THE INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE OF IRELAND.

THE following is the speech delivered by Dr. Bernard O'Connor at the banquet held in London under the presidency of Mr. Parnell, M.P., on St. Patrick's Day :—

I do not propose to attempt to inflict on this company of Irishmen a piece of deception in the form of what used to be known as a "prosperity speech," or to seek to prove, after the fashion of Hancock, that Ireland under British *mis*rule ought to be the most contented country on the face of God's earth. Still we cannot close our eyes to the fact that that land boasts of no less than *seven* distinct coal districts, one of which alone has been calculated to contain over sixty-three millions of tons of anthracite, which after deducting the cost of putting it into the market, could be sold for less than 11s 9d the ton; that it is a country of the 20 millions of acres of which over 2½ millions—divided about equally into flat and mountain bog—afford a practically inexhaustible supply of dry turf, which substance, if properly prepared, yields, whether on the domestic hearth or in the factory engine, a heat-producing effect scarcely inferior to that of coal—and this, too, at a cost of 7s 6d per ton. I will say nothing of otherwise waste lands which would still have occupied a greater extent of surface than they do at the present moment had it not been for the hunger-stamped labour of those toilers in sorrow—the peasantry of Ireland—once ground down, almost to the earth, by exacting, rapacious, and blood-sucking landlords. We must not exclude from our view that it is a country blessed with a liberal rainfall computed to be to the annual extent of 36 inches, of which 24 inches evaporate, thus leaving 12 inches to find their way down to the sea. The average height of the whole country being about 450 feet above the sea level, we readily calculate (since we know the extent of the whole island) that, in engineering phraseology, a horsepower of nearly 1½ millions is annually wasted in the absence of machinery. It would be superfluous to remind you of the plethora of deep harbours which, at the present moment, are remarkable for the absence of shipping. Then there are the minerals; and if the country had nothing left but its minerals it would still possess literally mines of untold wealth. No pig-iron ever worked at Dudley or Cyfartha ever reached the standard of purity of the iron of Connaught, yet this can be manufactured at a smaller cost and is equal to the celebrated "Black Band" of Glasgow. The malleable bar iron of the Lough Allen district can be turned out at £6 7s 6d the ton, while a corresponding article in Staffordshire costs over £8. The various ores of copper, the carbonate (represented by malachite and azurite), the subsulphide, and the copper-pyrites are found in nearly every country; and lead, such as we have at Glendalough, is even more plentiful. But I should only weary you were I to extend the list beyond the enumeration of such minerals as manganese, antimony, sulphur (which exists in enormous quantities), cobalt, alum, silver, and gold. I may say that 200 years ago alum and copperas were largely manufactured in Tralee, and the soft slate, containing copperas, utilised medicinally, was known throughout Europe as the "Irish stone." In one country alone (Wicklow) are to be found copper, lead, and sulphur in profuse quantities and, to a less extent, silver and gold. No country was ever more famed for the beauty of its white and its black marble, no other soil ever afforded so ample a supply of material for the manufacture of the finest porcelain clay. The quartz, flint, and sand of Donegal, Antrim, and Mayo are of finer quality than the same classes of substances (used in the manufacture of glass) which are obtained in the South of England. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the main support of the people, as a matter of fact, is obtained *above*, and not from *below*, the surface of the soil. And what a soil! Why, according to the calculations of agricultural statisticians (Irish, French, and British), it is physically capable of affording sufficient food for over thirty millions of inhabitants. And yet we are told that the cause of Ireland's poverty is her surplus population—a British misstatement (whether deliberate or ignorant I care not) which, to say the least, is an economising of the truth. But, sir, why should a country blessed with such a soil, below which abounds such mineral treasure and upon which there struggles for existence a population comprising some of the brightest, the fairest, and the most gifted of the human race—why should such a country, I ask, be so far behind in the race of nations? Why are those mines deserted which centuries ago were so prolific in their output? Why is that waterpower neglected which, Sisyphus-like, is, with so much prodigality, ever wasting its energies? Why are the material resources of Ireland to-day practically unknown, her agriculture precarious, and her commerce at a standstill? Why are her people so often on the brink of starvation and always on a numerical decline? The hand of England alone supplies the answer. But are we to stand idle? Is Ireland to lie supine with her people pondering in sadness over the bitter experience of their country, an experience which, as a dimmed lantern, sheds its gloomy rays over the gory pages of that country's history—the long and bloody record of England's perfidy, atrocity, and crime? How can the industries and commerce of Ireland be revived? Is it by our trusting the fair but false promises of Ministers that the resources of our country will be utilised for the benefit of our race? The promises of Ministers! Was it not Colonel North, a Conservative among Conservatives, who said that "nothing was more insecure than a security, nothing more unsafe than a safeguard, and nothing more elastic and untrustworthy than the conscience of an English Minister"? Is it by the smiles of royalty that poverty is banished and by princely visits that contentment is spread around? I know not, sir, what we have done—what the people of Ireland have done that they should be treated as children. I am at a loss to conceive how it comes that the so-called "Royal" Dublin Society takes upon itself to give to certain Royal visitors a ball at Ball's-bridge in the name of the citizens of Dublin! I sincerely trust that the people of Ireland will be influenced by feelings of self-respect, and will see in this visit but the theatrical trick of a moribund Ministry and the last desperate effort of a discredited Viceroy. Let us hope that no future Byron, addressing himself to the Ireland of to-day, will sing (as was sung before) :—

But he comes, the Messiah of royalty comes!
Like a goodly leviathan rolled from the waves;
Then receive him as best such an advent becomes,
With a legion of cooks and an army of slaves.
Nor (what has *not* been sung before) :—
But let not *his* name be thine idol alone;
On his right hand, behold! a Sejanus appears—
A Suspender called Spencer, who, as each one will own,
Is a wretch never named without curses and jeers.

