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CRIME IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

(From the *Dublin Freeman's Journal*.)

The poisoning system in England, it appears, is owing to an extraordinary exaltation of the nervous system. One stands to the other in the relation of cause and effect, the necessary inference from which speculative philosophy is, that the poisoner is released from moral accountability, for he could no more refrain from arsenic or strychnine than he could control the agitation of his nerves! Men and women did not poison an hundred years ago, because civilisation had not rendered the medullary substance so sensitive as it is at the present day! We suppose, if mankind—English mankind—is to go on in the path of progressive improvement—assuming the theory to be correct—the time will come when the whole population will either become terribly criminal or irrecoverably mad. Philosophy aims at too much, as well as strikes at the foundations of morality and religion in propounding such mischievous theories.—There is no evidence that Palmer or Dove, and the multitude of criminals who have lately been practising on the lives of wives, husbands, and children, were under the influence of nervous excitability. They appeared in full possession of their faculties, and acted with cool premeditation. Passion had nothing to do with their murderous resolves. Some studied the *Pharmacopœia* to ascertain what poisons could resist the severest tests of chemistry, while others attended Coroners' Inquests with assiduity—heard the evidence of the most experienced chemists about the effects of various poisonous substances—took notes for their study—and, in the full confidence of knowledge, administered the fatal dose or repetition of doses. This horrible practice seems to gain strength with each succeeding case. No sooner is one brought to light than another follows. Strychnine, arsenic, and essential oils, divide between them the destruction of life. In Ireland—thanks to our inferior civilisation!—our duller nervous system does not generate the class of crimes which abound in England.—We have, no doubt, crimes and criminals, but our apothecaries are never solicited for strychnine "to kill rats," and we question, if such application are made to the humblest of the profession, in the remotest village in Ireland, whether the police would not be set on the track of the inquirer, where English apothecaries sell their poisons as liberally as salts or senna. The *Times*, which so long trafficked on Irish crime, had been compelled to silence by the generally pacific character of our population during the last five years. In the face of parliamentary returns, and assize and quarter sessions intelligence, the comparative immunity of Ireland from serious crime, such as studded half the shires in England, could not be gainsayed. Some weeks ago Archbishop Cullen re-produced the notorious fact, that crime was less abundant in Ireland than in England. The *Times* seized on the assertion, and in its own fashion attempted to prove the reverse of the Archbishop's statement. Official returns were garbled—crimes, committals, and convictions were confounded—and in a grand rhetorical flourish, like the closing purple lights of a melodrama, the *Times* satisfied innocent England that Catholic Ireland was still the most criminal portion of the British empire. This hardy defiance of truth brought into the field a writer whose letter appears in this week's *Freeman*.

To the Editor of the *Freeman*.

Sir—Enclosed I send you a copy of a letter which I have addressed to the *Times*, in answer to a letter which appeared in that journal, affirming that Dr. Cullen's assertion that there was much less crime in Ireland than in England was incorrect, and that the contrary was the case, and attempting to prove that affirmation by official returns. Though not belonging to the same communion as Dr. Cullen, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, still as an Irishman I am glad to be able to prove his assertion correct. As the letter contains statistics of crime which may be unknown to many of your readers, I send you the copy of it in case you should think it worthy of a place in your columns, and remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

M. W. J.

To the Editor of the *Times*.

"Sir—Some short time ago I recollect reading in your journal a letter undertaking to prove that the number of crimes committed in Ireland, as shown by the number of convictions at assizes and sessions, far exceeded the number of crimes committed in England, similarly verified, in proportion to the respective populations of the two countries. Having at the time I read the letter no means of testing the accuracy of the English criminal returns adduced in proof of the writer's assertions in that letter, I took for granted that they were correct; and consequently that the writer had succeeded in establishing his point. However, on reading the analysis of the English criminal statistics for the year 1854, which you pub-

lished in the *Times* of Thursday, March 6, I have been induced to compare the returns of English offences, there given, with the returns of Irish crimes as given in *Thoms' Almanac* for the same year—and, when, on having made the comparison, I found that so far from there being a preponderance of crime in Ireland, the very reverse was the case, I drew up the adjoined tabular analysis which common justice will lead you to insert, in order to correct the impression made on the public by the letter alluded to above. The returns given in this table are for the last year for which we have any record, namely, 1854:—

TABULAR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND IRISH CRIMES FOR 1854.

