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F A C T S
FOR THE
KIND-HEARTED OF ENGLAND!
AS TO
THE WRETCHEDNESS
OF THE

IRISH PEASANTRY,

AND

THE MEANS FOR THEIR REGENERATION.

BY JASPER W. ROGERS, C.E.

This Edition (500 copies bound), has been presented by the Author, as a donation;—to be sold at the Ladies Bazaar, for relief of the famine in Ireland, and distress in Scotland.

LONDON:
JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.
1847.

FACTS

FOR THE

KIND-HEARTED OF ENGLAND.

[3]

IN my twentieth year my first visit was made to London—how long since need not be said, lest I make discoveries. I arrived at the "Swan with *two* necks," in Lad Lane, to the imminent peril of my own *one*, on entering the yard of that then famous hostelry, the gate of which barely allowed admission to the coach itself—and first set foot on London ground, midst the bustle of some half-dozen coaches, either preparing for exit, or discharging their loads of passengers and parcels.

Four "insides" were turned out, and eight "outsides" turned in—I, amongst the unfortunates of the latter class, taking possession of the nearest point I could to the coffee-room fire. It is to be recollected that in those days one had but *four* chances in his favour, against perhaps forty applicants for the interior of the mail—and he who was driven in winter, by necessity of time, to the top of a coach in Liverpool, and from thence to Lad Lane, and found himself in the coffee-room there unfrozen, might be well contented. So felt I, then,—and doubly so now, as I think of the dangers of flood, and road, and neck, which I encountered in a twenty-six hours' journey, exposed to the "pelting of the pitiless storm,"—for it snowed half the way.

[4]

Dinner discussed, and its etceteras having been partaken, in full consciousness of the comforts which surrounded me, contrasted with the discomforts, &c. from which I had escaped,—I sank into an agreeable reverie; and during a vision,—I must not call it a doze,—composed of port wine and walnuts—the invigorating beams of Wallsend coal—an occasional fancied jolt of the coach—the three mouthfuls of dinner, by the name, I had gotten at Oxford—and the escape of my one neck, when, goose as I was, I presented it where two seemed to be an essential by the sign of the habitation and the dangers of the gate,—I was aroused by a crash, something like the noise of the machine which accompanies the falling of an avalanche or a castle, or some such direful affair at "Astley's;" and starting up, I thought,—had the coach upset? but, much to my gratification, found myself a safe "inside." Still came crash after crash, until I thought it high time to see as well as hear. "What on earth is the matter?" said I to the first waiter I met, as I descended from the coffee-room, and got to the door of the "tap," or room for accommodation of the lower grade of persons frequenting the establishment. "Oh! sir," said he, "it is two dreadful Irishmen fighting: one has broken a table on the other's head; the other smashed a chair." I stopped short, and well do I recollect that the blood rushed to my face as I turned away; I confess, too, that while returning to the coffee-room, when the waiter followed and asked, should he bring tea, I "cockneyfied" my accent as much as possible, in the hope that he should not know I was an Irishman:—such was my shame for my country at the moment.

[5]

Many minutes, however, had not elapsed until I felt shame another way—namely, that I should for a moment deny the land which gave me birth;—and I at once determined to ascertain the facts and particulars of the outrage. Down I went, therefore, again, and entering the tap-room, found that in truth a table had been broken, and a chair too, not to speak at all of the heads; but, on further investigation, it appeared that the table, being weak in constitution, sunk under the weight of one of the belligerents, who jumped upon it to assail the other with advantage,—and

that the chair had been smashed by coming in contact with the table; the gentleman on the ground having thought it fair to use a chair in his defence when his enemy took to the larger piece of furniture:—hence the awful crash, crash—that awoke me from my—vision.

So far well—but further inquiry brought forth further truths. It came out that one of the party had called the other "a beggarly bogtrotter," for which he received in reply a blow upon his nose. Thus the row commenced; but better still, it appeared that *one* of "the dreadful Irishmen" was a *Welshman!* and that it was *he* who called poor Paddy "a bogtrotter."

[6]

First then, said I to myself, the table was *not* broken on the Irishman's head; it was smashed by the Welshman's *foot*—and it was *not* "two dreadful Irishmen," but *one*, who had been engaged in the fray, and he was insulted; therefore, at the most, ONLY ONE HALF OF THE STORY IS TRUE! *And in about that proportion have I since found almost all the stories and charges against the lower class of my unhappy countrymen*—and so will others too, who please to investigate facts.

Amongst my earliest introductions to "London Society" was "St. Giles's." Notwithstanding the warnings of my friends, as to the danger attendant even on a walk through its streets, I ventured a little farther; and who ever may have suffered there, I have not, except from witnessing the almost indescribable misery of its inhabitants. Throughout my entire search into its wretchedness, I never received even an uncivil answer but on one occasion, and I am the more desirous to state this fact, because, although "St. Giles" sounds to English ears as a spot *contaminated* by the abode of Irish only, I found many and many an Englishman there, as wretched as my own wretched countrymen.

