

can enter by the sense of sight. And that what cannot enter by the sense of sight may enter by the sense of sound, even as the still small voice of the telephone enters unheard by any save the recipient, only stiller and smaller and by finer perceptions, and spoken either apparently as if from a great distance, or as if from a voice the cadences of which are so fine and the meaning conveyed so "new," that the consciousness spoken to realizes at once that the voice which caused such gentle and unique vibrations in the wires of sense with corresponding emotions in consciousness could never have emanated from tangible creation—a voice causing a new creation.

Y.

## IRISH POVERTY EXPLAINED.

To the Editor of *The Week*:

SIR,—In the *Spectator* of Feb. 20 there is a letter, evidently from a well-educated Irishman, which throws great light upon the condition of Irish small farmers, also upon that curious condition of mind, so often to be met with among the Catholic Irish, that for their own mistakes and wrongdoing the British Government is to be blamed instead of themselves.

He states that he has an uncle renting six acres near Lisburn (population in 1871, 9,300), holding under an indulgent landlord, who allows him two or three years to pay his rent—a landlord hard to find on this continent.

He further states that his uncle's farm is not cultivated as it ought to be, because there is no money to drain or manure it (this is one of the great objections to small holdings); that last year he grew on his six acres enough potatoes for his family; he also had one acre under oats, producing about seven hundredweight (784 lbs.), say twenty bushels. (The crop in Ireland last year was above the average.) The official average for England on a series of years is thirty-nine bushels; so that, deducting for seed, his uncle would only market one-half of the English average. He also had a cow. With a number of other competing small farmers, their only market a town with a population of 9,300, he would have to depend upon the butter and the calf. As the dwelling "is barely covered with thatch, with the usual earthen, uneven floor," good dairying is out of the question. We can thus see the truth of the complaints of so much of Irish butter being greatly inferior to what it should be, and consequently fetching a lower price in the English markets than Dutch, French, or Danish butter. Hence the money returned from the cow must be far below what it should be. These facts will help to explain why, as shown in my letter in *THE WEEK* for March 4, the average net salable return per acre in Ireland is only £2 5s. 3d., against £4 2s. 5d. per acre in England.

His uncle, "with the occasional assistance of hand-loom weaving, manages to keep his young family in bread." Considering that forty years ago hand-loom weaving in England was driven out of the field by improved machinery—the hand-loom weavers earning at last about a shilling per day—your readers can form a correct idea of how little assistance he derives from that "occasional" source. Probably, averaging the whole year, about fifty cents per week would be the outside.

His uncle is afraid to buy his farm, even if he could borrow the whole amount from the Government. He sees, according to his nephew, that then he (and not the landlord as at present) would have to pay the taxes—that the payment to the Government, plus the taxes, would equal what he now pays (or owes) for the land; and, finally, that instead of having an easy landlord, waiting two or three years, he would have an official to deal with, who would require the money punctually.

This explains why he and so many others are averse to go into debt to buy, and it is a common-sense view.

As a matter of fact, the greatest dis-service one could do to that man would be to lend him the money to buy the land with, and thus chain him to the soil, like a serf of six hundred years ago. The greatest service that could be done to him would be, first, to repeal Mr. Gladstone's Acts, thus returning to free contract, one of the foundations of civilized life; and then in lieu of an easy-going Irish landlord, to give him an American landlord, who would turn him out and compel him to go to the States, and earn as a day-labourer from three to six times as much as he does now—in plain English, an American landlord would fivefold his income against his tenant's will.

If an exact calculation were gone into, it would be found that that farmer, including the wholesale value of the potatoes consumed by his family, does not net on an average of years, after all outgoings are allowed for, more than a dollar and a half per week from his six acres. Your readers can roughly test it in this way. Does the average Ontario farmer, where he has to pay rent, say \$250 for labour, besides miscellaneous expenses, net on an average from his hundred-acre farm \$998 (nine hundred and ninety-eight) per annum? If yes, he would soon make a competence.

