



# IRISH IMMIGRATION.

PRELIMINARY NOTE

## SPEECH

OF

# HENRY PARKES, M.P.

Delivered in the Legislative Assembly of New South

Wales, on the Second Reading of "A Bill to  
authorise and regulate Assisted Immigration."

Oct. 14th, 1869.

SYDNEY :

S. E. LEES, PRINTER, 285, CASTLEREAGH STREET,

NEAR PARK STREET.

1869.



PREFATORY NOTE.

In the Legislative Assembly on Thursday Oct. 14th, 1869, the Colonial Secretary (MR. ROBERTSON,) moved the second reading of a "Bill to authorise and regulate assisted Immigration" in a short speech which showed that he had paid little attention to the subject, and was simply submitting to Parliament a measure concocted, as DR LANG at a later stage tauntingly remarked, on "the supposition that it would meet the desires and intentions of a majority of the House and the Country." After a pause, and when the SPEAKER was about to put the question to the vote, MR. PARKES rose and delivered the herein re-published speech in opposition to the Bill.

At a meeting held in Sydney on the evening of Friday Oct. 15th, a deputation was appointed to wait upon MR. PARKES, and request him to revise the report of this speech for publication in a separate form, and, the request having been complied with, the following corrected version is published at the expense of a number of gentlemen, who believe that its extensive circulation will be beneficial in diffusing among the people a knowledge of the working of the boasted Assisted Immigration scheme of MR. COWPER and MR. ROBERTSON, which the present Bill was framed by the Government to revise.

The Secretary for Lands (MR. FORSTER,) replied to MR. PARKES, and, following the practice of the present Ministers, he employed his ingenuity to detract from the force of the objections raised to the Bill, without attempting to show its merits or to defend it. DR. LANG followed MR. FORSTER in a speech of severe condemnation, characterising the Government measure as an "unbleached Bill" which offered "a premium of £7 per head to the Roman Catholic hierarchy to Romanise the territory."

DR. LANG, however, implored the Colonial Secretary to *withdraw the Bill*, and the ministerial supporters, seeing defeat before them, immediately took the hint. MR. BURDEKIN got up and moved the adjournment of the debate until the following day, which was carried; and when the following day came there was "no House," only four Members on the Government side, besides the Ministers, appearing in their places, of whom MR. BURDEKIN was not one. The probability is that the Bill will be either abandoned or withdrawn, owing to the timely and effective opposition with which it was met; but there is reason to fear that should the present Ministry remain in office it will be introduced again in some other more insidious form.

This opportunity is embraced to state, respecting the position taken by those whom MR. FORSTER designated in his speech as "the extreme Protestant class" that their only object is to preserve those glorious privileges of Civil and Religious liberty which their fathers procured for all classes of Her Majesty's subjects. The aggression which is said to produce the religious discord which all well-disposed persons must regret to find existing in this community, is not to be attributed to them but to those who so far play into the hands of the Papal hierarchy as to threaten the stability of the free and glorious institutions which can only be successfully maintained under a Protestant Government. So far therefore from being the enemies of Roman Catholics, those who are stigmatised as "the extreme Protestant class" are their best friends; inasmuch as the check which is kept on Papal assumption and the resistance which is offered to those who would, at the dictation of a foreign potentate, abuse their political privileges, are the surest safeguard to them as well as to the rest of the community—that the injustice and political disabilities which Roman Catholics were subjected to in the United Kingdom, will never be submitted to in this country.

SPEECH  
OF  
HENRY PARKES, M. P.

MR. PARKES spoke as follows:—

Mr. Speaker: I do not think this Bill deserves the approval, or is likely to receive the assent, of the House. What may be considered the subordinate provisions of a Bill of this kind, appear to me to be of a very objectionable character. The hon. gentleman did not inform us how the emigration to this colony, as proposed by his Bill, is to be conducted in England—whether by the Commissioners sitting in Park-street, Westminster, or by agents representing the colony.

MR. ROBERTSON: It is left optional with the Government.

MR. PARKES: The matter is left in doubt as to how the proposed emigration will be carried on in England—whether by the Commissioners sitting in London, or by an agent representing the colony. Now, I believe all the colonies, with the exception of New South Wales, have agents of their own to conduct their emigration; and that very state of things renders it the more objectionable for this colony to entrust its interests to a set of gentlemen who know nothing of our wants—to gentlemen whose interest, acting under all the influences that are brought to bear upon them, is simply to get rid of the troublesome classes of the English population. We have proceeded upon this suicidal principle for many years. The English idea of emigration is to ship off that portion of the population that is an incumbrance to the parishes, to get rid of the troublesome classes, while the colonial idea of immigration is to obtain the most desirable portion of the English population. This Bill does not provide definitely against the expenditure of our money in the way in which it has hitherto been expended. I also entertain an objection to the description of the immigrants as defined in the seventh clause. If we are going to introduce population, the population we introduce ought to fairly represent all the best characteristics of the English nation. We want men to labour, but we want men with capital also, and the best immigrants would be those struggling provident-minded men, who have accumulated a small capital by unremitting industry, and are anxious by the safe employment of their little means and their labour still further to improve their condition. They will come here to form a home by their own labour, and by the employment of the labour of others. Many of them may not be mechanics, miners, or domestic servants, but nevertheless persons whom it is very desirable that we should receive. The tenth clause—to say the least of it—is very curious. It makes provision that any idiot sent out here, or any habitual drunkard, or any prostitute, or any person convicted





