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JEREMY BENTHAM AND THE EDUCATION OF THE IRISH PEOPLE

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Jeremy Bentham, inspired by the Principle of Utility, regarded education as a prime vehicle for maximizing the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Since there were no geographical limits to the doctrine of Utility and since Irish people, wheresoever, deserved equally to share in this happiness, Bentham attempted to ameliorate their condition through education. Two schemes resulted: one was an outline of a plan for Irish education, the other was an attempt to 'rescue' Irish labourers in New York. This article describes the major features of these schemes and attempts to account for Bentham's interest in the subject.

It would not be consistent with the known facts to maintain that Ireland was uppermost amongst the considerations which occupied the mind of Jeremy Bentham. Nonetheless, Ireland and its various concerns were a matter of intermittent interest to him, and he found time to devise schemes for the solution of its various problems which he believed would be beneficial and effective and, of course, consistent with the Greatest Happiness Principle as he had defined it. Bentham's attention was first directed to that country in the 1790s when he offered some comments on political economy in response to Lord Sheffield's *Ireland.* In 1801 he proposed, in outline, a scheme for Irish education and seventeen years later he put forward a scheme "For the Instruction and Improvement of the Moral character of the Irish Labourers in New York." A subscription to the Catholic Association (1824), some strictures on the conquest of Ireland (1831), and a lively correspondence and friendship with Daniel O'Connell (1826-1832) complete the catalogue of Jeremy Bentham's concerns with Irish affairs. Such intermittent interest indicates a concern, if not a dominating interest, for the greatest happiness of the Irish people. The purpose of this article is to furnish details of Jeremy Bentham's schemes for the benefit of Irish people wheresoever and to place such ideas in the context of Bentham's ideas on education.

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BENTHAM AND THE EDUCATION OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

Bentham's ideas on the education of the common people were based on an obvious social class bias which was reflected in his view of the condition of the poor For Bentham, as for other members of the middle classes, the poor constituted a problem They also posed a threat The problem was that there were far too many of them and they appeared to be on the increase Not only this, but they seemed to have a distressing tendency towards idleness, they drank too much, they were vicious, and they indulged in criminal activities In short, they represented a severe financial burden on the industrious members of the community In addition to this they appeared increasingly to absorb dangerous foreign notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity If such a tendency was not halted, the whole fabric of society would be turned upside down and property, that most sacred of all middle-class acquisitions, would be threatened The magnitude and the nature of the problems associated with the poor caused many of Bentham's contemporaries to despair of ever finding a solution to them The effect on Bentham was different the problems served to spur him to devise appropriate and effective solutions The pivotal point of these solutions was education

For Jeremy Bentham, education consisted of the art of showing men where their true happiness lay and of so forming their intelligence that they would know the order of nature on which their pleasures and pains depended Education would be practical in nature and would give the people mastery over their own environment so that they would control, in greater measure, their own lives Since education was to increase the happiness of the individual and since Bentham had committed himself to maximizing happiness in defining the Principle of Utility in the way that he did, it was axiomatic that all men ought to be educated What did not follow was that all men had to be given the same education Bentham's proposals for education and his interest in the field were strongly linked to his desire to provide a solution to contemporary problems such as poverty, crime, indolence, and political disaffection The educational programme which emerged was a comprehensive one Education was to make all men happy, it had, therefore, to involve a significant degree of government intervention It was to make the poor happy and, above all, content with their appointed lot whilst at the same time it would enable the middle classes to assume their proper place in the government of society Education was to become an arm of the state, and it was to be at all times both useful and practical The practical nature of Bentham's schemes is amply illustrated by the collateral uses he attached to his proposed houses of industry In addition to providing sustenance and shelter and work for the poor, they were to

furnish information about employment, to act as savings banks, and as a means of transmitting money from one place to another. In addition they would provide cheap accommodation for those in search of work, grant small loans, and serve as places of refuge for wives in distress. As well as being severely practical, Bentham's proposals for education had to satisfy three other criteria. First, they had to promote the secure holding of property. Second, they had to be cheap. Third, they ought to promote the qualities of industry, thrift, continence, sobriety, and political reliability amongst the lower orders. Such a programme of education had necessarily to be institutional in nature, for only if it was carried on in specially created institutions could it be controlled and contrary vitiating influences excluded.

Bentham's attention to the education of the Irish is contained in two specific projects. The first, an outline scheme for Irish Education, is dated about 1800. The second brief sally was undertaken in 1818 and was a Proposal For the Instruction and Improvement of the Moral Character of the Irish Labourers in New York.

