriptures.

We believe that the Roman Catholic Chaplains, who have adopted this line of conduct, are, in general, far from the intention of doing wrong; and we would strongly recommend, that their objections should be met by their Protestant brethren, in the spirit of Christian concession and conciliation. We would, in case



of necessity, go so far as to say—Let the Bible be withdrawn from the school as a book by which the prisoners learn to read, and let the use of it be confined to the audible reading of a chapter, without note or comment, at the conclusion of the school-hours. Let the Roman Catholic Chaplain, when he pleases, be himself the reader of it, though still without note or comment. Finally, let it be read out of the Douay version, which is approved by his own church.<sup>5</sup> An arrangement of this description has, in a very friendly manner, been entered into by the two chaplains of the County Jail at Carlow, as it respects the school for boys and men in that prison ; and has received the hearty sanction of the Roman Catholic Bishop, Doyle.

The observations, which we have hitherto made, relate almost exclusively to the jails of counties and cities. We are well aware of the existence of very numerous minor prisons in Ireland, which usually pass under the denomination of Bridewells. A few of these we had the opportunity of visiting ; and respecting others we have received much information. On considering this branch of the subject, we cannot speak too highly of sections 90 and 96, in the late invaluable Act of Parliament on the subject of the prisons in Ireland. The former of these sections empowers the Lord Lieutenant, or the chief Governor or Governors of Ireland for the time being, to order the discontinuance of unnecessary Bridewells ; and the latter abolishes, at a stroke, the prisons of small local jurisdictions throughout the Island. It appears, from a statement made to us by the Inspectors

<sup>5</sup> It was further agreed, that the R. C. Chaplain should select the chapter when he pleased, and that in his absence it should be read by one of the Roman Catholic prisoners, in case of there being any one who could read well enough ; otherwise, by the schoolmaster himself.



General, that in consequence of the introduction of these clauses, into the Act of Parliament, nearly forty small prisons have already been abolished. How prolific a source of misery and immorality has been swept away, by this spirited and judicious measure, will be seen, from the following evidence given before the House of Lords in 1819, respecting this description of prison in Ireland—"In a miserable building, prisoners are confined for days and weeks, without yards for exercise, without inspection, care of health or morals. Men and women are thrown together in cold cells, without bedding, and with damp clay floors. No chaplain attends. No surgeon or physician is appointed. No regular supply of food is provided. All is fraud, oppression, and misery."

The provisions of the Act of Parliament, for the arrangement and regulation of the remaining bridewells, are equally salutary. They are divided into two descriptions of prisons: first, *district bridewells*, in which are confined prisoners for trial, until near the time of the assizes, and convicts under sentence of short terms of imprisonment passed by Quarter Sessions; and, secondly, *local bridewells*, or *lock-up houses*, in which persons committed for trial may be detained for the sake of convenience, for a term not exceeding three days, (unless by special order of two justices of the peace,) before they are sent to the district bridewell or county jail. The proper treatment of prisoners in bridewells of both these descriptions, and especially a due supply of food, bedding, &c. is now happily secured by section 93 of the Act, by which the local inspection of every such prison is placed in the hands of the officiating protestant clergyman of the parish; and by section 95, which di-



rects a quarterly return to be made by the keeper or local inspector, to the Inspectors General.

An admirable code of rules for the management of these bridewells was drawn up, last year, by order of the Court of King's Bench, and signed by the four Judges of that Court. While we feel peculiar pleasure in noticing the wisdom and care of Government, which have been thus effectively directed to an important branch of prison discipline in Ireland, and while we rejoice in knowing that a vast improvement has already taken place in consequence, and that many bridewells have been enlarged or rebuilt—we take the liberty of remarking, that others of them still continue in a highly objectionable state. The buildings, in some instances, are so confined, as to render a compliance with the rules of the Court of King's Bench impossible, and they are in other respects fertile sources of misery and demoralization. We are aware of the zealous endeavours of the Inspectors General to accomplish, in these prisons, a more general and complete reformation, and we have only with great deference to express an earnest desire, that these endeavours may continue to receive what they so richly deserve—the cordial support of the Judges and of Government.

When we were at Cork, we inspected the prison used as a depot for female convicts previous to transportation, and we also visited the Hulk Surprise, used for male prisoners under similar circumstances. The former is defective as to its conformation, but both appeared to us to be cleanly, comfortable, and well superintended. At the same time we cannot help entertaining a strong doubt whether the disadvantage arising from these and similar depots—as it



relates to the moral discipline of the convicts—does not more than counterbalance their use ; and whether it would not be preferable, if possible, at once to convey the transports from the county and city jails, to the vessels appointed to convey them to New South Wales. We understand that the Government in England has for some time past been acting, as far as possible, on this principle. Whether this suggestion be adopted or not, we feel very anxious that the Ladies who visit the jails in Dublin and Cork, should be encouraged to extend their labours, for the order and benefit of female prisoners after they have been placed on shipboard. The experience of the Association in London enables us to say, that arrangements may be easily made for the employment, instruction, and orderly government, of female transports, during the whole of their voyage to New South Wales ; and that they may thus be prepared to occupy a useful station in society, after their arrival at the Colony.

We observe that Section 89 of the Prison Act empowers Grand Juries of any county, &c. to appropriate parts of county Jails or any buildings contiguous thereto, “to be *a house, or houses of correction*, for the custody and punishment of convicted prisoners.” We conceive, that the object here pointed out, is one of considerable importance : and that much advantage has arisen in various parts of the United Kingdom, from the formation of distinct institutions, for the safe keeping, correction, and we may add, *reformation*, of convicted prisoners. Such institutions are at present far from being numerous in Ireland, and the few which exist are by no means, all of them, equally salutary. In the house of correction for the county of Cork, which is kept in good order,



the prisoners are employed, *but not instructed*. In the new penitentiary at Waterford, they were at the date of our visit, *neither employed nor instructed*. The efficacy of the system, depends on vigilant and uninterrupted inspection, occasional solitude, constant employment, and religious instruction. Most of these objects are successfully pursued in two of the best managed prisons in Ireland, *the House of Correction at Belfast, and the Richmond Bridewell in Dublin*. The last mentioned prison does great credit to the Governor, the Matron, and other persons engaged in its superintendence.

Now we are on the subject of Houses of Correction, we cannot properly avoid noticing the Richmond General Penitentiary, although our visit to that institution was, from particular circumstances, too short and limited to allow of our forming a very correct estimate of its condition and effects. What we saw of it, however, bespoke a vigilant superintendence on the part of the Governor. At the period of our visit, six of the female prisoners were under punishment for refractory conduct, and were confined in solitary cells. They were handcuffed, which we regretted ; but in the Governor's absence, they all professed that they were humanely treated by him, and most of them acknowledged that they had been themselves in fault.

The system pursued in the Penitentiary had been, at the period of our visit, considerably disorganized by the public examinations which have lately taken place respecting the Governor's supposed attempts to proselyte the Roman Catholic prisoners. Whether there was, in the transactions which gave rise to these examinations, any partiality in his conduct or not, we have neither opportunity to form, nor authority to ex-



press, an opinion. But while we believe that the individual in question is a person of integrity and talent, and one who has the moral and religious interest of the prisoners at heart, we venture to express a sentiment that such difficulties could scarcely have arisen, had there existed a judicious board of superintendence, who could have exercised a daily authority over all the parties concerned. Arbitrary power in the hands of any individual officer ought, undoubtedly, ever to be avoided in the government of prisons. We rejoice to hear that some provision of this kind is likely to be made as it relates to the Richmond General Penitentiary, and we cannot but cherish a confident hope that this Institution, placed as it is under the immediate auspices of Government, will still be found a valuable instrument not only for the punishment, but for the diminution of crime.<sup>6</sup>

In the course of our visits to the prisons in Ireland we were, in general, careful to inspect the apartments in which the pauper and other *debtors* are confined, and we have no hesitation in saying, that, in most of the county jails which came under our notice, these apartments are comfortable. It was also very satisfactory to find that the pauper debtors in these jails universally receive the same allowance of food as the other prisoners. We must confess that we were by no means so favourably impressed with the condition and appearance of the prisons in Dublin set apart for the reception of debtors *only*.

We found the City Marshalsea prison very much crowded, and were greatly shocked by observing the idleness, clamour, and dissolute association, as well as,

<sup>6</sup> Should no board of superintendence be appointed, might not an effectual control over this prison be placed, with great advantage, in the hands of the Police Magistrates of Dublin?



in some cases, the deep and unalleviated distress, which appeared to prevail within its walls. The separation between the male and female departments is miserably insufficient, as is the accommodation provided for each of the two sexes. But the point which struck us most painfully, as directly opposed not only to the positive directions of the Act of Parliament,<sup>7</sup> but to common humanity, is this—that the wretched inmates of this truly corrupting abode—persons whom we have reason to regard as the most destitute of the inhabitants of the metropolis—are left *without any allowance of food*. We heartily hope it may be in the power of the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, of whose willingness to remedy abuses we feel fully satisfied, to enforce, without delay, the correction of so great an evil.<sup>8</sup> We fear that the same evil exists in some of the prisons belonging to smaller towns. In the prison at Youghall, for example, we found a pauper debtor in a state of extreme distress, and receiving no allowance of food.

The Sheriff's prison in Dublin is filled, in general, with debtors of a higher class, but we were deeply impressed with the appearance both of misery and im-

<sup>7</sup> See Section 82. "And be it further enacted, that any prisoner, of whatever description, in any prison whatsoever in Ireland, who shall not be of sufficient ability to procure food and other necessaries, shall be supplied in manner herein mentioned respectively with such food and necessaries at the public expense, &c."

<sup>8</sup> Were the minor courts in Dublin from which are issued the processes against these small debtors, induced to act on Sect. 83, of 7 Geo. IV. cap. 74, it would go far to remedy this evil, and indeed to empty the prison.—That section is as follows:

"Provided always, and be enacted, That in all Cases where any Person shall be confined or detained in any Prison at the suit of any Creditor or Creditors, for any Debt less than the Sum of Ten Pounds, it shall be lawful for the Court under Process from which such Debtor shall be detained, on the Application of such Debtor, in case such Court shall think right under the Circumstances of the Case so to do, to order the Creditor or Creditors, at whose suit such Debtor shall be confined or imprisoned, to pay to such Debtor such Sum or Sums, not exceeding the Rate of Two Shillings and Six-pence by the Week in the whole, at such Times and in such Manner as the said Court shall direct; and that on Failure of Payment thereof as directed by such Court, such Debtor shall be discharged from Custody at the Suit of the Creditor or Creditors failing to pay the same." See Act, p. 679.



morality, which that prison presents to the eye of a visiter. In the sick ward, one of us found a poor bed-ridden man, in the last stage of a consumption and worn to the bone, *without even a rag of clothing on him*. We were informed, that the Governor was remunerated partly by a salary, and partly by rentals, paid by the Debtors for the apartments which they occupy. We venture to express an opinion, that the latter mode of paying the Governor, is one, which in the nature of things, must ever be liable to abuse. We should think it would be a great improvement, to adopt the system pursued in the Four Courts Marshalsea, where the rentals are paid to the public purse, and the Marshall receives his whole salary from Government.<sup>9</sup>

The Four Courts Marshalsea Prison, to which Debtors are sent from every part of Ireland, and which therefore contains a very considerable population, is by no means well constructed for the purposes of order and classification. There is no effective separation between the men and women prisoners: *neither is there any yard for the latter*. It seems very desirable—in order to prevent disorder and vice—that every Debtor, of the upper class, should have a room to himself, in which he might receive his wife or family in private. As this is, at present, impossible, it is but too evident that additional buildings are necessary, in order to render this prison tolerably complete. Although, we found it difficult to form a correct opinion of the general system pursued in this, as well as the Sheriff's prison, we could not but entertain a fear, that the distress, endured by the higher class of Debtors, was often much aggravated by the

<sup>9</sup> We are informed by the Inspectors General—and are rejoiced at the information—that the Sheriff's prison is about to undergo a radical change by the issue of new regulations from the King's Bench, under Section 128 of the late Act,



amount of rentals, and other weekly demands, which they are obliged to pay for very moderate accommodation. We believe that the lowest class also are sometimes exposed to severe suffering, from want of food, on their first entering the prison, and before they can obtain their certificates of pauperism ; and we were also informed, that many of this description are detained here—to their own distress, and to the great inconvenience and cost of the public—in consequence of their inability to defray the insolvent solicitor's charges.

