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### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

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#### THE INDUSTRIAL AWAKENING OF IRELAND.

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[Read Friday, November 14th, 1913].

It is now ten years since Mr. Bailey in his Presidential address of 1903 took as his subject "Ireland since the Famine." I am inclined to think that we now stand in 1913 upon the threshold of another mighty change, the industrial development of Ireland, and I propose to-night to see whether the last ten years bear out this view.

Prior to the Famine the population of Ireland in 1846 was rather over 8,000,000, it has now fallen to about 4,500,000.

A great deal has been said and written, very naturally, of this drop in the population, but latterly certain writers and speakers have asserted that the decrease began with the Union of 1st January, 1801, and in fact it has been contended that all the decrease has been due to the Union, and all kinds of arguments for future statesmanship have been based upon this assumption, which is absolutely incorrect.

So far from decreasing after the Union, the population, which was a little over 5,000,000 in 1801, rose immediately afterwards, and it continued to increase rapidly for the next 46 years. The increase was constant, but for brevity I will only give the decennial periods:—

1801	..	..	5,216,329
1811	..	..	5,955,466
1821	..	..	6,801,827
1831	..	..	7,767,401
1841	..	..	8,199,853

Finally in 1846, nearly fifty years after the Union, the population reached 8,287,848, three millions more than it had been at the time of the Union, an increase of 60 per cent.

Then came in 1846 the awful catastrophe of the Famine, with which Mr. Bailey's paper opened. The country was crowded, there were no railways except the Dublin and Kingstown and the Dublin and Drogheda, both very short and on the east coast, for the Act for the Great Southern and Western was only obtained in 1845, steamers were few, harbours defective, the difficulties of transport prohibitive, the population, very largely agricultural, depended much on potatoes for food, the crop failed, and in grim language Ireland became a vast Congested District. The downward sweep of the pendulum set in, the starving people died or fled, some to England, others to the United States, Canada, Australia, just as many Highland Scots fled at the same time. The population fell in each succeeding census, but it is incorrect to attribute the falling-off to the Union forty-five years before, regardless of the intervening increase. The cause was not the Union of 1801, but the Famine of 1846-7. From the Union to the Famine the population steadily and rapidly increased.

It is not my intention to-night to enter upon the subject of the Famine. I have merely mentioned it to clear away the erroneous idea that the decrease was due to political causes, and to avoid building a system of reforms on a wrong foundation. The real blow was the Famine, due to the sudden blight which destroyed the potato crop.

It is only fair to point out that wide-spread as was the suffering at the time of the Famine, there were even then certain alleviating circumstances at work. For one thing, the railway systems both in Great Britain and Ireland developed marvellously about this time (the celebrated Railway Mania occurred in 1847) and not only were communications improved, but the enormous "labour in the earthwork," as railway cuttings and embankments were called, provided an immense army of "spade-users" with daily work as navvies while there was in connection with railways a considerable increase in shipping, notably our cross-channel services.

By no means the smallest change in Dublin since the Famine has been the conversion of Dublin harbour into a commodious port crowded with traffic, and demanding further extension, but I have dealt with this subject on a previous occasion. My father, who was in this country during the Famine, has told me that in those days, 1846-7, he remembered the North Wall was absolutely bare and empty from Carlisle Bridge to Halpin's Pond, at the East end of the North Wall, where the G.S. & W. Goods station now stands, at which point there was a solitary gunboat.

I do not suppose that this meant that there never were any

vessels or steamers there at all, but that these were only occasional. There was even then a weekly British and Irish steamer to London, and at least another once a week to Bristol. Now there are twelve lines of steamers on the North Quays alone, many of them with several steamers, some starting twice a day and even oftener, and communicating with Liverpool, Holyhead, Glasgow, London and various other ports. So much has the traffic increased that three other lines of steamers have been compelled to use the South Quays, though destitute of the immense advantage of railway connection, because the deserted quays of 1847 have become insufficient to accommodate the traffic, although the steamers are three times the size they were. As a matter of fact at the last General Meeting of the Dublin and South Eastern Railway Company, I pleaded for an extension of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway to the South Quays, not only for the benefit of the Railway Company, although it is perhaps the best step that that Company could take to improve its traffic and prosperity, but because it was absolutely necessary, in my humble judgment, to secure additional railway connection with the sea, having regard to the delay of business caused by the over-crowding of the North Wall, and its bad connection by road with the city, which, is for the most part on the south side of the river.