AN OUTLINE SCHEME FOR IRISH EDUCATION

Bentham's main contribution to the education of Irish people was an outline scheme for Irish Education (2). This exists in manuscript form only. No doubt Bentham, in accordance with the way in which he customarily worked, intended to return to the scheme at some subsequent date, but did not do so. The manuscripts are not dated but it has been estimated that they were written about the year 1801; they, therefore, predate the scheme for the Irish in New York by about seventeen years.

In general terms, the proposed scheme was to benefit all sections of Irish society, though its major thrust was towards the middle class and it had both educational and social ends in view. First, it was expected that country gentlemen, who were to superintend and manage agricultural schools, would, as a result, 'learn to understand and love agriculture themselves' (4). Second, the establishment of a Royal Academy with funding for experimental work was proposed. Third, there was to be a veterinary school established at Cork 'where the great cattle trade is.' The scheme had other objectives in mind also; in view of its authorship it would have been remarkable if it had not. Such objectives were both practical and social in their purpose. First, Bentham considered the effects of education on the labouring classes whom he considered it essential to educate since they had as much right to happiness as anybody else. That they should be taught to read was axiomatic; it would 'soften their manners by directing their attention from mischievous pursuits,' it would 'guard them against

mischievous error and imposition of every kind' and it would 'facilitate the intercourse of governments with them' (3) Second, Bentham addressed himself to the social benefits that would be expected to accrue from such education It would improve intelligence and good morals in the body of the people and it would encourage attendance at church (2) Indeed, the religious significance of education appears to have been at the forefront of Bentham's mind as he perceived it as a means of getting the Catholic clergy under the influence of the Crown, as a device for lessening the proselytizing activity of Catholic priests and attaching them and their people to the government, a necessary activity as other plans for their conversion appeared to be ineffective On the more mundane plane, Jeremy Bentham considered property and its security, a concern that was ever present in his mind He encouraged the purchase of forfeited estates by other Irish Catholics since this, he felt, would divide the Catholic population against itself He also felt that a 'declaration' respecting the present rights of property and the unlawfulness of disturbing them could reasonable be extracted from those who attended school (2)

Just as the purpose of the scheme was to be beneficial to different segments of Irish society so was its content and method The usefulness of what was to be taught was the outstanding criterion for inclusion This being so, the content prescribed displays a resemblance to that which Bentham had earlier described in his *Plan for improved pauper management* (1797) and to which he was to return in *Chrestomathia* (1818) and for many of the same reasons Modern languages and not dead ones should be taught, particularly French since, 'we are most connected with that country, the language is that which has the best things written in it, it is more the language of liberty ' After French 'the German ought to have the preferment (since), 1) it requires teaching more than any other after the French – the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese may be learnt without teaching, 2) it forms one of the main roots of our own language, 3) it has, after the French, the most useful things written in it' (2) Once again, and not surprisingly in view of the aforegoing, the classical languages were forbidden, on the basis of both utility and desirability since 'we have no ancient Greeks and Romans to talk to and we are not the worse for it' (2) It was other reasons, however, which excited Bentham's considerable feelings on the subject of Latin and Greek, Romans and Greeks They were, he stated, bad moralists who loved war, they venerated bad political institutions, they taught vices which were now punished with the gallows, they were too fond of obscurity, they taught inferior eloquence, natural philosophy, and natural history In short, Bentham concluded, 'while men are acquiring false words they are acquiring false ideas of things' (2) It was fashion and habit and tradition only which accounted for the superior position of Latin

and Greek and those were, for Bentham, unacceptable grounds for continuing any course of action.

If Bentham objected strongly to the classical languages, he was equally vehement on the subject of poetry. Poetry (with, perhaps, the exception of dramatic poetry, since it told a story) was his ancient foe; in formulating his felicific calculus* he had early decided that 'pleasure for pleasure, push-pin is as good as poetry.' Hardly an encouraging start. At one time, he conceded, it might have served some purpose; for example, in times when printing was unknown and few people could write, it might usefully have served as a vehicle for disseminating history and the laws, but such times were now long past. In his opposition to Latin and Greek poetry he was able to indulge his passion on two accounts at once, and did so:

> No Latin and Greek poetry is either so agreeable or so useful as what may be met with in English poetry. No other English poetry is more agreeable than dramatic poetry and novels: none so useful as good dramatic poetry and good novels. But neither dramatic poetry nor novels have any occasion to be taught (2).

