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THE WHISTLER AT THE PLOUGH

Containing Travels, Statistics, and Descriptions of Scenery and Agricultural Customs in Most Parts of England

Alexander Somerville

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The Whistler at the Plough

Alexander Somerville (1811-85) was an extraordinary figure, notorious in his own lifetime for his espousal of political reform. The youngest child of impoverished farmers from the Scottish border country, he was the last soldier to be flogged publicly in Britain, after openly stating that his regiment would not fire on Reform agitators. In his subsequent journalistic career his stance was influenced by his concern that violent revolution would inevitably be crushed and so lead to greater suffering among the working class, and he therefore supported the less radical reform movement urged by Cobden. He was a passionate opponent of the Corn Laws, and The Whistler at the Plough (published in 1852) is a collection of his letters and essays for the Anti-Corn-Law League, based on information gathered during his own travels around the country. The volume also contains his eye-witness account of the Irish famine of 1847.

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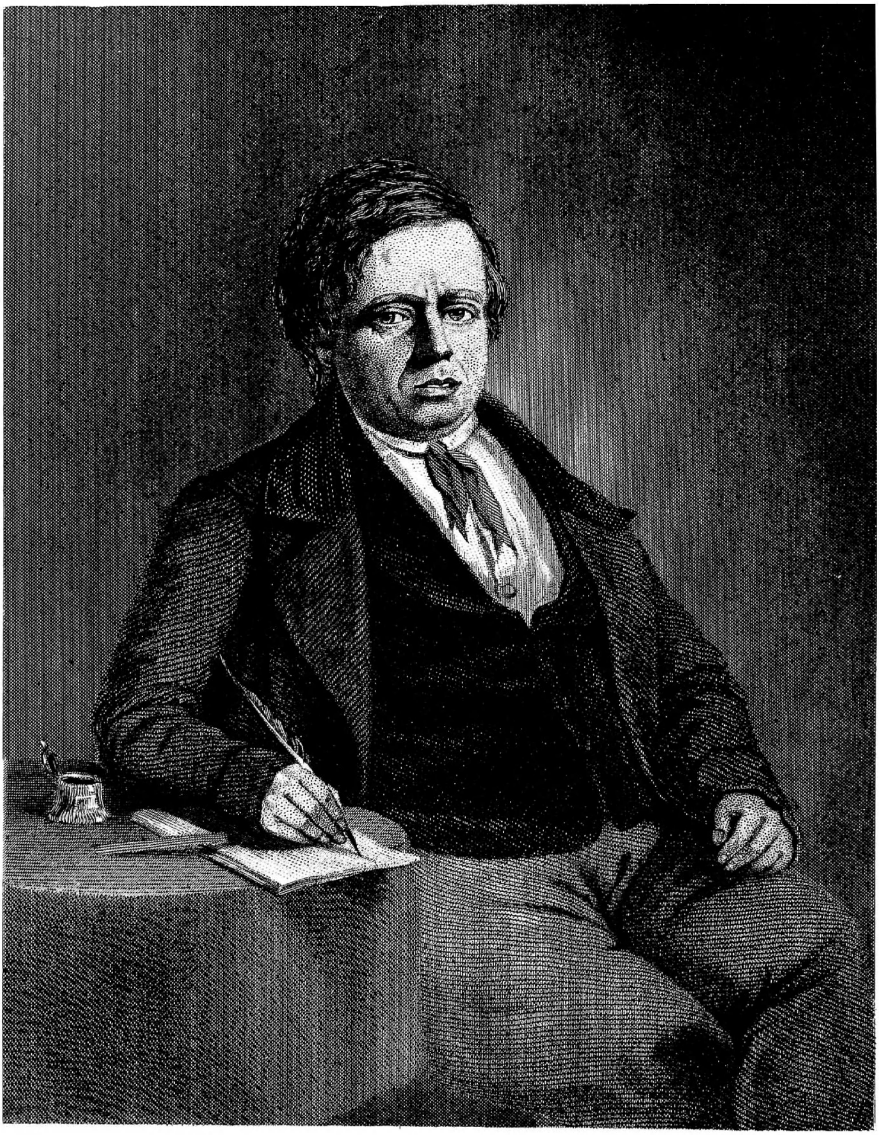

P Wilkinson. W. Wood Sc.

Alexander Somerville.

JAMES AINSWORTH, MANCHESTER.

THE WHISTLER AT THE PLOUGH

AND FREE TRADE

BY

ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE,

ONE WHO HAS WHISTLED AT THE PLOUGH.

1852.

MANCHESTER.
JAMES AINSWORTH, 93. PICCADILLY.

THE

WHISTLER AT THE PLOUGH;

CONTAINING

TRAVELS, STATISTICS, AND
DESCRIPTIONS OF SCENERY & AGRICULTURAL CUSTOMS
IN MOST PARTS OF ENGLAND:

WITH

LETTERS FROM IRELAND:

ALSO

"FREE TRADE AND THE LEAGUE;"

A BIOGRAPHIC HISTORY.

BY ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE,

AUTHOR OF LETTERS
SIGNED
"ONE WHO HAS WHISTLED AT THE PLOUGH,"
"REUBEN," &c.

MANCHESTER:
JAMES AINSWORTH, 93, PICCADILLY.
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1852.

INTRODUCTION.

In the early years of the Anti-Corn-Law League, free trade was viewed, alike by its advocates and opponents, as a question with manufactures and commerce on one side and agriculture on the other. But having been bred to agricultural employment, and accustomed to think though not to write much; having travelled some, and been observant in travelling, I was strongly impressed with a belief that, of all the interests to be promoted by free trade the agricultural interest would be most benefited, and of all persons interested in agriculture, living on or living by the land, the landowners were the parties who had most to gain. My reasons for so thinking will be found in various forms and places throughout this work. I saw and admired the sight of gigantic Manchester lifting up its head and crying, "No monopoly!" and I believed in the faith of that giant, that it, and those who were leagued with it, would some day overcome the mistaken monopolists, and compel them to yield. Yet how far distant did that time seem; what unknown and unlooked-for elements of national unhappiness might be engendered in compelling the agriculturists to surrender their unserviceable, yet dearly cherished protection! Nobody in this country has so large a stake in peace and order as the commercial classes, the owners of money and machinery. Nobody is more sensible of that than themselves. Nothing was more remote from their designs than the use of unconstitutional means to compel the agriculturists to yield. But how hopeless seemed the task of convincing two-thirds of the House of Commons, four-fifths of the House of Lords, and all the agricultural constituencies, that it was just to the other classes of the nation that they should yield, should submit to receive lower incomes and live at less expense. Yet so far as I had listened to anti-corn-law speeches or had read them, the advocates of free trade looked for success by these means, and these only. I speak of the time previous to 1842.

Wherefore, believing that the agriculturists would be gainers by the surrender of their monopoly, I at last thought it might do good, and could do no harm, to give my opinions and the reasons for holding them to the public. But how was I, unknown as a writer, to get into print; or if into print, to get readers, to say nothing of believers? I tried, sent an article to an evening paper which was understood to be the London organ of the free traders, and waited a few days with some anxiety to see it published. It was not published. I then sent a note to the editor, calling his attention to it, and requesting that, if he did not intend to use it, to leave it out for me at the office, and I would call for it. I did call, and was told that it had been "thrown on the fire with other rubbish of the same kind."

This answer, coming from the paper which was generally understood then to be (which I now know to have then been) the paid organ of the League, led me to believe that there was no hope that such anti-corn-law opinions as mine could or would be admitted in support of corn-law repeal.

However, I tried again; re-wrote something of the same kind, and sent it to another paper. It was not inserted. The reason given was, that the publication of such opinions would do more harm than good to the cause of corn-law abolition; that they would only be ridiculed, for they were in fact ridiculous. And the editor added, that he regretted to say this of an article which "otherwise displayed a knowledge of the corn-law question and evinced some talent."

This last was rather more soothing than to have ones "rubbish" thrown into the fire. It was some small encouragement to try again; yet how to try again, when everybody seemed to think it "ridiculous" to advocate the abolition of protection to agriculture for the benefit of the land and the landowners, I did not so clearly see. I pondered on the subject for several weeks, and examined it on every side, to see if I was not labouring under some hallucination. No; the more calculations made; the more recollections of agriculture gathered from previous observation; the more reflection given to the capacity of the soil of England to produce and the capacity of the people of England to consume, the firmer was my conviction that free trade and large trade would be beneficial to the owners and cultivators of the English soil more than to any other classes or interests whatsoever. And though I did not dream that the apostle of free trade, the member for Stockport, would so soon and so successfully take this view of the question; and as little that the great constitutional statesman, Lord John Russell, would within three years of that time proclaim in parliament, and obtain political credit for that proclamation, that protection had not been the support but the bane of agriculture; far less that his great compeer, the late Sir Robert Peel, would within four years confess the same conviction, and, in an illustrious self-sacrifice, risk his official exaltation and power, throw private friendships, political traditions, and party associations to the wind, regardless whether that wind was but a breath of enmity or a tornado of opposition, that he might minister to his country and to mankind in accordance with new truths, which were proved to be truths from new sources and by new circumstances; still, though looking forward to none of those great changes in so short a time, the humble hand that now traces these words traced then the words of an undoubting faith, the faith of other prophets, that commerce would be emancipated, nation would be to nation as neighbour to neighbour; that monopolies, clouds of commercial night, would expire, each in succession, by the light which the pre-expiry of its associates permitted to fall upon it; that England, in the van of nations, would be the first to march upon this glorious millennium; that the downfall of England's greatest commercial monopoly, that which disordered her daily bread and her daily labour. would be the signal for the fall of all the rest; that this would fall when the owners of the land saw that they were not called upon to make a sacrifice, but to accept a benefit, in giving freedom to industrial enterprise; and that, until this was proved, the corn-law would not be repealed.

Such was then my belief; and though no single article of that faith was original to me, all having been expressed, and better expressed, by others, yet the last-mentioned article. which was the first to be practically adopted for the attainment of the rest, seemed to be only of fractional importance in the opinion of those who admitted it; while nobody had admitted it who at that time held possession of the public ear, or eye, or judgment.

So, to fix public attention on this; to bring it within the scope of proof and of belief, and to make every public finger and finger-post point to it as the only road to free trade, at least the shortest and safest road, I once more resolved to write, but to write in a manner that would not at first sight let the main purpose be seen. The design was to keep the "ridiculous" doctrine out of sight until I had got some hold upon the public; and, to get that hold, it seemed that the best style of writing would be one which eschewed the didactic and the still less welcome array of dry figures, which in newspapers had hitherto made agricultural politics an uninteresting subject, and to take up a style of narrative and description.

I sat down and wrote accordingly, (it was in February 1842;) and having finished the first article at a late hour, retired to rest without having decided what signature should be attached to it. The common A. B. C. or X. Y. Z. signatures did not seem suitable, and I fell asleep without having fixed on anything. My mind was at this time, and had been for weeks before, so full of the subject, that I dreamt of it in my sleep; and on this night, while sleeping, wrote, as I thought, the signature "One who has Whistled at the Plough," to the letter which was lying unsigned. When I awoke in the morning, I was so impressed with these words, and with the belief that I had seen them on paper, that I thought they must have been written in an hour of weariness on the previous night, and that what was like a dream was not a dream. The slips of written paper were turned to eagerly, but nothing was signed there, nor had anything been signed; so thinking this designation of myself, which was at least truthful, might do, I appended it.

After some doubt, I thought of trying the *Morning Chronicle* with the letter I had written. I sent it there, and found myself more fortunate than elsewhere. It appeared on the 22d of February 1842, and I was so pleased to see myself in print on a subject which now occupied all my thoughts, namely, the benefit which English agriculture would derive from free trade, that I wrote a second letter. This was also published, and I received an intimation that others in the same style would be accepted, and this intimation was accompanied with what gave me a favourable opinion of the liberality of the editor and proprietors of that paper. Owing to the pressure of parliamentary debates, or other causes which I might not have been made acquainted with, fewer of my articles appeared in the *Chronicle* than I had expected. From February to August there were only six.

In the early part of August I received a letter from the editor, Mr Black, requesting me to call on him at the office. I had not seen him before, having up to that time communicated with him by letters or messengers only. He received me in his editorial room with kindness, and proceeded to say that my letters had given great satisfaction; that he had heard them spoken well of in the highest quarters, as useful and ——. It is not for me to repeat all he said on this head, though I confess to have been rather pleasantly tickled with his expressions of approbation. I had never up to that time heard more than one single word for or against my humble productions, and that single word I supposed was against them. It was in a coffee-house one day, when two gentlemen were sitting over their coffee reading the morning papers, while I was sitting in an adjoining box. One of them had the *Chronicle* in his hand, and said to the other, "What do you think of this Whistler at the Plough?" To which the other replied, "Humbug!" that was the only word I had heard in praise or blame of what I had written, (and I suppose "humbug" meant blame,) until I now heard Mr Black speak of what had been said in "high places."

After these preliminary observations, he took a letter from the table before him, and, unfolding it, said, "Here is another gentleman who seems to have been pleased with what you have written. He wishes to know if he can see you, and I think it will be worth your while to make his acquaintance. It is Mr Cobden, the member for Stockport. He will be at the House of Commons this afternoon, and if you go there and inquire for him in the lobby, you will find him. If not, this is his address, where you will see him to-morrow morning any time before twelve. You should go down to the House at once; I think you might do worse than form an acquaintance with these Manchester men of the League."

