

# I R E L A N D :

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS.

BY

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reproaches, which, thus coarsely expressed by the people, may appear inconsistent, will, nevertheless, be both merited; for if it be a charity that is bestowed, those who receive it will have no stronger claim than the millions to whom aid is denied; and if, under the name of charity, it be a punishment that is inflicted on misfortune, though the rigour be voluntarily accepted, the number of those subjected to it will always be too great.

May we not, then, fear that this measure, designed to reconcile the rich and the poor, will only increase their mutual enmity and their reciprocal grievances against each other? How, then, can a remedy be found for the evils of Ireland in a measure which is likely to aggravate them still more? 9

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## CHAPTER II.

REMEDIES PROPOSED BY THE AUTHOR—THE CIVIL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES OF THE ARISTOCRACY MUST BE ABOLISHED.

WE have seen how chimerical are the various extraordinary means of safety tried or proposed for Ireland; a multitude of other analogous plans might be discussed, whose total inutility may be shown by a very brief examination.

What, then, must be done in the painful and formidable condition of Ireland? How is she to be left

without a remedy for such calamities and such perils? What is the advantage of trying useless remedies? What complicates the difficulty is, that it is not enough to find measures good in themselves; it is further required that their application should be practicable. It is not sufficient to discover the system of administration best suited to the state of Ireland; it must also be adapted to the taste of England.

Is it not better, then, first to consider, abstractedly, what the interests of Ireland, taken apart, and by herself, would require?—reserving for subsequent examination how far that which is desirable is practicable; if what ought to be done will be done; if the interests of England will allow that to be accomplished which the interests of Ireland demand.

We have seen in the preceding chapters, that all the evils of Ireland, and all its difficulties, arise from the same principal and permanent cause—a bad aristocracy, an aristocracy whose principle is radically vicious. What is the logical consequence to be deduced from these premises? Clearly, that in order to put an end to the misery of Ireland, it is necessary to do away with the aristocracy in that country; as, to abolish the effect, we must remove the cause.

Whence arises the inefficiency of all the measures tried or proposed? From this simple fact, that no one of these modes of cure applies to the primary cause of the disease.

Thus a means of alleviating the immense misery of the lower classes is sought in providing them indus-

trial employment by the establishment of manufactories; but it is soon seen that the agitation of the country, and the passions of the people against the rich, render such establishments impossible: that is to say, the remedy for the evil is rendered impossible by the evil itself.

It is proposed to relieve the country by the emigration of some millions of paupers; but besides the enterprise being impracticable, we may soon see that if millions of paupers were removed from Ireland by enchantment, they would soon be reproduced by her institutions, always fertile in the production of miseries of every kind: to act thus would be to suppress the effects, and leave the cause in full force.

It has been thought that the most painful wounds of the country might be cured by forcing on the rich obligations of charity towards the poor; but here we are again brought back to the very principle of the evil—that is to say, to the heart of the aristocracy, which rejects charity. And we see, though some wound may be healed, and some pains alleviated, the sufferings of the poor would again spring in multitudes from the inexhaustible source of tyranny. This source must be dried up; it is this primary cause that must be attacked; the evil must be assailed at its root; every remedy applied to the surface will only afford transitory relief.

The social and political state of Ireland is not a regular state; everything shows that it is vitiated at the core. The disorder appears not only in the in-

finite miseries and perpetual sufferings of the population; it is even seen in the means adopted to effect deliverance from those evils.

What is this association, leading the people in defiance of government, but organised anarchy? What must a country be, where this anarchy is the sole principle of order? What is it, I say, but a society whose head is at enmity with its body,—which is in perpetual rebellion against itself?—in which every rich man is hated, every law detested, every act of vengeance legitimate, every act of justice suspected? Here is a violent and anomalous position, in which a nation cannot long continue.

We may conceive Ireland cloven down and trampled under foot by its aristocracy for centuries, but we cannot comprehend when Ireland has arisen, the aristocracy and the people facing each other, the former still eager to oppress, the latter sufficiently strong to resist oppression, without bringing it to a close.

Though the necessity of reforming the Irish aristocracy should not be proved by what has been already stated, perhaps one single argument will suffice to demonstrate it. In fact, look at the alternative: if allowed to subsist, one of two things must be done—the aristocracy must be supported against the people, or the people allowed to overthrow it.

In the first case, the sustaining power must become the mere instrument of all the passions of this aristocracy,—of its desires as well as its hatreds;—must place the artillery of Britain at the disposal of every landholder who cannot get his rents from his tenants,—



must subject to arbitrary and terrible laws every county in which the poor make an attack on the rich and their properties:—can the Irish aristocracy, with any conscience, demand—can it even wish for such sanguinary protection? <sup>1</sup>

In the second case,—that is to say, if the people be supported against the aristocracy; or, what is nearly the same thing, left to itself,—the aristocracy, deprived of a support without which it cannot exist, is delivered over, without defence, to the most cruel reprisals; it falls, bound hand and foot, into the hands of an enemy, full of resentment, subject to all the vengeance and all the madness of a victorious party; and, in this case, it may be asked, whether destruction is not more humane than such a state of existence?

This destruction, equally just and necessary, would be singularly easy in Ireland. In the first place, it would be aided by the whole strength of national feeling. In England, where the aristocracy is still so powerful, and, I might almost add, so popular, there is scarce a suspicion of the feelings with which Ireland regards her aristocracy.

Generally contented with their lot, the lower classes in England do not dispute the privileges of the rich; I might almost venture to say, they take pleasure in them: they see with a sort of pride these immense fortunes, large estates, parks, castles, and splendid abodes of the aristocracy; and they say that if there were no lower ranks, such glorious opulence and national splendour would not exist. People may laugh at this indigent enthusiasm in the happiness of the

rich: I agree to it; but it is a proud thing for an aristocracy to have inspired such sentiments. In general, a poor Englishman regards the rich without envy, or at least without hatred. If he sometimes attacks him, it is without bitterness, and then he rather assails the principle than the man; the person most opposed to aristocracy shows a profound respect to aristocracy; whilst he blames the political privilege, he bows to the lord; and even when he affects to despise birth, he honours fortune. England, fondly attached to liberty, does not care about equality.

