

“ shall go into our own pockets, but that, whatever does arise over and above the profits of the promoters, shall be applied to the general benefit of the Irish people. We propose to substitute the public and responsible management of an official department, for that of a private company, accompanied, as private enterprise must be, by irresponsibility. \* \* \* We think that, by these means, we shall be able, most considerably, to lessen the cost of the construction of the works, as well as to reduce the rates of travelling.”

These were some of the proposals of the government of that time. They may not precisely suit the changed condition of things; but they are worthy of the highest consideration from our existing statesmen; and they ought not to receive that consideration less effectually, because the Prime Minister of this day then sustained them, as leader of the House of Commons. Whatever may be the precise shape which a reform, in *some* shape manifestly necessary, may ultimately assume, I confidently trust, that it will secure to Ireland all the civilizing influences which have been exerted by railways in other lands, and which have yet had only partial and obstructed operation amongst us. The time, perhaps, has come, when we may more hopefully repeat the invocation of the poet, with which the Chief Secretary, of 1839, sought to rouse the Legislature to action for Ireland.

Bid harbours open; public ways extend;  
 Let temples, worthier of the God, ascend;  
 Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood restrain;  
 The mole projected, break the roaring main!  
 Back to his bounds the stormy sea command,  
 And roll obedient rivers through the land!  
 These honors, peace to happy Britain brings,  
 These are imperial works, and worthy kings!

For Ireland, also, it is surely possible to excel in “imperial works,” like these, and, uniting material and industrial progress with intellectual activity and moral culture, to shape her fortune to happier issues. It behoves us all to aid, according to our power, towards the attainment of that good result; and, if we can promote it, even in an humble measure, our Society will worthily accomplish the purpose of its existence, and deserve well of a renovated people.

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## II.—*Report of the Council at the Opening of the Nineteenth Session.*

[Read Tuesday, 28th November, 1865.]

The Council, with much confidence, renew on this, the commencement of the nineteenth session of the Society, the congratulations offered to the members on many similar occasions. Taking an active and useful part in the promotion of social science, and in

increasing its communication with like other kindred associations in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, this Society continues to devote itself particularly to the investigations of social questions connected with Ireland, and to the development in this country of a taste for information of a character no less useful than practical. With its finances in a satisfactory condition, its roll of members yearly increasing in number—the information contained in the publications of the Society thus disseminated more widely, throughout the country districts especially—its meetings well attended, and the discussions carried on with temper and moderation, the Society happily presents in its continuing prosperity the evidence of its recognized utility.

#### PAPERS READ DURING THE SESSION.

The Council refer with peculiar satisfaction to the character of the papers read during the past session, as presenting a body of practical information on subjects of very general importance. In the Inaugural Address of the President, the Hon. Judge Longfield, a most valuable addition has been made to the disquisitions upon the various phases of the land questions which in former years were laid before the Society by Mr. H. Dix Hutton, Dr. Hancock, Mr. Greer, Mr. Heron, Q.C., Mr. Ross, and others; and which, it may be hoped, were not without their effect in the temperate discussion of the question publicly, in later years.

So too, the public mind in this country was prepared for the examination, since earnestly pursued, of the policy of the purchase by government of the railways in the United Kingdom, by the well informed statements laid before this Society on the occasions early in the session, when papers on Railway Reform were read by Mr. S. McCurdy Greer, and by your Secretary, Mr. Gibson.

Upon the subject of Public Health contributions full of useful facts and practical suggestions were made; one by Mr. John Hancock, recommending the extension in Ireland of the Towns' Improvement Act of 1854; the other by Dr. Mapother, pointing out the differences between the statutes bearing on public health for England and Ireland. The legislature are yearly devoting more and more attention to sanitary reform, and it may not be inappropriate to the mention of these discussions in this Society, to point public attention to the valuable Act passed last session (28 and 29 Vic. cap. 75) for facilitating the more useful application of sewage in Great Britain and Ireland.

Questions affecting the working classes occupied much attention through the papers read by Professor Cairnes on "Co-operation in the Slate Quarries in North Wales;" by Professor Houston on the "Strike and Lock-out in the Iron Trade," as well as through the views expressed by your Secretary, Dr. Hancock, on "Strikes with respect to Hours of Labour;" and by Mr. Arthur Cleary on "The Organization of Industry with a view to Cheap Production." To the advance of co-operative societies in this country some of the members of this Society are giving active aid.

On the subject of Education, Dr. Shaw called attention to the

necessity of legislative or other interference to remove the disability of persons who had taken collegiate degrees in the Irish universities, from becoming the heads of certain public schools in England, whilst no reciprocal exclusion existed in this country.