In the instance I allude to, I had entered the first lobby in one of the houses of a most miserable street, where I saw a woman "rocking" in the manner the lower class of Irish express silent agony of feeling. Her body moved back and forward in that peculiar motion which told to my heart she was in misery; and entering the room in silent respect for her suffering, I forgot to knock or make any noise to attract attention. In a moment a figure darted from the side of a bed behind the door, and having caught up something as it passed between me and the entrance, he, for I then saw my assailant was a man, brandished the "miserable remains" of a kitchen poker before my face, and demanded, "*What did I want, and how da-ar I come there to trouble thim with my curoosity?*" And what right had I to pry into their miseries, unless to relieve them? I confess my object in visiting St. Giles's then, had not arisen from so pure a motive, and I felt the justice of his demand—The miseries of the heart are sacred amongst the rich: why should they not be equally so amongst the poor? Nature has made original feeling alike in all; but the poor feel more deeply; for the rich suffer in heart midst countless luxuries and efforts from others to wean them from their sufferings, while the poor suffer midst numberless privations, and almost utter loneliness. Why then should I have "*troubled thim with my curoosity?*"

[7]

But I made my peace, with little effort too; and then, for the first time, saw a dead body lying on the bed from whence the man had come, "waking," in the Irish fashion of the lower orders. It was a child of about seven years old. Its last resting place on earth was dressed with flowers, and the mother's hand had evidently done the most within its feeble power to give honour to the dead. Rising, she with her apron rubbed the chair she had been sitting on, and placed it for me; thus offering, in her simple way, the double respect of tendering *her own* seat, and seeking to make it more fit for my reception by dusting it.

[8]

I need not repeat all the tale of misery, the cause of their suffering then, was apparent. "She was their last Colleen—th' uther craturs wur at home with the Granny," and "*he* had cum to thry his forthin in Inglind; *an' bad forthin it was*. But the Lord's will be done, fur the little darlint was happy, any how—an' sure they had more av thim at home—an' why should she be mopin' an' cryin' her eyes out for her Colleen, that was gone to God!"

Thus the poor creature reasoned as she cried and blamed herself for crying; for miserable as she was, she evidently felt that she should be thankful for the other blessings that were left her. Do we all feel thus? Yet, at the moment that she did so, I believe there was not a morsel of food within reach of her means, and that her last penny had been spent to deck with flowers the death-bed of her child.

It is needless for me to describe the general miseries of "St. Giles,"—now no more. Its wretched habitations have yielded their place to palaces; its dreaded locality lives but in recollection; and its inhabitants have gone forth—Whither? *Perhaps to greater wretchedness*. Aye, almost surely! The misery of St. Giles's has ceased, mayhap to make misery double elsewhere; but, thank God! there no longer exists in London a special spot upon which the ban is placed of *Irish residence being tantamount to crime*.

[9]

Years and years have since gone by, and many a time the story of "the *two* dreadful Irishmen" has risen to my mind, as I have read paragraph after paragraph in the English papers, telling of some direful thing which had occurred and was wrapped in mystery, but concluding after the following fashion:—

"HIGHWAY ROBBERY—(*Particulars*). There is no clue whatever to discover the parties who committed this atrocious act—but *two Irish labourers who live in the neighbourhood are, it is supposed, the delinquents!*"

"BURGLARY AT — (Particulars). The parties who committed this robbery acted in the most daring manner. *The country is now filled with Irish harvest labourers!*"

"FOOTPAD.—A daring attempt was made by a most desperate-looking man to rob a farmer some days since—(further particulars) after a great struggle he got off. *He is supposed to be an Irishman!*"

"MARLBOROUGH-STREET.—There is a class of persons now known, called 'Mouchers,' who go about in gangs, plundering the licensed victuallers, eating-house and coffee-shop keepers, to an extent that would be deemed impossible, did not the records of police courts afford sufficient evidence of the fact. *The Mouchers are mostly of the lower order of Irish.*"—*London Morning Paper, 12th April, 1847.*

[10]

"HORRIBLE MURDER—(Particulars). Every possible search has been made for the murderers, but unfortunately without effect. However, *it is positively known that four Irish harvesters passed through the village the day before, and there cannot be a doubt the dreadful deed was committed by them!*"

Such are the kind of announcements seen frequently, particularly in provincial papers. In the latter case, the facts impressed themselves strongly upon my mind. A horrible murder had been committed, as well as I recollect, in Lancashire. The widow of a farmer, much beloved in the neighbourhood, and known to possess considerable property, was barbarously murdered in her bed at night, and her presses and strong box thoroughly rifled; nothing, however, having been taken but money, of which it was known she had received a considerable sum a few days previously. Much sensation was created by the fearful occurrence; and it was fully believed that "the four Irishmen" had committed the murder—why? *because they had been seen in the neighbourhood!* verifying most fully the adage, that "one man may steal a horse without being suspected, while another dare not look over the hedge." So it eventually turned out. A month elapsed; the four Irishmen could never be traced; but luckily the real murderer was. A labouring man offered a £20. note to be changed in a town some miles distant from the scene of the murder, and suspicion having arisen as to how he obtained it, he was taken up: eventually turning out to be the confidential farm servant of the unfortunate woman, still continuing to live unsuspected where the murder had been actually committed by himself; and he was subsequently executed.

[11]

But did this clear "*the four Irishmen*" from the imputation, or retrieve the character of their class? Not an iota. The journalist who accused them was not the fool to proclaim his own injustice; and perhaps, even if he did, the refutation would never have met the same eye that read the condemnation. No; "the four Irishmen" continued as thoroughly guilty in the public mind as if twelve jurors on their oaths had declared them so. The editorial pen had signed the death warrant of *character*, if not of life, as it has done in many and many instances with just as much foundation.

