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I—*Address at the Opening of the Twenty-Fifth Session.* By the President (Right Honourable Mr. Justice Lawson).

[Read 21st November, 1871]

As President of your Society, I have been called upon to discharge the usual duty of delivering the opening Address from this chair. I take the opportunity of returning thanks for the honour conferred upon me, and of soliciting your kind indulgence for the omissions and imperfections which may be found in an address written amidst the pressure of very many absorbing duties.

It has been not unusual for the President upon such occasions to take an opportunity of reviewing the condition of our country, regarded from an economic point of view, in order to estimate fairly our present state, to derive some lessons from the experience of the past, and encouragement or warning for the future.

This year seems to afford a favourable occasion for such a survey, as a standpoint from which to look back and note dispassionately and truthfully our present position, so far as social progress is concerned. The decennial census of 1871 has just been completed—great legislative changes have taken place within the last few years; some of which have not as yet begun to operate very sensibly, others are bearing fruit. Let us then, like the prudent merchant, take stock, see what we have lost and gained during the last ten years, what our present possessions are, and what we may reasonably calculate upon for the future.

The first matter to be looked at, in a survey of this kind, is Population.

The population, according to the census of 1871, was	5,402,759
Showing " a decrease, " in ten years, of 1861	5,798,233
	395,474

The decrease in the decennial period between 1851 and 1861, was 754,152 being very nearly double the decrease for the last ten years.

To be accurate, the rate of decrease for the ten years from 1851 to 1861, was 10.30 per cent.

For the ten years from 1861 to 1871 6.83 per cent.

The population attained its maximum of eight millions in 1841. In 1851 it had fallen to 6,552,385, being a decrease of 20.5 per cent.; falling in the next decade to 10.30; and in the last to 6.83 per cent.

The only places in which an increase of population, worthy of remark, has taken place, are Belfast, where the increase has been 43.41 per cent., and Londonderry city, 20.92 per cent. There has been an increase in Dublin county also, but in consequence of a change in the metropolitan suburbs, I cannot accurately estimate this. In the city of Waterford, and Carrickfergus, there has been also a slight increase. The greatest decrease has been in the town of Galway, where it amounts to 22.30 per cent.

The decrease of population in towns has been chiefly in west coast, and central towns, which have been affected by railways. Thus, to take four towns of which statistics are given. In all, the populations increased, notwithstanding the famine, from 1841 to 1851, but decreased rapidly since.

WEST COAST.

		Population.	Increase	Decrease.	
Galway	. 1841	. 17,638	. —	. —	} Before Railways.
"	. 1851	. 24,192	. 6,554	. —	
"	. 1861	. 16,967	. —	. 7,225	
"	. 1871	. 13,184	. —	. 3,783	} After Railways.
Limerick	. 1841	. 49,205	. —	. —	} Before Railways.
"	. 1851	. 53,782	. 4,577	. —	
"	. 1861	. 44,476	. —	. 9,306	
"	. 1871	. 39,828	. —	. 4,648	} After Railways.

CENTRAL

Cashel	. 1841	. 7,036	. —	. —	} Before Railways.
"	. 1851	. 8,247	. 1,211	. —	
"	. 1861	. 4,374	. —	. 3,873	
"	. 1871	. 3,976	. —	. 398	} After Railways.
Kilkenny	. 1841	. 19,377	. —	. —	} Before Railways.
"	. 1851	. 20,625	. 1,248	. —	
"	. 1861	. 14,174	. —	. 6,451	
"	. 1871	. 12,664	. —	. 1,510	} After Railways.

You will observe that in all these the rate of decrease is becoming less. The number of inhabited houses has increased in some towns, notwithstanding a decreasing or stationary population. Thus in Cork City, while the population has decreased 2.17 per cent. the number of inhabited houses has increased 7.87 per cent.; in Waterford, 8.70; in Dublin, 5.52; in Drogheda, 2.47.

The rate of decrease of the population has been thus gradually diminishing, and as it is caused by emigration, let us now see what are the statistics of emigration for the same period.

The special report on emigration published at Washington in the present year gives the number of emigrants from Ireland to the United States in the decade,

1851 to 1861	936,665
1861 to 1871	774,883

And taking the two last years of this decade, in

1869 the numbers were	79,030
1870 „	75,544

The number of Irish emigrants who arrived in New York in

1869 was	66,204
1870 „	64,168

From our own returns, it appears that the number of emigrants from Ireland during the first

7 months of 1870 was	53,854
7 „ 1871 „	49,155

Decrease 4,699

The entire number of emigrants from Ireland, from

May, 1851, to 31st July, 1871, was 2,062,409.