Classes of Sentences.	ENGLAND.		IRELAND.	
	Number of Convictions.	Proportion of Convictions to Population.	Number of Convictions.	Proportion of Convictions to Population.
Death.....	49	One to 365,860	6	One to 1,091,995
Transportation	310	One to 57,833	39	One to 167,999
Penal Servitude	2,108	One to 8,504	669	One to 9,795
Imprisonment.	20,388	One to 879	5,515	One to 1,188
Total number of Convictions,	23,049	One to 779	7,501	One to 929

"The above table plainly shows that in crimes involving sentences of death or transportation, the number of convictions were three times more numerous in England than in Ireland—and also in those crimes involving sentences of imprisonment and penal servitude, the same results, though in a less degree, are manifest, the population of both countries being in such instances taken into account. Thus it is evident that the number of crimes of a grave nature in England are three times more numerous than they ought to be in comparison with the number of similar crimes committed in Ireland. One class of convictions I have omitted in the above table—viz., those which involved fines, &c. In Ireland there were 720 of these trivial offences, nearly one-tenth of the whole number of convictions; in England there were only 192 of those species of crimes; thus showing further that the crimes in England were of a graver character, generally speaking, than those in Ireland. There is another thing to be considered as regards the incentives to crime—murder, for instance, and offences against property with violence. In Ireland, I may say invariably, some grievance—real or fancied—connected with land will be found to have been the incentive to those two species of crimes. In England no such cause exists, in consequence of the much greater size of the farms. There are only 142,358 farms in England under 100 acres. In Ireland, on the contrary, there are 458,976 under 30 acres; and taking the respective average of the two countries into account, the disproportion will be even more manifest; so that there evidently are greater liabilities to agrarian disputes in Ireland than in England.

"I think the above remarks and returns of crime will surprise many of your readers who had come to a quite different conclusion. What, in my opinion, has greatly helped the delusion, is the fact of the murders in Ireland being almost all of one particular species, connected with land somehow, and thus they excited more attention. Before concluding, I may as well notice the amount of pauperism in the two countries. In England, in the years 1854-55, there were 839,164 paupers, about in round numbers 1 to 20 of the whole population. In Ireland for same year the number of paupers was 86,819, or about 1 in 80 of the whole population. Thus showing that the number receiving relief from one parish in England were three times the number receiving relief in Ireland in proportion to their populations.

"Enclosing my card, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"M. W. J.

"Dublin, March 8, 1856."

M. W. J., though not a Catholic, is an Irishman. Convinced of the truth of the Archbishop's statement, he addressed a reply to the *Times*, which, of course, was not published, impugning its accuracy, and proving the preponderance of crime to have been altogether on the side of England. We should observe that the *Times* used the English criminal statistics for 1854, which are far more favorable to its view than the returns of the past year, while the Irish criminal returns for 1855 will exhibit a large decrease of crime compared with 1854. However, the *Times* had the benefit of similar returns for similar years in both countries, and, notwithstanding this vantage ground, the facts on which it relies are so divergent from truth as to lead to the belief, that the *Times* wilfully and of premeditated malice misrepresented. From the tabular analysis compiled by our correspondent we find that the total number of con-

