

MR. SHANNON thought the responsibility rested with the corporation to correct what Dr. Mapother had described.

DR. MAPOTHER said that he was not aware that there was any remarkable difference as to the death rate in the Dublin hospitals. If any existed it would, he thought, be found, and not unreasonably, to be against those in the most crowded parts of the city.

III.—*The Debt and Taxation of Ireland.* By Joseph J. Murphy, Esq.

[Read Wednesday, 16th March, 1864]

MY attention has been directed to the "Report of the Special Committee of the Municipal Council of Dublin on the state of the Public Accounts between Ireland and Great Britain," and I design to lay before you the results of a careful examination to which I have subjected that Report. I take all the figures there stated as correct; but I believe I can show that they do not support the inference which the Committee have drawn from them.

The first statement is, that the financial arrangement at the Union was not just towards our country. That arrangement was that each country should pay the interest on its own debt, as those debts stood at the time of the Union; and that the joint expenditure of the Empire, including the interest of loans contracted after the Union, should be charged to Great Britain and to Ireland in the proportion of 15 to the former and 2 to the latter. This proportion was fixed on as the nearest attainable approximation to the relative means of the two countries. I do not know whether data are now to be found for ascertaining if that proportion was really fair. At present the wealth of Ireland no doubt bears a smaller proportion to that of Great Britain, but Great Britain since the time of the Union has certainly increased in wealth more rapidly than Ireland. The Committee maintain that the means of this country were overrated by the arrangement at the Union; but their chief argument in support of that conclusion is, that we never did pay so large a proportion, and they omit any mention of the fact that our rates of taxation were much lower. They say:—"Taxes were increased and multiplied until the country broke down under their weight, and each new imposition produced not an increase but a diminution of the revenue. No cause, therefore, except inability can be assigned for the alleged failure of Ireland to furnish the quota of the joint expenditure allotted to her; and to say that she was unable to bear the burden is to say that it should not have been imposed upon her." The force of the word "alleged" in the foregoing extract is not very obvious, for it is stated, only a few lines above, that we never paid more than a tenth of the imperial expenditure, instead of the two-seventeenths that the Act of Union required us to pay; but perhaps they mean to reserve the liberty, in some future edition, of endorsing Mr.

Fisher's statement, which is published in the evidence appended to the Report, that Ireland ought to be credited with a million a year of income tax paid, during the French war, in Great Britain on Irish property. It is answer enough to this argument to remark that the income tax in question was paid because the owners of the property resided in Great Britain, and would not have been paid in Ireland if it had not been paid in Great Britain. It is not admissible to claim the proceeds of a tax levied abroad for a country that levied no corresponding tax at home. The statement that we paid as much as we were able to pay is not capable of being proved. It may be that no increase to the then existing taxes of Ireland would have increased the revenue, and yet that the extension of the income tax to Ireland would have enabled us to meet our engagements. Such was the state of the entire kingdom in 1842, when a very moderate addition to the import duties had failed to benefit the revenue, and yet the imposition of an income tax enabled Sir Robert Peel at the same time to improve the revenue and to liberate commerce. The Committee go on to say :—" Great Britain had to meet a separate annual charge of nearly £16,000,000 on account of her ante-union debt, while the corresponding charge to be met by Ireland was little over £1,000,000 ; so that if Ireland's capability were in fact two-fifteenths of that of Britain, she would have had a considerable surplus each year, after contributing her portion to the joint expenditure." This would be self-evidently true, if Ireland had paid the same rates of taxation as Great Britain, but the Committee have omitted to notice that we paid lighter rates. I go on quoting the words of the Report :—" It is difficult to acquit Lord Castlereagh of dishonesty in this matter, when we remember that there was then present to his mind a precedent of an equitable financial arrangement, that, namely, between England and Scotland. At the period of the Union between the last named countries, the debt of England was something under £20,000,000, while Scotland owed no debt. An estimate was then made, based on the proportion between the revenues of the two countries, of a sum which would compensate Scotland for assuming her share of the annual charge of the English debt ; and that sum, £398,085, was paid over, and has been applied, or still remains applicable, to Scotch purposes exclusively." This is a notable instance of what our late Archbishop calls "confounding two things that differ *only* in the essential point." Scotland assumed a share of the English debt as it stood before the Union, and of the annual charge thereof, and received compensation therefor. Ireland at her Union assumed no share of the then existing British debt, or of the annual charge thereof, and became entitled to no compensation.*

