

GLIMPSES OF IRISH INDUSTRIES

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Glimpses of Irish industries by J. Bowles Daly

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BY

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PREFACE.

In presenting this volume to the public, a few words of explanation are necessary, as the works which I have already published form a scheme of which this is a part. In my first historical work I have endeavoured to give a popular account of the origin and growth of one of the great parties in the State. In the second, by a careful selection from the writings of Dean Swift, together with the history of his political career, I have shown the attitude of the English Government towards Ireland during the 17th century. In the "Introduction" of my "Ireland in '98," I have exhibited the spirit in which England made laws for Ireland during the 18th century, and the class of men sent to enforce them.

In the present work I have confined myself to the industrial aspect of the country, dealing only with what I consider the most important of the languishing interests, and excluding others which from their prosperous condition require no support. To fit myself for this task, I have previously studied the condition of industry in France, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, and the United States of America. While pointing out the causes of the decline of Irish industries, I have fully condemned the defects of my countrymen, but never indulged in fault-finding without suggesting a potent remedy. The material of the present volume is drawn from the sifted information furnished by the heads of firms in Ireland, Government returns, and Blue Books. The latter

portentous documents have been compiled without number, and, as the majority of people entertain the same affection for a Blue Book as they do for a blue pill, my task was the reverse of exhilarating. I have, in order to become readable, dispensed with technicalities; and not wishing to mystify my readers, eschewed, as much as possible, long tables, classification of rates, and endless array of figures. Thus, an intricate subject, full of detail, has been lightened for the uninitiated, who have neither the time nor patience to wade through an undigested mass of valuable information. Many persons in Ireland have given me useful facts relating to their concerns. I regret to say also that several appealed to have not answered my inquiries. I take this opportunity of thanking the former.

Having here dealt with the political and industrial aspects of Ireland, my next work will be a picture of the social character of the country at a critical period, and from a new point of view.

J. BOWLES DALY.

CONTENTS.

	CHAP.
THE PROVISION TRADE	I.
RAILWAY AUTOCRACY	II. & III.
BANKING	IV.
POSSIBLE INDUSTRIES	V.
LACE	VI.
POPLIN	VII.
WOOLLENS	VIII.
KNITTING, SPINNING, WEAVING, EMBROIDERY	IX.
AFFORESTING	X.
FISHERIES	XI. & XII.

INTRODUCTION.

ONE is tired of listening to the oft-repeated statement that the Irishman will work hard in every country but his own. We are told that in America he will clear the forest, construct the railway, build the jail, and obligingly inhabit it. The imbecile retailer of such illogical verbiage is here invited to press his inquiries a step further by asking why is this the case. The answer is that the Irishman would be as diligent and active at home under the same conditions. Industry and art would be as zealously pursued in Ireland as in other countries if the same opportunities were provided; the following pages are intended as a refutation of this calumny recklessly flung at Ireland and the Irish. Italy, Switzerland, and even Japan would be in a worse condition than Ireland were it not for "the heaven of art" which exists there. Hod-carrying, distilling, brewing, and political scheming are supposed to be the only arts successfully practised by the Irish people. No greater mistake could be made by an observer of even the meanest capacity. It is generally admitted that no member of the great Aryan family ever lost a single power which it possessed. The Irish were a clever race in pre-historic times, and there is no indication of inferiority where their gifts had fair play and culture. It is true that a dislike to manual labour is universal; this is mainly owing to two reasons: first, the system of Irish national education,