

**STUDIES OF THE LAND  
AND TENANTRY OF  
IRELAND**

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Studies of the land and tenantry of Ireland by B. Samuelson

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THE  
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BY B. SAMUELSON, M.P.



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It has been thought, by persons whose authority I cannot esteem too highly, that the republication, in a permanent form, of the following notes, lately contributed by me to a daily paper, would be desirable. Except that they are somewhat amplified, the matter contained in them is unchanged in all essential respects.

The plan which I have ventured to recommend for giving security to the tenantry of Ireland has elicited from public writers the single important objection that it will lead to litigation. I admit that it may have this effect, but I believe that the danger has been overrated. It binds over both parties to keep the peace; the landlords by the liability to have their farms thrown on their hands on onerous terms; the tenants, inasmuch as they must make surrender a condition concurrent with any remedy against the landlords.

I anticipate from some of my Irish friends

the complaint that Tenant-right is no absolute bar to eviction. They will still insist on giving to all cultivators in Ireland, the perpetuity which was secured by law to nearly every occupier in France, Germany, and Denmark, even before the French Revolution, and the Prussian legislation of 1807-11.\* I fear that the tenant himself, and through him the State, would suffer, rather than the landlord, by any of the plans to effect this object which have hitherto been proposed for Ireland. The time has not arrived when the assistance and superintendence of good landlords can, in all cases, be regarded as of no public value in that country; and it is not in human nature that these should continue to be afforded if proprietors are placed simply in the condition of annuitants, on terms however favourable. The smaller tenants will not, for many years to come,

\* The tendency of legislation in nearly every German State has been for centuries to limit the rent and dues which the landlord could claim from the tenant, and to prevent the consolidation of holdings, or their absorption into the 'Domain' of the proprietor. The property of the tenant in the farm, and more especially in the homestead, was acknowledged by law long before feudal services were abolished. In Denmark serfdom ceased in 1702, and leases for the life of the tenant were substituted. Other important reforms succeeded in 1787-88.

be in a position to regard as immaterial to their welfare the liberal aid of such landlords as the Duke of Leinster, Lord Bessborough, or the Duke of Devonshire, to name only a few out of numerous instances; and the only prospect of improvement in the cottages of the labourers exists, at present, in the enlightened self-interest of the proprietors. No one except a mere partizan will affirm that the public danger arising from an indefinite subdivision of small holdings has entirely disappeared, and yet it is one with which the landlord alone can deal effectively; a control, however, which persons having no further interest than that of quasi lords of the manor could not be expected to exercise with discriminating care.

But whatever else may be done should be accompanied by Mr. Bright's plan of enabling occupiers with some capital to become proprietors on favourable terms; and it ought to be well considered whether great latitude should not be given to trustees and limited owners to assist in the creation of a peasant proprietary.

One argument, at least, is no longer urged as an objection to any proposal for dealing with