

Dean Swift's Ireland

Ireland In The Days of Dean Swift

(*Irish Tracts*, 1720-1734)

J. Bowles Daly, L.L.D.

1887

ANSWER TO A PAPER,

CALLED

A Memorial of the poor Inhabitants, Tradesmen, and Labourers of the Kingdom of Ireland. [1]

Dublin, *March 25th*, 1738.

Sir,

I received a paper from you, whoever you are, printed without any name of author or printer, and sent, I suppose, to me among others, without any particular distinction. It contains a complaint of the dearness of corn, and some schemes for making it cheaper which I cannot approve of.

But pray permit me, before I go farther, to give you a short history of the steps by which we arrived at this hopeful situation.

It was, indeed, the shameful practice of too many Irish farmers, to wear out their ground with ploughing ; while, either through poverty, laziness, or ignorance, they neither took care to measure it as they ought, nor gave time to any part of the land to recover itself ; and when their leases were near expiring, being assured that their landlords would not renew, they ploughed even the meadows, and made such havoc, that their landlords were considerable sufferers by it.

This gave birth to that abominable race of graziers, who, upon expiration of the farmers' leases, were ready to engross great quantities of land ; and the gentlemen having been often before ill paid, and their land worn out of heart, were too easily tempted, when a rich grazier made an offer to take all their land, and give them security for payment. Thus a vast tract of land, where twenty or thirty farmers lived, together with their cottagers and labourers in their several cabins, became all desolate, and easily managed by one or two herdsmen and their boys ; whereby the master grazier, with little trouble, seized to himself the livelihood of a hundred people.

It must be confessed, that the farmers were justly punished for their knavery, brutality, and folly. But neither are the squires and landlords to be excused ; for to them is owing the depopulating of the country, the vast number of beggars, and the ruin of those few sorry improvements we had. That farmers should be limited in ploughing is very reasonable, and practised in England, and might have easily been done here by penal clauses in their leases ; but to deprive them, in a manner, altogether from tilling their lands, was a most stupid want of thinking.

Had the farmers been confined to plough a certain quantity of land, with a penalty of ten pounds an acre for whatever they exceeded, and farther limited for the three or four last years of their leases, all this evil had been prevented ; the nation would have saved a million of money, and been more populous by above two hundred thousand souls.

For a people, denied the benefit of trade, to manage their lands in such a manner as to produce nothing but what they are forbidden to trade with, or only such things as they can neither export nor manufacture to advantage, is an absurdity that a wild Indian would be ashamed of ; especially when we add, that we are content to purchase this hopeful commerce, by sending to foreign markets for our daily bread.

The grazier's employment is to feed great flocks of sheep, or black-cattle, or both. With regard to sheep, as folly is usually accompanied with perverseness, so it is here. There is something so monstrous to deal in a commodity (farther than for our own use), which we are not allowed to export manufactured, nor even unmanufactured, but to one certain country, and only to some few ports in that country ; there is, I say, something so sottish, that it wants a name in our language to express it by, and the good of it is, that the more sheep we have, the fewer human creatures are left to wear the wool, or eat the flesh.

Ajax was mad when he mistook a flock of sheep for his enemies ; but we shall never be sober until we have the same way of thinking.

The other part of the grazier's business is, what we call black-cattle, producing hides, tallow, and beef for exportation : all which are good and useful commodities, if rightly managed. But it seems the greatest part of the hides are sent out raw, for want of bark to tan them ; and that want will daily grow stronger, for I doubt the new project of tanning without it is at an end.

Our beef, I am afraid, still continues scandalous in foreign markets, for the old reasons ; but our tallow, for anything I know, may be good. However, to bestow the whole kingdom on beef and mutton, and thereby drive out half the people who should eat their share, and force the rest to send sometimes as far as Egypt for bread to eat with it, is a most peculiar and distinguished piece of public economy, of which I have no comprehension.

I know very well that our ancestors the Scythians, and their posterity, our kinsmen the Tartars, lived upon the blood, and milk, and raw flesh of their cattle, without one grain of corn ; but I confess myself so degenerate, that I am not easy without bread to my victuals . . .

Now, sir, to return more particularly to you and your memorial. A hundred thousand barrels of wheat, you say, should be Imported hither : and ten thousand pounds, premium to the importers. Have you looked into the purse of the nation ?

