

(CIRCULAR.)

HALIFAX, 24th February, 1847.

Dear SIR,

A Dreadful Famine having visited a large portion of Ireland and the Islands and Highlands of Scotland, by which great numbers of the Inhabitants of the former Country have perished— a detailed account of which may be seen in the several extracts on the back hereof,

We are directed to transmit to you a Copy of a Resolution passed at a Public Meeting held in this City on the 22d instant, for the purpose of affording relief to the Sufferers, which is as follows :

RESOLVED, That the calamitous condition of Ireland and the Islands and Highlands of Scotland be brought under the notice of the various other portions of the Province.

Whatever Sums of Money you may be enabled to collect in behalf of the above object you will please forward to Thomas S. Tobin, Esquire, Treasurer of the Committee.

You are earnestly requested to give ample publicity to the appeal in your County as early as possible.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

PETER LYNCH, JUNR.

ALEXANDER JAMES,

Secretaries of the Committee.

Thomas Crowell }
Matthew McLennan } Esqrs

Shelburne

THE FAMINE IN IRELAND!

The following details of the famine now existing in Ireland, we clipped mainly from the Dublin Freeman's Journal of the 16th and 23d. They were read at the Meeting on Monday:

MAYO.—The Correspondent of the Freeman's Journal, writing from Clairmorris, says:

'A horse belonging to a poor man named Mackum, residing in this town, died a few days since, and the animal having been skinned, the carcass was left for dogs and birds to prey and feed on; but before much of it had been consumed, it was discovered that a portion of it had been carried away by a poor starving family named Kelly, who resides at a village called Kilbeg-wills, within a few perches of the town, and by them salted and used as food!

'Doubting the statement, I visited the village. On approaching it I met the wife—a horrible, famine stricken spectacle, with the bones almost protruding through her skin. She returned with me to her cabin, in which nothing could be seen but a wad of half-rotten straw, which seemed as a bed for the whole family, without any night covering whatever, save the tattered rags which they wore during the day. On asking if the story I heard were true, she did not hesitate to tell me all about it. 'Sir,' said she, as the tears rolled down her worn cheeks, 'look here,' pointing to six helpless children. 'These did not taste a morsel of food for four days. Three of them, we thought, were dying of hunger; but my husband hearing that Mackum's horse died, brought home a basket full of it, which was all the dogs had left, and on this alone we have lived the whole week, and the Lord only knows what I will now do for my starving children since it is gone.'

The same correspondent notices the deaths of ten others—one of the victims remaining five days unburied for want of a coffin.

The Rev. Mr. Curren, writing from Westport, says:

'At this moment I am after beholding a scene of distress, at which obdurate nature herself must recoil, the eyes and nose of a poor man, who died of starvation, eaten away by rats in a wretched hovel where he lay dead two days.'

The Mayo Constitution gives a list of eight deaths from starvation in that County, within four days.

The same paper notices the death from starvation of an old woman, who, when discovered in her hut, (the husband having gone two days before to beg) her arms and face were found mangled and eaten by the rats.

A Correspondent of the Dublin Freeman of the 16th, writing from the same county, says:

'In one parish of the county, Cong, it appears from the statement of the Rev. Dr. Waldron, quoted by you from a local paper, that *twenty seven deaths from starvation* have occurred within the past week!

A letter from the Rev. Mr. Henry, Parish Priest of another parish of same county, addressed to yourself, alluding to a late communication, in which, about a fortnight since, he had announced *eleven deaths by starvation*, says—"Since my last communication I regret to inform you that *at least twenty deaths have occurred in my parish*, Islanderry, county of Mayo, *from starvation*, and I fear that unless, immediate and extensive employment be given, I will have to record deaths not by units but by dozens. Day and night my residence is beset by thousands crying for food or labour tickets."

The Rev. Patrick M'Manus, Parish Priest of another parish of that county, the same clergyman who, in a former communication to you dated about ten days back, gave you a list of *twenty seven persons* that had died of starvation in his parish in three weeks, now announces that death is about to deal no longer with single victims, but with whole battalions. Speaking of the consequences of further delay in opening up new and extensive works, he says—"I am convinced that, *ere another month, half the population of my parish will be swept away.*"

The Rev. Patrick Fitzgerald, Roman Catholic curate of Kilgeever, another parish in Mayo, in a communication, addressed to you, says:—"My whole time and that of my co-operator, the Rev. Mr. M'Hale, is unceasingly occupied in administering the last comforts of religion to the victims of starvation. It would be an endless, and I fear useless task to record them." He proceeds to give you the following instance of the harrowing scenes with which he and his co-operator are now not merely familiar, but so engrossingly occupied, that with difficulty he finds time to address you a letter of thirty lines:—

"I shall never forget the impression made on my mind a few days ago by a most heart-rending case of starvation. I have witnessed the poor mother of five in family sending her little children, almost lifeless for hunger, to bed, and, despairing of ever again seeing them alive, she took her last leave of them. In the morning her first act was to touch their lips with her hand to see if the breath of life still remained; but the poor mother's fears were not groundless, for not a breath could she feel from some of her dear little children; that night buried them in the night of eternity."

