

vators of the soil constitute the backbone of a nation. I have carefully observed them in America, and have learned to consider them the ruling force of the nation; independent, thoughtful, exercising judgment and common-sense. Again and again I have seen the corrupt or mischievous vote of the large towns reversed or overwhelmed by the country majorities. The condition of the peasants who cultivate the soil all over our country presents a terrible contrast to this picture. Fever, produced by extreme misery, seems to be endemic amongst them, sapping their strength and stupefying their minds, when it does not kill; they are crippled by rheumatism and destroyed by scrofula; their miserable cottages are damp, dark, close, and overcrowded; their pitiful wages will not supply them with decent dwelling, sustaining food, and other necessities of life.

Let me quote testimony from high authority given within the year: 'As many as ten persons are often crowded into a sleeping-room not 12 feet square;' 'the external walls are too thin, the rooms too small, no ventilation, brick or tile floors;' 'cottages are frequently built in marshy situations, and by stagnant water, or at the foot of hills where there is no free circulation of air; the spot is chosen on account of the small value of the land and its uselessness for agricultural purposes;' 'they are not able to pay what would be a fair interest on a decent cottage.' 'If a new colliery is opened in an upland valley, 200, 300, or 400 cottages are built