What, then, should be taught? Most surprisingly, there is no mention of physical education which Bentham was usually most keen to promote and to which he devoted considerable attention (devising useful exercises) in his other educational schemes. No doubt this omission is due to the outline nature of the Irish scheme and one which Bentham intended to remedy when he returned to it at a later date. It was the natural and physical sciences in general and in their various branches which Bentham chose to promote here for the reason that they always presented something new to be discovered and they were obviously useful. The usefulness to the learner of what was being taught was always at the forefront of Bentham's mind, as was the expense of teaching it since 'at the public expense men ought to be taught nothing but what is really useful – what is agreeable they will in proportion as it is agreeable teach themselves' (2). Accordingly, in a predominantly rural country such as Ireland, there should be agricultural schools to enable the people to farm more efficiently. (Bentham suggested that a prize be awarded annually to the one which produced the most interesting project in the year.) Medicine, too, should be taught since 'it will enable some/every man to be his own physician on some occasions,

* The felicific calculus was a method invented by Bentham for calculating, on a quantitative basis, degrees of happiness to be rendered by alternative courses of action in order to allow the individual or body concerned to choose that one which would contribute to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people who would be affected by it.

some on most occasions, – to choose his own physician to advantage' (3) In addition, it would favour the advancement of medical science by promoting a greater awareness of it, after all, 'medicine is one of the few arts or sciences in which anything considerable is gained by the advance ment of it ' Reading, it goes without saying, was to be taught to all classes since it would be useful to them all, and to all who dealt with them The whole process of instruction was to be aided by those instructional devices which readily appealed to Bentham, maps of systems, maps of the world, charts of inventors, parochial libraries, and a weekly newspaper which would give news of new laws and other items of public interest and for public benefit Such a newspaper would be sent free to each parish and was to be read out loud in church as 'a means of the government corresponding in an easy and familiar way with the body of the people and in particular of teaching them the virtues of submission and good order' (2) The newspaper obviously was an idea which appealed to Bentham and one which, once again, he proposed to include in his pauper management scheme Bentham first decided that it should contain Irish news, English news, French news, Other Foreign news and what he referred to as 'Didactic parts' in that order but, upon reflection thought better of it since if the home news were put last there would be more likelihood of people remaining in church to hear it The major objection which Bentham antici pated to his newspaper proposal was that it would be inappropriate to read it in churches since it would divert attention from 'sacred things to profane' Bentham's response was that there was no more danger of this than there would in any case be by 'the conversation they would inevitably fall into otherwise, and it might even be made much less by being sanctioned with religious sentiments by having a religious cast given it It might conclude with a prayer for grace to give it a pious and moral application' (3)

The organization and management principles on which the school should be run was not an area which Bentham, with his passion for order, system, and strict adherence to principles, would be likely to overlook In fact, he considered three areas inducements available to teachers, why people should attend the schools, and who would supply the funds As to the first, teachers would be required to take an oath to attend school regularly (Bentham placed a great deal of importance on oaths for a wide variety of purposes and they figured prominently as devices for securing the loyalty and duty of officers to be employed in the *Panopticon* and *Improved pauper management* schemes) Perhaps more to the point was that they would be paid on the spot, failure to attend, therefore, meant that they would not be paid (2) and certainly Bentham believed that unless masters were obliged to attend whether or not they had any pupils to teach,

then the example of bad management would frighten away prospective pupils (3). The enticements to the learners were somewhat different though no less attractive: those who learned to read would be given votes, those who attended the course of lectures satisfactorily and regularly would be given the title and rank of esquire, and on a more practical plane, they would be eligible on completion of their studies for what Bentham was pleased to refer to as 'diverse offices' (2). The funds to promote the project should be allocated 'in the common way from general taxes in the first instance reserving the economical measures that are to furnish the indemnification till afterwards' (2); this meant that the education would have to be provided as cheaply as possible since it was being made available at the public expense.

Bentham's scheme for Irish education was, and remained, an outline only. That it was so reflects not Bentham's ability to go into detail (even the most cursory examination of *Panopticon, The plan for improved pauper management,* or the *Constitutional code* is sufficient to dispel that illusion) or his lack of interest in the subject. What it does illustrate is his method of working: he was constantly 'running from one good scheme to another.' He was so busy, so aware of the multiplicity of problems that had to be solved, and so committed to devising solutions to them which would be consistent with the Greatest Happiness Principle, so conscious of the fact that time was not without measure, that many schemes, which were drafted in outline with the intention of being completed later either by Bentham himself or by one of his amanuenses at his direction, remained in skeletal form at his death in 1832.