The decrease of population at home during those twenty years is 1,150,000.

In the returns of the Registrar-General of Ireland the number of Irish emigrants for the last ten years are calculated as 846,957. If the population has increased by the usual number of births above deaths, at the same rate as in the former census, viz. .92 per cent. and if there had been no emigration, our population should have been 6,297,275, and, deducting from this the estimated number of emigrants, 846,957, it would give a present population of 5,450,318, very nearly agreeing with the number ascertained by the census, 5,402,759, showing that there has been no extraordinary decline of population, but that it has maintained an equable rate.

I append a further table of emigration, compiled from the estimate of the Emigration Commissioners, and the returns of the Registrar-General of Ireland:—

Abstract Estimate of the Emigration Commissioners.

	Emigrants	Average per annum
1849	214,425	} 224,711
1850	209,054	
1851	249,721	
1859	64,337	} 76,519
1860	80,599	
1861	84,621	
1868	61,018	} 67,480
1869	66,568	
1870	74,855	

The above indicates an improvement in three years, ended 1870, as compared with three years ended 1861, and a reduction in 1871 as compared with 1870.

Numbers alone form a very imperfect test of the prosperity of a country. We must look to the actual condition of the population. If the supply of the necessary comforts of life does not increase with increasing numbers, we are not in an advancing condition, and on

the other hand, if though there is a decrease in the population, the smaller number are better fed, clothed, and lodged, we must conclude that we have not retrograded.

Emigration in the same way, *per se*, furnishes no test of the state of a country. It may proceed from bad laws which interfere with the free exercise of industry at home, but if this cause does not exist the emigration is the result of natural laws. From countries of old standing, where land is fully occupied and dear, there is always a tide of emigration, to places where it is abundant in supply and cheap. So within a country itself, there is a constant migration of labour from agricultural districts to manufacturing towns. We may be quite sure that such an emigration would not continue to go on freely, unless the condition of the emigrant was improved, and we cannot say that those at home are injured as long as the land is fully occupied and cultivated, and there is an ample supply of labour and of candidates for employment.

Let us then keep clear of extreme views; we must not speak of emigration as some do, as a fatal hæmorrhage, and draining of the life-blood of the nation, nor can we agree with those who represent over-population as the great evil, and call upon Government to carry on emigration on a large scale.

In connection with this subject of population and emigration, it is very interesting to observe the great increase in the use of agricultural machinery. For many of these inventions we are indebted to our brethren in the United States; we have not been slow to rival them in ingenuity. We all can note how within our own memory the use of them in this country has increased. The first show of agricultural machinery in this country, was at Galway in 1852, then at the Dargan Exhibition in 1853, and since then the progress has been continuous. I have not been able to procure any statistics on this subject, which I could lay before the meeting, but it is highly interesting to notice the part which these machines play in our social economy. They do not tend to reduce population or to throw hands out of employment, which is the stock argument generally used against machinery. They did not with us precede but followed a decrease of population. Their use benefits the farmer by making them much less dependent on the caprice of the seasons, because the operations can be performed so rapidly, as to enable them to some extent to defy the weather in saving the crops. They render it unnecessary for a portion of the labouring population to be idle during the dead season, as they used to be with us. The services of the machines, added to the ordinary labour, suffices to meet the extraordinary demands of harvest and saving crops. Necessity has indeed, in this instance, been the mother of invention. "*Curis acuens mortalia corda.*"

Let us now see what has been the condition of the several great classes of our population during the last ten years, and what it is now.

First, as to the *farming classes*. They have now security of tenure; it is not the interest of their landlord to evict them as long as they pay their rent and use the land well. He suffers heavy penalties if

he does so I believe never in the history of this country were farmers so prosperous and well-to-do. Rents are well paid, land better tilled, houses and offices improved, food and dress have undergone a marvellous change even within recent memory, and when lands are set up in lots to suit tenants there is no lack of purchasers.

The deposits in Irish joint stock banks in

1869 were	£22,672,537	
1870 „	24,366,478	
being an increase of	1,693,941,	or 8 per cent.
and for the 6 months to 30 June, 1871	26,048,818	
making an increase for 6 months of	1,682,340	
or for the year at that rate.	3,364,680,	or 14 per cent.