I thought so too, and so I went, wondering as I went what kind of man Mr Cobden might be, and how I should know him. I found him, and was not many minutes in his presence until I felt his intellectual power, though in manners he was as simple and humble as a gentle child. His knowledge of the free trade question extended far beyond my knowledge of it; but he was pleased to say that I had afforded him some information, and had opened a new channel of inquiry for more. He said then, as he has said often since, that in the process of instructing others the Leaguers had been themselves instructed. But unless it were on the question of how far the owners of land would be benefited by free trade, he seemed to have the same opinions then as he continued to have to the end of the controversy. On that point, and on that only, was I enabled to make suggestions which had not then occurred to him, but which he afterwards adopted. Subsequently I have communicated new facts, and have suggested new applications of them for argument, but was always too late; my duller comprehension had never seen them so soon as he had seen them himself. While, on the other hand, he communicated new views to me which I had neither seen before, nor comprehended clearly even when he introduced them. But he always introduced new views as questions for my consideration, not as positive certitudes. Of this kind was the question of how far the farmers taxed each other for each other's supposed protection? How far the wheat-growing farmer taxed the cheese-making farmer and the sheep farmer? the oats and barley growers, the wheat growers? and so on. When this subject was first opened to me, I doubted whether the free traders had a case in it. Mr Cobden was sure they had. He suggested the subject to Mr Morton of Whitefield Example Farm, Gloucestershire, who confessed this view of the question to be new to him; but at the same time he said he thought there was truth and force in it. He undertook the task of examining it closely, and, in doing so, made a series of calculations, which were published, and did more, I believe, than any single publication whatever, to convince thinking minds, not before convinced, of the fallacies of protection. I was engaged in similar calculations, and arrived ultimately at similar results. But about that time (end of 1844 and spring of 1845) my attention was directed more to the losses in live stock sustained by farmers from the failure of the hay and turnip crops, comparing their positive losses with the certain advantages which they would have gained had they given the money paid for very dear hay—keeping the sheep and cattle barely alive—for Indian corn, or beans, or oats, or barley of foreign growth, to feed the sheep and cattle fat, such pulse and grain being then obtainable at moderate prices, had not the law of *protection* prohibited their use, and condemned the live stock to hunger and the farmers to poverty. The loss of wool from the low condition of the flocks, and the inferiority of the lambs from the same causes in 1845; the loss of manure then, and at all times, from not feeding more cattle, cattle not being fed for the want of provender, and the consequent difficulty and increased expense in the production of wheat; these all formed subjects of inquiry for me, at the suggestion of Mr Cobden; and for the attainment of the facts involved in them I travelled over many thousands of miles of the rural districts.

In the following pages I have made a selection of letters and reports from various districts, without dwelling elaborately on any particular place or subject. My purpose is to present a kind of moving view of the country, at the same time that a record—imperfect I confess it to be—will be made of that process of education which Mr Cobden and his coadjutors applied to the "agricultural mind." If I knew all that was done by the many assistant teachers, most of them far abler than myself, I could not write all. So I have thought it best to confine my book to a selection of my own writings. But I cannot pass over this incidental allusion to others, without acknowledging the eminent services of such writers on the agricultural side of free trade as Mr Morton of Whitefield; Mr Lattimore of Whethamstead; Mr Hope of Fenton Barns; Mr Morse of Swaffham; Mr Hyde Greg; Mr Welford, who edited the agricultural department of the League paper; and others with whose printed opinions I am more familiar than with their names.

And, again, the acknowledgment must be made, that what they wrote and what I wrote would have had but little effect had there not been a master-mind, superior to all of us, who winnowed our grain from our chaff, and added to it from the riches of his own intellectual storehouse.

And saying this, I return to Mr Cobden, and will only farther remark in this Introduction, that at my first interview with him, he laid down for me as a rule to be observed, what he never failed to re-state at every interview I had with him during the four eventful years that succeeded, namely, Never to write a description of an estate or a farm so as to make any landlord or farmer feel aggrieved, though there should be much to find just fault with, unless some important fact or principle was at stake. Not to make enemies needlessly. Never to write all the truth, but reserve some of it to fall back upon. This reserve of facts to be brought up as a last resort should those first produced be assailed and denied. Never to hazard any statement on hearsay, no matter how credible the informant might seem to be; for there were often local and private influences that prejudiced very good and well-meaning men against landowners and their agents, and led them to give a high colour to matters which, though facts, were not facts of the shape and colour which they represented them to be. And then he was pleased to say that he had confidence in my discretion; that it was the absence of all acrimonious feeling which he had observed in my letters upon landlords and farmers that had led him to ask for my assistance. He made some other observations about what I had written, which it is not for me to repeat, and then, taking me by the hand, bade me go upon the mighty work which, with him and his fellow Leaguers, I had undertaken. Heaven, he said, only knew how much labour we had before us, and how long we would have to work; but so righteous did he believe the cause to be, so well founded in justice and sound national policy, so all-important to our own country and to the whole human race, that he felt confident of ultimate success, and, further, he believed that every man working to ensure that success, with zeal and honesty of purpose, would feel a consciousness of well-doing within his own mind that would be a reward for any amount of labour, though, at the same time, the League would defray all necessary expenses of such assistants as myself.

This interview occurred, I think, on the 24th of August 1842, and on the 25th I proceeded on a journey into Buckinghamshire, as related in No. I. of "*Notes from the Farming Districts.*"

THE WHISTLER.

NOTES FROM THE FARMING DISTRICTS.

No. I.

Notices the Poet Gray and the "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard."—Touches on the Ideal, and comes down to the Real.—Enters on the merits and management of Farm-yard Manure, as seen at Stoke Poges, and as written of by Mr James Jackson, an eminent agriculturist.

THE "country churchyard" of Stoke Poges, which has long been the shrine of the Poet Gray, which in his lifetime drew forth the language of his sweet fancy, and at his death received into its earthly keeping all that part of him that had died or could die—this doubly sanctified churchyard was to me the principal object of attraction on entering the county of Buckingham. From the Slough station on the Great Western Railway I proceeded along a pleasant road hedged on each side by thorns, clean, neat, compact, and highly creditable to the locality, when compared with the wide, unserviceable, waste-spreading fences so commonly seen in other parts. All that grew in the fields of crop-kind looked well, and all that had been taken off to barn or market was well spoken of, so far as brief conversations with farmers and work people elicited information. The generous summer had done so much for the perfection of an abundant harvest, that a passer by could not help feeling happy with the happy farmers, whether the science and industry of the latter rendered them deserving of the sympathy or not. Therefore I passed on, to reach, while the sun still brightened the tree tops, the place of the "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard."

I found the poet's grave by the tombstone erected to his mother's memory; and the deep shade of the heavy broad yew trees realized his description. The "frail memorials" of which he speaks were also evident enough. Indeed their reality despoiled some of the poetry of the expression; for they were not merely "frail," poetically speaking, as all monuments are, but they were positively so, being in many cases made of wood. However, a considerable majority of the "mute inglorious Miltons" and the "village Hampdens" were without any mark or monument save the grass rankly rising on their graves, to die when winter comes. But all of them had that deathless memorial around them which their poet had reared, and which obtains for their humble resting-places a more than common respect. The churchyard being completely imprisoned in a thicket of gigantic trees, and these being again surrounded by the formal neatness of a gentleman's park, a stranger would look in vain for the place where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," but for the white spire that shews itself among the trees, or for "some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood," who may be seen clipping a hedge or milking a cow in the adjoining meadows. The late Mr Penn of Stoke Park, a descendant of the family of the celebrated Quaker of Pennsylvania, erected a monument to Gray, on which is inscribed some of the poet's own lines. It stands at the bottom of the park, three or four hundred yards from the churchyard, and is altogether, in situation, style, and adornments, so out of keeping with the place where the body lies, (so I thought,) that I hastened away from it to find, or imagined to find, the "nodding beech," or some other of his favourite trees. I entered a grassy enclosure, from which many miles of country could be viewed. The woods and fields, reddened by the setting sun, stretched far away, and united Berkshire with the blue horizon of the south, while Windsor Castle sat in the centre of the scene, like a giant at rest, bathing his feet in the deep Thames and the gathering fog which rose upon the water's breast.

But though the ideal, rather than the real, had possession of the mind, I was constrained to hold companionship with the latter, and I found it associate itself with me in the shape of sundry cart-loads of cow and horse dung. I had pleased myself with the probability of Gray having stood on the same spot where I then stood, viewing the scene that I then viewed, sitting down to rest on the clean grass where I thought of sitting myself down to rest, when I perceived that all the grass was covered by a dry substance that had once been farm-yard manure. It had once been manure; and had it been taken to a field and ploughed into the soil, it might have continued to be manure until it was decomposed by the chemical influence of the matter composing that soil, after which its fertilizing power would have existed for a few years as a portion of the soil itself. But it had been carted out and spread upon the surface of a pasture-field, the bodily substance of it—that over which the sun and the gases of the air had no other power than to dry and leave to crumble—was there;

but as dead and incapable of quickening vegetable life as the dry dust in the adjacent grave-yard was of renewing its own animal existence. At the hamlet of Stoke I observed that the manure was laid up in heaps in the yard, exposed to the wasting power of the air, instead of being retained in a hollow or pit, or beneath a covering, where all its powers could be preserved. And, unfortunately, this manner of wasting manure is common over all parts of England, unless, perhaps, in Norfolk and Northumberland, or some parts of Suffolk. And not only this manner of wasting it, by laying it up in dunghills instead of putting it into dungpits, but the absurd practice of spreading it on grass-lands to lie and wither is a universal practice, and a practice so wasteful that, in manure alone, the farmer loses more than he would lose by the total repeal of the corn-laws, were these laws repealed before he brings his present crop to market. The loss by the manure is a positive loss; the loss by a repeal of the corn-laws is a supposed one; both of which, with some others, I shall estimate in the course of these letters. Meantime, for the good of the farmers of the comparatively well cultivated district of Stoke Poges, for the better economy of all cultivators, and especially for the benefit of a bread-eating population, who have a right to claim that the land and its fruits should not be wasted, I shall give a few extracts from a practical farmer and standard author on the value of that article which is so universally wasted—farm-yard manure. The work from which I quote is that of Mr Jackson of Pennycuik. He says—

"The situation of the dungpit should be near the stables and cow-houses, and placed so low that all streams of urine from them should flow at once into it, so that nothing be lost." And he adds—"It should be covered by a roof, so as to prevent the action of the sun." He also says—"It is of the utmost importance, though too frequently neglected, to convey to the pit the entire liquid refuse of the farm-yard, provided the quantity be not so great as to make it advisable to have a separate pit for its reception." And of dung-heaps carted to the fields he says—"In every instance the dung-heap in the fields should be placed in a hollow situation with a substratum of earth, and should have a scattering of a few inches of earth over it and around the sides, to keep in the volatile gases." And again he says—"At whatever time the dung is applied, it should in the first place be scattered evenly over the land, and ploughed in as speedily as possible. Every instant in which it is exposed to the air it is losing its value."

To the foregoing, the editors of Jackson's work, the Messrs Chambers of Edinburgh, add a note, which states—"We have seen lands in Germany covered with stable dung which had evidently been exposed on the surface for weeks, and was as dry as a chip." If such is to be seen in Germany, it is also to be seen in England, and in almost every part of it. But it is not to be seen in Belgium nor in China, two countries where manure is better cared for than in any other part of the world.

Jackson says—"There is no farmer but must have occasion to keep up the fertility of his land by the application of lime, bone-dust, rape-cake, and other ingredients, and a great part of this expense may be saved by collecting and applying what is absolutely wasting in his farm steading." And once more he says, speaking of collecting the liquid manure—"To accomplish this object, proprietors of lands should, if required, assist the tenantry in the erection of cisterns; for, as these are not removable, few tenants having only a nineteen years' holding would be willing to defray the expenses out of their own funds."

Now when the manure of the farm-yard is so wasted as we see it; when it is so valuable as we find it proved to be; when it is even doubtful if a tenant with a lease of nineteen years (the common term of Jackson's locality) can venture the expense of the necessary apparatus for collecting manure, what are we to expect of the English farmers whose landlords leave them to flounder on as they did fifty years ago; who give them yearly holdings of their farms, and employ lawyers to collect rents at rent time, votes at voting time, petitions at parliament time, and who, under a pretence of securing to them a protection from foreign competition, keep them in an unceasing fear of insecurity in respect of their own conduct?

But there is in many cases much to be said in defence of the landlords, inasmuch as the tenures by which the land is held are of such a nature as to mar all improvements and to render leases inoperative. It is said that James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, declared, after his return from an agricultural project in England, that he found it more necessary to be an acute lawyer than a skilful farmer.

No. II.

September 19, 1842.

It has been alleged that the name of Buckingham is derived from the natural forests of beech-trees which grow in some parts of the county, and which by the Saxons were called *Buccan;* but this is an error, none of these forests have been at any time in the vicinity of the town of Buckingham, the point at which the name was first fixed. The word *boch* signified, in the Saxon tongue, a charter, and *boching*, a meadow charter, or meadow held by charter. *Ham* signified sometimes a hamlet or small village, as also a mansion. We have, therefore, Bochingham, (now written Buckingham,) the mansion, or villages, of the chartered meadow. On the other hand, a copyhold was called *foch*, and the land, with its village or mansion, Fochingham.

There are hills and dales, wood and water, in every variety in Buckinghamshire. In truth, it is a lovely section of lovely England; and many of its sweetest recesses and noblest eminences possess an interest from historical events, political and literary, which makes the foot unwilling to move, and the fancy linger long after the foot has moved away. In my last letter I spoke of Gray, and the Elegy, and Stoke Church. Now I have to speak of Taplow Hill, overlooking the Thames, and the broad meadows which wedge out the distant undulations of field and forest in Berkshire. Like the rich and titled residents whose dwellings crown his head, and who are but food for coming death, like their fellow-mortals labouring in the fields below, Taplow is, as his fellow-hills, a mass of crumbling chalk; but the infirmity of his nature is hidden, save on one side, where the untiring river gnaws into his breast as ceaselessly as restless time worms away the heart of human strength. On every other side, and on most points of this, Taplow wears the richest dress which the summers of England can afford him; and variously disposed in his leafy robes may be seen, diadem-like, the mansions and villas of rich men, in their several varieties of simplicity and grandeur.