of a "serious" crime (a singular and not very definite expression), is to be reshipped back to England, at the expense of the colony. Under a proper supervision it ought not to be possible for persons of this description to be sent here at all. The necessary precautions ought to be taken to prevent idiots, drunkards, prostitutes, and persons convicted of any "serious" crime, from being shipped off to the colony. If the character of such persons cannot be discovered at home, where a full knowledge of their past life can readily be obtained, it is not likely that it will be discovered here. A Bill which leaves superintendence so defective must be regarded as a very bungling attempt to deal with the question.

It may be admitted that these objections to the Bill are comparatively trifling, and can be got rid of by the amendment of the measure in committee. But the main principle of this Bill is to revive a system of immigration which in its operation for the last ten or a dozen years has been, I do not hesitate to say, the greatest curse the colony has laboured under. (Cheers). No other cause has been so fruitful in conducing to the state of continuous depression and backwardness, in which the colony is now and has been for years struggling. (Hear, hear). Instead of increasing the productive power, it has increased the burthensome classes of the country. (Cheers). By far the greater number of persons who have arrived under this system of assisted immigration, have not come here because they were fitted for any purpose of colonisation, and to a great extent they have not gone into the productive or useful classes of the country. They are to be found as applicants for the situation of messenger or constable, or anywhere but in the rude walks of productive industry. Many of them have undoubtedly been brought out from motives which we must highly commend. For poor persons to hoard up part of their scanty earnings to assist their poorer relations to emigrate, is in the highest degree commendable in itself. But if we commend these persons for their habits of self-denial, and the manifestation of strong family attachments, it by no means follows that they are the best judges of the class of persons wanted here to assist us in building up a nation, or that we should entrust them with this most responsible duty of saying what are the right social elements to be introduced at the cost of the colony. I have other objections to this bill which have much greater weight even than these, and I shall not shrink from entering upon them. I shall very likely again be told that I want to introduce the question of religion into the proceedings of the House for mischievous purposes; but occasions arise when it is utterly impossible to avoid discussing questions of this kind, and, whatever other hon. members may do, I shall not shrink from doing what I feel to be my duty in this matter. I for one at once declare that I do not want to see this colony, which is the birth-place of my children, converted into a province of the Pope of Rome. (Cheers). I do not want to see the majority of the people of this colony of the Roman Catholic faith. (Hear, hear). I do not wish to forget that I belong to a nation which is eminently Protestant, where a person not a Protestant cannot ascend the Throne; and I cannot but remember that the very liberties of England are identi-

fied with the liberty of mind which the Protestant religion, pre-eminently, not only admits, but encourages. I for one am not prepared to do anything that will assist to increase in an undue proportion the Roman Catholic power in this country. Throughout my life I have uniformly used my best exertions to extend the same liberties to my Roman Catholic fellow-subjects as I have enjoyed myself. (Hear, hear). On all occasions, in word and deed, I have done everything for them that I would do for myself, and I should at any time be prepared to resist their being placed in a position of inequality. Whatever freedom, rights, or privileges others enjoy, I should desire at all times to extend to them, and I should earnestly desire to see no difference made between one religious section of the community and another. If any difference has been made, it has not been made by me. I have never belonged, at any period of my life, to any organisation directed against any portion of my fellow-subjects; nor have I at any time, or in any way, done anything hostile to any portion of the community. I am the last man in the community to set class against class. But notwithstanding all this, I am not called upon to increase in an undue degree one particular class in the country, more especially when, according to my powers of discernment, that class lives under an organisation which is directly hostile to the liberties of the State. (Cheers). Let us see what this assisted immigration has done during the last nine years. I was at the trouble an evening or two ago of collecting the results from our own Immigration Agent's reports. If any hon. member doubts the accuracy of my figures, he can examine the reports for himself. He will find them, where I found them, in the volumes of our proceedings.