Poor, unhappy "Paddy" the labourer has had years and years of outcry to bear up against and suffer under, a thousand times more trying to him than that now raised against "Paddy" the Lord. The poor and lowly struggle single-handed and alone; the rich and high face the enemies of their order shoulder to shoulder, and as one. Poor fellow, he is like the cat in the kitchen: every head broken is as unquestionably laid to his charge, as every jug to pussy's. And he has another direful mark which stamps him at once; namely, that "profanation to ears polite," *his brogue!* He possibly may not look ill to the eye—perhaps the reverse; his countenance may be honest and open, and his bearing manly, as he approaches an employer to seek for work; up to that point all goes well, perhaps; but once his mouth opens, the tale is told; instantly *Prejudice* does her office, unknowingly almost, and unless actual need exist, Paddy may apply elsewhere, again and again to meet the same rebuff. Lancashire, Somersetshire, Yorkshire, may revel in their patois without raising a doubtful feeling or a smile, but the brogue of Ireland does the work at once, and the unhappy being from whom it issues slinks back into himself degraded, as he hears the certain laugh which answers his fewest words, and the almost certain refusal to admit him within the pale of his class in England. Hence St. Giles's as it was—the purlieu of Westminster, as it is—the Irish labourer's refuge in England, is often the lowest point, because he cannot be driven lower.

[12]

And all this arises, not from ill will, but from long felt prejudice, and the repetition of stories and anecdotes and caricature of Irish character, which trifling circumstances have given rise to and upheld; and which, I grieve to say, is greatly due to the domiciled Irishmen in England, of the middle and better class. They sometimes forget their country, and in place of explaining away fallacies and making known facts which would have roused England long since to our aid, had they been fairly understood, *fear* to tell truths which they deem to be unpalatable, while perhaps their own palates are being feasted on the good things of the party who declaims against their country: thus permitting the continued existence of prejudice and consequent estrangement.

[13]

It is in no small degree amusing to observe the *attempt* made, in addition, to disguise the fact that the delinquent I speak of (I had almost written renegade) is an Irishman. No wonder that he should attempt the disguise, for he must deeply feel his delinquency. In all cases such as this, the Cockney twang and occasional curtailment is assumed to overcome the *brogue*, but in vain. For the first half dozen words of each *paragraph* in a conversation it gets on well enough, but the conclusion is sometimes exquisitely ridiculous.

I had the *honour* to meet at dinner recently, a person of this class, and a conversation having arisen on the subject, he said, "I am perfectly certain no one can know that I am an Irishman;" and the next instant, turning to a servant, he added, "Po-ta, if you please." When this thoroughly low-bred Irishism came out I could not help smiling, and caught at the same moment the eye of a lady opposite, who seemed greatly amused. In a few minutes after, she said, evidently for the purpose of having another trial of the Anglo-Irishman, "Pray, may I help you to a potato?"—the killing reply was, "Pon my hona' I neva' ate pittatis at all at all."

This was too much for the lady, as well as for myself; so we laughed together. The Irish gentleman, however, perfectly unconscious of the cause.

Having subsequently mentioned the circumstance to an "Irishman in London," who does not fear to acknowledge his country, he said, "O! the feeling descends lower still—the better class of labourers attempt to speak so that they shall not be known." Continuing, he said, "A porter in our establishment, who is an Irishman, came to me the other day, and speaking very confidentially, whispered, 'Sure now, Misthur —, you wouldn't guess be me taulk, thit I wus an Irishmin.'" "Certainly not," said my friend, laughing, when the fellow replied, quite happily, "Whi-thin that's right any how."

[14]

Who will excuse the man in a better grade who panders to prejudices, and not only forgets the country of his birth, but aids, *by consent*, to let her remain in misery? But must we not excuse the low and helpless, who are driven by such prejudices to keep themselves in existence by following the example of those above them? who, thus, have double sin to answer for; *their own*, and that which their dastardly conduct creates. Still, why should the unhappy labourer who feels that the tone of his voice keeps bread from his mouth, not wish it changed?

"Move on," said a policeman to a poor Irishman, who was gazing with astonishment at a shop window in the Strand, his eyes and mouth open equally, with intensity of admiration. But Paddy neither heard nor moved. "Move on, Sir, I say," came in a voice of command delivered into his very ear. "*Arrah, ph-why?*" said the poor fellow, looking up with wonder, and still retaining his place. "*You must move on, you Irish vagabond,*" now roared the policeman, "*and not stop the pathway,*" accompanying the "must" with a push of no very gentle nature. Paddy did move, for he could not help it; but as he turned away from the sight which was yielding him harmless enjoyment, to the forgetfulness of misery for the moment, and perhaps to create in him desires for better things, and give him greater energy to work and labour for them; he was rudely branded, with a mark of debasement, and I could see in the poor fellow's eye and gait, though labourer he was, pride and degradation contending for the mastery; but the latter conquered, and he did "move on," almost admitting by the act that he was "AN IRISH VAGABOND."

[15]

The position of the lower class of Irish in England is evidently not to be envied, but what is it in Ireland?

In the paper annexed, on "*The Potato Truck System of Ireland,*" will be found the ground-work of the misery of the peasantry. The whole recompense for their labour is the potato. If it fail, they starve. In summer's heat and winter's cold the potato is their only food; water their only drink. They hunger from labour and exertion—the potato satisfies their craving appetite. Sickness comes, and they thirst from fever—water quenches their burning desire. Nature overcomes disease, and they long for food to re-invigorate their frame. What get they?—the potato! The child sinks in weakness towards its grave. What holds it betwixt life and death?—the potato. It is the Alpha and Omega of their existence. A blessing granted by Providence to man, but made by man a curse to his fellow-beings. From what causes come the charges made, and made with truth, against the Irish peasant, of "*indolence*" and "*filth in and about their habitations?*"—One and all from that dreadful system, the "*potato truck!*"

[16]

Tourists tell that "*the cabin of the Irish peasant must be approached through heaps of manure at either side, making it necessary to step over pool after pool, to reach the entrance.*" This is no more than fact, but the cause should be told too.

