

**ENGLISH MISRULE AND IRISH
MISDEEDS; FOUR LETTERS FROM
IRELAND, ADDRESSED TO AN
ENGLISH MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649574834

English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds; Four Letters from Ireland, Addressed to an English
Member of Parliament by Aubrey De Vere

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AUBREY DE VERE

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ENGLISH MISRULE
AND
IRISH MISDEEDS.

FOUR LETTERS FROM IRELAND,
ADDRESSED TO
AN ENGLISH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

BY
AUBREY DE VERE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1848.



"I know that the interests of the two countries must be taken together, and that a man cannot speak as a true Englishman unless he speaks as a true Irishman, nor as a true Irishman unless he speaks as a true Englishman."—MR. PITT'S SPEECH ON THE UNION.

"As an Englishman, I owe reparation to Ireland for the wrongs of centuries."—MR. WILKINSON.

Κοινα γαρ φιλων οχη
Κοινα θ'ει τι πεισεται
αδε γα
Φαιμισσα χωρα.
ΕΟΛΙΓ. Ρησινία.

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LETTER I.

Two Englands.—One of those always adverse to Ireland.—Subjects treated in this Work.—The Labour Rate Act as it worked.—A different Mode of Relief suggested.—Progressive Symptoms of English Discontent with Ireland.—Attempts to discover its Cause.—Necessity for moderating the Expression of it.—Probable Effects in Ireland of recent English Detraction.—Its worse Effect in England.—Its incompatibility with Justice and Truth.

SIR,

THE great dissatisfaction and distress occasioned of late years to England by the noise of Irish misery, and its yet more formidable infection, blown over to you frequently in the westerly winds, not so much by our fault as by reason of the contiguity of the two islands, is a matter which ought long since to have touched us with some remorse, had we not been selfishly preoccupied with our own troubles. In former times, when the political condition of Ireland was lower than it is now, though the pressure of distress was less urgent, you appear to

have suffered little from this annoyance, perhaps because men complain less loudly of bondage than of starvation. It is a hard thing, Sir, to be assailed by the immediate breath of some person whom we have injured, and who is loathsome to us;—hard to look upon the scar which we had inflicted long ago, and intended to forget. Within the last two years the distress of England on this score appears to have been increasing; and it has been expressed in a tone of acrimony rising through the gradations of animosity up to abhorrence and a sort of contempt, or assumed contempt, at which for some time it has been stationary. This anger has, however, been subject to laws, by a careful induction from which we are enabled to calculate its intensity and foretell its amount at any given period. The more you have had to pay for Ireland, the more you have disliked her. Had it not been for prejudice and antipathy, England would have been conciliated toward Ireland by the endeavour to serve her.

Before proceeding further, Sir, there is one statement which I desire to make, not so much for your sake as for my own, and because there are many countrymen of yours to whom I would not willingly give pain, and whose censure I would not wantonly incur. The class to which I allude are, I hope, neither so unjust nor so unwise as to resent the fact that I do not think the faults of their country past cure, or their country so far enfeebled and degenerate, that she cannot

afford (as sometimes happens to individual men who have no part in true greatness) to dispense with her faults. I have sometimes been tempted to think that, as the mythologists make mention of three Jupiters, so there must be at least two Englands. In her past history, I have observed indications of a compound nature as diverse as her twofold language; and in recent times they seem to contend for the mastery. It is with one only that I have to do at present.

I have to entreat that this plain introductory statement may be kept in mind by any one who chooses to read these observations. If he thinks that there exists a certain England, noble, wise, and strong, against which such charges as I make must be as unjust as the charges which I repel, I think the same; and I believe that this better England not only exists, but has existed for the last thousand years, and has wrought after its kind. It has also, I believe, slept at times, and not known what was done in its name by that more sordid England with which it is strangely bound up. The distinction to which I refer is not one of classes or orders: each of these two Englands is composed of clergy and laity, rich and poor, aristocrats and democrats, agriculturists and manufacturers, Whigs and Tories; and, a sad and singular fact, the two have occasionally concurred in the same course, influenced by the most opposite motives indeed, but by a common delusion. My