

4. 1845 – 1849:

Now seemingly without any financially rewarding employment, but still enjoying accommodation at the offices of the ‘Society for the Protection of Alleged Lunatics,’ Mulock’s active mind required occupation and he produced “What is the British Parliament?” a review of ‘The laws, privileges, proceedings and usages of Parliament,’ an article written by T. E. May, a barrister at law, which had attracted Mulock’s attention and his review of May’s treatise, appeared in the *Mining Journal*, following which the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, commented favourably on Mulock’s critique, as a ‘very able review:

“What is the British Parliament? Thomas Mulock, esquire, has written a very able review in the *Mining Journal*, of a treatise recently published by T. E. May, esquire, barrister-at-law, upon the laws, privileges, proceedings, and usages of Parliament. The following remarks occur in the course of his striking review of Mr. May’s treatise:

‘In these days of strange political speculation, it is wholesome to have the public mind recalled to the true purport of Parliamentary power and interference. The open aim or secret drift of innumerable innovators is, to subvert the stable foundation upon which British laws and liberties really rest, and to prepare the way for godless anarchy; at one time, the crown is assailed under the pretext of restoring some dormant energy to parliament; at another time, the executive is denounced for yielding up the prerogative to the prevailing rage for legislation; but, in despite of every form of hostility, the fortress of British freedom is still capable of resisting all its enemies, for the principle of sovereignty is as yet unshaken. England is not ruled by a Constitutional Monarchy, but by a Monarchical Constitution. We have an august aristocracy, which furnished hereditary counsellors to the Crown, and a splendid bodyguard for royalty; and we have a House of Commons, springing from the people, and yet deriving its dignity from its legislative association with the monarch and the peerage. This is a wonderful instance of agreement in the estates of a great realm, and it has been effected by the gradual growth of national wisdom and intelligence, not by wholesale schemes, proceeding from political planners and audacious constitution-mongers. Of the British Parliament, composed of the pre-eminent and pervading Majesty of the Crown, the solid strength and lustre of the House of Lords, and the power and vital vigour of the House of Commons, we may affirm, with the poet:

*‘Tis not the hasty product of a day
But the well ripen’d fruit of slow delay.*

The British Parliament is not an institution; it is the vast reservoir of the experience of ages in guarding rights, in securing interests, in supporting the sovereign authority, whilst shielding the subject from rigorous rule – in devising the least oppressive sources of revenue – in upholding the respective relations of the several classes of the community, so as to conserve the unity of the body politic – in maintaining a supreme appellate jurisdiction, which keeps every other court in salutary check; these important functions are fulfilled by Parliament as the great inquest of the nation, with an efficiency which is truly admirable.¹

In February 1845, Mulock appealed to the editor of the *Mining Journal* on the subject of railways for Ireland although it reads as much like a lecture to the British government:

“Sir,

The great importance of the present subject will, I trust, plead my excuse for dedicating a special and a longer letter to it. Railways in Great Britain are adjuncts of national prosperity, being in truth applications of a new power to enlarge the energies of a great community already advanced to a wonderful pitch of industry, opulence, order, and refinement. England may afford to sport away the burden of her superfluities in devising innumerable schemes for the employment of capital, and two or three hundred railway companies are but so many sponges to suck up the surplus moisture of the monied world; but Ireland is differently circumstanced; she is, though rich in natural gifts, a poor province in every sense of the two-fold term – poor in the mighty elements of activity, assiduity, prudence, and perseverance – poor in her state of vassalage to false religious feuds (for true religion never dwells with discord) – poor in her absurd assertion of separate rights and interests, instead of wisely and cordially mixing herself with the integral power and progress of the British empire. I lay no stress upon her lack of pecuniary resources for Ireland can command wealth whenever she is content to exchange contumacy for tranquillity. I affirm that Ireland’s bane is her reluctance to submit to English rule. I am no obsequious eulogist of the mode in which my country has been governed by her conquerors, but conquered she most certainly was by English prowess, and policy maintained what warfare had won. I am led to consider the destinies of nations as appointed by the Most High God, not left to the mere caprice of chance rulers; and I therefore conclude it to be the will of Omniscience that one nation should enjoy sovereignty, and another sink into subjection – aye, and remain in subjection, until raised to parity or pre-eminence through Divine Mercy and goodness – not by turbulence or agitation, sedition or rebellion.

*If my voice could penetrate to the recesses of my native land, I would proclaim to all classes of her people, that submission to England – albeit, to the errors, prejudices, and haughtiness of England – would be the day-star of dignity, prosperity, and peace to long oppressed and humiliated Ireland! It is the spirit of insubordination, cherished and inculcated by the pseudo patriotism of the sister island that affords a colourful excuse for the austere domination of England, and the real **subalternity**, so to speak of Ireland, is refer-able to her own false standard of importance.*

*I am equally opposed to all political partisans or religious sectarists in Ireland, for I find them all adverse to the principle of obedience to the powers that be. The contingent loyalty of the ultra-Protestant is as dangerous to the state as any form of avowed hostility to the establishment; and the Roman Catholic repealer is in my view nothing more than a mob orator, trading upon the passions of the populace, which he wildly and sordidly inflames. And yet, such is the habitual dislike to quiet subjection that the most inveterate adversaries become pretended allies, when the policy of the English government does not square with their respective crotchets. Vain is it, therefore, to attempt the task of pleasing this or that party in Ireland. Her people should be deemed the children of the State, and, as children, managed accordingly. Show them kindness, favour, forbearance, and generosity, and you who rule will be recompensed by the gratitude of a people prone to fervid impulses; but, when you legislate, you must not pause to negotiate – when you exercise authority, you must do so upon upright general principles, not from a desire to obtain popularity with any of the parties which agitate and perturb Ireland. I wish the scope of this latter remark were more known to our leading statesmen. The great fault of the day is a readiness to depart from sound principles, in order to modify measures in accordance with some popular movement, and the result is, a wretched hotch-potch of mutilated truths and monstrous errors. The late Mr. Canning, among his other lofty capabilities, possessed that vital vigour of mind which qualified him to govern and to legislate **for** the people, instead of trucking to the people. This is a noble art, which seems well nigh extinct, and which I should rejoice to see resuscitated in the cabinet and in the senate.*

*But I must not be tempted into the depths of dissertation; my business lies with the actual condition of Ireland, and her susceptibility of receiving those astonishing improvements which will ere long alter the aspect of the civilised world. How can Ireland be most benefited by railway communication? I answer by the promotion, not of railway schemes, but of a railway system. Do not suffer Ireland to be victimised by hosts of lawyers, engineers, and other sons of speculation, belonging to the family of fraud, and whose sole object is to originate lucrative jobs, and to get up shareholding schemes – a goodly banquet for the harpies of the stock exchange. My heart's desire is that **poor** Ireland may not fall into the snare of **rich** England, and permit her highways, the great arterial lines of her land, to be planned by a parcel of paltry attorneys, not conversant with more than a Cathpole's knowledge of topography. Why, I have met solicitors who would propose a railway from Cork to Constantinople, if there were the slightest prospect of securing the preliminary expenses! As England is the paradise of pettifoggers, let her capitalists fill the pockets of their pet solicitors as bountifully as they like; but I warn my countrymen against the importation of English schemes for Irish railways. Under the mask of infusing English intelligence into the prosecution of Irish improvements, a swarm of locusts will migrate from the field of railway jobbery in England, and fasten upon every region of Ireland, where credulity welcomes cupidity. Railways Ireland requires, and railways she is sure to have; but I call upon the British government to protect their Irish province from English and Irish associations of adventurers, who, in their reckless rapacity, would cut up the country till it became fashioned after the figure of a Scotch plaid. Ireland demands railways essentially good, which, in their immediate operation and future extension, shall have the effects of imparting civilisation to her remote and uncultivated districts. There must be more than mercantile speculation – there must be sound political wisdom presiding over the suggestion of routes of railways. What can a smug solicitor, peering from behind a desk, in a third storey of Pump Court, know of Ireland, her evils, her wants, or her popular peculiarities? And how can a London millionaire, who has amassed in some oil-shop or cotton warehouse the wealth which he seeks to invest in railways – how, I ask, can such a merely monied man, who now, for lucre's sake, takes a Cockney concern in road making, to serve the poor **Hirish** – form the slightest conception whether his opulence will prove a blessing or a curse to Ireland? There is nothing radically worse in the character of legal practitioners or shop-keeping speculators than is traceable in other men; but their habits of contracted thought, running their little round of litigation or trading adventure, disqualify them from doing the work of statesmen – and it is the aid of statesmen that I invoke, in concerting railways for the benefit of Ireland. Engineers are to construct railways – solicitors have to perform the legal business belonging to their proper sphere – capitalists, with a view to profitable investment, supply resources for required outlay. All this is natural, necessary and orderly; but if the servants are made masters – if lawyers, engineers, and mere monied men are to be originators of railways – you must reckon upon every variety of failure, for public principle will have no place in such utterly sordid schemes. Methinks I hear some bloated stock exchange jobber tauntingly ask, what has public principle to do with trafficking in shares? Nothing whatever, I readily respond; but for that very reason, I would take care to exclude the whole race o share-traffickers from getting up railway, which should be wisely designed routes for permanents public accommodation – not paper highways and by-ways, to serve the purposes of dishonest dealers in scrip and time bargains.*

If any of your readers should wish to verify my statements, he has only to linger half-an-hour at the portals of the stock exchange, and a scene will present itself which he never could adequately imagine. Grey-headed gamblers are chaired in one corner, beardless brokers stand chaffering around the potent pecuniary seniors; up goes the premium of one rascally railway, down falls the discount on some equally iniquitous scheme; lies of the most contrary description are vended with a hardihood and audacity which none but stock-jobbers have effrontery enough to perpetrate; and the staple of all these fraudulent transactions is, the public ways of a monarchy! If Lord Dalhousie were to visit, *incog.*, the region of rapacity which I have faintly sketched, he would at once detect the source of all the mummeries of deputations which crowd the ante-chambers of Whitehall. As all the machinery of the law is alleged to be for the purpose of putting twelve men in a jury box, so the whole interposition of the Board of Trade only operates to nourish brokers and jobbers in the Alley – not from any fault of Lord Dalhousie and his talented assistants, but from the faulty constitution of the railway department, which is powerless to do good, and simply because it has no primary function in proposing railway communication based upon public principles.

Now, this is the railway system that Ireland demands; and never was there a more favourable juncture for promoting her national interests. The repeal agitation, that wildest of all popular movements, is rapidly, and I would add rationally, abating; not from the energy of frustrated government prosecutions, which only served to show the error of attempting to rule a land by the instrumentality of technical lawyers – but through the palpable folly of the swaggering agitators themselves, who have sunk into a political pathos, in consequence of the laughable failure of their own confident predictions. A vague expectation of some portentous change might have long duped an excitable people, more prone to poetry than to severe reasoning; but when the great leader of Irish lawlessness (for, lawyer though he be, he is always in practical opposition to the laws) took upon him to determine the very day and hour of the repeal of the union – calculating, like an astrologer, the nativity of “Young Ireland” – the thing became lucidly ludicrous, that “shame regained the post that sense betrayed,” and the revived shrewdness of an intellectual people showed them the vanity of trusting in false political prophets. There may be a continuance of rabid ridiculous speeches in that parody on parliament nicknamed the Conciliation Hall – the shadow of the repeal rent may linger after the substance has departed – but the choral cry for “repeal!” cannot be revived again: nor will monster meetings again constitute (strange to say) the opprobrium and the honour of Ireland – for, while those vast unauthorised assemblages denoted a shameful disregard of the laws, which interdict such gigantic gatherings. Yet the peaceable deportment of those masses (stimulated, too, by seditious speeches) was worthy of all praise; and, indeed, unprecedented in the annals of popular movements. Nor should I omit the ready submission of the Irish people to the proclamation, which too tardily, as I thought, suppressed those public meetings, convened without legal sanction, and held under circumstances which excluded all idea of responsibility. The periodic meetings at the Conciliation Hall are unquestionably illegal; but so is every other meeting un-convened by lawful authority; and it would appear that government have only the alternative of suppressing them all, or tolerating them all.

But, notwithstanding all the evils of perennial agitation, it is gratifying to feel assured, as I solemnly am, that Ireland is progressing in improvement beyond the utmost stretch of patriotic expectation. Six and twenty years had elapsed since I had an opportunity of inspecting her condition, and on recently re-visiting the shores of my native land I was powerfully impressed with the immense advance which she has made in national prosperity. I speak not of the street splendour of some fashionable parts of Dublin, which, in the style and completeness of their mansions, shops, and various establishments, are not a whit behind London. I marked the general features of amelioration as evinced by the increased intelligence, information, and industry of all classes. The so-called temperance movement (a misnomer, by the way, for abstinence is not temperance) has contributed to clothe their bodies, and the spread of education has done much towards arraying their minds with useful knowledge; and here I would emphatically implore the government to pursue with undeviating firmness their wise system of national instruction. Why should the Holy Scriptures be desecrated into an indispensable schoolbook, in order to sub-serve the ultra-Protestant prejudices of clerical zealots? Why should tens of thousands of Roman Catholic children be penally shut out from primers, slates, and pencils (provided out of funds levied from tax-payers of all creeds) because their parents or their priest do not wish that an usher’s school should be made a chair of theology? It is very remarkable, that at the time when the Pope is lecturing the Irish priesthood to abstain from molesting their Protestant rulers, the Protestant clergy of Ireland are anathematising the government for not insisting upon compulsory scriptural education – the government which upholds their secular rights, and secures their ecclesiastical property – yea! The government which supplied them with the means of subsistence out of the coffers of the state, when tithes were not recoverable by writs of rebellion, or squadrons of dragoons, and to be a parson was to be a pauper!

