

THE DEMOCRAT

MONROE, MARCH 25, 1882.

The English Phoeasant

Deplorable Condition of the English Phoeasant

When English pseudo-philanthropists cross the Atlantic for the purpose of meddling in our affairs, they very naturally turn our eyes to Great Britain to see if there is not something there that needs reforming. Here are two or three items from Chaucer that are worth noting in this connection. "Who may take each village, town and city throughout the kingdom, as central points to so many circles—each circle, as you pass from circumference to centre, exhibiting all the deplorable phenomena attendant on ignorance of natural laws, or on their evasion. Let us begin with an outlying example or two, the first taken from romantic Devon, the county par excellence for invalids, the delight of tourists. Who that has resorted thither will not remember the pleasant aspect of Tiverton, crowning the slope of a hill? Yet defilement lurks within, and health is endangered by offensive open drains and sewers, by which the whole town is more or less deteriorated. And further, many of the cottages are built on the ground without flooring; some have neither windows nor doors sufficient to keep out the weather, or to let in the rays of the sun, or supply the means of ventilation. Imperfect construction is not the whole of the evil; lack of space, of proper accommodation, necessitates overcrowding and leads to consequences which revolt the better feelings of our nature, and which might with propriety remain unrevealed, were it not that the true way to repair errors is to acquaint ourselves with their entire results. Families of six, eight, or more individuals sleep in one room—the majority not unfrequently in one bed; father, mother, grown-up sons and daughters, and young children. Who might not exclaim, "How could it be otherwise with such families that they should be sunk into a most deplorable state of degradation and depravity?—or that atrocious crimes should be committed without compunction?" Parish after parish, county after county, all tell the same tale of miserable hovels, called cottages by courtesy, inhabited by a wretched population—children devoured by disease; pure air an impossibility; all order, decency, dignity lost in overwhelming squalor. Here Bristol and Bridgewater in the Avon bridge Union, the tenements, instead of being built of solid materials, are empty shells of mud, on a spot of waste land, the most swampy in the parish. The medical officer of the Gippingham Union (Wiltshire) during three years' attendance on the poor of the district, had never known the smallest scariation, or the typhus fever to be absent. The royal town itself is no exception; of all the towns visited by me, writes the reporter, Windsor is the worst beyond all comparison. Everywhere we find something to deplore or condemn. But if the south was bad, the north was no whit better. Dorsetshire had its parallel in Northumberland. Even at the risk of repetition, we cannot forbear quoting a passage from the evidence descriptive of the cottages provided for the use of farm-labourers in the latter county, which, be it remembered, is in England, not in Ireland. "The description is by the Rev. Dr. Gilly, vicar of Northam. The dwellings, he says, are built of rubble or unburnt stone loosely cemented; and from age, and from badness of the materials, the walls look as if they would scarcely hold together. The wind rushes in through gaping chinks; the chimneys have lost half their original height, and lean on the roof with fearful gravitation. The rafters are evidently rotten and displaced; and the thatch, yawning to admit the wind and wet in some parts, and in all parts utterly unfit for its original purpose of giving protection from the weather, looks more like the top of a dung-hill than of a cottage. "Such is the exterior; and when the hind comes to take possession, he finds it no better than a shed. The wet, if it happens to rain, is making a puddle on the earth floor. (This earth floor, by the by, is one of the causes to which Erasmus ascribes the frequent recurrence of epidemics among the cottagers of England more than three hundred years ago.) It is not only cold and wet, but contains the aggregate filth of years, from the time of its first use. The refuse and droppings of meals, decayed animal and vegetable matter of all kinds, which has been cast upon it from the mouth and stomach—these all mix together, and exude from it. Windows there is none; the windows do not open. There is neither oven, nor copper, nor grate, nor shelf, nor fixture of any kind; all these things the occupant has to bring with him, besides his ordinary articles of furniture. Imagine the trouble, the inconvenience, and the expense which the poor fellow and his wife will have to encounter before they can put this shell of a hut into anything like a habitable form. This year I saw a family of eight—husband, wife, two sons, and four daughters—who were in utter discomfort, and in despair of putting themselves in a decent condition, three or four weeks after they had come into one of these hovels. "Again! How they lie down to rest, how they sleep, how they preserve common decency, how wretched horrors are avoided, is beyond all conception. The case is aggravated when there is a young woman to be lodged in this confined space, who is not a member of the family, but is hired to do the field-work, for which every kind is bound to provide a female. "Last Whitsuntide, when the annual lettings were taking place, a bird, who had lived years in the hovel he was about to quit, called to say farewell, and to thank me for showing him. He was a fine tall man, of about forty-five, a fair specimen of the Frank-embrian peasantry—of that peasantry of which a militia regiment was composed, which so amazed the Londoners (when it was garrisoned in the capital many years ago) by the size, the noble deportment, the soldier-like bearing, and the good conduct of the men. I thought this a good opportunity of asking some questions. Where was his large family (seven in number)?