We scarcely know what remedy Government can apply to the evils of this and similar institutions, and yet, doubtless, those evils are great. Persons of both sexes and various conditions of life—without any point of union but that of distress and beggary,—deprived of the means of pursuing their usual avocations, and, in general, condemned to total idleness—subject from the very nature of their case to no complete disciplinary control, and many of them addicted to those dissolute and vicious habits, which have brought them to poverty—are herded together in vast numbers, within the walls of one great building. We fear, it must be acknowledged, that a prison thus peopled, in whatever country it may be situated, can never fail to be the means of demoralizing a large portion of society—to be a *repository of sin as well as of misery*. Shall we be considered as stepping out of our right province, if we venture to express our firm conviction that the imprisonment of Debtors throughout the United Kingdom, is attended by a variety of painful and degrading consequences,—that while, in point of fact, it is a most ineffective means of securing the just rights of the creditor, it is one of the



most fruitful sources, not only of deep distress, but of idleness, dissipation, and vice? Could the property of the debtor be attached, instead of his person, the true interests of both parties would surely be better served. The relief and facility which such a change would afford to our whole system of prison discipline, is too obvious to require discussion.

We cannot with any satisfaction close our report on the subject of the prisons of Ireland, without earnestly calling the attention of Government, to that notoriously ill-constructed and demoralizing prison, *the jail of Newgate, in Dublin*. We are aware that reports have already been made on the subject, in very strong terms, by the Inspectors General; and we are also sensible of some difficulties, which have hitherto prevented those reports from being acted on. But we are sure, that any persons of reflection, on even a cursory inspection of the prison, would consider it an object well worthy of a large pecuniary sacrifice, to put an end to such a scene of moral contamination—of “crowding, filth, nakedness, blasphemy, and disorder.” We unite with the Inspectors General, from whose report we borrow these expressions, in ascribing the evils of the prison of Newgate almost exclusively to the lamentable defects of the building. On this point the Lord Lieutenant will be enabled to form his own judgment, when he is informed, that the men and women, when confined in their cells, can converse with one another—that several prisoners are often obliged to be crowded, during the night, into a single sleeping cell—that many of the windows are so exposed to the street, as to admit of communication between the prisoners and the public—that the prison (filled as it sometimes is with several



hundred wretched and lawless persons) is incapable of being properly inspected from any central point—that *there is not even a residence for the Governor within its walls*—that the day-rooms allotted to the male prisoners are both few and small, and are often crowded to the greatest excess, so as to frustrate every attempt to insure occupation, instruction, or discipline—that one of them, a dark room in a tower, unfit for the tenancy of man, can only be described as a terrible *den of thieves*—finally, that the yards for exercise are equally insufficient, and that one of them, of the size of about 17 feet by 14, is allotted to a class of felons which the Governor informed us has lately amounted in number to *a hundred*.

It admits of no reasonable doubt, that such a prison is worse than no prison at all—that it is a means of promoting, rather than diminishing, crime; and being placed in the metropolis, from whence so frequent a communication is kept up with every part of the country, (an observation which probably applies with peculiar force to the dishonest part of the population, it can scarcely fail to have an injurious influence throughout the whole of Ireland. We venture to suggest, that if Government would undertake part of the expense of a new prison, and the remainder were to be raised by a local tax, this object of so much importance, *even in a national point of view*, might without difficulty be accomplished.

Nothing is more painful to those who are interested in the subject of prison discipline, than to observe new prisons erected at a vast expense, and on plans which cannot be considered by any means the best adapted to serve the end in view. Such prisons are unhappily, not very uncommon in England; and,



although the newly-erected prisons in Ireland are in general well planned, and, as far as we can judge, economically built, there are unquestionably some instances of a contrary description ; for example, the Richmond General Penitentiary, and the new city jail at Cork. We think it right to state that the Committee of the Society for promoting Prison Discipline, in London, have sedulously directed their attention to the formation of such plans for prisons, as will serve the various purposes of a right discipline, and will, at the same time, entail no inordinate or extravagant expense. These plans the Committee will always be ready to communicate on receiving an application addressed to their chairman.<sup>1</sup>

We now beg leave to recapitulate the principal subjects adverted to in the preceding pages. They are as follow :

1. The general improvement, which has of late years taken place in the prisons of Ireland—to an extent, which must afford high satisfaction to every friend of order and reformatory discipline : a change which must be ascribed chiefly to the attention of an enlightened Government.<sup>2</sup>

2. The admirable system, pursued in Ireland, of superintendence and inspection ; and especially the useful offices, both of the Local Inspectors, and the Inspectors General.

2. Ladies' associations for visiting female prisoners; the institution of one at Dublin, under the patronage of the Marchioness Wellesley, and of others in many

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Hoare, No. 62, Lombard-Street.

<sup>2</sup> This object has been usefully promoted in Ireland by the prison discipline Society of Dublin, which deserves the warm support and encouragement of every friend to the cause in that country.



parts of the country ; and the good effects which they have, in various places, already produced.

4. The importance of places of refuge, such as those established at Dublin and Cork, for females and boys on their discharge from prison.

5. The necessity of promoting as far as possible, solitary sleeping for male prisoners, and the convenience which would sometimes arise from the use of hammocks.

6. The necessity of the steady maintenance of classification, as required by law, yet subject to variation in individual cases, under the care of local inspectors.

The same classification to be preserved in chapels ; especially an effective separation of the sexes.

7. The advantage of employment for untried prisoners ; and of hard labour for convicts ; and the propriety of a more general use of that valuable instrument of prison discipline—the Tread Wheel.

8. The probability that the application of the Tread Wheel to the case of *illicit distillers* might be an effectual means of diminishing their still prevalent offence ; and the necessity of the adoption of this, or some other method, of relieving the prisons from these numerous offenders against the revenue laws.

9. The use and advantage of a regular jail dress—a subject hitherto little attended to in Ireland.

10. The great utility of the schools already instituted in most of the prisons,—the propriety of their becoming universal,—the good which would arise, in prisons, from small libraries of moral and useful publications, to which no religious party would object ; above all, the propriety of the daily audible reading of the Scriptures in the schools, *without note or comment*.



11. The improvements which have already taken place in such of the Bridewells, and other small prisons, as have not been abolished under the late Act of Parliament, and the absolute necessity of a further improvement in many of them.

12. The consideration whether the depots for transports, might not, in due time, be abolished with good effect; and the propriety of engaging the assistance of ladies in arranging the female transports for their voyage to New South Wales—a provision which has been attended, in England, with effects of a highly satisfactory nature.

13. The great advantages of houses of correction—and the importance of maintaining in them uninterrupted inspection, constant employment, and scriptural instruction.

14. The general good order of the Richmond General Penitentiary, and the desirableness of a judicious Board of Superintendence in the government of that extensive prison.

15. The comfortable accommodation afforded to debtors in most of the jails—the city Marshalsea in Dublin a lamentable exception;—the inevitable evils which attend such institutions as the Sheriff's prison in Dublin and the Marshalsea of the Four Courts; *and the question whether, on the whole, the attachment of the persons of Debtors instead of their property, is not productive, to a great extent, both of misery and vice.*

16. *The disgraceful and injurious state of the Jail of Newgate, in Dublin; and the indispensable necessity of a new prison for that metropolis.*

17. The importance of such plans for the building of new prisons, as are effective for the purposes of discipline and reform, and at the same time *strictly economical.*



Having entered thus particularly into the subject of the prisons, and of the system adopted in their government, we beg to be permitted to close this part of our report, with a few remarks on two points connected with the administration of the criminal law of Ireland.

We trust we shall be excused if we venture to suggest to the consideration of the Lord Lieutenant and other members of Government, and especially to that of the *Judges*, whether great benefit would not accrue and great mischief be prevented, were there held, in all the county towns of Ireland, *three assizes in the course of the year, instead of two*. When we consider the rapid increase which has taken place in the population during the last few years—the more than corresponding augmentation (as we fear) of the number of criminals—the extreme inconvenience of many of the old jails—and the insufficiency of some even of the newest ones, to accommodate the vast number of persons now committed to them during the long period of six months—we cannot help feeling that some decided measure of relief is loudly called for, and is, in fact, become indispensable. If this is the true state of the case, can any such measure be devised, less expensive or less liable to objection than that of a more frequent clearing off of prisoners by means of a *third assize*? The benefit which would result from this measure, as it relates to the good order of the prisons, is too obvious to require much notice. The result would probably be, that the county and city jails would seldom be greatly over-crowded, and when the Lord Lieutenant remembers the large number of acquittals which usually take place in the



criminal courts of Ireland, he will, we believe, perceive the advantage of a plan, which would shorten the term of confinement to persons under charge of crime, but innocent of its perpetration.

The remaining point, to which we would venture briefly to advert, is one fraught with deep interest, on political as well as religious grounds—*We mean the infliction of the punishment of death.* We cannot do justice to our feelings, without taking the present opportunity of expressing the sincere pleasure we have derived from finding how strong a sentiment prevails in the minds of many persons in high authority in Ireland, against the frequent infliction of this punishment, so brief, so cursory in appearance,—*so tremendous in fact!*

That executions have of late years been of far less frequent occurrence in Ireland, than, from the peculiar circumstances of the country, might have been expected, is a fact which, in our estimation, reflects high credit on a temperate and benevolent Government. In this lenient administration of our too sanguinary criminal laws, there is surely much true wisdom and policy. Experience affords ample proofs that the frequent exhibition, to the public, of such painful and degrading scenes, is so far from inspiring a wholesome fear either of God or man, that it hardens the minds of the population, excites them to violence and revenge, teaches them to make light of the awful, yet momentary, change from time to eternity, and, in a very dangerous degree, *lowers their estimate of the value of human life.*

We trust, the Lord Lieutenant will allow us candidly to express our earnest desire—a desire founded not merely on our religious principles, but also on



what we apprehend to be a sound political view of the subject—that this lenient system may be pursued under his wise and moderate government to a still farther point—that public executions in Ireland may become events of greater and yet greater rarity—in short, that the sacredness of human life may be so practically upheld to view, in the administration of the criminal laws, that a corresponding sense of it (to the diminution of violent crimes, and the great advantage of peaceable subjects) may gradually prevail throughout the whole community.



## SECTION II.

HAVING, in the preceding section of our Report, fully stated our views on the subject of prisons and prison discipline in Ireland, we now propose to invite the Lord Lieutenant's attention to a few remarks respecting some other public Institutions, particularly Lunatic Asylums, Houses of Industry, Mendicity Institutions, and Infirmaries.

There are few subjects connected with the welfare of our fellow-creatures more fraught with interest than that of the *treatment of Lunatics*. This large and, we fear, increasing class of sufferers has a strong claim on the sympathy and protection of the public. Unable to help or defend themselves, and often exposed both to neglect and cruelty from those who surround them, they stand in peculiar need not only of the voluntary attentions of the benevolent, but of the watchful care of a paternal government. In the provisions made for lunatics, throughout the United Kingdom, (as in other countries,) the object kept in view has long been *too exclusively* the relief of the community by the stowage and seclusion of this disordered class of persons. It seems to have been too much forgotten, that these afflicted beings have natural and civil rights, as well as their neighbours—that it is the duty of the public to protect them from injury—that, whilst the safe custody of them is indispensable, they demand at our



hands, not needless restraint or punishment, but alleviation, consolation, and, as far as possible, cure.

The management of lunatics, however, like that of criminals, has of late years occupied much of the attention of the wise and benevolent. It is now universally admitted, that it is expedient, as well as right, to treat them with gentleness and kindness—that such a system promotes their cure and restoration to society; and that extreme coercion only aggravates their disease, to the misery of the poor sufferers, and to the great inconvenience of those, under whose care they are placed. Many new Asylums have been erected, in which the great ends of comfort, exercise, and classification, are well secured; and all institutions of the kind, whether public or private, have been made liable, by parliamentary enactment, to the inspection and control of the Magistracy.