Mr. Bailey has dealt so fully with this period of fifty years and more, that it is unnecessary to trace the events between 1848 and 1903, the present point is to show that the great development of the port of Dublin, which really made it commercially successful, belongs to this era, including as it does the general junction of the various main lines of railway of Ireland at the North Wall, which practically dates from about 1873, but which was spread over a number of years. The South Quay deepening was only completed within the present year.

These changes would appear to be due not so much to legislation as to social improvement and education, largely to railways and means of communication, and hence this comparatively lengthy notice of the development of Dublin harbour.

Resuming now the course of events in Ireland from 1903, the date of Mr. Bailey's most interesting and instructive address, it would appear that during the ten years which have since passed the effect of the great changes in the social system mentioned by him have to some extent become manifest and that we can now trace their tendency and note the direction in which they are moving.

There is special difficulty in weighing the evidence. In the physical world scales can be so delicately adjusted as to be turned by writing in pencil on a piece of paper already

weighed. Compared with that machinery the task of weighing the evidence at my command is far more serious. I can only bring very ordinary faculties to bear upon the problem and I feel the want of certainty due to imperfect observation when I give my opinion that Ireland has "rounded the corner."

I can only say that my conclusion is the result of much consideration, and that I wish I had a better balance at my command for estimating the various forces which have their share in influencing the result. It is really a very complicated problem to trace the drift of a nation's progress, and ascertain whether it is advancing or not. For instance the Cattle Outbreak last year seemed to be a terrible misfortune. Now it rather seems that it was a blessing in disguise; it showed us a very weak point in our main industry, which indeed thinking men had long foreseen, but which our agriculturists obstinately refused to consider, and probably it will end by forcing us to modify our present methods and to supplement our live export with a dressed meat trade, which will have the result of giving far more employment to our industrial population, as distinct from our agricultural, while actually increasing the latter also.

In an agricultural country, such as Ireland has been, and still more in an island isolated to a great extent from outside influence, efforts at improvement have naturally taken the form of an improved and systematic export of agricultural produce, such as the cattle trade, which had already achieved success in the form of a live export during the period included in Mr. Bailey's address.

This is not meant to deny the immense increase of Belfast and very considerable growth of Dublin city before 1903, but since that date it would seem that our general exports are taking a new form. We are still exporting live cattle, but we are adding other exports, such as butter for instance, which involves a certain amount of "manufacture," representing remunerative labour, and thus supplying work for more hands, in fact for an increased population.

This exportation of agricultural produce began with a rough and ready system of co-operation, and this is the way in which such movements have begun in other countries and at other periods. The prevailing system of trading and commerce in the Middle Ages, roughly speaking, was the system of Guilds, using the word in a wide sense for a loose body of merchants or traders having a common business, and to some extent helping each other and sharing expenses, while receiving, or trying to receive individual profits, and having no part in the government of the country. We find this in Venice in the Middle Ages, and still more in the mighty Hanseatic League, comparatively less known, which under the leadership of Lubeck the great "Queen of the Hanse,"

became a Confédération strong enough to hurl a monarch from the throne of Denmark. There can be no doubt also that the nations of the North, England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the coasts of the Baltic now belonging to Prussia and Russia, gradually sought to manufacture the raw material in spite of the efforts of the Hanse to hold the monopoly. The course adopted by Queen Elizabeth, who finally closed the celebrated but mis-called "Steel Yard" of the Esterlings in London, is well known to most readers of history. The League, as everyone knows, faded rapidly in the 16th century, and even the three surviving "free cities" Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck no longer possess separate postage stamps, but form part of the German Empire.

