

# THE IRISH IN AMERICA.

## England Quoting Statistics to Reassure Herself.

The question as to what may be about the real number of the Irish in America, which has of late been brought before the public in various nationalist speeches, articles and letters, has again come up in the house of commons, says the St. James's Gazette. As it seems equally desirable that Irishmen should cease to overestimate the amount of support likely to be at their disposal across the Atlantic in certain eventualities to which they look forward, and that Englishmen should know as accurately as possible the strength of the elements which go to form public opinion in America, it may be worth while to set forth the real state of the case as far as it can be ascertained from the only authoritative source—the returns of the United States census for 1890.

If we turn to page 164 of the huge volume, we shall at once light upon the most direct information as to what we are in search of. A table is there printed showing how many of the population were of foreign birth, or had parents of foreign birth; among the latter being included all who had one parent native—a class forming a not dissimilar proportion among the various nationalities. The total number, excluding colored persons, was 20,519,643. Of these, 9,015,675 were of foreign birth and 11,503,675 of foreign parentage. Now it is believed, after all the boasting we have heard about the 15,000,000 Irish, that the actual number of Irish is only 4,913,238. It may possibly be said that this cannot be the true figure, as immigration from Ireland has been going on so long that here must be large numbers not included under the foregoing headings. But the Irish immigration prior to the great famine was not large. Between 1820 and 1830 it amounted to only 50,721, and in the following decade to 207,381. So that if we make every allowance for those whose grandparents or remoter ancestors were of Irish origin, and who therefore do not appear in the census as Irish, we need hardly add, at the outside, more than 1,000,000 to the total already given, which would thus be raised to 6,000,000. But from these must be deducted the Irish Protestants who, in the present century at least, cannot be reckoned with the others politically, and they hardly number less than 500,000. Thus the total Catholic Irish element in the states cannot exceed 5,500,000. In further confirmation of this estimate may be quoted a statement, made not very long since in an Irish-American newspaper, that the total Catholic population in the states is about 10,000,000. But these 10,000,000 are largely made up of immigrants from the Catholic countries of Europe and from French Canada and Mexico—the actual figures are given in the census—and these, in addition to a proportion of the Germans, which can hardly be less than 2,500,000, must number some 4,000,000; thus leaving the Irish 6,000,000, which does not differ greatly from the estimate already arrived at.

It may be added that the English immigration into the States has been greatly on the increase since 1870, and the explanation as to the exaggerated numbers of the Irish is due to their being principally massed in the great cities of the Northeast and the neighboring Middle states.