As the lower classes have been intellectually elevated, the better orders have risen into proportional power of mind, so that the whole Irish community is steadily progressing. Ireland is essentially an agricultural country – she is prospering in that congenial field of labour, and her rural gentry are addicting themselves to the improvement of the

soil, with the skilful zeal and gainful energy, which I was rejoiced to witness; and their example has had a surprising effect on the peasantry, who now adopt rotations of crops and modes of cultivation which thirty years ago would have been deemed heretical. The petty husbandmen are abundantly succoured by the richer proprietors; for, in the face of all misrepresentation, I boldly affirm, that, as a body, the calumniated landlords of Ireland are, perhaps, the best landlords under the sun. Why, their error, construed into crime, is over indulgence towards their poverty stricken tenantry, whom they permit to subdivide land amongst their descendants, until a patch of potato ground becomes the farm of a whole family. What is a landlord to do if he has a heart of flesh in his bosom? Can he prohibit lawful marriage – can he prevent the blessing of multiplication and increase – can he drive ruthlessly from his estates the children whom God hath given to his already crowded descendants? No, he acts not according to the maxims of Malthusian philosophers, but conformable to the dictates of a benevolent conscience; he refuses to raze the cottages of the poor strugglers around him – he suffers them to wring a scanty subsistence from infinitesimals of soil – and, though he is disabled from relieving their destitution, he cannot bring himself to incur their malediction. The result of this compound of generosity and improvidence is a state of things hardly to be paralleled in any country of Europe. The population becomes enlarged without a corresponding increase of land being taken into cultivation. Each generation adds numbers to the soil, until a special spot is covered with a coagulated mass of pauperism. There can be no augmenting demand for labour because no new breadths of land are tilled and sown, and the price of labour on lands of meagre cultivation is continually kept down by the fierce competition for employment. The poor creatures consume their years in idleness, not from the want of energy, but from the want of work, and to remove them from their hovels is to drive them to deeds of desperation, for the estate on which they barely live forms the limits of their little world. This is a faithful picture of very many populous parts of Ireland, but there are huge districts capable of easy culture, situated in the western and southern regions of Ireland, which offer a ready relief for the redundant numbers starving and stagnating in other localities. And these districts might be opened by the powerful agency of a wise system of railway communication. Lines radiating from the Irish metropolis to Sligo, Galway, Cork and Waterford, would confer inestimable benefits on the Irish people, by rendering remote regions of the same land popularly pervious to each other's inhabitants. Roads are the great mechanical means of quickening the pulse of a nation's powers by promoting the interchange of her products, and the transit of her population. All roads must now give place to railroads, which are almost lightning conductors of the vast energies of civilisation. Give royal railways to Ireland – railways which shall glow with third-class trains, conveying peasants to the distant plough, artisans to the remote workshop, fishermen to the long extended coast, teeming with every variety of the finny tribe, but where at present are neither boats, nor nets, nor fishermen. I am no planner of specific railways, but I plead for routes that shall be fixed according to luminous general principles – not scheming sections to secure the co-operation of a titled proprietor or a jobbing municipality. I would also observe, that the canals in Ireland should be preserved in their integrity, if even their own directors and shareholders were willing to sacrifice them for some present advantage; and the reason for their conservation is obvious – the existing canals are a part of the national arrangements for conveyance, and, as we reckon upon railway lines which shall approach the direction of the canals, the latter will have their share of goods' traffic, whilst affording a salutary check to the possible monopoly of railroads – a consideration of great importance where companies bear sway. To dilate upon the commercial benefits flowing from a noble railway system would furnish a pregnant page. Look at the position of Galway, her capacious bay, forming a refuge from the buffets of the Atlantic. Imagine a railway running through the centre of Ireland direct to Galway from Dublin, and tell me if it be foolhardy to predict that North American liners would eject their thankful passengers upon the Galway terminus of such a railway, in order to hurry them in a few hours to the Irish metropolis? What is to prevent Galway from maturing into an Irish Liverpool, for what was Liverpool in the first year of George 3rd? Innumerable incentives might be urged, all conspiring to demonstrate to the Irish people the importance of sound Irish railways. But I must check my thoughts and my pen. As an impartial Irishman, I would ask Sir Robert Peel's government to aid in enfranchising my bondaged countrymen from the whole tribe of noxious agitators, sham liberators, and truculent pacificators. I ask them to bestow upon Ireland the precious boon of a judicious railway system, which will develop her dormant resources, stimulate her inert population, multiply her points of commercial contact, and diffuse widely the external elements of order, peace, and prosperity. I have never flattered sir Robert Peel- I have spoken freely and fearlessly of what I conceived to be his errors; but I honestly avow that he is doing his best for Ireland, and therefore he deserves the support of every calm judging Irishman. No patronage could purchase my pen – but I readily give to our rulers the mead of approbation, which, I think, their conduct calls for.

Thomas Mulock".ⁱⁱ

Seeking further outlets for his literary accomplishment, and with it some hope of financial remuneration, Mulock - perhaps through Henry Wellesley or Lord Hatherton - approached John Gibson Lockhart, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*. That gentleman, in a letter dated 4th March 1845, wrote to John Wilson Croker (a politician and essayist who contributed to the *Review*), commenting:

‘You are likely to know about Mr. Mulock. I am not you see, informed clearly what he wishes to write about - but from the printed paper I suppose it is the Irish branch of the Railway question. He writes well – but I can’t say a word until I hear from you. I hoped you might think of another railway article yourself – and moreover I doubt exceedingly as to Mulock’s wisdom in enforcing a government system of railways for his and your green island.’ⁱⁱⁱ

In April 1845, still smarting over the difficulties encountered with the project for the direct railway, Mulock attended a meeting at Shelton, Staffordshire, called by those who objected to the British government’s proposed endowment of Maynooth College, Ireland. An attempt that he made to address the objectors and speak in favour of the government proposal was refused by the chairman of the meeting. It was a refusal continued at another meeting that Mulock attended in the Potteries, but not to be denied Mulock called a meeting of his own, held at the Town Hall, Newcastle-u-Lyme on the 30th of April. Speaking to what was described as a tolerably numerous audience, Mulock spoke in favour of the proposed measure, despite its plain revocation of the exclusive Protestant Church establishments of both England and Ireland, and summed up:

“I have thus endeavoured to point out the real bearings of this important question. I have shown that there is nothing in true religion that can be reasonably urged against the grant to Maynooth – for true Christianity is tolerant, bountiful and benignant – and disdains a penal withholding of pounds, shillings and pence. Secondly, I have sought to prove that every consideration of public policy, and of national peace and prosperity, would influence a sound statesman or legislator to sanction the boon that Sir Robert Peel proposes to confer on the vast majority of Irish people. But I have, with all fairness, distinctly demonstrated that the present proposition, in behalf of Maynooth is a direct departure from the existing law of the land, so far as that law exclusively recognises the English and Irish Church Establishment. Well, what the legislature in its sovereign competency enacted, the Queen, Lords and Commons have overruling power to modify or repeal. To Parliament, I as a loyal and confiding subject, leave the decision of the matter, without attempting to coerce their deliberations.” Mulock, with a needful eye on the means for subsistence, also published for sale a letter on the subject.^{iv}

This venture was followed by another when Mulock addressed an audience at Liverpool:

Mr. Mulock will deliver, THIS EVENING, (Friday) the 9th instant at the CONCERT HALL, Lord Nelson Street, an ADDRESS on the subject of the Government Educational GRANT to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth. To commence at half-past seven o’clock. Admission free.

At this time - which may account for Mulock’s presence in Staffordshire and Cheshire - Mulock’s wife and daughter had returned to Staffordshire contemplating setting up a school, but Mrs. Mulock proved to be in too poor health for this to succeed and the plan was abandoned. Amongst the wider family members Mulock’s prospects were seen as poor. William Parker, writing to the other brother-in-law William James Reade, in April 1845, drew a gloomy picture, and from a reference to the Insolvency Court there leaves little doubt but that Mulock had incurred debts that he was unable to meet and faced legal procedures that would have seen him imprisoned:

“In confidence I am sorry to inform you that all is up with poor Mulock. His wife, who cannot live long, and his daughter, I saw in this neighbourhood a day or two since on their way to Newcastle to set up a school again, as soon as Mrs. M is able. Mr. M will in all probability go through the Insolvent Court; he wants to avoid it by getting his wife’s money. But the trustees are firm in withholding it. I advise a school again. The boys are with the father in London.”^v

However, perhaps carried on by the momentum of public speaking, Thomas Mulock then gave a lecture at the Town Hall in Stoke early in June, when he expounded on the existing state of religion in Great Britain and Ireland. At this there was a large attendance - perhaps because admission was free - but the event does not appear to have provided him with a source of income.^{vi}

Whatever opinion was held by the public concerning the Direct London/Manchester line, in a letter to the *Railway Record*, which was also printed in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Mulock set forth his explanation of the situation:

“My attention has been called to the following paragraph in the Railway Record of the 24th instant: “Direct London and Manchester Railway. There are two schemes of this kind just out. One is a revival of the scheme brought out last year by Thomas Mulock, and then under the engineering auspices of Mr. Remington.”^{vii}

Struck with this announcement, I sought for some further information on the subject, which I at length discovered in the shape of an advertisement, signed 'Edward Bernard Neill, secretary' intimating, inter alia, that "this important national undertaking was brought forward in the autumn of last year, and arrested from the want of sufficient time to comply with the Standing Orders of the House, the then provisional committee having determined that they were not justified in wasting the money of the subscribers in carrying on a contract which must necessarily be prolonged into another session."

As this self-constituted secretary is unwittingly palming a flagrantly false statement upon the public, I, who had the misfortune to be secretary to the "then provisional committee," must beg leave to set the public right. No such prudential policy as Mr. Secretary Neill alleges was the true cause of the abandonment of the 'The Direct London and Manchester Railway.' The dissolution of the provisionally registered company arose from the fact having transpired, that eighteen Manchester warehousemen, yclept gentlemen – persons of great opulence and high character – had consented to head a prospectus with their influential names - they secretly stipulating, that they were not to be asked to take any shares – to subscribe a farthing towards the preliminary expenses – or to give any attendance at meetings of the committee! This underhand arrangement I denounced, as soon as it came to my knowledge, as a scandalous imposition on the public; and rather than submit to be legal, honourable, and working members of a responsible committee, those eighteen Manchester worthies covertly laid their plans, mustered their forces, and, without affording any notice of their intention, passed a resolution by which the company was declared to be dissolved, and also without any official explanation being given to the public, who, on the strength of the calico part of the committee, had come forward, in four days, to apply for shares to the amount of more than a million sterling!*

Now, sir, allow me to announce, that if it shall appear on the face of the forthcoming prospectus, that any of the Manchester magnates before mentioned are connected with the revived scheme, I will do my best to prove them utterly unworthy of the confidence of the public. So little sense of justice had those unscrupulous gentry that they tossed an excellent railway project to the wind, and bolted from the concern so as to evade payment of expenses honestly incurred. Their bills are I regret to say, up to this date un-discharged. The printer cannot obtain the amount due to him, and Mr. Sherman, the confiding proprietor of the Bull and Mouth Hotel, is minus to a somewhat large figure – his waiters and chambermaids being 'heart sick with hope deferred' Messieurs Clowes and Wedlake, solicitors, are, to my knowledge, out of pocket – not a very usual event with railway solicitors. Two or three hard worked clerks have not received a sixpence each; and, last and not least, I may add, that I have not received a halfpenny for my services in zealously promoting the scheme. In order, however, to instruct me in the perils of railway secretary-ship, I was placarded in Manchester as the swindling emissary of a bubble company; and I have been assailed with legal proceedings by Mr. Nethercraft, lithograph printer, who thought it more handy to attack me, than to arrest the millionaires of Cheapside.

*But these petty privations and disappointments have been beneficial to me, for they have emphatically compressed upon my mind the inestimable advantage of keeping aloof from public companies, and very specially from railway promoters, for the bulk of their schemes are fraudulent follies, concocted by pettifogging attorneys; and where the scheme happens to be really sound and good (as in the case of Mr. Remington's London and Manchester Line), it cannot be carried out except by resorting to base and juggling acts, which no conscientious man could possibly lend himself to. Railway schemes will yet prove a direful curse to this country, for public undertakings, emanating from no public principle, but, on the contrary, originating in the vilest sordidness of reckless speculation, have no real element of success or security. The sooner the crash comes, the better – for the longer the crisis is delayed the greater will be the pecuniary convulsion – when *saue qui peut* will be the cry of innumerable shareholders.*

*I am sir, your obedient servant,
Thomas Mulock.*

Liverpool. May 26th 1845.^{viii}

Responding to this and no doubt other comments, Ashurst, the solicitor involved in the proposed formation of the company, now stated his view of matters, shaking off Mulock's contention:

"In 1840, an advertisement appeared announcing a company for the formation of a railway from Manchester to London. After some time, the movers, who were unknown to the Manchester trade, found it necessary to apply to some of the gentlemen connected with that trade in London to support them. They were referred to me by some of the leading houses in the trade here, and I was requested to report my opinion, not of any line, but of the propriety of their uniting the applicants. Before I was able to report upon the prudence of men with capital and influence uniting with men not known to possess either, I was sent for to a meeting of "the Board" in Cornhill, and was told that the landlord was urgent for his rent; and I was asked to pay that rent and take solicitor-ship of the company. I declined the office, but

made the advance, that I might have time to report. The result was that a union was not thought desirable, and the matter died. Mr. Remington's name was used on that occasion. About this time in the last year, 1844, Mr. Mulock advertised that he had taken up Mr. Remington, and intended to form a company. Mr. Mulock also found it necessary to obtain the support of the trade; he sought it, and was referred to me. He came to me, accompanied by Mr. Wedlake, of the firm of Clowes, Orme and Wedlake, the well-known and respectable solicitors in London. In consequence of this, I again had interviews with the principal houses in the trade of London; and they gave me introductions to many of the leading houses in Manchester, whom I saw on the subject. On my return I made my report to those who deputed me; and they resolved that it was *not* desirable then to form a company. Mr. Mulock and Mr. Remington thought differently, and they advertised a company, with the names of gentlemen as a provisional committee, who afterwards resolved that the company should not proceed. During all this time the only question was the propriety of forming a company, not the merits of Mr. Remington's line."^{ix}

Mulock's wife, Dinah, died on the 3rd of October, 1845. From this time, and perhaps some time earlier -such as when he was obliged to give up the accommodation at 8, Southampton Row - Thomas Mulock appears to have had little or nothing to do with his children who were left to their own devices, although the point must be reserved that they might equally have chosen to have little to do with him as they were not entirely without some financial means but which under the influence of the father might easily have become dissipated. Pape cites the indenture entered into in January, 1840, by Thomas Mulock and his wife, Dinah, on the one part and a man named Hyde, bookseller and Robert Bull, a wine-merchant, made upon the will of Thomas Mellard, made in October 1815. The gist of the will being that Mrs. Mulock, who was one of four daughters, received £500 (long paid) and that after her death such money as remained was to be held on trust for her children equally. There was also money that came to the family on the death of Mrs. Mellard, but as the money was held on trust the children sometimes experienced difficulty in getting it.^x

In November 1845, still pursuing such means as he could to enhance his financial status, Mulock published, priced one shilling and printed by Davidson, printer, of Serle's Place, Carey Street, London, 'Railway Revelations, being letters on the subject of the proposed Direct London and Manchester Railways.' On the title page Mulock was described as the late secretary to the late Direct London and Manchester Railway Company (Remington's Line.)^{xi} In an advertisement Mulock set out his thoughts on the subject:

*"When Sterne – no mean moral painter – was desirous of portraying the horrors and miseries of hopeless imprisonment, instead of wasting his words in diffuse dissertation upon the woes of **captivity** in the abstract, he employed himself in sketching a **captive** narrowed to his lonely cell. In like manner, though with far less power, I would aim to submit to the British public, not eloquent **general** animadversions on the evil of railway speculation, corruption, and mismanagement; but a strictly faithful view of the proceedings connected with a single railway scheme – one, too, of unquestionable soundness and national importance; yet marred, perverted, and jobbed away by that overwhelming sordidness which turns the best public undertakings into pettifogging projects, for the furtherance of private interests. Without attempting to detract from the merit of the **Times**, in recently exposing these nefarious errors, I must lay claim to priority in giving expression to earlier sentiments regarding delusive railway schemes, and the false principles upon which even sound schemes were conducted. So far back as May 1844, I ventured to address the following remarks to a large railway meeting, in the county hall, Bedford:*