victions in England in 1854 amounted to 23,049, or one conviction to 929. If we take the graver classes of crimes, the difference is still more striking. England had 49 convictions for death, or one to 365,868; Ireland, 6, or 1 to each million of the population.—In England, 310 were sentenced to transportation, or 1 to 57,800; in Ireland, 39, or 1 to 168,000. One to 8,504 of the population was sentenced to penal servitude in England, and 1 to 9,795 in Ireland.—The greater number of convictions in both countries were for terms of imprisonment, amounting in England to 20,388, or 1 to 879, and in Ireland to 5,515, or 1 to 1,188. In crimes involving death, transportation, and servitude the convictions in 1854 were three times more numerous in England, or in the proportion of 2,467 to 714. With respect to the peculiar class of crime which exists in Ireland, out of which the *Times* makes the most—charitably overlooking the drain on the druggists' shelves, and the cool barbarity of offences against property and person in England—we cannot improve on the language or facts of our correspondent:—"There is another thing to be considered as regards incentives to crime—murder, for instance, and offences against property, with violence. In Ireland, I may say invariably, some grievance, real or fancied, connected with land will be found to have been the 'incentive' to these two species of crimes. In England no such cause exists, in consequence of the much greater size of the farms. There are only 142,358 farms in England under 100 acres. In Ireland, on the contrary, there are 458,976 under 30 acres; and, taking the respective average of the two countries into account, the disproportion will be even more manifest—so that there are evidently greater liabilities to agrarian disputes in Ireland than in England." Our correspondent might have safely concluded from his own statistics that the class of agrarian offences—so rife in Ireland, and rapidly dying away, could not exist at all in England—that the conditions under which the land has been held in that country for centuries rendered agrarian outrage impossible; for the offences called agrarian in England, and which prevailed at particular periods, arose from far different causes—such as the decline in agricultural wages—high prices of food—the substitution of machinery for labor, &c. Our correspondent supplies another unpalatable fact to the *Times*, though, for obvious reasons, we would not lay much stress on the present unfiled state of the Irish union workhouses. In 1854-5 the number of paupers in England was 839,164, or nearly one to twenty of the population; while in Ireland, for the same period, the number was 86,819, or one to eighty. This, however, is no reliable test, for in Ireland thousands prefer the chances and unpunishable liberty of beggary to the meagre dietary of the workhouse; while in England mendicity, if detected, is rigorously punished. The English pauper, too, is content with a reasonable and diversified diet instead of the everlasting skimmilk and thin gruel of the Irish pauper.

GODLESS EDUCATION THE SOURCE OF CRIME.

(From the *Tablet*.)

Mr. Wakley, the coroner, complains that he has too much to do. At an inquest which he held on Wednesday week, in Marylebone, "Mr. Wakley," says the *Times*, "regretted to observe to what a fearful extent infanticide had increased in the metropolis within the last few years—indeed, he might say the last few months. He had held an appalling number of inquests in that district of the county within that period."

To diminish the business of the coroner, Lord J. Russell would increase the numbers of the schoolmasters. The innocent and amiable enthusiast would ameliorate the heart by enlightening the intellect. If the education spoken of by Lord John Russell mean anything, it means an acquaintance with English authors. Nevertheless, we all know that Voltaire, in his "Letters on the English Nation," declares that it was by reading English writers he first became an infidel. Yet it is the cherished hope of Lord John Russell that the course of reading which made Voltaire deny Christ will make the working classes obey the Commandments. The morals of the people will be greatly improved, he thinks, when they are familiar with "our great English authors."