We have Dropmore, the seat of the Grenvilles, where strangers may visit the gardens, rich in exotics—rich even to matchlessness in some departments. We have Hedsor, the seat of Lord Boston, high in situation, yet as nobly arrayed in its towering woods as its lord in his robe of state. We have other lords, with knights and baronets, and among the latter Sir Francis Burdett. But finest and most delightful of all their mansions is Clifden, centre-piece of the front group, the residence of Sir George Warrender. This has had several owners, among whom was Frederick Prince of Wales, great-grandfather of her present Majesty, who here congregated around him the most eminent men of all professions and ranks of life—men whose names and words will exist when the Thames has turned old Taplow and all his magnificence into meadows and mud. The mind swells even beyond the breadth of view, broad as that is, when the eye looks from this exalted paradise. We see the noble river in the vigour of its youth, uncontaminated as yet by the world's intercourse; and the willing fancy winds with him a tortuous course, until he becomes the parent of a commercial city vast beyond all rivals. We follow him, and as he mingles with the eternal ocean, his fleets, offspring of his strength, go forth to every sea-shore of the world. Accompanying them in vagrant fancy, we see them chief of all fleets in all seas, and at last, suddenly recollecting our place of prospect, we find ourselves standing on the identical spot where that most heart-swelling of national melodies—*Rule Britannia*—was first sung. James Thomson, its author, was one of those eminent visitors whom Frederick drew around him; and in this circumstance, as also in the visits and poetry of Pope and others, we have the hallowed light of genius and old days around us, in addition to a present scene almost matchless in beauty.

Then, if we traverse the country towards the north, we find, at the distance of a few miles, just as we are about to criticise the agriculture of a great landlord—George Dupre, Esq., M.P. for the county—that we are once more on ground otherwise remarkable than for its lovely situation. We are in the pleasant town of Beaconsfield, and have around us the estates which were the patrimony of a being rare in the world—a rich poet. This was Edmund Waller. And when we pass from his grave in the churchyard into the church itself, treading lightly in the solemn stillness, we put our feet on the silent dust of one who, at no distant time, commanded the listening senate, and ministered with stupendous eloquence to the admiration of the intellectual world: we are over the grave of Edmund Burke.

Passing from thence, and advancing through a country variegated with many of the beauties of nature, to wit, hills, valleys, streams, and wild woods, with corn fields to match the woods in their wildness, we shall find ourselves, in due time, on a section of the Chiltern Hills. Here we find the natural beeches growing to a goodly size, and extensive coppices of indigenous trees, including boxwood, stretching over many miles. From lowest valley to highest woodland all is luxuriant, if not checked by some superior agency; but there, as elsewhere, the strong checks the weak, with only this difference, that the weak are weaker there, and the strong stronger than where we find humanity better schooled and land better cultivated. We see there, in fullest contrast, the weak bush and the strong tree, the weak corn and the strong weed, the weak tenant and the strong landlord.

In our advance to the Chiltern Hills we may visit Hampden, the seat of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, who, about twenty years ago, succeeded to the property of the last of the descendants of John Hampden the rebel-patriot. To the reader of history there are interesting associations at this place; to the curious in relics there are undoubted antiquities; to the lover of field sports there is sport; to the lover of the forest there are fine trees and forest scenery; to the student of geology there is ample instruction; to the lover of good mutton there are South Down sheep; to the lover of good farming there is bitter disappointment.

A portion of this district is known as the Chiltern Hundreds, the stewardship of which a member of Parliament nominally accepts from the crown when he wishes to resign his seat. When we advance to the front of these hills, we look down on the Vale of Aylesbury, an extensive tract of level land, remarkable alike for the richness of its soil and the indolence of its owners. I find that the writers of the Agricultural Survey of 1794 state that—" So rich and fertile is the soil about Aylesbury and Buckingham, that we are assured it is considered a disgrace to a farmer to suffer a heap of manure to be seen at the end of his field, to plough in straight lines, to disturb an ant-hill on his pasture, or to permit more water than falls from the heavens to pass over his meadow." And a topographical work, published twenty years subsequently, states—" In this district large tracts possess in such a degree the advantage of obtaining water, that the farmer can flow his grounds when and where he pleases, brooks and rivulets running through the greater part of these fine meadows, with few or no mills to interrupt or control him in the free application of their fructifying streams; yet, except in the neighbourhood of one or two of the paper-mills, there is scarcely an acre watered throughout the country."

The topographical writer says something in praise of the style of cultivation on and around the hills, where necessity has, in some degree, overcome the sloth of the valley; and adds—" *On the contrary, in the Vale of Aylesbury, and the more northern parts of the county, the richness and fertility of the soil has produced such a strong prejudice against any improvement among the farmers of these districts, that, contented with the natural fertility which nature has bestowed upon their lands, they neglect every artificial means by which they might be rendered more productive.*"

Reader, go over this *italic* passage again. It applies in a greater or lesser degree to much of England, and not alone to the vale of Aylesbury. Read it and recollect it. It is a text from which homilies must be preached. It is the key of the " Castle of Indolence," the key of the house of the bonded corn. One giant holdeth the doors of both. Let us knock him on the head with his own key; awaken that which he burieth in sleep; set at liberty that which he keepeth in bondage.

No. III.

The Duke of Wellington having denied that there was a scarcity of corn in the country in 1841, the author questions the means by which the Duke formed his estimate.

With his camp on Torres Vedras, Portugal in front, Spain in rear, the French occupying both, winter surrounding all, and discontent at home ruling a feeble government, which neither appreciated his talents nor dared support if they had appreciated them, Wellington stood strong in his position, but stronger in his own courage, protected in his deep trenches, but better protected in his deep sagacity—and he outreached all his enemies, whether armed with the sword in the Peninsula, or, more formidably, with the envious calumny in London. But great as was his defensive triumph—and it was unquestionably one of the greatest achievements of his great career—he had only to estimate and provide for contingencies which his previous experience had prepared him for. He might not know precisely how many French were in Portugal nor how many in Spain. The quantity of powder, and ball, and bread, in *their* stores he could only guess at, but he knew to a day's consumption the amount of his own. How much biscuit there was to each set of teeth he knew to an ounce weight. How much duty could be done by each eater of biscuit he knew to an hour's march. He could measure futurity, and direct his foresight with certainty; he was able to measure to each man his bread, and to the measure of the bread bind each man's mouth to receive and be silent. Not so now. He may compare for a nation a supposed supply with a supposed consumption; but where are the items of his estimate—from whence comes his knowledge of enough? Are there no empty cupboards—no breadless tables—no weavers with potatoes and gruel—no weavers with half potatoes and gruel—no weavers and others without work and without gruel? Or is there not a wide-spread necessity among the millions of working people to cut with such caution at a loaf—to pinch with such self-denial the meals of each day—that two loaves, and two meals may suffice where three would be gladly eaten? On the contrary, is it not known in every working man's family, and in a majority of the families of all the shopkeepers, tradesmen, clerks, and small gentry in the kingdom, that if bread and flour and butchers' meat were cheaper, they could each day of the year consume more than they do? And has the Duke of Wellington taken these deficiencies of consumption into account? He has not; and this is our reply to the question of—"What is to be done with a supply from abroad and an increased production at home?"

Yet this reply will not convince the owner and advocate of protected corn that the working population could eat more. Each will say there is distress in the factory districts, and that the masters have so mismanaged, that many people are unable to eat their fill of the "enough;" and they will lament, through press and pulpit, that a virtuous, well-fed, rural population, should be seduced to the towns, first to earn high wages, next to starve, and, employed or unemployed, to become the most criminal of British subjects, the most sinful of God's creatures. But having arrived at this point of argument, it becomes necessary for us to shew that hunger and crime are not exclusively town-bred; and, in doing so, I resume my observations on the condition of Buckinghamshire.

We are descending a valley with our faces southwards. Behind us is the town of High Wycombe, distant five miles. the intermediate space being farm fields, lovely in situation—lovely despite their weedy foulness and mismanagement. The Wyke rivulet, meandering through the meadows, is studded with flour and paper mills; and the London and Oxford road, following the course of the stream, is studded with public houses. On each side the ground rises with gradual ascent. until, at the distance of two or more miles, and at the height of three or four hundred feet, it again declines, and forms the banks of other valleys. And here, where we now stand. we have these heights ploughed to the top on our right, while on our left are woods of goodly timber, stretching to the distance of several miles, interspotted by an occasional field of grass or corn, ultimately terminating with Taplow and its diadem-like display of villas and mansions. The orchards on each side of us, and the luxuriant hedge-rows bend their branches beneath the weight of their ripening fruit; and wild flowers, offspring of the autumn, and plentiful as the fruit of the plants that flowered in summer, bloom as gaily as if summer and autumn contended for mastery and summer prevailed. In the shade of the orchards, cottages, clustered in groups and scattered singly, reveal themselves as we advance; and tall poplars rise above cottage and orchard, many of them in rows, so gigantic in stature, so hedge-like in form, as to give the idea that we are in some enchanted paradise guarded by giants. The distant blue of Berkshire may be traced in their openings and observed mingling with the blue of the heavens, while nearer at hand the rich vegetation tells of the alluvial meadows deposited by the adjacent Thames.

Having noticed the wayside marks of parish boundaries as we advanced, we are aware that Wooburn parish surrounds us; and, arriving at a village, we are informed that it bears the appropriate name of Wooburn Green. It is a sweet place. A smooth level of green turf, several acres in extent. is the centre-piece. Surrounding it are the houses, almost forming a circle; orchards stretching behind the houses; the tall poplars behind the orchards; and exalted woodlands towering above the poplars. The well-employed Wyke, almost tired of turning water-wheels, floats calmly along, and, as if conscious of having done its duty, prepares for the eternity into which it is about to enter—the sweeping Thames. As we linger, the loveliness grows upon us; and apples in tens of thousands in single orchards suggest that if England can produce an apple-pie we may hope for it here. Perhaps our first observation to the first person we meet refers to apple-pies, and, if so, the following will be the tone of the conversation—it is almost word for word that in which I engaged on entering the village:—

"Pies!" said the person with whom I conversed, "we as have apples and an income to afford flour may have pies and puddings both, but every family—nor the half, nor the quarter—have not fruit of their own, and, if they had, where be the flour to come from and the sugar?"

This induced me to inquire at once into the question of wages. The reply was that wages had been nine and ten shillings a-week, but that many were employed only partially, a few days at a time, while others were wholly without employment, and that in the heat of harvest! I proceeded to examine into the physical and moral condition of the people of this district more minutely than I had at first designed; for I was surprised (a commissioner, if examining into the state of the colliery or factory workers, would say *shocked*) at the extreme depression under which each family, each principle of independence, each feeling of humanity struggled. Irregular employment, family discomfort, female prostitution, drunkenness, idle habits, gambling, absolute ignorance, and, in many cases, starvation almost absolute, were the prevailing characteristics of the working population.

No. IV.

The Letter by Robert Hyde Greg, Esq., on "Scotch Farming in the Lothians."

The subject of Mr Greg's letter is "*Scotch Farming in the Lothians;*" and he opens it by saying—"The Lothians comprise the counties of Edinburgh, Haddington, and Linlithgow, and have latterly become celebrated for the superior system of cultivation carried on, the flourishing condition of the farmers, and the high rate at which the land is leased." And after he has recorded his visits to the various farms which he saw in various parts of these counties, Mr Greg says—"I have thus endeavoured to give, in a somewhat unconnected way, the result of my observations on the Lothian farming, *where high rents, high profits, and a well-paid and contented peasantry, are all seen combined in a pleasing union.*"

It is, however, necessary to be more particular in describing the Lothians than Mr Greg has been, lest people at a distance may form an idea that these districts are *naturally* a broad paradise of peace and plenty.

The three counties stretch along the south side of an arm of the sea called the Frith of Forth, over a distance of between seventy and eighty miles. Linlithgowshire (called West Lothian) contains 71,680 acres, of which 50,000 are cultivated, but many of these are a poor cold soil; 10,000 uncultivated, yet capable of giving some profit to their owners; and 11,680 are altogether unprofitable;—Edinburghshire (or Mid-Lothian) contains 230,400 acres, of which 181,000 are cultivated, but much of that quantity is also a cold soil, and not one-half of it so good as the middling land of Buckinghamshire, very little of it, if any, so good as the Vale of Aylesbury; 20,000 acres are uncultivated, and 29,400 are unprofitable;—Haddingtonshire (or East Lothian) contains 160,000 acres, of which about 100,000 are cultivated, 30,000 uncultivated, and 30,000 unprofitable.