The deposits in Post Office savings banks, were in

	£
1869	458,148
1870	583,165
and to 30 June 1871	642,627

The deposits in trustee savings banks, were in

	£
1869	1,974,750
1870	2,054,907
and to 30 June, 1871	2,151,430
being an increase in 6 months of	96,523

Now, with respect to agricultural produce—there is a decrease of the acreage under crops of 1871, as compared with 1870, of 20,000 acres; but the value of live stock has increased by £1,240,988.

One of the *doctrinaire* theories broached with regard to Ireland by many writers, was that the evils of the country were caused by the extent to which potatoes were grown in Ireland: as the matter was put by Sir Charles Trevelyan, “what hope is there for a nation that lives on potatoes?”

The acreage under potatoes, before the failure in the potato crop, in 1846, has been thus estimated:—

ACRES UNDER POTATOES.			Increase.	Decrease
1845-1846	*1,237,441	.	—	—
1847	284,116	.	—	953,325
1857	868,501	.	584,385	—
1859	†1,200,347	.	331,846	—
1861	1,133,504	.	—	66,843
1867	1,001,781	.	—	131,723
1868	1,034,681	.	32,900	—
1869	1,041,902	.	7,221	—
1870	1,043,788	.	1,886	—
1871	1,058,287	.	14,469	—
			Average per cent. of population.	
1845-1846	1,237,441	.	15	
1851	868,501	.	13	
1861	1,034,681	.	18	
1871	1,058,287	.	19½	

* Estimated.

† Maximum.

It appears from these tables, how completely the potato was restored in 1859 to very near the acreage before the famine. The acreage fell off to 1867, but in the last five years there is a continuous increase, and the acreage for each 100 of the population is now $19\frac{1}{2}$, while it was only fifteen acres when the growth of potatoes was represented as ruinous to the country.

As to agricultural labourers, I cannot present as favourable a picture. Their wages have greatly advanced, and there is a constant demand for labour, but their dwellings are bad, and they have no security for the possession of their holdings. They are practically deprived of the benefit of the Poor Law, for they have no right to relief out of the workhouse.

The law provides a summary mode of putting the labourer out of his dwelling, but it confers upon him no security of tenure. The 10th sect. of the Irish Land Act recognizes the want of labourers dwellings, and loans may be obtained for this purpose; but, by the 15th section of the same Act, their holdings are excluded from the compensation clauses. The laws on this subject require to be revised. I do not believe in the possibility of planting every labourer in his own homestead, as lately suggested, but much may be done in that direction. The farming classes, having now obtained security of tenure for themselves, should not object to the extension of somewhat similar advantages to the labourers; but how often it happens that the servant who has been forgiven all, takes his fellow servant by the throat.

This question of the status of the labourer, is one that cannot be overlooked, and I hope sincerely that some of our members will make it the subject of investigation in the Society. Recent circumstances tend to show that this, if not attended to, may lead to the opening of a new chapter in agrarian crime.

According to the census of 1861, the number of fourth class houses in Ireland, each of which had but one room for the entire family of every age and sex, was . . . 89,374

In which were living, families . . . 197,062

This is too great, but in 1851

The number of such houses was . . . 135,589

And families 284,229

I hope this census, when completed, will show a still greater diminution in fourth class houses.

With respect to our manufactures, although not great in the aggregate, our progress appears to be steady. The year 1868, as compared with 1862, gives the following results :

In 1862 the number of flax factories was . . . 100

Number of power looms 4,666

The numbers in 1868 were :

Factories 143

Power looms 12,969

The number of woollen factories in 1862 . . . 39

Number of power looms 123

In 1868 : Number of factories 45

„ power looms 215

If what I have heard of recent discoveries of iron and coal in Antrim, turn out to be well founded, we may expect a further development of manufacturing industry in the north.

With respect to trade, I desire to call attention to the development of the ports of Dublin and Belfast.

The gross tonnage of vessels using the port of Dublin was,

	Tonnage	Increase per cent.
In 1836 . . .	419,197	—
„ 1846 . . .	740,741	76
„ 1856 . . .	904,903	22
„ 1866 . . .	1,363,564	57
„ 1870 . . .	1,506,011	—

showing an increase of very nearly four-fold in the thirty-four years.

Take the corresponding figures for Belfast tonnage :

	Tonnage	Increase per cent.
In 1837 . . .	288,143	—
„ 1847 . . .	538,525	23
„ 1857 . . .	790,968	24
„ 1870 . . .	1,176,330	—

showing a similar four-fold increase in thirty years.

