

**THE SOURCE OF
ENGLAND'S GREATNESS,
AND THE SOURCE OF
ENGLAND'S POVERTY**

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The source of England's greatness, and the source of England's poverty by A carrier's boy (Eli Hamshire)

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A CARRIER'S BOY (ELI HAMSHIRE)

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ENGLAND'S GREATNESS,
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ENGLAND'S POVERTY**

THE
SOURCE of ENGLAND'S GREATNESS,
AND THE
SOURCE of ENGLAND'S POVERTY;

WITH CORRESPONDENCE ON THE LABOUR QUESTION

FROM THE

RIGHT HONBLE. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

BY

A CARRIER'S BOY.
(*Eli Hamshire*)

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THE SOURCE OF ENGLAND'S GREATNESS,
AND THE
SOURCE OF ENGLAND'S POVERTY.

BY A CARRIER'S BOY.

I INTEND to write this book as the history of my life, with the source of England's greatness and the source of England's poverty, hoping that no jealousy or ill-feeling will arise from any person's feelings, as I write for the benefit of the lower and middle classes of society. I myself have no ill-feeling towards any man, woman, or child. I have been in the habit of travelling twenty miles per day, Sundays excepted (railway travelling excepted), for the last thirty years, and I have been the instigation of saving little children's lives from the brink of starvation. It has given me a heart to feel and a brain to think different to a great many of my fellow-countrymen.

I have lived in the parish of Ewhurst, on the borders of Sussex—which is twelve miles from the union workhouse—all my lifetime, and I have known old people who have worked hard and fared hard all their lifetime, and just at the latter stage of their life have been sent away to the union workhouse, with one foot in the grave and one foot out, there to die, after using the heavy irons of toil all their days, and bringing up a large family of children, when they ought to be together to prepare for eternity. Man's allotted time is three-score years and ten : this gives him ten years' Sabbaths

to prepare for his latter end. Then, again, I have known instances of people who have died broken-hearted through the dread of going to the union, and I have known inquests held over their bodies where the juries have brought in a verdict of "heart disease." Now, this class of people is often called improvident. Take the farm labourer, whose weekly wages has not amounted to more than 12s. per week on an average during the last forty-six years, and which is £81 4s. per annum—supposing him to have a family of eight children, and the two parents, making ten, to be kept. Having three meals each per day would amount to 11-16ths of a penny (just under $\frac{3}{4}$ d.) for each meal, which would amount to 12s. per week. They want the rich to tell them how to live; we pay the rich very dear to tell us how to die.

I chanced to see an almanack with a representation of Her Majesty, holding a Bible in her hand, which Book was stated to be the source of England's greatness. Now when I look into the second chapter of this Book, I read that the Almighty did not see it fit for man to live alone, and created woman for a helpmeet for him. The woman is not portioned from a bullock, or a horse, or an ass, but she is the portion of a man. Then we read at the time of the Flood that they were to replenish and multiply. Then, again, when our Saviour came upon earth, He said: "Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Now these laws were instituted when man's Sabbaths were appointed.

Then we have our bishops, and canons, and Church of England ministers, who have their splendid mansions in each parish, and they have large salaries themselves, and they sit as Chairmen at the Boards of Guardians, they lawfully marry people, and they are the first to separate them.

I also read in the *Echo* newspaper that Her Majesty's income was £385,000. If she had the same number in family as the man who holds the plough her money would amount to £35 9s. 2d. 5-16ths of a penny for each meal for each individual. My motive in writing this—I have never seen it done by any other writer—is to show the contrast between the man who holds the plough and those who have these enormous incomes. And they preach equality in a religious

point of view. Then, I say, which horse deserves the most respect—the horse that draws the Queen's carriage, or the horse that draws the plough? Then surely the human beings who hold the plough ought to be better respected than sent twelve miles to the union workhouse, there to be separated, and there to die, which is wrong in the sight of our Maker!