During the time that assisted immigration was carried on under the hon. gentleman's (MR. ROBERTSON'S) regulations, from 1860 to 1867, there were imported into this colony at the public expense 20,768 immigrants. Of these only 4349 arrived from Great Britain; and 14,876 of them were from Ireland. It is easy to see that under such a system this colony will no longer be a British colony but an Irish colony. (Cheers.) I am not prepared to lend my assistance in any way to bring about such a result as that, which I should regard as one of the greatest calamities that could fall upon the country where my lot is cast. It must be remembered that these four thousand persons represented the twenty millions of Great Britain, while nearly fifteen thousand came here to represent the six millions of Ireland. If we look to the creeds of the people, we shall find that of these 20,000 immigrants only eight thousand were Protestant, and twelve thousand were Roman Catholic. I am not prepared to return to any system of immigration which will bring about such a result as that. This is a question deserving the dispassionate and bold investigation of every person who feels an abiding interest in this country. It is impossible to attach too much importance to legislation on the subject of immigration. It is a question peculiar to young countries like our own. England never has to consider questions of this kind. And what are the consequences attaching to legislation on such a question. Those consequences strike right into the root of the social fabric, and will



speedily show themselves in our social life and character. If, for instance, we introduce a larger proportion of Italians than people from all other countries, the country will become Italian in all its main features and characteristics; if we introduce a larger proportion of Scotchmen, the country will become Scotch; if we introduce a larger proportion of Englishmen, the country will become English; and in the same way, if we go on introducing a larger proportion of people from Ireland than from all other countries, the colony will, in its very elements, become Irish. That is a matter not to be disposed of lightly or without serious reflection. It deserves from every man careful and conscientious inquiry. What will be best for the country and for those who come after us? I believe it is our duty, as far as we have the power, to build up a community fairly representing the British Empire. I am quite willing to throw the colony open, cordially and without any invidious distinction, to the people of Ireland. But let the people from Ireland fairly represent the Irish element in the nation. (Hear, hear.) I do not wish to see the Irish element overwhelm all other elements in the English nation. I want to impose no restriction. I am ready to hold out the hand of fellowship to the people of Ireland as well as to the people of Scotland or England. But I do not want nine Irishmen to every Scotchman, or seven Irishmen to every three Englishmen. Let them come here in something like proportions fairly representing the great country to which we are all proud of belonging. I will now proceed to read more in detail the figures taken from the immigration reports, to show what has been going on for the last seven years. The first report, published in 1863, shows the immigration for the three previous years. During the years 1860, 1861, and 1862, 1782 persons came from England and Wales, 564 from Scotland, and 4918 from Ireland. In the year 1863, 1028 persons came from England and Wales, 295 from Scotland, and 3275 from Ireland. In 1864, 731 came from England and Wales, 278 from Scotland, and 2946 from Ireland. In 1865, 495 persons came from England and Wales, 155 from Scotland, and 2041 from Ireland. In 1866, 190 persons came from England and Wales, 64 from Scotland, and 937 from Ireland. In 1867, 123 persons came from England and Wales, 57 from Scotland, and 759 from Ireland. The total number of persons coming from England and Wales during the seven years was 4349; from Scotland, 1413; from Ireland, 14,876. During these seven years only 130 persons arrived from other countries. During the years 1860, 1861, and 1862, the religious faiths represented by these immigrants were 2991 Protestants, and 4297 Roman Catholics. In 1863, there were 1822 Protestants, and 2754 Roman Catholics. In 1864, there were 1625 Protestants, and 2352 Roman Catholics; in 1865, there were 974 Protestants, and 1732 Roman Catholics; in 1866, there were 369 Protestants, and 833 Roman Catholics; in 1867, there were 302 Protestants, and 642 Roman Catholics. During these seven years only 75 persons of the Jewish faith, or of other religions, came to the colony at the public expense. These immigrants were brought here at a cost to the country of £225,084. That money for the most part has been

borrowed, and all classes of the community are now paying a heavy interest for it. It is a debt which has been incurred for the introduction of a stream of immigrants which has done much to change the character of the community, and remove it from the British type. (Hear, hear.) These immigrants were not the class of persons that ought to be introduced at the public expense. They were, generally speaking, persons who were brought here from motives of affection, and were not selected by any rule as to their fitness for colonial life. (Hear, hear.) It is extremely difficult to adduce evidence in support of allegations of the kind I have made. It is extremely difficult to demonstrate the truth of such allegations from the public records, although one may have abundant reason to be convinced of their truth. But there are some tests which will afford proof. I find it stated in the Immigration Agent's report for 1864 that, out of 3722 female immigrants introduced at the public expense, only 944 expressed a willingness to accept situations of any kind. That affords some evidence that those persons were not the most eligible persons for introduction into this colony at the public expense. As a rule, persons of the humbler classes, who have been reared to frugal and industrious habits, and who have a settled purpose to form comfortable homes or themselves, will accept situations in respectable families on their first arrival, even though they may possess means of their own, to enable them the more securely to obtain a knowledge of the colony. Probably the greater part of our successful immigrants have been men who arrived with a little money, but who obtained employment for a time, until they became acquainted with the country. But there are some other tests available. The Immigration Agent's report gives the educational character of the immigrants who arrived. It is some evidence of a man's character when he can read and write. For even if their education has been neglected by their parents, persons of natural intelligence, habits of sobriety and perseverance, and who have a regard for their own interest, will acquire for themselves sufficient education to enable them to read and write. Well, out of the Protestant immigrants who arrived during the seven years which I have quoted above, only 423, or less than one in fourteen, were unable to read; whilst out of the Roman Catholic immigrants who arrived during the same period, 2997, or more than one in four, could not read. In the absence of any other evidence, that is pretty strong evidence of the character of these immigrants. I have shown that during those seven years the number of immigrants from Ireland was greatly in excess of the total number from all other countries; and I have also shown that during the same period, the number of immigrants of the Roman Catholic faith was greatly in excess of those of all denominations of Protestants. I shall be able to show that whilst that was the case with this colony, it was not the case anywhere else. (Hear, hear.) That is a very important consideration. I shall be able to show from the Imperial returns, that whilst we were receiving these excessive numbers of people from Ireland, no other country, either British or foreign, where receiving immigrants in the same proportions—