In Ireland, on the contrary, where the laws have never been anything but means of oppression for the rich, and resistance for the poor, liberty has less value, and equality greater. Doubtless there is too much of the English spirit in Ireland to allow of liberty being absolutely despised, or equality thoroughly comprehended; but the people is driven towards it by its most powerful instincts. In truth, there is nothing of philosophy or reason in its desire for equality. The feeling is still undefined in the soul, as the idea of it is still vague in the understanding; still it is the passion which seems destined to seize strongly on the heart, and which indeed is predominant there already. Equality is in all the Irishman's wants, though it be not in all his principles. He already loves equality in so far as inequality is odious, and established for the advantage of those whom he detests. I do not know that he has an enlightened taste for democracy; but most assuredly he hates aristocracy and its representatives. A remarkable fact! In England, in the

midst of feudal institutions singularly mingled with democracy, a good government has produced respect, and sometimes even a passion for aristocracy. In Ireland, unmingled aristocratic institutions, under the influence of pernicious policy, have developed democratic sentiments, instincts, and wants unknown in England.

The overthrow of the aristocracy, which would be so popular in Ireland, would also be easy, for at the same time that democracy is rising in that country, aristocracy is perceptibly on the decline. This aristocracy never possessed any great organic force.

What renders the English aristocracy particularly powerful, is the strict union of all the elements that compose it: large estates, great capitals, the church, the universities, medicine, the bar, arts and professions, form a compact association in that country, whose members have one common interest, passion, and purpose, the conservation of their privileges.

Nothing like this exists in Ireland. If we except the university, which is so closely connected with the church that it may be regarded as its twin sister, all the aristocratic elements are held together in Ireland by the feeblest of ties.

There is, indeed, a great and natural sympathy between the landlords and the ministers of the Anglican church; the same religion, the same passions, the same political interests. Rejected by the same hatred, they are disposed to approximate like two transported criminals in their place of exile. But their mutual relations have not that regularity which can

alone be derived from real and solid union ; neither resides habitually in Ireland, they only meet there by accident, they regard each other as if they met in a strange land ; it is a transitory union, which, however sincere it may be deemed while it lasts, leaves no traces behind.

The great wealth and possessions of the church are, besides, a subject of jealousy, and an occasion of discord to the landlords. We have already seen with what emulation churchmen and laymen press upon the people ; and how the exactions of one are injurious to the other. The tenant used to pay his landlord badly on account of the tithe he owed to the minister ; the parson found it difficult to recover his tithe, because the landlord charged too high a rent. These rivals in extortion are, nevertheless, political allies ; and after having mutually imputed to each other the miseries, famine, crimes, and desolation of the country, they renew their friendly intercourse ; but their union, sufficiently apparent for the tyranny of the one to injure the other, is not sufficiently close to afford mutual strength to both.

The support which the aristocracy receives from its other auxiliaries is still more feeble and uncertain.

The municipal corporations, its most faithful allies, have long fallen into a state of discredit and disgrace, which renders the advantage of their assistance very doubtful ; and the scandalous abuses in which they are steeped, imprint disgrace on the power they sustain, more injurious than the zeal they display in

its service. Besides, these corporations have not the strength which their great wealth gives the English corporations. Formerly, as Protestants, they had the monopoly of commerce, and all profitable industry; but, whilst this monopoly lasted, Irish industry was sacrificed to that of England. Their privileges, therefore, were worth little. To preserve them, they were, therefore, forced to place them at the mercy of England, whose yoke they endured for the sake of imposing their own. At present, they are delivered from the bonds of England, but we have already seen that since its enfranchisement, Irish industry creates more democratic properties than it does wealth in alliance with privilege.

We have seen that Catholics of the middle class have taken possession of the bar, formerly the ally of the Protestant aristocracy. Thus on all sides this aristocracy is feeble, divided and menaced in the small remnant of its strength. Aristocratic life, in fact, exists only in one body, the lords of the soil. There only can we find any accordance between the views of the members, any regular proceedings, any durability of union; but, even here, the most wealthy, that is, those who could give most power to their order, are out of the country.

Finally, the largest proportion of Irish landlords has recently fallen into a state of distress and degradation, which deserves to be considered. We have seen a description of the evils endured by the poor agriculturists of Ireland; the misery of the rich in that country would also furnish a very sad picture.

It is an undisputed fact, that most of the landlords are greatly embarrassed in their fortunes; they are crushed by a weight of debt, their estates are loaded with mortgages. Many of them, bound to pay interests equal to the whole amount of their rents, and perhaps even more, are but nominally proprietors of their estates. I have seen an estate of fifty thousand acres, bringing a rent of 20,000*l.*, out of which the proprietor only enjoyed about 500*l.* a year. Nothing is more common than to see receivers appointed over large estates, charged with collecting rents due to the landlord for the benefit of the creditors, and appointed, either by a court of law, or in consequence of a special agreement.

This distress of the Irish landlords, which goes on continually increasing, arises from several causes; but the first and chief is their own recklessness. They have for centuries thrown all the trouble of their affairs upon agents or middlemen; and now they begin to perceive that their affairs have been badly conducted, and that their fortune, instead of increasing, has declined. Another cause is their blind cupidity, which, by rendering their tenants miserable, has become a source of impoverishment to themselves. And then, as they are actually in a state of war with the population, this incessantly causes them great loss, without any other advantage than the pleasure of injuring the people in their turn. It would be difficult to form an idea of the number of cattle maliciously killed or mutilated every year on the lands of the rich; the quantity of wood

and houses burned, and of meadows dug or ploughed up. I find that in 1833 more outrages were committed in the province of Munster, for the mere purpose of injuring the landlords, than for the purpose of procuring any advantage to the perpetrators. Thus, in this catalogue of crimes I find only fifty-nine robberies, but I observe one hundred and seventy-eight outrages dictated by brutal and vindictive violence, which ruin the landlord without enriching the tenant.<sup>2</sup> I have said that nothing can compensate the poorer classes for want of sympathy in the rich: it must be added, that the rich can never find an adequate substitute for the sympathy of the poor: and when the poor hate the rich, there is no severity of law, no court-martial, no punishment, which can prevent the poor from labouring to effect the destruction of those whom they detest.

Finally, the indigence of the rich arises from the following final cause, of a more recent date. During the war of France with Europe, and especially from 1800 to 1810, England having been almost entirely reduced for subsistence to the resources of its own territory, Ireland, which had always been its most abundant granary, became more so than ever. The demand for the agricultural produce of Ireland became, consequently, so great, that the prices were raised out of all proportion. This state of things continuing from year to year, the landlord, perceiving that the harvests of their tenants rose to double or triple their value, raised their rents in the same proportion; and not foreseeing that this increase of for-

tute, so agreeable to their pride, would cease with the accident which gave it birth, they established the expenses of their households on this fragile base.