From the detail of the truck-system, it will be seen that the unfortunate peasant is paid for his labour by land to cultivate the potatoes which sustain his existence, and these potatoes cannot be effectively grown without manure. His cabin is usually situate on some road-side, his potato-garden rarely with it, and the only spot he possesses, upon which he can collect manure to obtain food for himself and family throughout the year, is the little space reserved before his door. He has nothing else, it may be said, in the world, but that manure. It is that which is to yield sustenance to his family, and if he have it not, they starve. If put outside the precincts of his holding it is lost to him, and that which he collects scrap after scrap from the road side, or elsewhere—that upon which his life actually depends, is too precious to be risked beyond his care. Why should he be blamed then for the apparent "filth" which surrounds it? Whether is it his fault, or that of the system which has driven him to this degrading necessity? Not his, surely!

[17]

Then he is described as to be seen "supporting his door-frame, and smoking his 'dhudeen,'^[1] while he should be at work." It is true; but whence his seeming idleness? The truck system again! He is engaged by the year to some farmer, and is bound to do his work, for which he gets his potato land; but the farmer is not bound, as he should be, to give him continuous labour throughout the year. And many a day, and half-day, and quarter-day is cut off his year's labour, when the weather, or the farmer's absence, or his *mighty* will and pleasure, may make him think it fit to stop the work. When this occurs, and it is sadly frequent, it is impossible that the poor

labourer can either seek or find a half, or even a whole day's labour. He has no garden, or patch of ground upon which he might expend with profit his leisure, or his extra time; he has nothing to occupy him; nor can he make an occupation perhaps, for he has not the most trifling means to obtain even lime to whitewash his cabin. Then, if he do smoke his "dhudeen, leaning against his door-way," where so proper for him to be, as with his wife and children? And is the so-named "weed of peacefulness" sought for by the highest in the land as a soothing enjoyment; by those who have but to wish for and obtain every luxury and blessing that wealth can give—is the scanty use of the meanest portion of it, improper or slothful in him who knows no single blessing but his wife and family? But it cannot be fairly deemed so. The custom is universal, and the Irish peasant, declared by the Legislature it may be said, to endure more privation than the peasant of any other country in Europe, ought not to be set down as *slothful*, because, to soothe his care, he smokes his "dhudeen."

[18]

Again, we are told by tourists of the fearful fact, that men, women, children, a cow, a horse, a pig, congregate together at night in one cabin; *one bed for all!* How dreadful the truth—for it is true to the letter. But we are not told the cause; on the contrary, subsequent commentary ascribes the fact, in no gentle terms, to the "slothful, filthy habits of the people." Yet, when such realities exist, it is not wonderful that they who so patiently bear, should be set down as the producers of their own misery—still they are not only not so, but they have no power to release themselves from the thralldom which sinks them day by day deeper in degradation.

[19]

Once more I return to the truck system of the potato. If 4,000,000 of the people of Ireland have sustained life, and barely, on that root alone—many and many a day without even salt—how well may it be understood that they have not means to buy proper clothing. In fact, their only hope for this, is on "*the woman*," as they express, whose sole dependance has been on eggs from her few hens—knitting stockings, in some localities, in others, spinning. But the numerous calls for family necessities swallow up these little means; and it may with truth be said, that except a single blanket, or a coarse rug, there is rarely to be found any thing in their cabins as covering for the night. The clothes of all are clubbed together to do the office of the blanket and the counterpane. Then, think of the cabins they live in. In one county alone, Mayo, there are 31,084 composed of one apartment only, without glass windows, and without chimneys; and the door so frail and badly made, that every blast finds its way through it. The floors are *mud*, the beds straw or ferns strewed sometimes on stones raised above the ground. The father and mother sleep in the centre, the children at each side, and the pig and horse, or goat, as may be, at one end. How dreadful it is to contemplate that such should be a fact existing in a Christian country—and worse, that this most fearful reality, which arises from the people's helpless misery, should be made a charge of "filthy habit" in place of being urged as the ground-work for the perfect change of a system which could allow so crying an evil. It is a truth, that men, *women* and children, pigs and cattle, lie in one bed!—but what causes it? Their hopeless, helpless, poverty. They have not a sufficiency of clothes to cover them at night in winter; *and if they did not bring in the pig and cattle to create warmth in their cabins, they must perish of cold.* This is the cause, and the only cause, and the true proof is, no tourist will pretend to tell you it occurs in summer.

[20]

Having now seen what the lower class of Irish endure, it may be well to look into their natural character, and ascertain what is the cause of that endurance—what are their virtues, and what their vices?

That "endurance under privation, greater than that of any country in Europe," is the true characteristic of the peasantry, cannot be questioned, particularly after being declared by the high authority of the Devon Commission. That it is innate in their character, is evident. They believe that "whatever is, is best"—not as fatalists; for under the most severe suffering, you will hear them say, "Well, shure, it's a marcy 'twasn't worse any how." "Well, I'm shure, I might be contint, bekase it might be double as bad." And every sentence ends—"And God is good." They have also a certain natural *spring* (lessening daily) which upholds them, and they *try* to make the best of every thing as it comes.