The uncultivated and unprofitable bears the highest proportion in the latter county, but the cultivated is, upon the whole, a better district naturally than that of Mid-Lothian, and much superior to West Lothian. Excepting some particular and very limited localities—limited when compared with poorer ones—such as the Merse of Berwickshire, the Carse of Gowrie, on the Tay, and small portions of some other counties, the cultivated land of East Lothian is greatly superior to any in Scotland, yet it is barely equal in its natural qualities to one-half—perhaps I would speak more correctly if I said two-thirds—of the cultivated land in England. Of the 100,000 acres under cultivation some idea of the difference in its quality may be formed when I state that, with other young men, I have been engaged ten or twelve days at harvest work in the earliest parts of East Lothian; have then gone to Dunse market, engaged with a Berwickshire farmer for his entire harvest, only then beginning, his wages and work being higher and harder than the wages and work of the Lothians. We have been a month or five weeks with him, have seen every straw cut down; have then penetrated into Northumberland, reached Morpeth or the later districts of Durham, and had two or three weeks more. Having finished off there, we have returned to our own county, East Lothian, and engaged with one of the upland farmers, then in the heat of his harvest, perhaps in the very parish where we began ten weeks before a harvest finished within a month. The parish of Innerwick is one of those so varied in soil and climate. It comprises some of the richest land in the county and some of the poorest in the kingdom; is like a garden in some parts, a wilderness in others. Such, then, is East Lothian; and I deem this explanation necessary to guard strangers from supposing that all the county is a rich soil. Neither must it be supposed that such good farms as Mr Greg saw could be seen in other parts of Scotland, except in the limited districts already named; but it must be recollected, and I crave pardon for again repeating it, that one-half, if not two-thirds, of the land ploughable in England, could be rendered as productive at as small an expense as the best farms seen by Mr Greg, save, perhaps, those adjoining Edinburgh, where advantages are found not common to more rural districts.

What, then, did Mr Greg see? He enumerates the farms he visited; and of those beyond the influence of Edinburgh, he says—"No. 7. 500 acres; *rent*, L.1750." This he states to be a soil of stiff clay, which any practical person knows to be the most difficult and expensive of all soils to farm profitably. It is let at L.3, 10s. an acre; and Mr Greg states that the farmer and his two brothers, who are in the neighbourhood, pay the sum of L.4500 of annual rent. Such a farm as this, of 500 acres, would be let in Bucks to three or four yearly tenants, or perhaps more, who would with great difficulty pay, including tithes and poor-rates, the sum of five and twenty or at most thirty shillings an acre for it. Indeed, considering the stiff quality of the soil, which with them would waste the strength of six horses to a plough, they knowing little or nothing of the art of ameliorating clay soils, such land would more probably be let at fifteen or twenty shillings an acre.

Yet they would be whipped up to every election to vote for the candidate who would vote for a protective corn duty; and with the protection of that duty they would sit down with their rosy cheeks and their long pipes over their ale, lamenting their hard bargains, fearing deeply for Peel, hoping highly of the Duke of Buckingham.

"No. 9," says Mr Greg, "300 to 350 acres; 25 miles from Edinburgh; *rent* about L.1200. Farmer absent; and being the last year of the lease, the grieve (overseer) was not communicative, thinking we were looking at the farm for ourselves. Seventy acres in wheat, about 5½ quarters to the acre, and exactly equal over every inch of the field. The farm nearly without a fence, and almost every yard in the highest state of cultivation." To be without a fence is no merit, if fences are necessary either for cattle or shelter to the crops, but in those parts land is otherwise cared for than to put cattle on it to graze; cattle are fed at the stall, and beef is made in half the time, with no waste of food; manure is made, and good crops are grown. What did I see in Buckinghamshire? the crops struggling with weeds; in many fields they were suffocated, in every field they were unequal. Scarcely a fence was capable of keeping in cattle, and yet the fences were from twelve to fifteen feet high, occupying, with ditches on each side from five to fifteen yards of ground, and nursing in their warm shade the most luxuriant and most varied crops of weeds which vagrant nature could supply to her travelling emissaries—the winds. "It being the last year of the lease," says Mr Greg, "the grieve was not communicative, thinking we were looking at the farm for ourselves." It is always the last year of the lease in Bucks; and that suspicion and taciturnity which seize the Lothian farmer once in nineteen years keeps tyrannic hold of the Buckingham tenantry every year. Many of them told me that I need not be too eager in putting questions about their rent and produce, if I got the land I was looking for I would not find it much of a bargain; and almost all looked on me, as they look on every stranger, with suspicion.

"Considering the fate of the corn-laws to be sealed," writes Mr Greg, "and all unequal protection to the landed interest about to be withdrawn, I was anxious, both as a landlord and a farmer, to prepare for the state of things which such a change might introduce; more particularly, as a farmer, to prepare myself, by increased skill and economy in the management of my farm, for the keener competition and lower prices which the free introduction of foreign agricultural produce must establish." Accordingly he took his bailif with him, and visited the Lothians. He saw, as he says, that "there is as wide a difference between the system existing there and in these parts of England, as in that pursued in the small detached spinning mills of thirty years ago and what is now practised in the first-rate factories."

It is a singular coincidence that the finest farms visited by Mr Greg were either the property of Sir George Warrender of Lochend, or very near the town of Dunbar, around which is the Lochend estate; also that Mr Greg should have been at the great agricultural show of the Highland Society held at Edinburgh in a park belonging to Sir George Warrender, and that the best land which I saw in Bucks and Berkshire—the best land and the foulest weeds—the finest farms and the worst farming—should have been lying near, stretched in front, and in view of, the splendid mansion of Clifden, described in my letter No. II. the princely residence of this same Sir George Warrender! But beyond this remark we must not go; the farms are not Sir George's, neither has he any property there save the mansion and the wooded park and garden adjoining. His near neighbour, the Earl of Orkney, has a farm, however, which I visited there, and found depressed with the common disorder of the country. The barley absolutely wasted through the want of proper management; on the harvest field was, at least, double its amount of seed, and the crops were not so luxuriant as to have much to spare. The dung-heaps were laid up to dry, with the liquid running into a waste ditch, after the fashion of the most ancient ignorance.

The land in the valley of the Thames, so rich by nature. so valueless by cultivation, belongs in part, I was told, to a Mr Lewis. Close by, in another field, a man was paring off the tops of the couch and other weeds with a hoe. Beans had been the crop; and so thickly and unopposedly had the foulness grown, which, as the man told me, overtopped the beans, that the ground which he had hoed looked like an old pasture, or a piece of moor-land newly paired of its turf. The weeds were in seed also, and fully ripe, and he was mingling them as effectually as he could with the soil for the ruin of the ensuing crop. A short distance from him there was another bean field; and, to make the most of it, turnips had been sown between the rows of beans. The turnips were not much inferior to some I saw in fields specially devoted to them, yet they were so very feeble, so incapable of holding on against the foulness that choked them, and the beans had been such a meagre crop, at the same time the owner of them was so full of complaints about hard times, that I turned from the scene with shame. And I was within a few miles of the Great Marlow Union Workhouse, crowded with the unemployed poor; within a mile of Cookham and Maidenhead, in which the half-employed, and less than half-fed labourers were crawling about, asking, in return to every question asked of them, for "something to get a drop of beer," adding that "times be so terrible bad that they couldn't get half enough of work to do," that they couldn't get "bread enough no how."

Yet there is not in England's isle a county fairer in its face than these two to which the Thames is here the beautiful margin. Two days before I was in this neighbourhood her Majesty the Queen had driven from Windsor to visit Dropmore and the fine scenery of Taplow. Doubtless she looked down on this fine valley, and casting her thoughts to rugged Scotland, which she was within a day or two of embarking for, took one parting look of some of the loveliest scenery of lovely England. Yet on that day week—exactly that day week—the royal eyes saw the sun rise on Mid-Lothian, where farms produce six quarters of wheat and pay L.6 per acre of rent.

"No. 3," writes Mr Greg, "340 acres; old lease of 19 years recently expired—old rent L.1700, or L.5 per acre. The farmer took off L.18,000 to L.20,000, and has just bought a handsome estate in the neighbourhood, which he is improving. The farm is re-let at a *rent of* L.2000, *or* L.6 *per acre*."

"No. 2. At two miles from town, with ample supply of town manure, potatoes and turnips carried daily into Edinburgh—*rent* L.7 per acre."

These are samples of what her Majesty saw, or might have seen, within a week of her visit to Taplow—these are the farms on which Mr Greg says there are "*high rents, high profits, and a well-paid and contented peasantry combined in a pleasing union.*" In the lovely valley which her Majesty must have looked on from Taplow, there are *low rents, low profits, an ill-paid and a discontented peasantry.* The rents are thirty shillings an acre, a railway to London is at hand, and barges are passing and repassing on the Thames, ready to take away produce and bring back manure.

Mr Greg, speaking of the Lothian rents and profits, says —"It is an interesting question, but one I am not going to enter upon, how this improved system of cultivation can be introduced into England, particularly into our own and the neighbouring counties. Where are the landlords ready to grant a nineteen years' lease? Where the farmer of sufficient intelligence and capital to manage successfully 500 acres and lay out L.1000 to L.1800 on draining alone, during the two first years of his lease?" And after these queries he gives an opinion of the causes that have led to the great improvements in Scotch farming. Of these I shall speak in my next letter.

No. V.

The "Scotch Farming in the Lothians," as described by Robert Hyde Greg, Esq., is further noticed in this Letter, and the Causes of its Advancement are spoken of.

"I am inclined to think," says Mr Greg, "the *superior and more practical education* of the Scotch has been at the bottom of the improved state of things. Education has given the knowledge which has enabled them to apply their capital with success, and to extract from the landowner the long lease which enables them to invest their capital with *safety* as well as success."

No; not education. The school education of the rural population in Scotland is a meagre affair, and has been greatly over-rated. *The long lease is one of the main causes of the excellence in Scotch agriculture;* the facility of obtaining loans from the banks is another; so is the absence of tithes and the poor-laws—though there is much need of a properly regulated poor-law—the Scotch paupers being wretchedly provided for; *but the leading cause, which brought others into operation, and which has promoted the culture of the Lothian farms to the present state of excellence, was the original poverty of the country, which poverty impelled the owners of the soil to exertion, in order to reach, in some degree, the opulence of the landlords in England.* Of this *cause* abundant evidence is furnished, even in England itself. Scotland was once to England what the poor soil of England is to the rich at this day. In Buckinghamshire, and other counties near it, we see the poorer soils cultivated with a science and industry comparatively eminent; the richer soils lie in the profound sloth of two centuries. In Scotland, the husbandry of eighty or a hundred years ago was so very bad, the crops, the cultivators, and the people all so very poor, that the landowners were driven by *necessity* to do something for a reformation. The farmers being not only much poorer than those of England, but the farms much smaller, the landlords found it necessary to introduce a superior class of farmers, and to break up the small holdings. This superior class of farmers, being capitalists from the towns, or small tenants made great ones by favour of the landlord and assistance of the banks, were forced by necessity to demand leases, and the landlords were by necessity forced to grant them. The inferior implements of husbandry—at that time inferior to those of England—induced mechanics to study the construction of an improved class of implements, so that they have gone on improving until they have left England far behind. "Necessity is the mother of invention," says the proverb, and the proverb says truly.

Nothing could be a greater blessing to all interested in English agriculture, and that is the entire English nation, than the abolition of the corn-laws, if the abolition would withdraw that delusive prop which sustains indolence. Look to what age of the world we may, and to what country, we find individuals and nations falling into decay in exact proportion to the protection which obviates the use of exertion. Spain is an eminent instance. A nation once the most enterprising has become one of the poorest and most indolent, because an evil-working good fortune gave it mines of gold in other countries. There was no necessity to plough the rich soil of old Spain, and accordingly it is not ploughed, only scratched here and there. But Spain is now poor, and she must do something for self-redemption. She has some of the finest soil in the world, and lies within a short voyage of our shores; she has no cotton factories, and her clothing is expensive and inadequately supplied; her people are fonder of idle warfare than work; but if work they must, they will rather be in the open fields than in close factories; therefore, if they had a demand for their wheat, and a trial of our cheap clothing, we should see Spain improving. America excepted, we shall one day see her become our best customer for manufactures, and one of the best producers of wheat. Her people are extremely frugal in their diet. They could produce vast quantities beyond their consumption, and what they cannot eat they will learn to sell. When this and other competitors are seen in the corn market, there will be some *necessity* for our landlords to bestir themselves; and, bestirring themselves, they will see the propriety of adopting the system which has improved the Lothians.

As to education, if Mr Greg means school education, which I presume he does, it is the birthright of every child; and we, or the parents, or the government for us, rob that child of its birthright if we neglect its education. The parochial schools of the Lothians may have favoured the advancement of agriculture; but it must not be forgotten that they were the same as now, or as they were recently, when Scotland had a hundred years of bad cultivation before her. Indeed it is a common complaint with old people in Scotland that education has retrograded—they meaning religious education, which, in fact, must be the kind of education favouring agriculture, if anything from a school or church has favoured it. At all events, a knowledge of the practical sciences, or of anything calculated to expand the mind, formed no part of the education which I received, and I got all that two schools could afford. These schools were in East Lothian, and their teachers were equal to any in the county, keeping off the town academies. The course of instruction was the following:—

Lessons in a spelling book, and a flagellation with *the tawse*, (a piece of saddlers' leather two feet long, two inches broad, and split half the length into six tails.) When done with the spelling book, the New Testament, and—the tawse. When done with the New Testament, Barrie's Collection, (of select pieces,) and—the tawse. Accompanying that, psalms on Mondays, and—the tawse; the catechism five days of the week, and—the tawse; writing, and—the tawse; arithmetic, and —the tawse, all of which lasted over a space of six years. I was as seldom in mischief as any one; and, when I got any encouragement, more zealous to learn than many others; yet I hammered away, and was hammered on, for six dreary years —the most dismal period of my life—and did not know as much of arithmetic at the end of that time as I could now learn in a day, or any child of ordinary capacity, properly treated, could learn in six.