So long as the continental blockade continued, the Irish aristocracy was splendid and prosperous, and the peasants themselves suffered less; but peace having been restored to the world, the Irish corn market was deprived of its monopoly, agricultural produce lost its exaggerated value, and the fortune of all the landlords was suddenly reduced. Still, in spite of the reverse, which took away one half of their revenues, the rich did not diminish their expenses.

It is in the nature of aristocracies not to be able to retrench; they are erected on a pedestal, of which vanity is the base: now, vanity would cease to be itself, if it submitted to restriction or abatement. Such resignation is especially impossible in an aristocracy of wealth, for when fortune is the measure of rank, who would wish to humiliate himself by acknowledging the diminution of his riches?

The Irish landlords could not, and would not, diminish their outward show on the scale of their declining fortunes: continuing to live at the old rate with decreased resources, some have been completely ruined, and others are rapidly hastening to the same consummation; and rather than reform in their household one horse or one servant, they are about to fall from the summit of their pride into extreme indigence. It is a common weakness of mankind not to be able to support the approach of a light evil



whose hour is fixed, and to advance resolutely towards an immense inevitable misfortune, the date of which is uncertain. Aristocracy exaggerates all the vices, as well as all the virtues, which proceed from pride.

Whatever may be the fortunes of the Irish aristocracy, no tears will be shed over their fate. Why should any one be grieved to see the decrepitude of a body whose end is unavoidable? Left to itself, this aristocracy would probably perish. But ought it, infirm and impotent as it is, to be allowed to languish for years, perhaps for ages, and expire in slow agonies amidst the outrages it will excite, the miseries it will produce, and the curses it will bear to its very last hour? No; its weakness, instead of being its protection, should be its condemnation: it can never be anything to the Irish people, but the blood-stained phantom of a government; and, doubtless, it will never recover from the terrible attacks made upon it, when even its season of unresisted tyranny has sunk so low. It is, therefore, nothing better than a scourge and a nuisance, which should be removed as soon as possible.

## CHAPTER III.

IT WOULD BE AN EVIL TO SUBSTITUTE A CATHOLIC ARISTOCRACY FOR THE PROTESTANT ARISTOCRACY.

It is not only the Protestant aristocracy that should be abolished in Ireland; but every kind of aristocracy. Nothing could be more pernicious than to erect a Catholic aristocracy on the ruins of a Protestant aristocracy. I have already shown that there is no greater peril to the middle classes in Ireland, than their inclination to seize the privileges of which the aristocracy will be despoiled. This danger, if it be not in the present, is certainly in the future. But it is not sufficient to state as a certain danger, the mere possibility of a Catholic aristocracy; we must also show why this chance is an evil.

Doubtless we may suppose, that if the upper classes, in possession of the soil, were Catholics, many of the oppressions which bear heavily on the Catholics would be removed or greatly alleviated; but then, what would be the fate of a million and a half of Protestants scattered over the surface of Ireland? Would not they risk encountering, from an aristocracy hostile to their creed, the same persecutions which Catholics endure at present? Would it

not be, in truth, the substitution of one tyranny for another? and then, it would be just as well to leave the present one to continue.

Besides, how far could a Catholic aristocracy in Ireland be beneficial to the Catholics themselves? Does any one suppose that it would display generosity, sympathy, and liberality to the people? Might it not offer a dangerous lure to the Catholic priesthood, and risk, by bringing that body over to itself, depriving the clergy of more influence than it would have retained by adhering to the people? But before interrogating the future, let us consult the past.

We have already seen that, in the confusion of political confiscations, a small number of Catholic families saved their properties and titles. There has been, then, constantly in Ireland the fragment of a Catholic aristocracy. Now, what assistance has it afforded to the population, professing the same creed as itself?

During the entire period of Protestant persecutions, persecuted itself, it thought far more of its own safety, than of that of the people; and for this it is not very much to blame. As it was rich, it had everything to fear from Protestant tyranny, which was directed far more against property than against creeds. The Catholic aristocracy was cautious of giving umbrage to its political enemies, and, consequently, did not venture to offer its friends any protection. It lived without ostentation or noise on its estates, miraculously preserved, and abstained from showing any dangerous sympathy for the lower

classes of Catholics. We should not require from men sacrifices beyond the reach of humanity. Was not the rich Catholic who adhered to his creed, in spite of the political disqualifications attached to its profession, performing a great duty?

But, if the Catholic aristocracy could not do more, did it sufficiently endeavour to establish between it and the poor those relations of benevolence on one side, and respect on the other, which form the aristocratic link between the poor and the rich? No. There was no close alliance formed between the rich and poor Catholics during the whole of the eighteenth century, at the time when it would seem that they ought to have been united by a common persecution. Besides the prudential motives which separated the rich from the poor, there was also a remnant of pride of race which prevented their intimate union; the few rich Catholics who escaped confiscation were of English descent, and accustomed to despise, as Irish, those with whom they were connected by religion.

But this old aristocracy of Ireland did not confine itself to refusing all political and social protection to the people. All the records of Irish history show that it oppressed those whom perhaps it might be excused for not defending. It did not escape the selfish passions that animated the Protestant proprietors, and showed itself to the full as severe and avaricious towards its tenants as they did, and in consequence provoked the same hatred. It is very difficult for a landlord to avoid endeavouring to get from his estates

as much as he sees his neighbours get from theirs. However that may be, the rich Catholics inflicted on the lower classes a social oppression precisely the same as that exercised by Protestant landlords; the people could not distinguish one from the other; it mixed both in its hatred, and in the popular outbreaks of vengeance assailed rich Catholics equally with rich Protestants. This explains why the White-boys attacked the first, just as well as the second. These popular outrages completed the separation between the people and the Catholic aristocracy; and thus, during the whole course of savage reprisals between the poor and the rich, the Catholics had no aid from the nobility or gentry of their own creed.

However, when Catholic Ireland struggled against its chains, and loudly proclaimed its determination to be free, we see this aristocracy partially appear on the stage: not that it came of its own accord, it was sought. There was need of it; for how could any enterprise be formed if a lord did not preside? It then gave the support which it dared not refuse.<sup>1</sup> But this alliance was of brief duration. The Catholic population of Ireland assumed sufficient courage to desire to send an address to George III., expressing the wishes of the country: the petition was prepared, the people assembled, tried its voice and its strength. At the sight of these movements, the Catholic aristocracy of Ireland, fearing to be compromised by adhering to the popular cause, separated itself from the people. This occurred in 1791. Still the national movement continued; the retreat of the Catholic aris-

tocracy taught the people to do without it; a plebeian<sup>2</sup> took the helm of affairs; victories were gained, checks experienced; and when the frightful crisis and the terrible storms had gone by,—when, after so many trials, the triumph of the people was finally assured, the Catholic aristocracy was seen to reappear;<sup>3</sup> it returned to the popular cause, which it had abandoned in the hour of danger, and vainly aspired to direct it; and now, placed between the Protestant power which it detests, and the Catholic people whose alienations it dreads, it has no resource but to disappear entirely: it either dissembles or departs.