[21]

"Jack," said I, some years since, to a handy "hedge carpenter," in the county of Wexford, "why did you not come last night to do the job I wanted? It is done now, and you have lost it." "Whi-thin, that's my misforthin any how—an be-dad 'twas a double misforthin too, for I wus dooin nothin else thin devartin meeself." "*Diverting yourself*," said I, "and not minding your business?" "Bee-dad it's too thru; but I'll tell your hanur how it happened. I wus workin fur the last three days fur my lan'lady, which av coorse goes agin the rint; and whin I cum home yisterday evenin, throth, barrin I tuck the bit from the woman and childre, sorra a taste I could get—so sis I, Biddy jewel, I'm mighty sick intirely, an I cant ate any thing. Well, she coxed me—but I didn't. So afther sittin a while, I bethought me that there wus to be a piper at the Crass-roads, an I was thin gettin morthul hungry; so sis I t'meeself *I'll go dance the hunger off*—and so I did:—an that wus the way I wus divartin meeself." Now, I have no doubt, that many an Irishman has *danced* the thought of hunger away as well as Jack. But the following incident will prove that the innate feeling of the people is to make the best of their miseries.

It was, I think, in the winter of 1840, a fortnight of most severe weather set in at Dublin. I had suffered in London from "Murphy's coldest day" in 1838, and thought it was in reality the coldest I had ever felt; but 1840 would have won the prize if left to his Majesty of Russia to decide the question. In addition to a black frost, there came with it a biting, piercing, easterly wind, which seemed to freeze and wither every thing it came upon. Pending this infliction (for I confess I suffered under sciatica as well as the easterly wind), I left home rather early one morning,

[22]

muffled in two coats, a cloak, muffler, "bosom friend," worsted wrists, and woolsey gloves; and yet as I closed the door, I half repented that I had faced the blast.

Not twenty yards from my dwelling, I overtook a little creature, a boy of about eight or nine years old, dressed in—of all the cold things in the world—a *hard* corduroy habiliment, intended to have fitted closely to him; but his wretched, frozen-up form, seemed to have retreated from the dress, and sunk within itself. I believe he had not another stitch upon him. His little hands were buried into his pockets, almost up to the elbows, seeking some warmth from his body; and he crept on before me, one of the most miserable pictures of wretchedness my eye ever rested on.

As I contemplated him, I could not but contrast my own blessings with his misery. I had doubted whether I should leave the comforts of my home, although invigorated by wholesome, perhaps luxurious food, and I was clothed to *excess*; while the being before me, likely had not tasted food that day, and was *barely covered*. Such were my thoughts; and I had just said to myself, we know not, or at least, appreciate not, a tithe of the blessings we possess, when that little creature read me a lesson I shall recollect for my life. He shewed me that *he* could bear up against his ills, and make light of them too.

[23]

At the moment I speak of, I saw one hand slowly drawn from his pocket, and in effort to relieve it from its torpor, he twisted and turned it until it seemed to have life again. Next came forth the other hand, and it underwent the same operation, until both appeared to possess some power. Then he shrugged up one shoulder and the other, seeking to bring life there also; and at length flinging his arms two or three times round, he gave a jump off the ground, and exclaimed in an accent half pain, half joy, "*Hurrah! for the could mornins!*"—and away he went scampering up the street before me, keeping up the life within him by that innate natural power of endurance I have described, evidently with a determination to make the best of his suffering, and not sink under misfortune. What a noble trait of character—but how little appreciated!

With such a ground-work to act upon, what might not these people be made? and that they have intellect of almost a superior order, cannot be questioned. Their ready replies alone prove it; and their usual success any where but in their own country, tells it truly. Some years ago I stood talking to an English gentleman on particular business at a ferry slip in Dublin, waiting for the boat. A boy, also waiting for it, several times came up to shew some books he had for sale, and really annoyed my friend by importunity, who suddenly turned round and exclaimed, "Get away, you scamp, or I shall give you a kick that will send you across the river." In an instant the reply came—"Whi-thin thank yur hanur fur thit same—fur 'twill just save me a ha-pinny." They are quick to a degree—and have great activity and capability for labour and effort, *if but fed*, which may be seen by every Englishman who looks and thinks. The coal-whippers of the Thames, the hod-men, or mason's labourers of London, the paver's labourers, and such like, almost all are Irishmen. But they must be fed, or they cannot labour as they do here. Treat them kindly, confide in them, and be it for good or evil; I mean to reward or punish, *never break a promise*, and you may do as you please with them. My own experience is extensive; but one who is now no more, my nearest relative, had forty years of trial, and he accomplished by Irish hands alone, in the midst of the outbreak of '97 and '98, as Inspector-General of the Light-houses of Ireland, the building of a work, which perhaps more than rivals the far-famed Eddystone,—namely, the South Rock Light-house three miles from the land, on the north-east coast of Ireland,—every stone of which was laid by Irish workmen. And to the honour of the people be it spoken, when the rebellion broke out it was known that a large stock of blasting powder and lead lay at the works on the shore; yet not a single ounce of one or the other was taken. It was known, too, that their employer was then engaged in the command of a yeomanry brigade, formed for the defence of the east side of Dublin; still his *lead* and *powder* lay safely in the north of Ireland. But more extraordinary still, after the battle of Ballinahinch, where the rebels were routed, his yacht was taken by a party of them to make their escape to England; and lest any ill should befall it, when they arrived at Whitehaven they drew lots for three to deliver it up to the collector of the port, and state to whom it belonged. They were immediately arrested, as indeed they must have expected, and with great difficulty were their lives afterwards saved.