I am no Commissioner of the Treasury ; but am well assured that the whole running cash would not supply you with a sum to purchase so much corn, which, only at twenty shillings a barrel, will be a hundred thousand pounds ; and ten thousand more for the premium. But you will traffic for your corn with other goods ; and where are those goods ? if you had them, they are all engaged to pay the rents of absentees, and other occasions in London, besides a huge balance of trade this year against us. Will foreigners take our bankers' paper ? I suppose they will value it at little more than so much a quire. Where are these rich farmers and engrossers of corn, in so bad a year, and so little sowing. You are in pain for two shillings premium, and forget the twenty shillings for the price ; find me out the latter, and I will engage for the former.

Your scheme for a tax for raising such a sum is all visionary, and owing to a great want of knowledge in the miserable state of this nation. Tea, coffee, sugar, spices, wine, and foreign clothes, are the particulars you mention upon which this tax should be raised. I will allow the two first ; because they are unwholesome ; and the last, because I should be glad if they were all burned : but I beg you will leave us our wine to make us awhile forget our misery, or give your tenants leave to plough for barley. But I will tell you a secret, which I learned many years ago from the commissioners of the customs in London : they said, when any commodity appeared to be taxed above a moderate rate, the consequence was, to lessen that branch of the revenue by one half ; and one of those gentlemen pleasantly told me, that the mistake of parliaments, on such occasions, was owing to an error of computing two and two to make four, whereas, in the business of laying impositions, two and two never made more than one ; which happens by lessening the import, and the strong temptation of running such goods as paid high duties at least in this kingdom. . . .

You are concerned how strange and surprising it would be in foreign parts to hear that the poor were starving in a RICH country, &c. Are you in earnest ? Is Ireland the rich country you mean ? Or are you insulting our poverty ? Were you ever out of Ireland ? Or were you ever in it till of late ? You may probably have a good employment, and are saving all you can to purchase a good estate in England.

But by talking so familiarly of one hundred and ten thousand pounds, by a tax upon a few commodities, it is plain you are either naturally or affectedly ignorant of our present condition : or else you would know and allow, that such a sum is not to be raised here, without a general excise ; since, in proportion to our wealth, we pay already in taxes more than England ever did in the height of war. And when you have brought over your corn, who will be the buyers ?—most certainly not the poor, who will not be able to purchase the twentieth part of it.

Sir, upon the whole, your paper is a very crude piece, liable to more objections than there are lines ; but I think your meaning is good, and so far you are pardonable.

If you will propose a general contribution for supporting the poor in potatoes and butter-milk till the new corn comes in, perhaps you may succeed better, because the thing at least is possible ; and I think if our brethren in England would contribute upon this emergency, out of the million they gain from us every year, they would do a piece of justice as well as charity. In the meantime, go and preach to your own tenants to fall to the plough as fast as they can, and prevail with your neighbouring squires to do the same with theirs ; or else die with the guilt of having driven away half the inhabitants, and starving the rest.

But why all this concern for the poor ? We want them not, as the country is now managed ; they may follow thousands of their leaders, and seek their bread abroad. Where the plough has no work, one family can do the business of fifty, and you may send away the other forty-nine. An admirable piece of husbandry, never known or practised by the wisest nations, who erroneously thought people to be the riches of a country ! If so wretched a state of things would allow it, methinks I could have a malicious pleasure, after all the warning I have in vain given the public, at my own peril, for several years past, to see the consequences and events answering in every particular. I pretend to no sagacity ; what I writ was little more than what I had discoursed to several persons, who were generally of my opinion, and it was obvious to every common understanding that such effects must needs follow from such causes—a fair issue of things begun upon party rage, while some sacrificed the public to fury, and others to ambition ; while a spirit of faction and oppression reigned in every part of the country, where gentlemen, instead of consulting the ease of their tenants, or cultivating their lands, were worrying one another upon points of Whig and Tory, of High Church and Low

Church, which no more concerned them than the long and famous controversy of strops for razors : while agriculture was wholly discouraged, and consequently half the farmers and labourers, and poorer tradesmen forced to beggary or banishment. “ Wisdom crieth in the streets : Because I have called on you ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.”

I have now done with your Memorial, and freely excuse your mistakes, since you appear to write as a stranger, and as of a country which is left at liberty to enjoy the benefits of nature, and to make the best of those advantages which God has given it, in soil, climate, and situation.

