

said the judge, "how is that? raise the wind by flying kites: that's new to me Mr. Plunket." "In England, my lord," said the wit, "kites are very different things from what they are in Ireland, in England the wind raises the kite, but in Ireland the kite raises the wind."

The humor of the Irish, and especially of the peasantry, I need waste no time in proving: it is plain and palpable. The Irish peasant, except sorrow and sickness be too hard for him, holds as laughing a soul in as mercurial body, as any other sample of humanity which the wide earth can shew. And his humor is indeed a soul: it diffuses itself through his whole nature: it is not an effort, but an instinct; it is vivid, rapid, careless and graceful: it flows into his phraseology, illuminates his face, moulds his gestures, and hangs around him with his costume. It is communicated to all that has contact with him, and clings to them even after separation. You would laugh at a queer Irishman's hat, if you saw it on a post: the very rim would tell you it covered a comic phiz, and you cachinnate in very sympathy. Oddity has marked him for her own, and he fulfils his destiny, it lurks in the turn of his lip; in the twinkle of his eye; it is written in the rents of his tattered coat. And this humor is full of most sympathising and kindly human nature; it is not mere external absurdity which may cover the heart of a savage or the soul of a slave; but a sportive and impulsive nature which catches the sunshine as it falls, and reflects it gladsomely around his little world. Cruelty or scorn is not hidden in the Irishman's laugh; neither is the laugh an echo from mere emptiness; it does not deceive you; it does not degrade himself. The fun of the Irish peasant is never malignant or idiotic; it never degenerates into the antics of a buffoon, or the imbecilities of a butt. It is a glow in the blood, an overflowing of the heart's life; a gala and a festival of all his faculties. It is fraught with imagination, and this constitutes to my apprehension, the distinction and the glory of Irish humor. Without lowering his own pride or wounding that of his fellows, the Irishman by the sheer oddity of his images, puts the spirits into a turmoil of exhilaration. This geniality of temper is a wonderful compensation for many ills of life. The Irish under its influence are not only patient, but gleeful. With labor that would kill the sad, and food that would drive the discontented to despair, by the hilarity of a jocund nature, they have manfully borne against fate, and have proved themselves superior to misfortune. Hard as their lot has been they have not allowed poverty to rob life of all its pleasures. To their undespending

minds, the sky is bright and the field is fair, heaven has glory, and earth has beauty: Summer evenings bring their sports, and Winter nights, society, a bright fire, and a merry tale. God is good, and they bless him with a grateful worship. They not only brave privation, but they laugh at it; they will not crouch to their enemy with sad faces, but mock him with a reckless fun; they will joke over their potatoes, and sweeten the big one with the little one. While a ray of hope can pierce the gloom about them, they have sight to catch it, and faith to walk by it.

The Irish are proverbial for readiness of reply: their answers often contain a force and pungency which at once astonish and delight. A poor man asked an Irish peer for charity. "I never give any thing to strangers," said the nobleman. "Then Your Lordship," replied the suppliant, "will never relieve an angel." They are but too lenient to the character of a witty rogue. I heard a story once of a tailor that was more amusing than virtuous. This tailor got cloth from the parish priest to make him a comfortable winter coat; the tailor thought it would be exceedingly pleasant to have for his own use, a cosy waistcoat, and a waistcoat, accordingly he cribbed. But the day of confession came and what was he then to do? "Yer riverence," he commenced, "I shtole the makins of a waistcoat, and I'll give it to you:" "no, you reprobate, I'll not have it: give it to the man that owns it." "I would, yer riverence, but he refused it:" "then keep it, and repent, you sinner."

Pathos and humor go together by a mysterious bond of union and sympathy. The buoyant joy of the Irish soul is only equalled by its tones of sorrow. The Irish laughter is hearty and sincere, but yet it is seldom far from tears. Long affliction has not passed without leaving sadness behind: and ever and anon, its shadow is falling on the memory, and a lone thrill of woe mingles with the sound of joy. The pressure of a hard condition and the recollections of a tragical history will often steal upon their gladness, and tame down the wildness of their merriment. The Irish are acutely susceptible of all the pensive passions. Their grief, if not enduring, is most piercing while it lasts: their head is water, and their eyes are fountains of tears. Never can sorrow receive more heart-rending expression than that in which they utter theirs. Their language modulates through every movement of anguish and tenderness, now in the mad sublimity of despair and again in the low murmur of complaint. Every color in which love can paint its objects; every image by which the darkened breast can