to hold me they were to inhabit one of these birds' cottages, whose narrow dimensions were less than 24 by 15, and that the eleven would have only three beds to sleep in; that he himself, his wife, daughter of six, and a boy of four years old would sleep in one bed; that a daughter of eighteen, a son of twelve, a son of ten, and a daughter of eight, would have a second bed; and a third would receive his three sons of the age of twenty, sixteen, and fourteen. "Pray, said I, do you not think that this is a very improper way of disposing of your family? Yes, certainly, was the answer; it is very improper in a Christian point of view; but what can we do until they build us better houses? "The dwellings of those whose labor lies below the surface exhibit a similar degree of wretchedness; the 'lodging-shops' of the miners of the north are such, that in comparison the wigwags of the prairie Indians are palaces. In a room 15 feet by 18 were fixed two tiers of seven beds each, each bed being occupied by three or four men or boys, according to circumstances. There was no opening to the external air, forms of cooking were continually rising from the kitchen beneath; yet here slept from forty to fifty men, succeeding each other in relays during the twenty-four hours—hot, dirty, and dusty. Through the beds, states the reporter, had not been occupied for the three nights preceding my visit, the smell was to me utterly intolerable. What the place must be in the summer nights is, happily for those who have never felt it, utterly inconceivable. And this is said to be a fair sample of all the lodging-shops in the country! Heaven help the lodgers! One of the miners decries the rooms to be unfit for a swine to live in, where fifty men slept in sixteen beds, with not a single flag or board on the lower floor; and there were rows of water twelve inches deep. You might have a rat and a coal-vase, and taken off the dirt and potato-peelings six inches deep. In such circumstances as these, we can hardly expect the moral virtues to flourish. Poor humanity sinks very low when kept up by the higher sustaining influences. "Deeper yet sink from the country into the towns. In the evidence from Lancashire, it is affirmed by Mr. Wood—I have met with upwards of forty persons sleeping in the same room, married and single—including of course children; and several young adult persons of either sex. In Manchester I could enumerate a variety of instances in which I found such promiscuous mixture of the sexes in sleeping-rooms. I may mention one; a man, his wife and child sleeping in one bed; in another bed two grown-up females; and in the same room two young men unmarried. I have met with instances of a man, his wife, and his wife's sister, sleeping in the same bed together. I have known at least half-a-dozen cases in Manchester, in which had been regularly practiced—the unmarried sister being an adult. "Overcrowding, either in public lodging-houses or in private dwellings, is attended by physical as well as moral debasement. A degenerating process has been observed among the wretched beings who throng these places, whereby they sink into the form and habits of the monkey-tribe. "The state of society in the monkey-houses at the Zoological Gardens is said to afford no inapt specimen of what actually exists among the degraded and indigent of our population. A London magistrate makes a statement which presents another aspect of the downward tendency. 'I have often said,' he observes, 'that if empty casks were placed along the streets of White-chapel, in a few days each of them would have a tenant; and these tenants would keep up their kind, and prey upon the rest of the community. I am sure that if such facilities were offered, there is no conceivable degradation to which portions or species might not be reduced.' Some appalling forms of the degradation here alluded to were witnessed in many parts of the country during the construction of railways by the herding together of troops of village-alized navigators; in towns and villages already too thickly populated. "With such a state of things, every degree and tone of improvidence and debauchery would inevitably be associated. Where not an idea existed of the laws of health, over-eating and over-indulgence in intoxicating liquors were sure to prevail; while cleanliness, either of person or of habitation, would be altogether disregarded. "What would be the effect of such a polluted mass underlying the other grades of society? In proportion to the degradation so is the disposition to mischief and violence. Here lie the seeds of crime; the materials for mob-and riots, the instruments of the demagogue and the enemies of order. Here is the plague-spot of our civilization; and until it shall be removed, our prosperity will be precarious, and our progress uncertain. "The corpse is never absent from the sight of the survivors; eating, drinking, or sleeping, it is still by their side; mixed up with all the ordinary functions of daily life, till it becomes as familiar to them as when it lived and moved in the family circle. From familiarity it is a short step to desecration. The body, stretched upon two chairs, is pulled about by the children; made to serve as resting-places for any article that is in the way; and is not seldom the hiding-place for the beer-bottle or the gin, if any visitor arrives inopportunely. Viewed as an outrage upon human feeling, this is bad enough; but who does not see that when the respect for the dead—that is, for the human form in its most awful stage—is gone, the whole mass of social sympathies must be weakened—perhaps blighted and destroyed? "Funerals afford grand opportunities for plunder. The number of undertakers in London is estimated at from 500 to 1000; many of them merely receive orders, on which a commission is obtained; while a second, and sometimes a third party, does the work, so that three profits have to be paid. One of these middlemen got a new pair of clothes for himself out of the remuneration from a common mechanic's funeral. A laborer's funeral costs from £2 to £3; working tradesmen pay from £10 to £12; people of moderate respectability £20; a clergyman's widow was charged £110 for her husband's funeral, she having ordered 'what was respectable'; while to gentlemen and the superior ranks the cost is from £200 to the 1000.