The next grievance alleged by the Committee is that Ireland was wronged by the consolidation of the exchequers in 1810. The exchequers remained separate after the parliamentary Union during the sixteen years from 1801 to 1816 inclusive, and the accounts of

* See the recently published pamphlet on "The Financial Exigencies of Ireland before and after the Union."

the debts of the two countries were kept separately. The complaint of the Committee is, that an unfairly large proportion of the debt contracted by the United Kingdom during those sixteen years was charged against Ireland. They say:—"The entire liabilities of Ireland, during the sixteen years, may therefore be stated in round numbers at £106,000,000. The Irish revenue during the sixteen years amounted to £94,238,828, leaving a deficit of something under £12,000,000, and to make up this deficit there was added to the Irish debt £80,538,939." In other words, we were overcharged by at least £68,538,939. Further down they give a table by which it is shown, on the authority of a parliamentary paper of 1815, that during the first fourteen of the sixteen years there was credited to Great Britain towards joint expenditure £663,143,965; and a parallel column shows, on the authority of a parliamentary paper of 1824, that during the same time the portion of British revenue applicable to joint expenditure, after deducting the interest of the ante-Union debt, was £585,995,590, leaving a deficit on the fourteen years of £77,148,375 against Great Britain. Let us suppose—it cannot be very far wrong—that by the end of the sixteen years the deficit so calculated was increased to £100,000,000: we know that during that time the British debt was increased by £268,514,068: consequently, if the Committee have reasoned rightly concerning Ireland, it follows that Great Britain also must have been overcharged by the difference between those two sums, namely, by £168,514,068, and for no one's benefit except that of the national creditor.

A similar table shows that Ireland during the same fourteen years was chargeable with a deficit of £6,978,850,* being in the proportion of about 1 to 11 as compared with the British deficit. The Committee admit, in a note, that "these figures do not represent the true deficits, inasmuch as they do not include the interest on the loans contracted after the Union. They nevertheless show what *ought to have been* the proportion between the loans contracted for the two countries respectively." Thus the Committee first state that the increase to the debt of Ireland in the sixteen years ought not to have exceeded £12,000,000; and then admit that their inference is from mistaken data, and that our share of the debt contracted in that period was fairly chargeable in the proportion of 1 to 11 as compared with that of Great Britain. Now the total increase to the debt was £349,053,007, and our share of that sum, on the basis admitted, would be £29,087,750. This is a little more than £12,000,000. It is to be observed that in the tables which contain these data, the sums credited to each of the two countries are taken from a parliamentary paper of 1815, and the revenue of the two countries are from a parliamentary paper of 1824. It is uncertain, therefore, whether the two sets of figures are properly capable of being compared, and, if they are not so, the sums obtained by sub-

* This deficit is stated at the head of page 5 of the Report at £6,107,987, which the Committee suppose may have been increased to nearly £12,000,000 by the time of the consolidation of the exchequers. The discrepancy between £6,107,987 and £6,978,850 is not explained in the Report.