The improvements now being effected in the Port of Dublin are on a large scale. The river is being deepened so as to allow large vessels to lie alongside. The depth of water upon the bar at low water has been increased from seven to fourteen feet, and new quays are about to be constructed. Belfast presents a similar picture of improved docks and harbour.

The following is the Return of the value of Property paying Probate Duty in Ireland —

		£
The average for five years from	1821 to 1825 . . .	2,941,478
„	„ 1836 to 1840 . . .	3,755,758
„	„ 1841 to 1845 it fell to	3,038,681
„	Minimum 1846 to 1850 . . .	2,534,611
„	„ 1851 to 1855 . . .	2,904,896
„	„ 1856 to 1860 . . .	4,220,395
In 1870 . . .	„ . . .	5,014,795

So far I have supplied to you such information as I could collect as to the material condition of Ireland, and the result seems to me a most favourable one.

Let us now for a moment glance at the state of Education, which I shall do without advertng to any controverted topics.

The following table shows the attendance at the National Schools for the years 1860 and 1870.

I.—Attendance of Pupils at National Schools, during the years 1860 and 1870, respectively —

Year.	Number of Schools in operation.	Total number of Pupils on Rolls during year	Average daily attendance of Pupils during the year
1860	5,632	804,000	262,823
1870	6,806	998,999	359,199

This increase is very satisfactory, particularly when we consider that the population of the county was less by about 350,000 in 1870 than in 1860.

These numbers were distributed amongst the different religious denominations in the following proportions

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS.

Period	Late E. C.	R. C.	Pres.	Others.
Twelve months, ended 31st Dec, 1860	45,269	668,243	86,666	3,822
„ Per-centage	5 63	83.11	10 78	0 48
Twelve months, ended 31st Dec, 1870	74,237	807,330	110,189	7,243
„ Per-centage	7.44	80.82	11 02	0 72

The relative proficiency of pupils may be generally stated as follows: In 1860 there were 18.6 per cent. of the pupils on rolls in the third and higher classes. In 1870 there were 25.1 per cent. of the pupils on rolls in the third and higher classes.

When we add to these the pupils in the Christian Brothers' and other Catholic schools not in connection with the Board, and those in the Church Education schools, we must admit that, as far as primary education is concerned, great opportunities are afforded to our people for acquiring a good education. Yet there is a stratum to which we have not as yet penetrated. Of women and girls committed to gaols, 55 per cent. were totally ignorant; and of those admitted to industrial schools, 53 per cent. could neither read nor write—ignorance and crime going hand in hand; suggesting the reflection that while we are disputing as to the quality of education that should be given, numbers are still perishing for lack of knowledge.

Of the state of our intermediate education I cannot speak very favourably. In many of our small towns there are no good middle class schools—a serious injury to those who cannot afford to send their sons to boarding schools.

So far as the higher education may be judged of by its results, we have no reason to complain. In the Indian service and other services open to public competition, a glance at the lists will show that Irishmen carry off a due share of the prizes, and at the recent open competition for excise appointments, I have been informed that the number of successful Irish candidates was greater than that of English or Scotch. If we look to the names of the governors of the colonies and dependencies of the United Kingdom, we shall find Irishmen, not a few, amongst them—in India, Canada, N. S. Wales, Queensland, Ceylon, Labuan, and others. I might refer to other instances of the success of Irishmen, but it would seem like boasting, to which perhaps we are somewhat addicted. I merely mention it to show that there is nothing to prevent us from obtaining our fair share of Imperial prizes, and that the free air of competition seems to agree with us. The effect of the abolition of purchase in the army, will, I venture to think, be that we shall find more Irish names in the army list than we have heretofore seen.

Having spoken so fully of our material wealth and our intellectual attainments, I am now bound also candidly to inquire whether

we have rightly used these advantages, and whether the moral aspect is equally favourable; and this brings me to say a word about our criminal statistics.

Dr. Hancock's comprehensive volume supplies us with full information for the year past, and I only purpose to glance at it. He gives us the number of indictable offences, for the seven years beginning in 1864 and ending in 1870. From this it appears that the number of indictable offences in 1870 was 9,517, being an increase of 339 on the previous year. He says this table shows an unsatisfactory amount of crime in 1870, as the number of serious crimes, in proportion to the population, was the same as in 1865, slightly higher than in any year since, but lower than in 1864. He gives reasons, however, for thinking that the increase of crime in 1870 has most probably subsided in 1871. There has also been a diminution of the number of agrarian offences since the passing of the Peace Preservation Act.

If we embrace the wider field of observation which the two decades present, I think we shall have no reason to conclude that crime is on the increase, but the contrary.

