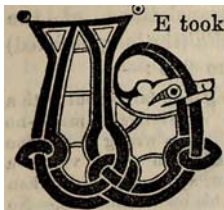


## THE IRISH BUILDER.

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THE CORK EXHIBITION AND  
IRISH INDUSTRIES.

As our text in last issue "The Promotion of Native Art and Literature," and showed what could be done in special branches if a little enterprise were again evidenced, and that all classes of our countrymen, irrespective of sect or party,

combined for the national, good. Political or religious differences need never enter into the calculations of our countrymen, or disturb their combined efforts for the preservation of the industries of their native land. We do not care what a man's political or religious opinions may be, and in this journal we have always endeavoured to steer clear of politics and sectarian questions. Our estimate of a patriot consists not in viewing a man as an eloquent orator or the writer of a "slashing article," who hits his foes hard, and wins applause thereby from those who subscribe to his political views. Sentimental patriotism is one thing, but practical patriotism is another; and we are thorough believers in the value of the latter kind. The man or number of men who by their combined efforts help to found one or more native industries or revive dormant ones, are practical patriots. The man of capital, the merchant, the manufacturer, the landed proprietor, the trader and shopkeeper who subscribe funds and, by their influence among their circle of friends, acquaintances, and neighbours, induce them to unite to establish a new industry and provide employment for the artisans and labourers of their country—these men are practical patriots. We care not whether some men may be actuated by interested or personal motives to help a movement, for human nature is human nature over the world, and most men who live by business will more or less look on a matter with a business eye. So long as they do not wrong their neighbours by any covert or dishonest action, they may well stand excused before their countrymen.

An Industrial Exhibition has lately closed in Dublin, after several months run. We do not desire to closely criticise its belongings or results. It could have been more successful, but it might, on the other hand, have been less satisfactory: It had somewhat of a stormy origin, through differences of political opinion on the part of a section of its promoters; and perhaps on account of the, secession of a number of the original promoters, it suffered to some extent. It must be confessed that the late Dublin Exhibition was not a financial success; but the loss on one hand was in a great degree compensated on the other by the extent and variety of the exhibits, and the impulse it gave to the revival of several industries.

The Cork Exhibition, which is now being prepared for, opens under more favourable auspices than the late one, and it has every promise of success. It has already enlisted a good general committee and an influential list of subscribers. The province of Munster at least has

rallied to its support; but though the Exhibition will be a Cork one, it will be by no means a local display. With a view of assisting the ends the promoters have in view, we will here embody its "Objects":—

The exhibition of articles manufactured in Ireland, and of raw materials—mineral, vegetable, and animal—produced in Ireland.

The exhibition of articles manufactured and raw materials produced in other countries which, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, may tend to the improvement of existing or the development of new industries in Ireland.

The exhibition of machinery suited to Irish industries, the machinery manufactured in Ireland being distinguished from that of other countries.

An exhibition of paintings, sculptures, carvings, china, antique furniture, armour, antiquities, plate, lace, and other works of art.

A General Loan Collection of similar works and articles.

An exhibition of agricultural products and machinery, subject to same conditions as are attached to exhibits in 1 and 2.

An exhibition of appliances used in the culture, capture, and curing of fish, both sea and river.

The exhibition will be utilised, as far as possible, as a school for educating the farming, artisan, and working classes, by means of suitable lectures, demonstrations, and reports.

The above objects are very clearly and precisely stated, and they embrace nearly all the class of exhibits, the production of which would tend in a few short years to make this country again prosperous by affording employment for its population. An exhibition of raw materials indigenous to Ireland, and used or fit for being used in various industries will be a very judicious display, and it is one which we have called for again and again in connection with manufactured objects. There is a large class of mineral, vegetable, and animal raw materials in Ireland waiting to be utilised, while in building and ornamental stones, and in other building and furniture materials a very varied class of exhibits could be shown. In connection with the fishery and subsidiary industries much also could be produced, and we are glad to see that the committee have taken cognisance of the fishery industries, a question which we have for years never ceased to agitate. Again, we are pleased to see that the exhibition is to be utilised as far as possible "as a school for educating the farming, artisan, and working classes, by means of suitable lectures, demonstrations, and reports." A good class of exhibits will have the direct effect of imparting knowledge, even apart from lectures, for they will appeal to the eye, and intelligent artisans will see at a glance more perhaps than any lecture could adequately convey. It is intended to give prizes for reports upon industries which already exist in Ireland, or might be without much difficulty introduced, also for facilitating the exhibition of domestic industries and stimulating artisans to produce works of exceptional merit. We trust that, apart from the general fund, subscriptions may be, forthcoming to create a good prize fund, and thus enable the committee to award ingenuity and merit.