I doubt whether such antecedents could be the starting-point for a good aristocracy. Yet this starting-point will no doubt have great influence in its consequences. The aristocracy which may be established will, it is true, spring in a great part from a new source, as already shown; but the present cannot be thus separated from the past; and whether the rising aristocracy of the middle classes attaches itself to the old branch of the Catholic aristocracy, or to the rotten trunk of the Protestant aristocracy, it will assuredly receive pernicious traditions and a fatal heritage.

The kind of instinctive and hereditary contempt which the rich feel in Ireland for everything that is poor and beneath them,—the prejudice which even amongst Catholics makes this contempt a sign of fashion and elegance,—the opinion so generally diffused, that the rich man has a right to oppress the poor man, and trample him under foot with impunity,

—such are the traditions from which a new aristocracy in Ireland cannot escape without great difficulty.

Were even these perils avoided, there are others from which this aristocracy could not escape; even though it would not merit, it would excite all the hatred shown to its predecessor: for the people of Ireland has also its tradition, which is to believe in the selfishness of the rich, and the right of the poor to detest them.

These mutual feelings of the poor and rich in Ireland are doubtless not graven for ever on the soul; if they were so, we might despair of the country and its future fate; for, whatever reforms may be made, rich persons will always be found amongst the people. But it is impossible that such sentiments, sealed in torrents of blood and ages of oppression, should not be long perpetuated; and they will be vivid in proportion as the new class of rich men retain the titles, privileges, and honours of the extinguished aristocracy. If the rich can ever be reconciled to the poor in Ireland, it must be by ceasing to appear before them surrounded by the same ensigns which, during centuries, were displayed by an odious aristocracy. It is also perhaps the only means for themselves to lose their pernicious habits of oppression and tyranny.

It will therefore not be enough to destroy the Protestant aristocracy; the very principle of aristocracy must be abolished in Ireland, in order that no other may take the place of that which must be suppressed. After the existing institution is humbled down, the

ruins must be cleared away, and the ground prepared for the erection of a very different edifice.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HOW AND BY WHAT MEANS ARISTOCRACY SHOULD BE ABOLISHED IN IRELAND.

WHEN I say that the Irish aristocracy must be destroyed, and its very roots extirpated, I am far from intending a violent and sanguinary destruction.

I do not agree with those who believe that, in order to establish order, prosperity, and union in a country, it is necessary to begin by massacring some thousands of persons, exiling those who are not murdered, seizing the property of the rich, and distributing it to the poor, &c. I at once reject all such measures as iniquitous, and I stop not to inquire if they be necessary. I believe, without any examination, that they are unnecessary, because they are not just, and because they are atrocious. It is in my eyes a vicious proceeding, when an injustice is about to be reformed, to begin by the perpetration of another, to commit a present and certain evil for the sake of a future and doubtful good. I distrust these criminal and doubtful means which the end must sanctify, and which, if the end fails, leave nothing but crime to those who



use them ; or rather, I do not believe that criminal means can ever become honest. Besides, I cannot admit that injustice and violence can ever profit either nations or individuals. I esteem the progress of humanity too highly to believe that it will be profited by excesses which dishonour it. Does that crime really hasten liberty, which gives it a powerful impulse that endures but a day, and then retards it for centuries? Were it even proved that iniquity would be advantageous to the present generation, I could not be persuaded that it has the right to burden future generations with the certain expiation.

By abolishing the Irish aristocracy, I merely mean that it should be deprived of the political power, which it has used only for the oppression of the people ; that it should be stripped of its civil privileges, which have been only the means of satisfying its selfishness ; and that its religious predominance should be abated, which, though it no longer generates persecutions, perpetuates the remembrance of them.

SECT. I.—*What should be done in order to abolish the privileges of the Aristocracy.—Necessity of Centralisation.*

To destroy the political power of the aristocracy, it would be necessary to deprive it of the daily administration of the laws, as it was formerly deprived of legislation. Consequently, the whole administrative and judicial system must be changed from top to

bottom, in so far as it rests on justices of the peace and the organisation of grand juries as at present constituted. In order to accomplish this destruction, power must be centralised.

If it is, in general, difficult to conceive any foundation for a new government without the aid of the central power, which commences with the destruction of the existing system, the assistance of this central power seems especially necessary when, before laying the basis for a new system of society, an aristocracy is to be overthrown. What means, in fact, are there of reaching the multitude of petty powers scattered over the surface of the country, all these local existences, all these individual influences peculiar to aristocracy, unless by concentrating the whole public strength on one single point, from which it might be brought to act against every condemned privilege and rebellious superiority?

In the countries where the best aristocracy exists, the central arm, when extended to strike them, is, in general, popular with the masses. This is sufficient to show how popular in Ireland a powerful system of centralisation would be, established on the ruins of a detested aristocracy, against which political hatred is mingled with religious hatred.

The more the state of Ireland is considered, the more clearly will it appear that, under all circumstances, a strong central government would be the best which that country could possess, at least for the present. A bad aristocracy exists, which there is an urgent necessity for destroying. But to whom must

the power wrested from its hands be entrusted? Is it to the middle classes? They are only beginning to exist in Ireland. The future belongs to them; but will they not compromise that future, if the power of leading society at the present is entrusted to their unskilled hands and violent passions?

Such is the present state of parties in Ireland, that justice cannot be obtained if the political powers are left in the hands of the Protestant aristocracy; and that it cannot furthermore be expected, if these powers are at once transferred to the rising middle classes of Catholics.

What Ireland wants is a strong administration, superior to parties, beneath whose shadow the middle classes might grow up, develop themselves, and acquire instruction, whilst the aristocracy would crumble away, and its last remains gradually disappear. Here is a great work to be accomplished, the execution of which is offered to the English government.

When I indicate centralisation as a means of reforming political society in Ireland, I hasten to explain my whole opinion on this head. I am assuredly very far from considering as salutary in itself the absolute principle of complete centralisation. There may be a central government of such a nature that it would be, in my opinion, worse than aristocracy itself. The principal vice of an aristocracy is, that it restricts by patronage the number of individual existences; but a single central power, which does everything and directs everything, not only diminishes but annihilates the political life of the citizens.