A PROPOSAL FOR THE EDUCATION OF IRISH LABOURERS IN NEW YORK

Bentham's Proposal for the Instruction and Improvement of the Moral Character of the Irish Labourers in New York was addressed to DeWitt Clinton, Governor of the State of New York. The vast majority of the ten thousand labourers in question appear to have manifested the same moral defects which the English poor demonstrated: they were too frequently drunk, were consequently quarrelsome, caused annoyance to the rest of the community, and were vacant of mind (9, p. 500). What Bentham was proposing was that the ideas of an Irishman, Mr Thaddeus Connellan, which had already been put into effect elsewhere, should be employed in this case. Most certainly Bentham was impressed by Connellan and the effectiveness of his programme and person:

> The number and respectability of the persons who, I am well informed, have in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland, been witnesses to his

> conduct during these operations, is such, as, coupled with the promptitude, frankness and consistency displayed in the course of his answers to the questions which, at different times, I have put to him, have sufficiently cleared my mind of those suspicions which the extra ordinariness of the facts could not but have excited to the prejudice of the sincerity or the correctness of his statements (9, p 501)

Certainly his own personal accomplishments were acceptable, as the following indicates

> not only was the handwriting (of Connellan) good, but the language unexceptionally proper and correct, (and) the state of mind evidenced by it highly meritorious (9, p 501)

For the content of the course of instruction, designed to effect, as Bentham would have put it, 'the special ends in view', we must refer to the course and Plan of Instruction Perhaps the most obvious and outstanding feature is that Bentham (via Connellan) was suggesting that the New York labourers be taught to read in the Irish language, since

> Those who are taught thus to read, are many, if not most of them, taught to write A higher stage of instruction, to which not so large a number have been admitted, is that by which they learn to read and write English (9, p 510)

The mainstay of the scheme was one that ever commended itself to Bentham the use of a monitor After all, it was cheap Bentham's appreciation was couched in the following terms with reference to Connellan

> He began with teaching at one and the same time, a set as numerous as he would collect at one and the same place, but to this course none were admitted as disciples, but upon condition of their serving, each of them, if required, in the capacity of a teacher, to another such set, administering, in the same mode, the instruction he had received (9, p 502)

As for time, it was flexible two or three hours in a day had sufficed in England, abroad, it seems a somewhat greater time was needed In terms of length of time 'from two to three months at the outside' should suffice (9, p 502)

The actual teaching method employed by Connellan was one that was ever to commend itself to Bentham on a variety of accounts it was systematic, it was universally applicable and above all, it was cheap In other words, it was the monitorial method not only in the sense that monitors

would teach the other children in the same school but also, whilst this was going forward, the master would be off to

> some other village about twenty miles distant from the first; leaving the villages in the interval to be taught by his disciples (9, p. 502).

The source of the teaching material itself was, at first, expected to be less acceptable to Bentham, that is, the Bible. We are assured, however, that no one sect was expected to profit from this, since

> ... he avoids all topics characteristic of different sects. For this cause, his life and those of his disciples have been repeatedly put in danger, by persons set on by Catholic priests (9, p. 502).

As for the implementation of Connellan's mode of instruction for the Irish labourers in New York, Bentham's suggestions were that, first, two or three of Connellan's disciples should have their fares paid to New York (the fare money was not, however, to pass through their hands for obvious reasons); second, on their arrival in New York they should be guaranteed the minimum labourer's rate of pay and should teach in their spare time; third, they should be returned to Ireland after an agreed and stated time with, if they merited it, some extra reward (9). The other instructors, Bentham suggested, should be rewarded with grants of land made on more than usually favourable terms.

> Such grants confined of course to such, if any so circumstanced as to be found capable of occupying the lands in person to their advantage, for as to grants made with no other expectation than that of the lands being sold, half of this sort would manifestly be but so much waste (9, p. 503).