MAXIMS CONTROLLED.

The heading of this tract would imply that the theories of political economy have no application to Ireland. Here he shows, one by one, how the ordinary rules that guide us in regard to other nations are utterly fallacious when applied to Ireland. What strikes us most in all these tracts is the deliberate incisiveness of their irony, the despairing bitterness that gives them finish and completeness.

MAXIMS CONTROLLED IN IRELAND.

The Truth of Maxims in State and Government examined with reference to Ireland.

Written in 1724.

THERE are certain maxims of State, founded upon long observation and experience, drawn from the constant practice of the wisest nations, and from the very principles of government, nor even controled by any writer on politics. Yet all these maxims do necessarily presuppose a kingdom, or commonwealth, to have the same natural rights common to the rest of mankind, who have entered into civil society ; for if we could conceive a nation where each of the inhabitants had but one eye, one leg, and one hand, it is plain, before you could institute them into a republic, that an allowance must be made for those material defects wherein they differed from other mortals. Or, imagine a legislature forming a system for the government of bedlam, and, proceeding upon the maxim that man is a sociable animal, should draw them out of their cells, and form them into corporations or general assemblies ; the consequence might probably be that they would fall foul on each other, or burn the house over their own heads.

Of the like nature are innumerable errors committed by crude and short thinkers, who reason upon general topics, without the least allowance for the most important circumstances, which quite alter the nature of the case.

This has been the fate of those small dealers who are every day publishing their thoughts, either on paper or in their assemblies, for improving the trade of Ireland and referring us to the practice and example of England, Holland, France, or other nations.

I shall, therefore, examine certain maxims of government, which generally pass for uncontroled in the world, and consider how far they will suit with the present condition of this kingdom. First, It is affirmed by wise men that the dearness of things necessary for life, in a fruitful country, is a certain sign of wealth and great commerce ; for when such necessities are dear, it must absolutely follow that money is cheap and plentiful. But this is manifestly false in Ireland, for the following reason. Some years ago, the species of money

here did probably amount to six or seven hundred thousand pounds ; and I have good cause to believe that our remittances then did not much exceed the cash brought in to us. But, by the prodigious discouragements we have since received in every branch of our trade, by the frequent enforcement and rigorous execution of the Navigation-act—the tyranny of under custom-house officers—the yearly addition of absentees—the payments to regiments abroad, to civil and military officers residing in England—the unexpected sudden demands of great sums from the treasury—and some other drains of perhaps as great consequence—we now see ourselves reduced to a state (since we have no friends) of being pitied by our enemies ; at least, if our enemies were of such a kind as to be capable of any regard towards us except of hatred and contempt.

Forty years are now passed since the Revolution, when the contention of the British Empire was, most unfortunately for us, and altogether against the usual course of such mighty changes in government, decided in the least important nation ; but with such ravages and ruin executed on both sides, as to leave the kingdom a desert, which in some sort it still continues.

Neither did the long rebellions in 1641, make half such a destruction of houses, plantations, and personal wealth, in both kingdoms, as two years' campaigns did in ours, by fighting England's battles.

By slow degrees, as by the gentle treatment we received under two auspicious reigns, [2] we grew able to live without running in debt.

Our absentees were but few ; we had great indulgence in trade, and a considerable share in employments of Church and State ; and while the short leases continued, which were let some years after the war ended, tenants paid their rents with ease and cheerfulness, to the great regret of their landlords, who had taken up a spirit of opposition that is not easily removed. And although in these short leases, the rent was gradually to increase after short periods, yet, as soon as the terms elapsed, the land was let to the highest bidder, most commonly without the least effectual clause for building or planting. Yet, by many advantages, which this island then possessed, and has since utterly lost, the rents of land still grew higher upon every lease that expired, till they have arrived at the present exorbitance ; when the frog, over-swelling himself, burst at last.

With the price of land, of necessity rose that of corn and cattle, and all other commodities that farmers deal in ; hence likewise, obviously, the rates of all goods and manufactures among shopkeepers, the wages of servants, and hire of labourers. But although our miseries came on fast, with neither trade nor money left ; yet neither will the landlord abate in his rent, nor can the tenant abate in the price of what the rest must be paid with, nor any shopkeeper, tradesman, or labourer live, at lower expense for food and clothing, than he did before.