thus proving very conclusively the defective character of our system of immigration. I find by the returns furnished by her Majesty's Commissioners for Emigration for the year 1865, that the total emigration from the United Kingdom to the Australian colonies and to New Zealand, amounted to 37,283 souls. Of those, only 10,920 were from Ireland. So that whilst to New Zealand, Victoria, South Australia and the other colonies in this hemisphere there was an emigration fairly representing the British nation, we alone were receiving that continuous flood from Ireland, which was calculated to disorganise the social elements of this country and change its social character. But to take a larger view of the emigration from the United Kingdom, I find that the emigration from Great Britain and Ireland to all parts of the world, including the United States and Canada, for 1865, numbered 209,801 souls; of those only 100,676 were from Ireland. So that notwithstanding the vast streams of Irish emigrants to the United States and Canada—their favourite places of destination—still the great majority of persons leaving England for that year represented other divisions of the British Empire than Ireland. While we were receiving nearly 15,000 souls from Ireland to little more than 4000 from other parts of the British Empire, other countries were receiving a stream of immigration which to a large extent fairly represented the different social elements of the United Kingdom. The question arises—what is the best population for colonizing purposes?—and to this we are bound to direct our attention regardless of all other considerations. I do not hesitate to say that Irish Roman Catholics are not the best people. Of course I am well aware to what I am laying myself open by making this avowal, but I will not shirk what I conceive to be my duty from fear of any consequences. I have before me the published opinions of men occupying conspicuous places amongst the advanced Liberals of England, and for their advocacy of the rights of Ireland. From the opinions of these writers I will endeavour to present to the House the real character of the immigrants we have been introducing, and their fitness for the purposes for which we want immigrants, and what is likely to be the consequences of their introduction. I shall quote first from a work published a few years ago, on the condition of Ireland, by a man who, of all others, has rendered the most illustrious services to the cause of English progress during the last generation, and who ever proved himself an earnest advocate for the redress of Irish grievances—I mean the late Mr. Cobden. After enumerating a variety of causes that stood in the way of the improvement of Ireland, Mr. Cobden says:—

“There exists, apart from all intolerant or party feelings on the question, a cause, and we believe a primary one, of the retrograde position, as compared with England and Scotland, in which we find Ireland at the present day, in the circumstance of the Roman Catholic religion being the faith of its people. Let us not be misunderstood, our business does not lie in polemics, and far be it from us to presume to decide which mode of worship may be most acceptable to the great Author of our being. We wish to speak only of the tendency, which, judging from facts that are before us, this Church has to retard the secular prosperity of nations. Probably there is no country in which the effects of the Catholic and Reformed religions upon the temporal career of communities may be more fairly tested than in Switzerland. Of twenty-two