The education of the rural districts in Scotland has not been what strangers suppose it is. If a clever boy could make the discoveries which the schoolmaster is now supposed to teach him, he of course learned something; but he dared not communicate what he knew to the one who had to sit a week over a question in arithmetic, and then go home as ignorant of it as at first. In fact, the range of knowledge to be acquired in the school was so limited, and the necessity for each pupil acquiring all his knowledge without the aid of a superior deemed so essential, that education, properly so called, did not exist. And a flagellation being considered the natural accompaniment of each lesson by the schoolmaster, and all who abetted him, our parents and neighbours, every one, young and old, we, the pupils, believed it too; and, feeling the "tawse" to be a punishment, we had no other idea of education than as one of the evils of life which we could only hope to escape from when we grew big enough to thrash the schoolmaster, or get quit of him altogether by going to work in the fields. In short, a mother had no readier method of frightening a refractory child into obedience than by threatening it with the *school!* An Englishman sees an occasional Scotchman pushing himself forward in life, and therefore praises the Scotch school education; but, were I with any such Englishman in my native parish, (and there the style of farming is of the most superior kind,) I could put my finger on at least a dozen individuals who would have been men of livelier mind and clearer intellect than they are, had they never been at school at all, so thoroughly benumbed were their faculties by hammering and thrashing, and attempting to force them to know that which was never explained to them. And in Lothian, and the neighbouring county of Berwick, I could point to four farmers, one of them paying L.2000 of rent, none of them less than L.1000, who were at the same school with myself, *and never at any other*, who were occasionally thrashed as I was, though not so frequently, their fathers being farmers, and mine only a farm labourer, and who, left to their own wits for education, are notwithstanding eminent farmers.

In short, it is not the schools that have advanced the agriculture of the Lothians; but it is now at that point where real education may assist. When chemistry and other sciences are practised by the farmers—and to such practice they must be educated—Lothian will advance beyond its present fruitfulness. Hitherto, all that has been done has been by sheer industry, protected by a lease, and a moderate attention to the common physiology of vegetation; but if the abolition of the corn-law brings competition, we shall not only see England equal the Lothians, but the Lothians stretch far ahead of what they have yet attained to.

No. VI.

Cranbourne in Dorsetshire is a village with an extensive parish, stretching towards Wiltshire on one side and Hampshire on the other. The parish contains 2444 inhabitants, chiefly farm labourers, but all dependent on agriculture. Wages are at present eight shillings a-week, the rate of recent years, but some have reduced that allowance, and all talk of a reduction. The village is a confused collection of houses, standing in all shapes and positions, from the respectable cottage of the tradesmen with its garden, to the crumbling hovel of clay and wood occupied by the labourer, at a rent of L.3 and L.3, 10s. a-year without a garden. It stands in a hollow, and is surrounded with land of excellent quality, farmed by tenants-at-will at a rent of about L.1 per acre.

Cranbourne has a redundancy of labourers. At the low wages of seven and eight shillings a-week there are those who cannot find employment. There is no part of England where the promoters of emigration could more efficiently plant an office and an agent. The following are a few of the conditions on which such an agent should act:—

1st. Ascertain if the labourer is without employment, or, if he is employed, ask if he wishes to improve his condition; in whichever way he is, the answer will be one favourable to the agent.

2d. Fit him out at once. His family need not all go with him at first; his wife can stay at home, and one of the children can follow with his dinner. There need be no passage-money paid, nor weeks and months of sea-sickness and danger incurred. The distance is only two or three miles to the nearest landing-place. Neither need the trouble of erecting a hut of clay or wood be incurred, previous to building the comfortable and permanent cottage; the labourer can return to the hovel of clay and wood which he left in the morning in the old country.

3d. The labourer will have no occasion, on his arrival in the new country, to hew and burn down the giants of the forest. The land is already cleared, and he may have his choice of any part of many miles of country. He may begin by paring and burning; and when he turns up the first spadeful, he will break a virgin earth, never moved before by human hand.

4th. Previous to a commencement of digging and sowing, the emigrant will require to form an arrangement with the native chiefs. This an agent might do for him through the British government. The chiefs are by no means hostile to those who merely walk over their uncultivated territories; if no game is killed, and no attempt at cultivation is made, a settler will not be interfered with; but there is a sharp jealousy ready to oppose all attempts at digging, and sowing, and reaping, if these are made by any but the chiefs themselves, or their servants.

5th, and lastly. The unimproved wastes are so extensive and variously situated, as already stated, that unlimited choice of situation may be made. The soil is all good. Some is of first-rate quality. It must be estimated not by acres but by miles. In some directions the stranger who does not know where the settlers are planted, may go five miles; in others, eight miles; and in some, from ten to twenty miles, over a country not producing sixpence an acre, which, in two or three years, might be made to produce, per acre, several quarters of grain. The settlements already made are not so productive as they might be, because of the uncertainty of the holders. This uncertainty, and the evils attendant on it, was well shewn by Lord Stanley, in the last session of parliament, as regarded New South Wales. In the uncultivated country now under observation, a security similar to that obtained in New Zealand and the Australian colonies must be obtained ere it would be safe to send out such as the labourers of Cranbourne. The chiefs to be applied to would be chosen according to the district in which the emigrant intended to settle. Suppose the labourer moved towards Salisbury, the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and several landowners who are not enobled, would be the best to arrange with; while, if a movement was made in another direction, without intending to penetrate far into the interior, the Earl of Shaftesbury might alone be consulted.

However, all this is for the consideration of other parties. who will judge whether it is best to send labourers across an ocean of ten thousand miles at a great expense, or endeavour to employ them at a distance of two miles from their present homes.

No. VII.

Over a section of Salisbury Plain.—A Sunday in St Giles'.—A Notice of the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Ashley, &c.

Having visited Old Sarum, and the old tree where three old freeholders voted at the old elections, and having seen as much of New Sarum (so the city of Salisbury is fondly denominated by the inhabitants) as the worthy hôst of the —— inn and other kind friends thought fit to recommend to my attention, I set out on an inspection of what are seldom recommended to, and perhaps seldomer visited by, strangers—the dwellings of the agricultural labourers in the country. The first six miles of road brought me in contact with several shepherds, waggoners, and others returning from the great Weyhill Fair, which had been held during the week near Andover.

They were returning into various parts of Dorsetshire, and from them I learned the continuation of two important facts which had met me in every provious county, namely, that the harvest had been abundant, and that the labourers' wages were being reduced from one shilling to two shillings a-week in consequence of that abundance.

Around Salisbury I found the old wages to have been nine shillings for regular ploughmen and carters, and the reduced rate to be eight shillings, with a scarcity of employment. In those parts of Dorsetshire nearest to Wilts, the wages of the same description of men were, and had been, eight shillings, with some reductions to seven, and an expectation that such reduction would be general in a few weeks. A gentleman from the neighbourhood of Lord Portman's estate, near Shaftesbury, stated the wages in that district, and all the way down towards Devon, to be seven shillings, in some cases reduced to six.

One of my temporary companions was a dealer in geese. He bought them in the New Forest, in Hampshire, which stretches its bald downs and shaggy wildness into Dorset, and sold them to the farmers and millers near Salisbury. In the first instance, the breeders of them inhabiting an uncultivated country, which, though generally fertile, they were not allowed to cultivate, sold them at about eighteenpence, in order to raise money for the Michaelmas rents. He sold them at a small profit, and again purchased them at four or five shillings each at Christmas for the London market. Suppose the miserable dwellers on these vast commons were allowed to enclose, and compelled to cultivate well, a piece of land, the value to them may be at once seen as enormous even in the fattening of geese.

After producing eggs, and sustaining loss in breeding, they sell the ill-fed, yet full-grown bird, for eighteenpence, for the want of food to make it worth three times as much, which food is supplied by the farmers and millers in Wiltshire without almost any expense.

I had still six miles or more before me when this geese-dealer and the daylight parted, he taking the road to Blandford, the light following its westward career, both leaving me to loneliness, darkness, and the broad downs, the roads on which I was told could not be mistaken, they were so easily observed, but which I mistook from the easiness of perceiving so many of them.

Properly speaking, there was only one road, but it was such a jolly old-fashioned English road, that it branched into a hundred tracts the moment it escaped into the common. When the law of necessity came in force, as, for instance, at a declivity, or the crossing of a marsh or brook, these tracts re-united for common safety; but as soon as freed from the law, they were off again, each enjoying his liberty, each destroying the produce of more space, apparently for the love of destruction, than would have fed, and clothed, and lodged a state convict or a parish pauper.

My last travelling companion had told me to observe certain bushes and dark clumps of trees on the horizon, to keep one to the right and another to the left; and he accompanied his directions with anecdotes of robberies and murders committed in those parts in the olden times, hinting that at such a period as this, the great fair week, there might be people lurking about who might be tempted to mischief by a supposition that money was to be carried home, and that it was best to keep a sharp look out, and so on. With this injunction we parted.

I soon lost the way, and found on each side of me robbers enough—robbers of a nation's food; the most unjustifiable of all robbers, and filching more in one year than all the violent men have filched on Salisbury Plain since the Saxons first set foot on it.

These robbers were widely extending bushes of furze, and all manner of unprofitable rubbish, together with the open baldness of the downs, occupying many thousands of acres, which should have borne benevolent supplies of grain.

That the soil is capable of bearing grain profitably is abundantly testified by the patches of cultivation which, on my return some days after, in daylight, I saw interspersed amid the broken wildness. Other causes than a difference of soil had led to a cultivation of one part and a neglect of others.

A field of Swedish turnips, the best I have seen for a month, though journeying in search of them, was holding association with miles of furze, which occupied land of equally good quality, simply because of some difference in tenure. In at least a dozen places I saw young wheat, as fine as any I had seen a week before in Kent; and, in some cases, I inspected the crop of straw and grain which the recent harvest had yielded, and was told the quantity was four quarters an acre.

Furze, which was worth about a shilling an acre for fuel, or a bad material for a bad dead fence, was occupying the land which could produce four quarters of wheat, and this because the rich landowners will either have all the commons enclosed for themselves to the exclusion of the commonality, or they will not let them be enclosed at all.

Some of that down land might not be capable of bearing wheat in equal abundance, but all of it, more extensive than the largest landed estate in England, now almost worthless, might be rendered highly productive.

But, generally speaking, the districts which are reclaimed are so poorly attended to, and the population so ill paid and ill fed, that it matters little for their sakes whether these downs be ploughed or not. Each enclosure bill excludes the poor man from the common, and, upon the whole, it may be as well for them to live the mean life of breeders of geese, rather than be turned out to labour for wages less than the price of food. But the right of an individual is not the right of the nation; and the national right demands to know why there is to be a scarcity of food because of the caprice of the landowners. All farmers are tenants-at-will in those parts, and incapable of using knowledge or capital on their farms with security, if they possessed either, which, in most cases, they do not in sufficient strength to advance in improvements.

However, this belongs to the daylight portion of my observations, which I must at present omit, to continue my journey to Cranbourne.

Having been put in the right way by a labourer, who came out of his way for the purpose, and who told me that he laboured for eight shillings a-week; that he got up at four in the morning to his horses, and was then, at half-past seven in the evening, just quit of them in the stable; and further, that much of the rough country over which I had come was Lord Shaftesbury's, and that, should it be enclosed, much more of it would become his Lordship's private property; I proceeded until I again found it necessary to inquire which of two roads I was to take.

I entered a cottage where two men, who had just left work as the other had, were sitting down to a very small piece of boiled bacon and vegetables. I held parley with them long enough about the way I had come and the way I was to go, until they had finished their meal. They, too, were carters, rising at four in the morning and coming home to dinner and supper at seven in the evening. They had been receiving eight shillings a-week, but were now reduced to seven. I asked if they could afford bacon and vegetables to their dinner every day? and they said no, they could not when they had eight shillings, and they did not know how they would with seven.

I reached Cranbourne, and found a comfortable inn; talked with several people, who all agreed in stating that the labourers had a hard struggle to make a living.

All of them kept a pig or two; but they had to sell them to pay their rents.

There are cottage allotments of half an acre; but for various reasons, which I shall hereafter describe, these are by no means so profitable as they might be.

Next morning I walked out, intending to return to breakfast, not knowing there was any other village or inn within reach. But at two miles distance, while supposing I was only in the vicinity of St Giles' Park, the seat of the Earl of Shaftesbury, I found myself all at once in one of the sweetest little villages to be seen in England. It bears the name of St Giles', and has a pleasant little church nestling among the lofty trees which overtop the entrance to Lord Shaftesbury's residence. A clear stream comes calmly along a green meadow, and the green meadow is fringed with houses, which are again surrounded with little gardens, these, in most cases. having the last roses of summer still beautifying the walls and the bright glass windows.

Her Majesty the Queen Dowager had visited at Lord Shaftesbury's on the previous day, which visit having caused the preparations of clearing away the fallen leaves and new gravelling the walks, gave the whole place, pretty at any time, a peculiarly pleasant appearance, particularly to one who had come over the rough country I had crossed, and out of Cranbourne, for which, it seems, there are no special guardians of cleanliness and comfort as at St Giles'.

At the latter, the Rev. Mr Moore, who holds the living, and who is possessed of considerable private property, is the chief promoter of the respectability which distinguishes it. All the people residing there, and I conversed with many of them, speak most respectfully of the Earl of Shaftesbury, of Lord Ashley his son, and of the other members of the family; but though they were admitted to be kind to those immediately about them, the words spoken in praise of Mr Moore were the most frequently and zealously expressed.

There is a free school, principally supported by Lord Shaftesbury, and the dwelling houses are let to the working people at L.2 a-year, each having a little piece of garden ground. His Lordship lets them have wood for fuel cheap, and for those who are too poor to bring turf fuel from a common some miles off, he sends his carts to fetch it. Mrs Moore and some of the Shaftesbury family have established a savings' bank, in which a penny a-week is deposited, to be drawn out at Christmas, at which time they, the patronesses, double the amount of each deposit, and bring a travelling haberdasher to the village, who exchanges certain kinds of goods for the money in the bank.

