

IT NEVER CAN HAPPEN AGAIN

A nearer approach to an ideal was the coal, which came behind a horse, and sold itself for a shillin' a hundred, more or less, accordin' as the season. The scales, they'd weigh down to twenty-eight pound, if you didn't want to have capital lying idle; but then it was a slight easier to be cheated at that, and you could always bring two coal-scuttles, and if one of 'em was wore through, why, a stout hit of brown paper, coverin' in the hole, and there you were! Because the dropping of fragments of coal on the pavement was not only wasteful, hut giv' them hoys something to aim with. Ammunition was scarce, owing to the way the road was kep'; similar, them hoys took every opportunity.

There were two other vehicles that were known to Tallack Street. One came every day with a drum, and sold vegetables. The proprietor had made himself hoarse, many years since, with shouting about the freshness of his stock between the outbreaks on the drum, and, as life advanced and his lung-power declined, the drum-performances encroached on the oratory. This suited a large majority of the inhabitants, conveying a sense of Life—was, in fact thought almost equal to the Play—by those who had been to it—and was so appreciated by Lizarann and Bridget-ticks that they would petition to be allowed to stand in contact with the drum to feel the noise inside of 'em like.

The other vehicle was, however, the climax of the Joy of Living in Tallack Street, only it demanded a 'apeny a time, and you had to save up. But if you could afford it, it was rapture. How describe it? Well, it was drawn by a donkey, and went round and round and round. You yourself, and your friends, sat on truncated chairs at the end of radial spokes rotating horizontally on a hub, which played melancholy tunes, and you could tell what they were by looking, because there was the ticket of it, every time a new tune come. But the execution supplied no clue, or very little, to its identity.

Tallack Street, as you will have inferred, was a cul-de-sac, and therefore very popular as a playground with the children of the neighbourhood. It ended in a dead wall, formerly enclosing an extinct factory, which had survived