The distress in other parts of Ireland is equally heart-rending.

Nine persons died on one day, in the town of Newry, from fever, caused by destitution, and destitution itself.

The Tipperary Vindicator mentions several deaths, on the public highway, from starvation.

The Rev. Mr. Maloney, Parish Priest of Roscarbery, writing to the Cork Examiner on the 13th January, says:

'My parish contains a population of nine thou-

sand, of whom six thousand have been in almost extreme want since March last. Their suffering has increased exceedingly from September, by reason of the suspension of the public works for six weeks, the increased dearness and scarcity of food, and their want of clothing. Several to my own knowledge have since died of starvation. I reported to the Lord Lieutenant six of these deaths, as having occurred in November, and I have reason to think the chief of police, who has been deputed to inquire into the fact, has confirmed my statement. There was an inquest held a few days ago on two of those creatures, beggars, who had no friends to prevent it, which satisfied the physician, Dr. Fitzgibbon, and a respectable jury, that want of food was the immediate cause of their death. A family named Kennedy, and extremely destitute, got fever, and lay all together on the same litter. The head of the family died, and was two days dead amidst his living bedfellows, before they or their next door neighbours perceived it. My assistant and I are administering the last rites of religion, both day and night, and are called upon to attend several who have no apparent sickness of any kind—save exhaustion for want of food—and upon these occasions we find many almost literally naked, even modest females, who were obliged to pawn everything they had in the shape of dress to prolong existence.

A correspondent of the Ballyshannon Herald, writing from Ballydehob says: 'deaths are fearfully on the increase here. Four persons have died in the immediate vicinity of this village within the last few days. On yesterday, a man was discovered half concealed in a pigstye, in such a revolting condition that humanity could shrink at a description of the body. It was rapidly decomposing; but no neighbour has yet offered his services to cover the loathsome remains. Poor Coughlan, of the Board of Works, was crawling home a few nights ago, when hunger and exhaustion seized him within a few yards of his house, where he was found the following morning a frightful example of road mortality. I have just learned that in the neighbourhood of Crookhaven they are buried within the walls of their huts. They have, in most cases, forgotten the usual ceremony of interment. The living are so consumed by famine they are unable to remove the dead.—On the 13th January, Richard O'Grady, Esq., Coroner in Mayo, held inquests on the bodies of

four persons, who died from starvation. In one case it is stated, while holding an inquest on the body of one of a family of ten, who had been living for three weeks on boiled water cresses and salt, two of the children were dying!

Another Coroner in the same county, but a different district, gives the names of two other persons who died from starvation, one of them a female, who was found on the roadside.

Another Coroner, for Tyrrawly districts, held inquests on eleven persons, in each case of which the jury returned a verdict of 'Death from starvation.'

The poor victims are frequently buried uncoffined in their rags, or with nothing round them but a coarse sheet.

A correspondent of the Cork Examiner, writing from Skibereen on the 14th January, gave the following horrible details:

"On yesterday, Joseph Driscoll, of Skull, poor-rate collector, went to the lands of Risbrine, in the parish of East Skull, to collect poor rates, and on coming to the house of a man named Regan, the door was shut, when he repeatedly knocked at it to no effect. He then pushed in the door, and what was his astonishment to find three men dead in the house, and no other person in it but the three lifeless corpses.

"He also told me that at a place called Drishane, in the same parish, there is a woman named Neill dead since the 6th instant, and not buried, as yet; and on Tuesday three children of her's died, one boy and two girls, and that he thought the father was a corpse before this, as he was lying sick at the time.

"In the parish of Kilmore a man was found dead in a field, and a great part of his body eaten by the dogs; he remained so long there before he was seen, that he was not identified by any person, and was buried without a coffin, which is the common practice in that parish.

"A man dropped on Tuesday last at the west end of the town, returning from one of those roads; he was taken into the backhouse of the police barrack, to afford him some relief, but life was extinct.

The papers furnish numerous other statements which might be given, were it necessary to shew the awful extent of the famine and consequent suffering,—but we grow sick on the details.

Mrs. & Scotch Families
1847

Mr. J. M. Crowell Copy
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Mr. J. M. Crowell Copy

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