*"It is strongly impressed upon my mind that railway projectors have hitherto begun at the wrong end. Availing themselves of that astonishing application of steam power, which is become the savage world's wonder and the civilized world's pride, men imbued with too much of a mere mercantile spirit, have concocted plans of railway communication more with a view to the creation of a new species of securities for the investment of craving capital, than with the higher (and, as I shall aim to prove, the safer, and ultimately, more profitable) view of promoting public undertakings demonstrably of national benefit. And here I shall be met with the taunting query – why do you quixotically mix up patriotic motives with pecuniary considerations? What has patriotism to do with railway speculations? I reply, much! So long as men pursue the private path of individual interest, let them be as sordid and selfish as they may, I cannot presume to control them; but if they become component parts of a public company, seeking and obtaining the sanction of queen, lords, and commons, then am I entitled to exact from them that they shall keep steadily and honourably in view the interests of their country, which they are about to cut up and mangle by virtue of an act of parliament! And, in honestly consulting the best interests of the community, a well constituted and wisely conducted company would infallibly secure the interests of shareholders; and they can, in truth, secure them in no other way. Therefore, sir, I boldly denounce the mischievous error of considering a railway project as provender for **bulls** and **bears** in the Stock Exchange, and that if Jew and Gentile jobbers in the alley are pleased to patronize the plan, these Cockney capitalists may **run-a-muck** through the rural districts of this lovely land, reckless of public objects so long as scrip and shares can travel profitably from hand to hand among a brotherhood of brokers! Gentlemen, if in the insatiable pursuit of lucre, we stifle all patriotic considerations, we not only lose caste among professedly Christian communities, but we*

place ourselves immeasurably below the standard of ancient heathenism. We should be withered by the indirect rebuke contained in the noble sentiment of the Roman orator and patriot:

'Omnes omnium charitates, patria una complectitur.'^{xiii}

Eighteen months have passed away since the foregoing words were uttered, and, without laying claim to the gift of prophecy, the speaker may with certainty affirm that the soundness of his views has been abundantly verified. At this moment twelve hundred and odd railway schemes are placed before the British public – schemes originated by professional men of every class – ostensibly supported and managed by men of all ranks – the nobility, gentry, ecclesiastics, merchants, traders of this great country – and moreover upheld by the **deposits** of innumerable shareholders – men, women, and children! To assert that patriotic motives have had any share in stirring this national impulse would be to incur the downright ridicule of the speculators themselves. Gain, immoderate gain, is the avowed object of every meddler in railway matters, and ten **per cent** dividends are the golden apples flung in the path of England's runners in the race of insatiable covetousness! It is in vain that these deluded multitudes are warned against the daring lies and crafty exaggerations of the manifold projects of this evil day; the love of lucre has so besotted their reasoning faculties that they avert themselves from all salutary admonition, and hug the deceptions which will ere long crush entire communities. Nor is it merely the evil of extravagant railway speculation that has smitten so deeply the British nation; it is the frantic neglect of those profitable pursuits in which regular industry has hitherto been successful, that will inflict the sorest injury upon the commercial interests of England. Gamblers will never become steady traders, men of prudence, content with small, sure, and honest profits. As well might you hope to convert a reckless buccaneer into a Thames Wherryman.

As for remedies, it is the proper function of the paid servants of the crown to devise prescriptions for an ailing people. Sir Robert Peel is, or ought to be, the first state physician, and it is to be deplored that his science was not earlier employed in checking the primary symptoms of a fearful epidemic disease which threatens to ravage a whole empire."

In the May of 1846 a paragraph appeared in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* under the title 'The Mystery of Canning's Life,' (reproduced from *The Critic*) which commented on a recent biography of George Canning:

"Throughout the whole period of his life from his quitting school to his coming into Parliament, there is a mystery which must strike every reader. How did he live? College life costs something. A man cannot study for the Bar and visit in the highest circles without a tolerable income, nor can a Member of Parliament subsist upon "Hear, hear" and "Cheers from both sides." Canning had not a farthing of his own. His uncle died in 1788 and left him nothing. His mother could with difficulty keep herself. There is some dubious sort of story of the sum of £200 per annum charged on the paternal estate on the cutting of the entail; but of this there is no evidence; it is only rumours and conjecture. How, then, did Canning subsist? It is to be regretted that Mr. Bell has been unable to solve this problem, for the sake of the many young men of parts who would fain, like him, be gentlemen, without money and without work. Such an example would have been invaluable; it would have totally eclipsed the famous treatise 'How to live in comfort and respectability on £150 a year.' Canning might have taught us how to live as a gentleman upon nothing!* Yet we never heard that he got into debt or gambled. Did his pen help him to an income?

(*The present scribbler cannot but think that innumerable politicians of the present day have given us quite sufficient instances. A.J.S.)

Any comment upon Canning would lead Mulock to rise to the occasion; he did not disappoint now and set out to explain, correct, and clarify:

"The Mystery of Canning's Life:

*"A paragraph headed as above, and extracted from The Critic, having met my eye in your last publication, I am tempted to offer, through your medium, some observations on the very interesting theme thus publicly noticed. Of all the distinguished men that ever flourished in this great country, the illustrious individual of whose early life and advent to political position the least is known, is unquestionably George Canning; and certainly it is an object of legitimate public curiosity to solve the problem of his progress from privacy to public renown. Enjoying, as I did for many years, the honour and happiness of calling Mr. Canning my friend – a friendship wholly apart from patronage on his side, or dependence on mine – I came to the determination some six years since of endeavouring to achieve a biographical work, which should include 'The Life and Times of George Canning.' I felt it my duty to communicate my intention to Viscount Canning, not suing to him as a possible patron, but wishing to afford his Lordship an opportunity of contributing his **filias quota** to recitals calculated to further the fame of his incomparable father. But Lord Canning, in*

the exercise of a discretion that I am not disposed to censure, informed me that he had the strongest objections to the **present** publication of any life of Mr. Canning, and assigned as one ground, that he (Viscount Canning) possessed important documents, without which a life of his father would be **meagre**, but which could not with propriety be published until the lapse of time should remove existing difficulties. I confess I was disappointed with Lord Canning's determination, and dissatisfied with his reasons; but I soon discerned, in his Lordship's acceptance of office under Sir Robert Peel, a very sufficient motive for withholding all aid from an undertaking which, if executed with fairness and impartiality, must have touched freely and fearlessly on the conduct of certain political personages towards Mr. Canning, when the great man was called to be, for a mournfully brief period, the first minister of the Crown! I do not, therefore, complain of Viscount Canning's discreet deference to the present possessor of power, but I lament that he should have thought it necessary to exclude me from the possibility of obtaining information from eminent persons who lived in the closest intimacy with Mr. Canning, and who would have readily and rejoicingly opened their delightful stores to me, but for the interdict of Viscount Canning. I mention the late Lord Seaford in particular. From Mr. Stratford Canning and the Marchioness of Clanricarde I received the most courteous and considerate communications; but Lord Canning's **front negative** extended its influence in every quarter where authentic and illustrative details concerning Mr. Canning might be expected to abound. Shut out from those magnificent materials of authorship, I was prosecuting my work as I could, when from an unforeseen source I obtained a mass of information such as I believe Lord Canning himself is unpossessed of, and all bearing on the early life of his father. The autograph letters of Mr. Canning's mother (Mrs. Hunn), written to her favourite daughter, were also placed in my hands, and from them I have made copious extracts which will in due time gratify every admirer of Mr. Canning. More I cannot at present say.

I hope I shall not incur the suspicion of enviously underrating the literary labours of Mr. Canning's recent biographer, when I assert, in the strongest manner, that he is grievously in error upon innumerable points relating to Mr. Canning himself, his immediate family, and very specially his mother, of which lady I am entitled to affirm, and the public will agree with me when they read her admirable letters, that she was every way qualified to secure (as she did to her dying day) the devoted love and reverential regard of her almost idolised son. When I read the announcement of Mr. Bell's, *Life of Canning*, I asked the publisher's (Messrs. Chapman and Hall) if the author they employed could supply **desiderata** much coveted by the public, and which, or at least a portion thereof, I was myself preparing for publication? Mr. Chapman replied that "Mr. Bell's *Life of Canning*" was not of so ambitious a cast as mine." My ambition was to write a truthful biographical memoir of a truly great man, whereas I fear Mr. Bell, in order to fill up the dearth of veritable information has exercised a somewhat poetical faculty concerning all those parts of Mr. Canning's life which lie out of the pale of well known history. Mr. Canning's transfer of his talents to the cause of Toryism, in consequence of a breakfast confidence with the democratic William Godwin, as solemnly narrated by Mr. Bell, has the air of a nice little bit of romance, instead of accounting for the political principles of a great statesman. But lest I should be seduced into a review of Mr. Bell's work, allow me to terminate this letter."

Thomas Mulock.^{xiii}

Following this, in the May of 1846, when perhaps resident in Liverpool, Mulock set up as an advisor on railway companies when the following notice was published:

TO RAILWAY SHAREHOLDERS WHO ARE EMPOWERED TO APPOINT A PROXY UNDER THE
PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSED RELIEF ACT.

"Mr. Thomas Mulock, who has devoted much attention to railway affairs while keeping himself aloof from the transactions which have led to the present crisis, is induced to offer his assistance to parties who are desirous of having their interests fearlessly and efficiently advocated at public meetings about to be holden under Parliamentary sanction. Mr. Mulock's earnest endeavours will be directed to elicit at such Meetings the fullest information regarding the origin, management and present position of each convened company; to urge the most scrupulous inquiry into all alleged expenditure, and to enable shareholders to draw a just distinction between **bona fide** public schemes, and the pernicious projects by which the public have been deluded. Persons who are unacquainted with the details of railway subjects – who are engrossed with their own business – and who, if at liberty, would be disinclined to face the tumult of public meetings, will see the advantage of confiding the care of their interests to a party able and willing to espouse their cause. Mr. Mulock will adopt a fixed rate of remuneration in preference to an accumulation of charges.

N.B. Mr. Mulock was secretary to the original committee for promoting the Direct London and Manchester Railway (Remington's Line) from which position he retired, from his disapprobation of their proceedings.

Communications may be made to Mr. Mulock, at No. 28 Sister Street, Liverpool. Attendance from ten to four.^{xiv}

At this point it should be said that the situation of the Direct London Manchester Line was being resolved and in the August of 1846 a Special meeting of Shareholders was held to consider the dissolution of the company.^{xv}

The situation in respect of Mulock's children, which does not appear to have given him too much concern, came to the fore in tragic circumstances. Perhaps as noticed, Mulock took the view that the youngsters were capable of making their own way in the world; perhaps the daughter, an independent girl who would quietly tolerate no nonsense and who appears to have borne on her shoulders the difficulty of her mother's failing years, had indicated that Thomas Mulock was not to be a burden upon them and eased the parting of their respective ways. It was said that the eldest son, Thomas Mellard Mulock, had given up study of painting on the death of his mother (although Elihu Rich states that young Thomas Mulock was expelled for some act of rebellion), upon which he looked for a situation aboard ship and through the offices of Metcalfe, a ship owner and Member of Parliament for Tynemouth, was articled for three years to one of Metcalfe's ships' captains. Having successfully completed one voyage to Canada, an experience that young Thomas Mulock was said to have thoroughly enjoyed, when returning to the ship which was then in dry dock at St. Catherine's prior to leaving for Australia, on the 12th of February 1847, he somehow slipped off the edge of the dock wall, falling a great height and breaking both his thighs, dying from his injuries aboard the Dreadnought Hospital ship that was then moored on the river Thames, he was then aged 19.^{xvi} There is a reference to young Thomas Mulock during the time he was studying painting:

"At the Museum there was one tall, handsome youth, with full yellow hair and clear blue eyes who could never be forgotten; he drew with great earnestness, capacity and modesty. His name was Tom Mulock; and frequently his sister, Dinah, the authoress of 'John Halifax' would sit by his side. He died quite young."^{xvii}

Hyde, one of the trustees to the Mellard/Mulock estate, having visited London early in April 1847, wrote to Reade saying:

"I was in town about three weeks since and saw Miss Mulock and her brother. She is now doing pretty well in the literary way and getting some money by her writings. Benjamin is an engineer. It was a most distressing and melancholy accident that deprived poor Tom Mulock of his life. He was a fine, promising young man and likely to get on in the service."

Whether Thomas Mulock expressed any distress at the death of his son, Thomas, or whether he ascribed the tragedy to the will of God to be accepted without comment is difficult to determine.

In the latter part of 1846 Mulock had travelled to Ireland (see below), then to Scotland, from where he wrote to Lord Hatherton to explain contact that had been made with Lord Clarendon, then the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland:

52, Cumberland Street,
Edinburgh.
January 3rd 1847.

"I do assure you I never meant to provoke a correspondence with the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland – what I did was this. Having obtained some valuable information in the North of Ireland I felt it my duty to make it known to his Excellency, not looking for reply but merely acknowledgment of receipt. It might be from Lord Clarendon's private secretary. That Lord Clarendon appreciated the communication your Lordship already knows – but I have this day received another and much longer letter from Ireland – in which he says:

"I learn with equal surprise and regret that you did not receive a letter from me in the summer – although I must add that it is not the only instance of letters miscarrying or being lost since I came here. I cannot now tell the date of that letter, although I well remember answering yours either the day or the day after I received it, and that besides expressing my entire concurrence in your views respecting this country, I stated my wish to have the benefit of communicating with you. I now, however, perfectly understand the tone of your second letter, and as I think it was justified, I beg you will allow me to withdraw the remarks I made upon it in writing to you some days ago."

Certainly your Lordship's recital of the etiquette properly prevailing at Dublin Castle, exceedingly enhances the honour of Lord Clarendon's condescending communications to me – but then your Lordship's favourable mention of me to Lord Clarendon must be borne in mind. Without that I had no personal grounds for expecting any peculiar distinction to be shown towards me.

Nothing can be sounder than Lord Clarendon's news of the policy likely to be pursued towards Ireland. His Excellency writes as to present matters:

"It is impossible as yet to say what will be the effect of the Crime and Prevention Act but from all quarters I hear that the people are alarmed at it, and that they are convinced it is already a reality. I have issued a special commission which will open at Limerick on Tuesday next and if the juries do their duty, which there is every reason to expect, as great pains have been taken to ensure a proper panel, I shall be sanguine about the restoration of tranquillity which is the sine qua non^{xviii} to all other measures of improvement."

"As I am much importuned by friends to revisit Ireland, I shall in that event take an early opportunity of paying my respects to his Excellency – for whose notice and special kindness, I feel myself entirely indebted to your Lordship."