Of this improvement in the treatment of lunatics, Ireland, has unquestionably partaken, and, in adverting to the subject, we wish, in the first place, to express our warm approbation of that excellent provision of 7 Geo. IV, chap. 74, which entails on the Inspectors General of prisons the additional duty of annually inspecting all establishments for lunatics or idiots, whether they be public institutions, or “kept for the profit of any private individual.” We wish, however, that the Act had gone farther; and had called in the assistance of Local as well as National Inspectors. We conceive that there is no description of public institutions which demands the more frequent scrutiny of persons independent of its resident officers than these asylums: and the annual visit of the Inspector General to the Lunatic Asylum, like that to the Jail, ought, we think, to be but the *consummation* of the daily, or



at least weekly, visits of some intelligent person on the spot ; for example, the officiating Protestant clergyman of the parish, who would of course act under the authority and control of the Board of Managers. Material benefit would also arise from the superintendence of a committee of ladies over the female patients; for women are obviously better calculated than men, to examine the condition, alleviate the sufferings, and supply the wants, of this afflicted portion of their own sex. For similar reasons the female patients ought ever to be under the exclusive care of *female officers*.

Trusting that the Lord Lieutenant will have the kindness to consider these points, we have now to state, that, in the course of our late journey, we visited Lunatics, in Prisons—in Houses of Industry—and in County Asylums. Those in Prisons are too often found in a very improper and wretched condition. Those in Houses of Industry may in general be described as in possession of pretty comfortable stowage, without the means of cure. Those in the few County Asylums which have hitherto been erected, appeared to us to be, on the whole, admirably managed and treated. We will venture to offer a few remarks under each of these heads.

Of all the places which are anywhere allotted to the reception of the insane, Jails are the most unsuitable. It cannot be expected that jailers or turnkeys should be qualified for the care of these unfortunate persons; and, since the introduction of lunatics into the prison never fails to be a source of grievous interruption and inconvenience to its officers, it can be no matter of surprise, that they should so manage these irregular inmates as to give themselves the least possible trouble—in other words, that they should



leave them in sleeping cells with bundles of straw to lie upon, and in almost invariable solitary confinement. Such appeared to us to be the too general situation of maniacs in the jails ; and we sometimes found the cells in an uncleanly and very offensive state. Who would suppose that this solitary and noisome incarceration—this severe and truly dreadful punishment—is inflicted not on crime, but *misfortune* ; and that this is the method adopted by a *Christian* community in the management of an *afflicting disease*—a disease which, by a contrary mode of treatment, might always be alleviated, and often cured ?

In some instances, the lunatics are confined in the same building as the other prisoners, and, when not kept in sleeping cells, are in general suffered to keep company with them—an obviously objectionable practice. In others they inhabit old jails, disused for all other purposes. This is the case at Lifford, where, although they are kept in a cleanly state, and are kindly treated, the place to which they are consigned is, in all respects, insufficient and improper. It is also the case at Roscommon, where the condition of these poor diseased creatures was, at the date of our visit, pitiable in the greatest degree. Some of the men were indeed allowed to inhabit a tolerably airy day-room, but others were lying, like wild beasts, without any proper accommodation, in miserably gloomy and solitary cells. The wretched day-room, or rather *den*, appointed for the women, is lighted only by a hole in the roof, which, on account of the cold weather, was then stopped up with straw. The result was, of course, nearly total darkness. There is no yard, or court, where the lunatics in this jail can take exercise ! One of the poor men confined here poured out bitter com-



plaints respecting his situation. His evil passions seemed greatly roused ; and he had, the day before, attempted to hang himself—we believe, not so much from mania, as from the uncontrolled feeling of vexation. “This place,” said one of the wretched women to us, with a terrible emphasis, “is *like the bottomless pit* !”

We consider it to be our duty to describe this abode of misery as we actually found it, but we believe some improvement has since taken place in the condition of the lunatics confined there. Unquestionably they ought to be transferred, with as little delay as possible, to some more suitable asylum.

In the houses of industry at Limerick, Cork, Waterford, Clonmell, and many other places, a considerable part of the building is allotted to lunatics, epileptic patients, and idiots : and the department in question is, for the most part, extremely crowded. We believe, that in most of these institutions, the patients thus confined are kindly treated, and are not exposed to much physical suffering. But few of them are kept in their sleeping cells ; and, whether they are so confined or not, they are under the care of officers, whose time is devoted to them, and who are, of course, more adapted to such a duty than the keepers and turnkeys of jails. They have also, in general, the benefit of good medical attendance. It is obvious, however, that where so many persons are crowded together, with little classification and no employment, it is in vain to expect even a small proportion of cures ; and the whole system can be regarded only in the light of a *tolerably convenient method of safe keeping*.

To this remark there is a very honorable exception in the house of industry at Dublin—where a consider-



able proportion of the lunatics and even the idiots are employed ; and where, under the kind and assiduous government of Colonel Morris, much has been effected for their comfort. Several maniacs, who were deemed and called incurable, have, we believe, under the influence of his benevolent superintendence, been restored to health.

We are aware that the public in Ireland has been, for some years past, alive both to the impropriety of confining lunatics in jails, and to the fact, that the accommodation afforded them in the houses of industry is, in general, unsuitable and insufficient ; and hence, we believe, has arisen the erection of District Lunatic Asylums. The plan acted upon, in respect to these institutions, is doubtless familiar to the Lord Lieutenant. Two, three, or more counties unite in the expense of building and maintaining an asylum for lunatics, and of course in partaking of its benefits—the building itself being erected in some convenient and central spot. We had great pleasure in inspecting two such institutions at Armagh and Limerick ; and the Richmond Lunatic Asylum in Dublin which we also visited, may be considered as belonging to the same class.

We were well satisfied with the cleanliness and order in which we found these extensive establishments ; and, in all three of them, the Governors, on the choice of whom almost every thing may be said to depend, appeared to us to be well adapted to their interesting and important office. The lunatics, in these asylums, are divided into classes according to the degrees of their mania. With the exception of the occasional and necessary use of the strait waistcoat, or leathern muff, their persons are free from restraint, and small indeed is the proportion of them confined to their cells. We



believe that the law of kindness prevails, in the management of them, to a great extent ; but the point from which we derived the highest satisfaction is this—that a considerable number of them, especially in the Richmond and Armagh Asylums, are busily occupied—the women in knitting, spinning, cleaning, and various kinds of needlework, and the men, either in weaving or gardening. In this respect, the treatment of lunatics in Ireland is superior to that adopted in many of the best Asylums in England ; and we are assured, (and who can doubt the truth of the assurance ?) that the method thus taken, of employing the minds and time of the patients in an innocent and useful manner, is a very successful means of promoting their cure.

The principal defect in these institutions appeared to us to be, the total absence of any provision for congregational worship. It often happens that persons whom it is necessary to confine as lunatics are nevertheless both aware of religious truth and alive to religious impression, and they *ought not* to be debarred from those means of spiritual improvement which are enjoyed by other parts of society. The experiment has been already tried in England, in several asylums ; and it may now be considered as a point fully ascertained, that religious instruction, judiciously applied, and social worship, carefully conducted, powerfully tend to subdue the passions and to control the imaginations of the insane—and thus are highly useful in aiding their restoration to a sound mind. We would earnestly invite the attention of the several boards of superintendence and of the Inspectors General to this interesting branch of this subject ; and we are by no means discouraged from doing this by remembering



that a great majority of the inmates of such establishments in Ireland are Roman Catholics. Let the lunatics—whether Roman Catholics or Protestants—and when not under the influence of violent mania—pursue the mode of worship to which they are accustomed. We believe that the regular attendance on religious service, *in either case*, would greatly promote their order, their comfort, and even their cure.

On the subject of Lunatic Asylums, we have to trouble the Lord Lieutenant with only two further observations. We wish to suggest, for the consideration of Government, whether it would not be a great advantage to the counties which unite in the erection and support of these asylums, were a part of the buildings allotted to *incurables*. This is not at present the case; and the consequence is, that, even in such counties, these unfortunate and often dangerous persons are either left at large, consigned to prisons, or most inconveniently crowded together in the houses of industry.

And lastly, since the Inspectors General of Prisons are commissioned, under 7 Geo. IV, c. 74, to inspect *all* asylums for lunatics, whether public or private, we feel very desirous that they may be encouraged to direct their especial attention to such of them as are kept by *individuals for their own profit*. Since these institutions are in general secluded from public notice, and are for the most part subjected to individual, and therefore to arbitrary authority, they must be considered as *peculiarly liable to abuse*, and as claiming a diligent exercise of that wholesome check which the legislature has wisely provided.

It is perhaps, on general principles, *questionable*, whether the public welfare is, in the best way, promot-



ed by a kind of establishment, found in many of the larger towns in Ireland, of the same *nature* as the Poor-houses or Work-houses in our own country. The establishments to which we allude may be classed under the general name of *Houses of Industry*. Most of them are, we believe, supported partly by public subscription and partly by Grand Jury presentments; and they are the receptacles (of course with occasional local variations) of incurable lunatics and idiots, prostitutes under order of confinement from magistrates, destitute children, and aged, infirm, and helpless persons of both sexes. It cannot be reasonably denied that the conflux of so vast a number of persons, and of such various descriptions, within the limits of a single building, is in itself a considerable evil, and indicates a state of society very far from sound or desirable. With the exception of persons labouring under disease of body or mind, it would certainly be far preferable, could even the poorest and most helpless part of society be left to their own cottages, and to the care of those with whom, by the ties of nature, they are most closely connected.

While, however, *in all our measures intended for the benefit of the poor, the great principle of independence ought ever to be kept in view*, we fear the state of the lower orders, both in England and Ireland, is too much disordered, at present, to allow of our acting on it without reserve; and in the mean time, we have great pleasure in bearing our testimony to the generally satisfactory state of cleanliness, comfort, and order, in which we found the houses of industry—a state, which we conceive to be, on an average, *very superior* to that of the work-houses in England. On inspecting these painfully interesting establishments,



we mostly found that the two sexes are kept separate, and that each of the particular classes occupies its own department of the house—that clothing is afforded to a considerable extent, and a sufficient quantity of plain food—that many of those who are able to employ themselves are furnished with work—that medical attendance is insured, and that official religious care is generally provided. In looking more distinctly at the several classes, we might venture to say, that, in most of these public receptacles, the *lunatics* and *idiots* are safely kept, and are not exposed to needless suffering; that the *children* are taught to read and write,—that the *young women of bad character* are kept at work, and are under a course of tolerably effective discipline—and, more especially, that the *aged and infirm* are surrounded with comforts, which have often called forth from them, in our hearing, warm expressions of satisfaction and gratitude.

We have again to make especial mention of the House of Industry at Dublin, under the government of Colonel Morris, which, with the single exception of the mendicant department (where the building does not allow of a proper separation of the sexes,) appeared to us to be admirably conducted, so as fully to justify (as far as management is concerned) the liberal parliamentary grant by which this vast institution is annually supported. The houses of industry at Belfast, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, and Clonmel, may also be mentioned as orderly and well managed establishments.

Independently of the houses of industry, many of the larger cities and towns in Ireland have of late years given birth to *Mendicity Societies*. The most wretched and destitute part of the population, which



was formerly without any means of support, except begging, are referred, under the care of these societies, to some large house in the town, appointed for the purpose, where they are employed in various kinds of work, fed, and sometimes, if necessary, lodged ; and their poor ragged children disciplined and instructed. No person who has travelled in Ireland, and who has experienced the misery of being surrounded by crowds of wretched beggars in every little town through which he passes, can fail to appreciate institutions like these, by the operation of which the streets of many of the *larger* towns, and especially Dublin, are to a great extent, relieved from such afflicting scenes. We were sorry to learn that these societies, which depend for the support of their object solely on voluntary contribution, are, in many places, so much impoverished by the increasing demands of a distressed population, that they have but very little hope of being able to pursue their salutary labours. Such institutions, however, are too important for the order and comfort of the whole community of Ireland, to be suffered, *under its present circumstances*, to fall to the ground ; and rather than allow such a catastrophe, we trust that Government will ensure their being *in part* supported, like the houses of industry, by Grand Jury presentments. The expense of assisting in the maintenance of the most wretched of the poor would thus, we presume, devolve, not merely on the benevolent inhabitants of a town or county, but rateably on the proprietors of real estate, too many of whom, we fear, are drawing their resources from the vitals of Ireland, without expending a single shilling for her benefit.

