

flinging Ulster, with its contentment, its prosperity, and its loyalty, in my face.

Briefly as possible I shall in the space at my disposal state a few of those causes which have contributed, and still contribute, to keep Ireland the poorest country in Europe, perhaps in the world, and which justify her people in

#### Their Unrest and Discontent.

In the first place, Irishmen labor to-day under political and religious disabilities from which not only Englishmen themselves, but the people of every other dependency of the Empire are exempted. Irishmen are dissatisfied because they are suffering from the evil effects of a union that was carried by bribery, force, fraud, and corruption, the baseness of which has never been surpassed in the history of nations, and the details of which form the foulest blot on the escutcheon of England. It is a Union that has enabled England ever since to plunder her weaker partner with the callousness of the desperado and the perseverance of the parasite. Not so long ago a Royal Commission, appointed by Parliament, found that Ireland had been paying in excess of her legitimate taxation £2,750,000 a year for the previous half century or more, and yet Irishmen are asked—and in good faith—what they have to complain of.

Not only did the carrying of the Union cost Ireland over three millions of money at the time, but it has forced upon her a burden under which she has been staggering from that day to this. In 1848 the late Charles Gavan Duffy said that his country was lying as helplessly under the exhausting drain of English finance as a corpse on the dissecting table under the knife of the surgeon. Ireland has been depleted by a system of misgovernment which until quite within our own times has had no parallel in history. There was no species of tyranny from which she was suffered to escape, lest she might prosper and grow fat. To-day, although she is the most crimeless country in Europe, perhaps in the world, she is kept down with the mailed fist of England's power. Although her population is less than that of Scotland, with one-third less crime than Scotland, the administration of justice, and up-keep of the police cost her three times that of the latter country. While law and justice in Ireland cost £3 per head of the population in Scotland they cost but £1 per head. The police in 1909 cost in Ireland £1,500,000, in Scotland £500,000. The Irish Prisons Board, with 2500 convicts under its charge, cost £107,000; the Scotch Prison Board, with 2900 convicts, cost £80,000. By this iniquitous system of finance there is a waste of money from which both countries suffer, the benefit going to the men who draw large salaries and live upon the vitals of the poorer one.

It is not so long ago since the British Parliament set up a Financial Relation Commission to inquire into the taxation of Ireland, and according to the finding of that body Ireland's contribution to the Imperial exchequer should be three millions a year, or an aggregate of £279,000,000 from 1801 to 1894, whereas the amount which was actually collected from her was £570,000,000, an excess of £291,000,000 over her fair and legitimate contribution. Yet if England sends a million or two over to Ireland to relieve the poverty which she herself has created, we are duly reminded of her generosity. But there is another wheel within the machinery. While the taxes collected for spirit duties, etc., in England are returned to the local authorities and spent by them in their several districts, such taxes collected in Ireland are carted off to England and are spent there, and then we are coolly told that nothing can satisfy us, and when we ask to redress these things we are told that we are a set of malcontents and are disloyal to the Empire. Again, there is

#### An Army of Sincures at Dublin Castle

holding a sham court there, and displaying a quasi-royalty for which Ireland is as little suited as is the island of Rarotonga, and which costs, nearly a million and a-quarter of money a year to keep up—a court, moreover, in which no Catholic can hold office, and in which all the heads of departments are Englishmen and Scotchmen; and yet, in face of this, we Irish are asked what we have to complain of. Have we not got Catholic emancipation? But, oh, the farce of it! Catholic emancipation, indeed! There is no solid emancipation while a Catholic, because he is a Catholic, is debarred from holding any, even the highest, office in his own country.

Through all this evil legislation, and within my own memory, Ireland had been reduced to such withering poverty that a large portion of her people were subsisting mainly on the remittances of their friends in America, and when I was in Ireland lately I noticed that the one ambition of almost every working man I met was to save up enough of money to enable him to leave the country.

There was no such thing as constant employment in the small towns and villages, for there were no capitalists, no employers of labor. Centuries before every industry (unless that of the linen trade, which for various reasons had been encouraged) was as first crippled and finally crushed out of existence until the country became a nation of paupers. The tobacco industry, the woollen industry, the shipping and the fishing industries, in fact, every industry for which, in the days of her prosperity, Ireland was famous, was, the moment it was found in the least

degree to interfere with that at the other side of St. George's Channel, ruined and suppressed by prohibitive legislation. The linen industry alone was allowed to live, because the climate of England was unsuited to the profitable growth of flax, and because also the industry was in the hands of Protestants.

Mr. Froude's *The English in Ireland* gives some information on this subject. Writing of the suppression of the cattle trade, he says: 'Ireland had established a large and lucrative cattle trade with Bristol, Milford, and Liverpool. It was supposed to lower the value of English farm produce and was utterly prohibited. Neither cow nor bullock, sheep or pig, fat or lean, might be transported from Ireland to England. Salt beef and bacon, even butter and cheese, lay under the same interdict.' At this time, however, Ireland had a large colonial trade, but by the Navigation Act of 1663 Irish ships were practically swept off the seas. 'All produce of the colonies sent to Ireland,' says the same writer, 'and all Irish produce sent to the colonies had first to be landed in England and thence reshipped in English "bottoms"—in other words, the Irish, having been first forbidden to trade with England, were then forbidden to trade with the colonies except through England. These measures soon effected the purpose for which they were designed. In 1660 an Act was passed imposing prohibitive duties on the Irish woollen goods going into England, but, as if this was not enough, certain English manufacturers presented addresses through both Houses of Parliament to William III. for the total suppression of the trade. Accordingly, in 1669, an Act was passed which prohibited the Irish manufacturers

#### From Sending Their Goods Out of Ireland,

and thus the woollen industry was killed. Other industries followed suit. It may seem strange to people in this Dominion to hear that Irish fishermen had to petition Parliament to be allowed to catch fish in their own waters; but so it was. The gold lace business and flagree work, introduced by the Huguenots, were at once favorite and prosperous industries in Dublin, but they were suppressed by one of the Georges in the interests of the London manufacturers. Mr. Davenant, an English writer on commercial questions in those days, maintained that owing to the greater advantages of cheap living and labor that Ireland possessed, she was sure to become a dangerous rival in trade and commerce to England. He therefore urged that every branch of business in Ireland that was likely to interfere with any similar branch in England should be discouraged and suppressed. Needless to say, Mr. Davenant's advice was acted upon. In the reign of Charles II. it was thought that the Irish tobacco industry was interfering with the growers of the plant in the American colonies, so it was, like all the others, ruthlessly suppressed by cumbering it with prohibitive duties.

In this connection, the following excerpt from a late Irish paper is instructive. During a debate in the House of Lords on March 21 of this year, the Earl of Dunraven said that for the last few years he had been growing from twenty-five to thirty acres of tobacco per annum, and in respect to the yields for 1907, 1908, and 1909, he paid the Treasury the sum of £6300, whilst the amount he received back from the Treasury in assistance was £1387. The Treasury therefore made practically £5000 out of his crop for three years. From the 30,000lb of tobacco resulting from last year's crop he would realise, he said, about £750, whilst the Treasury would receive £5000. Tobacco, he urged, was of immense value as a means of employment in the country, and as the soil and climate of Ireland are especially suited to certain varieties of the plant, it ought to be encouraged instead of being deliberately destroyed by the action of the State. Comment on this is needless.

If the average Englishman is still of the opinion that Irishmen have nothing to complain of, there are still more facts on which, at some other time, I shall be glad to enlighten him. Meanwhile I think that I have written enough at present to show him why the Irish people want Home Rule.

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