In this exportation of agricultural produce from Ireland we have, of recent years, seen an immense development, the produce of Creameries, Eggs, Fowls, Fruit, Vegetables, transmitted in a system of regular quantities, the first attempt at exporting anything beyond raw material, and it would seem that now, in 1913, after ten years of preparation, we are standing on the brink of exporting finished articles involving remunerative labour in their preparation, and also of utilising what may be called the "by-products" to give work to another class of people, and so provide for a surplus population and once more increase our numbers.

The Irish population fell off first from the Famine but also because there was not remunerative work at home for the full number. They left the country in search of the means of living, in other words of work. If now we want to stop the falling-off, the inhabitants must be provided with work, and of late it would appear that this has actually taken place and that there are already faint signs of the change, and hence the title of my address. Confirmation of this theory may, perhaps, be drawn from the fact that the rate of decrease in the population has gradually shrunk from year to year, and has been of late confined to those districts where there has been an absence of industrial labour or occupation as opposed to agricultural.

Between 1901 and 1911 :—

	per cent.
Connaught has fallen off by 36,966, amounting to	5·7
Munster has fallen off by 43,103, amounting to	4·0
Ulster has fallen off by 4,254, amounting to	0·3
Leinster shows an <i>increase</i> of 7,499, amounting to	0·7

The difference between the first two and the last two is remarkable; in the first two, agriculture predominates to a great extent, in the last two there is in each a great industrial centre.

More evidence is forthcoming in the fact that there has been an increase in the urban populations where labour is

utilised, as against the agricultural where it is falling off. It is not well to clog an address with statistics, but here are a few instances.

In 1881 the populations of Londonderry and Waterford cities were equal, Londonderry had 29,162, and Waterford 29,181, the latter leading by less than a score. In 1901 Londonderry had risen to 39,892, Waterford had fallen to 26,768. In 1911 Londonderry had risen to 40,799, and Waterford had to some extent recovered to 27,464, bearing out the theory in both respects, as it will be seen that the falling off in Waterford City has ceased.

As regards Munster, the theory holds good, Cork City in 1901 had 75,115 inhabitants, increased in 1911 to 76,679. Limerick City increased from 38,161 in 1901 to 38,518 in 1911. The increases are small, almost microscopic, but as already remarked the first signs are very slight, it is the almost imperceptible turn of the tide.

As regards Leinster, the same phenomenon appears to be visible, Omitting Dublin, where the increase is very large indeed, and taking the next three towns, Dundalk, Drogheda and Wexford, they show the following results:—

Dundalk, 1901	..	13,067.	1911	..	13,128
Drogheda, 1901	..	12,760.	1911	..	12,501
					(a decrease)
Wexford, 1901	..	11,168.	1911	..	11,531

It must be remembered that we are only dealing with tendencies, these small increases follow previous and long-continued decreases, but they carry out the deduction that we have reached the point where we are beginning to find work for our surplus population, and hence to keep more of them at home, and that the days of decrease are rapidly drawing to a close. A ship is in fair hope of being saved when the pumps begin to gain on the leak, and when a barometer ceases to fall it is a sign that we have seen the worst of a storm.

Finally, and it is a little remarkable that I had drafted this paper before I heard of it, I find by the report of the Registrar-General for Ireland for 1912, published this year, that he states that there has been an increase in the population of Ireland in the year ending 30th June, of 1912, as compared with the middle of the preceding year; in other words there were 1,102 more births than deaths and emigrants put together during the year ending 30th June, 1912, the first increase for the last sixty years and upwards.

Another point of great importance as an index of improvement is the accumulation of means, or as it is termed "wealth." The large enterprises of modern life, roads, railways, factories, require considerable funds for their construction and erection.

It is well known and has been commented upon by various writers and speakers, that the wealth of Ireland, represented by surplus cash, bank accounts, savings-bank deposits and so on, has been increasing marvellously of recent years, and in fact we now have ample funds available for investment, if it were not that our institutions have not yet secured the trust and confidence due to long stability.