tracting the one from the other are simply without meaning. The Committee, however, infer from those tables that the deficit fairly chargeable against Ireland was only one-eleventh of that chargeable against Great Britain. They have failed to perceive, what is self-evident when stated, that if we paid two-fifteenths of the British contribution, as we had bound ourselves to pay by the Act of Union, the deficit chargeable to us in those years of war expenditure would have been two-fifteenths of the British deficit, but as our contribution to the joint expenditure was less than that, the deficit chargeable to us was larger. The Committee admit that we were bound to pay two-fifteenths of the British payments; they admit, in the beginning of the Report, that we never paid so much; and yet they assert, farther on, that our deficit, fairly charged, was only one-eleventh of the British deficit. But there is yet another statement to be considered. The Committee say that if the loans raised by the United Kingdom after the Union had been raised on joint account, as required by the Act of Union, and charged in the proportion of 15 to Great Britain and 2 to Ireland, our proportion of the post-Union debt would have been £41,065,058. Thus the Report states first that our share of the post-Union debt ought to have been under £12,000,000: then they admit to £29,087,750: and finally calculate it at £41,065,058. Which of these statements are the Committee willing to stand over? The last apparently: for the Committee wind up by saying that *on the whole* they see no reason to doubt that the debt shown to be chargeable to Ireland, at the time of the consolidation of the exchequers, was overstated by about £40,000,000.

A collateral circumstance is mentioned in support of this last statement, which is more astonishing than even the statement itself. I quote the words of the Report:—"On the 5th of January, 1816, the debts of the two countries appear for the last time distinct, and they stand on that date as follows:—

Great Britain	..	...	..	..	..	£688,820,032
Ireland	...	..	..	..	..	107,380,158
						<hr/> £796,200,190

Assuming that there was no increase or diminution of either debt during the year 1816, the total above given would represent the joint imperial debt on the 1st January, 1817. But the same return (No. 256 of 1824), which states the two separate debts in 1815 as above, gives the joint debt in the following year as £755,737,972, showing a difference of about £40,000,000, being the amount with which, on a fair view of the account, Ireland appears to have been overcharged."

Thus we are asked to believe that the accounts of the national debt have been falsified, in the clumsiest and most unskilful manner, to the extent of forty millions sterling: and that the fraud was first brought to light by the acuteness of a committee of the Dublin Corporation, in 1863, which committee at the same time had not acuteness enough to prevent it from making three incompatible

statements, as I have shown, in three consecutive pages of its Report. Observe also how it is assumed for the purpose of the argument, and without any attempt at proof, that the debt was neither increased nor diminished during the year 1816. The recently published pamphlet on "The Financial Exigencies of Ireland before and after the Union" states that the debt was diminished by twenty millions in that year.

The debts of Great Britain and Ireland at the Union of the Parliaments, and at the beginning of the year 1816, are shown in the following statement:—

	Great Britain.	Ireland.	Total.
Ante-Union Debt	£420,305,944	£26,841,219	£447,147,163
Post-Union Debt	268,514,068	80,538,939	349,053,007
Total,	£688,820,012	£107,380,158	£796,200,170

Thus the increase in the debt of Ireland from the Union to the commencement of 1816 was neither £12,000,000, nor £29,087,750, nor £41,065,058, but £80,538,939: a fact which, as we have seen, the committee cannot account for except by supposing a fraud. It admits, however, of a very simple explanation. We never paid our stipulated proportion of the imperial expenditure, and the deficiency was registered as a debt against us. The less we raised by taxation the more we had to raise by loan. No question appears to have occurred to the committee as to the natural and necessary consequence of our failing to pay our stipulated proportion, although in one place they have approached to a correct guess. They say:—"The only possible excuse for departing from the principle of borrowing on joint account prescribed by the Act of Union, could be found in the contingency of either country failing *in an undue proportion* to meet the payments chargeable against it. But the accounts certainly show no such justification for separate borrowing as against Ireland." This must be compared with the statement in the beginning of the Report, that we did not pay our stipulated quota because we could not. So that the Committee's case is, that we did not pay our quota because we could not; and besides, that we did pay it in full. The truth is that the consolidation of the exchequers and the amalgamation of the debts was a measure of relief to Ireland. In 1816, as we have seen, the debts were charged to

Great Britain	...	£688,820,032
Ireland	.	107,380,158
Total,		£796,200,190

By amalgamating the debts in 1816 each country became practically liable to the annual charge thereof in the proportion of its financial ability: and supposing this to be as 15 to 2, as assumed at the time of the Union, the burden would be

Great Britain	...	£702,529,562
Ireland	..	93,670,608
		£796,200,170

consequently Ireland was relieved to the extent of £13,709,550, being the difference between £107,380,158 and £93,670,608, and that at the expense of Great Britain. If we assume the financial ability of Ireland at a smaller proportion to that of Great Britain, the amount of the relief will appear larger, and whatever may be thought of the ability of Ireland to pay taxes, it is certain that we never have paid in so large a proportion.