I have been the larger upon this first head, because the same observations will clear up and strengthen a good deal of what I shall affirm upon the rest.

The second maxim of those who reason upon trade and government, is, to assert that low interest is a certain sign of great plenty of money in a nation, for which, as in many other articles, they produce the examples of Holland and England. But, with relation to Ireland, this maxim is likewise entirely false.

There are two reasons for the lowness of interest in any country. First, that which is usually alleged, the great plenty of species ; and this is obvious. The second is, want of trade, which seldom falls under common observation, although it be equally true, for, where trade is

altogether discouraged, there are few borrowers. In those countries where men can employ a large stock, the young merchant, whose fortune may be four or five hundred pounds, will venture to borrow as much more, and can afford a reasonable interest. Neither is it easy, at this day, to find many of those, whose business reaches to employ even so inconsiderable a sum, except among the importers of wine, who, as they have most part of the present trade in these parts of Ireland in their hands, so they are the most exorbitant, exacting fraudulent dealers, that ever trafficked in any nation, and are making all possible speed to ruin both themselves and the nation.

From this defect of gentlemen's not knowing how to dispose of their ready money, arises the high purchase of land, which in all other countries is reckoned a sign of wealth. For, the frugal squires, who live below their incomes, have no other way to dispose of their savings but by mortgage or purchase, by which the rates of land must naturally increase ; and if this trade continues long, under the uncertainty of rents, the landed men of ready money will find it more for their advantage to send their cash to England, and place it in the funds ; which I myself am determined to do, the first considerable sum I shall be master of.

It has likewise been a maxim among politicians, " That the great increase of buildings in the metropolis, argues a flourishing state." But this, I confess, has been controuled from the example of London ; when, by the long and annual parliamentary session, such a number of senators with their families, friends, adherents, and expectants, draw such prodigious numbers to that city, that the old hospitable custom of lords and gentlemen living in their ancient seats among their tenants, is almost lost in England ; is laughed out of doors ; insomuch that, in the middle of summer, a legal House of Lords and Commons might be brought in a few hours to London, from their country villas within twelve miles round.

The case in Ireland is yet somewhat worse : for the absentees of great estates, who, if they lived at home, would have many rich retainers in their neighbourhoods, have learned to rack their lands, and shorten their leases. as much as any residing squire ; and the few remaining of those latter, having some vain hope of employments for themselves, or their children, and discouraged by the beggarliness and thievery of their own miserable farmers and cottagers, or seduced by the vanity of their wives, on pretence of their children's education (whereof the fruits are so apparent), together with that most wonderful, and yet more unaccountable zeal, for a seat in their assembly, though at some years' purchase of their whole, estates : these, and some other motives, have drawn such concourse to this beggarly city, that the dealers of the several branches of building have found out all the commodious and inviting places for erecting new houses ; while fifteen hundred of the old ones, which is a seventh part of the whole city, are said to be left uninhabited, and falling to ruin. Their method is the same with that which was first introduced by Dr. Barebone at London, who died a bankrupt. The mason, the bricklayer, the carpenter, the slater, and the glazier, take a lot of ground, club to build one or more houses, unite their credit, their stock, and their money ; and when their work is finished sell it to the best advantage they can. But, as it often happens, and more every day, that their fund will not answer half their design, they are forced to undersell it at the first story, and are all reduced to beggary. Insomuch, that I know a certain fanatic brewer, who is reported to have some hundreds of houses in this town, is said to have purchased the greatest part of them at half value from ruined undertakers ; has intelligence of all new houses where the finishing is at a stand, takes advantage of the builders' distress, and, by the advantage of ready money, gets fifty *per cent*, at least for his bargain.

It is another undisputed maxim in government, " That people are the riches of a nation ;" which is so universally granted, that it will be hardly pardonable to bring it into doubt. And I will grant it to be so far true, even in this island, that if we had the African custom, or privilege, of selling our useless bodies for slaves to foreigners, it would be the most useful

branch of our trade, by ridding us of a most unsupportable burden, and bringing us money in the stead. But, in our present situation, at least five children in six who are born, lie a dead weight upon us, for want of employment. And a very skilful computer assured me, that above one half of the souls in this kingdom supported themselves by begging and thievery ; two-thirds whereof would be able to get their bread in any other country upon earth. Trade is the only incitement to labour ; where that fails, the poorer native must either beg, steal or starve, or be forced to quit his country. This has made me often wish, for some years past, that instead of discouraging our people from seeking foreign soil, the public would rather pay for transporting all our unnecessary mortals, whether Papists or Protestants, to America ; as drawbacks are sometimes allowed for exporting commodities, where a nation is overstocked. I confess myself to be touched with very sensible pleasure, when I hear of a mortality in any country parish or village, where the wretches are forced to pay for a filthy cabin, and two ridges of potatoes, treble the worth ; brought up to steal or beg, for want of work ; to whom death would be the best thing to be wished for on account both of themselves and the public.