It was Bentham's sanguine expectation that just as, in the past, 'in the midst of their poverty, the Irish of the labouring classes' (9, p. 503) had given up gambling and card-playing when they learned to read so, now, they would cease being drunk. There was one final point which Bentham naturally considered: how was the scheme to be financed? The method to be employed was such that costs would be kept to a minimum, but some costs there inevitably would be. Two possible sources were suggested by Bentham: a public fund or private endowment but he confessed his own inability, as a stranger, to pronounce definitely in favour of the one or the other. 'The person to receive and supply the money would, I suppose, be some citizen of New York, whose station, whether or not in office, happens to be in this country' (9, p. 503). Surely a curious consideration when the action would take place in New York. Equally strange, when one considers

the important role envisaged by Bentham for himself in the *Panopticon* and *Improved pauper management* schemes was his denial of any such involvement here Such then were the proposals dispatched in duplicate no less, 'against accidents', to the Honourable DeWitt Clinton, Governor of the State of New York on the 29th September, 1818

THE BASIS OF BENTHAM S INTEREST IN IRISH EDUCATION

Of interest to historians of education is what motivated Bentham to interest himself in Irish education Undoubtedly, one of the foremost reasons was that without education, in the way that Bentham conceived that term, the Irish people were not as happy as they could, and should, be To educate them would be to make them realise where their true happiness lay, it would also enable them to exercise a greater measure of control over their own environment To educate the Irish would be to maximize their happiness and would thus be wholely consistent with the Principle of Utility, that mainspring of all that Bentham thought, said, wrote, and did Reference has already been made to Jeremy Bentham's *Constitutional code,* together with the *Panopticon and Improved pauper management* schemes, the point of the reference was to indicate the detail in which all their various aspects were worked out Nothing was left to chance, for that would have been to contravene the Principle of Utility This brings to the fore another of Bentham's passions which surely played some part in turning his attention to the subject of Irish education, his passion for order and system Certainly, there were, as there had been for centuries, a variety of schools in Ireland the Charter schools, the parish schools, the free grammar schools, the 'royal' schools, the charity schools, and more recently the celebrated hedge schools had over a period of time and for a variety of purposes played their various parts in the continuing Irish respect and desire for education But there was no order in all of this, and this offended Bentham's passion for systematic solutions to all the world's problems What Bentham was, in fact, attempting to do with his Irish scheme and his plan for Irish labourers was to introduce order and system to an area in which it was notably lacking

Jeremy Bentham was a life long resident of the borough of Westminster, his house at 2 Queen's Square Place was but a short distance from the Palace of Westminster, the focal point of most political activity in an age when such activity rose to unparalleled heights In this, I believe, lies the key to Bentham's unexpected interest in Irish education, it was 'political' insofar as that was compatible with the Principle of Utility This is a complicated and somewhat speculative point which requires some clarification By the year 1800, Bentham's relations with his sovereign had reached an all time low

This situation was due to the lack of progress with the Panopticon scheme* which Bentham blamed on the personal intervention of the King, George III, and which produced a *History of the war between George III and Jeremy Bentham by one of the participants* (which I think we may reasonably assume was not written by the King). Bentham was, therefore, not at all well-disposed towards King George III. But what were the alternatives? Certainly the decade of the 1790s had not been an encouraging one for those committed to the maintenance of the existing social order, and amongst these must be numbered Jeremy Bentham, King George III notwithstanding. The French Revolution had taken place in 1789; not a good omen for those committed to the maintenance of law and order. There had been minor insurrections in the British navy and army and indications of major discontent on the increasingly important industrial scene at home. The middle class, which to Bentham appeared to be the most important section of the community (after all, they had prospered, had worked hard, had invested, had fostered scientific investigation, had provided all the political, social, and commercial expertise necessary to promote the industrial revolution) was in danger. Its most sacred precept, that of the sanctity of property, which alone distinguished it from competitors from above and below, was in peril. The position of the middle class, therefore, was a particularly perilous one but nowhere was that dilemma more apparent than in Ireland. In Ireland also, there was an added and divisive element, religion. It, together with the attractive aims of liberty, fraternity, and equality, which wafted enticingly across the channel from France, had begun to entice the small, but powerful, Irish middle class. Such disaffection from the predestined course of events was enough to cause apoplexy in English middle-class intellectual circles.