We understand that, with one or two exceptions,



(made under particular circumstances, and, we believe, with bad effect,) all the counties of Ireland are required by law to institute and (with the assistance of voluntary subscriptions) maintain a *public Infirmary*, for the reception of poor persons suffering under the effects of accident, or severe yet curable disease. Of these institutions we visited a considerable number, and were uniformly admitted to a free inspection of every part of the establishments. Each infirmary is placed under the immediate care of some *one* physician or surgeon, who either resides on the spot, and then combines with his office the duty of governor, or else lives near enough to the institution to exercise a daily care over its inmates. The gentlemen to whom is thus committed the management of the Infirmaries we generally found to be men of benevolence, as well as of good reputation for medical ability; and the instances were *very few* in which the patients did not speak satisfactorily of the care under which they were placed.

The average condition of the county Infirmaries we apprehend to be creditable to Ireland. The patients are, in general, furnished not only with medical and surgical aid, but with many comforts which must unquestionably promote their cure. They are, for the most part, provided with food suited to their bodily state, with comfortable beds, and with apartments as clean and airy as could (from the habits of their inmates) be reasonably expected. With regard, however to cleanliness and comfort, these institutions by no means all support the same character. We inspected two or three of them which were far below the common average. We were, for instance, by no means fully satisfied with the degree of cleanliness main-



tained in the Infirmary of Omagh, for the county of Tyrone. That at Lifford, for the county of Donegal, presented, we are sorry to say, a scene of *extreme* filth and wretchedness. On uncovering one of the miserably dirty beds in which a sort of concealed lump caught our eye, we discovered (for example) an emaciated, blind, old woman, perfectly naked. The physician, who lives on the spot, was absent when we visited the institution. We had no opportunity, therefore, of expressing to him the pain we felt ; but we are extremely desirous of calling the attention of the gentlemen of Donegal to the subject ; being assured that, were they aware of the state of the house, as well as of its total inadequacy, in point of size, to the wants of the county, they would lose no time in providing a remedy for evils of so glaring a character.

The Infirmaries at Enniskillen, Maryborough, and Galway, may be mentioned as specimens of cleanliness, comfort, and good order ; but it happens somewhat singularly that the Infirmary, which, of all others in Ireland, we should mark as excellent in these respects, is within but a few miles of that at Lifford, and presents a most striking and agreeable contrast to it. We allude to that at Londonderry, which may justly be described as an admirably conducted institution. Our worthy friend the bishop of Londonderry, is not only a liberal supporter of this and other public institutions in his neighbourhood, but bestows upon them a constant and sedulous personal attention. The effect produced by his efforts is very conspicuous.

On the subject of the Infirmaries in Ireland, we wish, in conclusion, to offer a few general remarks.

There appeared to us to be a danger, with respect



to many of these establishments, of their falling *too exclusively* into the hands of the medical practitioner appointed to the care of the patients ; especially in those places where such practitioner, in the joint capacity of physician and governor, resides in the house. However well disposed these persons may be, it is inconsistent with the very nature and principle of public institutions, that they should be placed under the uncontrolled care and authority of any individual, and wherever the boards of superintendence are inactive (and in some cases we fear they are almost nominal) this consequence is, at present, inevitable.

In order to remedy the evil now alluded to, we wish to suggest, for the consideration of Government, whether the Local Inspector of the county jail (the two institutions being almost uniformly in the same town) might not also be required to visit and inspect the county infirmary, and to make a quarterly return to Government of the number and condition of its inmates. And would it not be an important *additional* security for the proper management of these institutions, were they, like the Lunatic Asylums, brought under the annual notice of the Inspectors General ?

Great advantage would also arise, were the female patients to receive a daily visit from some lady or ladies in the neighbourhood. These afflicted persons stand in great need of the tender attentions of their own sex ; and, indeed, it is very obvious that the male as well as female department of *hospitals* might derive important benefit from the kind attentions of judicious women. We are happy to inform the Lord Lieutenant, that the ladies who have associated to visit the *prison*, have, in several county towns, also embraced the care of the *infirmary*.



The most striking general defect in the infirmaries appeared to us to be the almost total absence of proper employment for the mind, and especially of religious instruction. It is highly desirable that the patients who can read should, at least, *have the opportunity afforded them* of a daily perusal of Scripture ; and were a Bible regularly placed in each ward, they might, on this point, *exercise their own discretion*. To the Sacred Volume might be added, in every infirmary, such other moral and religious books as the Roman Catholic and Protestant clergyman of the parish should unite in approving, and also one of the cheap Kildare Street Society libraries of small, useful, and entertaining, publications. To *these* no party can object, nor can any one reasonably doubt, that the agreeable diversion and occupation of mind, which such reading would afford, must often have a tendency to facilitate recovery from sickness.

We beg leave, for the sake of clearness, to recapitulate the subjects adverted to in the present section of our report.

They are, *first*, The general principles which ought to regulate the treatment of lunatics ; and the progress which has, of late years, taken place in relation to this interesting subject.

*Secondly*, The advantage which would arise from the *local inspection* of Lunatic asylums in Ireland, in addition to the care of the Inspectors General.

*Thirdly*, The utter impropriety of confining lunatics in jails ; and the evils which have arisen out of this practice in almost every part of Ireland.

*Fourthly*, The state of the lunatics in the houses of industry, where, though not exposed to much



suffering, they are far from being generally placed under any curative system.

*Fifthly*, The very desirable condition of the patients in the District and other large asylums, and especially the useful efforts made for their employment,—the absence of the usual provision for public worship, being nevertheless a defect in these institutions. The propriety of allotting a department in them to incurables.

*Sixthly*, The question, whether the *principle* of collecting paupers together in *houses of industry* is a sound one. The satisfactory order in which we generally found these extensive institutions, especially the house of industry at Dublin.

*Seventhly*, The benefit arising from the institutions formed in several of the larger towns for the relief of beggars and the suppression of mendicity—the desirableness of their being partly supported, when found necessary, by Grand Jury presentments.

*Eighthly*, The general character of the infirmaries ; and the particular condition of several of them ; especially those at Lifford and Londonderry. The propriety of placing Infirmaries under the care of the Local Inspectors of prisons, and of the Inspectors General ; as well as of their being daily visited by ladies ; and the advantage which would accrue from some farther attempts to occupy and instruct the minds of the patients.

We may now conclude this part of our report by expressing the satisfaction we have derived from observing, that many of the populous towns contain *Fever Hospitals*—a provision, which, under the present circumstances of the island, may well be deemed essential, not only for the relief of a multitude of dis-



tressed sufferers, but for the protection of the public. Although we did not personally inspect these receptacles of contagion, which, during the period of our visit, were said to be crowded to an unusual and very affecting extent, we often heard satisfactory accounts of the care and management under which they are placed; and we were made acquainted with some individuals, not of the medical profession, who, at the risk of their own lives, have been accustomed to pay a close personal attention to the unfortunate persons confined in them.

The prevalence of fever in Dublin and other parts of Ireland, which, during the last year, has been so frightfully extensive, cannot fail to have claimed the notice of Government. Useful and essential as are the hospitals provided for the reception of fever patients, we apprehend that the first object to aim at is the *prevention of the disease*. Where large numbers of poor persons are obliged to inhabit a single wretched dwelling—half fed—half clothed—and in the midst of filth—it can be no matter of surprise that low fever should be generated, nor that, when generated, it should spread to every class in society. While it appears impossible at present for Government, by any efforts, to stop *some* of the sources of this disease, we have often been led to think (when passing through the poorest parts of the principal towns) that much good might, in this respect, be effected by ensuring *a far greater degree of cleanliness*. The filth which is often observable in the streets, and which is accumulated round the walls of the poorest huts, must, we think, be a productive origin of contagious sickness; and it is one of those evils, for the removal of which the police now established in Ireland might surely



operate, under the orders of Government, with a strong probability of success. The Lord Lieutenant will, we doubt not, agree with us in the opinion, that if the streets of Dublin (for example) were, through the daily attention of proper officers, preserved in a uniformly wholesome and cleanly state—which in many parts of the city is at present far from being the case, the health as well as good order of the inhabitants would be most usefully promoted.



### SECTION III.

WE may now proceed to communicate to the Lord Lieutenant some of our thoughts and sentiments respecting the *general condition* of the population of Ireland, especially of the lower orders; and happy indeed would it make us, should we be enabled to suggest any plans, or to unfold or confirm any principles from which a people, at once so interesting and so afflicted, might derive any substantial advantage. Notwithstanding the existing diversity of opinion (a diversity which divides the wise, the good, and even the liberal,) on the politics of Ireland, we fully believe that the attention of Government is sedulously directed to the great *practical* object of relieving and improving its inhabitants. It appears to us that, in the maintenance of various public institutions of a humane and charitable nature—in the establishment of a well-organized police—in the amelioration of the local administration of justice, as well as of the whole system of prison discipline—in the forming of new roads and other public works—in the lessening of taxation, and in the useful modification of the law of tithes, much has of late years been effected, under the auspices of Government, for the relief and benefit of Ireland.

While, however, we can by no means unite in the opinion of those persons, who ascribe to mere mis-



government the miseries of that country, we are deeply sensible that the efforts, both of public wisdom and private benevolence, for its benefit, have hitherto been attended with only partial effects, and that want, ignorance, and violent crime, still exist in Ireland to an awful extent.

It is indeed impossible for any persons endued with common powers of observation and common feelings of humanity, to travel through Ireland, without being deeply afflicted by the scenes of wretchedness and helpless beggary which perpetually meet the eye, and these impressions of sorrow were, in our own case, much aggravated by the inspection of the prisons, which unfolded to us an extent and quantity of crime, much exceeding our expectations. To trace the precise causes of these evils cannot be otherwise than extremely difficult. Undoubtedly they are both various and complicated ; and we are persuaded that, in order to these causes being removed, and their effects remedied, there is required not only much wisdom, *but a long continued patience and perseverance.* The work must, in the nature of things, be a very slow one ; but we encourage ourselves in the belief that it is making progress, and that there is gradually taking place in Ireland that moral and intellectual improvement in all classes of society, which will ultimately be the means of producing, in her condition, a substantial and permanent change for the better. And although in consequence of the disadvantages under which the country now labours, the population seems to be excessive, there is surely strong reason to believe, that were the most made of the national resources, this apparent evil would cease.

This, indeed, was the most striking feature which



the picture of Ireland presented to our view. Scarcely any thing is made the most of. A fine and fruitful country is left in a state of partial and inadequate cultivation. A people gifted with an extraordinary vigour of both body and mind, and evidently designed for an elevated place in the scale of nations, is to a great extent ignorant of its own wants; and is therefore so far from putting forth its powers, that it *appears* to rest contented with filth, rags, disorder, wretched accommodation, and very inferior diet. We rejoice in the gradual progress of that civil, moral, and religious, light, which can alone effectually raise any nation out of such a condition. In the mean time we apprehend, that honest and persevering efforts, on the part both of Government and of individuals, may be successfully employed in promoting the great work of national improvement, and that there are a variety of particular points to which those efforts may be usefully directed.

The few remarks which we think it right to offer, on the subject, will be of a simple and practical nature, and will relate, first, to the *physical wants*, and secondly, to the *moral and religious condition* of the lower orders in Ireland.

I. When we speak of the poorest classes of society in Ireland, we conceive that we ought to distinguish between those in the *country*, and those in *towns and cities*.

With respect to the poor in the country, a very important difference is to be observed between those in the North of Ireland, and those in the three provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. In Ulster *generally*, the people are pretty decently clad, tolerably housed, and in that state of apparent healthi-



ness, which indicates no want of food. The same pleasing appearances are to be observed in other partial districts ; more particularly in the immediate neighbourhood of gentlemen resident on their estates. But even in Ulster, we occasionally met with the obvious marks of great distress ; and, on the whole, we are constrained to say, that a very large majority of the poor, in the country districts of Ireland, appeared to us to be in a very wretched condition—their persons squalid and uncleanly, their garments tattered, and their little turf huts too often unfit for the habitation of civilized man. We do not doubt that in every part of the country, great distress has, of late years, arisen from the want of sufficient employment ; and wherever the potatoe crop fails, that distress is extremely aggravated.