It was usual with Sir Walter Raleigh, as Father Parsons, the Jesuit, asserts, to make his young acquaintances (by way of improving them) "spell God backwards." Yet Dr. Johnson regards Sir Walter as an honor to English literature and a type of "our great English authors." He is by no means the most exceptionable of them; but no man will be morally improved by reading his history. His lucubrations are poisoned by the corruptions of his mind. But if Sir Walter Raleigh be pernicious, what must Gibbon and Hume be? Sir Walter Raleigh (says

Father Milner, in his "Letters to a Prebendary,") was justly put to death for perpetrating robbery on the high seas. Now, the writings of a robber are not likely to make honest men. A man who in private society blasphemed God, and in his public actions outraged morality—a pirate like Raleigh, or a speculator like Bacon—must be a very dangerous moralist. Yet the whole stream of English literature is tinged with the words and ideas "that wise Bacon and grave Raleigh 'spake.'" The more popular writers have filled their urns at those fountains, and retailed their thoughts. The working classes who imitate the practices of Raleigh and Bacon will certainly be hanged, and all classes who adopt their opinions are certainly in danger of hell fire. Nothing can be more dangerous to society than to deify rice because it is accompanied by intellect—it is a kind of devil worship.

The vices of genius are not excused but aggravated by its intelligence. Strauss has truly observed it is a most melancholy fact that the only shred of religion which the revolution of the 18th century has left to the educated classes is the worship of genius. But what can be more pernicious than to worship vice, piracy, or speculation in the aspect and under the form of talent? It is the idolatry against which Saint Augustine directed his thunderbolts when in his "City of God" he denounced the absurdity of revering adultery in Jupiter and theft in Mercury. To return; if Sir Walter Raleigh privately sneered at the Deity, his successors—such writers as Hobbes—publicly proved, or endeavored to prove, that God does not exist.

Now, Lord John Russell, in his amiable simplicity, believes that if "the masses" only read the novelists and essayists who popularise the ideas of the godless philosophers of Britain, and they all do this, "the masses" will become, not sinners, like the philosophers, but models of every virtue, like Lord John Russell himself. This is his hallucination—a hallucination which we do not share. We believe that he who does not gather with the Church scatters. We deny that the worship of reason is more advantageous than the worship of God. We assert that this is an old blunder of the French Atheists now brought up under a new form. We believe that Lord John Russell in England and the Godless-College folk in Ireland are unconsciously miserable apes of the Mirabeaus and Dantons of the last century. There is nothing new in them. They are old clothes—men who drive a trade in the cast-off toggery and renovated rags of the French revolutionists, which they would fraudulently pawn upon us for something new. Nor did these ideas originate with the French. They are much older. The French of the last century servilely imitated the light-bearer" of the garden of Eden, who assured our first parents that by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge they should become like unto God. It is an old story, a twice-told tale, and quite as false in the mouth of the modern plagiarist in Parliament as in that of the original inventor in Eden. It is lamentable that this "light-bearer" of modern times, who would triumphantly educate little factory boys into a perfect knowledge of the alphabet, cannot be persuaded to educate the Whigs into a detestation of corruption in politics and perjury at elections—that the quack medicine does not cure the quacks—that education does not make Whigs honest any more than knowledge made the Devil like a Deity.

But, if the literature of Protestant England does not produce honest politicians, it will not produce weavers and tailors. It could not. The early literature of "reformed" England is bad, but the literature which succeeded it is worse. The atheistical metaphysics of David Hume, the materialism of John Locke, and the scepticism of Gibbon, are quite as likely to poison the mind of readers as the infidelity of Hobbes or Herbert. The inferior writers who translated the ideas of these men into popular language are more pernicious than themselves. Nobody reads Bolingbroke in his own prose, but every one reads his ideas in Pope's brilliant versification.

It is not by reading the doctrines of Spinoza, in the oratory of the one or the poetry of the other, that the humble classes will become honest citizens. Poverty cannot be moralised into rectitude through the instrumentality of Atheism. Unfortunately philosophy has only become more profligate in descending to the present times. We are not to suppose for a moment that the infanticides of which Mr. Wakley complains are attributable to the cruelty or savageness of the English character—they do not originate in the natural badness of the heart, but in the artificial corruption of the mind of the English.—During the last thirty years the opinions of Malthus have been showered into the English mind through a thousand vehicles. The *Edinburgh Review* seems to have been founded for the express purpose of vi-