*I have the honour to be your Lordship's obliged and very obedient servant,
Thomas Mulock.^{xix}*

Mulock had been in Ireland during November, 1846, when a letter of his appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, and his comment that he had been asked to revisit implies, as the address given indicates, that he had travelled to Scotland. However, the persuasion of friends in Ireland seemingly irresistible, a week later Mulock was in Dublin, residing at Nesbitt's Hotel from where he wrote to the *Freeman's Journal* to express his opinion on troubles then besetting the city:

"Supineness of the Executive Regarding the Public Peace of the City of Dublin:

Sir,

Allow me as a sincere well-wisher for the preservation of life and property, to offer a few remarks on the strange supineness of the government with reference to the (I fear) inceptive food riots in this metropolis, recently recorded in your ably-conducted journal. It appears that bodies of evil disposed, or hunger-bitten men (I take the fact either way) have been perambulating parts of this city – visiting bakeries and provision shops, and plundering in open day the property of industrious individuals. Police protection there has been positively none. Cases have been stated in your own journal where these marauders have been suffered to rob and carry off bread munching it by the way. The police have looked on at a safe distance and then pursued the travelling thieves to "see what they would do;" reminding me of the young lady pleasantly described by Addison, who when asked why she had so long borne with the improper liberties taken by an indecorous swain, replied, "that she wished to know how far his impudence would carry him." Sir, the plain duty of the police was to arrest on the spot the offending parties, to be dealt with according to the law; and the next duty devolving upon the government was, to issue a firm, vigorous, uncompromising proclamation, denouncing all riotous assemblages, and informing the public that all peaceably-conducted persons should be protected in their respective avocations.

If some such steps as these be not immediately taken by the proper authorities, I predict that all civil government must be speedily suspended, and that martial law will be the sole resource in order to avoid the horrors of anarchy and universal ravage and spoilation.

I address myself at once through the public press to all that is worthy of being called mind in this distracted country; for I know by humiliating experience, what a thankless and profitless task it is to attempt to approach the government unless you have some party prestige to herald your way."^{xx}

Aside from this comment on public matters, Mulock had already become embroiled with a Dublin businessman over an issue to do with railways, and being annoyed at a letter published in the *Freeman* on that subject had written in terms that the editor would entertain. Following the rejection and having gathered his dignity, Thomas responded:

"The Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Dublin Railway Company:

In lieu of my former letter on the subject I beg leave to substitute the following statement, viz. that the communication addressed to your journal on the above theme last week was made up of information every point of which Mr. Thomas Dixon had received privately from me, and which he thought proper to publish, as emanating from his own judgement, without asking my permission for this wholesale appropriation of another person's diligently acquired knowledge of railway matters. As Mr. Dixon is seeking justice for himself and fellow-sufferers, I recommend him to observe it towards others."^{xxi}

As can be easily understood the view of the one side led to the disclosure of the other man's opinion:

"A person who signs himself 'Thomas Mulock,' but of whose localities I can learn nothing, though he dates 26, South Frederick Street, has thought fit, through the medium of the Freeman, to prefer the somewhat ludicrous charge against me of having published 'information' in your paper regarding railways, the whole of which I *privately* received from him; and it seems he did this in his *first* letter, addressed to you on that subject, in terms so offensive as to render it unfit for your respectable and well-conducted journal.

Some days ago I had occasion to call at an agency office in the city, when this person, whom I chanced to see there, began to vociferate, in accents ill-suited to private communications and in a style more remarkable for its volubility than for its coherency, certain crude and not very intelligible notions touching railway matters and acts of parliament; and no doubt *he* believed, in truth and verity, that in some two and a half minutes he had made me wiser thereupon than King Hudson and all his men. But then, Sir, it unfortunately happens that this letter of light which you had the honour to publish was, for the most part, in type before I had the benefit of this illuminating interview with 'Thomas Mulock' and would have been published but for some reason (probably a press of matter) which you can explain.

The letter itself, in the first place, urges the committee of the WWW's to meet and, for reasons therein stated, to call a *public* meeting of the shareholders; and, in the second place hazards the opinion that the directors ought to have lodged the list of shareholders with the magistrate as soon as *the period when the act of parliament had received the royal assent*; but I did not give this opinion with much confidence, as I then stated. Beyond this (for which I presume it will not be said I was indebted to your correspondent), my letter contained nothing worth mentioning.

I have heard of an hypochondriac who not only fancied himself to be a blazing meteor, but believed he had the rare quality of illuminating all other bodies that came within the sphere of his influence. You, Sir, I do not say Mr. Mulock, will know how to make the application. When you have read the enclosed letter, which I request you will publish, you will, perhaps, think with me that it is a pity this poor gentleman cannot be prevailed upon to 'hide his talent in a napkin.' It will be seen that I am not a solitary sinner, but that his own countrymen, or all of them with whom he has had to do, are as little susceptible of the 'generous' as your Saxon friend.

Thomas Dixon.

Newton Park, 13th January 1847.^{xxii}

An infuriated Mulock –incensed no doubt at being denied his Irish birthright, replied virtually by return of post:

"Sir,

If Mr. Dixon had scribbled a ream of rodomontade (which appears to be his proper province), I should not interfere with his avocation; but as the gentleman has thought proper to publish a letter in your journal, in which so far as regards myself, there is not a single particle of truth (which I impute to Mr. Dixon's total loss of memory) I must ask a portion of your space to set the matter right.

In the first place – Mr. Dixon knows me very well – inasmuch as I happen to be the school-fellow and uninterrupted friend of his brother-in-law, Mr. R. R. Guinness.

In the second place, instead of Mr. Dixon's finding me at an agency office, it happens that I found him there (Messieurs Guinness and Mahon's) and talking very much in the strain which he is pleased to ascribe to me. He said that he called several times to thank me for communicating to him my commented copy of the Railway Registration Act; and this led me to remark that himself and his fellow sufferers in railway matters did not seem to be aware of the protective provisions of that act. He expressed his anxiety to be informed on the subject, and I readily imparted to him the whole of the information regarding registration. That the letter could not have been then written, much less in type, will come out tolerably clear when I affirm (what is in the recollection of a party present at the interview) that the following sentence contains my identical words:- "Registration is for public purposes, the affixing the seal is to effect objects which only relate to shareholders." A doctrine of which Mr. Dixon was glad to be apprised, and very hospitably asked me to dine with him in order to educe further information; which honour, I being a "person" out of Mr. Dixon's sphere, very discreetly declined. This is the plain truth of the case; and I may add, that when I met and remonstrated with Mr. Dixon on the unfairness of his conduct, his reply was – "that he had paid me the highest compliment by adopting all my views."

Let Mr. Dixon write as he may, nothing shall induce me to notice his nonsense.^{xxiii}

It would seem that the matter now dropped and Mulock returned his attention to public affairs:

“Lord John Russell and the Corn Merchants:

Sir,

As the British ministry are clearly upon their trial with reference to their economical policy towards Ireland and other destitute parts of the home empire, it is highly important that the plain truth of the alleged charge against the government should be impartially presented to the public. In the month of August last information of the most undoubted kind reached Liverpool (where I then happened to be) conveying to the mercantile body of that great town the full certainty that the fatal failure of the potato – the staple subsistence of the Irish people – would cause an almost measureless demand for foreign supplies of corn for this country. In order to make the most of this national calamity, the Liverpool corn merchants (I do not affect to blame their commercial cupidity) agreed to dispatch a deputation to government to ascertain whether the executive would or would not interfere by means of purchases in foreign markets for the relief of destitution at home. Lord John Russell, after consulting the cabinet, gave such a favourable assurance and perfectly satisfied the cautious capitalists of Liverpool.

Now the view I have always taken of the minister’s decision is this:- that he - a free trader – was, in effect, conceding a monopoly to the corn merchant on the eve of scarcity, which might frightfully mature into famine. I maintain that the proper duty of a high-minded and paternally disposed minister of the crown was to abstain from committing himself, so as to sub-serve the sordid interests of a commercial cabal. There was ample and afflicting scope for the provident energy of the government, and for the uttermost stretch of mercantile enterprise. But the rigour of political economy was preferred to the blessed liberality of Christian counsel, and the cabinet became the upholder of the counting-house.

My just apprehension goes to the extent that the government, backed by parliament, can now do little or nothing to alleviate the amazing destitution of the Irish people – the most enduring people under calamity that the sun ever shone upon! The wise governments of France, Belgium, Prussia, and other nations, sorely short of sufficient food, have anticipated us in bargaining for the surplus corn of more fortunate countries – whilst Ireland and Western Scotland have to deplore the supineness of a government, obsequious to the wealthy and philosophically elevated above Christian sympathy for the starving poor.”^{xxiv}

Mulock’s letters to the *Freeman* continued to appear, presenting a constant criticism of the British Government while receiving the approbation of the *Freeman*:

The New Relief Committees – Supplies of Food:

“We publish in an adjoining column a letter from Mr. Thomas Mulock, addressed to Lord John Russell, on the principle of the new system of relief. Mr. Mulock understands the principle of the new relief system to be “supplying local relief committees “with *money* to purchase food for distribution to the destitute,” and asks “*Is it possible that your Lordship is not yet convinced that food not money is the real, urgent present want of Ireland?*” Whether Mr. Mulock is right in supposing that the principle of the new measure is to supply **money** to the relief committees, without putting forth any of the energies of the state for the purpose of introducing more abundant and cheaper supplies of **food** into the country, we do not know; - but we have hoped better. One thing, however, is plain – if Mr. Mulock misinterprets the intention of the government it is the government’s own fault who have not been more explicit in the development of their policy; and his mistake, if it be one, is shared by great numbers of persons well qualified to form an opinion. *

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We beg to recommend the letter of Mr. Mulock to the attention of our readers as coming from a gentleman whose suggestions deserve attention. On the 3rd November last, now more than three months ago, Mr. Mulock addressed a letter to Lord John Russell, in which the following passage occurs – a passage which the issue which the issue to which things have now come – *eventus stultorum magister* makes rather remarkable:-

“From the failure of the potato the occupiers of small holdings are now driven by their destitution of food to seek employment on public works, which chiefly resolve themselves into miserable road-making. These poor creatures in supplicating for daily subsistence from public works must renounce all expectation of tilling their patches of land, nor have they a spare shilling to hire anyone to dig their desolate one, two, or more acres. The road is gravelled – the hill is shaved – the hollow is filled up, but the land from which the labourer’s subsistence should be raised is at this moment overgrown with weeds, nor does there exist any reasonable prospect of its being cultivated for a coming crop – for if the unfortunate owner, beggared of his supply of potatoes, absents himself from the daily road-making, he and his

family must do without daily food. Thus while public works yield a certain degree of succour to the starving peasantry the soil is stripped of its cultivators, and the hope of next year's produce from the poor man's field is all but lost. Now, my lord, I venture to maintain, with all humility, that if a portion of the amount of public money now expended on works which will not provide a blade of corn in lieu of the perished potato, were discreetly disbursed in giving present support to the small holders of land, while cultivating that land, a twofold benefit of unspeakable worth would be conferred on the community. Present subsistence would be afforded them at no higher rate of wages than is now paid for public unproductive task-work; and the untilled, would be placed in a course of profitable food-full cultivation."

Mr. Mulock made these observations after personal enquiries prosecuted in the King's County and the County of Westmeath. They so perfectly square with facts which time has since broadly developed, and which, though then little attended to, now command universal recognition – that we think they may not unreasonably be cited to solicit for Mr. Mulock's present observations something more than passing attention. The letter which we publish today is written after a personal inspection of some of the *northern* counties, and more especially the county Armagh. We are sorry to say that Mr. Mulock is of opinion that the only difference between the north and the south is a question of time; and that as overwhelming is the nature of the present calamity, that notwithstanding the superiority of circumstances unquestionably enjoyed by the northern peasant, the same exhibitions of destitution and famine, which are now common in the south, already begin to show themselves in the north, and unless arrested by the most vigorous measures, must ultimately prevail to an equal extent; - only that they may come a month or two later. In a private letter which we have received from Mr. Mulock, he says, "*You have seen, I doubt not, two sick persons, both mortally affected, but one of them possessing more strength of constitution, and consequently, more tenacity of life than the other; - such is the north contrasted with the south of Ireland.*"^{xxxv}

A fortnight later and another firebrand appeared in which Mulock again castigated the British Government over its handling of the potato crisis:

"The 'Blue Book' or Relief Records of the Board of Works:

As you have with much kindness and courtesy assigned some importance to my humble communication I venture to claim a portion of your space for the impartial consideration of a subject on which (it appears to me) the public mind is very imperfectly informed, and, occasionally, has been very much abused. I advert to the general principles and proceedings of the Board of Works. My testimony is, I believe, an unobjectionable one, for I have no connection whatever with the government – nor am I desirous of any such connection; but after close investigation, I am fully persuaded, that under all the circumstances in which they were unexpectedly placed, no department could have evinced more promptitude, assiduity, judgement, and perseverance, than the Board of Works have displayed since its reconstruction, in order to carry out the unlucky labour-rate act – and the equally unlucky nullification of that act by Mr. Labouchere's letter – and here Sir, allow me in the context to remark, that power, in its true acceptation, as the rightful exercise of executive authority, seems to have passed away from the British government, whatsoever party may be the ostensible rulers of the state. The functions of the government are in fact usurped by the House of Commons whose committees not only control the executive, but are the constant creators of temporary legislation, so as to reduce the government to the level of powerless place-holders. England and her colonies are possessed with this pile on pile of petty-fogging legislation – but Ireland suffers all the more severely from this parliamentary supersession of the rights and responsibilities of regal government. Let us apply these truths to the present calamitous condition of Ireland. Towards the close of the last session of parliament, it became a matter of painful certainty that the staple subsistence of the mass of the Irish people was menaced with almost total failure – the perished potato leaving a gap in the domestic supply of food, which portended immense calamity. The only effectual relief in such a case was the timely importation of foreign-grown food – and in the securing that importation the government was bound to be foremost, leaving abundant scope for commercial cupidity. But instead of obtaining food from abroad the government resorted to the legislative to sanction a system of public works in Ireland – as if public works taken at their best, could possibly supply the want of national food! An act of parliament was accordingly framed (no doubt by some legal pedant, a technical clause-penner at the Home Office), whereby the threatened famine in Ireland was to be averted by means of public works. These works were not to originate with the government, but to emanate from the inventive faculties of jobbing gentry and cess payers, convened at innumerable presentment sessions, and who were empowered to tax themselves for the employment of starving multitudes. Road making being the universal stock-in-trade of all rural jobbers – roads of every foolish diversity, became the sole subject matter of every presentment. Good roads must be altered for the worse – bad roads must be devised to fill up the complement of assumed needful assessment, and as for money, government was to find all – the patriotic expectation being strong, that repayment would not be rigorously required. Such was the chaotic state of things which this absurd act of parliament gave birth to – and to impart anything resembling order or regularity, to their own stupid scheme, the government called into exercise the Board of Works, renewing and enlarging its constitution. Now it is if the continuous acts of that much maligned board, that the 'Blue Book,' named at the head

of this letter, specially treats. Its awful dimensions are enough to startle any modern reader of small books, but I can honestly affirm, that, whosoever shall have the courage to peruse its pages, will acquire a clearer light as to the present state of Ireland, than from all other publications put together. The rapid organisation of a staff competent to direct the (alas unprofitable) labours of enormous multitudes is truly surprising, and evinces that superior minds presided over the operations of the Board. And here let me notice a great error into which the acute writers of the Evening Mail, incautiously fell. They did not discern that the functions of the Board of Works were merely administrative – they had no power to initiate any beneficial plans, and they had to limit themselves to the letter of an act of parliament, or to the repeal mandates of Mr. Laboucher. In this trying position the members of the Board appear to me to have acted admirably; and as to “lolling in their easy chairs,” of which the poor gentlemen were accused, there is proof sufficient in the “Blue Book” that they were harassed and overwrought “from morn till dewy eve.”