If then the question arises, how the physical condition of the country poor of Ireland is to be relieved and improved, the obvious answer is this—Furnish them, if possible, with employment, and with such means of maintenance, as will ensure them a tolerable support, even in seasons when their favourite article of food is scarce.

Now we are well aware, that possible as this seems to us to be, it is not in the power of Government to enforce it. It may be, we doubt not, very materially *promoted* by persons in official authority, but it can be *effected* only by the exertions of private individuals, and especially by an enlightened and liberal system of management on the part of the landed proprietors. Here is, on the one hand, a population of vigorous and healthy men about half employed, and, on the other, a fine and fertile country about half cultivated. It needs no scientific acquaintance with political eco-



nomy to perceive, that were the force of such a people fairly applied to such a country, the result would probably be, first, that *all would be employed*, and secondly, that *all would be fed*. The productions of the land, already abundant, would be vastly increased. Food would seldom be extremely dear, and the failure of the potatoe, whenever it might occur, would, we trust, be remedied by a pretty even and constant supply of a far more nutritious article of food—good, wholesome, wheaten bread. Such would, we apprehend, be the happy and certain result, did there arise among the proprietors of lands in Ireland *a combined and united effort*, at once directed to the improvement of the labouring poor, and to the benefit of their own estates ; but unhappily there is at present so little union of endeavour for this purpose, that in some places, where attempts of the kind have, in a very noble manner, been made by individual proprietors, the effect has been to attract so large a surplus population to their estates, as almost to render the undertaking abortive. We were informed by Colonel Currey, the Duke of Devonshire's benevolent agent in the county of Waterford, that his attempts to promote the employment of the people were greatly clogged and impeded by this discouraging circumstance. It is quite obvious that were corresponding exertions made on all the neighbouring estates, this consequence would not occur, and the great work of national improvement would advance without difficulty. It is most desirable that, notwithstanding these inconveniences, the more enlightened and liberal proprietors should persevere in their course; and it may surely be expected that on the principles of self interest, if not of benevolence, their example will gradually be followed, and their practice become general.



We understand that this end has been materially promoted, in some counties, by FARMING SOCIETIES, the object of which is the encouraging and rewarding of successful agriculture. Such societies are so obviously beneficial, that they appear to claim all the patronage which Government can bestow upon them, and it is to be hoped that the attention of those who compose them will ever be directed, amongst other objects, to the beneficial employment and temporal comfort, of the *agricultural labourer*.

Nothing seems, for this purpose, more desirable than allotting to each family of the labouring poor on an estate, a small quantity of land, at a moderate rent, which they may cultivate for their own benefit. Such a practice appears calculated to encourage in them industrious and domestic habits, to inspire them with a useful sense of their importance in the scale of society, and to attach them heartily to their masters and landlords. Thus might they gradually rise to a rank which in general they have not hitherto attained—that of an honest, sober, and independent, peasantry. We apprehend that this system would not prevent their being chiefly employed as day labourers in the service of others.

Could any arrangement be made for enabling the poor, by degrees, to obtain a property in these small allotments of land, the great end in view would be still further promoted. It seems to be of the utmost importance to the welfare of Ireland, that even the lowest class of the people should be brought to feel that they have a stake in the country—that they possess something valuable either to preserve or to lose. Thus would they be prevented from entertaining, as many of them now appear to do, that most disheart-



ening and unsettling notion, that no change of circumstances can be to them *for the worse*.

We take the liberty of referring the Lord Lieutenant to two pamphlets which have lately appeared on this subject. The one is entitled "Statement of some of the causes of the Disturbances in Ireland, and of the Miserable State of the Peasantry, with a Plan for an Amelioration of their Condition, &c." *Dublin*, 1825. The other bears the name of Sir Charles Townshend Waller, and is entitled "A Plan for the Relief of the Poor in Ireland, &c." *Bath*, 1827. In both these pamphlets it is proposed that Joint Stock Companies should be formed, which should invest their capital in the purchase of land, and building cottages upon it—that the land purchased should be divided into lots consisting severally of three acres, with a cottage on each lot—and that these little farms should be let at a moderate rent to families of labouring poor: and in the former of these works, it is particularly recommended that the tenants should have the option of gradually buying off the rental of the lands, and thus making them by degrees their property in fee. It seems probable that an experiment of this description, if fairly made, might, without any material risk of capital, lead to extensive and beneficial consequences.

Another pamphlet to which we are desirous of inviting the Lord Lieutenant's attention, and which we have already placed in his hands, is called "*Colonies at Home*." It is the work of a well known British philanthropist who has for many years been engaged in making experiments respecting the produce of certain quantities of land of average quality, under spade cultivation; and who in England, Ireland, and many other countries, has obtained by personal observation



an extensive knowledge of the condition of the lower orders. He proposes the formation of villages, consisting of any number of cottages, on land hired at a ground rent, for the purpose—each cottage to be allotted to a single poor family, with three acres of land, if they are to support themselves entirely upon it; or with a less quantity, if they are also engaged as hired labourers. Two or more families to unite in keeping a cow for milk and manure, which he proves may be annually effected on the produce of half an acre—the children of the village to be educated in a school supported by a small rate on the inhabitants—and the whole community to form an association governed by a few plain regulations. He farther suggests that the capital necessary for building the cottages and stocking the farms—a capital to be gradually raised by the tenants—should in the first instance be advanced, at legal interest and on sufficient security, either by the proprietor of the land, or by benevolent societies formed, in the district, for the purpose. At Lindfield, in Sussex, this experiment has been tried—with great advantage, as we understand, to the inhabitants—by the proposer of the plan himself. And at Frederick's Oord, in North Holland, thousands of the poor are comfortably supported, in a somewhat similar manner, upon small allotments of land. Why should not the same effects be produced in Ireland?

It ought to be remembered, that *moderate* rentals and *certainly of tenure* are indispensable to the success of any such measures. From various accounts which have reached us, we apprehend that the very contrary of these things—we mean *immoderate rentals* and *a cruel uncertainty of tenure*—are to be numbered among the most aggravated evils which oppress



the people of Ireland. When a gentleman or a nobleman's lands fall into the hands of middle-men, whose interest it is not so much to preserve and improve the estate, as to obtain the greatest possible quantity of money from the lower tenantry, (that is, in many cases, from the labouring poor,) or into those of agents, the amount of whose fees and commission depend on that of their receipts, it is no wonder that the rentals, even of miserable huts and small plots of ground, should be screwed up to an exorbitantly high point.

On the subject of the uncertainty of tenure, and the dismal effects produced by it in Ireland, the following extracts from the first of the three pamphlets, now cited, will throw an ample light—"In many instances it has occurred that a set of tenants have taken uncultivated poor ground at the foot of a mountain, at a few shillings an acre rent, but without leases: being either deceived by promises, or unable to pay for the leases when taking the land; after a few years, by almost incessant labour, the ground being rendered of some value, these poor people have been forced to leave their farms and remove higher up on the mountain, to begin again on unimproved ground; and it is no fiction to state, that those who began to cultivate the soil at the foot of the mountain have, by progressive removes, been ultimately placed as near its top as subsistence could be raised; being thus defrauded of the fruits of their early hard labour, and obliged to end their days in want, after spending their lives in toil and pinching penury; having the additional mortification of daily seeing the ground they had in their youth brought first into cultivation, occupied by others."—*Page 4.*

Now what is the effect of all this grinding and



oppression? The poor people on the estates of such landlords gradually sink into the extremity of wretchedness, listlessness, and want. They are deprived of all their motives to an honest industry, and are loosened from every tie of attachment to their superiors. They become thievish and idle servants—violent and dangerous neighbours—and miserably discontented subjects. But the most remarkable fact respecting them is this—that notwithstanding all those supposed *checks to population* which are said to arise from sickness, misery, and want, their numbers are perpetually increasing. Sensible that they can sink no lower in the scale of wretchedness, and anxious to secure to themselves the few natural enjoyments of which society has not deprived them, they are uniformly found to give themselves up to early and improvident marriages—and the lands on which the whole scene is acted, are presently overrun by a starving and angry population.

But, alas! the piteous tale ends not here. The proprietor, oppressed and half ruined by the poor people on his property, seizes the opportunity of some informality in their tenure, or perhaps of the expiration of their leases, and with one rude stroke sweeps away themselves and their habitations from the face of his estate! “About two years ago,” says the author of the same pamphlet, “—— in the county of —— took possession of a considerable tract of land, under an ejectment for nonpayment of rent, and without giving the tenants six months time to redeem, which according to law he was bound to do, actually threw down their houses or cabins at the commencement of a severe winter, having turned the occupants out on the road: and some of them having made a sort of a shed-roof against part of the walls which were left



standing ; he sent and had these sheds pulled down, and the walls completely levelled, in order to drive the people quite away, making many families destitute wanderers in that inclement season." p. 32.

The following evidence on this subject was given before a select committee of the House of Lords (we believe in 1825) by John Leslie Foster.

"I conceive that within the last two years, a perfect *panic* on the subject of population has prevailed upon all persons interested in land in Ireland ; and that they are at this moment applying a corrective check of the most violent description. The principle of *dispeopling* estates is going on in every part of Ireland where it can be effected ; in some part of Ireland more, and in some less. I have known of instances in the South, where on the expiration of a lease affording an opportunity to a landlord of newly dividing the land ; *thirty, forty, or fifty*, occupying families have in fact been turned adrift, and the land which supported them has been divided into perhaps half a dozen *respectable farms*. Even where the expiration of the lease of a large district of the country does not create an opportunity, nothing is more common than notice to quit being given, for the mere purpose of annexing the tenement to another farm. The landlords of Ireland are at length deeply convinced, that though a stock of cattle or sheep will afford profit, a stock of mere human creatures, unemployed, will afford none; and they, therefore, are acting upon that principle, *even in the extreme*. If your Lordships ask me what becomes of this surplus stock of population, it is a matter on which I have, in my late journeys through Ireland, endeavoured to form some opinion, and I conceive that in many instances they wander about the country



as *mere mendicants* ; but that more frequently they betake themselves to the *nearest large towns, and there occupy as lodgers the most wretched hovels, in the most miserable outlets, in the vain hope of occasionally getting a day's work.* Though this expectation too often proves ill-founded, it is the only course possible for them to take. Their resort to those towns produces such misery as it is impossible to describe."

We received from our friend Col. Currey, and from numerous other persons in the course of our journey, statements which convince us, that since the period when this evidence was given, the cruel practice of forcibly depopulating the lands, has been rapidly advancing ; and that it has given rise to an extent and degree of misery which has seldom before been known in any country. Must it not be allowed that the supposed necessity for such murderous measures, arises from the gradual operation of a vicious and tyrannical system in the management of the labouring poor ? and is not the true remedy to be found in the adoption of those wise and benevolent principles, to which we have already adverted, and which appear to have been the means of raising upon the *improved* estates of John Leslie Foster, Lord Headley, and several other such landlords, a comparatively prosperous and peaceable peasantry, to the vast advantage of all the parties concerned ?

Amongst the numerous causes which have occasioned the distress and demoralization at present existing in Ireland, it is universally allowed that the absence in another country of so large a proportion of the landed proprietors, is one of the principal. Not only is an immense amount of capital—we understand about three millions sterling—annually drawn from



the heart of the country to which it belongs, and in which it might have been beneficially expended ; but the care and management of properties are left in the hands of agents. *Their* interest in the estates over which they preside, must always be very inferior to that of the proprietors, and they are too often found to pursue their own pecuniary advantage at the expense of an oppressed and afflicted tenantry.

We are aware that to this rule there are many honorable exceptions. Nevertheless it must be confessed that nothing is more striking to the eye of even a cursory observer, during a journey through Ireland, than the contrast between the estates of many of the absentees, and those which are under the immediate care of the more enlightened resident proprietors. In the former there is a very general appearance of recklessness and abject poverty—the land wasted—the fences in decay—the hovels of the poor, wretched in the extreme—the people themselves, ragged, filthy, and sullen. In the latter, on the contrary, we were often cheered by indications of order, industry, and comfort. We have no doubt that the resident proprietors, who desire to promote the improvement, not only of their estates, but of the poor people upon them, have many difficulties to cope with. We are sure, from various accounts which have reached us, that they have to undergo many trials of patience ; but they ought to be encouraged to a steady perseverance in the line of conduct which they have adopted, by the salutary effects it has already produced. Were their noble example universally followed, the miseries of Ireland would cease.