No, sir, it is not by royal visits that the industries of Ireland will be stimulated. Nor will our object be attained by patiently and humbly waiting on that treacherous, black-livered jade—English public opinion. The power of English public opinion! Sir, in those statements respecting the power of English public opinion I perceive not so much the evidences of any power which might be manifested in the ordinary routine of every-day experience, but I recognise rather the feeble and infinitesimal power of an inflated and hostile imagination. No, sir, our remedy is to be found in unity amongst ourselves, in trusting to our own exertions, and in our striving in all things to do whatever—little in may be—there is in our power to encourage the manufactures and the farming industries of our country. Whatever their ideas of political economy may be, the Irishmen in this city have now an opportunity of doing so, for there has been established for nearly twelve months in London, in the neighbourhood of Long Acre, a store for the sale of farm produce exclusively Irish, and to lend a helping hand to so laudable and patriotic an endeavour seems to me to be a matter of far greater importance than some Irishmen—and presumably good Irishmen—in London have up to the present moment seemed to suppose. Sir, a country's career is mainly of the past and in the future. Its present is but momentary and dissolving. May Ireland's lot be likened to the magic picture cast upon the screen in which the past does not influence the future, and the future is not modelled upon the past. May we live to welcome that day when the industries and commerce of Ireland, under the fostering care of a native legislature, will again be in the ascendant, and may we all have a voice in the shout of triumph which, from the Causeway in the North to Skibbereen in Munster, from Carnsore Point in Wexford to the shores of Sligo Bay, will ascend at the glorious tidings of the freedom of our country. Before I sit down, sir, may I hope—and I trust sincerely that all here will unite in the enthusiastic expression of that hope—that English intolerance—not only in Ireland but all the world over—being soon (I hope very soon) effectually checked, peace to our country, based upon just and honourable terms, may quickly return, and that the sword of oppression being sheathed and the cannon of Ministerial and police misrepresentation and coercion being silent, the people of Ireland may go forward to win those social triumphs—and I lay great stress upon the social triumphs—which bring no sorrow in their train, which, if less dazzling, are still far more enduring than the most brilliant achievements of arms.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

(San Francisco *Monitor*.)

TWENTY-TWO years ago John Boyle O'Reilly enlisted in the Prince of Wales's regiment, the Tenth Hussars. He was then about 19 years old. A well educated boy, of ardent temperament and sincerely devoted to the Irish cause, he did what he could in the regiment to promote the revolutionary movement that began in 1863. His connection with the Fenian movement was discovered. He was arrested, tried and convicted of high treason, and was sentenced in July, 1866, to imprisonment for life. This sentence was afterwards commuted to penal servitude for twenty years. O'Reilly spent about a year in the English prisons, working in the chain gangs. In November, 1867, he was transported to West Australia in the convict ship Hougoumont, crowded with felons. For about thirteen months he worked at road making near Bunbury in the penal colony, associating with convicts and ticket-of-leave men. Various accounts of the manner of his escape in February, 1869, have been printed. The true story was not known until Mr. O'Reilly had been in the country ten years or more, when time had removed all danger of inculpating certain friends who had risked so much in assisting him to freedom.

In the list of absconders printed early in 1869 in the official *Police Gazette* of West Australia, there appeared this paragraph :—

"2.—John Boyle O'Reilly, Registered number, 9,843. Imperial convict; arrived in Colony per convict ship Hougoumont in 1868; sentenced to twenty years 9th July, 1866. Description—Healthy appearance; present age, 25 years; 5 feet 7½ inches high, black hair, brown eyes, oval visage, dark complexion; an Irishman. Absconded from Convict Road party, Bunbury, on the 18th of February, 1869."

The man to whom Boyle O'Reilly owed his liberty was a good Catholic priest, the Rev. Patrick McCabe, "whose parish extended over hundreds of miles of bush, and whose only parishioners were convicts and ticket-of-leave men." He was a scholar and gentleman of rare accomplishments, "almost always in the saddle, riding alone from camp to camp, and sleeping in his blanket under the trees at night." "He was an ideal disciple of Christ," says Mr. O'Reilly, "who laboured only for his Master. He was the best influence, indeed in my time he was the only good influence, on the convicts in the whole district of Bunbury." We continue the quotations from Mr. O'Reilly's own narrative :

"One day this remarkable man rode to my hut, and we walked together into the bush. I had then made all my plans for escape, and I freely told him my intention. 'It's an excellent way to commit suicide,' he said; and he would not speak of it any more. As he was leaving me, however, he leaned from the saddle and said; 'Don't think of that again. Let *me* think out a plan for you. You will hear from me before long.

"He went away and I waited weeks and months and never heard a word. I was not compelled to work with the criminal gang on the