Among all taxes imposed by the legislature, those upon luxury are universally allowed to be the most equitable, and beneficial to the subject ; and the commonest reasoner on government might fill a volume with arguments on the subject. Yet here again, by the singular fate of Ireland, this maxim is utterly false ; and the putting of it in practice may have such a pernicious consequence, as, I certainly believe, the thoughts of proposers were not able to reach.

The miseries we suffer by our absentees, are of a far more extensive nature than seems to be commonly understood. I must vindicate myself to the reader so far, as to declare solemnly, that what I shall say of those lords and squires, does not arise from the least regard I have for their understandings, their virtues, or their persons : for, although I have not the honour of the least acquaintance with any one among them (my ambition not soaring so high), yet I am too good a witness of the situation they have been in for thirty years past ; the veneration paid them by the people, the high esteem they are in among the prime nobility and gentry, the particular marks of favour and distinction they receive from the Court ; the weight and consequence of their interest, added to their great zeal and application for preventing any hardships their country might suffer from England, wisely considering that their own fortunes and honours were embarked in the same bottom.

A Short View of the State of Ireland, 1727.

HERE, Swift catalogues in regular order the possible adjuncts and conditions of prosperity, and shows how the very negative of each is present in Ireland. “ If we flourish, it is against every law of nature and reason : like the thorn of Glastonbury, which blossoms in the midst of winter.” He draws a fanciful picture of what Ireland might seem to a stranger, favoured as she is by nature ; but breaks from it in despair. All his tracts have one end and aim : “ Be independent.” Law cannot help ; theory is futile ; English selfishness is great. Whatever you get will be by self-assertion and by that alone. Swift was acquainted with the current nostrums, which he despised. He saw the evil lay deeper, and that it could be cured only by giving to Ireland the motive power of independence. He kindled her energy by plain bald statements, withering sarcasm, derisive scorn, and the fiercest indignation. The sarcasm and indignation are for the English selfishness ; the scorn for Irish imbecility and weakness.

A Short View of the State of Ireland, 1727.

I AM assured, that it has for some time been practised as a method of making men’s court, when they are asked about the rate of lands, the abilities of the tenants, the state of trade and manufacture in this kingdom, and how their rents are paid ; to answer, that in their neighbourhood all things are in a flourishing condition, the rent and purchase of land every day

increasing. And if a gentleman happen to be a little more sincere in his representation, besides being looked on as not well-affected, he is sure to have a dozen contradictors at his elbow. I think it is no manner of secret, why these questions are so cordially asked, or so obligingly answered.

But since, with regard to the affairs of this kingdom, I have been using all endeavours to subdue my indignation, to which indeed I am not provoked by any personal interest, not being the owner of one spot of ground in the whole island ; I shall only enumerate, by rules generally known, and never contradicted, what are the true causes of any country's flourishing and growing rich ; and then examine what effects arise from those causes in the kingdom of Ireland.

The first cause of a kingdom's thriving is, the fruitfulness of the soil to produce the necessaries and conveniences of life ; not only sufficient for the inhabitants, but for exportation into other countries.

The second is, the industry of the people, in working up all their native commodities to the last degree of manufacture.

The third is, the conveniency of safe ports and havens, to carry out their own goods as much manufactured, and bring in those of others as little manufactured as the nature of mutual commerce will allow.

The fourth is, that the natives should, as much as possible, export and import their goods in vessels of their own timber, made in their own country.

The fifth is, the privilege of a free trade in all foreign countries which will permit them, except those who are in war with their own prince or State.

The sixth is, by being governed only by laws made with their own consent ; for otherwise they are not a free people. And therefore all appeals for justice, or applications for favour or preferment, to another country, are so many grievous impoverishments.