Mr Moore has given a field, his glebe I believe, to some of the families in half-acre allotments, at the moderate rent of twelve shillings each, which is, however, more by four or five shillings the acre than the farmers pay. Lord Shaftesbury has also given a few allotments, but several families are still without them, because of the hostility which the farmers evince to any such system; they will take no man as a regular labourer who has an allotment.

On inquiring the reason for this, the answer was, that the farmers were jealous of seeing the labourers in a thriving condition; but I was not satisfied with this supposition.

The real cause I believe to be the hand-to-mouth system in which the farmer carries on his work. He calls the men when he chooses in the morning, keeps them to any hour at night, detains them always late, but especially at those seasons of the year, spring and harvest, when the allotments would most require their attention.

The farm labourers are as badly provided on the St Giles' estate as elsewhere, save those resident in the village, where the clergyman's benevolence is largely diffused.

I can safely say that I never heard so much spoken in favour of any clergyman as was said in praise of the charities of Mr and Mrs Moore; and I believe sincerity and justice dictated every word I heard. Yet, with all this charity, the people were no better provided than they ought to have provided for themselves without it. The comfort is not wholesome which is promoted by charity. For instance, the savings' bank in this village will give no proper idea of the value of savings. Should they remove to some place where there are no kind ladies to double the amount, he or she will have no inclination to deposit at all.

Moreover, this giving of charity causes the recipients to feel that they require it, and that they were not previously as well provided for as they should be. Those living within four hundred yards of Lord Shaftesbury's gate, which distance includes the village and living under the unusually benevolent superintendence of a clergyman, may not feel any very hard privations. His Lordship allows those who work in his park nine shillings a-week, which is a shilling more than the farmers give, and two shillings more than is given in other parts of the county; with this, and the perquisites, and the allotments, they may rub on pretty comfortably, being constantly employed; but his Lordship's estates extend far beyond the village of St Giles, whereas the charity stops there. What the labourers require is real independence, not of wealth, to be above working, nor of relationship to a master, to be beyond obedience, but of agreement—an agreement which binds the master equally with the servant. Mr Hyde Greg saw in the Lothians, he says, that all the operations of the farm were carried on with the same regularity as in the great factories.

The time of working in the Lothians is observed scrupulously to a minute, ten hours a-day in some districts, nine in others—generally nine; but such is not the case in the country I am now describing.

Though there may be just landlords, and I do most sincerely believe Lord Shaftesbury to be one, at least in his motives, still all are not just, neither do all manage their own property; and if they were conscientious in their motives, they may be unjust indirectly. If they uphold a system such as the tenancy-at-will, marring improvements, lowering wages, and spreading poverty, they become unjust, however honest in the intention to let the farmer retain his farm until his capital is repaid. In no department of trade is money parted with without security; even if one borrows from another for a day only, he gives a written acknowledgment, which, in the event of his sudden death, will enable the other to recover what he has lent. But though landowners die, like other men, (and this Mr Moore exemplified in his sermon which I heard preached at St Giles',) they expect that a farmer should trust to them and their successors, whoever these last may be, for a return of expended capital. The farmers, however, do not trust, and they never will; and the result is, that we have foulness of soil and poverty of crop, and a population poor and uncultivated as either.

Having alluded to Mr Moore's sermon, I may state that, having heard so much said in praise of his good works by all with whom I conversed in the village, I had a desire to see so good a man, and to hear the sound of his voice. It being Sunday, I accordingly went to church, and found him engaged in a christening. He is a man of middle size, with a head that would fill a phrenologist with delight. The broad lofty brow, bald backwards, shewing forth benevolence in a very eminent degree, is a forcible argument in favour of phrenology when viewed in connection with what the people say of him. The Earl of Shaftesbury had been at church in the morning I was told; but at this time there were only four of his family there—Lord Ashley, Lady Ashley, and two others whom I did not know.

They paid devout attention to the worship, and the ladies. in the exceeding plainness of their dresses, shewed very humbly in contrast with the more expensively decorated wives of the upper servants. Perhaps ladies of title can afford to wear a coarse bonnet and a sixpenny ribbon—nobody suspects that they are really unable to get better; but poorer people's pride must not hazard a suspicion. The church is a handsome one, erected at Lord Shaftesbury's expense, and maintained by him. One of the parishioners, to a question I put, said, that though he had heard of church-rates, practically speaking he did not know what they were. All the people at church were neat and comfortable in appearance. I made a remark on the subject, and was answered by one who said—"Ah! you may travel far enough before you see such another place as this." The text was that passage in the gospel of St John which relates that "a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum, came to Jesus," &c.

I know not if this text were taken by design or rotation; but knowing that the Shaftesbury family had only come to St Giles' a few days previously, and hearing Mr Moore remark on the uses of affliction in humbling the spirits of men, more especially those of high rank, who were more likely to be uplifted with the vanities of life than the poor, whose poverty alone was often a great affliction; hearing such a sermon at such a time, I could not help remarking it.

No. VIII.

The Country around Salisbury.—A Returned Convict.

Salisbury stands in a valley at the confluence of two streams, which form a goodly river named *the Avon;* on each side of which below, and for many miles on each side of its tributaries above, are excellent meadows. These are regularly irrigated by sluices and trenches, which operation is called in the local dialect "drowning the maids." The level breadth of these valleys may vary, perhaps, from half a mile to three times as much, and then on all sides rises the land generally known as Salisbury Plain. Many excellent farms and several fair specimens of cultivation may be seen on each side of Salisbury; but vast tracts of good land are lying waste, and much that is under the plough seems imperfectly cultivated. The general aspect of the country is bare, there being few trees or fences save in the valleys, and even there the fences are not well kept. Standing on the high mound where once stood the citadel of Old Sarum, a mile and a half north of Salisbury, the view on all sides is very extensive. Were the reader to fancy himself the head of a pin, and Old Sarum a pincushion, left by some playful kitten in the centre of a parlour floor carpetted with drab cloth, and further, that the said kitten had amused itself with a ball of white worsted, he, the reader, would see a resemblance of the extensive downs and numerous lines of chalky roads which stretch out and cross each other in every direction, as viewed from the citadel of Old Sarum. Moreover, if he could imagine that a child had played on the drab carpet in addition to the kitten, and with very small fragments of ill-used toys had laid the outline of houses and gardens, and enclosed fields, and, when tired of play, had scattered the whole, and, with the kitten, had left the room to the reign of solitary confusion, the said reader would see all that is to be seen in shape of farms and enclosures in the wide country viewed from Old Sarum, including parts of Hampshire and Dorset, as well as Wilts.

Though the aspect of those parts of Wilts and Hampshire is so bare and unpleasing to the eye, there are fine woods at no great distance from Salisbury. There is the residence of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton, three miles from Salisbury, up the valley of the Avon—a delightful place, rich in the adornments both of art and nature. There is in another direction Longford Castle, the property of the Earl of Radnor, with a park bearing excellent timber. Passing that, two or three miles eastward, I found Trafalgar Park, the property and residence of the successors of the famous Lord Nelson.

"What extensive woods are those?" I asked of a man who was breaking flints for the public road on the side of the Avon opposite this park.

"Which be they you mean?" said the man, raising himself up, and shewing his full height, which was about five feet four inches, with a firm breadth of body; shewing also a weather-beaten face, apparently forty years old, and a smock-frock and hat which, judging from their condition, might have been even older. "Which be they you mean?"

"Those opposite, with that very large mansion rising on the high ground behind."

"Ah, that; that be Trafalgar. That be Lord Nelson's house; but he be dead now, they say, and there be a young lord a-coming to live there."

"Indeed! I was not aware that a property so very interesting as that of the famous Lord Nelson was here. Do you know if his Lordship, the great Nelson, ever resided here?"

"There wur a Lord Nelson here, but he be dead, and there be a young 'un a-coming, I hear say, but I don't know nought of the other Lord Nelson, only I've heard people say he wur a terrible hand at fighting."

"Do you know whom he fought with, and where he fought?"

"No; I suppose he fought with they as fought with he; it was at sea, they say, but I don't know nought but what I've heard tell on."

"Then I suppose you have never read history?"

"No; I never learned to read nought—I never wur at no school."

"What wages can you earn? Do you work by the day, or have you so much a load?"

"I goes on by so much a-day. I work twelve hours a-day in summer, and as long as I have light to see in winter. My wages be one shilling and fourpence a-day—eight shillings a-week. It be not much, be it?"

"No, it is not much. How do you manage to live?"

"Not well; and there be three more—wife and two children. We had another boy, but he died two weeks aback; as fine a boy as you could wish to see he wur, and as much thought on by his mother and I; but we ben't sorry he be gone. I hopes he be happy in heaven. He ate a smart deal; and many a time, like all on us, went with a hungry belly. Ah! we may love our children never so much, but they be better gone; one hungry belly makes a difference where there ben't enough to eat."

"Poor man! It is indeed a melancholy evidence of national distress to hear a hard-working man speak as you do. Have you got a piece of garden-ground with your cottage?"

"Ees, a small piece, about four log or so, it don't grow much for such as be so ready to eat everything as we. And it costs, with house rent, L.2, 10s. That ben't easy paid out o' eight shillings a-week, be it?"

"No; you must have a very hard struggle to keep yourselves alive?"

"Ees, hard enough. It makes one think on doing what one would never do, but for hunger."

"Did the late Earl Nelson employ many people on his estate?"

"No; I don't know that he employed many—not more than others here—not so many as some—not so many as Lord Radnor did at Longford; but he be gone from that now, and I hear say there ben't so many at work as wur."

"He, the late Lord Nelson I mean, was a clergyman—was he not?"

"I've heard he wur once, but don't know much of what he wur, 'cept that he transported me."

"Transported you! What for?"

"For poaching. I got seven year; and wur killed near almost. And they killed my brother dead at once—knocked his skull to pieces."

"Who—the gamekeepers, I suppose? Did you make much resistance?"

"No; I heard them fall on my brother, and I wur fifty yards from him. And when I wur hiding, they came and took hold on me, and beat in my skull. Here, you can feel with your hand; out of that part, and this, and this, eleven pieces of bone were taken. I never wur expected to live for a long time. No, I never made no resistance; for they had broken my head and killed my brother afore I knew they saw me."

This man went on to tell me, in answer to several questions, that he was at that time out of work; that he and his brother went out to poach, leaving their father, mother, and two sisters, I think he said, at home; that the result was, as already stated, that after lying long in the prison hospital he was tried; that the Earl of Radnor, pitying the family for what had already befallen it, endeavoured to prove that the men were taken on his ground, and not on Earl Nelson's, but it was decided otherwise; that he (the convict) was kept nineteen months at Portsmouth after trial, and then shipped off for Bermuda; that he served the full term of his sentence there, at building the public docks and fortifications; that about a thousand convicts were there during that time, who slept in barracks at night, and wrought by day under a military guard; but who, apart from this unpleasantness, lived well. He wishes, he says, and prays to God, that he could now for himself and family at home have such an allowance of food as he had in the West Indies when a convict.

"We had *terrible good living*," this was his expression, "by as I ever had for working in England. Fresh beef three times a-week, pork and peas four times a-week. But the weather was so hot we *drowd* (threw) the soup away."

"Could you have remained there after your time was up?"

"I don't know; I wur tired of the confinement and the heat—it wur terrible hot, it wur, and we had no liberty. And then father and mother and sisters wur at home. But father died soon as I wur gone—one son killed, and me a'most, and then transported, wur too much for him to stand. Ah! he wur broken hearted, he wur; and as soon I was come home mother died."

"I suppose you had difficulty in finding employment when you came home? People who wanted workmen would look on you as a bad character."

"Ees; but some on 'em knew as I never would do no harm, and I got work some how, and got married. I be nine or ten year at home now."

"When you were in the West Indies serving your sentence, was any attempt made to instruct you? Were there any attempts made to reform you, to give you instruction, teach you to read, and make you comprehend the duties of life, and prepare you to practise them when you would escape from bondage."

"Oh ees, we had a terrible sight of all that. We had prayers many times a-day, sometimes oftener, and sometimes fewer, but many times, and on Sundays nought but prayers. Oh ees, we had a terrible sight of that, too much many a time, we got tired on it."

"But had you any books to read? Or was any attempt made to teach you to read."

"No; nothing but prayers, and some preaching o' Sundays."

"No instruction was given on the moral duties of life, as, for instance, the relationship of one man to another as human beings, how to live comfortably, profitably, and honestly?"

"Oh ees; I wur told thousands o' times that poaching wur a terrible bad thing."

"However, you were not taught to read and write?"

"No, there wur none o' that."

"What is your name!"

"John Baillie—that be my name."

Having, after some other conversation about the present fall in wages, left this man, I entered a roadside inn at the distance of half a mile from where he was at work, and there, amongst other things, heard the landlady say—"The man you speak of must be John Baillie. He is a truthful man. Depend on it, whatever he told you was the truth, extraordinary as you may think his account of himself. There is no man, I believe, that is more honest and truthful than John Baillie, even though he has been transported."

Perhaps it will occur to some people that such a man as this might have been a better citizen, maintaining himself and family comfortably with a little expense in education, and early moral training; whereas he must, as it is, live a very unpleasant life, and have cost the country a great deal of money during his imprisonment. The public money expended on him alone would do a good deal for the reclamation of the waste land and the waste people in his native country.

Report on the Condition of the Agricultural Districts.

November 1842.

