

The Price paid to the  
 Commemorative Basket  
 Industry is as follows:-

1 Rose Basket	1-9
1 Letter Rack	1-6
1 Doll's Chair	1-6
1 Key Basket	1-6
3 Norwegian Cherry Baskets	3-0
1 Lined Knitting Basket	2-6
1 D. Upholster	1-9
3 Leather Slides each	3-0

The above are the  
 whole of the contents  
 of this box  
 for the officers of Customs

## A little Contribution from Commemara

On the lowest slope of the Diamond Mountain - where the valley of Kilmore broadens out towards the sea, stands a little iron building, the new 'nursery' of an infant Irish industry. Looked at near it is not very beautiful to eyes that knew the hillsides unscarred by civilization; but in the distance it melts harmoniously enough into the tint of the grey stone peaks above -

Four years & a half ago one English woman resolved to do what she could in reparation of what most wanted of the wrong done to Ireland in "old, unhappy, far off" days, the destruction of her industries. "The only gift is a portion of thyself" says Emerson; & the notion of starting an industry was neither solicited a subscription nor to call a committee meeting, but to sit down on the floor of the dilapidated old "Court House" in Letterfrack, side by side with her first pupil, the little Pat, & teach linin & make - a basket. Since that day, thousands

2 of Shawrock labelled Comenacra baskets  
have been sent out to take their chance  
in the markets of the world - After  
an infancy anxiously tended, subject to  
many vicissitudes & some misunderstandings  
(but are not bygone, & be bygone in Ireland?)  
the little letter-fuels industry has now  
settled itself in a home of its own, that in  
Gold Crown letters proclaims itself a  
"Basket Industry" to the summer tourists  
on the long cars that pass in the road below.  
great was the excitement when one frosty  
morning last January Mike, the  
transport carrier, came with an extra  
cart for the heavy baskets <sup>the large</sup> ~~only~~ just  
able to be got through  
the doorway, is carried carefully down  
the steep path - Pat & Willie Tom & Dan  
"Black Foyon" & White Foyon, that &  
Martin, all lend an eager hand to the  
ropes that secure it on the first stage  
of its long journey to the word's Fair.  
Among all the group that stand round  
to watch it off, from the industrial  
veterans of four years standing, down  
to Pat the younger & little Tom the  
beginner, as yet more alert to run an  
errand than to twist a candle, -

There is hardly one without a brook  
or a well in the great country for which  
their work is bound; & their thoughts  
flow westward so naturally that  
Chicago is as familiar to their  
imagination as Dublin.

Behind the workroom, in a sheltered  
spot, lies up the mountain, the  
new ore beds. It is only three months  
since, for the first time, the air on the  
hillside was filled with the pleasant  
smell of willows boiling, & a couple of  
dainty rose-baskets were woven, to  
be carefully kept as the first fruits  
of native gold.

The soil of Cornucopia, so fitted for  
-growing, the natural depths of rich  
lands, already familiar with the  
coarser form of willow-work in the  
native twig creels, - all point to  
basket-making as an industry  
especially suited to the country -  
Indeed looking at the entire absence  
of wood in the neighbourhood, the  
founder of this industry foresaw a day  
when not only shall distant

markets be full of better fracture  
Basketware, but the cabins of the whole  
Carony shall be fitted with Cornu-made  
crockery, chairs & tables, bookshelves,  
and book-cupboards, bedsteads, egg-cups,  
- perhaps even coats, " & why not in  
Curtain, knives & potato-pots?" asks a  
scoffing friend - But there is one thing,  
at least, among the work for Chicago,  
a pretty little desk or writing table,  
perhaps more fit for a Boston Condoir,  
than for a Cornu-made cabin, made of  
pale (druffed) oaks, with its stool,  
paper basket, and dainty little  
fittings all command that extorts  
reluctant admiration even from  
the scoffer at a "creating chair"  
situated however, the work has been  
chiefly such as can go by post, for  
the light railway is still to come  
"tomorrow" - But the Cornu-made  
flower baskets & other rails, egg-stands  
& dainty doll's chairs, are beginning  
to have their own reputation in Great  
Britain & further off -  
The little factory employs but few

workers as yet, - even counting the 5  
(Liberish) girls who do the plaiting; yet  
a friendly eye, looking quietly on, may  
see in it a "picture in title" of the  
needs & virtues of the Irish people,  
with perhaps a "side-light" on the  
Irish "question" -

Watch the little group of boys that start  
day after day, in the darkness of a  
winter morning, from the bleak side  
of the Renoyl Mountain for their boy  
"school" walk towards the  
'green dawn' hardly glimmering  
down the Kylemore valley; look  
on at their steady industry till day till  
they set out westward again in the  
twilight, often to face such a "white  
hurricane" as sweeps the Comerana  
hills in winter time; & you will hardly  
say an Irishman does not care to  
work when there is something to  
work for! - Or could any  
prejudice be proof against that  
sweet tempered readiness to be interrupted

6  
even in an interesting piece of  
new work, the smiling prompt "I  
will miss," with which a boy runs  
to chase a marauding black sheep  
from the early peas, or to catch the  
post-car with a belated letter?

And if there is sometimes a tendency  
to pick out the very best pieces for  
the finer work, & tread the rest  
underfoot, may it not be forgiven as  
a very natural vice, if not even  
defended as an artistic virtue?  
After pupils than the Irish boys it  
would be hard to find. They have some  
of the obstinate prejudice, the slow  
to catch an idea, that makes it  
so hard to an English peasant to try  
a new plan - To make a fresh  
kind of basket is an object of  
emulation: a new impression is  
taken almost at ready - From  
time to time, as the boys are ready

For it ~~was~~ has been a teacher  
brought to carry them on another  
day; above this a Frenchman from  
a basket-making village of the Ardennes,  
another, a solid Lorraine  
workman, who shakes his head  
doubtfully at the fine French twists  
& says the handles must be stronger.  
And very interesting it is to see how,  
apart from any definite teaching of  
new ways, a half unconscious  
imitation shows at once in all the  
work - now, a dimly delineation of  
finer suggest the original French  
influence; & again, after but a few  
weeks of a new regime, with greater  
strength, a certain cloud of clumsiness  
settles on every basket: the touch of  
the Lascor! But through one <sup>phase</sup> ~~phase~~  
plus other, the work is growing  
better. Native taste is use, wanting  
and with a few years of steady work,  
the little factory at Lelles, France



away yet send Knitting Baskets to 8.  
Amsterdam, & wicker Lounges to New  
Orleans - You write Celtic grace &  
spirit, & just a faint touch of  
foreign stolidity "ai melcandle"  
what more can we wish for in a  
Basket, or a nation?

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The Cornucopia Baskets will be

found as hardy as Aberdeen's ~~state~~  
~~at the~~ Irish village at  
Chicago -

Do not fail to return this!

C. K. L.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013