It is a question which admits of considerable doubt, whether any substantial benefit would arise to the Irish



poor, especially in the country districts, from the introduction amongst them of, what may be called, the *modern manufacturing system*. Experience proves, that the institution of large factories is too often productive of extensive immorality, as well as of almost intolerable *occasional* distress. But there is one species of manufacture carried on in Ireland, which appears to us to be of a most useful and desirable nature—we mean the *domestic linen manufacture*. In Ulster the cottager grows his flax, spins his yarn, manufactures his linen, and carries his web to market. The whole operation from the production of the raw material to the sale of the perfected article, centers in himself and his family; and amongst the most pleasing sights which we witnessed in Ireland, was that of a comparatively healthy and well-dressed peasantry, bringing their bundles of linen, under their arms, to the neighbouring town for sale on the market day. We are grieved to hear that this truly salutary domestic trade, is under circumstances of depression. We fear it can scarcely stand long against the overwhelming competition of British machinery and capital, but we are sure it deserves the watchful care and protection of a paternal government.

We are informed that the funds annually voted by Parliament to the linen board have already been diminished; and that there is even a probability of their being entirely withdrawn. But we trust that this will not be the case if it can be made to appear, that they may still be usefully applied for the relief of the Irish population. Is it not very desirable that the poor should be provided with the articles employed in spinning, either gratuitously or at a reduced price; and with steeping pools and other needful accommo-



dations in their respective parishes? And would it not promote the purpose for which these funds are granted, were they partly applied in small loans to poor families, to encourage them in the prosecution of this staple trade?

The observations which we have hitherto made respecting the poor in Ireland, relate chiefly to those in the country. We fear that many of the inhabitants of the towns, are in a far more deplorable condition. Driven from the lands on which they once obtained a living, which, though wretched, was all *they were taught to want*—thousands of half-clad, half-starved, people, have of late years found a miserable refuge in the already crowded tenements of the cities and towns, with little or no resource for a maintenance but begging, thieving, and the sympathetic charity of their fellow-sufferers. Such, from various accounts which have reached us, we conceive to be the unhappy condition of the lowest order of society in many, if not all, the principal towns, especially in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught; and we understand that in Dublin and some other places, their distress has been greatly aggravated, by the failure of the manufactures from which they were formerly accustomed to derive their support.

We much regret that we were prevented by the want of time and the extreme pressure of other engagements, from making more than a cursory visit to the lowest and most distressed parts of that metropolis. It was very much our wish to have gone from cottage to cottage, in some small district, which might have been fixed on as a specimen, in order that we might form some exact judgment of the state of its inhabitants; but we venture to suggest that nothing



can be more easy than privately to institute such an examination in Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, and other principal places ; and it is surely highly desirable, that both Government and the public should be placed in possession of the precise state of the fact. From all that we heard from benevolent individuals who are in the practice of visiting the poor in their own habitations, we believe it would, on such an examination, be ascertained, that several families are often crowded, in a most promiscuous and demoralizing manner, into a single tenement—that a very large proportion of the population of these cities is destitute of employment—that another large proportion is employed only partially—that their state of uncleanness, and their want of proper clothing, is extreme—and that vast numbers, if not absolutely starving, are obliged to content themselves and their poor helpless children, with a miserably insufficient quantity even of the cheapest food.

If the question is fairly considered, what is to be done for the relief of so large and so distressed a multitude, we are sure, that on one point, all persons of common humanity must be unanimous—all will agree that it would be disgraceful and cruel in the extreme, to allow them to starve. We are very far from wishing to recommend the introduction, into Ireland, of the English system of the Poor Laws. We are aware of the many evils which attach to that system—or perhaps we should rather say to its *abuse*—and we believe it would be extremely dangerous to impose upon Ireland the unmitigated weight of a burden, which England with all her opulence and prosperity is scarcely able to bear ; but to preserve the poor from starvation, is a duty which appears to devolve not only



on the benevolence of individuals, but, in case of absolute need, *on the justice of the whole community.*

On the whole, we are strongly inclined to the opinion that it is the duty of Government, in the first place, to ascertain how the fact really stands ; and secondly on the supposition that the statements of distress are not exaggerated, to institute some public provision of such a nature as would prevent the catastrophe of starvation in any of the poor, without encouraging a state of idle and vicious dependence. There is some reason to believe, that this object might be effected, at least pro tempore—and temporary measures may possibly suffice—by supporting and extending the operation of the *Mendicity Institutions*. These establishments, maintained, as they are at present, merely by private contribution, are already the means of supplying food, day by day, to very many persons who, to all appearance, would otherwise starve ; and we think it would not be impossible, by a system of close inspection and frequent visiting of the poor in their own houses, to provide, that in every successive day of the year every individual in Dublin, or any other town or city, who would otherwise pass that day without a meal, should have the opportunity of receiving at the Mendicity House a quantity of plain food, sufficient for the preservation of health.

Although we are decidedly of opinion that these Mendicity Institutions, if thus extensively applied, ought to be supported from some public fund—probably by a rateable tax, under Grand Jury presentment, on the whole county—we should be extremely sorry to check that private charity which originated and at present maintains these useful establishments. We would rather call that charity into fuller action and systematize



its operations in such a manner that it should be made to apply to the *whole* of the more distressed inhabitants of any town or city ; and the public provision at the Mendicity House would, in that case, come in, not as its *substitute*, but only as its *aid*.

Were the most wretched parts of the principal towns properly examined, and the distress which prevails in them brought fully to light, there can be no doubt that the most generous sympathies would be excited in the Irish public, and that very considerable subscriptions might be raised (with some assistance probably from England) in every town of importance throughout the Island. Nor would the inhabitants of the country districts fail to come forward in the support a cause which may well be regarded as of *national* importance. On the supposition that annual funds might be raised for the benefit of the poor in all the towns containing any considerable population, we would strongly recommend their being applied through the medium of DISTRICT SOCIETIES ; one of which ought to be planted in each town.

Societies of the description to which we allude have for some years existed in England ; and after long experience, have been proved to be attended with the happiest effects. The principle on which they are constituted is very simple. It is this—that charity of every description, in order to be effective to the greatest possible extent, must, to the greatest possible extent, be *localized*. Whether our attention is directed to the physical or moral wants of the lower orders—whether we are endeavouring to clothe, to feed, or to educate them—we ought never to rest satisfied with those generalized efforts, which may be said to sweep the surface, without penetrating the deep and private



recesses, of ignorance, misery, and want. Every cottage should be examined—every child cared for—every yard, lane, or street, placed under close examination and constant superintendence. Now all this may be effected, and that with little difficulty, *by the division of labour.*

Amongst the various circumstances, which must strike every careful observer, in the present state of Ireland, one of the most conspicuous as well as the most pleasing, is the vast diffusion in the middle and upper ranks of society of *practical religious principle*; or in other words of an earnest desire and endeavour *to do good.* In whatever part of the country our lot was cast, we presently observed the sure indications of this Christian spirit; and it often happened to us, that we entered into some populous town perfect strangers to all its inhabitants, and yet, within a few hours, found ourselves surrounded by a large number of benevolent persons, all anxious to promote our objects; and all desirous of being informed how, in our opinion, they might best employ their time and talents for the welfare of their fellow-countrymen. We assure the Lord Lieutenant that the scenes of this description, of which we were almost daily witnesses—and often on a very large scale—were eminently calculated, amidst all the miseries of degraded Ireland, to gladden the hearts of those who pray for her prosperity, and to unfold the almost certain prospect of a happier day. We are most happy to be able thus to throw a gleam of light over the general darkness of the picture we have been constrained to draw. If distress and degradation abound in Ireland, a zealous philanthropy abounds also. If the work to be effected is one of extraordinary magnitude and difficulty, ex-



traordinary also is the number of persons who are ready to grapple with it.

Now we would say to our numerous Christian friends in the various principal towns in Ireland:—Waste not your zeal and your liberality on unproductive generalities. Every heart that can feel, must feel for a purpose ; and every hand that can act, must be brought into action. Unite indeed in one general cause, and operate on one uniform principle ; but if you would produce permanently beneficial effect, divide and subdivide your labour. Let twenty, thirty, or forty, poor houses (as circumstances may dictate) be placed under the daily watchful superintendence of A. and B., and let them be the responsible parties by whom alone are to be issued the tickets for the necessary supply of food from the Mendicity House. But this is but a small part of the duty which must devolve on A. and B. They are to civilize, moralize, relieve, and console, the wretched inhabitants of their district. They are to insinuate themselves by kind, personal attention, and by patient *perseverance* in well doing, into the good graces of the poor. They are to superintend the education of the children. They are to supply small articles of clothing when absolutely necessary. They are to give tickets to the sick for the public dispensary. They are to do their best in helping to provide employment. They are, by every means in their power, to infuse the spirit, and to confirm the habits, of order, cleanliness, and industry. Of course they are not to interfere with C. and D., to whom is committed the superintendence of the neighbouring yard, or the next row of cottages. We venture to express an opinion formed on our own experience and observation, that there is not a consider-



able town in Ireland, in which this simple and effective system might not be adopted with unspeakable advantage to the whole community.

The District Society in each place must of course be governed by a President, Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Committee, and Secretaries—the Committee to meet once a month, and a certain number to form a quorum. At this monthly meeting a report, on a prescribed form, of their proceedings must be personally delivered to the Committee, by one of the visitors of every district, and the funds of the institution distributed accordingly ;—and the general report of the Committee must be presented once every year to a meeting of the subscribers at large. We may conclude our remarks on the subject, with the earnest request that the Lord Lieutenant will be pleased to extend to these *district societies*, in whatever part of Ireland they may be formed, the important sanction of his support and patronage.

We cannot satisfactorily conclude our remarks respecting the physical wants of the poor in Ireland, and the methods which may be adopted for their relief, without briefly adverting to the subject of *emigration*. It is unquestionable, that independently of the plan lately instituted by Government to promote this object, emigration has, during the last two or three years, been going on from Ireland to a very considerable extent. When we left Waterford on our way to Dublin, in the latter part of the spring, we met many small parties of pedestrians, respectably attired, who we believe were all going forward to the port, in order to emigrate ; and a single merchant at New Ross informed us, that during the last year, he had himself transported from 1000 to 1200 individuals to Ame-



rica—we believe, almost exclusively to the British settlements in Nova Scotia and Canada. We fear that much of the emigration which has thus taken place, has been very far from tending to the strength and prosperity of *a country, which can ill spare her more respectable inhabitants of the middle class* ; neither is it possible for us to believe, that were the population employed, as it might be, on the lands, any such redundancy would be found in it, as would demand this species of relief, even as it relates to the lowest description of the people.

Nevertheless, in the present disordered state of things—and with an especial view to the misery actually existing, particularly in the over-crowded towns—we are much inclined to adopt the sentiment of many practical men, that the transfer of three or four hundred thousands of the most destitute part of the population from Ireland to America (particularly we should say to Prince Edward's Island, and Upper Canada,) would be productive of immense benefit to the parties themselves ; and of very great relief to the country. We are glad, at any rate, that this important subject is likely to come under the consideration of Parliament—and we would only add, that in case of such a measure's being adopted, we are led to believe, that it might be effected at a far cheaper rate than Government appears to have hitherto apprehended. We have reason, from what we heard, to form the opinion, that the sum of five pounds sterling is sufficient to secure the transportation and settlement of a single emigrant ; and that, in the case of large families, this sum per head, would admit of a further and considerable reduction. Sensible as Government undoubtedly is, of the necessity of adopting some means



for the relief of the vast multitudes of poor, now congregated in the principal towns of Ireland, we are persuaded that the subject of emigration will meet with its best consideration. Should it, after farther examination, be deemed a right measure, it could, we presume, hardly be effectual on a less scale than that which has now been mentioned ; and the expense of the undertaking, though necessarily very large, might perhaps be defrayed, without very great difficulty, by county rates to be levied throughout Ireland, and a parliamentary grant, *equal to their produce*.

