

separable. I saw before me that king of men and tribune of the people standing in all the majesty of his manly strength and beauty; his very physique bearing witness to the vigor of his brain and the power of his large and tender heart. I could see him standing before me, strong as a tower that "stands four square to every wind that blows." I asked myself, How did that strong man come to die? I found that he died of a broken heart. He was struck down by the great Irish famine of 1846-47.

"His enpierced breast

Sharp sorrows did in thousand pieces rive"

at the sight of the people he loved with such fierce tenderness wasting away in thousands through starvation and disease. I thought it a wonderful thing to contemplate so sturdy a man, one so fearless, being prostrated, and wholly broken down by the sorrows of his people. Then I asked myself how came it that O'Connell was so overcome by the great calamity of the famine of 1846-7? And I answered myself: because he had an intimate knowledge of the peasantry of Ireland, and therefore he loved them passionately; and because he had witnessed with his eyes the appalling sufferings of those he loved. Could I, I thought, only get some knowledge of that people, something like what he had, could I but fix my eyes on their distress, then I should be able to weep with him, and love them and assist them all I could. I then thought over in my mind all I knew of that wonderful people, especially of the peasantry. I remember their singular generosity of character, their courage, their humanity. I remember what Curran said: "The hospitality of other countries is a matter of necessity or convenience—in savage nations of the first, in polished of the latter—but the hospitality of an Irishman is not the running account of the posted and ledgered courtesies as in other countries; it springs like all his qualities, his faults, his virtues directly from the heart. The heart of the Irishman is by nature bold, and he confides; it is tender, and he loves; it is generous, and he gives; it is social, and he is hospitable." So much for Irishmen in general, and from long personal experience, I can vouch for its truth. But what about the peasant class in particular? I remember a pas-

sage from Gilos, who had an intimate knowledge of this remarkable class. He says: "The peasant in Ireland exercises a peculiar and sacred order of hospitality strange to the nobility and wealthy. Such hospitality is mentioned in the Gospel—hospitality, which recounts amongst its guests, the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and which has its reward in heaven. These classes in Ireland had not merely a share in the humble man's feast; they had also their pittance out of his scarcity. Daily he divided with some of them his food, and nightly he shared with some of them his roof. None more than the humble Irish seemed to keep constantly in mind that Christ was supplicant in each person of the destitute; and well did their treatment of the destitute anticipate that last address: 'I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me.' How beautiful, how surpassingly touching, I thought within myself is not all this! And then I remembered reading in some speech of John Bright's that the Irish in America alone, during the space of sixteen short years, I think it was 1848 and 1864, sent back over the waters to their friends and relatives at home thirteen million pounds sterling! Their bravery and humanity are equal to their generosity. I am speaking still principally of the peasant class. I chanced, only two days ago, to look into the history of the Siege of Limerick; and I came across one fact of gallantry, humanity, and daring which I do not think could be equalled in the annals of military warfare. A breach had been burst in the walls of the city. An attack was made. But the garrison repulsed the attack with such impetuosity that the enemy retreated and were followed to their camp. In the melee the English hospital was set on fire. What did these Irish soldiers do, these soldiers who had been drawn from the peasant class of their country? They forgot the enemy; they rushed in among the flames, and did not desist till every wounded Englishman and Brandenburger had been carried away from danger, and had been put in a place of safety until they had effectually extinguished the flames which were raging in the