It is another hindrance to our prosperity that in addition to our original absence of capital our political movements, only too often have been movements of subversion, ruinous to commercial peace and prosperity.

At the same time these appear to be undergoing a change all over the country, and there is now a much larger class devoted to and interested in preserving private peace and plenty, and by way of instancing what is coming it will be sufficient to take the cattle trade of Ireland as a general example. It has grown up gradually, so gradually that people hardly recognise its enormous extent, and the number of people interested in it. It needed the recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease, and the subsequent embargo placed on our live export to show how vital it has become to the prosperity of the country.

According to Thom's Almanack we exported for all Ireland in 1911, 694,828 head of cattle, and from Dublin alone 306,206. I take that year as the Foot and Mouth outbreak interfered with 1912.

For the sake of brevity no reference is made to horses, sheep and swine, but only to cattle.

Most of us are aware that these consist of two great classes, one of fat cattle for immediate slaughter, and the other of young thin cattle, technically termed "Stores," sent to Scotland and England to be fattened for market.

Of late years the Irish farmers have been depending more and more on the sale of "stores" to be fattened across the Channel, and it is a question if the supply of fat cattle is much more than sufficient for our own local demands for butchers' meat. The matter has caused considerable anxiety among the victuallers of Dublin. In fact during May last, if not later, as a consequence of a great demand for cattle in England, caused by prohibition of our export last year, the Dublin butchers could not obtain supplies for the Dublin market, except at enhanced prices, and they wished to stop the threatened export of dressed meat, to prevent their being outbid in the market, and applied to the Dublin Chamber of Commerce to withdraw a resolution passed by that body in favour of introducing a dressed meat export.

It is obvious that such a course as stopping this trade would be a retrograde step, depriving the farmers of Ireland of their legitimate free market, and the Chamber of Commerce

very properly declined to comply. The proper course would be to increase the supply of fat cattle by providing more tillage and root crops.

This is an important matter, but one feature of the subject is that it presents many side-issues: for present purposes it will be sufficient to deal with the majority of the cattle, the so-called "stores."

The peculiarity of these is that they are exported alive across the Channel, where they are bought by English and Scottish farmers to be fattened by them and resold at a profit, a handsome profit, to the butchers of Great Britain.

Another point to be borne in mind is that a beast does not consist entirely of eatable meat; nearly one-half, say six parts out of fourteen by weight, is made up of hide, hoofs, horns and uneatable interior, all technically termed by butchers "offal," *i.e.*, waste meat or refuse, but though "refuse" in the eyes of the butcher these remaining six-fourteenths of each beast are valuable for other purposes, they support very large trades:—Manure, Tanning, Felting, Soap, Candles, Glue. Unfortunately by our system of live export we lose two things, first the profit of fattening the "stores," second the profit of the offal and the various products obtained from it, both of which would support a much larger population than we possess, for it cannot be doubted that our population is far below what it might be if we had work to give them.

The farmer puts forward two arguments in favour of the existing system, both of which are fallacious. He says, "the purchaser pays me for the offal, that goes into the price he pays for the live beast, and, second, I don't have to go to the expense of growing roots, wages to labourers run away with the profits of fattening."

As to the first, naturally the farmer does get something in the price on foot of the hides, horns, hoofs, &c., but it is something like what the English of the Fourteenth Century got when they sold their raw wool to the Flemish weavers and bought back cloth at more than ten times the price of the wool, a mere fraction of the value if they developed the raw material themselves, as the English eventually learned to do with their wool. If we kept the raw material we should be supporting our surplus labour besides getting a much greater profit. Exporting "raw material" is all very well, but it is very far inferior to exporting "labour," for the worker's time and skill are then paid for in coin, and represent a much greater portion of the product than the mere value of the raw material, even without the further point that each worker is himself a consumer in regard to other trades than his own.