Of the chairman, Colonel Jones, I know nothing but what this bulky volume discloses; but enough is recorded to establish his claim to be considered one of the best official men in the empire; and I may go even farther than this – Colonel Jones exhibits in his correspondence a clear comprehensiveness of mind as to the extent of destitution in Ireland, which I have not been able to trace in the speeches or letters of any members of the government. Take for example the following extracts from a letter written to Mr. Trevelyan, who, it may be added, is a very able man, although in treasury trammels;-

“September, 1846

“The prospects for the ensuing season are melancholy to reflect upon; the potato crop may now be fairly considered as past; either from disease, or from the circumstance of the produce being small, it has been consumed; many families are now living upon food scarcely fit for hogs. I am apprehensive government will find it necessary to send meal into some of the remote districts in the west, where there is a large population who live upon potatoes in good years; there is scarcely a town, and if there is scarcely any trade with the ports beyond the very few articles or commodities that a very poor population require. Therefore it is not to be expected that private traders will be able or willing to introduce meal in any such quantities as will be required. I am very much afraid that government will not find *free trade*, with all the employment that we can give, a succedaneum for the loss of the potato. It has forced itself upon my attention whether, under existing circumstances, government enumerators or inspectors should not be employed to ascertain and determine the numbers of families who will require relief. The everyday cry is for government to do something for the starving population. It is really distressing to read the applications for assistance from *Skibbereen(!)* and that district, where there is abundance of fish close to their shore, lying upon the beach, and no salt to cure them. There is another point which requires early attention. What is to be done when bad weather sets in and the people cannot be employed on works - are they to be paid or fed?”

“September 8th, 1846

“To Mr. Trevelyan,

“The potato crop may now be considered as lost as an article of provision for next year, and dismay appears to have taken possession of men’s minds.”

November 19th 1846

To Mr. Trevelyan,

“The agricultural state of the country at this moment is most inconceivable; nothing doing – no preparation of the land to receive seed for early crops. Surely such a state of things ought not to be allowed to continue. I have this day moved upon a line of upwards of fifty miles and have only seen *two* ploughs at work and one man throwing in seed.”

November 18th 1846

To Mr. Labouchere,

“There is another subject to which I am anxious to draw your attention, which is the apparent cessation of labour. From Clonmel to Clonakilty I did not see more than a dozen ploughs at work. Stubble fields and potato grounds lying in the same state as when the crops were cut or taken up. It becomes a question of serious consideration whether the productive land is to be allowed to remain uncultivated, for it appears to be generally admitted that the farmers will not do anything. The road system must soon be stopped, in many parts will soon be worked, and what is to be done? Land stewards and bailiffs might be appointed, who should report what is necessary to be done, and the poor,

who require relief, should be employed in tilling the land. It is a melancholy prospect under the present state of want of food and the certainty of its continuance nine months longer, to cast the eye round the country, and to witness the perfect stagnation which prevails; it has the appearance of being uninhabited.”

“I am of opinion that these extracts will suffice to show that, whatever be the “negligence and ignorance” of the higher powers, want of forecast cannot be reasonably alleged against the Chairman of the Board of Works. Well would it have been for unfortunate Skibbereen, and other destitute districts, if Colonel Jones’s seasonable and compassionate suggestions had been properly attended to.”^{xxvi}

There was then a respite of some weeks before Mulock returned to assail the government, this time on the policy of Relief Committees which had been introduced to help abate the terrible calamity which Ireland’s population was facing. Once again the *Freeman*, as well as reproducing Mulock’s letter had drawn the attention of its readers to that letter in an editorial paragraph:

“We subjoin the circular of the ‘Relief Committee,’ and, by way of commentary, we place in an adjoining column a letter from Mr. Thomas Mulock, a gentleman of acute observation, of great practical sagacity, which more than confirms our own experience of the inefficiency of the system adopted for bringing the relief act into operation.”

“The state of this unhappy country becomes daily more distressing and perilous, not only from the frightful extent of destitution, but from the sort of penal perversity which marks all the legislative measures ostensibly devised to alleviate (no human effort could remove) the national calamity. I am not disposed to underrate the difficulties which beset the government in endeavouring to follow out the crude technicalities of an act of parliament, but, straining my tolerance to the utmost, I cannot exonerate the executive from the charge of culpable remissness regarding the operation of the new relief system; and I think some frank and fearless exposition of the subject is rendered more necessary in consequence of the recent publication of a memorandum issued by the Relief Commissioners to the inspecting officers of unions, from whom have been received “numerous reports with respect to relief committees refusing or neglecting to act.” This is a grave, wholesale inculcation of committees, and, without professing myself to be their champion, I am strongly inclined to urge some plain truthful considerations which may tend to turn accusers into defendants.

*In considering the probable success of any practicable project, reference must always be had to what may be termed the **motive power** by which men propose to accomplish their moral objects. **What** and **where** is the absolute agency, as well as the animating and abiding principle which is to carry out your designs? If this great point be not satisfactorily established, the most specious schemes will eventuate in disgraceful disappointment. Acts of parliament, treasury homilies, government instructions, menacing memorandums, may fall “as thick as leaves in Val Ombrosa,” in supposed furtherance of some awfully important public purpose, and yet during the whole hurricane of official bustle, no perceptible, beneficial progress is really made. The evil meant to be redressed marches onwards with giant strides, while the halt, the maimed, and the blind, we **employed** in tracking, not mitigating, national misery. And now, sir, for the definite application of these sound incontrovertible principles. What, I ask, have been the fruits of the Commission for the Relief of Destitution in Ireland, constituted previously, but sanctioned by an Act of Parliament “passed 26th February, 1847?” What district, what city, what town, what hamlet, have as yet come clearly and avowedly under the operation of this act? The press would not be slow to record the benignant results of a well conducted system of alleviation in dreadfully distressed localities; whereas their columns teem with reports of abortive disputations in discordant relief committees, who, with the most benevolent discords and intentions, grope in darkness, wondering at the dilatoriness which they deplore, but totally unable to vanquish delays which are but another form of expression for DEATH! Whence then, it may now be justly enquired proceeds this fatal frustration of a plan which the mightiest minds in the empire conspired to concoct? Let me see. I have now lying before me (through the courtesy of Mr. W. Stanley) a cleverly compiled manual of the meditated relief operations from the date of the note of Sir George Grey’s primary letter to the Lord Lieutenant, down to the latest general instructions emanating from the Relief Commission, and after calmly contemplating the drift of all these documents, I am no longer at a loss to account for the failure of the national relief scheme. It is a bungling commixture of government interference and popular action, so as to generate a commission void of vital influence. Instead of a lofty and liberal discretion being invested in Sir John Burgoyne, enabling that distinguished man to adapt his measures to the diversified exigencies of this terrible time, I plainly perceive that the relief commission is chiefly instructed to cast the burden on the public, represented by relief committees. Now I will venture to predict that unless this false principle be speedily retracted the relief commission will become a national nuisance instead of an advantageous administration. If the government seriously desire to distribute succour to famishing multitudes they must empower Sir John Burgoyne to place relief inspectors in an entirely altered position. I contend that the working out of the relief measures must be deemed to depend, not upon committees composed of unpaid, and for the most part, of unqualified persons, but upon the relief inspector, who is by virtue of his*

appointment a member of each committee constituted by order of the Lord Lieutenant, and who, if he deserves his salary, ought to be the eye, the ear, the hand, and above all, the presiding mind of the community to which he belongs. It is impossible to overrate the important duties of a relief inspector at this calamitous crisis of our country, and yet I am sorrowfully convinced that these duties are very imperfectly appreciated. To test the matter, I would ask Sir John Burgoyne if he has instructed relief inspectors to use all personal diligence in acquiring a correct knowledge of the nature and extent of the destitution existing and spreading in their respective districts? Has he enjoined them to penetrate into the hovels of the poor, and thus to inform their own judgements, instead of trusting to the suspicious statement made by ignorant, prejudiced, or interested parties? Has he told them firmly and honestly that relief inspectors should be missionaries of mercy to the starving population, investigating the depths of their distress, and calling forth the compassionate energy of the more fortunate classes to abate the unspeakable wretchedness of their indigent brethren? Has Sir John Burgoyne intimated to relief inspectors that instead of being litigious disputants, or captious cavillers at committee meetings, it behoves them to be full of courtesy and conciliation towards persons whose services are gratuitous, and who have moreover, the invidious functions to fulfil of imposing compulsory contributions upon themselves and others? These are questions which I put respectfully to Sir John Burgoyne, as the accredited administrator of national relief in Ireland; and I put them with the more confidence, because from my own experimental knowledge of the sad state of the country, I am clear that if relief inspectors are not properly instructed, or do not follow out proper instructions the relief committee will turn out to be an organised fallacy, as well as a gigantic job – sweet to half-pay naval or military officers, but utterly unproductive of good to the famine stricken portion of our people.

In another letter I will endeavour to point out in more distinct detail, certain duties which, according to my apprehension, relief inspectors might very beneficially discharge, and certain snares which it would be desirable for them to avoid. ^{xxviii}

The following day Mulock contributed an attack upon the policy of the ‘Irish Party,’ which had put forward a plan to bring about the compulsory migration of some two million Irish Roman Catholics to Canada, as a means towards resolving the problem of feeding the population:

“I have perused with no ordinary degree of interest and attention, the supplement to the Spectator of the 3rd instant, in which appeared the ably-written details of the above-named plan, emanating from an equivocal, yet somewhat important body (without a head) styling itself the ‘Irish Party.’ Viewed merely as a speculative dissertation, the paper in question (ascribed, I believe, to a very talented individual, Mr. J. R. Godley), merits considerable commendation. It is evidently the product of a thoughtful mind, largely imbued with Irish and Transatlantic information. But the writer, whether from failure of intention, or from purposed tact in disguising his real drift, does not succeed in shaping out the ‘Irish Party’s’ plan so as to render it popularly clear and intelligible. A great deal is said, and well said, and yet there is a mystery of motive hanging over the whole of this stupendous scheme, which the contrivers do not help us to penetrate. May I ask for a portion of your space to enable me to offer a few impartial strictures on this gigantic ‘plan of colonisation for Ireland,’ and to add some faithful and fearless remarks applicable to the published parties from whom so portentous a project plainly proceed.

*The salient points of this plan, when gathered into compass, out of the diffuse and rather disorderly details, are as follows. It is proposed that an ‘Irish Roman Catholic Emigration’ to the amount of ‘two millions,’ should be effected as speedily as possible; and that this presumed surplus population should be transferred from their own fertile (and alas! – imperfectly cultivated) fields, to the wilds of Canada. Ireland, it is alleged, lacks capital and industry; and Canada, it appears, wants capital and labour, in order to humanise her vast solitudes. Expend funds, therefore, pray the Irish Party, in shipping two millions of expatriated idlers from Ireland, and expend still larger funds **improving** Canada, by means of colonising a colony – and a colony by the way, where two races contend for mastery, are, I conclude, to be harmonised by a third race of pure Milesian extraction. This I take to be the pith of the Irish Party’s plan, and we have next to collect the proposed details of its execution. A company is to be formed either by act or charter, to be entitled the Irish Canada Company, having a large subscribed capital, and authorised to borrow money for the purposes of its incorporation. That much capital and much borrowing would be required, is sufficiently clear from the inventory of achievements which the Irish Party aims to accomplish. “The business to be done would be extensive and multifarious. It would consist of raising money “in this country to be lent to the district councils of Canada – undertaking works in the colony – procuring laws for settlements – providing the aids of settlement – managing the contributions to the fund for passage – money, and generally whatever should need to be done, whether in Canada or in Ireland, with a view to the smooth and efficient working of the whole plan.” But here an almost insuperable difficulty is candidly acknowledged by our patriotic projectors, - “Irish Settlement, to use a common expression, does not ‘pay’ in Canada. It has been frequently tried as a speculation, and we are assured, invariably without success. The principal cause of failure appears to be the poverty and helplessness of the people; another cause is the difficulty, in a part of the world where land is so very cheap, of recovering with profit, except under very peculiar*

and favourable circumstances of position, an outlay upon settlement, by means of a sufficient increase in the market value of the land settled. But to whatever the circumstances may be attributed, it is certain that capitalists will not embark in this kind of undertaking."

These adverse considerations would certainly discourage the lucre loving magnates of Change Alley; but not so the cheerful and buoyant phalanx who constitute the Irish Party. "A parliamentary guarantee of interest at the market rate on money invested in the improvement of Canada would deprive the lender of all further anxiety – of all motive for caring the money were wasted or beneficially laid out." Here therefore is the pecuniary pivot upon which this grand scheme avowedly turns. If the First Lord of the Treasury do not succeed in seducing the parliament to guarantee a market rate of interest to cautious capitalists, not a sixpence will be advanced by the sons of scrip, and the 'Company' will have no being or existence save in the patriotic pates of the noblemen and gentlemen who have subscribed to a paper plan! I assume the truth of their own statement, viz.: - "the discredit which at present attaches to everything relating to colonies and colonisation. In the city of London, the great money mart of the world, the disposition to engage in colonial enterprise is extinct; and its extinction is there attributed to causes utterly beyond the control of those who have lost their money by engaging in colonial undertakings" - certainly the 'Irish Party,' unlike the eastern astrologists, do not appear to have fixed on the 'fortunate moment' for commencing their colonial career. They earnestly desire emigration on a colossal scale. They propose to effect their object by constituting a company with an immense subscribed capital – and they fatally demonstrate that no capitalists will subscribe – therefore, unless moneyed men forsake all known mercantile principles, this project of wholesale Irish emigration is as hopeless as the well-meant wish of a certain King of Bohemia, who was only prevented from establishing a formidable navy, by finding out that he had no seaport in his dominions. I apprehend that the Irish Party's national nostrum must fall into the category of 'hazy generalities,' which they so dogmatically deprecate. Money they cannot raise, except through the direct donative of the British House of Commons, and where is the rational expectant who can look for so absurd a bounty in bubbles? Let me therefore dismiss all further consideration of a commercial scheme which is void of the element of commercial feasibility. What the Irish Party may prevail on the government to attempt I have no means of judging; but as to a company to be formed by the "ordinary incentives of private enterprise," the thing is too preposterous for enlarged discussion.