The seventh is, by improvement of land, encouragement of agriculture, and thereby increasing the number of their people ; without which any country, however blessed by nature, must continue poor.

The eighth is, the residence of the prince, or chief administrator of the civil power.

The ninth is, the concourse of foreigners, for education, curiosity, or pleasure, or as to a general mart of trade.

The tenth is, by disposing all offices of honour, profit, or trust, only to the natives ; or at least with very few exceptions, where strangers have long inhabited the country, and are supposed to understand and regard the interests of it as their own.

The eleventh is, when the rents of land and profits of employment are spent in the country which produced them, and not in another ; the former of which will certainly happen where the love of our native country prevails.

The twelfth is, by the public revenues being all spent and employed at home, except on the occasions of a foreign war.

The thirteenth is, where the people are not obliged unless they find it for their own interest or conveniency, to receive any moneys, except of their own coinage by a public mint, after the manner of all civilized nations.

The fourteenth is, a disposition of the people of a country to wear their own manufactures, and import as few incitements to luxury, either in clothes, furniture, food, or drink, as they can possibly live conveniently without.

There are many other causes of a nation's thriving, which I at present cannot recollect ; but without advantage from at least some of these, after turning my thoughts a long time, I am not able to discover whence our wealth proceeds, and therefore would gladly be better informed. In the meantime, I will here examine what share falls to Ireland of these causes, or of the effects and consequences.

It is not my intention to complain, but barely to relate facts ; and the matter is not of small importance. For it is allowed, that a man who lives in a solitary house, far from help, is not wise in endeavouring to acquire in the neighbourhood the reputation of being rich ; because those who come for gold, will go off with pewter and brass, rather than return empty : and in the common practice of the world, those who possess most wealth, make the least parade ; which they leave to others, who have nothing else to bear them out in showing their faces on the Exchange.

As to the first cause of a nation's riches, being the fertility of the soil, as well as temperature of the climate, we have no reason to complain ; for, although the quantity of unprofitable land in this kingdom, reckoning bog and rock and barren mountain, be double in proportion to what it is in England ; yet the native productions, which both kingdoms deal in, are very near on an equality in point of goodness, and might, with the same encouragement, be as well manufactured. I except mines and minerals ; in some of which, however, we are only defective in point of skill and industry. In the second, which is the industry of the people, our misfortune is not altogether owing to our own fault, but to a million of discouragements.

The conveniency of ports and havens, which nature has bestowed so liberally on this kingdom, is of no more use to us than a beautiful prospect to a man shut up in a dungeon.

As to shipping of its own, Ireland is so utterly unprovided, that of all the excellent timber cut down within these fifty or sixty years, it can hardly be said that the nation has received the benefit of one valuable house to dwell in, or one ship to trade with. Ireland is the only kingdom I ever heard or read of, either in ancient or modern story, which was denied the liberty of exporting their native commodities and manufactures wherever they pleased, except to countries at war with their own prince or State : yet this privilege, by the superiority of mere power, is refused us in the most momentous parts of commerce ; besides an act of navigation, to which we never consented, pinned down upon us, and rigorously executed ; and a thousand other unexampled circumstances, as grievous as they are invidious to mention. To go on to the rest. It is too well known, that we are forced to obey some laws we never consented to ; which is a condition I must not call by its true uncontroverted name, for fear of Lord Chief Justice Whitshed's ghost, with his *Libertas et natale solum* written for a motto on his coach, as it stood at the door of the court, while he was perjuring himself to betray both. Thus we are in the condition of patients, who have physic sent them by doctors at a distance, strangers to their constitution and the nature of their disease. . . .

As to the improvement of land, those few who attempt that or planting, through covetousness, or want of skill, generally leave things worse than they were ; neither succeeding in

trees nor hedges ; and, by running into the fancy of grazing, after the manner of the Scythians, are every day depopulating the country.

We are so far from having a king to reside among us, that even the viceroy is generally absent four-fifths of his time in the government.

No strangers from other countries make this a part of their travels ; where they can expect to see nothing but scenes of misery and desolation.

Those who have the misfortune to be born here, have the least title to any considerable employment ; to which they are seldom preferred, but upon a political consideration. One-third part of the rents of Ireland is spent in England ; which, with the profit of employments, pensions, appeals, journeys of pleasure or health, education at the Inns of Court and both Universities, remittances at pleasure, the pay of all superior officers in the army, and other incidents, will amount to a full half of the income of the whole kingdom, all clear profit to England.