[24]

[25]

I could relate several similar instances which occurred to others; but I shall only state one more, as occurring to a defenceless woman. My maternal grandmother occupied at the time of that rebellion the castle of Dungulph, in the county Wexford, the family residence. It was an old stronghold regularly fortified and surrounded by a moat, with a drawbridge; and when she left it to take refuge in the fort of Duncannon, with the other gentry of the county, it was immediately taken possession of by a force of rebels from the county Kilkenny, as a most valuable place of defence, &c. They remained in possession for about a fortnight, and during that time killed twenty of the sheep found in the demesne. At the expiration of the period, the rebels of the neighbourhood, who had been in the interim engaged at the battle of Ross, returned, forced the others to leave the castle, and when my relative came back to her residence, she found that twenty sheep had been brought from another part of the country, and placed with her own in the demesne; which on being traced by their marks, were discovered to belong to a county Kilkenny grazier, the county from whence the rebel party had come; thus the sheep were brought from the same place the rebels had come from,—it was supposed, as an act of retaliation. I should add, too, that while these occurrences took place, the heir to the property was engaged in the defence of Ross, where many of his own tenantry were slain or wounded, as rebels, by the military under his command.

[26]

Naturally the mind of the Irish peasant is good, honourable, and grateful—but it has been deteriorated by miseries and neglect; and is being so, more and more daily *at home*; while, when

they go abroad they seem to inherit all their original good qualities.

It is a fact too, known to all who know them, that when they settle in England as labourers, they almost invariably share their earnings with their relations at home. The remittances from London alone to Ireland amount to many thousands yearly. There is no possible means of ascertaining the sum; but I know numerous instances myself, and it may be judged of from the facts which appear in the following statements, recently published in the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle*, shewing the amount which comes yearly from America. [27]

"A curious fact is presented in a letter from a correspondent at New York, showing that it is not to England alone that the Irish proprietors are largely indebted for the support of their poor. It has generally been understood that the Irish emigrants to the United States have always remitted very fully of their hard earnings to their relatives at home, but most persons will be surprised to hear the extent of this liberality. 'A few days since,' says our correspondent, 'I called upon the different houses in New York who are in the daily practice of giving small drafts on Ireland, from five dollars upwards, and requested from them an accurate statement of the amount they had thus remitted for Irish labourers, male and female, within the last sixty days, and also for the entire year 1846. Here is the result—"Total amount received in New York from Irish labourers, male and female, during the months of November and December, 1846, 175,000 dollars, or 35,000*l.* sterling; ditto, for the year 1846, 808,000 dollars, or 161,600*l.* sterling.'" These remittances are understood to average 3*l.* to 4*l.* each draft, and they are sent to all parts of Ireland, and by every packet. 'From year to year,' our correspondent adds, 'they go on increasing with the increase of emigration, and they prove most conclusively that when Irishmen are afforded the opportunity of making and saving money, they are industrious and thrifty. I wish these facts could be given to the world to show the rich what the poor have done for suffering Ireland, and especially that the Irish landlords might be made aware of what their former tenants are doing for their present ones. I can affirm on my own responsibility that the amount stated is not exaggerated, and also that from Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans, similar remittances are made, though not to the same amount.' With regard to the feeling in America upon the calamity under which the Irish people are at present suffering, the same writer observes: 'Collections are being made for their relief, but the distress is so general that our benevolent men have been almost afraid to attempt anything; they think the British Government and Irish landowners alone competent to the task.'"—*Times*, 3rd of Feb. 1847. [28]

"AMERICAN SYMPATHY.—We do not think we can better express the sympathy which is now so universally felt in the United States, for the sufferings of the people of this country, than by stating that *immediately after the news brought by the Cambria had been promulgated, 1,500 passages were paid for by residents in New York, into the house of George Sherlock and Company, for the transmission of their friends in Ireland to the land of plenty.* Through the same house, by the last packet, there have arrived remittances to the amount of 1,300*l.*, in sums varying from 2*l.* to 10*l.*"—*Dublin Evening Post*.—*Morning Chronicle*, 5th of April, 1847.

As to the vices^[2] of the Irish peasant, a few years since they might have been set down as three—whiskey drinking, cupidity, and combination. The first exists no longer, and if we seek for proof of good intention and desires in the people, this gives it forcibly. Having food of but one kind, and that possessing no stimulating power, nor capability of imparting grateful warmth, such as the "brose" of the Scotch, or the soup of the continental peasant; and the climate being cold and humid to excess, they *naturally*, it may be said, used the only stimulant they could obtain. And if we think how anxiously *we* seek such, under the influence of wet and cold, (we, who have all comforts and all varieties and luxuries of food)—can it be wondered that the Irish peasant, who working for the day in a winter's mist, his clothes saturated through, and none to change when he returned to his wretched cabin, should have been tempted to take this stimulating poison? But, by the gentle guidance of one good and great man, they have been led from the evil, receiving no substitute for what they relinquished; getting nothing in return, they gave up their only luxury at his bidding. What may not be done with such a people? [29]

But the peasant has two vices which still continue—cupidity and desire for combination. Strange that amongst all the evils laid to his charge the first has been passed over. It exists to a great extent, and in place of being reckless as to money, he too eagerly grasps at it when the opportunity offers; hence the combinations which have at different times occurred in the accomplishment of public and also private works. He mars his object by his ignorance. This has arisen principally from the unfortunate frequency of public undertakings, caused by famines or distress. In any such case he took it, to use his own expression, as a "good luck," and sought by any means to make the most of it while it lasted. Then, in private works, when he imagined a necessity existed for their accomplishment, he sought to make the most by demanding higher wages, and forcing the well-inclined to join in the demand. It is a fact that he suffers under *natural cupidity*, and its evils have been increased by the circumstances named, the effects of which will require care to overcome, if his regeneration be attempted; and, perhaps, under all [30]

circumstances, it cannot be wondered at. The opportunity to obtain money for his labour so rarely occurred, that when it did he could not resist the temptation of getting as much as possible to provide against the day which he knew would soon come again, when he would be left to the potato alone; and on this point he will require to be led and taught as in other things. But the Irish peasant is, in fact, now in that position which it is fearful to contemplate. From the nature of his food alone he has been long retrograding in physical capability, and, of course, energy of mind. It is impossible that beings living entirely upon one description of food, no matter what it be, can exist in strength and healthfulness. But if the food be of that nature which, used as the potato is, tends to produce evil from the *quantity* necessary to be consumed, in order to give to the body bare nourishment to uphold existence, it must be evident that the very *quantity* alone will produce listlessness and want of energy, while the system itself receives scarcely enough to uphold its vital powers.