The number of criminals tried at assizes and quarter sessions in 1850 was 31,326. That number appears to have been steadily decreasing from that time, till it fell to 4,151 in the year 1869.

For the four years ending in 1869, the number of committals varied very little. The numbers are

In 1866	.	.	.	4,326
1867	.	.	.	4,561
1868	.	.	.	4,127
1869	.	.	.	4,151

I regret to say that drunkenness is decidedly on the increase, and with it crime must increase, a very large part of the offences tried being, according to my experience, attributable to that source. The number of convictions for drunkenness in 1869 was 88,878; in 1870 they were 96,116, showing an increase that year of 7,238 cases. This certainly suggests the necessity of dealing with habitual drunkards, by placing them in a reformatory where they might be reclaimed. There is one other unfavourable feature which I must notice. Cases of riots and breaches of the peace have been 34 per cent. more numerous than in 1869, and the number of assaults on peace officers, disposed of summarily in 1869, were 5,636; in 1870, 6,266, being an increase of 630 in one year.

The next remarkable feature in those returns, and one which comes home to us, is the increase of the criminal class in Dublin. Dr. Hancock tells us "The highest number of offences was in the Dublin District, including both County and City, where it reached 130 in every 10,000, or above seven times the average;" and again he tells us, that of 657 offences against property with violence in all Ireland, 320 occurred in Dublin and only 5 in Belfast.

This is a very startling circumstance to us who remember when Dublin was comparatively free from crimes, except larcenies and offences of that class which always exist in a large city. The inevitable conclusion is that there has been of late an influx of the criminal

classes into Dublin, induced by what attractions it is not for me to speculate. Riots take place, houses are assaulted and wrecked, peaceable citizens put into a state of terror, and unless checked, the roughs are likely to have it all their own way. I shall only say, in exculpation of our national character generally, that it is scarcely fair to visit upon the nation at large, a responsibility for scenes which have recently disgraced the streets of our once peaceful city.

I pass, however, from this unwelcome subject, expressing my conviction that the great mass of our people love peace and order, and are entitled to protection against evil-doers.

Having thus pointed out truly, as I believe, the material condition of this country as to wealth, and having glanced at the great legislative improvements of recent years, my sketch would be partial and imperfect if I did not point out evils existing which legislation may cure, and suggest that the public mind should be applied in that direction, instead of in pursuit of impracticable schemes.

I conceive that we require and are entitled to a more complete assimilation of our laws with those of England than we at present enjoy. Measures are introduced for England, and from either carelessness or official indifference Ireland is omitted. Identity of laws should be the rule, and distinct legislation should only take place when the different circumstances of the two countries clearly require it; and such should be done deliberately and advisedly.

The Local Government Act of last session was an extension to Ireland of advantages which have been enjoyed by English towns for many years. We are indebted indirectly to Mr. Heron for this legislation. He introduced a Bill to remove the evil at present felt from the expense of Private Bill Legislation. The Government did not adopt his Bill, perhaps wisely preferring to deal comprehensively with England and Scotland at the same time upon this subject; but instead of this they passed this Bill which is a considerable boon, and we may hope, perhaps, in next Session, to see the other subject comprehensively dealt with for the entire Kingdom.

Again, a most important subject which has been frequently brought under the notice of this Society by Dr Hancock and by Dr. Ingram, is, the difference between the Poor Law system in England and in this country. We ought to insist on a complete assimilation of the law. On what principle can it be defended that in England—the wealthier country—relief is liberally given; in Ireland—the poor country—it is denied? Time would not allow me, in this paper, to point out the difference in the way in which the law is administered in the two countries. The papers to which I have referred afford the most ample information on the subject. Professor Fawcett, in his recent lectures on pauperism, thus states the difference at p. 27 :

“For many years after the Poor Law was first established in that country (Ireland), in 1838, no outdoor relief was granted. At the present time it is much less frequently given than in England; the consequence is that instead of the outdoor paupers exceeding the indoor paupers by eight to one, the proportion is reversed, and Ireland has nearly five indoor to one outdoor pauper.”

The poverty to be relieved is greater in Ireland than in England. Here it is not relieved, in England it is, and this the Professor considers a merit in the Irish system, and actually proposes that England should revert to the strictness of the Poor Law of 1834.