We are denied the liberty of coining gold, silver, or even copper. In the Isle of Man they coin their own silver ; every petty prince, vassal to the Emperor, can coin what money he pleases. And in this, as in most of the articles already mentioned, we are an exception to all other states and monarchies that were ever known in the world.

As to the last, or fourteenth article, we take special care to act diametrically contrary to it in the whole course of our lives. Both sexes, but especially the women, despise and abhor to wear any of their own manufactures, even those which are better made than in other countries ; particularly a sort of silk plaid, through which the workmen are forced to run a kind of gold thread, that it may pass for Indian.

Even ale and potatoes are imported from England, as well as corn ; and our foreign trade is little more than importation of French wine, for which I am told we pay ready money.

Now, if all this be true (upon which I could easily enlarge), I should be glad to know, by what secret method it is that we grow a rich and flourishing people, without liberty, trade, manufactures, inhabitants, money, or the privilege of coining ; without industry, labour, or improvement of land ; and with more than half the rent and profits of the whole kingdom annually exported, for which we receive not a single farthing ; and to make up all this, nothing worth mentioning, except the linen of the North, a trade, casual, corrupted, and at mercy ; and some butter from Cork. If we do flourish, it must be against every law of nature and reason ; like the thorn at Glastonbury, that blossoms in the midst of winter. . . .

There is not one argument used to prove the riches of Ireland, which is not a logical demonstration of its poverty. The rise of our rents is squeezed out of the very blood, and vitals, and clothes, and dwellings of the tenants, who live worse than English beggars. The lowness of interest, in all other countries a sign of wealth, is in us a proof of misery ; there being no trade to employ any borrower. Hence alone comes the dearness of land, since the savers have no other way to lay out their money ; hence the dearness of necessaries of life ; because the tenants cannot afford to pay such extravagant rates for land (which they must take, or go a'begging), without raising the price of cattle and of corn, although themselves should live upon chaff. Hence our increase of building in this city ; because workmen have nothing to do but to employ one another, and one half of them are infallibly undone. Hence the daily increase of bankers, who may be a necessary evil in a trading country, but so ruinous in ours ; who, for their private advantage, have sent away all our silver, and one-third of our gold ; so that within three years past the running cash of the nation, which was about five

hundred thousand pounds, is now less than two, and must daily diminish, unless we have liberty to coin, as well as that important kingdom the Isle of Man, and the meanest principality in the German empire, as I before observed. I have sometimes thought, that this paradox of the kingdom's growing rich is chiefly owing to those worthy gentlemen the bankers ; who, except some customhouse officers, birds of passage, oppressive thrifty squires, and a few others who shall be nameless, are the only thriving among us : and I have often wished that a law were enacted to hang up half a dozen bankers every year, and thereby interpose at least some short delay to the farther ruin of Ireland.

Ye are idle ! ye are idle ! answered Pharaoh to the Israelites, when they complained to his Majesty that they were forced to make bricks without straw.

England enjoys every one of those advantages for enriching a nation which I have above enumerated ; and, into the bargain, a good million returned to them every year without labour or hazard, or one farthing value received on our side ; but how long we shall be able to continue the payment, I am not under the least concern. One thing I know, that, when the hen is starved to death, there will be no more golden eggs. I think it a little inhospitable, and others may call it a subtle piece of malice, that because there may be a dozen families in this town able to entertain their English friends in a generous manner at their tables, their guests upon their return to England shall report that we wallow in riches and luxury.

Yet I confess I have known an hospital, where all the household officers grew rich ; while the poor, for whose sake it was built, were almost starved for want of food and raiment.

To conclude : If Ireland be a rich and flourishing kingdom, its wealth and prosperity must be owing to certain causes, that are yet concealed from the whole race of mankind ; and the effects are equally invisible. We need not wonder at strangers, when they deliver such paradoxes ; but a native and inhabitant of this kingdom, who gives the same verdict, must be either ignorant to stupidity, or a man-pleaser, at the expense of all honour, conscience, and truth.

[1] The memorial was written by Sir John Browne.

[2] Ireland was, for political reasons, much favoured by the Crown, during the reigns of Charles II. and James II.

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