



THE POET'S DECADENCE.

STIGGINS.—“Well, Buskin, how did your tour of the Provinces pan out?”

BUSKIN.—“Poor; played to empty houses right along. Fact is, old man, Shakspeare is losing his grip on the people.”

CORRESPONDENT RAFFERTY.

HE ADVOCATES A RETURN TO FIRST PRINCIPLES.

I SAY, GRIP:

Here we are again—as the fox said to the hin-roost. Seein’ that yiv tuck me advice an’ dispinsed wid the onmannerly servises av Terrence Finnegan—bad scan to him!—I’ve had more faith in ye. I always rispict a man that ’ll follow me idays and accipt me counsel in the shpirit in which it is given. Sometimes, bedad, when I talk to a man, undher the influence av sphrit, and he won’t agree wid me, I’m in for batin’ the houl hide av him black an’ blue, there an’ thin.

That’s the consarvitive ilimint in me, GRIP dear! That’s the instinct that taches a man to be contint wid what he knows an’ what he is—an’ make others belave the self-same docthrine. Signs on it, here am I to-day, Denis Rafferty, at your command, widout a shtick or a ha’porth more to me name—barrin’ five childher—than I had when I first set foot on the shores av Ameriky, tin years ago come nixt sphring.

I was born a Consarvative; an’ me forefathers before me—rist their bones!—ivery mother’s son av thim was a Consarvative, an’ shtuck to it through thick an’ thin. What was good enough for thim ought to be good enough for me, sez I. So, faith, I cling to ould times, to ould shtyles, to ould frinds, to ould notions an—troth, right y’are, darlin’, for well I know what’s on the tip o’ yer tongue—to ould clothes.

I’m a belaver in first principles, me boy; and here, on this shpot, I rache out a fisht o’ frindship to the noble editor av the London *Free Priss*, whose well-constructed articles I often have the plisure av radin’.

Its down on murtherin’ gas he is, for wan thing. “Hire an attindint to put out the gas,” sez he, “and save the lives av poor divills in hotels who don’t know how to handle the haythenish shtuff.” “Or,” he goes on to say:—

“Better still, let candles be used as formerly.”

More power to yer pin, *Free Priss*! sez Denis Rafferty. To Bagdad wid modern glims, whin our fathers had lashions av light from innocent, undesavin’ candles!

An’ sure its not only in matthers av light, but av hate, an’ motion, an’ the devil knows what all, we are gallopin’ to destruction in this nineteenth century av civilization. “Civilization,” indade! “Divilization” sez I!

Luk at yer locomotives smashin’ intil aich other ivery day in the wake! Would we be havin’ this shlaughter av the ould stage-coach was shtill on the road?

Mind how the shtame engines bust an’ murther right an’ left! Did we have it so whin we sailed our ships, did our thrashin wid a flail, worked our looms wid our hands an’ fate, an’, ginerally shpakin, did all our jobs be mane strength?

Think av the ilicthricity, the hydraulic prissure, an’ all the schames and devices to prevint a man airnin’ an honest day’s pay be the shweat av his brow, an’ the shpine av his back!

Faix, they’d be thryin’ hod-carryin’ be shtame, only they know honest min like meself would rise in our might an’ shwape the thing off the face av the airth! An’ so I say to the *Free Priss*, kape at it, avic! Down wid innovations an’ back to first principles!

What do we want wid banks, whin ould shtockings are shtarin’ us in the face on ivery hand?

Bad cess to yer hevy-dhraft horses, wid the rack o’ donkeys becoming extarminated.

Ould Nick take the patent raypers an’ thrashers, an’ let min handle the harvist!

Be off wid yer coal-ile shtoves, an’ give back our dear ould shpit!

Out av that wid yer lager beer, and let us have a jug av mountain-jew that niver saw an excise label on the barrel!

“First Principles” I’m fightin’ for, an’ begob, I’ll fight for thim while there’s e’er a bit o’ life in me ould shape.

DENIS RAFFERTY.

ONE OF JIM’S JOKES.

It would take a volume to record the many “good things” which the late James Fahey used to deliver spontaneously among his friends and newspaper associates—bright sayings and keen witticisms that would have added lustre to the humorous literature of the day had they but found their way into print, but which have perished with him, poor fellow!

I remember one funny story that went the rounds of “the boys” at the time, and made every crowd roar to whom it was recounted.

Jim, who was editing the *Evening Canadian*, was invited to a small affair at the Rossin, but failed to attend. Some of the fellows next day were telling him what a good time he had missed.

“I’m sorry, of course,” said the genial Irishman, “but the fact is, boys, I really didn’t have black clothes to go in. The only garment I could have donned, in contradistinction to my unstudied every-day attire, was an ould ulster; and, as I didn’t care to dress up in that ulster and make all the guests who didn’t happen to have on ulsters feel jealous and bad, why, I ambled home and took to my bed. It is quite true I might have announced myself as the Man from Ulster, but it would have occasioned me too conspicuous and painful notoriety. My native instinct, you know, is to be humble and get in my two columns of stuff a day without any libel-suits.” T.