As means to an end, industrial exhibitions are calculated to do much good, but they must not be expected to achieve miracles in industrial fields. Though temporary in character they may at the same time be productive of results that will have permanent good effect on the future manufactures of this country. The lessons they teach must be profited by and acted upon by men of energy and capital, or even by those of small means clubbing together on the co-operative principle. If the only good an exhibition achieved was confined to the benefiting of a few traders in its vicinity from the time being, it would not be worth

holding. What is desired is, to benefit the many and not the few, to provoke emulation, to excite effort, to encourage talent and patronise production by purchasing the native manufactures of one's country, if the goods or materials are equally as good as are to be found in the market.

We would address the enterprising individual though he move in the humblest ranks of society, and we would say to him—If you are conscious you understand what you are about to undertake, proceed with your work, manufacture! Manufacture! manufacture!—no matter how small may be your beginnings, but remember manufacture or make what is good and honest in workmanship and materials. We have known several traders and manufacturers in our experience whose greatest capital was their enterprising spirit and their practical knowledge, who commenced business with a few pounds, and by the dint of industry and the turning out nothing but honest goods and wares soon increased their business, and became wealthy and influential. It may be more difficult now than formerly (at least in some businesses), for men of small means to succeed, but in this country there are such a number of wants which are at present supplied from sources outside our shores, that there is little difficulty in selecting an open for the starting of some industry or other.

Although this country has undoubted claims upon the Government for assistance, —an assistance that might be expected, and doubtless would be granted if a native legislature was in existence,—yet, viewing all things, we would say to our countrymen—Give up depending upon the Government, and help yourselves as far as is possible. Government will do some things, but there are other matters which the Government will not do for this country. Why it will not do these things can only be shown by entering into the region of political questions, and we have no desire for such discussions. This country has grievously suffered, and is still suffering through a combination of circumstances. It will be a long time before the cultivation of the land will afford the returns of former years; indeed, we fear, with foreign competition a new condition of matters must eventually obtain in connection with the soil. Rents are coming down all over England, as well as over Ireland; but in the case of the sister kingdoms there are a large number of industries which absorb the labour of the population. After the passing of the Act of Union (aye, and before it, by sundry prohibitive acts in restraint of our manufactures and exports and imports), England obtained the start, and by a system of continuous centralisation since 1800, our native industries have been handicapped to such an extent that one after one they were crushed to earth. The past is past, but the ill effects of the past remain, and it is this we have to overcome by the infusion of a new spirit among all classes of our countrymen. It is the duty of Southern Catholics and Northern Presbyterians alike, whether they be Nationalists or Orangemen, to forget their feuds, and meet in harmony on the industrial platform. Belfast is, we know, quoted by some politicians as an example for Cork, and even Dublin to follow; and certain conclusions are drawn which we care not to specify, because if justice was to be rendered to both parties the question would admit of much further discussion than it has ever yet received. What is being done in Belfast could, to a considerable extent, be done also in Cork; but it must

not be forgotten that in all times certain trades and manufactures have been located in particular towns, and have so continued.

The linen industry is now indigenous almost to the North, and within the last quarter of a century and upwards ship-building has been started and prospered in the port of Belfast. There exists no reason why more ship-building and ship repairs should not be done in Dublin or in Cork or Waterford than there has been for many years past. In connection with the fishery industry at least a large number of small craft could be built in several of the Irish ports. Indeed with the development of the Irish fisheries, we believe that a very prosperous boat-building industry could be established at some of the principal Irish ports. The subsidiary industries depending more or less upon fishing are many, and in Ireland there would be many opens for starting some of these, instead of being always depending upon imports.

In connection with the promotion of our native industries and their prosecution, the question of emigration will be gradually got rid of. We have been always opposed to systems of emigration as a cure for the ills of Ireland. Some people may, of course, be benefited by emigrating; but it is a folly to suppose that any general system of emigration could benefit this country, and make it more prosperous. Ireland is not over-populated. Indeed if her population was nearly twice as large she would not be over-populated, provided manufactures existed in number. Emigration is the drawing of the blood and strength of the country; and as well might you expect to cure a man by bleeding him nearly to death, as to give vigour to this country by deporting the young and able-bodied and most skilled of the population. It is positive madness to think of it. We want to keep the young blood at home, and establish industries in their midst. Every honest and thoughtful parent studies the welfare of his children, and every country has a right to study its own interests, and a citizen is no practical patriot if he does not assist the interests of his fellow-countrymen, among whom he lives. While we counsel energy and enterprise at home, we have no desire to disparage the manufactures of the sister kingdoms. The world is large: America is competing with England and other Continental countries, and the latter are also competing with British manufacturers. English firms for many years have driven a large trade in Ireland, and as competition is the life of trade, the market is open for Irish manufacturers to drive trade in England and Scotland as well as at home. There must be no child's play or the crying out on the part of Irishmen that they are hurt by trade rivalry. As we said before, the test of success is to produce good goods at as moderate prices as our competitors, and if this is done there can be no doubt that Irish manufacturers will be able to hold their own, particularly in their own land.

In conclusion, we will only add that we wish the Cork Exhibition every success; and if a straightforward course is pursued to the end on the lines of the good beginning, there can be no doubt as to the good results.

[Taken from *Irish Builder*, Vol. XXV, 1883, p.32]