The following extract from a great quantity of matter collected by the author, and partly published in the *Anti-Bread-Tax Circular*, at this time, refers to the same locality as the last three letters. The precise place is outside the park walls of St Giles', the seat of the Earl of Shaftesbury. His Lordship is the nobleman spoken of; the farmer numbered as 21 is one of his tenants; and the labourer numbered as 22 was an eccentric subject met with at that time.

No. 22, A labourer putting flints on the highway, is spoken with shortly after leaving No. 21. He says he has eight shillings a-week, and has received notice that after next week he will only have seven. Says he saw me talking to old ——, and would like to know what *he* said about wages. I told him that we talked of many things, but I forgot to mention wages. The labourer asks what I did talk about to the "*old un.*" I reply that I talked to him about his manner of keeping accounts, whether he was particular in writing everything down. To which No. 22 says, "And what did *old un* say to thee?" "He said he did not keep any accounts, he trusted to his memory." "And," says No. 22, "what did thou say to he?" "I said it was not proper to trust everything to one's memory, that a man could not conduct his business properly unless he kept his accounts correctly." "And what did *old un* say to thee then?" "He said he never forgot anything." "Never forgot nothing!" exclaimed the labourer, as if highly amused with his examination and my replies; "Never forgot nothing!" he again repeated, "no, *old un* be not likely to forget nothing as will put a penny in his pocket and keep it out of another man's. *Old un* won't forget that he told his men last week he would take them down a shilling; but he be's as long as a journey from here to London on a pig's back afore his memory be's good enough to raise wages at the time he promises when he takes 'em down!" And having thus spoken, No. 22 applied himself with great vigour to his work. Observing at this moment a person at some distance, walking by himself, and supposing that he was some other farmer whom I had not seen, I called the man's attention to him, and inquired if he knew him, and if he was a farmer? After standing a minute, and scanning the person as narrowly as the trees would permit, the labourer said, "That be the *old un's* master; that be all our masters. The *old un* be as much afraid of that un as any of we." "Does he go out among the farmers much?" "I ben't no farmer myself; wish I wur." "Why do you wish you were?" "What do thee think I work for?" "For wages." "And how much do thee think I get?" "You told me you had only eight shilling, that you are to be reduced to seven?" "And how much do thee think I eat over a whole week out of that?" "I cannot say; I should like to know; perhaps you will tell me?" "Suppose, rather than I tell thee, that thou tries. Take thee to breaking flints and making roads at eight shillings a-week for a year, do thee think thou could tell what thee lived on?" "I don't know;

I think there would be no danger of having such an abundance as to forget." "Do thee think not? Well, an I wur a farmer I would always have as much to eat as to be able to know what it wur; I don't be able to tell it now at times, 'cause how I go with an empty belly so often that my grub ha'n't no name. Ah! you be a precious lot o' hard screws on a poor man, the whole lot of you be." "Which lot? You seem to include me, and yet you don't know who or what I am?" "Don't I though? I see you ha' got a good coat on your back, and a face that don't look like an empty belly; there be no hunger looking out atween your ribs I'll swear. You either be a farmer or somebody else that lives on somebody else. May be you be a lord for aught I know on; or a squire; or a parson, dang it—you be a parson perhaps! One thing I see, you ben't one of them as works fourteen hours a-day, to feed lords, and 'squires, and parsons, and farmers; dang the farmers, they be the worst of the lot of ye."

"Why do you think so? Why do you think the farmers are the worst?" "Why! what need of me to tell you why? You wouldn't believe me wur I to tell why; but I dare say you know without telling. I dare say you be one of them as has your daughter, an you ha' a daughter, playing on the piano on a Saturday night to drown the noise of them brutes of labouring men what come to get their wages through a hole in the wall; what cannot be allowed to set foot within a farmer's house now-a-days; what must be paid through an opening in the partition, lest they defile the house of a master what gets rich as they get poor; a master what must get his daughter to play music lest the voice of a hard-working man be heard through the hole in the wall! Ah! it be enough to drive men mad; it ha' made men think on things they never would ha' thought on."

"But," said I, "you are wrong in supposing every person to be your enemy who is not one of yourselves. Do you speak of a farmer in particular who pays his men through a hole in the wall while his daughter plays the piano inside, or do you say all the farmers do so?" "Oh, you know, master, what I mean; you be not such a stranger here as you would make me believe." "Did you ever see me before?" "I ha' seed enough o' thee, I dare say. I dare say you be about to go and tell all you heerd me say now. I dare say you be one of 'em as come from London to kill game, that a poor man, like I, must not look at. Ah! I don't care; we must just go on. We be all like to have justice sometime; there ben't no noblemen in heaven, they say." "Is there not? and will there be any *poor* men there?" "Not an the rich can help it; not an the rich can keep the poor out, I should think. But I be told no rich be to get there neither." "Who says so—the parson?" "Oh, I ben't no friend of the parson's." "Why are you no friend of the parson?" "The parson be no friend to me." "Why?" "Because he ben't." "You don't seem to be afraid to speak your mind?" "Ah! I ben't like to be much longer here; I be like to try my hand in another part of the country. Seven shillings won't do; eight wur bad enough, but seven won't do."

No. IX.

The Author having been criticised by Sir Charles Wolseley, and the Allotment of Land to Labourers ridiculed by Sir Charles, while the Workhouse System was denounced, this Letter, descriptive of the Town of Wilton, where the Author happened to be at the time, and descriptive of the Unemployed there, was written in reply to such critics as Sir Charles Wolseley.

The town of Wilton, once the capital of Wilt hire, stands in a valley, fertile and lovely, three miles from Salisbury. It once sent two members to Parliament, and still sends one. It once had a manufacturing trade in flannels and carpets, now it has almost none. Its near neighbour, Salisbury, robs it even of the value of its markets and fairs. I went through and through, round and round, this poor remnant of a town, and to a distance of some miles beyond it. Nothing could be finer than its situation, with wood and water, hill and valley, forming a sweet nest of nature, in which the cottage streets reposed. Judging by the tower of a new church, which was rearing its head above the trees, and holding up to view several masons and their labourers, with hammers and trowels, and mortar and scaffolding, as if to shew a stranger, even when a mile out of the town, that he must not go away with the belief that everybody in Wilton was unemployed; judging by this, when looking down from the elevated vicinity, one would suppose that the little town was a young one just peeping from the leafy nest for the first time; and with such a supposition to begin, the mind would soon stretch into the probable future, and see the powerful stream that waters the rich valley, and the rich valley itself, studded with buildings, great as this great new church, for the manufacture of food and clothing, (we shall say flour and flannels, the materials for which are abundantly supplied by the surrounding country,) and these buildings stocked with wheels and human hands, labouring and giving birth to labour. Having the supposition of the town being a young one, the first flight of the stranger's mind is to form an opinion for the infant Wilton, and say what it will be when it is full grown.

But descend from the elevated vicinity—enter the streets, and all the beauty of the wood and water and green meadows has vanished, so also the dream of youth and vision of future greatness. You find, instead of a day to come, the day has gone by. Wilton has had its day. If we might personify its condition further, we would say there is an old man before us stricken in years, yet not so feeble from age as from the accumulation of other ills. He is time-worn and venerable, and entitled to our respect; but he is hunger-bitten, and cold, and friendless, and claims our pity. He can call to mind the bygone days, and tell of what he did when making carpets and flannels; how he ate bread and bacon and roast beef, and brewed his beer, and was comfortable, because well employed and well fed. But he is old and lonely now, he will tell you, and his offspring with his trade have left him for some place in the north called Yorkshire, where, by all accounts, they are not thriving so well as they should do.* They are suffering hardships themselves, and cannot help him. He moves on crutches, which, he says, are his only supports. One of them, on which he depends most, is strong, but hard and hurtful to his decayed frame; he grumbles at it, and calls it the "New Poor-Law." The other is more pleasing when he can lean on it, but it is too short, and were he to trust to it, he would fall, and die where he fell; this he calls "casual charity." Being old and ill provided for, he is fretful. Of both his crutches he is constantly complaining. He speaks of bad times and a hard-hearted world, and is not thankful for either of his supports, because, as he says, if he had got fair play he would have needed neither. He sees the splendid new church building, at a cost of L.30,000, and he is told it will be an ornament to his old age; but he says there is a great cathedral three miles distant surrounded by parish churches; that there are three more of the latter situate between that cathedral and his own door; that he has another at his own door, and that he thinks L.30,000 might have been more rationally expended. Being argued with, he will admit the possibility of a new church being required in place of the old one, though he assures us the old one was large enough; but he will not allow more than L.10,000 for a new church, and maintains that the remaining twenty should have been devoted to the improvement of the land or the renewal of the manufacturing trade. In reply, he is told that the money expended on the new church is not his; that it is private money; that the Earl of Pembroke and members of his family have provided this money to build this church, and that no one has a right to question them on the subject. He says to this that he has no right, and he seeks no right; he knows the church will be an ornament to him, and a monument to those who are defraying its expense; but he says he wants the means of sustaining life; that he conceives the greatest monument which any rich family, such as that of Wilton House, could rear to their own honour, would be to renew his trade, recall his scattered offspring; rear around their domain a thriving population, who, being physically comfortable, might be trained in moral respectability.

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* This was written in the year of Yorkshire distress 1842.

But let us relieve ourselves from this metaphor; let us proceed to the bare "matter of fact." Come with us, Sir Charles Wolseley, and all who abominate the "Bastile Poor-Law," as you call it; come with us, and see the poor of Wilton, where there is little trade, where almost all are dependent on an agricultural neighbourhood; come, all who would deny an allotment of land to the poor, all who would keep the cultivation of land and the amount of human labour on that land at a *minimum*; come, all who drive the industrious people to the workhouse, and then seek public applause, by denouncing the workhouse as a "Poor-Law Bastile;" come, and tell us what you would do with the poor. Here we are, a landlord, Sir Charles Wolseley, a farmer, a guardian, a gamekeeper, and a ploughman. Let us speak to the first poor man we meet:—

Ploughman—"What is your name, my good man?"

"William Turner; some of them gentlemen know me well enough; I've lived long enough in Wilton to be known."

"You are an able-bodied labourer, I perceive; how old are you?"

"I be forty or thereabout."

"Are you married?"

"Yes; I have a wife and six children."

"What wages have you?"

"No wages; I be out of work, and can't get none."

"No wages and no work? What do you live on?"

"We don't be living; we be starved. I been to the guardians to get into the house, but can't get in afore next week. Don't know what we shall do till then. One-third the people in Wilton be without work, and t'other third don't have more nor three days a-week throughout the year. Them as be employed constant don't have more nor eight shillings a-week now; they had nine shillings; but now, since the markets came down, farmers be taking down wages. Ah! them be hard times; terrible hard times; a poor man don't know how to live no how."

"Well, gentlemen, what is to become of this man, his wife, and six children? I see many thousands of acres of waste land at no great distance from this, which should be taken into cultivation. I do not—mark me well—I do not mean the thin chakly down land, though doubtless the herbage of that might be improved by laying clay or some such substance on it; but I allude to the excellent corn land which may be found in every direction, forming part of those downs, and which, if broken up to grow corn and winter food for sheep, would enhance the value of the thinner soils left for summer pasturage. But, apart from these downs, there is the rich land around us, which is indifferently cultivated. Many parts of England are not so well cultivated as this district I admit, but this is bad enough—some of it disgraceful in respect of foulness, bad fences, and wasted manures. Why don't you, Mr Farmer, employ more people, and call into activity the neglected resources of your farm? By an expenditure of capital you might soon have a great profit out of that which is now comparatively unproductive; out of those meadows, for instance."

Farmer—"Why, sir, his honour my landlord knows I am only a tenant-at-will; and what with that, and what with politics and elections, and one thing and t'other, it would not be safe for me to lay out much money in employing people more than I can help. I don't say as how, by no means, that Lord Pembroke, or any one belonging to his family, would raise my rent when they saw me growing better crops by better cultivation, or that they would turn me out of my farm if I did not vote for their interest, I don't say that; but I say as how it would not be wise in me to lay out my money without the security of a lease."

Landlord—"Oh! a lease! you want a lease, do you? We would rather have tenants-at-will."

Sir Charles—"And so would I rather have a tenant-at-will; I never knew a farmer do any good with a lease. No tenant of mine, save one, ever asked for a lease."

Ploughman—"Well, gentlemen, the question is, what will you do with this man, his wife, and six children? They are starving. We have seen their wretched home. It is without any comfort, almost without furniture, and its rent is one shilling and sixpence a-week. Attached to it is about four log of garden ground. Two or three pecks of potatoes, and about eighty cabbage plants, is as much as this garden would bear in a season. Would it not be advisable to give such a family as this half an acre of land, at a rent of twenty shillings?"

Sir Charles—"Oh! I see what you are for; allotments of land to labourers; no, no, we must have no allotments."

Ploughman—"Well then, gentlemen, what shall we do? Perhaps, Mr Guardian, you will suggest something?"

Guardian—"Why, the only thing the man can do is for him and his family to go into the workhouse. We would rather not have them in, rates are enormously high already, and the house full, but we must either admit them or let them starve to death outside; if we do the latter the law will punish us, so we must do the former."

"What will such a family as this cost you in the workhouse?"

"They will cost nearly at an average four shillings a-head per week; a good bit of money, is it not?"

"What do you feed them on in the house? You don't give them much pleasure in their pauper life, I presume?"