cantons, ten are, in the majority of the population, Catholic; eight, Protestant, and the remaining four are mixed in nearly equal proportions of Protestants and Catholics. Those cantons in which the Catholic faith prevails are wholly pastoral in their pursuits, possessing no commerce or manufacturing industry beyond the rude products of domestic labour. Of the mixed cantons, three (Appenzell, St. Gall, and Aragan) are engaged in the manufacture of cotton; and it is a remarkable feature in the industry of these, that the Catholic portion of their population is wholly addicted to agricultural, and the Protestant section to commercial, pursuits. All the eight Protestant cantons are, more or less, engaged in manufactures. Nor must we omit to add, which every traveller in Switzerland will have seen; that, in the education of the people, the cleanliness of the towns, the commodiousness of the inns, and the quality of the roads, the Protestant cantons possess a great superiority over their Catholic neighbours; whilst such is the difference in the value of land, that an estate in Friburg, a Catholic canton, possessing a richer soil than that of Berne, from which it is divided only by a rivulet, is worth one-third less than the same extent of property in the latter Protestant district. Such are the circumstances as we find them in comparing one portion of the Swiss territory with another. The facts are still more striking if we view them in relation to the states immediately around them. Switzerland, being an inland district, far removed from the sea, is compelled to resort to Havre, Genoa, or Frankfort, for the supply of the raw materials of her industry, which are transported by land three, four, or five hundred miles, through Catholic States, for the purpose of fabrication; and the goods are afterwards reconveyed to the same ports for exportation to America or the Levant, where, notwithstanding this heavy expense of transit, and although Switzerland possesses no mineral advantages, they sustain a prosperous competition with their more favoured but less industrious neighbours and rivals. If we refer to France we shall find that a large depot of manufacturing industry has been formed upon the extreme inland frontier of her territory on the Rhine, where her best cottons are fabricated and printed, and conveyed to the metropolis, about three hundred miles off, for sale. Alsace, the Protestant district we allude to, contains no local advantages, no iron or coals; it is upwards of four hundred miles distant from the port through which the raw materials of its manufacture are obtained, and from whence they are conveyed, entirely by land, passing through Paris, to which city the goods are destined to be again returned. Thus are these commodities transported overland more than seven hundred miles, for no other assignable reason, except that they may be subjected to the labour of Protestant hands. Germany gives us additional facts to the same purport. If we divide this empire into north and south, we shall find the former, containing Prussia, Saxony, &c., to be chiefly Protestant, and to comprise nearly all the manufacturing and commercial interests of the country; whilst the latter are principally Catholic, and almost wholly addicted to agriculture. Education, likewise, follows the same law here as in Switzerland; for, whilst the Catholics amount to about twenty millions, and possess but five universities, the Protestants support thirteen, with only a population of fourteen millions. If we turn to Catholic Italy, where there is very little manufacturing of any kind, we yet find that the commerce of the country is principally in the hands of foreigners. The merchants of Genoa, Naples, Trieste, &c., are chiefly British, Swiss, or Germans, whose houses, again, have their own agents in the principal interior cities; so that the trade of the Italian States is, in great part, transacted by Protestants. We need scarcely add to these statements the fact which all are acquainted with—that in Ireland the staple manufacture is almost wholly confined to the Protestant province. We shall, probably, be reminded of the former commercial grandeur of Spain and the Italian republics. This was, however, to a great extent, the effect of monopolies, which must, from their nature, be of transient benefit to nations; and, moreover, they flourished prior to the complete triumph of the Reformation; and our object is merely to exhibit a comparison between Protestant and Catholic communities of the same period. Besides, Spain and Italy have left no evidences of the enlightened industry of their people, such as are to be seen, for example, to attest the energy of the Dutch, in the canals and dykes of Holland. We have thus briefly glanced at the comparative conditions of the Catholic and Protestant interests in Europe; and, disclaiming, as we do,



any theological purpose, we trust we may demand for our argument, what is not often accorded to this invidious topic, the candid attention of our readers. The above facts, then, go far to prove that, in human affairs at least, the Reformed faith conduces more than Catholicism to the prosperity of nations. We shall not argue that the temporal welfare of states, any more than of individuals, affords proofs of spiritual superiority; we will admit that it does not; but if it can be proved from facts (as we think even our intelligent and ingenious Roman Catholic readers will agree we have done) that the Protestant is, more than the Catholic faith, conducive to the growth of national riches and intelligence, then there must be acknowledged to exist a cause, independent of misgovernment, for the present state of Ireland, as compared with that of Britain, for which England cannot be held altogether responsible. The deficient education of a people is, no doubt, a circumstance that must tend in these days, when the physical sciences and the arts are so intimately blended with manufacturing industry, and when commerce itself has become a branch of philosophy, to keep them in the rear rank of civilised nations; but we think the abhorrence of change that characterises Catholic States, and which we shall find not merely to affect religious observances, but to pervade all the habits of social life, has even a more powerful influence over their destinies."

This was the opinion of Mr. Cobden, fortified by historical testimony, on the tendency of Roman Catholicism in Ireland—that, by denying to its people the right of judgment and the freedom of thought and opinion, it deprived them, as a consequence, of that life and vigour which freedom alone can give to human action. Lord Macaulay characterised the polity of the Roman Catholic Church in these words:—"Among the contrivances that have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind, it occupies the highest place." Such were the opinions of Mr. Cobden and Lord Macaulay on the repellent force and inherent tendency of this ecclesiastical organization "to retard the secular prosperity of nations." I shall now quote from a paper on the working of the American Commonwealth written by a gentleman who has taken a leading part in the reform movements in England during the last two or three years—a gentleman who, during the great agitations in the mother country, has been amongst the foremost advocates of the cause of Ireland. This gentleman, some short time ago, visited the United States of America, and has rendered himself remarkable for the candour with which he has published to the world the results of his inquiries and observations in that great country, as opposed to some of his previously formed opinions. And in this paper on the working of American institutions, he instances, as a most formidable impediment to their safe working, the existence of the Irish immigrant population. He says:—

"If free institutions in America have been tried under great advantages, they have also been tried under great disadvantages. Emigration brings population, labour, wealth; but it also brings from Ireland and South Germany especially, an annual crowd of strangers, ignorant, or at best ill-educated, untrained to political action, and full of anarchic passions, excited by resistance to repression under the governments of the old world. The Irish are politically in a state of barbarism. Their only political idea, if the name is not too dignified, is still that of the clan; and the most worthless demagogues take the place of the clan chiefs. English notions of American politics are derived mainly from New York, where the correspondents of our newspapers live. The corruption, mob rule, demagoguism of New York can hardly be exaggerated, though even in New York you have a good supply of water, outwardly decent streets, good public schools, and enough of law and police at all events to guard the growth of immense commercial wealth. But New York is politically an Irish and German city. The State outvotes it. The