Now, it is not suggested that Bentham was entirely representative of English middle-class thought, but in one respect perhaps he was. For him, the middle class had a peculiar and increasingly important role to play in the public affairs of the country. It had to defend and advance its own interests and rights and it had to unite in defense of property. Unfortunately the Irish middle class did not fit into this mould: it flirted with dangerous ideas and it had already demonstrated its willingness to co-operate with foreign revolutionaries. The judicious application of the right kind of education, administered under the right conditions, in the right circumstances, by the right people, would not fail to bring them to their senses. It was for these reasons, and for them alone, that Bentham supported the status quo. That the English political establishment

* This was Bentham's scheme for improved prisons based on the principle of universal inspection at all times.

happened, at the same time to have similar ideas, is largely coincidental

Lest it be thought that Bentham's opposition to the seeming political disaffection of the Irish middle classes was due to religious considerations, perhaps we should refer to Bentham's views on that subject and particularly to what he had to say on the subject in the Irish education scheme One thing that should be made clear is that Bentham was not prejudiced against the cause of Catholic emancipation, neither was he prejudiced against Ireland His warm friendship with Daniel O'Connell, his concern for the well being of the Irish labourers in New York, his obvious support of Irish aspirations (cf 10, pp 64-66), his support for Catholic emancipation coupled with the pious prayer that

> his oppressed brethren of the Catholic persuasion will neither retaliate persecution by persecution, nor attempt redress by insurrection, but unite with the liberal among Protestants for the attainment of security for all, against depredation and oppression in every shape, by the only practicable means – Parliamentary Reform, in the radical and solely efficient mode (9, p 544),

are sufficient evidence to allay such fears What Bentham did have to say on Church affairs in the Irish scheme is wholly consistent with his sentiments expressed on the same subject at other times * Bentham was critical of established religion and most certainly he was critical of the English bishops, but he was quick to realize the social value to which institutionalized religion could be put A major reason, therefore, for Bentham's plan for Irish education was to reclaim the allegiance of the Irish middle classes who had been alienated because of British government policy (particularly with respect to education) and who had, especially in the last decades of the eighteenth century, demonstrated their support for liberty in the United States of America and France and at home in Ireland

One final point ought to be considered What benefit did Bentham personally expect to derive from the implementation of the plans discussed in this paper? The answer is none at all A visitor who had the rarely accorded honour of staying with Jeremy Bentham about a year before his death in 1832,† speaking of his host's physical appearance, reported that 'the whole is the face of a man of great mental power in which the dominant

* For further information on this see 1 and 8

† See 'Three Weeks at Benthams (7) The writer was probably George Wheately of Whitehaven, though the manuscripts are not signed or dated but are believed to have been compiled for publication in the *Westminster Review*

tract is benevolence.' Bentham was an instinctively benevolent man who always acted, naturally and consistently, for what he perceived to be the well-being of his fellow human beings. It is true that his great schemes for penal and pauper reform contain elements of what may appear to be austerity and rigidity in their proposed treatment of convicts and paupers (I believe they appear less so if one turns to consider the alternatives available) but in no respect were such schemes inhumane in their proposed way of dealing with such people. In those schemes Bentham did perceive an important role for himself, but he did so not because he lusted for power and fame but because he knew that he would act in an instinctively benign way. So long as Bentham himself was involved there would be no corruption. In both the Proposal for the Instruction and Improvement of the Moral Character of the Irish Labourers in New York and in the Plan for Irish Education, Bentham specifically excluded himself from any personal involvement in their operation. In the case of the former scheme, he wrote 'that for any such purpose (receiving and disbursing the funds) the person to whose lot it has fallen to be giving you this trouble, is altogether out of the question, is sufficiently evident' (9, p. 503). And in the latter case

> My race is run: I have at length reached the goal: but am too much fatigued to cross the sea for the purpose of running a similar one in another country ... I have nothing to solicit (6).

Such, then, were Jeremy Bentham's contributions to the education of Irish people. It was obviously a matter which did not dominate his thoughts, but then, apart from considering how the Principle of Utility ought to be consistently applied, no one matter ever dominated his attention entirely or for long. His interest in the subject does, however, indicate his concern for Ireland and the welfare of her people, particularly when to it are added his other writings on Ireland and his total lack of prejudice – a quality unfortunately not too common amongst many of his contemporaries. What his interest also indicates is his awareness of the social problems attendant upon large-scale migration, his comprehensive concept of education which goes far beyond mere schooling, and above all his willingness and his ability to devise practical solutions for social problems which others were content to ignore. He was indeed an essentially practical man. This quality is demonstrated many times over in his work and certainly it impressed his contemporaries if John Stuart Mill is to be believed; he wrote of Bentham that

> His was an essentially practical mind. It was by practical abuses that his mind was first turned to speculation (11, p. 31).

It was this quality which led Mill to refer to Bentham as one of the 'two great seminal minds of England in their age' (11, p 28), and it was that same quality which prompted Bentham to interest himself in the matters that have formed the subject of this paper

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