Another of the grievances insisted on is that a very large proportion of the taxes paid by Ireland are not spent in Ireland; on which subject I will only remark that Scotland contrives to prosper under the same disadvantage.

It is made another ground of complaint that Great Britain has been much more largely benefited than Ireland by remissions and reductions of taxation. In order to appreciate the force of this reasoning, it is necessary to be aware of a fact which the Committee have left without mention; namely, that Great Britain has at all times paid every tax paid by Ireland, and others which Ireland has not paid.

But, it will be said, our taxation is being equalized with that of Great Britain, and we have received no equivalent as Scotland did. The reply to this has been stated by Mr. Delahunty in the evidence appended to the Report. We have not received an equivalent in the same shape that Scotland did, but, if taxation were perfectly equalized in this session of Parliament, we should have received more than an equivalent for thus assuming our share of the charge of the ante-union debt of Great Britain, in the shape of lower rates of taxation. The taxation of the two countries might without injustice have been equalised at the consolidation; and were such a folly committed as re-opening the account, it is Ireland that would be loser.

The most extraordinary statement contained in the Report is, that the taxation of Ireland is excessive as compared with that of Great Britain. The Committee attempt no explanation of the paradox of heavier taxation by means of lighter rates of taxation, and do not appear to be aware that it needs any explanation. No doubt, it would be possible to impose nominally equal taxes in such a way as to be really very unequal; for instance, a tax on land would be a much heavier burden on agricultural than on manufacturing districts; and a tax on raw cotton would be a special burden on Lancashire. But we pay no taxes of such a character. We pay an income tax that affects all classes of income alike; we pay stamp duties; and we pay customs and excise duties, not one of which falls on any of the necessaries of life or the raw materials of manufacture. Great Britain pays all these, and in addition pays assessed taxes and taxes on the conveyance of passengers. The proof advanced by the Committee for this astounding assertion, that we are more heavily taxed by our lighter rates of taxation, is merely that our total taxation is larger than that of Great Britain, in proportion to the wealth of the two countries as indicated by the income tax returns. In other words, it is a grievance that the indirect taxes are more productive in proportion to the income tax in Ireland than in

Great Britain. In no case would this be a real grievance, unless the taxation were imposed so as to be really unequal. But the high relative productiveness of the indirect taxation of Ireland is in part due to the propensity of our people to prefer spirits, which are heavily taxed, to beer, which is moderately taxed; and the low relative productiveness of the income tax is partly due to the lower average of incomes in Ireland, which causes fewer of them to come within reach of the tax; partly to the small size of farms in Ireland, which exempts nearly all the farmers from the tax; and partly to a favourable difference in the law, which charges the tax on real property and on agricultural tenants, by a very moderate official valuation, instead of the actual letting value.

Although I do not think it affects the rights of the question in the slightest degree, I will here speak of what I regard as a prevalent error concerning the "uncredited taxation" of Ireland. It is believed by the Committee, and appears to be the general belief in Ireland, that the customs duties paid in Great Britain on articles, chiefly sugar, ultimately consumed in Ireland, amount to about £1,000,000. It is certain that the receipts of the custom-houses of Great Britain and Ireland are no criterion whatever of the real amounts of duty-paying articles really consumed in the two countries. In 1862 the customs actually paid were:—*

Great Britain	..	..	..	..	£21,735,242
Ireland	.	..	..	..	2,258,305
Total,					£23,993,547