My own memory (and I am not so old as to count half centuries) shows an evident change in the general physical appearance and capacity of the peasant labourer. He is not the same, even within twenty years; and to those who recollect fifty, the alteration must be painfully great. [31]

A little thought will shew it could not be otherwise. The potato, eaten in the way it is, simply boiled, and as I have again and again pointed out, *without aught else with it but salt!* and not even that sometimes, contains but little more than *two pounds weight* of that description of nutriment (gluten, or animal matter) which is essential to uphold strength, in fact to re-create bone and muscle in the system, for every *hundred pounds weight*, the unfortunate being condemned to live upon it solely, is obliged to gorge himself with, in order to sustain his animal powers.

The average quantity of potatoes an adult peasant labourer consumes in the day is about ten pounds—his meal being usually a quarter of a stone each at breakfast, dinner, and supper; thus he receives into his system every twenty-four hours, about 3 ounces of that which is essential to give him power to perform his functions of labour. In other words, he eats in that time but 3 ounces of the representative of *meat*. What would the railroad "Navy" of England say—what the farm labourer—if either was doled out 3 ounces of beef or mutton per day to work upon? and if he seemed *listless* and unenergetic, was then taunted with the name of "*indolent, reckless, good-for-naught.*" Still, my unhappy countrymen have received this quantum of food, with submission for ages; and with it received those degrading appellations, as a fitting reward for their "*endurance.*" [32]

Now, medical research has fully established that the quantum of animal matter, be it obtained from vegetable or else, actually necessary to be taken into the system merely to reproduce the bone and muscle worn away by the general labourer in his day's work, is 5 ounces! It cannot therefore be doubted, that the Irish labourer, *in Ireland*, is and has been deteriorated in physical capability, and consequently, mental energy, by want of proper nutrition.

Such has been his position for ages; and my firm belief is, that his sufferings would not have been so long borne, but for the hope which has been, from time to time, kept alive in him. Alas, how delusively! In "Emancipation"—he was taught to see deliverance from his miseries—mayhap, remission of his rent. In "Repeal"—"plenty of work and plenty of money; and the cattle kept at home, and the pigs to be eaten by himself, in place of *the Saxon.*"

Unhappy designation, and unhappy delusion, which have held the countries asunder, in place of being one and the same in all things. But he has lived upon that hope, until now, when it has vanished from him for ever. And with his hope, the food that kept life barely in him has gone too. He is bereft of all that holds existence and soul together, and sees nought before him, even if he do live, but ceaseless struggle and ceaseless misery. Can such a being aid himself? No more can he, than the invalid, weakened and powerless from sickness. Aid must be given him by those who have strength and knowledge, or he will sink, if not into death, to that which will be worse, —*hopeless, helpless degradation.* [33]

And will Ireland then be "the right arm of England?" No; she will be the blot upon her noble scutcheon—mayhap the "millstone" to sink her in that ocean over which she now so proudly and gloriously rules.

It has been proved that above 4,000,000 of the peasantry of Ireland live upon the potato, which they receive as payment for their labour—about, or nearly *one half* of the population of the country, and from whom should, and now does spring its almost entire wealth. Their hands, with God's permission and will, produce the means to feed themselves; to feed the remaining half of the population, and to give to England many millions' worth yearly; which supports the aristocracy of Ireland, and pays the taxes to the nation. Humanity and justice, then, are not the only claims upon us; self-interest, nay, self-preservation demand, that they who yield us food and comfort, should have ample food and comfort themselves—that they who aid to clothe us should have at least sufficient covering to protect them from the rigour and humidity of the climate in which they labour—that they should have houses fitted for the inhabitants of a civilized country, not wigwams worse than those of the savage—that they should be taught and led and fostered till they understand and can practise at home the arts of proper industry—to give not only blessings to themselves but the nation at large. Then would Ireland be in truth "England's right arm;" but more, she would have her heart, which now lies open, yearning to receive and give affection. I know my country and its feelings well—I mean *its people's feelings*; and there exists not elsewhere more genuine gratitude than in its heart. Causes and circumstances already explained have encased it in icy doubt towards England; but now England has proved her heartfelt pity; not [34]

alone her money, but the kind and high and noble-minded have risked their lives to distribute food and help and covering to the wretched beings as they lingered between life and death. And I know the people not, if I may not vouch, as a man and Christian, that every mouthful given (not through public works), every comfort yielded, every gentle and kind and consoling word uttered, is indelibly impressed upon their feelings, and will live there. Seize, then, the opportunity to amalgamate as one, Ireland with England's people. Fear not the idle stories of the past; look but upon the present, and think of the glorious future which the guidance and help of England may accomplish. England has laboured for, and won her glories by her labour. Teach Ireland, and she will win glories too—not for herself alone, but for the general weal. Lead her kindly now, and she will rush to your foremost ranks in the hour of danger—not *pray* for that hour, that it may give her chance of rescue from her misery.

[35]

Shall I conclude, and rest in hope of general sympathy? No; although it has magnificently proved itself.

