

**LETTER TO THOMAS SPRING RICE, ESQ.  
M.P. &C.: ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
LEGAL PROVISION FOR THE IRISH  
POOR, AND ON THE NATURE AND  
DESTINATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

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Letter to Thomas Spring Rice, Esq. M.P. &C.: On the Establishment of a Legal Provision for the Irish Poor, and on the Nature and Destination of Church Property by James Doyle

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**JAMES DOYLE**

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**A LETTER,**  
**BY THE**  
**RIGHT REV. JAMES DOYLE, D. D.**



# LETTER

TO

THOMAS SPRING RICE, ESQ. M.P.

Ac. &c.

*Kt Baron Montezagle*

ON

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEGAL PROVISION

FOR THE

IRISH POOR,

AND ON THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF

CHURCH PROPERTY.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. JAMES DOYLE, D. D.

Ac. &c.

*written*

DUBLIN:

RICHARD COYNE, CAPEL-STREET,

BOOKSELLER TO THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ST. PATRICK, MAYNOOTH,  
AND PUBLISHER TO THE R. C. BISHOPS OF  
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LONDON, J. RIDGEWAY, PICCADILLY.

1831.





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## A LETTER,

&c. &c.

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SIR,

THERE are many reasons why such remarks, as occur to me, on the subject of a provision for the most indigent portion of our countrymen, should be addressed to you. Among those reasons, are the unwearied attention with which you have investigated the state of Ireland; the extensive and accurate knowledge you have acquired of that state; your ability to improve her condition, and your anxious desire for that improvement; but above all, the patience, I should rather say the kindness with which you have, at all times, listened to my crude opinions, even when those opinions differed very widely from your own.

It appears from the "Report of the Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland," ordered by the House of Commons to be printed,

16th July, 1830, that the question of making a legal provision for the Irish poor remains as yet undecided. And as the committee, abstaining from any specific recommendation to the House of Commons on the subject, is satisfied to refer them to the evidence as reported, it may not be improper, perhaps it may be useful to lay before the public, under the sanction of your respected name, a summary of the arguments contained in that evidence. This is the task which I propose to myself. I will endeavour to execute it with brevity and candour, not by extracts from the evidence itself, for then brevity could scarcely be observed, but by reducing the arguments employed by the opponents of a poor-rate to the most simple form, and unfolding those used in reply to such extent only, as will enable the public to estimate their value.

We may premise as *maxims*, or *postulates*, those truths or facts about which all, or nearly all, the witnesses are agreed. These facts or truths are the following. 1st. *That* a great portion of the labouring population is without employment.

2nd. *That* the average price of labour is about ten-pence per day.

3rd. *That* the labouring classes subsist on a

species of food, capable only of supporting animal existence in the lowest state.

4th. *That* the supply of this food is precarious, and the failure of it is attended with extreme suffering, arising from want and contagious disease.

5th. *That* the number of destitute poor in Ireland is exceedingly great ; and though few of them die of actual want, great numbers of them perish gradually of inanition, or are carried off by chronic or inflammatory diseases, produced by wet, cold, and hunger.

6th. *That* the expense of providing food for an Irish pauper, varies from two to three-pence a day, but in no case is found to exceed the latter sum.

7th. *That* excepting fever hospitals, county infirmaries, dispensaries and lunatic asylums, there is no provision made by law for the Irish poor.

8th. *That* the number of the unemployed, as well as of the destitute poor, has been exceedingly increased, and their sufferings proportionably aggravated by the system which has prevailed for some years, and still prevails, of ejecting the smaller tenantry from their holdings, and consolidating farms.

9th. *That* the burthen of supporting the poor