But if we suppose that the real payments of the two countries were in the proportion of 15 to 2, being the supposed relative ability of the two countries at the Union, the payments were:—

Great Britain	..	..	..	..	£21,170,777
Ireland	.	..	..	..	2,822,770
Total,					£23,993,547

Consequently the uncredited taxation of Ireland was in 1862 the difference between £2,258,305 and £2,822,770, or £564,465, and I doubt whether we can come nearer the truth than this estimate. In the same year, none of the inland revenue taxes that were common to the two countries yielded in Ireland in so large a proportion as that which I have assumed for the customs, with one exception, and that, I am sorry to say, was the spirit duties. I have condensed a table from the various official revenue reports of 1862, by which it appears that in that year Great Britain paid £3,885,733 of taxes in which Ireland did not share, and £57,406,779 more of taxes (including post-office receipts) which were also borne by Ireland; while Ireland paid £6,718,516 of taxes, all of which

* These are the gross receipts, stated in page 44 of the Report. The nett receipts are not separated for the three kingdoms. I have, however, given the nett receipts in the table at the end.

were shared to the full by Great Britain.* It is also to be observed that the post-office revenue is not a tax at all: and that not one of the taxes paid by Ireland in 1862 could be reasonably objected to as oppressive in respect to its rate, except the income tax, which in that year was 9d. in the pound; or as bad in principle, except the fire insurance duty. It is, however, the recent additions to our taxation that are complained of. No one, so far as I am aware, has maintained that Ireland was oppressively taxed in 1852. The Report, it is true, complains of the increase of the stamp duties

* It is necessary to detail the way in which the following table has been constructed.

For the post-office revenue, I have added together the proceeds of postage and money-order commissions as stated in the Post-office Official Report.

For the customs, I have taken the total from the Customs Official Report, page 53, and assigned fifteen-seventeenths to Great Britain and two-seventeenths to Ireland.

The excise on spirits I take from a special corrected statement in the Inland Revenue Official Report.

The succession duty is not stated separately in the Inland Revenue Report for 1862: I take its amount as identical with that stated in a special statement in the Report for 1861, but I take the total of the probate, legacy, and succession duties from that for 1862.

The post-horse duty in 1852 produced £150,000. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone commuted it for a license duty, at an estimated loss of £54,000. I have taken it at £100,000.

All the other items are taken from the Inland Revenue Report for 1862.

The inland revenue is made up in the Report to the 31st March, 1863; and the customs to the 31st December, 1862. I cannot make out to what date the post-office receipts are made up. These are small discrepancies; but they are to be regretted, and might be avoided.

REVENUE OF 1862.

	Great Britain.	Ireland.	Total.
	£	£	£
Post-office	3,363,167	270,422	3,633,589
Customs	20,920,151	2,789,354	23,709,505
Excise on spirits	7,496,385	1,945,880	9,442,265
Excise on malt and sundries	5,308,816	278,063	5,586,879
Game and other licenses, less } £100,000 estimated for post- horse duty	1,653,673	154,460	1,808,133
Income-tax	10,006,556	703,322	10,709,878
Succession duty on real property	548,554	51,185	599,739
Probate and legacy duties	3,060,679	171,112	3,231,791
Fire insurance	1,578,734	80,942	1,659,676
All other stamp duties	3,470,064	275,776	3,743,840
	57,406,779	6,718,516	64,125,295
Land tax	1,128,139		1,128,139
Assessed taxes and race-horse duty	2,044,247		2,044,247
Railways	383,057		383,057
Stage-carriages, and £100,000 } estimated for post-horse duty } Hackney-carriages (England only)	232,598		232,598
	97,692		97,692
	61,292,512	6,718,516	68,011,028

in 1842, but does not mention that they were reduced again in 1851. The taxes imposed since that date produced in 1862 as follows:—*