In the Department of Jurisprudence, too, as upon the other subjects already adverted to, members, versed in the matters of which they treated, directed attention to points which their experience suggested. Mr. Monahan's paper on the "Functions of Grand Juries in Criminal Cases;" Mr. Molloy's "Suggestions for the Amendment of the Law relating to the qualification and selection of Jurors," and the paper by your Secretary, Mr. O'Shaughnessy on the "Venue for Trials," all were of a nature to call for the serious consideration, not simply of jurists, but also of the public at large, who are constantly and deeply affected by them.

Our system of Patent Laws, a subject which in the industrial progress of the kingdom is becoming of increasing interest, was reviewed by Mr. J. Lowry Whittle, and its working examined.

The only other paper read during the session, was that in which the effects of increased spirit duties was discussed by Mr. J. J. Murphy, and his views explained as to the consequences of recent fiscal regulations on that important branch of national industry.

The Journal of the Society has placed most of these important contributions in the hands of the members.

#### THE LIBRARY.

The Council congratulate the Society on many valuable additions recently made to the Library, particularly in information respecting our Australian colonies, obtained by means of the Hon. John O'Shanessy, and Mr. W. H. Archer, corresponding members. To the Registrar-General in Ireland, Mr. Donnelly, C.B., acknowledgments also are due.

#### BARRINGTON LECTURES.

The lecturer, Mr. John Monroe, reports that the attendance at the courses of lectures delivered out of Dublin, viz. :—at Banbridge, Armagh and Kilkenny, was in general fair. The subjects were selected with a view to spread amongst the people a knowledge of the principles of Political Economy, selecting for illustrations some questions of present interest; thus he has lectured during the past year on Free Trade and Protection; on Trades' Unions and Strikes; on the Economic Aspects of Slavery; on Emigration; on our Fiscal System, &c.

In Dublin, such lectures do not seem to prove as attractive as their value to the working classes, for whom they are intended, unquestionably deserves.

#### RECENT LEGISLATION.

One other topic remains for congratulation,—the enactment during the last session of statutes providing for the recording of Titles to Land (cap. 88) and authorizing Transferable Debentures to

be charged upon land (cap. 101) in Ireland. To a not inconsiderable share in the work of adding these measures to the statute book this Society may lay claim; here it was that, at an early period, Judge Longfield, our President, promulgated his well-considered views upon Land Debentures; here, too, were discussed the projects for the Registration of Titles, as explained by Colonel Torrens and Mr. H. Dix Hutton; through the means of the free discussions of this Society, these proposals for changes of the law were ventilated; and through some of its members their details were worked out. To these enactments, from which many expect much benefit to the community, the open counsels of this Society have given help, as they did to many previous measures of practical advantage to our country.

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III.—*The Unhealthiness of Irish Towns, and the Want of Sanitary Legislation.* By E. D. Mapother, M.D., Professor of Hygiene, Royal College of Surgeons; Medical Officer of Health, Dublin; and Surgeon to St. Vincent's Hospital.

[Read Tuesday, 19th December, 1865]

ABOUT two years ago, I had the honour of reading a short paper on the "Sanitary State of Dublin," in which I was compelled to assert that it was most unsatisfactory, because of the insufficient legal powers which then belonged to the Corporation, and because of the imperfect machinery which had been organized to carry out the preventive powers which they did possess. In July, 1864, the "Dublin Improvement Acts Amendment Act" became law, and so ample were its provisions that it has left scarcely anything to be desired in the way of sanitary legislation, and it will be the fault of the Corporation and its officers if the most substantial benefits do not soon follow. The artisan and poorer classes of this city, who number about 100,000, dwell in some 8,000 houses, each room of which is usually let as a separate tenement, and the state of these dwellings has been deplorable in the extreme. The Corporation gained by the recent Act the power to compel the owners of these houses to put in thorough repair, and keep so, their roofs, walls, and chimneys; to have their windows kept clean, and glazed, and movable at the top or bottom, and to keep a properly-trapped house-drain and other sanitary requisites in good order. The Corporation is also to determine the fit number of occupants for each of these rooms, many of which are dangerously overcrowded; for instance, in Cuffe-street there is a room in which six adults have but 216 cubic feet of space each, and two children half that amount. The standard which has been proposed is 300 cubic feet for each person over eight years, and 150 for each child below that age, and a card stating the cubic measurement and the fit number of occupants will be posted in each room. The poverty of the occupants and the want of good house accommodation has precluded the adoption of a higher standard, the regulations under which I am