It was found impossible to carry out that system in England, and in 1842 the conditions of relief were liberalized, notwithstanding which, the strict system is, with few exceptions, maintained in this country, though it requires more liberal relief than England. I believe a liberally carefully administered Poor Law is at once the truest economy and the soundest policy. If France had had a Poor Law she would never have been convulsed by so many revolutionary changes. The law there did not recognize the right of the workman to relief, and therefore he was able to insist upon and enforce a system of subsidizing by the state, and of carrying on gigantic works at the public expense in order to keep him quiet, regardless of the rum which such a proceeding must eventually entail upon a nation.

As showing what may be done by a judicious administration of Poor Laws, I was struck by a paper read at the Social Science meeting at Leeds by Sir Baldwin Leighton, Bart. He described the administration of a union in a West Midland district, where the board were never guided by motives of economy, falsely so called, but solely by principle. The guardians were active and unremitting in their exertions to mitigate the frightful causes of pauperism. The death-rate had been reduced to less than fourteen per thousand. Out relief was always refused to persons of indifferent character; but when widows or men with children applied, the board offered to take part of the family into the house. The children were taught not only reading and writing, but also industrial work, and they had no difficulty in getting situations. The guardians always acted upon the principle of setting a premium upon thft, and a discount on crime. The following figures showed the results of their labours:—In 1836 the population numbered 17,855, and the paupers 1,395, or 8 per cent., in 1856 the population was 19,000, and the paupers numbered 329, or $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and in 1870 the population had reached 19,300, but the paupers had fallen to 493, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The reduction in the expenditure in the period was 100 per cent., and the present poor-rate was 6d. in the pound.

A more liberal system of relief would prevent the crowding of the destitute classes into the towns, where they have more chance of relief from private charity, but where they generally at last swell the numbers of the criminal classes.

Many other important law reforms remain to be accomplished; but they are necessarily a work of time, and if we have but perseverance, they will be accomplished.

The reform of the Grand Jury Laws has been frequently advocated here, and is a subject which will probably soon engage the attention of the legislature.

The passing of the Land Act renders an improvement in our Civil Bill Courts absolutely necessary; they should be courts of equity as well for plaintiff as defendant, they should be empowered to distribute the compensation money which they now can only ascertain under the Land Act.

The absurd rule that their jurisdiction is ousted, when a question of title to land arises, should be abolished. What farmers generally dispute about is a question of fences, or boundary with respect to some small strip of ground, and yet these are the very subjects which the local court cannot decide upon. A question of right of way affords a remarkable instance of the mischief of this rule. There is no subject about which farmers more frequently differ. It is the cause of violent assaults, and even more serious crimes, and yet the legislature refuses them the aid of a local court to adjust their differences. There should be also provided, in cases involving points of law, a speedy appeal to one of the courts in Dublin, instead of an appeal to the next judge of assize. It would be also necessary to alter the office of Clerk of the Peace: it should be filled by a retired solicitor resident in the county, who could effectually aid the chairman in making enquiries and taking accounts, whereas at present the office is in many cases held by absentees, who are never seen in the county, and who delegate their duties to deputies—generally very efficient but badly paid officials.

I believe there is not a single one of these reforms, or any others necessary for our well-being, which cannot be had from the Imperial Legislature.

I must, in conclusion, speak one word of warning. We are, I fear, becoming too fond of looking to laws and government for everything, and yet they can do no more than give full and free scope for the exercise of our individual energies, protect the infirm and helpless, and firmly enforce just laws for the security of life and property. *Laissez faire* was not very long ago the doctrine of economists, and it was natural enough, when trying to get rid of the vexatious restrictions which clogged commerce and industry; but the current has now set in the opposite direction, and there is from day to day an increasing demand for more law and more government, and our social legislation is assuming vast proportions. I do not say that we have as yet advanced too far upon this road; but we must be cautious how we sanction the notion of the regulation by government of wages, and hours of labour and prices of commodities, or the attempt to enforce by law the discharge of social duties. All such legislation necessarily tends to multiply itself; every class requires that legislation shall embrace its interests or guard its rights, as it has done to other classes. The machinery to carry out such laws is complex; it involves an army of government functionaries, and a great increase of taxation. What we do for ourselves, is much better done than it can be by others for us, and our social as well as our individual well-being must depend mainly upon our own character and conduct.

Trade should be free; the transfer of land should be easy and simple; ignorance and crime should be treated as enemies to the commonwealth; reformation and prevention should be regarded, and will be found, as well more effectual as more economical than punishment. These, with just laws firmly and impartially administered, constitute mainly what Government can do to promote the welfare of a people; and yet all these will prove insufficient to make us happy or contented, unless we are animated as a nation by the spirit of religion and the influence of brotherly love.