Spirit Duties of 1862	£2,292,479
Less Spirit Duties of 1852, the last year of the 2s. 8d. duty	1,247,029
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Increase of the Irish Spirit Duties	1,045,450
Income Tax	703,322
Succession Duty	51,185
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The total taxation imposed since 1852 amounted to	£1,799,957

We thus see that the new taxation produced in 1862 about a million and three quarters; of which a million was levied by increased taxation on a most pernicious luxury, and the other three-quarters by taxes on the classes of society who have property, or at least more than the bare necessaries of life. But it is to be noticed, also, that while these new taxes have been imposed on us, we have been benefited by the abolition of the advertisement duty, the paper duty, the compulsory newspaper stamp, and the timber duty, the reduction of the wine and tea duties, and the reduction or abolition of many of the minor import duties. These are not mentioned in the Report; nor is it mentioned that in 1847 the Imperial Parliament raised eight millions by loan, at an increase of £270,000 to the annual charge of the debt, for the relief of distress in Ireland, scarcely any of which was repaid. The increase of the annual charge of the debt thus incurred is equal to the proceeds of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. of Irish income tax.

I have no doubt that the equalization of taxation between Great Britain and Ireland will be completed, with the exception of the land tax, which is now a fixed charge like tithe, and, like it, capable of redemption; and perhaps with the exception also of the railway-passenger tax, which may be, like the land tax, hereafter converted into a fixed charge. The other taxes on the conveyance of passengers, and the assessed taxes, together produce only about as much as twopence of the income tax; and I believe the best use to make of the next surplus in the revenue, after greatly reducing the fire insurance duty, would be to repeal those taxes. We must regard the income-tax as a permanent burden, and the existence of another system of direct taxation side by side with it, in Great Britain, appears an indefensible anomaly.

It needs no argument to prove that where there is equality of benefits there ought to be equality of burdens; and that when two

* The spirit duties are stated in the text as in the general statements in the Inland Revenue Reports. But in the table at the end of this paper they are taken from a special corrected statement giving the nett totals after all drawbacks and transfers from one kingdom to the other. I have not, however, seen any such corrected statement for 1852, and, in comparing any two years, it is of course necessary to give figures that have been made out in the same way for both. If the excess of the exportation of spirits from Ireland over the importation into the country bore the same ratio to the production in the two years, the increase of the proceeds of the duty shown in the text is exactly the increase of the tax paid by Ireland, and this supposition cannot be very far wrong. I have stated the succession duty as it was in 1861, not having seen it given separately from the legacy duty in 1862,—but there cannot be much difference

nations are politically united on equal terms, neither can reasonably ask to be more lightly taxed than the other, except in the case of special circumstances giving to one of them a legal claim to partial exemption, or at least such an equitable claim as a legislature ought to regard as equivalent to a legal one; and I think I have shown that Ireland can make out no such case. A union between a rich nation and a poor one is no exception. As between individuals it may be maintained that a man who has only a hundred a year ought to be taxed at a lower rate than one who has a thousand a year. Such is the operation of the income-tax, and in my opinion it is only just. But as between nations, to demand on behalf of the poorer one that its taxation should be at a lower per-centage rate, is in fact to demand that a man who has a hundred or a thousand a year, living in a poor country, should be taxed less than a man with the same income living in a rich country. It is not to demand exemption for the poor; it is to demand exemption for rich men who have poor neighbours. The same reasoning applies to indirect as to direct taxes. A tax of a shilling a pound on tea is equally burdensome to poor consumers in a poor and in a rich country, and equally a matter of indifference to rich consumers in both.

In conclusion, I avow my belief that what Ireland needs is something very different from untaxed incomes for the rich and cheap whiskey for the poor.

DISCUSSION.

MR. SHANNON thought the Corporation deserved great credit for having brought forward their report. He referred to the declining state of the country, proved as it was by the fact that the people were flying by thousands from the country, as a reason why Ireland should be exempt from an undue pressure of taxation, and expressed the hope that the present movement which had been so well conducted by Mr. Dillon, would produce beneficial results to the country. At the period of the Union anything done by way of arrangement was so open to cavil, that they could place no confidence in the data brought forward by the lecturer that evening. Now was the time to reopen the question, which was, were the accounts equitably arranged at the time of the Union?

