

"Poor Ireland," June 21, 1849

Poor Ireland.

By the politeness of our townsmen, Mr E. Cooper, we have Irish dates up to the 23rd ult. [last month], less than one month old. The accounts of an increase of death and destitution are sad and heart sickening. In the address of the General Central Relief Committee it is said that the condition of the people of Ireland is worse than at any other period. – The editor of the Dublin Press of May 23d, in speaking on this subject says:–

“Connaught is fast perishing. A deeper shade of gloom seems to have settled on the west. Mournful as were the tidings which the earlier part of the spring brought to us from that devoted region– incapable as the sad facts then narrated appeared of any addition to their fearful character to confess that the wide-spread misery has increased, and that the intensity of the sufferings of the people of Connaught at the present moment has no parallel in the history of the human race. The desolating influences of famine and of pestilence are diminishing that “congestion (sic) of population” which formed the subject of discussion on a late occasion in the House of Commons. The most approved economic theory of the adaptation of space to living men is rapidly being complied with. The rude hand of death is fast settling the question of emigration from Ireland. The Irish people are emigrating to the grave– they are planting a vast colony in the land of death.”

In the reports, which we have not space to copy, the population had dwindled, chiefly from death and starvation, down to the diminution of forty per cent. Sixty per cent of the population are on the out-door relief lists. The maximum rate of wages is but two pence per day. Those on the out-door relief lists receive but one pound of poor Indian (sic) corn, for which in some cases they have to travel three miles and then break stone all day on the road. Fever and dysentery are prevalent, and the population have scarcely a particle of clothing to cover them. Numbers are huddled together without any covering to shield them from the inclemency of the weather.– Twelve hundred persons had perished during the last four years in the Parish of Balla by destitution and disease. In Mr Anderson’s Appeal to the Lord John Russel, he states that a shipwrecked human body was cast ashore, and a starving man “extracted the heart and liver, and that was the maddening feast on which he regaled himself and perishing family.” A poor forlorn girl, whose mother had died of the cholera, bore the corpse on her own back three miles, to the relief officer, to secure her mother a decent internment. Poor girl. She, herself, was taken with the disease, and died the next day. Shame on England, with all its wealth, to permit such desolation. Let America again lend a helping hand to starving Ireland. We have enough and to spare.