State, now that the Irish are deprived of their slave-owning allies, will very probably control it with a firmer hand. Morrissey, the prize-fighter, was elected to Congress, not by the Americans, but by the Irish. His election caused as much scandal in America as it did here, where since the time of Mr. Gulley, only the patrons of prizefighters have sat in Parliament. The same thing which is true of New York is true, in some measure, of the other great seaboard cities where the emigrants land, and where the Irish especially, from their want of intelligence and enterprise, linger and form low quarters. Were it not for the public schools, these wanderers would seriously endanger the civilisation into which they are received."

This is the opinion of Mr. Goldwin Smith, a man of high ability and education, one of the foremost of those who have been battling for the redress of Irish wrongs, and conspicuous as an advocate of extreme liberal opinions. Another gentleman who represents one of the metropolitan constituencies in the House of Commons, a gentleman of unquestioned intelligence, and an earnest advocate of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and of the great reforms which are agitating the public mind in England, visited this colony a short time ago. He left England, visited America, travelled across the Continent to the Pacific, passed through Polynesia and New Zealand, visited these colonies, and returned by way of India to England—he meant Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke. In a book of much ability Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke gave his impressions of the various English-speaking countries through which he passed, and he thus expressed his opinion, founded upon American statistics, of the character and value of the Irish immigrants in America. These were his words:—

"Three-fourths of the Irish in America remain in towns, losing the attachment to the soil which is the strongest characteristic of the Irish in Ireland, and finding no new homes. Disgusted at their exclusion in America from political life and power, it is these men who turn to Fenianism as a relief. Through drink, through gambling, and the other vices of homeless, thriftless men, they are soon reduced to beggary; and moral as they are by nature, the Irish are nevertheless supplying America with that which she never before possessed—a criminal and pauper class. Of ten thousand people sent to gaol each year in Massachusetts, six thousand are Irish born; in Chicago, out of the 3598 convicts of last year, only eighty-four were native-born Americans."

This is a picture of the results of Irish immigration in America, published to the world on the authority of Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke; who also, so far as he is known in the political world, ranks among the friends of Ireland, and has been a steady supporter of Mr. Gladstone in the disestablishment of the Irish church. About the time when Sir Charles Dilke visited these colonies, another gentleman of some literary repute, Mr. John Martineau, was also in Australia. This gentleman, in a book entitled "Letters from Australia," has devoted a chapter to New South Wales, in which he gives his impressions of the Irish element in our society. Mr. Martineau says:—

"It is said that at one time great efforts were made to swamp the rest of the population with Irish emigrants, and make New South Wales essentially a Roman Catholic colony. There is no chance of this happening now; but there is an element of disturbance and lawlessness in their separate and sectarian organisation which, in critical times, might be dangerous, and is at all times injurious to political morality. Roman Catholicism among the Irish in Australia seems to be becoming less a Church than a political society. The priests are said not to be very strict about a man's morality, or how often or how seldom he goes to Mass or confesses. If he pays his subscription to the





priest or to the new chapel when he is asked for it, and votes as he is told at the elections, he is a good Roman Catholic. It may almost be compared to the Vehmgericht, the Jacobin Society, the Evangelical Alliance, the Reform League, or the Trades' Unions; for all these have, or pretend to have, a germ of religion, or quasi-religion in them, which gives them their strength and cohesion; and all have set up an authority unrecognised by the law, and have exercised influence chiefly by open or disguised intimidation. Their ecclesiastical organisation gives the Roman Catholics more political power than naturally belongs to them. A squatter told me that even the maid-servants in his house up the country were called upon to pay a certain subscription, being assessed sometimes even as high as ten shillings, and woe to them if they refused. At the elections, if, for any reason, it is required of them, they obey orders and vote as one man. Any private judgment in such a case would be a grievous offence."

This is the summing up of what Mr. Martineau, an intelligent stranger amongst us, with no bias that we can discover to one side or the other, saw and heard in New South Wales. I have given the views of Mr Cobden as to what has been the impediment to the prosperity of Ireland at home, and I repeat that this is the opinion of one of the warmest and most consistent friends that Ireland has ever had. I have given the views of Mr. Goldwin Smith of the Irish as a social element in the United States of America, and here again I have given the opinion of one of the warmest and most consistent friends of Ireland. I have given the opinion of Sir C. W. Dilke, who is identified with the reform party of England, and an earnest advocate of the disestablishment of the Irish Church. And I have given the opinion of Mr. Martineau as to what that gentleman saw in the colony for which we are legislating, with regard to the character of this class of persons. What has been the experience of the mother country with regard to the few Irish immigrants in England? In the year 1862 I saw with my own eyes some three or four hundred Irishmen create a riot, an anti-Garibaldian riot, in the heart of London, and continue their disorder throughout the whole day. The *Times* of the following morning remarked that it would be impossible to find any of these persons in the ordinary walks of industrial life, so few and insignificant were their numbers, but nevertheless they appeared, as if by magic, to disturb the peace and revel in their senseless violence, in the midst of a Protestant city of 4,000,000 of souls. At Birkenhead, when Mr. Laird was elected, an election riot was created by the handful of Irish residents. The same thing occurred in an election at Preston, and at other places. And at all times these people, led on by their priests, sided in their violence with the enemies of human progress, and against the friends of popular liberty. It is not a pleasant thing to have to address oneself to a subject like this. I do not imagine anyone can suppose that I take delight in a subject of this kind, or am anxious to evoke personal hostility. I can have no object to serve. I am aware that persons who are anxious to accomplish their own ends by setting class against class in this country, have accused me of the same thing. What design can I have? If I desire a seat in this House, I can always find one; and I do not think any one supposes I should have much difficulty in finding one. I confess I do not see anything to make a seat in this Assembly an object of special ambition to any