MR. JAMES HAUGHTON said that if he understood Mr. Murphy rightly, at the outset he stated that he took it for granted that the figures of the Corporation were correct.

MR. MURPHY signified an affirmative.

ALDERMAN DILLON begged to make a few observations, but in doing so he would ask the Society not to take it for granted that what he would then say was all that could be said on the matter, for he had not come there prepared to make an elaborate reply to Mr. Murphy, and anything he said on the subject should not be taken as the best that could be advanced in answer to that gentleman. The first matter in the report of the committee of the Dublin Corporation with which the learned lecturer quarrelled, was their statement of the injustice done to Ireland, in allotting two-

seventeenth, at the time of the Union, as that part of the revenue which Ireland should pay ; and he alleged that the committee deduced from the fact of Ireland not paying two-seventeenths, that she was unable to pay it ; and Mr. Murphy further alleged that they did not pay it. Now, he (Mr. Dillon) had a right to say to his antagonists, that they did or did not pay it. If they did not pay it—remembering that he had the highest authority in England for saying that Ireland was taxed to the highest figure, that Mr. M'Culloch and Lord Sydenham cited the case of Ireland as an instance of a country whose revenue absolutely broke down under the weight of taxes, during the period between the Union and the consolidation of the exchequers of Great Britain and Ireland in 1816 ;—if they did not pay it, it was reasonable to suppose that they were unable to pay it ; and, if they were unable to pay it, it was clear that they should not be called upon to do so. If it were stipulated that Ireland should pay two-seventeenths, and that she did not pay it, what other conclusion could be come to, than that her revenue broke down under the weight ? The conclusion that so large a proportion ought not have been assigned to Ireland at the period of the Union was equally inevitable. The interest on the two debts at the time of the Union was in proportion of 1 to 15, or say 1 to 13. If Ireland raised £2 for every £15 of England, she would have paid everything she was called on to pay, and a good deal more, because the interests of the then existing debts of Ireland and England were only as 1 to 13. He submitted that the failure of Ireland, supposing it to be true, to pay, was a proof of her inability to do so. He used that as an *argumentum ad hominem*. After referring to the state of the exchequers of Ireland and England at the time of the Union, and at the period of their consolidation, Alderman Dillon said that, at the most moderate estimate, the annual uncredited revenue of Ireland amounted to one million sterling. What he considered as the greatest grievance of Ireland was, that she had annually to send such large remittances to England in the shape of rent to landlords resident there. There was an argument that Ireland should no more complain of this than if she were an English county. To this argument he should give his dissent. Dublin was the metropolis of Ireland—it was the seat of the learned professions—it was the centre of intellect, industry, and enterprise, and it was the place to which the people of this country looked, and not to London. If a farmer wanted to make his son a professional man, whether as a lawyer or as a doctor, it was to Dublin, and not to London he wished to send him. So long as Dublin was the metropolis of Ireland—so long as she was a metropolis in any sense of the word—they should never consent to see this country treated as an English county.

MR. MICHAEL MORRIS, Q.C., said that his friend Alderman Dillon, with his practical patriotism and great ability, had applied himself to the question of taxation, and had disposed of a good many of the arguments of the lecturer as applicable to the taxation of the country at the time of the Union, and up to the year 1816. Now, he (Mr. Morris) did not intend to refer to either of those periods, because he thought that an enquiry referring to those times