The Seven Wonders of a Married Man

- 1. Not going to sleep after dinner!
2. Never going anywhere in the evening except "to the Club!"
3. Always being good tempered over the loss of a button, and never regarding his vengeance on the coal-fir "dinner" isn't really exactly to a minute!
4. Never finding fault with his "dear little wife," if she happens to be his partner at whist?
5. Not "wondering," regularly every week, "how the money goes!"
6. Resigning himself cheerfully when asked to accompany his wife "on a little shopping!"
7. Insisting upon the servants sitting upon the same chair as he sits upon!
8. Always being down in the first breakfast, always being dressed in time for dinner, and never keeping the carriage (or the cab) waiting at the door a minute!
9. Always having "delicate health," about the autumn, and being recommended by his medical man "change of air" immediately!
10. Keeping up her "playing and singing," the same after marriage as before!
11. Giving her husband the best cup of tea!
12. Never making the house uncomfortable, continually "putting it to rights!"—nor filling it chock-full with a number of things it does not want, simply because they are "bragars!"
13. Never allowing, under the strongest provocation, to "make complete sacrifice" she has made of herself!—nor "regretting" the "two or three good offers" which she (in common with every married woman) has made with every woman to whom she has been recommended to accept!—nor "saying" she is never by any accident, calling her husband "a brute!"

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BUSINESS CARDS

- G. Z. Dimock, Physician and Surgeon, Monroe, Pa.
George Fuller, Dealer in Boots, Ready-made Clothing, Hats & Hosiery, 207 N. 2d St.
M. C. Tyler, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Crockery, Hardware, Tinware, Fish, Oils, Fluid, Paints, &c., &c., also pays cash for all kinds of Shipping Furs.
Charles Hillman, CHAUVIN & CO., 207 N. 2d St.
S. S. Winchester, ATTORNEY AT LAW, Lancaster, Pa.
D. D. Hanks, DEBY AND EXCHANGE TABLE, Office 30 doors below the City Hotel, Monroe, Pa.
E. B. & S. B. Chase, ATTORNEYS AT LAW, Monroe, Pa.
Congdon & Sterling, DE LEY & BROS., MONROE, PA.
C. M. Simmons, BOOT AND SHOE MAKER AND REPAIRER.
Dr. G. C. Edwards, PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON, Hartford, Pa.
John H. Dimock, ATTORNEY AT LAW, Monroe, Pa.
M. L. Truesdell, ATTORNEY AT LAW, Monroe, Pa.
C. D. Virgil, STROVER DENTIST, Monroe, Pa.