It may be better to give an illustration in a concrete form and not in bare statistics. In 1911 we exported from Dublin more than 300,000 head of cattle. Allowing 300 working days in the year this meant 1,000 hides a day, each weighing, say 60 pounds, a low allowance. The number of tanners required to deal with such a quantity, 535 hundred-weight daily, call it five hundred for round numbers, and taking all the processes into consideration, would be very considerable, and these tanners in their turn would be customers for food and clothes, and the same with the other offal.

As to the value the declared value of exported leather is returned as over £12 a hundred-weight. It does not take much arithmetic to show what an enormous sum is represented by 500 hundred-weight (25 tons) turned out each working day in a year. It is far nearer £2,000,000 than £1,000,000. Does the Irish farmer get anything like this sum when he sells the hides on the living beast? The question is ridiculous.

Now as to the second :—It is true that the farmer saves the wages of labourers for root crops, but it is a question for my audience to consider whether the canny Scots, who buy so many thousands of our store cattle to fatten, do so for benevolent and philanthropic motives! Can anyone say that this charitable motive has created the business that runs at least one daily express goods-train from Aberdeen through Carlisle to London, 540 miles, quicker than the mail train itself?

This may seem incredible, but the dressed meat train starts from Aberdeen at 1.50 p.m., fifty minutes after the mail train, and arrives in London before it, passing the mail train at some station on the way, generally north of Carlisle.

There may be some credulous persons who may think differently, but the reasonable conclusion is that charity and benevolence have nothing to say to the case, and that the simple fact is that the fattening process pays well when properly managed, and further, it supports a large number of agricultural hands engaged in growing turnips, beet, mangold, &c., to supply the cattle with fattening food. The Irish farmer has lost sight of the fact that these two sources have been thrown away by him. He has been content to take his small profit, and has allowed the fattening and the by-products to slip through his hands. Some indeed have ceased to do any agricultural work strictly so called. I have known a so-called "farmer" who, by his own confession, had not even a spade, rake, fork, or any implement on his premises, and whose sole occupation was watching cattle endeavouring to find grass in his neglected crop of thistles and blackhead, and this experience of mine was by no means a single instance.

In other words, the Irish farmers, or rather some of them, are imitating the English of some 500 years ago, when they sold their undressed wool to the Flemish weavers.

It may seem erroneous to devote so much attention to our live cattle export, but over and above its value as illustrating the difference between exporting raw material and the finished product, the cattle trade is our leading industry as regards a great part of the country, and there are signs of very important changes looming in the future, all tending in the direction of our ceasing to export "stores," and replacing them partly by finished cattle fit for market, but far more by a dressed meat trade, which will enable us to utilise our own factories for the uneatable portions which for years we have been exporting at nominal prices. It is worthy of remark that on the 10th September this year, the Lord Mayor of Belfast opened in that city a new municipal abattoir, erected and equipped at a cost of £52,000 on a site of four acres adjoining the markets, cattle sale-yards and railways, and containing lairages, slaughter halls, dressing halls and cooling rooms, manifestly in preparation for a new system in that stirring city.

The immediate cause of this activity has been the recent outburst of cattle disease and the consequent embargo on our live export to Great Britain. If the movement continue it will be truly said that the recent outbreak has been indeed a blessing in disguise, but it all depends if we have the energy and ability to utilise the chance offered to us. We have the capital if we had confidence in our commercial ability.

It is only right to say that the importation of chilled meat from abroad is in the hands of powerful competitors, and it will involve a keen struggle for Ireland to hold her own, but her opponents are handicapped by distance and she has the ability and strength, if she will use them promptly, energetically and with unity of action.

The cattle trade is not the only business capable of development and naturally much of what has been said applies to other great exports, sheep and swine. Further, since 1903, various industries have been established too numerous and perhaps too small to receive special mention, but still all showing that during the last ten years there has been a steady improvement and development, and that there is no sign of reverting to the old state of things.