Although this power might not be tyrannical or oppressive, though it may restrain itself within the limits of law, and respect the popular passions and interests, still I should not find it the less bad; for it would still annihilate the political existence of individuals. Now, just as the best education is that which develops man's intelligence and multiplies his moral forces, so the best institutions give him the greatest number of civil rights and political powers. The greater number of people that there are in a state, competent to manage and guide their family, their parish, their county, or the state itself, the more political life will there be in that country, and the more the value of each individual will be increased.

Though it might be proved to me that this single central power, whether of a man or of an assembly, a minister or a commission, might execute, better than all the individuals together, the affairs of their parish, their province, or their entire country, I would not be less of the opinion, that it is bad to take from them the care of their private interests, because, in my view, it is of less importance to render their lives physically pleasant and comfortable, than to increase by political interests the domain offered in this world to their soul and understanding. It is not, then, as a final form of government that I recommend centralisation to Ireland.

Just so much as a central government appears to me necessary for this country, would its long continuance seem to me an evil. Extreme centralisation is rather a violent remedy than an institution. It is not a

state, but an accident : it is a weapon potent in combat, which must be laid aside after the battle is over, under pain of being wounded by its edge, or borne down by its weight. It is a stage through which every nation must pass that is obliged, before erecting a new social edifice, to clear away the ruins of the old ; and from which they must hasten to depart the instant that the work of transition is completed. Unfortunately it is not always easy to dismiss this auxiliary when its aid is no longer required ; and society may find the seeds of destruction in the very cause by which it was saved. There is the danger. This danger is so great, that a people should not incur it, unless it were about to be exposed to a greater danger. There is a choice to make between the chance of not being able to destroy a bad government without the aid of centralisation, and the risk of not being able, after the destruction is accomplished, to get rid of the instrument by which it was effected. But it is because the overthrowing of the aristocracy is in Ireland the first and most urgent, that it is necessary to employ the most powerful though the most perilous instrument.

It accords neither with my wishes nor my purpose to explain the form and mechanism of the centralisation that would suit Ireland ; I limit myself to recognising, as a principle, its transitory utility to that country. I will, however, venture to suggest one single practical idea. In order to organise a powerful central government in Ireland, it would be necessary to draw closer the bonds that unite Ireland to England, to bring Dublin as close as possible to London,

and to make Ireland an English county. Everything at the present day tends to make this an object of easy execution; we are no longer at the period when a voyage of weeks or even months separated Ireland from England.

Once, in the reign of Henry VIII., the Irish parliament, long deprived of all news from England, on the arrival of a long-delayed courier passed an act recognising the king's marriage with Anna Boleyn; and on the following day, having received a second and a speedier courier, solemnly voted the nullity of the marriage.<sup>1</sup> If an Irish parliament existed in our day, and if a tyrant asked from it a similar act of baseness, it would not run the same risk of displeasing its master by its very servility.

Thanks to the improvement of navigation and the roads, London is now within twenty-one hours of Dublin. Ireland is nearer the English parliament than Scotland or Wales. How strange! England is now nearer to the United States of America, though they are six thousand miles distant, than she was to Ireland half a century ago, though Ireland is separated from her only by a narrow strait. These wondrous creations of human science, which are destined to change the social relations, not only of men but of nations, will exercise their first influence on Ireland, for the route between London and Dublin is the first great distance by land and sea which has been greatly diminished by steam. Whence comes it, then, that Ireland continues to retain a government distinct from the English government, a special executive power, peculiar and

local administrations? This distinct government separates Ireland from England, to which it could not be drawn too close. The English who come to Ireland to contend against the aristocracy, are less powerful than if they remained in England. Every administration in Dublin is in one or other of these two predicaments: it either submits to the influence of the aristocracy which it ought to attack; or, if it rejects the aristocracy, it is exposed to attacks which it is less able to resist in Dublin than it would be in London.

We do not dispute that Ireland has need of a special government; and if there be a necessity of governing it on a legislative system different from that of England, special agents are required to apply different rules of administration. But this being granted, we see no reason why the seat of Irish government should not be fixed in the first city of the British empire.

There are those who consider the vice-regal court of Dublin as necessary to temper the violence of parties, and keep them separate when it cannot extinguish them. But has this opinion any foundation?

The only way in which a court can be brilliant is, by calling around it the aristocracy of the country. Now this aristocracy, exclusive by its nature, being in possession of the ground, will not suffer the inferior classes to mingle in its ranks; and besides, of what fusion or what harmony can this court be the source? Suppose that the head of the court in Dublin has received orders to combat the Irish aristocracy, how can he invite its members to his parties, or how avoid the in-

vation? If he asks for their company, he deceives them—if he passes them over, he insults them. And even should he attempt to attract them, this aristocracy, mortally wounded in its pride, will hold itself apart, will affect to despise a court which it will call mercantile and vulgar, and will refuse to join in pleasures, of which, however, it will not hear the fame without regret. In fact, a court at Dublin would create parties, if they were not already in existence.

The reform of the viceroyalty, and the abolition of the local administrations of Ireland are, doubtless, mere changes of form. But they are practical means, indispensable for the execution of the political reforms of which the country is in want. It is absolutely necessary, that during the period of transition in which Ireland is placed, those who govern the country should be completely severed from it, from its habits, and its passions. The government must wholly cease to be Irish; it must be, if not entirely English, at least entrusted to Englishmen.

*SECT. II.—What must be done to abolish the civil privileges of the aristocracy in Ireland—Necessity of rendering the people landed proprietors.*

It would be of little value to attack the Irish aristocracy in its political privileges only; it is its social power that must especially be assailed. Whatever revolution is effected in a country, society remains nearly the same, if its civil laws are not modified at



the same time as its political institutions. Political laws change with the passions and fortunes of the parties that succeed to power. The civil laws, in which a multitude of interests are engaged, do not change. Consider the two greatest revolutions that have convulsed the world, in modern ages, that of 1649 in England, and of 1789 in France. Popular clamours were equally loud in both countries; the same enthusiasm of reformers, the same passion of levelling; in the political order, every thing was overthrown, broken, and trampled under foot; here and there the existing world was demolished, to raise on its ruins a new world, an ideal world, where justice, reason, and truth would be the only sovereigns; both countries went nearly the same length astray, the one with its philosophy, the other with its religion; they seemed mutually to copy each other in excesses, illusions, and miseries; each sacrificed its holocaust of royal blood; each had its anarchy and its despotism; the one its Napoleon, the other its Cromwell; each returned to its ancient dynasty, England to the Stuarts, France to the Bourbons; the similitude seems perfect between the two epochs and the two nations, except that in France there was more glory and in England less blood. How then comes it to pass, that from the very outset, the first completely changed its appearance, whilst the second retained its likeness to itself?