History gives some thousand facts to shew that man is led to good by woman; deprived of her gentle guidance towards that good, he usually sinks to evil. Unchecked by the example of her patience, gentleness, and faith, he often revels in thoughtless wantonness,—while, resting under the beaming influence of her love and sympathy, he melts and is moulded into a form approaching her own. Happily for Great Britain, this peaceful, blissful influence sheds its beams over almost all men's destinies, hence its public virtues, its private happiness; and hence the cause of my present appeal *to the Ladies of Great Britain!*

Pardon me, fair Ladies! if I approach you on that which may be deemed "a matter of business;" but I am not of those who consider woman's mind unfitted for the toils and difficulties of life and only made for its pleasures—far the reverse. Nor shall I yet approach you under the sweet incense of flattery, said to be a *cloud* which gives to you a grateful odour—I believe it not. Nor shall I, to tell you of the prowess of man in his deeds of arms; nor of his glories midst the slain or dying; for, thanks to God! the heart of an Englishwoman shudders at the thought. Man shall not be my theme. I come to tell you of the ills and sufferings of unhappy *Women!*—beings like to yourselves, in gentle and good feelings, though poor—like to yourselves in love and affection, though wretched—Woman, in truth, kind, affectionate, and good; blessings to their own—Woman in all things, but in that which is her due and right in Great Britain—*care and respect for her sex and virtues*. Those whose cause I plead are blessed with as pure and spotless bosoms as your own—though one may be cased in russet or in rags, the other enshrouded in lace—and they die, not through the horrors of war, or of plague, but of starvation and of cold.

[36]

In my description of the cottage of the general peasantry, you will have seen, and I doubt not recollect the fact, that upon some 2,000,000 of your sex in Ireland is entailed the degradation of passing the hours of her rest with the family, all in one resting-place, and getting warmth by being forced "to herd with the beast of the field." Think of this indignity and say shall it longer exist?

To you is due the final accomplishment of one of the noblest acts of England—the abolition of West Indian slavery. The battle was commenced by man, and fought manfully; but without your aid he could not have conquered as he did. Your generous voices cheered him on, and he became invincible. And so will it ever be in Great Britain. O! give but the same aid now, and you will accomplish at least an equal good.

[37]

If of the aristocracy, tell to those whose halls you adorn, that the peasant *woman* of Ireland can only obtain warmth enough to save her from perishing, and give her sleep, by herding with her pig! Say, *Woman sleeps thus!* and ask, *should it be?* Mayhap when Woman in her loveliness and power thus pleads for Woman in her misery and poverty, the chord may be struck which will proclaim the *sin*, and produce its abolishment.

If the mansion of the wealthy be guided or blessed by thy residence, proclaim the fearful fact, and whispering ask, "For what does God give wealth?" The answer may not come at first, or for a time; but whisper again—and 'tis said that angels' whispers fill the air with charity and love. So, perhaps, will thine—and wealth may at thy bidding aid to rescue Woman from such degradation.

If the middle class (from which England's greatness springs), claims thee as its own, tell to all around the truth which tells of Britain's shame—that *the Irishwoman is forced to herd with cattle!* Plead, and say—Am I not a woman, and is she not my sister? And by degrees thy pleadings will strike man's heart, for the thought will come upon him—"Oh! that one I love should fall to such a lot," and his voice will join thine in truthfulness and charity, to win others to the task of rooting out the evil.

[38]

If thou art poor, I need not plead. The poor feel for the poor, and spare even somewhat from their poverty. Their hearts can tell the pangs of poverty, and pity fills them with love and charity and regret that poverty makes them powerless. But still thou hast a *voice*. Raise it, and cry shame on those who may, yet will not save the nation from the stain of this deep indignity to *woman!*

And how, you may ask, is this to be done? Most simply. Ireland possesses wealth in soil—in fuel—in minerals—in fisheries—in water-power—in short, in all things fitted to be developed by the great and wonderful business capability, knowledge, and capital of England; but the latter has feared without just reason—has been acted upon by groundless prejudices and dreads, so as to

prevent that business intercourse and mercantile enterprise, for which Ireland offers such beneficial opening; and she has been left to herself, to anarchy, misrule, and neglect, until she has sunk into pauperism. In a word, let England but embark a just portion of her enterprise and capital, and talent in Ireland, in place of *seeking* for opportunity to do so abroad. In doing this, she will employ the people in useful occupations highly profitable, and in proportion as such be done will Ireland's poverty vanish, and Great Britain's wealth increase. *Ask for this;—and that the peasant labourer shall be paid in money, not potatoes. And if you ask from your heart, you will succeed.*

Then, fair pleaders for my countrywomen!—then your labours may cease—for even those who possess *your* affections do not, nor cannot, value them more highly; nor those who hold you in their hearts do not love more truly, than the peasant of Ireland. Your labours may cease—for it will then be his labour of love to guard and protect his own from insult and indignity. And as you rest after your glorious victory, your pillow mayhap will not even crease by the pressure of the fair cheek upon it, so light and so sweet will be the sleep to follow so kind and good a work.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Short tobacco-pipe.
- [2] See Comparative Statement of the Crimes of England and Ireland, in "*The Appeal for the Irish Peasantry*."

Transcriber's Note: Minor typographical errors have been corrected without note. Dialect spellings have been retained. Punctuation has been standardised. The following significant amendments have been made to the original text:

Page 17, added 'that' to 'When this occurs ... it is impossible *that* the poor labourer can ...'

Page 39, removed additional 'you' from 'And if you ask from your heart, you *you* will succeed.'

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