Curiously enough there is a matter which gives some apprehension. It would appear that the men capable of directing large works and developing businesses are as yet comparatively rare in this country. So far from the market being over-stocked with the talent for such undertakings, the exact contrary seems to be the case. It is not exactly want of brain, the wit is keen, the apprehension quick, the

intellect good; it is perhaps more a moral than an intellectual deficiency. There seems to be a want of originality, regularity, punctuality, method and system. There is also a habit of shirking trouble, and, above all, an absence of readiness to face responsibility. There are, of course, numerous exceptions, the expression is a general one; but when one meets a genuine "captain of industry" one notices it because of the comparative rarity with which they occur. They are not by any means unknown, any one can recall the names of several, but still they are not numerous taking all Ireland.

Perhaps it would be fairer to say that the defects are rather a question of want of habit and of education due to absence of training than of want of intellectual ability.

A singular defect among directors in Ireland is that they seem only too often to be afflicted with a species of craving for parsimony under the disguise of "economy." Really one hears the word "saving" from the average chairman more frequently than "efficiency." Both individual directors and whole Boards seem unconsciously to take more trouble in keeping down expenses and salaries than in extending business. For instance I have known an Irish Railway Board boast of reducing traffic expenses by one per cent., while they could not be induced to "risk" as they termed it, the same amount in excursion and tourist development, which promised a reasonable prospect of a high return on the immediate expenditure, to say nothing of immense developments in the future. I even remember a General Manager, now dead, who hated excursionists and excursion traffic, because they interfered with his routine.

There is, perhaps, ground for the criticism that we are apt in Ireland to think that there is more virtue in saving money than in making money, and yet when one comes to think of it, there cannot be any doubt that the second is infinitely the more important. A saving is always a small thing compared with the development of new business, and there is always the risk of tampering with the efficiency of the "concern." Unfortunately, a timid board is very apt to put the saving first and perhaps prone to forget the increasing of the business altogether.

This may seem to be wandering from the subject, but it really affects the case very seriously. The old proverb still holds good that an army of stags led by a lion is better than an army of lions led by a stag. A timid board or a timid chief shirks any responsibility at all, and throws away opportunities which only require an effort, while all the subordinates, knowing the risk they run, shirk responsibility in the same way.

Further, there appears to be an absence of foresight among the workers. They are perhaps in some ways unaccustomed

to an industrial life, and there seems to be an absence, or rather a deficiency of what is called among the Scots "level-headedness," which will probably wear off as the people recognise that their prosperity and happiness depend very largely upon their own exertions and their conduct towards each other. At present they do not recognise that thrift, self-restraint, patience and perseverance are necessary for success, and that capital and labour must help each other.

For instance, and it may seem a very quaint instance to give, our strikes are of the most unreasoning and spasmodic description, entered into upon impulse, without the slightest preparation, without any funds laid by, or a thought of the consequences, and as often as not at the suggestion of some stranger who is practically unknown to the strikers, while any grievance that may have existed could have been settled without difficulty. Further, every such episode damages our struggling trade and commerce, perhaps for long periods, because it drives our customers elsewhere, and they do not return; situated as we are, striving to get access to the markets of the world, the effect is really pitiable.

The foregoing paragraph was written before the recent strike in Dublin, and was based upon the disastrous strike which devastated Wexford two years ago.

If it were possible, it would perhaps be better to look upon these episodes in the commercial history of a country with deliberate judgment, and instead of hastily condemning them to regard them as a species of problem or unsolved mystery, often presenting in the future features which are the exact opposite of what they appear to be at the first glance. It may be that it was necessary for our people to learn the lesson, possibly new to our workers, that capital and labour are intimately connected, and that neither of them can work profitably apart.

After all, it is perhaps hardly to be expected that the Irish in their first efforts to become an industrial community should escape the disorders which arose a generation ago in Great Britain. The spasmodic strike was not unknown there, the name of Broadhead is not forgotten yet, and there must be many still alive who remember the terrible time in Sheffield which culminated in a special commission in 1867.