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II. A state of overwhelming physical distress, in any people, is for the most part closely associated with a degraded condition of morals ; partly because beggary and immorality produce and confirm each other, and partly because unsound principles of action are equally productive of *both*. This observation is, we fear, fully justified by the condition and character of the lower orders of the people in many parts of Ireland. We confess that we were deeply affected, as we passed through many of the villages and towns, by observing in the appearance and deportment of the populace, the too evident traces of a disordered state of morals ; and this impression could not fail to be very much deepened, by our visits to the jails. There, as we have already hinted, we were brought into contact with a vast variety as well as quantity of crime, and an opportunity was afforded us of studying the darker side of the character of the population—of observing what are their peculiar propensities to evil—and what the particulars of their natural temperament which most obviously require counteraction.



A great proportion of the offences committed in Ireland, are such as arise from the violent and often sudden impulse of unsubdued passion—inflamed probably by the intemperate use of spirituous liquors. Assaults of various descriptions are the most usual *misdemeanors*, for which Irishmen are sent to jail—and these instances are, in every part of the country, extremely numerous. Another large and more serious class of offenders appeared to have been engaged in acts of violence, and sometimes of great cruelty, from motives of *settled revenge*; and as far as we could ascertain, this disposition was excited, almost, universally, by private, rather than political, causes. When a gentleman in any of the more disturbed districts dispossesses a tenant—though for the fairest reasons—and lets his farm to a person who may not be quite so pleasing to the surrounding population—and even when no such distinction can be drawn—he exposes the new occupant of his farm to the revenge not only of the individual supposed to be aggrieved, but to that of almost the whole neighbouring community: and we are sorry to be obliged to believe that this revenge is in general most difficult to appease. The result, perhaps, is the conflagration of his haystack or barn, or, more probably, a combined attack upon his house, his family, or his person.

It is a melancholy fact, that these desperate attempts are too often consummated by the murder of the individual, who is thus exposed to the vengeance of the people. It was in the highest degree awful and affecting to our feelings to find in many of the jails, *several* individuals imprisoned under charge of murder. Some of these, we believe, were cases in



which the sudden gusts of passion, or excess of intoxication, had led to the destruction of human life;—but, for the most part, the offence appeared to have assumed the more formidable character of cruel deliberation—usually in order to gratify revenge, but in some instances for the purpose of robbery.

Examples of the description to which we have now alluded were more numerous than it was possible for us to have anticipated. In the jail at Clonmel, shortly before our visit, there were, we are told, about seventy prisoners under charge of murder; and to such an extent did the law of terror prevail in the county of Tipperary, that a considerable number of persons committed for trial, (chiefly for violent crimes,) were discharged at the assizes, because the prosecutors deemed it more prudent to forfeit their recognizances, than to run the risk of appearing against the offenders.

It ought not indeed to be forgotten, that the numerous prisoners with whom we conversed, and who were charged with offences of this desperate nature, had not in general undergone their trial; and it is probable that many of them have since been acquitted. Nevertheless it was impossible not to perceive that so vast a number, even of untried felons of such a description, indicated a most lamentable state of society. And although this prevalence of violent crime has, we believe, but little connexion with political disaffection—much less with any organized system of revolt—we are persuaded that it must be very alarming, as well as distressing, to those on whom devolves the arduous duty of governing Ireland.

If we are led to inquire into the origin of that violence and immorality which has now been described, it is obvious enough, that it is to be found in the na-



tural propensity of man to indulge his passions, in spite of the dictates of reason and conscience ; but undoubtedly, in the case of the lower Irish, there are several circumstances which impart to this general source of evil, a double vigour. We have, in the first place, a state of misery and degradation, by which every motive to sobriety, honesty, and virtue, is undermined, and a recklessness engendered, which leads, in the most easy manner, to the commission of crime : secondly, a national mind impatient of control, and liable, in the greatest degree, to strong and lively emotions : thirdly, a constant and cheap supply, and universal consumption, of ardent spirits : and lastly, in some parts of Ireland, an almost incredible ignorance and want of mental culture.

If these are some of the principal causes of the debased morals and violent crimes prevailing amongst the lower part of the population, it will not perhaps be very difficult to point out the best methods of counteracting their operation. This work of counteraction, however, must necessarily be a very slow one, and it is rather from a reliance on the *ultimate* efficacy of certain great principles, than from the expectation of any rapid change for the better, that we venture to lay before the Lord Lieutenant a few remarks on what appears to us the most important points connected with the subject.

If a state of great physical misery, and the degradation and despair connected with it, are one fertile source of the moral evils which abound in Ireland, it is evident that every sound plan for relieving and employing the poor, and of raising them to a condition of respectability, will not only produce its direct effect in alleviating distress, but will tend, though in-



directly, yet certainly, to check the progress of immorality and crime. Nothing, indeed, can be of greater importance, in order to insure the peace of Ireland, than a combined effort, on the part of the reflecting and cultivated portion of society, more completely to *civilize* the lower orders ; to give them an interest, a stake, in the country ; and while relief and employment are afforded them, to lead them forward to habits of outward decency and comfort. These, when once formed, will preclude all temptation to a life of lawlessness and outrage.

Were the poor of Ireland, instead of being reduced by high rents, miserably low wages, uncertain tenure, and want of employment, to a condition of misery and disaffection—and then in the end driven off the lands in a state of despair—were they, instead of suffering all this oppression, kindly treated, properly employed and remunerated, and encouraged to cultivate small portions of land, at a moderate rent, on their own account, there can be little question that they would gradually become valuable members of the community, and would be as much bound to their superiors by the tie of gratitude, as they are now severed from them by ill-will and revenge. We fully believe also, that even in the crowded towns, the formation of District Societies, which would bring every cottage and family of the poor under the care of benevolent visitors, would have a strong tendency to allay the feelings of animosity, to excite good will and gratitude, to implant the habits of civilized life, and thus to deter from the commission of crime.

It seems to be of the utmost importance in the second place, that in all our efforts to improve and moralize the Irish people, we should consider their



mental temperament, and apply our remedies accordingly. Liable as they are to quick and lively emotion, jealous of their rights, and prone to the unrestrained indulgence of their passions, they require to be governed not only with a firm, steady, and sometimes, vigorous, hand, but with the strictest justice and impartiality, and with persevering condescension and kindness.

We were much gratified, during our journey through Ireland, with what we observed of the operations of the police, and of the appearance of the police-men. They seemed to us to be generally very decent and well behaved persons, civil in their manners, and kind as well as vigorous in the execution of their duties. The establishment must, we think, be found a very effective one, and although these officers are armed—a precaution which we are inclined to think might have been spared—yet we have no doubt that the method now adopted for securing the peace of society is found to be much less irritating to the minds of the people, than the old plan of the perpetual interference of the soldiery.

Such an interference appears to us to be peculiarly ill adapted to the character of the Irish, and ought, we think, to be carefully avoided, lest fresh provocation should only lead to more violent and extensive outrage. It is very much on the same principle that we feel anxious (as we have already ventured to state) for a still more general disuse, in Ireland, of the *punishment of death*. The life of man is already, by a large proportion of the people, far too little regarded,—*it is a cheap article in their estimation*. In the conduct and application of the criminal law, therefore, it seems *peculiarly* important, in such a country, to avoid those shocking exhibitions of the last fatal punishment,



which, while they excite revenge and insubordination, *lower and familiarize the picture of violent death.*

Abounding in gratitude as are the Irish when justly and kindly treated, we presume it will be allowed that they are, in no common degree, alive to a sense of *wrong*—that when injured and deprived of their just rights, they have both the acuteness to discern it, and the heart to feel it; and presently harbour a deeply-rooted sentiment of disaffection and revenge. We conceive that we should be stepping out of our right province were we to offer a direct opinion on that perplexing and agitating question—“Roman Catholic emancipation;” but we trust we shall not offend the Lord Lieutenant by an expression of the *general sentiment*, that there never was a people, in the management of whom a perfect equity and impartiality was more evidently requisite, than the people of Ireland—that it is, in the highest degree, desirable that every class of the king’s subjects in that country should, so far as is consistent with the safety of the state, be allowed the exercise of the same civil rights—and that the less the distinctions of religious opinion are insisted on and dragged to light, in connexion with the civil polity of the country, the greater will be the probability of its being blessed with a state of permanent tranquillity. We lament the constant agitation of this irritating subject, which keeps perpetually open the wounds of Ireland; and cordially do we wish, that through the means of reasonable concession on both sides, *the question might be settled and forgotten for ever.*

We could hardly forbear expressing these hints on a subject of great notoriety, and, under the present circumstances of Ireland, of high practical im-



portance ; but in touching on that lively sense of wrong which distinguishes her population, our object was rather to advert to a subject which we know has already claimed the attention of Government—we mean the local administration of justice. If partiality and corruption in magistrates are dangerous everywhere, we are persuaded they are doubly dangerous in Ireland ; and we have no doubt that the notorious existence of these evils, in some parts of the island, has been one of the most fruitful sources of disaffection and disturbance. Nothing indeed can be conceived more calculated than a partial and corrupt execution of the law, to inflame the passions of a most acute and sensitive people. We hope we may take the liberty of congratulating the Lord Lieutenant on the improvement which is universally allowed to have taken place, in this respect, within the last few years ; nor ought it to be forgotten, that while the character and conduct of the local magistracy, where they have hitherto been defective, has been undergoing, we trust, an essential reform, the higher judicial offices are now generally filled with men whose humane and enlightened views are singularly well adapted to the state of the country.

But it is not justice and impartiality *alone*, that the Irish people require at our hands. If we would conciliate their good will towards Great Britain and her government ; if we would render them a satisfied and contented people ; if we would turn their lively emotions of mind into the channel of love and gratitude, we must treat them with kindness and tenderness ; we must be actuated in all our transactions with them, by the most *patient* and *persevering* benevolence. Their wounds are too deep, and their irritation too much



confirmed, to be very speedily healed ; but a determinate adoption and *uniform maintenance* of such a line of conduct towards them will, doubtless, be found, in the end, efficacious and triumphant. These remarks are intended to apply not merely to the public acts of Government, but more particularly to the general conduct and demeanor of the upper classes towards those who are placed under their influence and authority. We were often pained as we passed through the country, by hearing so much of the unqualified command and rough rebuke ; nor could we wonder that, on the part of inferiors, sullenness and obstinacy were the consequence. We long to see the most degraded part of the people raised from the condition of slaves—treated as men of understanding and feeling—and ruled with that civility and tenderness which are sure to meet (in the Irishman especially) with a corresponding return of grateful and devoted affection.

Were it possible for Government to form some effective plan for checking the consumption of spirituous liquor in Ireland ; such a plan would contribute most essentially to her peace and prosperity. Nothing can be more grievous than the effect of such beverage on the natural temperament of the people. Every thing that is dangerous and hurtful in the disposition of an uneducated Irishman, is aggravated and inflamed by ardent spirits. Even when they are not taken in excess, they have this undeviating tendency ; but who can wonder at the violence and misery of the lower orders, who knows to what extent there still prevails amongst them the intemperate use of their favorite whisky ? “ Sheebeen houses,” where this noxious article is sold, are multiplied on every side ;



and the doleful effect produced by it, especially in the towns, is visible to the most cursory observer.

We allude to the subject chiefly for the purpose of suggesting to the Lord Lieutenant, whether some inquiry is not very desirable, in order to ascertain the effect which has been actually produced by the lessening of the duty on spirits, and by the very great cheapening of the licenses required to authorize the sale of them. On this subject we received opposite accounts in different parts of the country ; but we could not help entertaining a strong apprehension, that while the practice of illicit distillation is still going on to a very great extent, (of which we saw ample proof in many of the jails,) the actual consumption of whisky by the poor, in spite of their distressed circumstances, is, in some parts of the island, fearfully increasing. This subject appears to require the speedy and close attention of a wise and humane Government.