was rather of an antiquarian character. The question which affected them most was, how the taxes stood at present—what they were in the year 1864, and where they were spent. Sidney Smith said that no man was certain of anything in his life but of his death and of the taxes he had to pay. Applying the saying to this country, he might say that death and taxes were almost synonymous terms. He (Mr. Morris) should object most strongly against the lecturer's argument, that taxes should be put upon what he called pernicious luxuries. The lecturer seemed to have some extraordinary dislike to whiskey, and according to him it was no matter if five millions of taxes were raised on the commodity, because he considered it pernicious. He (Mr. Morris) was one of those who considered that taxes were raised for the purpose of revenue, and not for the purpose of putting down, by an indirect mode, any species of industry. There were some persons who imagined that the sale of spirits should be abolished, but they were so few, that if all who were of that opinion in Ireland were brought together, they would easily fit in that room. It was absurd that a few units, who imagined whiskey was a pernicious luxury, should argue that it should be oppressively taxed. He believed that up to the year 1852, Ireland paid at least her full share of the taxes of the empire; yet they had this startling fact, that from 1852 to the present time, new taxes were put upon this country to an amount which the learned lecturer admitted was one million and three quarters sterling, or, in round numbers two millions. The taxes of this country since 1852 had been increased 33 per cent. without an increase of 1 per cent. in England. He (Mr. Morris) was old enough to recollect that, even in 1852, there were wise persons who then complained that Ireland was excessively taxed; but, even assuming that in 1852 the taxation was reasonable—the taxation since that time having increased 33 per cent—was there any particular cause for such increase? He believed that the repeal of the corn laws was one of the most ruinous measures to this country that had ever passed.

A voice—No, no.

He (MR. MORRIS) did not want to convince any one, he simply expressed his opinion on the matter. But he had a pretty good knowledge of a great many phases of society in this country, and his opinion was that the repeal of the corn laws was a great blow to the manufacturing industry of the country in the shape of corn production. Sir Robert Peel, in consequence of the repeal of the corn laws, reduced the taxation of this country—especially with reference to the support of the constabulary. The corn law measure took place in 1847. Now, what took place since 1847, assuming that up 1852, Ireland was paying her fair share, that she should be burdened with two millions more of taxation? To use the words of Sidney Smith, he (Mr. Morris) thought that a man should be trepanned before he could be convinced of the justice of it. He would now ask where were the taxes spent? It was said that Scotland and Yorkshire existed, although no taxes were spent there, but was it any argument to say that because one man was strong enough to

bear an injury, that every other man should bear it. It was new to him to hear that taxes were not spent in Yorkshire and in Scotland, and it was certainly an extraordinary notion that taxes could be taken out of a country, and spent elsewhere without injury to that country. If he met any one foolish enough to make such an assertion, he (Mr. Morris) would not think it worth his while to answer him. The report of the committee of the corporation showed that a large amount of the taxes of the country were spent out of it. Lord Byron said that the union between this country and England, was like the union between a whale and the thing it swallowed. Ireland participated in the payment of taxes, but not in their expenditure. The question which he (Mr. Morris) would suggest to the practical patriots, was that the taxation of this country should be spent at home. The Irish people should not be treated as milch cows. There was every disposition shown to take these taxes off, and spend them elsewhere, so much so that they were now nearly dry cows. He hoped every prudent man, as he considered he was himself, would join his friend Alderman Dillon in his truly patriotic proposal with reference to taxation, and that that proposal would be ventilated far and near. He believed it would take a man better able to deal with figures than the learned lecturer was, to prove to this country the contrary of what had been shown by Alderman Dillon.

The CHAIRMAN said that they were indebted to the lecturer, and also to Alderman Dillon, who had put forward the opposite side of the question. It was well that there should have been an opportunity of giving them the defence of the Corporation to the remarks made upon their statement.

MR. MURPHY replied. He said it was urged as a grievance that England benefited more by a repeal of the taxation than Ireland. That was only natural, as England was more heavily taxed. As to the allegation that Irish revenue was spent out of Ireland, of course Ireland was a kingdom united to Great Britain on the same terms with Scotland, and they had reason to believe that a very large proportion of the Scotch taxation was spent out of the country, and yet it was one of the most prosperous countries of Europe. That appeared to be a conclusive proof, that two or three millions spent out of a country need not show any want of prosperity.