It must be borne in mind that there are over 70,000 farmers in Ireland with smaller holdings than the one before referred to, and that nine out of every ten have no hand-loom weaving to earn an occasional shilling by.

But whose fault is it that he is thus poverty-stricken?

A Canadian would not have married until, at least, he had saved enough money to have had a wooden floor put down, also a few pounds required as capital, to make the most of the holding.

The uncle, while single, should have emigrated, and when he had saved enough have sent for his sweetheart—in political-economy phrase, he should have taken his labour to the dearest market, instead of as now to the cheapest. In lieu of thus acting he recklessly plunged into matrimonial poverty, is too lazy to improve his floor up to the civilized level, or to properly cultivate his patch, and then the British Government is blamed for his faults, including his recklessly bringing a family of paupers into

the world. Gladstone's Land Bill (by perpetuating small farms) and Home Rule will increase these evils. If economic laws had not been interfered with by Mr. Gladstone, one-half, at least, of the 231,000 small farms would, during the last fifteen years, have been consolidated into fair-sized farms.

In *Harper's Magazine* for 1879-80, vols. 59 and 60, there are some letters from the West of Ireland by Miss Cloud, an American artist-author. She mixed with and lived among the poor, and writes in a kindly manner, giving instructive details of their daily life. At page 540, vol. 60, she gives a graphic account of how in her presence at a wake (the best description of an Irish wake ever written) an Irish farmer gave the particulars of having wedded his daughter to a blind pensioner possessing nothing but a pension of thirty-two cents per day; the father considering it "a very proper marriage." Also, how the priest had married them at his (the father's) expense, for half the usual fee, jocularly observing that he was ready to marry fifty more at the same price. Not a word from the priest as to the certain poverty and wretchedness that must result from such a union. The British Government and the landlords are vilified and blamed for the evil results of reckless marriages, instead of blaming the right persons.

At page 97, vol. 60 (1880), she states how she was present at a shebeen, where a marriage was arranged by the fathers of a young couple—one engaging, in addition to other small gifts, to put up a cabin for his daughter and to give her a quarter of an acre of land. Of course, if the landlord or his agent tried to prevent this subdivision, their lives would have been endangered.

So long as such things take place there must be poverty in Ireland. With Home Rule of course these and many other evils will be intensified. Moral and economic laws, if persistently broken, must entail punishment.

In future ages, professors of political economy will always adduce Irish Home Rule (if unhappily for Ireland it should be granted) as the greatest and best instance ever known, from a statesmanlike point of view, of "How not to do it."

Yours, LIBERAL.

Toronto, March 20.

## SONATA.

FAST or slow,  
Rising loud or sinking low,  
Sweetly go  
The liquid tones of an underflow,  
Mingling with note of a joyous bird,  
Scarcely heard,  
Mounting in air a solemn thrill,  
Sweet and still,  
As morning sunbeams kiss the hill;  
Or blending in tone the valley's rill,  
Dancing the eddies about until  
The dimpled stream with joy they fill,  
And make it show  
The stones below  
In all the tints of heaven's bow.  
Then up away  
Swells Nature's lay  
Among the trees, along the hay,  
Across the sheen of the azure bay;  
And ever again,  
Life summer's rain,  
Gladly sparkling,  
Strangely darkling,  
Ever open flower startling,  
It floats above,  
A song of love,  
Clear as the nightingale, soft as the dove.  
But hush! O hush!  
The deadening crush  
Of all things beauteous, glad, and flush.  
Ah! gone the flowers,  
Gone the showers,  
Gone the velvet, mossy bowers.  
Yet harken, hear,  
Low and clear,  
Driving Fear  
And Doubt and Sorrow far away.  
The frozen bay,  
The falling ray  
Lights up again in glories gay.  
With what delight—  
A graceful fight—  
The dancing flakes their tiny might  
Exert against a world bedight  
In colours slow,  
To music low,  
Till every obstacle is white.  
The silvered tree,  
The spotless lea,  
Are all in beauty clothed free;  
No stint, nor spare,  
But everywhere  
In purest colours, purest air,  
The song of chastity is there.

J. F. A. W.