Allow me now to address myself to another, and as I conceive a much more important topic, I mean the position, principles, and motives of the distinguished parties who have given their general sanction to the plan which I have just reviewed. If I do not greatly err, there is a 'case of Ireland' involved in this mighty project, which is of far more fearful import than Mr. R. Holme's Irish "Rights of Man" – the comet of a season! Here we have the names of noblemen and gentlemen belonging to the so-called 'Irish Party' subscribed to a plan for driving into eternal exile from their own land – a land teeming with natural resources – two millions of Roman Catholic emigrants for whom, according to the statistics of Protestant proprietors, the Irish soil can no longer furnish subsistence. They are, moreover, stated to be a people "indigent and uneducated, and who practically have almost no aristocracy – no natural leaders but their priesthood; while from their peculiarities of character and circumstances they stand more in need of leadership than any people on the face of the earth!"

And is it really come to this, O ye lords and gentlemen! – representatives of the Irish Party with prospective 'adhesions' (after the Easter holidays) from the vast majority of Irish Protestant proprietors – do ye avow yourselves to be in the position of land owners, who stand in no relation of aristocracy or leadership, government or guidance, succour or solace, to millions of the people who famish on the territorial possessions from which ye derive your titles, your importance, your influence, your wealth. Has confiscation been mellowed into the legal semblance of undisputed succession, only to bring about a state of things which the most ruthless ravagers of nations never permanently perpetrated? The English, the Scotch, the Anglo-Irish, you fully admit to have "natural leaders or caretakers of society;" but you tell us, that the 'descendants of the ancient native population' we are only 'cumberers of your ground,' and that the casting on of miserable millions is become a matter of "State expediency." Are these the fruits of your pure Protestant principles – or has religion been made a pseudo-spiritual screw for the rigorous exaction of rents and tithes; while all the duties – the privileges – the charities of proprietorship, have been flung to the winds by the heedless possessors of the soil? I solemnly declare my conviction that all the inflammatory rhodomontade which has at intervals burst from Irish turbulence ripening into rebellion, never contained such mischievous views and sentiments as this self-condemnatory confession of the Irish Party. They concede the dreadful fact, that after the long years of exclusive enjoyment of property in the soil – they – the Protestant landlords of Ireland, are surrounded with starving aliens – a peasantry not of serfs, but of strangers – an unguided, uninstructed rabble, over whom they can exercise no salutary control – no sympathetic influence, and whose mourning multitudes they are bent upon banishing to the snows and swamps of Canada! My spirit is stirred at the bare mention of this abominable plan of enormous INJUSTICE – for it is clear as noon-day that compulsory emigration is the real object contemplated by the contrivers of 'Colonisation for Ireland.' All the subtle tyranny of ejectment would quickly be enforced, in order to thin the tenantry of landlords, who

prefer the depopulation of their estates to the arts of improvement, which can alone render their possessions valuable, or their dependents comfortable and contented. The terrible secret is now divulged. The Irish landlords as a body have no hold upon the minds, the affections, the interests of millions of tillers of Irish soil; and to crown the cup of national calamity, it is proposed to coerce the estrays of famine and pestilence into the clutches of sordid emigration-mongers.

*Let me not be rashly misunderstood. I well know that Ireland can justly boast of some as liberal intelligent, and improving landlords as adorn as country under heaven. I give the humble tribute of my admiration to such estimable men whenever I am fortunate enough to meet them; but if they were **numerous**, Ireland could not possibly be in the condition which the document of the Irish Party describes with such frightful fidelity. If their statement be true, then it must follow that their misconduct has been inexcusable – nor will it be unattended with painful results. The forfeiture of human prosperity is the inevitable consequence of human error. No schemes of selfish retrieval however craftily or comprehensively devised, can shield the negligent landlords of Ireland from the righteous retribution which assuredly awaits them. The word of the God of truth denounces the delinquency, and foretells the doom of every hard-hearted proprietor of the soil who chuckles at the prospect opened by compulsory emigration.*

“Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the faithless” for their Redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee. ^{xxviii}

A few days later and the second letter on the same subject appeared, Mulock:

*“In my former letter upon this subject I dealt principally with the mercantile impracticability of endeavouring to constitute a company for carrying out a scheme which its authors candidly confessed would not ‘pay;’ inasmuch as all efficient zeal for the furtherance of emigration enterprise was totally ‘extinct’ in the only quarter which could furnish the subscribing element of a commercial company – viz.: the English, and very specially the London, capitalists. It is true that the Irish Party bespeak the succour of government to obtain a parliamentary guarantee which shall overcome the coyness of reluctant shareholders; but is it not strange that Mr. Godley and his acute abettors should not see that their proposition is utterly opposed to the free trade principles and policy which the parliament has so strenuously sanctioned? Do they not perceive that to “guarantee the market rate of interest” to subscribers would be, in effect, to give a ‘protection’ to the projected company? My persuasion is so invincible that no such **bonus** will or can be afforded to provide a cradle for the infant “Irish Canada Company” that I take my leave of this part of the subject, quite certain that, after a few more memorials (I trust of more dwarfish dimension) and two or three deputations to Downing Street, in which the usual farce of official babblement will be courteously played off, this monster plan will fume out its unsubstantial existence, and vanish into the limbo of craftily contrived bubbles.*

But whilst the commercial portion of this scheme is doomed to quick dissolution – there are, to my thinking, questions raised by this “Roman Catholic Emigration” plan, which demand the gravest, and the earliest consideration. An ‘Irish Party’ composed of a vast preponderating majority of Protestant proprietors in Ireland, avail themselves of their presumed patriotic combination to cooperate in countenancing a plan which is to issue in the compulsory expatriation of two millions of Roman Catholics from the land of their ancestors. I repeat, emphatically, the word ‘compulsory’ – for it is as plain to me as the noontide sun that now shines upon my pen and paper, that the essence of this scheme is the obtainment of a power, whereby Irish landlords can weed their estates of a population which they deem to be intrusive and unprofitable. Whilst proprietors have been mortgaging their neglected estates, swarms of dependents have sprung up – the soil has been sub-divided into almost infinitesimal patches of pauper tenancy (without the balancing benefits of either increased or improved cultivation) and universal beggary, arising from the two years failure of the perished potato, menaces alike the indigent landlord and his famishing tenantry. In this common calamity – this sub-infeudation of starvation – what is it that the great Protestant proprietors propose to do? Do they conspire in one powerful, patriotic appeal to the government and the legislature to call forth the uttermost resources of the empire in order to uphold society in Ireland, which is on the verge of awful disorganisation? Do they invoke the mind – the feelings – the interests of the English rulers and people, to combat the cry of REPEAL by evincing the actual worth – the life – sustaining sympathy – the ameliorating blessing of the Union? Do they boldly, yet with a right-some reverence for truth, proclaim that the dire day of Irish destitution ought to be the time of boundless benevolence – of uncalculating – unstinted bounty on the part of Great Britain – aye, to go the full length of affirming, that England’s sovereign will sit on a tottering throne if the resources of her realm are not speedily brought to the succour of Ireland? Alas no! – this vaunted Irish Party – which from the first I correctly conceived to be a wild gathering of panic-stricken proprietors – more anxious to conserve their own exclusive interests than to alleviate the dreadful distresses of the poor – these patriotic prattlers at the Rotundo now exhale their compassionate prudence in a laboured memorial to Lord John Russell, entreating his official aid to transport one-fourth of the Irish people to Canada! Some vague expectations are expressed that “other measures” will be propounded for the contingent welfare of the Protestant proprietors of Ireland, who are to organise sheep walks and cattle-grazing at home – but nothing, it is averred, can be beneficially

effected until two million of Roman Catholic peasants shall have been within a short period cleared off from the possessions of these Protestant potentates. The paupers of the Established Church, or the indigent members of dissenting bodies, are, it seems, to be excluded from this gigantic relief movement, which Protestant philanthropy graciously confines to the miserable multitudes professing an adverse creed. Indeed the ultra-liberality of this plan on its religious arrangements is not undeserving of remark. Protestant noblemen and gentlemen who declare popery to be a national nuisance here, are now bent upon shipping a whole priesthood to consecrate a whole people in Canada – they would even consent to a gentle property tax, in order to foster the growth of Irish Roman Catholicity in the disputed deserts of Oregon! This from parties some of whom avowedly deplore the departure of the penal laws, appears to require explanation. The door must be either shut or open. If the Roman Catholic religion be inconsistent with Protestant prosperity in Ireland, how can it the “Roman Catholic emigration” have any tendency to **improve** Canada? Like causes, like effects. If the Irish Roman Catholic peasantry are incapable of being turned to account at home why take such pains to secure for them their nationality and their religion abroad? If, on the contrary, these poor, oppressed neglected creatures are susceptible of improvement, then I ask, in the name of the God of Heaven, why should not their capabilities be cultivated – their condition bettered – their affections awakened – without ruthlessly driving them from their own fruitful land? So far from believing that Ireland is over-populated, I do not entertain a doubt of her productive power to sufficiently maintain a population of twice the existing amount; but to ensure this result property, I admit, must be differently administered. By whom has it been administered for more than three centuries? I answer, as the Irish Party would answer – by Protestants – by an exclusive class of political religionists – whose theological tenets – whose secular ascendancy – were placed under the protection of laws that frowned fearfully on everything adverse to Protestant pre-eminence. What is the result of this exclusive system in the year of grace, 1847, is a point which I must reserve for discussion in another letter. ^{xxxix}

Mulock’s criticism of the British Government was continued later in the month and with it a far-seeing, even prophetic exclamation:

“Have the People of Ireland a Government?”

“During a four months sorrowful sojourn in this afflicted country the result of my inquiries has frequently forced upon my mind the distressing consideration, what present advantages serve to distinguish Ireland from the most barbarous, lawless, and neglected of known communities? Allied to Great Britain by virtue of a legislation of taxation – called upon to furnish her fair (or unfair) proportion of taxation – England’s granary in time of peace, her recruiting region in time of war – how comes it to pass that Ireland should at this moment be ravaged with the horrors of augmenting destitution, disease, and death, and yet that no efficient aid should be ministered to her wretched population by the alleged boundless wealth and resources of prosperous England? I am no Repealer. I am, and shall continue to be, wholly separate from every party, factor or association, in this country; but I cannot conceal my impression that if some signal and speedy alteration do not take place in the practical policy of England towards Ireland, the latter will be lost to the integral importance of the British empire. I well know that for a season military power may uphold the semblance of civil authority, but I also know that horse, foot, and artillery, cannot long continue to be the three estates of a realm, and that where justice does not sway the sceptre, sovereignty will soon be unable to wield the sword.

*These thoughts have struggled into expression in consequence of my painful perusal of the dreadful details concerning the Cork and Bantry workhouses which appeared in your journal of the 24th instant. Nothing recorded in the annals of human suffering on an extended scale – no, not the miseries of the ‘middle passage,’ so indignantly bewailed by English abolitionists – ever exceeded the horrors which Dr. Stephen’s reports to his government employers, and which authenticated abominations the executive have, it should seem, left un-redressed. Well and wisely may men of humanity now propose the question – have the people of Ireland a government? – and is so, **what** is it? **Where** is it? And how does it demonstrate a paternal promptitude in flying to the succour of subjects smitten with the two-fold visitation of famine and pestilence? The answer which I would boldly offer is this – that no government is worthy of the name who should permit for one week the existence of such atrocious neglects as Dr. Stephen’s describes. The Cork and Bantry workhouses are public institutions, created by law, and over which the Poor Law Commissioners have ample control. Now, I ask whether the Lord Lieutenant, or Mr. Labouchere, or Mr. Redington, or the Poor Law Board, could read Dr. Stephen’s report without perceiving that something was required **to be done**, and without an hour’s delay? If these functionaries answer in the negative, and tell us that the only result of this medical mission was to pay two guineas a day and his travelling expenses to a roving and reporting physician (who, however, evinces good sense and good feeling), then I take leave to say that the sooner this mock machinery of sham government is replaced by real rule and rulers the better for Ireland. But what is **your** plan, what would you do? Are the constant interrogations of a ministry resolved to do nothing. My reply is short and my plan simple. If the government have any serious intention of alleviating the dreadful distresses of the people, why not send competent persons, armed with adequate authority, and having the command of sufficient means, to take immediate steps for meeting a present proved evil? Half-a-dozen of*

such qualified emissaries would be of more service to Ireland at this juncture than all the host of powerless but well-paid officials who are ostensibly engaged in the non-working of what is cheatingly called the Irish Relief System.

The tremendous condition of the Irish workhouses was a feature of national calamity easily foreseen by me. In the month of November last, I closely investigated the state of the Athlone workhouse, which was so bad as to be almost incredible, and I took the liberty of fully reporting to the Lord Lieutenant the monstrous neglects which I had noticed; and I particularly pointed out the certainty of approaching pestilence from the very causes which produce such awful effects in the Cork and Bantry workhouses. I received from Mr. Redington two of those vapid official acknowledgements, which attest the supreme contempt for all information that does not proceed from paid subordinates. I mention this in order to clear myself of the possible reproach that I did not communicate privately with the government before resorting to public censure. But the plain truth is, that I availed myself of all proper occasions to inform and warn the government, until I felt persuaded that suggestion was hopeless and unwelcome.

The Whigs have constituted a cabinet of philosophers who deem it unwise to interfere in the alleviation of famine and pestilence. 'Private enterprise,' they think, will afford food and medicine to multitudes without money and without health. Perhaps the philosophers may be startled some fine morning by finding that 'private enterprise' is ready to undertake the functions of government, and that anarchy is a retributive consequence of the unfeeling supineness of abused authority."^{xxx}

Lord Clarendon, perhaps intrigued by the character that Mulock presented through his correspondence, wrote to Lord Hatherton in June 1847, commenting:

"Many thanks for your information about Mr. Mulock whom I shall be very glad to see and be civil to – if you write to him again pray ask him to call upon me when I am established in Ireland.""^{xxxi}

Mulock's critical assaults continued and in the August he produced a letter in which he concentrated on the approaching harvest and its aftermath, the editor of the *Freeman* yet again drew the attention of its readers to Mulock's contribution:

"We beg to call the attention of our readers to an interesting letter on the subject of the harvest and people's food, which appears in another column, from the pen of Mr. Thomas Mulock, a writer well-known to our readers for the comprehensiveness and foresight of his views, as well as for his deep sympathy with our people.