The new plan of building the labourers' cottages, is with five rooms, with two rods of ground buried in with timber, the w.c. to empty within nine feet of the well of water, and the drain to empty within eighteen feet of the highway road into an open dyke! Now, God gave man light, and He gave the air to breathe and the water to drink, and said unto them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth;" and why should not the labourer who holds the plough have a piece of land, to keep a cow, &c.? We have what they call model farms in our parish, and, as Job said, they grow thistles in the wheat and cockles in the barley, and a great many other kinds of rubbish, I am sorry to say, and they monopolise the land; and where there used to be twenty little dairies of butter, and a quantity of other produce, it is now almost dormant; and they have their hundreds of acres, and enclose the waste land where the poor man used to keep his cow and his pig; and they plant laurels and what I call evergreen rubbish, instead of planting nice fruit-trees, which would be a benefit for mankind. One man has enclosed the church tow-path in our little parish; and at Cranleigh one man who owns thousands of acres enclosed the Goose-green, and an old farm labourer chopped the posts and rails down. In the parish of Wonersh there is a large piece of land added to the park, and there were a few working men who applied for a piece of land, and they were told that the land was in chancery. The parishes, Cranleigh and Wonersh, belong to the same lord of the manor. You see, these men who have abundance of land could enclose it if it was in chancery, but the working man can't get a rod of ground. Now in the parish of Shere there are 1,717 people, and there are 1,770 acres of waste land. I believe there are about sixteen million acres of commons and waste lands, and, if honestly held by the government in trust for the nation, and let at small

rentals, we should probably in a short time receive eight millions sterling per annum. The rents would be paid into the national exchequer, and the taxation of the country lessened by so much.

The Paris Political Economy Society has been discussing the advisability of introducing the Torrens Land Act—now in operation in Australia—into France. In the course of the discussion it was stated that the land of France is broken up into 126,000,000 plots. Surely something can be done in England in this same way.

Now I saw a poor old man lying by the side of the road, with a handkerchief over his head, and my horse shied at him. I said, "Not well, gov'nor?" and he said, "No, I am not well, friend. I have got cold congealed upon cold, and I feel almost in despair; and I feel empty. But I have seen better days." "Yes," I said, "there are many high trees fall to the ground; and here's twopence for you." He then took hold of my hand, and he said, "My hearty wish towards you is that a Supreme Power may ever reign over you, and that the sun of glory may ever shine around you, and that the gates of paradise will be opened unto you to the highest desire of true happiness!" And the tears ran down his face when he said it. There is not one man in a hundred who would pull his horse up and give a poor man twopence by the side of the road. I then gave him another twopence and drove on, and my thoughts were, Do those magistrates get that hearty wish who give fourteen days' imprisonment for asking for a crust of bread on an empty stomach? And as I thought this over in my mind there came a sort of chill over my body, and the tears began to run down my cheeks as I remembered there were so many thousands in the country like him. I had just read of an inquest, held on a baby four months old. The mother of the child said her husband had been out of work some months, during which time witness and her husband and six children had been almost starving; the poor mother herself not having sufficient nourishment, the child was starved at her breast. To the females of England: How long will you be crushed down by the ruling powers of this country? We hear much of abolishing the

House of Lords. If we could get a House of Females in the room of them, they could then stand up for their own protection! And then, again, I saw a case in a paper where a poor woman had three months' imprisonment for sleeping in an outhouse, and was so ill when committed that she only lived three days.

FUNERAL OF ELIZABETH WHEELER :

Sent to Hard Labour for Three Months for being Homeless and Destitute.

Out in the dark and the danger,
Out in the night and the cold,
Though our Saviour was longing to lead her
Tenderly into His fold.

Oh, where are the mourners?—alas! there are none
In the world now she is gone!
But bear softly her bones over the stones,
Tho' a pauper, she is one that her Maker yet owns!
The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests,
But this young woman in this so-called Christian country had nowhere
to rest.
How much there is needed to inquire for the distress!
Or how shall we stand with our Maker in that Great Day of rest?

The CASE of ELIZABETH WHEELER.—Mr. Burt put a question to the Home Secretary (Sir W. Harcourt) in the House of Commons upon this case, Mr. Macdonald inquiring if the right hon. gentleman had communicated with the magistrates at Guildford with regard to three months' imprisonment—a sentence sometimes passed on men for killing their wives—(laughter) passed upon the woman for sleeping in an outhouse.

And when these men, who refuse a glass of water,
Are in the valley and shadow of death,
It will work on their consciences
When they are striving for breath.
On the 27th of January, they took her, helpless and distress'd,
A sentence sometimes pass'd on men for killing their wives
(Laughter in the House of Commons),
And that was all she got for her redress!

And how hard they deal with the little paltry cases with the small tradesmen! For in nine cases out of ten they are perfectly innocent, but they are sure to have to pay £1 18s.