man. I say at once, I shall not take much trouble to return to this Assembly. On the contrary, I shall be exceedingly well pleased if the door of this Assembly is closed against me. [Mr. Hart: Hear, hear.] I have no doubt the hon. member would be well pleased also. (Laughter). For the few years I have to live, I think I can employ my time elsewhere, and in other pursuits, perhaps more largely to my own enjoyment, and my own advantage. I hope I have up to this point expressed my opinions without manifesting any bad feeling. I have put before the House the views of very intelligent persons—persons whose views are entitled to weight and authority. In addressing myself to this subject, I have done so in a spirit quite consistent with the spirit of calm enquiry in the passage I have quoted from Mr. Cobden's works. I have no feeling of hostility to the Irish people. I have always freely associated with them, and have never been influenced by any prejudice towards them; but I take my stand on this ground; I feel myself charged with the grave responsibility of devising a system of immigration, of making laws for the country, affecting its future social character and lasting interests; and I cannot shut my eyes to the momentous consequences involved in this question. I should be unworthy of sitting here if I allowed the fear of loss of friendship, the fear of personal misrepresentation or hostility, to influence me, when I see the calamitous results that may flow from injudicious legislation on the question before us. As a member of the great nation composed of Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen, it is my duty to preserve the character of the community as representing fairly and fully these various nationalities. It is my duty to the utmost of my power to preserve the British character as representing the Reformed religion, because that Reformed religion, in my sense of my political functions and obligations, is identified with human progress and human liberty. (Hear, hear). I would not desire to live myself, and I would warn my children against living, in a country where the majority of the people were subject to a foreign potentate and under an ecclesiastical organisation which deprived them of liberty of thought and action, and reduced them to mere obedient creatures who must obey the dictates and commands of ignorant priests. [Mr. Egan: That is your opinion.] I am here to express my opinion; and occupying the position the hon. member does, it is not his place to seek to restrict that expression, when the responsibility rests with me alone. I feel myself bound to give utterance to my opinions, and to vote in the way that will best give effect to them, in conserving the British interests and the British character of this British colony. (Hear, hear). What is our experience of this mass of immigration that has poured into the country during the last several years, at a cost of £300,000, bringing us 15,000 Irishmen to 4000 Englishmen? Have these people come to mingle with us—to assist in forming one common Australian people? Is it not the case that they bring with them the memory of their Irish wrongs, and reproduce amongst us their seditious agitations charged with senseless insults to the nationality of England? I am one of those who freely admit that Ireland has been a cruelly misgoverned



country; but all people coming here, from whatever country, should lose all sense of foreign grievances, and mingle together in promoting Australian interests and in forming one people. (Hear, hear). But has this been the case? On the contrary, have not these persons moved about with a separate action of their own—they not, obviously and beyond dispute, instead of acting as free agents in a free country, been insensible to the priceless liberties they enjoy, surrendering their precious rights, and yielding up all their privileges to priests not more able to direct them than they are themselves? Look at the manner in which these people exercise the suffrage. Instead of exercising their judgment freely on the merits of the candidates presenting themselves for election, is not this particular section of the population to be seen moving together in one dark mass under the orders of others, and throwing the great weight of their numbers into the scale, irrespective of all questions of political import or personal fitness involved in the election itself? What can be more dangerous to the successful working of representative institutions? That danger is alarmingly apparent in this country, when we find politicians fearful of expressing their opinions lest they should offend their Irish supporters; and Ministers of the Crown, although fortified by their position of lawful authority, continually bending to this particular section of the community in opposition to their own judgment, in contravention of the public interest, and simply because they are afraid to offend a body of men so powerful at the ballot-box. (Hear, hear.) I have myself been present in a polling booth when a body of men came up to record their votes, and, not being able to read, when they were asked by the Returning-officer for whom they wished to vote, they stated that they wanted to vote for the priest's man. (Hear, hear.) Not very long ago the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bathurst, Dr. Quinn, published a manifesto in which he declared that Roman Catholic parents would be denied the ordinances of their religion if they continued to send their children to the Public schools. (Hear, hear.) Can persons in a position like this be said to be free? Parents desire to give their children the best education that can be obtained, and send them to schools conducted in no way antagonistic to their religion; but the priest steps in and forbids it with threats that they will be deprived of the consolations of the Church and handed over to perdition. That is the plain way of putting it. (Hear, hear.) Can we expect to build up a free, enlightened, and powerful nation under influences such as these, which prevent persons having the grave responsibility of parents from doing the best they can for their offspring. In these remarks I am not under the influence of any feelings of hostility or religious bigotry, and in the course of my whole life I have never shown the slightest prejudice against the people of any country or creed. I oppose the Bill on no such ground, but with the object of preserving the British character of the colony and the freedom of its people.