Scarcely had Charles II. resumed the crown, when English society returned to its accustomed channels; nothing farther remained of the revolution; twelve years of reforms, acts of violence, despotic interfer-

ence of the state, passed away like a tempest, the traces of which are effaced by a calm. In France, on the contrary, in spite of the political form that attempted to reproduce the ancient state of society, quite a new people is revealed to our view; no matter whether it be called republic, empire, or royalty, the monarchical France of 1789 has become democratic, and will never cease to be so.

Why is there so great a difference in the effects, when the causes appear so similar? Because in England, at the very height of political destruction, the reformers did not touch the civil laws. They abolished royalty, and left the right of primogeniture untouched; whilst in France the changes were made in civil and political order at the same time. Social reform even preceded the great revolutionary crisis; the laws that abolished feudal services, which substituted equality of inheritance for privilege, had been all enacted when the republic came into existence. These laws attacked the very heart of the old social system, that which is most immovable amongst a people, land, and family. The republic passed away, but the civil laws remained. They had at once reached the foundation, whilst the other had only run lightly over the country, not indeed like the breeze that passes away, but like the scythe, which, though it mows down, only affects the surface. It would then be an idle enterprise to deprive the Irish aristocracy of its political authority, if at the same time its civil privileges, which are the soul of its power, were not taken away. There are, in Ireland, social wounds which it is more important to

cure than political evils. What is essential is the establishment of harmony, not only between the governing power and its subjects, but between the labouring and the wealthy classes. What must first be checked is the war waged against society by the peasant, whose profound misery merits so much pity, and whose passions menace so many dangers. There is a bad democracy, it is that which is hostile to the fortunes created by industry; but there exists also a good democracy, it is that which combats the fortunes maintained by privilege alone.

Now it is these laws of privilege, such as entails and the right of primogeniture, which both in England and Ireland concentrate the possession of all territorial wealth in the hands of the aristocracy. The monopoly established by these laws is doubly pernicious, by the evil it inflicts and the good it prevents; it chains down the land in indolent and selfish hands, to which it only lends a pernicious force, and it prevents the land from falling into the possession of those who, by improving it, would enrich themselves and benefit the entire community. It does not always save stupid or foolish landlords from ruin, and it forms an insurmountable obstacle to the acquisition of landed estates by the people. And yet can any one see Ireland and its immense agricultural population, without recognising that the true remedy for the misery of the people would be to render them proprietors instead of tenants?

England demonstrates better than any other country, how with a good aristocracy the agricultural popu-

lation may be prosperous without ever acquiring property in the soil ; whilst Ireland proves that there are countries where the people are absolutely miserable in the condition of tenants.

It is difficult to imagine a country in which property is worse distributed than Ireland. In England, large farms established on vast estates employ only a few cultivators, but these few live comfortably. In France, where property is infinitely divided, the agricultural labourer is for the most part the proprietor ; and his farms, when he has any, are sufficiently large to render his condition far from deplorable. In Ireland, properties are as large as in England, and farms as much divided as properties in France ; in other words, the country has all the abuses of large properties without any of the compensating advantages ; with all the inconveniences of small farms, a system of which it possesses nothing but the vices.

English economists frequently quote the example of poor Ireland, to prove the great injury of the extreme division of land in France. Yet such a comparison can only be a source of error, for there is only an apparent similitude in the agrarian distribution of the two countries. The land in both is, I grant, equally loaded with agriculturists ; but there the analogy begins and ends ; since in France the petty agriculturists are owners of the parcels of land which they occupy, whilst in Ireland they are only tenants.

When people see the peasants of Ireland sunk in wretchedness on the miserable "lots of land" which they cultivate, they conclude that in France the same

misery must be the lot of the person who occupies an equally small fraction of ground : no conclusion, however, can be less logical. It is for himself and for his own profit alone that the French agriculturist waters with the sweat of his brow the ground whose harvest is assured to him ; whilst the Irish peasant sows for another, reaps a crop of which he never tastes, and has for the most part exhausted the soil ; when he has raised from it the rent that he is bound to pay his landlord. Who does not see that the same spot of ground which amply supplies the wants of the one, must necessarily be insufficient to the other ? Who does not comprehend that on his small farm one may be free and happy, for the same reasons that will render the other dependent and miserable ?

It is a common objection against the division of land, that as the partition never ceases, estates will be cut up into such small fractions, that each parcel will only be a barren boon to its possessor, and a general source of impoverishment to a society composed of such proprietors ; but are not such fears exaggerated or chimerical ? Do we not see the partition of land in France halt at the point where it ceases to be useful ; more restrained where land bears a less price, more developed where a less extent represents an equal value ?<sup>1</sup> When a proprietor has no interest in preserving land too limited for his purposes he sometimes sells it, and sometimes farms it out to a neighbouring proprietor ; most frequently he cultivates it himself, and in such case, however small it may be, he finds it his interest to keep it ; but as the

care of his farm does not occupy him the whole year, no more than its profits would afford him sufficient support, he joins some other branch of industry to his agricultural labours. Most of these French petty proprietors work for others; some as day-labourers, others as vine-dressers; some as small shopkeepers in the village, others as mechanics. But it may be asked, does not the land thus broken, divided, and delivered over to feeble resources for its cultivation, lose its value and fertility?

I will not here discuss the great controversy about small and large farms. I know it has been maintained that a large farm produces more proportionally, than several small farms of the same extent; because the large proprietor has the command of capital and processes which are not within the reach of the small proprietors; but I am not sure whether it might not be answered, that the petty occupants, in the absence of monied capital, expend on the parcels of which they are the proprietors an amount of activity and personal energy which could not be obtained from a hired labourer; that all labouring thus for themselves, and under the influence of a fruitful selfishness, may, by the force of zeal and industry, succeed in obtaining from the lands as much, if not more, than a single proprietor, compelled to hire the labour of others, could procure: that this employment of the greater force to produce the same result, is not to be regretted in a country where, if the people did not turn to the land, they would not engage in any other branch of industry;

finally, that these petty cultivators, obliged to superior efforts in order to obtain an equal end, need not be pitied, because they find in the interest and passion of property an inexhaustible source of vigour, which renders their heavy burthen lighter. The experience of modern times has shown what a difference in value there is between the work of the free labourer and the slave; but we do not yet know how much the labour of the cultivating proprietor is better than that of the hired labourer.