We believe we may safely assert, that the greater part of the criminals whom we saw in the jails, were, before they came into the prison schools, unable to read or write ; and not only in these respects are the criminals of Ireland generally illiterate. They may justly be described as destitute of every thing approaching to *mental culture*—an observation which perhaps applies with peculiar force to those in Connaught and Munster. Abundant evidence is indeed afforded to the visitors of prisons, that *brutal crime* is almost inseparably connected with *brutal ignorance*. And since this truth is undeniable, we presume the Lord Lieutenant will agree with us in the position, that of all the means which Providence has placed in our power for effecting a gradual diminu-



tion both in the extent and flagrancy of crime, the most important, *is the education of the people.*

Great good is unquestionably effected by the cultivation of the mind, by the improvement of the intellectual faculty, the enlargement of knowledge, and the refinement of the taste—and all this is the result of *education*. We fully believe that there has been, for some time past, taking place, in all ranks of the Irish population, a gradual yet very material progress in these respects ; and that the lower orders of society have partaken in this general advance, is evident from the very increased diffusion amongst them of books and tracts, from the formation, in some towns, of “mechanics’ institutions,” and generally from the manifestly growing spirit of inquiry on every subject of interest and importance.

Heartily as we rejoice in this intellectual progress, and fully as we believe that, in its tendency, it is usefully opposed to those rugged prejudices and that savage brutality which are so often the result of ignorance, we cannot forget that the only radical remedy for the evil propensities of man is *religious principle* ; and we are confident the Lord Lieutenant will allow us to express our decided opinion—an opinion founded on long observation and experience—that every system of national instruction *ought to have the Holy Scriptures for its foundation*. It is by training the young in the principles of that holy book which teaches them to fear, serve, and love God—to believe in their Redeemer—and to perform all their social and relative duties, that we can alone enable them (under the influence of the Spirit of God) to obtain the mastery over their evil passions, and to become, as they grow up to manhood, virtuous and useful members of the community.



Nor are we to look on this subject in an exclusively civil point of view. To the national education of the poor, there ought ever to attach the higher and nobler purpose, of so training them up in a sober, righteous, and godly life, that through the mercy of God, they may become the heirs of eternal happiness. Now how can this great object be so well promoted, as by a Christian and *scriptural* education?

For such an education of the poor in Ireland great efforts have already been made. Societies under various names have been formed for the propagation of evangelical knowledge. The Bible without note or comment, has been largely disseminated. Schools have been formed in every part of the island, and tens of thousands of children, as well as large numbers of adults, have been brought under a course of elementary instruction. One society in particular, wisely yielding to a popular prejudice for the sake of propagating truth, is engaged in promoting the instruction of the Irish in their native tongue, and furnishes them with the Scriptures in the same language—or in other words, in a form which renders the gift doubly acceptable.

We have no doubt that these various efforts have been already attended with extensive benefits; and as long as they are conducted with impartiality, and under the influence of Christian love—as long as they are singly directed to the promotion of the temporal and eternal welfare of the people—so long they demand, in our opinion, the warm concurrence and support of all who wish well to Ireland. But while we cordially rejoice in the steps already taken towards illuminating her darkness, we are far indeed from considering the work to be complete. We fear that



a very large proportion of the children of the poor are still uneducated, and we sincerely wish that the attention of the benevolent, in that country, may be yet more directed to the *localizing* of the means of instruction.

We are too apt to rest satisfied with a single large school for the whole lower population of a particular town ; or if two or more schools are instituted in the place, there is seldom any corresponding geographical division. Each institution operates, as it may happen, over the whole surface of the town. We fear that in consequence of this defective arrangement the work is often superficial, and that a considerable part of the children of the poor continue destitute of any instruction at all. Were every large town in Ireland divided into a certain convenient number of districts, and a school, under local superintendence and government, formed for each of them, all the children of the poor might be instructed : and we apprehend that with prudent management, and by calling in the aid of voluntary teachers this improved plan might be carried into effect, with but little increase of expense. But it is not only in the towns that the poor require education. It is important that the same benefit should be enjoyed in every country parish ; and most happy should we be to see the Protestant incumbent and the Roman Catholic priest every where uniting, on a system of entire impartiality, in the prosecution of the work.

Where the children of the poor are engaged in labour during the week days, vast advantage arises from *sabbath-day schools*. The extensive formation of these institutions which has of late years taken place in Ireland, is one of the most favourable signs of her future welfare ; and heartily is it to be desired that



they should be spread still more widely over the country. We venture also to suggest that Christian benevolence in that country can scarcely be directed to a more useful object than the establishment of schools for the *infant poor*; for there is surely no part of the united kingdom, where greater evil would be avoided, and greater good produced, by the exercise of a *very early* systematic discipline over the minds of children.

Among the various institutions formed in Ireland for promoting the education of the poor, we have again to notice the Kildare-street Society, which is supported by an annual grant from Parliament. We heartily hope that this grant may be continued without diminution, for, in the course of our journey, we found many proofs of the efficacy of the system which that society pursues. That system is one of a broad and liberal nature. The schools of the society are open to children of every religious denomination. No distinction whatever is made between Roman Catholic and Protestant. The masters and mistresses are indifferently chosen from either class. No creed or catechism is introduced. The religious instruction of the children is confined to the simple reading of the Holy Scriptures. Such a system is surely pre-eminently adapted to the wants of Ireland!

It is not, however, to be concealed, that great difficulties have of late arisen in the prosecution of the plan. We were grieved to find, in a great number of places, that the Roman Catholic children have been withdrawn by their priests from the Kildare-street Society's schools, on the ground, as we understand, of its being the undeviating principle adopted in these schools, *that the children should be taught to read in the Holy Scriptures*. We should



hardly have supposed it possible, that in a Christian country, and in an age of diffused light and liberality, such an objection would have been urged by any one; much less, that professed ministers of *the Gospel* would debar their flock from the benefit of education, rather than allow them to be made acquainted with the New Testament—the sacred yet simple volume, in which alone that Gospel is revealed to mankind. We venture to express an earnest hope that the superior Roman Catholic clergy may be led to reconsider this important subject; and that our “schools for *all*,” in Ireland, founded as they are on the broad basis of Scripture and reason, may *again* be rendered effective by the *unanimous* support of the friends of religion and virtue, under every denomination.

Although we do not think it right to shrink from making these remarks, which we trust many enlightened Roman Catholics will themselves approve, we have at the same time, much satisfaction in reporting to the Lord Lieutenant, that the subject of the education of the poor is by no means neglected by the clergy and other members of that community. They are engaged at this time in forming large schools for boys in several populous towns, and many such institutions have been, for some time, established. The nuns in many of the convents are also very laudably devoted to the superintendence of schools for girls. We had much satisfaction in visiting some of their nunneries; and the schools under the care of these benevolent and useful ladies appeared to us to be, very generally, in a state of good order and discipline. While, however, we are far from undervaluing these exertions—while we cannot but allow that they are highly creditable to the Roman Catholic part of the



community—it is impossible for us to feel much satisfaction in any system of education from which the Scriptures are, to a great extent, excluded. We are firmly convinced that the welfare of the Irish people would be much more effectually and extensively promoted, were the Roman Catholic priests on the one hand, and the Protestant clergy on the other, to take their own opportunities (independently of the schools) for imparting instruction in their respective peculiar principles; and were both parties to unite in one generous and impartial effort for the elementary and scriptural education of *all the children of the poor in Ireland*. Such an union has long existed partially, but were it general throughout the island, the work of education would go forward with an irresistible force; and notwithstanding the diversities of opinion subsisting between different religious communities on non-essential points, contention, anger, and bitterness, would, we trust, gradually give way to Christian harmony and love.

Amongst the many banes of Ireland, the greatest of all, perhaps, is *party spirit*. We lament its influence in politics, and we still more lament it in religion; for it cannot fail to be the occasion of infinite mischief, when persons who acknowledge the same heavenly Father, and believe in the same all-wise and omnipotent Redeemer—persons who are professing to obey the same divine law and to be looking forward to the same eternal inheritance—(a description which embraces both Roman Catholics and Protestants) are opposed to one another, in hostile array, and instead of upholding to the view of all men their main agreement, are perpetually agitated by the discussion of their minor differences.

We feel the more regret on this subject, because



we believe the evil to be an unnecessary one. On many public occasions of a religious nature, when we were favoured with the company of a large number both of Protestants and of Roman Catholics, we found it no very difficult task to direct their attention to many fundamental principles of our common Christianity in which all could unite, and under the influence of which, all could salute one another as brethren.

For our own parts, we are glad to take the present opportunity of expressing our hearty good will and christian affection towards *all* persons in Ireland, of *whatsoever* religious profession, who are endeavouring to promote the welfare of their fellow-creatures and the glory of God. May their useful and honorable efforts in the cause of religion and virtue, be conducted in the spirit of meekness and *liberality* ! May those essential principles of divine truth, which are common to both the religious parties, be duly appreciated and exalted ; and may mutual condescension and charity become, even in distracted Ireland, the *bond of peace* !

The subjects adverted to, in the present section of our Report, are as follows :

1. The distressed state of the lower orders in Ireland, notwithstanding all the public measures and private efforts which have been applied, for the benefit of that country.

2. The general condition of the poor in the country districts,—one of inadequate employment and insufficient maintenance.

3. The obvious propriety of applying the force of the population (for the mutual benefit of the employed and the employers) to the more complete cultivation of the lands.

4. The advantage which would arise from the al-



lotment of small portions of ground to the poor at an easy rent, which they might cultivate on their own account.

5. The distress produced by high rents, uncertainty of tenure, and the barbarous practice of depopulating estates.

6. The evils arising from absenteeism.

7. The importance of encouraging the domestic linen manufacture.

8. The immense pressure of distress existing in the towns, and the necessity of some public provision to prevent starvation ; an object which might probably be accomplished through the instrumentality of the Mendicity Institutions.

9. The proper direction of the charity of individuals among the distressed inhabitants of the towns and cities, and the great advantage which would arise from the formation of " District Societies."

10. The relief which might perhaps ensue to Ireland, under its present disordered circumstances, from emigration cheaply and beneficially conducted ; and the method by which the expense of such a measure might possibly be defrayed.

11. The low state of morals existing among the poor, and the affecting prevalence of crime.

12. The peculiar nature of the offences most commonly perpetrated in Ireland. Some of the causes of these offences to be traced in the poverty and degradation of the people—in the national temperament, prone to violent emotion—in the immoderate consumption of ardent spirits—and in extreme and brutal ignorance.

13. The good *moral* consequences which must en-



sue from every sound plan for the *temporal* advantage and more complete *civilization* of the lower population.

14. The importance of dealing aright with their national character, by the exercise of strict and uniform justice—by allowing to all classes amongst them, as far as possible, the same civil rights—by maintaining an impartial and incorrupt magistracy—and by persevering measures, both public and private, of conciliation and kindness.

15. The propriety of ascertaining, whether the late diminution of duties on spirituous liquors has not increased the consumption of them; and of adopting some method of lessening that consumption.

16. The benefits which have already arisen, and may still be expected to arise, from the education of the poor—the importance of conducting that education on the basis of Scripture—the character and operations of the Kildare-street Society—the opposition which has of late arisen to its proceedings from the Roman Catholic Priesthood—the schools of the Roman Catholics—the advantages which would ensue in the prosecution of the work of instruction, from the united efforts of all denominations of Christians, on a system of perfect impartiality.

17. The evils which abound in Ireland in consequence of party spirit, as it relates not only to politics but to religion; and the infinite benefit which would result to the community, were both Roman Catholics and Protestants willing to make some practical concessions, and to exercise towards each other *a comprehensive Christian charity*.

We are sensible that we ought to apologize for having occupied the Lord Lieutenant's attention at



so much length, and for having ventured to touch upon so great a variety of topics. But should we have exceeded our proper limits, or have brought forward, through inadvertence, some subjects, the notice of which did not fall within our province, we trust that he will excuse the liberty we have taken, and ascribe it to its true cause—our earnest desire to promote the welfare of Ireland.

If any part of the information given, or of the suggestions offered, in this Report, can be applied to any practical purpose for the good of that country, we shall most cordially rejoice : but we think it right to add, that we deeply feel the vanity of every human effort, whether public or private, in this great cause, without the assistance of an all-wise and gracious Providence.

That the Almighty may be pleased to bless Ireland and all classes of her highly gifted yet afflicted people, is our sincere and fervent prayer.

THE END.



**WORKS SOLD BY JOHN CUMMING,**

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