"The Coming Harvest and its Results as Affecting the Poor of Ireland:

*Through the unspeakable mercy and goodness of the most High God, the growing crops throughout Ireland bear the promise of abundant fruitfulness; and we await with trembling expectation the seasonable realisation of the husbandman's hope. But be our anticipations of an ample harvest as sanguine as they may, it behoves us well to consider whether any possible product of the Irish soil can this year provide plenty for the Irish people? This is the grand question, which 'ere long will be in the course of solution. The corn that now richly waves will soon be subjected to the sickle, and then will commence the fearful test of our next year's lot – either of sufficient supply, or aggravated scarcity. I am aware that my fore-views will not find favour with the more fortunate classes of society, who can always enjoy a command over the necessities of life; but with **them** I do not presume to meddle: they will be certain to take care of themselves. My business in this article is to deal with the concerns of the poor of Ireland, and to prepare the public mind for coming consequences, which, in my opinion, cannot be averted by any conceivable exuberance of the most joyful harvest.*

*The corn produce of Ireland formed no part of the peasants' food – it was almost exclusively devoted to the payment of rent. During the two last desolating years, arrears of rent have inevitably accumulated, and landlords will in most instances be compelled from sheer necessity to exact from their tenants – strong and small – every penny that the harvest produce will yield towards the liquidation of lawful claims. What will be the condition of holders of land under **five acres**, when called upon to pay up arrears of rent? I reply on their part, that they must either refuse to surrender their crops, or starve! And, indeed, I may push the plain truth still farther – and at once affirm that if the whole produce of the petty tenancies in Ireland were, on the termination of the approaching harvest relinquished to the owners, it would not suffice for the subsistence of their families. For, let me ask, how is it possible that such an amount of corn cultivation as can be compressed within a farm of five acres, could supply the place of the poor man's potatoes – which afforded food for his family, his cattle, his pigs and his poultry? No one I presume will be hardy enough to assert that in the event of an undisclosed crop of potatoes seeming to maturity, the produce will be one tenth of the gathered quantity of ordinary years – and even this portion of produce will not be found in many districts of Ireland –*

where seed potatoes were unattainable, and where the land was thrown out of cultivation by the pernicious prevalence of what were called 'Public Works.' Therefore, notwithstanding the cheering aspect of the existing crops, for which we cannot be too thankful, it must be evident to men who unite observation with reflection, that another dark cloud of destitution still hangs over the peasantry of Ireland. Until the two last disastrous years of the potato failure, the Irish peasant dug his entire subsistence from his potato garden; but where is the peasant who can now boast **now** of the probability of securing such a supply for himself and family? Here, let it be emphatically pronounced, is a fresh source of calamity and danger to this unhappy country, of which statesmen should take timely cognizance. The new poor law cannot reach relief to any poverty-stricken peasant, who is the occupier of more than a quarter of an acre of land. What is to become of a family manifestly unable to pay rent, and compelled to eke out subsistence from the produce of three or five or even eight acres? I know there are scores of pseudo-philosophers who, if listened to, would make short work with the Irish peasantry, by recommending the annihilation of all small holdings, to make way for farms of the Mid Lothian magnitude, and sheep walks as extensive as the Duke of Sutherland's. But these exterminators forget to inform us from whence Ireland is to receive the influx of capital sufficient to work these wonders – for depend upon it the penal thinning of the population will not, of itself, effect the agricultural improvement of the country. If Mr. Godley's two million emigration movement were to be carried out this autumn – it would only leave huge scars of desolation on the face of the land, without super-inducing more invigorated industry – more enlarged enterprise, or more available resources. No **schemes**, however splendid or plausible can ever remedy the wretchedness of Ireland, a patient progression in well-doing, can alone work out the national prosperity.

Therefore, dismissing all plans founded on the fallacy, that Ireland cannot be succoured but by the sacrifice of her peasantry, I throw out for consideration the more Christian theme – how can that important portion of our people be best preserved from renewed, and it may be, increased suffering? I address myself to those who fill seats of authority, for popular impulses, however patriotic in their origin, never did, nor never will, effect any national benefit. Whilst I entirely concur in sentiment with our able and judicious Viceroy, when replying to the address of the Dublin Corporation, that "towards bringing about a state of things now most to be desired for Ireland, neither laws nor the action of the executive government are indispensable" – yet, I am confident, that the Earl of Clarendon did not mean to detract from the immense importance of the executive, in wisely wielding power for the alleviation of a sudden national calamity. My persuasion is strong and clear, that the function of the government in affording aid to the destitute in this country, cannot terminate (as announced) on the 15th of August, and I will attempt to assign some reasons for my belief in another communication. ^{xxxii}

Mulock had returned to Scotland towards the autumn of 1847, and in the October he advertised another publication, 'The Failure of the Reformation; an Introductory Essay, or To The Deliverance of the True Israel; or The Present and Eternal Perfection, of All Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,' by Thomas Mulock, Esq. This was available from John Elder, 139 Prince's Street, William Collins, Glasgow, James Nisbet, & Co., London, priced one shilling. ^{xxxiii}

Whether domiciled in Scotland or Ireland, there now came a letter concerning destitution in Ireland, upon which the editor remarked on Mulock as "an old and valued correspondent, long known to the readers of the *Freeman* as intimately acquainted with the condition of the country and as almost prophetically anticipating the disasters of the present year, while others were congratulating the poor on the prospects of a harvest that they were destined never to enjoy. We do not in all things concur with Mr. Mulock, but these are not times for hair-splitting, and the great and important truths so forcibly put forward by Mr. Mulock so far outweigh the minor points of difference between us that we cheerfully place his letter before the public."

"What are the Destitute Peasantry of Ireland to do?"

So far back as the 9th of August last, I addressed a letter to your excellent journal on the subject of "the coming harvest and its results as affecting the poor of Ireland." In that communication I sought to warn the public against the dangerous supposition that the bounty of our gracious God, in bestowing so rich a promise of corn and green crops, would, in the ripeness of the harvest, constitute a sufficiency of subsistence for the poor of the land. I endeavoured to point out the painful truth, that however abundant might be the corn product of the soil, still the potato, the staple article on which the peasantry of Ireland, their cattle, pigs and poultry subsisted, was no longer in national existence for the supply of a pauperised population. I saw clearly that the government and the landed proprietors did not grapple with the frightful fact that **THE POOR MAN'S FOOD WAS GONE**; and that consequently no efficient efforts were made to provide a substitute apart from that special corn cultivation which was wholly applied to the payment of rent. In more than one of my earliest published letters on the great calamity which has befallen Ireland I ventured to affirm that no permanent relief could be rendered to the Irish peasantry who were small holders of land but by the general substitution of rye, for example, in lieu of the lost potato. I know, sir, as you well know, that wheat and oats are sown, not for the tenant's food, but for the landlord's rent, and that if a new corn culture were not adopted for the peasant's

exclusive consumption, a crisis would inevitably arise in Ireland which might go far to unfix the foundations of property, and even to break up the social system – surveying as I do now, at a calm, but by no means unfeeling distance, the present condition of my unhappy country, I have no hesitation in saying that the predicted disorder and disorganisation appears to be advancing with rapid and ruinous strides. The harvest is gathered – grain is in abundance – but the growers of corn are in this dreadful predicament. If they par with their corn in order to pay rent, they must die! For I ask, with the confidence of a man who has acquired a personal knowledge of the subject, what are the resources of the small Irish farmer when his corn crops have been sold to meet his landlord's lawful demands? He may have some turnips (thinned, but not legitimately, by famishing marauders), a few beans, also curtailed by the hand of the hungry, and peradventure if a handful of seed escaped the search of the starving, two or three drills sufficient to show that the potato is not. This would be a fair inventory of the sort of subsistence which the peasantry have to rely upon. Is it enough? Will it carry through the coming winter the miserable millions of Ireland, whose life was bound up with the perished potato? The political economists will of course prove to us that the poor have no right to live, and that even coffins are not claimable for those who die of starvation, but in my humble opinion a state of things is close at hand, which will make the government and the proprietors of soil curse the day when the plainest principles of Christianity were set at naught, and the diabolical doctrines of a false philosophy held forth as the light and safeguard of society. I maintain that it was the bounden duty of the executive ten months ago, when the magnitude of Ireland's distress was fully ascertained, to contribute from the imperial treasury, not the niggard millions which were wrung from England's covetousness, but a noble act of bounty which, if timely afforded would have, humanely speaking, saved innumerable lives – and let me add that it was equally the duty of the landlords of Ireland to have shared their subsistence with their famishing tenantry, which to my abundant sorrowful knowledge they, as a body, refused to do. The result of this twofold barbarous neglect on the part of the government and the landlords,' was a scene of horror unprecedented in the annals of modern nations. I write as an eye-witness, not as a distant denouncer of unseen cruelties. All that Burke's vivid imagination enabled him to conceive of Hindu famine caused by British rapacity, was unspeakably exceeded by the destitution, disease, and death which harassed Ireland in 1847. We are at the close of this memorable year of mourning, lamentation and woe, are we likely to be in better plight during the year that approaches? I answer boldly yet grievously, NO; for the rulers of the State and the owners of the soil, seem to have derived no instruction from awful experience – and it is plain that they will play over again the same inhuman game, which doomed last year so many hundreds of thousands to destruction. I advert to the horrible shuffle of responsibility – the executive trying to devolve their function on the landlords, and the landlords endeavouring to shirk their proper duties, by invoking the aid of government, and that too more for themselves, than for their destitute, dying tenantry! During my sojourn in Ireland, I saw that this was the fated course pursued by the government, and (with some splendid exceptions) by the collective body of Irish landlords. The latter as a class are, in my judgement (and I studied their conduct closely and impartially) most unworthy possessors of property. They know hardly anything of their tenants, but as rent-paying paupers – and indeed words cannot adequately express the hideous inequality which exists between landlord and tenant in Ireland. It is not the relation of rich and poor – much less of man to his fellow-man – it seemed to me more like the connection between huntsman and his harassed hounds. But, England's kennelled dogs are better cared for than Ireland's cabined peasantry.

And now comes the retributive reckoning for long-continued oppression, and for recent misdeeds. Are the Irish landlords about to grant such a remission of rent to their tenants, as would enable the latter to share a portion of the present abundant harvest? If not, the corn must be shipped to England, or elsewhere, leaving the tillers of the land – the producers of this very corn – to STARVE! Will they be content to follow their buried brethren, of this year's famine and pestilence while their landlords are banqueting in London, or Brighton, or Paris? My opinion, bounded on much communication with the Irish peasantry is this – that as last year has been marked with endurance – the coming period will be signalised by conflict. The landlord who recklessly exacts his full rents, is in fact demanding the lives of his tenants. These poor creatures now stand between two graves – the grave of the famished and their own! Will they submit to slow and dreadful death for the sake of their landlords? I trow not. Even while I write the increase of organised outrage in Ireland serves to indicate the nearness of more appalling agrarian disturbances which cannot be quelled by more military force. It is bread, not bayonets and bullets that can quiet a famished people – and even soldiers themselves will scruple to slaughter wretches whose criminality consists in their want of food. I will not yield to any man living in a wise zeal for the conservation of society – but I am unalterably persuaded that whenever the selfishness of the upper classes stimulates them to disobey the commandment of God, which enjoined mercy to be shown to the poor – all permanent protection of ill-administered property is out of the question – and that no man can calculate upon safety for his person, or possessions who has practically denied the truth and power of our common Christianity.

One word, sir, as to the vague outcry in Ireland against the exportation of corn, many parties rashly and blindly recommending a total prohibition. They know not what they ask. The immediate effect of a compulsory retention of

corn in the country, would be to depress prices below remunerating rates, and even then, so dire is the poverty of Ireland, that sakes could not readily be effected. Surely it is not meant that farmers should give away their corn.

I am for keeping at home Ireland's corn to help feed Ireland's famishing poor; But the only rational and equitable way in which this can be done, is by the just and generous remission of rents – which rents are paid out of the sale of corn for exportation. If the landlords of Ireland would adopt this course, instead of forming Irish Associations with as many alias's as a London swindler, the corn furnished by a bounteous harvest would remain at home – the landlords might dwell unharmed in the midst of their thankful tenantry – the poor peasant would be snatched from the jaws of impending destruction – and in the very depths of national distress, a firm foundation might be laid for future prosperity, and happiness. ”xxxiv

Mulock's next foray concerned legislation then before Parliament:

“As I have never contributed to a public journal conducted with more fairness and impartiality than the Freeman, I feel that, be our differences what they may, your columns are still open to a writer who honestly sets forth truth according to the measure of his light and knowledge. With this brief medium I at once claim (though not on the ground of birthright) a portion of your valuable space for some congenial considerations on the theme placed at the head of this letter.

After examining with the closest and even the most suspicious strictness the Coercian Bill now before parliament, I confess myself utterly unable to fix upon any one of its provisions, or any part of a provision, which can be reasonably objected to by any well-disposed, peaceable subject of her Majesty residing in the sister island. The bill is meant to cope with a frightful state of things in Ireland, which the government do not think vincible by the ordinary operation of existing laws. I presume to differ with the executive, and I hold that the laws now in being are, if wisely and vigorously administered, abundantly sufficient to restore order and punish transgression; but as, happily for myself, I have no voice in her Majesty's councils, I limit my remarks to an investigation of the supplementary legislation which the advisors of the crown are now proposing for parliamentary adoption. It is perfectly plain that the principle of the bill is to diminish the facilities for the perpetration of what may be termed agrarian crime in Ireland. Outrages of the most horrible kind affecting life and property, have disgraced and endangered many districts. Firearms appear to be plentifully possessed by the peasantry – murderers and marauders have availed themselves of these instruments of ill – and the government perceiving that the public peace – the very conservation of society – is threatened by the continuance of a system of enormities – are putting forth additional strength to subdue the lawless and disobedient – I dwell emphatically on these weighty words, “the lawless and the disobedient” for I must resist the old fallacy, so often exposed, but so pertinaciously repeated, that measures directed to the repression of partial evil are, therefore, directed against the community at large. This fallacy, uniformly pervades all the arguments with respect to restructure measures – but what Irishman, of good sense and good feeling, can imagine, for a moment, that the masses of his countrymen are concerned in the murderous use of firearms, because a bill penally prohibits the unauthorised carrying of arms? This would be a block indictment against a whole people. But such is not the case – the bill is levelled against midday assassins and midnight robbers – against delinquents who make savage not with landlords and tenants – wretches who take advantage of the present dreadful destitution to prey upon society in its enfeebled and disorganised state – just as monstrous villains have been wont to slay and spoil during the horrors of earthquake or pestilence. Let me not, sir, find fault with penal legislation, because of the needful severity of its sanctions. The law must be directed against the crime, however small may be the number of instances in which it is perpetrated, compared with the mass of the population which is not concerned in the guilt, but which would suffer by its unpunished perpetration. Ireland is not denounced by the legislature, because restrictive measures may be enforced in disorderly districts; and even in those districts, be it remembered, the law will only have the salutary effect of separating the quiet and inoffensive part of the population from the blood-thirsty and the turbulent. It is not, I maintain, Irishmen in their capacity of good subjects who will be reached by a coercion act – but wicked, disloyal, dishonest Irishmen – men out of the control of conscience, who care nothing for priest, or law, or landlord, and who must be restrained, if civil government is deemed to be worthy of conservation. In time, I think it no hardship that a prudent Irish peasant should be directed to keep his gun in his own cabin, instead of going armed on the high or by-road where murderers and robbers are prowling; nor do I think it a grievance that, under circumstances named in the bill, arms should be collected from individuals, and deposited, for a time, with officers appointed by the government; and furthermore I consider the cause fraught with oppressive and arbitrary consequences which presumes that there may exist in Ireland persons willing to aid in pursuing and bringing to justice parties believed to have been guilty of MURDER. Why, sir, the most truculent scribbler in the Times, or the most ignorant and splenetic spouter in parliament, never passed as bitter a calumny on the Irish people, as the man who treats as tyrannical the bare assumption that among a population professing Christianity there may be found a posse comitatus, able and willing to “search and pursue, discover and apprehend,” the alleged perpetrator of culpable homicide; God forbid that notwithstanding the errors, prejudice, and follies which hold captive many of our misguided

countrymen, there should not be found multitudes in Ireland who hate murder and outrage, robbery and wrong, and who, filled with patriotic horror at the prevalence of such crimes, would not run readily in the pursuit of known offenders.