However this matter may be, leaving the examination of this question to the economists, I limit myself to the assertion, that if the economical advantages of the division of land are doubtful, its social and political benefits are far from uncertain.

Ask all those in France, who have known anything of the condition of the people before 1789, and they will tell you that it is now infinitely more prosperous than it was formerly: and what has been the chief cause of this sudden change? simply, that the people have become proprietors. But we have no need of the traditions of the last century, to convince us of this truth. Let us only look at what is passing before our eyes: which of us is not struck by the revolution suddenly wrought in the entire existence of any one of the people who was not a proprietor, and has become so? Land is in France the supreme ambition of the working classes. The domestic servant, the day-labourer, the operative in the factory, labours only to purchase a small piece of ground; and he who attains the object so eagerly

desired, not only becomes physically more comfortable, but morally a better man. At the same time that he wears better clothes, and uses more wholesome food, he conceives a higher idea of himself; he feels that henceforth he counts for somebody in his country; whilst wandering about from district to district, and from town to town, he was little interested in living honourably, and incurred few perils by an immoral course of life. Here nothing was known of the regular life he had previously led elsewhere; there, people were ignorant of the dishonesty that disgraced him in another place. But now that he is attached to the soil, he knows that everything will be taken into account; from this moment he keeps a watch over himself, for he will suffer all his life for an evil action, as he is sure always to derive advantage from his good deeds. He is thus more moral, because he is more independent. In general he takes a wife at the same time that he purchases his land; and soon, in the bosom of the domestic affections, he learns order, economy, and foresight: he is better both as a man and a citizen; his country is to him something tangible; is not his country the land? Henceforth he has a place on its bosom. In vain would economists prove to me that, by the division of land less produce is obtained from the ground at greater expense; I would reply, that I know no means of covering the surface of the country with inhabitants more prosperous, more independent, more attached to their native land, and more interested in its defence.



If the acquisition of property in the soil has been such an advantage to France, with what great blessings would it be fraught to the poor people of Ireland! By becoming proprietors, the French have passed from an endurable condition to a much better state; the people of Ireland would clear at one bound the space which separates a prosperous lot from the most wretched condition imaginable.

The more we consider Ireland, its wants and its difficulties of every kind, the more we are convinced that such a change in the condition of its agricultural population would be a remedy for all the evils of the country. So long as the Irishman will be merely a tenant, you will find him always indolent and wretched. What energy can you expect from the agriculturist who knows that, if he improves his farm, his rent will be augmented?—that if he could augment its produce one hundred fold, his share would not be one whit greater? who takes his farm at so high a rent that even in the most prosperous year he cannot clear off arrears; who always sees “the hanging gale” suspended over his head, as a menace, the obvious purport of which is, that if at the next harvest he should collect a few more sheaves than was expected, the profit shall not belong to him! Suppose him, on the contrary, the proprietor of the two or three acres which he now rents; with what ardour will he till the soil which will recompense all his pains? Of what efforts will he not be capable, when he will see a reward attached to every toil, an advancement at the end of every furrow?

It may be fairly presumed that whenever Ireland shall have small proprietors, the greater part of the miseries of the country will cease. The fatal competition for small farms, which is not less injurious to the landlord than to the tenant, would soon disappear; for wherever the people possess a mere sufficiency of sustenance from their own ground, they will not farm the land of others, except on advantageous terms. The rich, ceasing to have the monopoly of the land, will no longer incur the curses of the poor; and besides, the petty occupant who covers with his body his field and his cabin, will have nothing to fear from the attacks of which land is the object in Ireland.

England is now making great efforts to raise Ireland from her frightful state of misery; all theories are invoked, all superior intelligences set to work, all means are tried, from the charity which gives bread to the poor, to the emigration which exiles him from the country. All these violent or factitious means must be ineffectual. Let people coolly reflect, and they will see that the land on which the poor live now so miserably, can alone render their condition better. It is in vain to attempt saving Ireland, by introducing manufactures: Ireland is essentially agricultural, and she is so, precisely because England is essentially manufacturing. The people must find a prosperous condition in the land, or resign itself to be eternally miserable: since the Irish peasants are profoundly wretched as tenants, is not their only remaining chance to become proprietors?

I could support my opinion by a thousand other arguments, but I forbear. If an English reader deems my reasons insufficient, I beg of him to consider that every one but an Englishman will find them superabundant.

But if it be true, that the Irish nation is doomed to languish in frightful distress so long as it will be excluded from property in the soil, how is this right of property to be attained?

Grave and distinguished publicists have given a solution of this difficulty which I cannot accept: admitting the necessity of the principle that I have established, they propose that the tenants now in possession should be simply and plainly declared proprietors.<sup>2</sup> This is not a question for discussion, but clearly a revolution. I have already given my sentiments on the nature of the proceedings by which social or political reforms are effected. In my opinion, to be good they must have one primary condition; that is, they must be conformable to justice and morality. Now, though it is less cruel to deprive a landlord of his property than of his life, the spoliation is quite as unjust as the murder, and therefore equally odious. It is very gratuitously supposed, that this agrarian revolution would be legitimised by a British act of parliament. But, in the first place, the dispossession of the rich for the profit of the poor would not be one whit more equitable because it was executed in the name of the law. Vainly would they allege that the actual possessors of the Irish soil having been usurpers, it is just to resume it.<sup>3</sup> What

present existing right would stand against an examination of the past? And which set of proprietors would be declared usurpers? Would they be merely the descendants of the companions of William III.? But then, only a small portion of the land would be resumed? Would they add to these the lands of Cromwell's soldiers and adventurers? But why not then go back to the settlers in the time of James I., or even of Elizabeth?

Since the sixteenth century, property in Ireland has changed hands a thousand times, not merely from the shock of revolutions, but by sales and transfers. Are all possessors to be shipped off their estates, by whatever title they hold them? even those who have purchased them with their money, under the protection of the laws? But then, Ireland must be thrown into frightful confusion, and the evil will strike without distinction the old proprietors and the new purchasers, the Catholic and the Protestant; the person who has purchased an estate from the fruits of his industry, as well as the person who inherits it from his ancestors; the merchant who has advanced money on mortgage, as well as the proprietor himself. Besides, though we may understand how, by such a system, the poor will cease to be indigent, we do not see what is to become of the rich, who, doubtless, will not remain cool and passive spectators of their own ruin, and who, if they do not kindle the flame of civil war in their country, will doubtless abandon it, so that all the proprietors having disappeared, there will only remain in Ireland rude peasants turned into masters. A singular means

of advancing the civilisation of Ireland, of restoring peace to a country distracted by six centuries of civil discord, and of restoring the feelings of right and rectitude to a land where they have been lost !