In fact, in spite of the suffering and temporary set-back caused by the recent strike in Dublin, it is quite possible that like the Foot and Mouth outbreak it may prove to be a blessing in disguise, which may save us from worse things in the future, and I certainly have no wish to stir up strife by making reflections on anyone or anything.

Meanwhile, in many ways we are possibly on the verge of better things. Not so long ago we imported much of our rolling stock for our railways, not to mention locomotives,

now we build our own, and we have seen what we never hoped to see in Dublin, the beginning of a ship-yard. A small ship-building yard started some years ago in Dublin by an enterprising man has recently been formed into a Company with sufficient capital for the costly machinery required for large work. In fact many more things are manufactured in Dublin than is generally supposed. I have been in a box factory where they were finishing an order for 20,000 soldiers' chests for Woolwich, and it was by no means the only English order held by the firm. I do not say that our Dublin works are gigantic, but I believe that we have entered upon a new era. Further, in other parts of the country, there are signs that Ireland is now awaking to the opportunities afforded by the improvement of trade facilities and communications, and the inhabitants are beginning to enter upon industries and improvements of which they never dreamed. It is by no means unusual to find some local industry established in some small county town which might almost have served for Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." As a curious instance the paper on which I typed this address was made in the little-known village of Saggard in the County of Dublin.

It may be granted that these county industries are small, mere seedlings at present, but still they are there, and with cultivation they may grow. In fact we have an immense supply of labour, but the workers need training and experience, and we badly want what in the army would be called "non-commissioned officers" by which is meant capable, painstaking, energetic foremen, as well as owners in the case of private firms and directors of public companies.

While the future is thus hopeful, there is still much to be done. In addition to the creation of officers and non-commissioned officers for the industrial army, and drill or technical education for the workmen we have to guard against hindrances connected among other things with education, religion and politics.

The first has improved immensely, not in mere book-learning but in social habits, in method, order, perseverance, system, even cleanliness; these rest to some extent with the teachers. There is still room for improvement, there always is, but the change is remarkable.

Religion does not present much difficulty, there is a good deal of toleration all round, now-a-days, we are improving every year, and I am very glad to acknowledge it. As to politics, it is a more open question, but the subject is barred from discussion in this Society.

I fear I am becoming personal, though I have endeavoured to avoid it, but I have nearly finished. If I could have my wish I should like to see all religions combining to support

truth, justice and charity; I should like to see politicians of all colours uniting for the advancement of comfort, happiness and prosperity. In the words Moore addressed to Ireland nearly a hundred years ago:—

“ Till, like the rainbow's light,  
Thy various tints unite,  
And form in Heaven's sight  
One arch of peace.”

I have now reached the close of my inaugural address, and I think it well to explain why I selected such an ambitious subject.

My reason is that this Society owes its origin to the troubles of the Famine. It was founded in 1847 when the Famine was sore in the land, by a number of distinguished men with the express object, as defined by the resolution, “of a thorough scientific study of the then existing conditions, in the hope that some remedy might be found to alleviate the evils which were having such a disastrous effect upon the country.”

The greatest evil in the country was the continued fall in the population, as indicating an absence of material prosperity based upon the comfort, happiness and prosperity of the individual members.

Hence on finding that the period of my presidency coincided with the first increase in the population since the foundation of the Society, I felt bound by the high office I held to refer to the subject of the industrial awakening of Ireland as a fulfilment of the wishes of the original founders of the Society, however inadequate my knowledge and ability might be to the subject.

Perhaps, as the words of the President of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, my address may attract some notice, and have some effect on the volume of opinion in favour of developing the industrial resources of the country by honest and united action, and by cordial co-operation between labour and capital. Perhaps they may lead others of far greater power, influence and ability, to proclaim that the olden days have passed away, that the dawn of industrial development in Ireland has taken place, and finally I trust that it may prove to be no false dawn, whose radiance is again withdrawn, but that the rise of our happiness and prosperity may soon be recognised as an epoch in the history of our country.