I am not in favour of any system of immigration confined to the introduction of mere manual labourers in order to compete with the wages-receiving classes now here. (Hear, hear.) Immigration, to be

sound, must be in a stream fairly representing the mother-country, bringing persons of all classes, including the labourer, men of small means, and men of large means, and with a view to the settlement of population on the lands of the country. (Hear, hear.) I have no sympathy whatever with those prejudices which seem to influence some persons in their opposition to any fresh immigration. I believe that a steady flow of immigrants into this colony would benefit the working classes more than any other. But before it can have that effect it must bring here the industrious, sober, and provident, and must represent the various grades of English society. In the human family the largest class of persons are so organised mentally that they are only fitted to work under the direction of more intelligent minds. Have we not continually experienced that? Have we not seen, all of us, examples of men who have proved themselves praiseworthy, most efficient, meritorious members of society, in some particular walk of life where they were under discipline and intelligent direction, but who, on being removed to another condition of life where they have had to trust to their own resources, have entirely failed? We want in a new stream of population a fair proportion of those self-reliant, self-contained minds, who can discover where new avenues for productive industry can be opened, and the best means of developing fields for the employment of others who have not the same foresight and penetrating judgment. We can only meet with that fair proportion of superior intelligence by having our immigration scheme on such sound principles that it will ensure a fair representation of all classes of the British population. To bring five or six thousand persons here every year of the class only fit to follow the leading of others, would increase our difficulties. There cannot be a doubt on any man's mind, but that this country is as capable as any in the world of sustaining a great population. Our mineral wealth is equal to that of any other country; and, notwithstanding that Victoria has made much greater advances as a gold-producing country, we have the authority of intelligent officers of the Governments of other colonies for believing that our gold-bearing lands are superior to those of Victoria, and that they only want the application of science and intelligent enterprise to develop them, and make us a gold-producing community richer than any on these Australian shores. It cannot be doubted that in many other respects we have all the elements of a prosperous nation, and that millions of persons may settle in this land, and by their settlement secure to all a larger amount than is now enjoyed of happiness and plenty. But if this result is to be obtained we must not dwarf the grand idea of creating a nation, for that in reality is what immigration means, by regarding it as merely the introduction of manual labourers to compete with persons of the same class who are already here. I hope that nobody will suppose that my opposition to this bill arises from any want of appreciation of the importance of immigration; and I hope I have said nothing that can justly offend the authors of the bill. I have not gone out of my way to make any observation whatever on the motives by which they have been



RB  
325.94  
P245i

actuated, or the ability they have manifested in framing this measure. I have confined my attention to the measure itself, and I have spoken frankly, without prejudice, and I hope in a good spirit, my views on the question. I am extremely sorry that I cannot support the measure, because I have a strong conviction that the question of increasing the population of the country is more important than any other—more important than the public finances, more important than legislative schemes for opening the lands of the country. It is my belief that from various causes the population is in an abnormal condition, that we have far too many persons engaged in trade—in the mere business of exchange and agency, that we have an undue proportion of our people depending upon the labours of the rest, and that of the causes which have operated to bring this about, the most fruitful has been the particular system of immigration which has prevailed in this country. I see no way of adjusting this disordered condition, of repairing these difficulties, of restoring society here to a normal and healthy play, except by the introduction of a superior class of persons—except by outvoting the improvident and dependent classes by provident and independent people. For this reason, I regard this question as one of transcendent importance, surpassing all others, and in fact including all others. The difficulty of finance would be got rid of at once if our population were increased, the mere operation of the Customs tariff supplying all needful revenue. The expense of government would be proportionately lessened; because if our population were quadrupled—if we had two millions, where now we have less than half a million, the expenses of government would be very little increased. The evils of the cost of government from which we suffer are in part incident to and inseparable from our infant condition, and by a natural operation they would be diminished by a sound promotion of immigration. This bill, however, would make matters worse, and would simply add to the inert mass of helplessness in our society, while it would still further increase the debt of the country. It would only bring out a class of persons who would swell the idle, dependent, and unproductive classes of the State; and it would at the same time add to those elements of conflict and weakness which are already so apparent to all impartial observers. For this reason I shall give the Bill my unqualified opposition, and I conclude with the motion that it be read a second time this day six months. (Cheers.)