For my part, it seems to me so important not to trouble the public conscience by any violation of rights, and not to agitate society by interference with property, that I equally reject the system of those who would wish to distribute the three millions of waste land in Ireland amongst the poor peasantry. In order to bestow such a gift, the lands must first be taken from their present proprietors. Now, in my view, every attempt on property is a bad measure of political economy.

Cannot the proposed end be attained by mild, equitable, and legal measures?—an end which would cease to be desirable, if it could only be reached by injustice and wrong.

What is it that is wanting to the lower orders in Ireland? To acquire property in the soil; but not to obtain it by iniquitous force: we must not make, but aid them to become, proprietors; and to attain this end, they must be supplied with the means. Now it is the means that is absolutely wanting at present. The Irishman finds it absolutely impossible to acquire property in the soil, not only because he is poor, but because, in both countries, civil laws made for the advantage of the aristocracy tend constantly to the concentration of the land in the smallest number of hands—because, in one word, these laws prevent land from being a marketable commodity. The inacces-

sibility of the land is the great obstacle to overcome; it is the most important of all aristocratic privileges to destroy; and its magnitude is so great, that I shall make it the subject of special examination in the next chapter.

### SUBSECTION I.

#### *Feudal state of Landed Property in England.*

In order to comprehend the condition of landed property in Ireland, I must explain its state in England. In the latter country, land is still feudal. The hand of the cultivator has long been free; but he has not broken his old chains; and whilst all around him is agitated, changed, and modified, he alone is unchanged, an unalterable fragment detached from a state of society mutilated by time and by revolutions.

In spite of all the victories gained every day by the new principles of society over the old, the labour that creates over the privilege that preserves, eternal progress over eternal immobility, land is what it was seven centuries ago—the feudal base of a social system no longer in existence, a living emblem of an extinct world.

The art by which the English aristocracy has preserved its civil privileges entire, whilst it surrendered its political privileges, is a fact worthy of observation. The spirit by which it is animated is nowhere shown more clearly than in everything relating to land. As-

vainly tries to be always wise and always just. A situation vast and covered with darkness, in which the mind labours, wearies, wanders; where all that at present seems necessary to be undertaken, is found impossible; and for which we can discover in the future only sad and incomplete solutions, until the period, far or less distant from us, when the democratic principle, which is working its way through the world, and which reaches England not only through the passions of Ireland, but also the general movement of the whole human race, shall have overthrown aristocracy in England, and, by introducing into that country the only institutions which Ireland can endure, rendered possible an accordance between two people condemned to a common life, and which at present are no more able to unite than they are to separate.

### *Final Reflections.*

In the midst of all the miseries, all the perils, and all the complications of which we have drawn so mournful a picture, one consoling aspect is offered to our view.

Whence have these embarrassments, perils, and difficulties, which her greatest statesmen are all but unable to solve, come upon England?—From Ireland: from Ireland, unfortunate and oppressed; on which England formerly practised a severe and selfish conquest; which England cruelly attacked in her religious liberty, after having deprived the country of political liberty; from Ireland, held during centuries

under a yoke of iron, and subjected, without relaxation, to the most odious persecutions ever invented by the most ingenious tyranny.

And it is this people, crushed by so much oppression, and degraded by so much servitude,—this people so often mutilated, broken, and trampled under foot by England; it is this people, a victim by turns to every form of calamity, foreign and civil wars, massacres and exiles, the sword that slays, the gold that corrupts, the law that persecutes;—it is this people, rent in sunder by eternal convulsions, and decimated by annual famines,—it is this people of paupers, this people of rags, this people of slaves, that now becomes to its tyrants a source of embarrassment and peril!

Assuredly, here is matter of grave meditation for rulers and for nations. Does it not show that violence and corruption are bad engines of government? Does it not show that every system of policy, to be good, must begin by being just, and that in the art of guiding nations, as in the science which serves individuals to guide themselves, no separation should be made between honesty and policy?

There are occurring at this moment, amongst the two greatest nations that ocean separates, two phenomena of the same nature, which deserve to engage the attention of the world.

The United States of North America are beyond contradiction the most fortunate nation on earth: in no country are the conditions of society so equal and so prosperous; no land advances so rapidly to the power conferred by wealth and industry; nowhere is



the progress of humanity so constant and so extraordinary. Still, in the midst of this marvellous prosperity, shining with so bright a splendour, a frightful stain appears ; this body, so young, so healthy, so robust, bears a deep and hideous wound. The United States possess slaves. Vainly in that christian land do religion and humanity devote themselves with admirable virtue to heal this fearful evil ; the leprosy is extending, it is blighting pure institutions, it is poisoning the felicity of the present generation, and already depositing the seeds of death in a body full of life.

At the same time that the United States in America are making fruitless efforts to expel the negro race from their bosom, because their slavery troubles and humiliates them ; the nation, which is probably the best skilled in the art of government in Europe, England, exhausts herself in useless efforts to shake off a nation which she took six centuries to conquer, and struggles vainly under the miseries of her slave.

And how have these two nations reached situations so sad and so similar?—By the same roads,—by a primary act of violence, followed by a long course of injustice.

America and England would indeed gladly abandon these pernicious paths which terminate in such frightful abysses. But it is not so easy to escape from the pernicious and dark road which has so long been followed ; long deviations and tedious retracing of steps are necessary for such a purpose. When the solemn violations of morality and justice have been continued for centuries, the deep perturbation which they

have produced in moral order must endure long after they have ceased. It is not sufficient that the tyrant, who believed tyranny useful to his interests, should recognise his error in order that he should escape the consequences of his iniquity. It does not depend on the greater or less intelligence of selfishness to suspend or prolong the responsibility of its actions. From the moment that oppression has begun to exist, the oppression has incurred the fatal penalty. This law is severe, but it is just and sublime ; there is a happiness in recognising that selfishness, injustice, and violence bring with them retributions as infallible as their excesses.

There are those who believe that individuals and nations are led by fatality to crime. The opinion is false ; it is injurious to humanity, which, by such a theory, cannot be acquitted of crime without being deprived of virtue. The crimes of nations, like those of individuals, are voluntary, not necessary acts. There is nothing necessary but the consequence of crimes ; nothing predestined but their expiation.