Therefore it is that because I am an Irishman because I love Ireland – because I believe the great mass of our population to be accessible to conscientious considerations – because I believe subjection to authority to be the loved rule, and insubordination the loathed exception, that I would exhort good Irishmen of all ranks and classes to offer no opposition to the proposed ministerial measure. I may add that I have not, nor desire to have, any communication with the government on this or any other subject, but I feel that they have immense difficulties to encounter, and that it is the duty of all loyal subjects to succour the executive in their well-meant effort to uphold the safety of the state. On other topics I have so freely censured the government, that my impartiality cannot, I conceive be impugned.”^{xxxv}

At this time there appears to have been a mix-up in mail between Mulock and Lord Clarendon, which led to Mulock taking offence! This was explained away to Hatherton:

52, Cumberland Street,
Edinburgh.
December 28th 1847.

My Lord,

“I propose to copy on the other side the contents of a letter which I received yesterday from the Earl of Clarendon. That letter gave unmixed satisfaction, for even the candid censure towards the close has made way for the removal of a misapprehension. It appears that some time since, and before my departure from Ireland, his Excellency wrote me a letter which never reached me and which letter was abundantly calculated to gratify me. I have replied in a strain which I think Lord Clarendon will find explanatory and at the same time apologetic – for if I had reason to consider myself neglected, this was no excuse for any expression of pique towards his Excellency and I owe your Lordship the same apology as being Lord Clarendon’s noble friend.

*I have the honour to be your faithful and obliged,
Thomas Mulock.*

Clarendon’s letter had read:

“VR Lodge,
December 23rd 1847.

Sir,

Pray accept my best thanks for sending me your very able and judicious letter the Freeman (the only part of which I disagree in is the “fairness and impartiality*” of that journal.

If truth and the real welfare of the people were the objects of *soi disant** patriots here, the sentiments expressed in your letter would be generally adopted, but they will find no sympathy with professional agitators who are dependent upon social disorganisation.

With respect to your postscript I entirely agree with you, but Sir George Grey to the best of my belief uniformly called the bill “An act for the prevention of crime and outrage” and the name of “Coercion Bill” was given to it by those who desired to secure for it the utmost amount of unpopularity in Ireland.

I cannot omit this opportunity of stating why I committed the apparent discourtesy of not acknowledging your last letter, and I will frankly tell you that I considered its tone most strange and uncalled for – I was much gratified by your first letter, and I told you that as a friend of Lord Hatherton’s and as a gentleman thoroughly versed in the affairs of this country it would be very agreeable to me to make your acquaintance or to communicate with you and though this may not have suited you to do, it certainly did not invite such a letter as you wrote to me after leaving Ireland.

I have thought it due to our common friend Lord Hatherton, for whom I entertain the sincerest regard, to offer you this explanation.

I have the honour to be, sir, your faithful servant,
Clarendon.

To: Thomas Mulock, esquire.”

*Mulock added a postscript: *"I merely expressed my sense of the editor's "fairness and impartiality" in inserting my communications when totally at variance with his own published opinion."*^{xxxvi}

At the time that Clarendon was writing to Mulock, yet another 'letter' appeared in the *Freeman*, this time pointing out the disadvantaged situation in which some Irish workers were placed by the policy and behaviour of Scottish administrators:

Soup Kitchens in Scotland – Barbarous Treatment of the Irish:

The following letter from the pen of Mr. Thomas Mulock, is in substance identical with a communication addressed to an Edinburgh journal, but refused admission into its columns. Our readers do not require to be told that Mr. Mulock is no agitator. Even by those who are opposed to every sentiment of Irish feeling, the statements put forth by Mr. Mulock, uninfluenced as they are by any partisan bias, must be received with indignation. To this subject we must return. Meantime we hasten to place Mr. Mulock's letter before the public:-

"WARNING TO THE BENEVOLENT – THE EDINBURGH SOUP KITCHENS PERVERTED TO PROMOTE THE DEPORTATION OF THE IRISH POOR:

Although I cannot claim the distinction of being a citizen of Edinburgh, and consequently am not in the absolute enjoyment of a ratepayer's privileges, I beg permission, as a citizen of the world, to avail myself of a portion of your space in order to unfold a subject of the deepest local importance, and which also involved the highest interests of humanity. Not to fatigue your readers with preliminary dissertation I will at once enter in medias

On the 15th instant as I was passing through the Fish-Market Close I met a number of men, women, and children returning to the Cowgate with empty cans in their hands, and loudly exclaiming in a variety of brogues that "the Irish were shut out from the Soup Kitchens." As experience has led me to inquire somewhat scrutinisingly into the merits of Irish cases of alleged grievance I stepped into that admirable institution, the Night Asylum, where the soup cauldrons were diffusing a savoury steam, and, in answer to my questions, I received information which seemed to support the complaint of the hungry Hibernians. An order, I was told, had just reached the soup distributors from (I think) a Doctor Gunning and somebody else prohibiting the further dispensation of soup to any parties, however destitute, except they were provably persons who had a legal settlement in Edinburgh. To the credit of the human ladlers of soup this rigorous restriction was, I believe, partially disregarded, and upwards of one hundred Irish received soup on Friday evening. I called again at the asylum on Saturday, and conferred fully with the authorities there. I then proceeded to the office of the parochial board, where I had a long interview with the intelligent and straightforward inspector, Mr. Hay; and, finally, I had an equally long interview with Mr. Clarke, of Hanover Street, the convenor of the Soup Kitchen Committee – a gentleman whom I need not eulogise forasmuch as he assured me in the most emphatic manner, that he was one of the most benevolent men in the philanthropic guile town of Edinburgh. Having from these several sources acquired an accurate knowledge of the history and mystery of Edinburgh Soup Kitchens, I will now lay the whole matter honestly and fearlessly before the public – Scotch and Irish.

Some gentlemen of Edinburgh, actuated, I firmly believe, by the utmost beneficent motives, proposed to raise by subscription a fund for the establishment of soup kitchens, in order to furnish a portion of food to distressed persons, not positively within the pale of pauperism, and who were consequently not recipients of legal parochial relief. The design was admirable – the appeal to the public was quickly responded to, and subscriptions began to pour in. Nothing more was required than that the soup kitchen committee should keep faith with the public, and should give good soup to poor persons, whose cases they were bound to investigate. But hardly had the first cash chinked on the treasurer's table, when the sound reached the quick ears of the parochial board, who, not content with allocating the immense funds they are empowered to levy according to law, resolved, it should seem, to clutch the funds which appeared to emanate from the Gospel – for surely voluntary beneficence is somewhat different from a tax paid to a collector with a bailiff at his back! The parochial board sought a conference with the soup-kitchen committee, and after some seducing eulogy on benevolence, and very specially on the benevolence of the Edinburgh subscribers to charitable institutions, the parochial board ventured to hint the necessity of "protecting the interests of the ratepayers," which, if much caution were not used in the dispensation of soup, might be woefully damaged. Next came the statistics of poverty. It was shown that some two hundred and twenty or thirty Irish families were now located in Edinburgh, who wanted food in consequence of being deprived of work. The most of them had been engaged four years ago to subserve the schemes of Scottish railway projectors, who, from what they call the state of the money market, but what I designate in plain English as their own lavishness and lack of forecast, bordering on fraud, are compelled to discontinue the poor Irish labourers whom they had inveighed. Now, quoth the protector of ratepayers, if these Irish families are allowed to share this cleemosynary soup, they will be enabled to "tide over," (their own nautical phrase, not mine) the hardship and

hunger of the winter, and, oh horrible! – they may live another year so as to gain a legal settlement in Edinburgh, and, most horrible! – these Irish will infallibly be fed, clothed, washed and bulged, at the cost of the ratepayers of Auld Reekie! The Irish will never work (having tired themselves at the railways, and scavenging being scarce), therefore, by all the rules of Scottish prudential logic, it is plain that if they get soup, the ratepayers of Edinburgh will have to nourish their bairns upon broo, Anglice broth reduced by water. This withering appeal touched the hearts of the conferring soup-kitchen committee, and way was speedily made for an agreement with the parochial board, the latter potentates stipulating to give a donation of £100, not out of their own well-filled pockets, but out of the poor-rate treasury, on condition that the soup-kitchen committee should continue to pester the public for subscriptions, but should also transfer their authority to a committee of the parochial board, “in whose hands” (I quote their own advertisement, dated 9th December) “will be the working out of the details” of soup-kitchen arrangements, so as to secure the following eminently amiable objects: - First, that all applicants for soup who shall be found to have no legal settlement in the parish shall be refused aid by the committee; Secondly, that the said applicants shall have “parochial aid” given to them, such aid being connected with the inestimable privilege of being escorted by the police to the water’s-edge (possibly hand-cuffed), and from thence stowed into the hold of a steamboat, ventilated after the fatal fashion adopted by the cruel captain of the Londonderry floating black-hole!

Now, Sir, I appeal to the bulk of the benevolent inhabitants of Edinburgh who subscribed to support soup-kitchens, whether they gave their money to promote such objects as these – I repeat the “bulk of the subscribing inhabitants, because Mr. Convenor Clarke attempted to awe me with a list of important personages – the chief justice clerk, the lord advocate, &c., &c., who fully sanctioned the new arrangement; but I replied that with all my respect for the character or position of public men, mere names went for nothing with me, as I like to look into the truth of things. If the subscribers to the soup-kitchen fund are content with the virtual extinction of the original committee, with the new plan of placing the product of private bounty at the disposal of the parochial board, that “all who are able may freely subscribe to the funds now being raised for the establishment and support of the proposed soup-kitchens” – I can only say that they are very accommodating people, and more easily misled than Caledonians are reputed to be; but with the view I entertain of the subject I would not give the most mutilated of her Majesty’s farthings towards the soup-kitchens until I know them to be conducted by a committee wholly apart from the parochial board, leaving to that respectable body, the care of protecting the interests of ratepayers, whilst the spontaneous bounty of the public should be administered upon principles of sound benevolence. The Irish part of the subject speaks for itself – No soup for soi.

Thomas Mulock.

P.S. As I am informed that so many great lawyers approve of the “new arrangement,” I suppose I must take for granted the legality of the donation of £100 before-mentioned. To my un-professional perceptions it seems queer that the parochial board should have the power of giving away the public fund, which is leviable by law, and which one should think, ought to be allocated according to law. I should like to see the Lord Advocate’s opinion on the matter.

After I posted my letter I witnessed the following scene:- a crowd of famishing, emaciated Irish, was collected beside a close in the Grass-market, where a soup-kitchen is placed. A policeman was clearing the street of the poor creatures; I asked him why? He said he had received orders to do so. This was nearly three o’clock, and many of them had been, the policeman said, on the spot looking for soup from ten in the morning! On my enquiring of the officials they informed me that they had been ordered over-night not to give soup to any Irish applicant. I insisted upon one of the clerks going out and distinctly declaring tis sad condition to the Irish crowd, which was done.

Tomorrow is to be the last day of distribution at other soup-kitchens – save to persons who have a settlement in Edinburgh. Thus the poor Irish will be cut off. Every art is being used to entrap the indigent Irish. A woman whose husband went to seek work, was advised by her landlady to elicit medicine for her sick child. She has been laid hold of to be shipped for Ireland (Tullamore), but I will appeal to the magistrates tomorrow. ”xxxvii

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- ⁱ Staffordshire Advertiser 8th February 1845.
- ⁱⁱ Mining Journal February 1845.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Vol 111, Lockhart-Croker correspondence, world-wide web.
- ^{iv} Staffordshire Advertiser 3rd May 1845.
- ^v See Pape.
- ^{vi} Staffordshire Advertiser 7th June 1845.
- ^{vii} The Blackburn Standard, 28th May, 1845
- ^{viii} Staffordshire Advertiser 7th June 1845.
- ^{ix} Freeman's Journal, 23rd August 1845.
- ^x 'Old Newcastle' T. Pape
- ^{xi} A similar advertisement appeared in the Liverpool Mercury, 1st May 1846.
- ^{xii} Bedford Mercury, 25th May 1844.
- ^{xiii} Staffordshire Advertiser 9th 16th May 1846.
- ^{xiv} Staffordshire Advertiser 1846
- ^{xv} Staffordshire Advertiser 1 Aug 1846
- ^{xvi} Notes and Queries, February 1924
- ^{xvii} Pre Raphaelitism and the Pre Raphaelite Brotherhood, William Holman Hunt.
- ^{xviii} An indisputable condition
- ^{xix} SRO/D260/M/F/5/27/23 Hatherton Letters 1847
- ^{xx} Freeman's Journal 11th January 1847
- ^{xxi} Freeman's Journal, 12th January 1847
- ^{xxii} Freeman's Journal 18th January, 1847
- ^{xxiii} Freeman's Journal 20th January, 1847
- ^{xxiv} Freeman's Journal 23rd January 1847
- ^{xxv} Freeman's Journal 12th February 1847
- ^{xxvi} Freeman's Journal, 27th February, 1847
- ^{xxvii} Freeman's Journal 12th April, 1847
- ^{xxviii} Freeman's Journal 13th April, 1847
- ^{xxix} Freeman's Journal, 18th April, 1847
- ^{xxx} Freeman's Journal, 28th April, 1847
- ^{xxxi} SRO/D260/M/F/5/27/23 Hatherton Letters 1847, folio 34.
- ^{xxxii} Freeman's Journal, 9th August, 1847
- ^{xxxiii} Caledonian Mercury, Edinburgh, 18th October, 1847
- ^{xxxiv} Freeman's Journal, 3rd November, 1847
- ^{xxxv} Freeman's Journal, 15th December, 1847
- ^{xxxvi} Hatherton Letters
- ^{xxxvii} Freeman's Journal, 23rd December, 1847