"No, we have too many demands for admission as it is. We would have many more were we not to make the diet as low as will possibly sustain life. We give them bread and milk for breakfast—seven ounces of bread and half a pint of milk. We give them six ounces of bread, half an ounce of butter, and a pint of coffee for supper. This is throughout the week. For dinner they have, on Sunday, one pound of suet pudding; Monday, one quart of bullock's head soup; Tuesday, one pound of potatoes and three ounces of bacon; Wednesday, seven ounces of bread and two ounces of cheese; Thursday, five ounces of beef and one pound of potatoes; Friday, four ounces of bread and a portion of the liquor which boiled the previous day's beef; Saturday, one pound of potatoes and three ounces of bacon. Such is the diet of the workhouse. It is low, but, low as it is, one-half of the working population of Wilton and neighbourhood don't live better in their own houses—many of them not so well. How can they, with wages so low, and many of them without work? In short, we are obliged to feed them meagrely, and give them hard task-work at breaking bones, or some such thing, lest they find the house too comfortable."

Sir Charles—"Abominable. This is an abominably cruel system this poor-law. The house is no better than a bastile."

Ploughman—"Well, Sir Charles, it is bad enough, Heaven and the poor know; but what is to be done? You dislike agricultural improvements; you deny security to your tenants. so that they cannot incur the risk of improvements, nor employ more labourers; you will not give the labourers an allotment of land to keep them from idleness and starvation;

you call the workhouse, to which they are driven by sheer hunger, a bastile, and yet you drive them thither. What is to be done?"

No. X.

From Wilton to Shaftesbury.—A Stage Coach Company.—A Somerset Farmer and a Gentleman from Paris.

Leaving Wilton to repose amid its fine woods on the banks of its clear streams, with its splendid mansion and its new church, the latter intended to be one of the finest parish churches in England, and already shewing an outside which fulfils the intention; leaving the natural and artificial beauties of Wilton to the companionship of a population ill-employed, ill-paid, and ill-fed, an unhappy mixture of paupers, poachers, and men not yet reduced to their condition, but fast approaching it, we shall proceed towards the borders of Dorset and Somerset. Let the reader give me his company, and he shall see and hear literally what I saw and heard.

We are on a four-horsed coach running between Southampton and some towns in the west. At Salisbury I tried to get on the box with the driver, to talk with him as we went along, but that seat was bespoke. I next tried to get a share of the seat behind him, but that was full. There was only room for one outside, and that was behind, on a seat which holds three facing forward to three others, who, with a pile of luggage at their backs, were seated on the roof of the coach, separated from those in front as the inhabitants of one side of a mountain are separated from the inhabitants of the other side.

Well, we are out of Salisbury, through Wilton, and on the Shaftesbury road, with some good farms on each side. We see the Honourable Sidney Herbert with his friends out shooting; and several Salisbury publicans and other burly, well-fed, and not very busy-at-home personages, who, having no privilege, or no gun, or no ability to shoot, are out looking at the sport, with the hope that the exercise will quicken their appetites for the dinner which is cooking at home. Having made the acquaintance of some of these gentlemen, we nod to each other, but the coachman, willing to let the Salisbury people see what he and his horses are, when out of Salisbury, is going at a canter, and there is no time to exchange words.

On we go; and I now suppose that the loss of a seat beside the driver is not so much to be regretted. There is a guard to the coach, and a guard can give more of his time to talkative passengers than a coachman driving four in hand. But as yet it is impossible to say if he will be talked to. There is nothing seen of his face to tell the humour of his mind; yet he has a face as surely as the sky has a rising moon, when we see a streak of red light, with a cloud concealing her upper and the horizon cutting off her under limb. The guard has a face; but what with shawls of worsted, and cotton, and silk, piled up like wintry mountains, and an enormous breadth of brim lowered like the clouds, to which the mountains are near neighbours, there is almost a total eclipse. And although guards of coaches are a kind of common property, on which any one may intrude in virtue of the quit-rent of a glass of brandy when changing horses, and a shilling or two when leaving the coach; and though I am resolved to pick up what I may find this common property capable of affording, and have no doubt but there is life and something lively behind that red nose which is dipped into a fold of the uppermost whity-brown shawl, yet I hesitate. There is a gentleman from Paris between us. He is not *of* Paris; he is an Englishman returning to his native country *from* Paris, as I afterwards learn; and the newness of hat, exquisiteness of whisker, and dignified polish of manners, with my knowledge that he is an inside passenger sitting outside for his own pleasure, make me hesitate to send my words across him either before or behind.

Yet something must be done. I attempt to *draw* the Parisian Englishman; but nothing with which I am acquainted will bring him out. There are hills of chalk on our left, forming the margin of the great tract which is in France, which comes across the channel, starts at Dorchester, and stretches to Whitby in Yorkshire. We are on the adjoining tract of clay and limestone, and the embrowned margin of chalk, which rises like a sloping grassy wall a hundred feet high, bounding us apparently in endless length, and the road on which we travel, taking all the windings of these chalky downs at the respectful and pleasant distance of half a mile, are prominently before us, and I start upon geology. Several polite "Yes, sirs," and nods of acquiescence are given by the travelled gentleman, but nothing more. Another passenger, who sits facing me, and whose knees are dividing the narrow space with mine, looks like one who may be spoken to, and he acknowledges that the sudden termination of the chalky ridge and the commencement of the clay on which our road is formed is very extraordinary. But he halts there. In vain I speak of the probable ages when these ridges and this valley took the place they now hold. This gentleman, who is encased in a drab coat and several shawls, seems determined not to come out, so I beg permission of the gentleman from Paris to say a few words to the guard, which permission is most politely granted, and I address myself to the two inches of red face and the red nose which is reposing in the woolly shawl.

"How far are we from Shaftesbury? Where do you change horses next? What do the farmers pay for land like that? Do the railways affect you on a cross country road like this? You have got a truss of hay strapped on behind—what is the price of hay? Potatoes seem to be a fair crop in those fields—do you know what the price of them is? Do the farmers hereabout allow their labourers a portion of potato ground, or must the labourers buy all their potatoes?" To these questions I receive answers brief and indistinct. What little I do hear is a "yes" and a "no;" the remainder is communicated by the Parisian traveller, who acts as agent. Seeing that nothing is to be made of the guard, and fearing that the polite gentleman who separates us on the seat, but who kindly endeavours to unite us in conversation, may get tired of such crude questions and barren replies, I desist, and leave the red nose to undisturbed rest.

Potatoes; there are more potatoes being turned up on the farms we pass, and I attempt to bring out the traveller in the drab great-coat, whose knees divide space with my knees, on the subject of potatoes. I find this gentleman has recently travelled in Suffolk, and still more recently in Buckinghamshire. He thinks the potatoes are much better in Suffolk than in Bucks. For his part, he never saw good potatoes in Bucks. When by any chance they are good, the people of that county call them bad. They dislike the floury potatoes and prefer the waxy ones. I remark that when travelling in Bucks I saw few good potatoes, and also observed the preference given to what I considered the bad ones. The Parisian traveller says potatoes are not much used in France; and another traveller, in a dark pilot coat, who has not previously spoken, and who sits with his face immediately in front of the guard, says he likes, for his part, a floury potato; he likes it hot, and never has a good dinner if he has not a nice smoking-hot potato. The gentleman in the drab top-coat likes mashed potatoes best, and prefers them done with butter or new milk. There is now a likelihood of a general conversation, and, determined to bring the guard into it, I ask him which he prefers, potatoes of the waxy kind or the floury kind? The guard cares for none of them. "Give me," he says, "good old English fare, and good old English times, and *dang* your potatoes and railroads both!"

This is excellent. Potatoes and railroads! I attempt to take the guard back to the times, not yet very old, when no coaches travelled on the road—when our grandfathers, with their pack-horses, had all the trade, and the coaches did with them what the railroads are doing with the coaches now. But the guard is silent. We are about to descend a declivity. He alights on the road while the coachman is drawing up, and, having put the drag on the wheel, is up again to his seat with a nimbleness quite astonishing. We talk of the patent drag, but receive no information on its absence from this coach, save that the proprietors do not go to the expense of having one. At the bottom of the hill the guard again descends to the road, as a linnet descends from the upper spar to the bottom of its cage; the drag is removed, and, like the linnet, he is aloft again.

This nimble getting down and linnet-like getting up, by a being who but for these motions might be a mummy for aught we can see of his body, leads me to make a remark on the dangerous quantity of his clothes should these get entangled with his feet, for it is evident he does not wait for the coach stopping when he gets down, and as evidently the coachman does not wait for him getting up when he drives away. This suggests the fatal accident which befell the Duke of Orleans; and the Parisian gentleman relates the particulars of that melancholy event. He speaks highly of the deceased Duke, highly of the royal family, highly of Paris, highly of the French. highly of everything but his own health, which he says is not as he should like it to be.

Well, we are halted at a road-side inn. Determined to invade the taciturnity of the guard, I ask him to have a glass of something hot and strong. He has it. The coachman, a jolly, laughing-faced fellow, who neither conceals his face in a shawl nor his thoughts in himself, is in the hands of some other passenger, and is also drinking a stiff glass. In quick time we are on the coach again, seated and away. We are, at first, much the same as before, save the guard. who shews more of his face and somewhat less of his taciturnity.

But there is a short middle-aged gentleman not yet spoken of, the centre one of the three whose backs are to the mountain of luggage, whose faces are to us, and who sit on a narrow space saved for a seat by the piling of the luggage on the roof of the coach. This gentleman is in top-boots, and while other people's feet are resting where common feet on a coach are intended to rest, his are suspended from the seat, unable, however willing, to reach by several inches the resting-place allotted for them. He has spoken to nobody; nobody has spoken to him; but the little top-boots dangling from his little body, and his little round face with a larger share of good nature shining in it than is to be seen in many longer faces, draws my attention. He is eating walnuts, and asks me to accept of a few. The Parisian gentleman is also asked, so is the guard, so are the passengers right and left of the little gentleman. All accept them, all are cracking and picking the nuts, and all are now disposed to talk. A whole stage has been wasted in vain efforts at conversation, merely because the right man was not spoken to, and because he did not choose to speak to those who did not speak to him. But here he is, just the man of all others to meet on a stage coach, if a stranger wants information about farming.

We are talking of the poor and the poor-rates. He tells us he pays L.70 a-year of poor-rate, for one of his farms, and about half as much more for other property. I ask him where his locality is, and he replies, "Somersetshire; down in the south of Somerset; the farm that is assessed for L.70 of poor-rate must be no trifle;" and I inquire whether he is a grazier or a corn grower. He pauses until he cracks another nut, and then says, "I am both; more's the pity." "Why?" asked the gentleman from Paris; "why do you say more's the pity?" "Why?" replies the other, "because between falls in the prices of corn and falls in the prices of cattle, buying dear and selling cheap, I don't know what to be at with myself." He skins another section of his nut, puts it in his mouth, and then replies to another question of the Parisian, by saying, "No, sir; I don't say either corn or cattle be too cheap. Cheapness is a relative term. Provisions may not be too cheap for those who have to buy, but they too cheap for I who have to sell them to pay such rents and taxes as I have to pay."

This leads to a conversation on leaseholders and tenants-at-will. He is well aware, and smiles, and cracks another nut, as he replies, that he has good reason to know the value of a lease, if a rationally constructed lease, over a tenancy-at-will; but he adds, "As times be now, and as leases commonly be made, no leases for me. No, no; not even the most liberal lease that tenant ever had of landlord for me. Why, gentlemen, it be no farer gone than a fortnight since the proprietor of a large estate down our way sent for me to come to him. Well, I went. He know'd I farmed a good bit of land; he know'd I had money to lay out; he know'd I had laid out money on my land; he know'd I grew the best corn, and turnips, and worzel in the country; he know'd I was reckoned an improver of land. Gentlemen, I am one that tries to make the most of my land. This landlord know'd it. He said, 'Now tell me what you will give for *such* a farm, if I give you a lease, with liberty to improve it as you like?' Says I, 'Sir, I am much obliged; *but tell me first what the price of my corn and cattle will be when I have improved your farm, and I will tell you the rent I can pay.*' To this the gentleman replied that the question of prices was now in a manner settled; the corn-law was settled, the tariff was settled, and prices would soon be settled. 'Corn-law settled! tariff settled! prices settled!' says I. 'Why, the whole three are unsettled; we have had nothing but unsettled prices since we had a corn-law, and I suppose never will have. You won't let the corn-law alone, and you *can't* let it alone; and it won't settle prices if it were let alone. No, no, sir,' says I; 'no taking of leases with matters as they are now.' So to this the gentleman replied, 'Well, but it is your opinion that land cannot be properly farmed without a lease, is it not?' 'Oh yes, sir,' says I, 'that be my opinion, sure enough, and my experience too; *but land must be badly farmed or go without farming afore I touch it on a lease in such times as they we now live in.*' That I did, gentlemen; I told this landlord my mind; I ben't afeared to speak to nobody; I pay my rent and my taxes, and my debts, and care for nobody. So, as I said already, *cheapness* is a relative term. Things don't be too cheap for them as buy, mayhap; but they be too cheap for me."

Hearing this, the gentleman in the drab top-coat says, "What would you do to settle the question of rents and prices?" "Ah," replies the other, "that be what I want to know. I want of all things, next to my heavenly salvation, to know what on earth we be to do; nobody tells us—everybody inquires—and all that I can say is this, that if I am to be hanged, hang me as a dog should be hanged; don't put a tin kettle to my tail, and hunt me about with a mob after me. in which I cannot know my friends from my foes. Why, dang it! put un to death or save un at once; don't torture and kill by slow degrees."

With this, and much more of the same kind, we are in Shaftesbury; and here I shall take the reader from the coach and set him down at the Grosvenor Arms. This is the principal inn, and as its name indicates, is the property of the Grosvenor family, who have a residence and an estate in the neighbourhood, named Motcombe. I did not halt here myself at this time. The interesting conversation of the farmer on the coach, together with a promise I had made to visit, if I ever went into that part of the country, a gentleman living several miles farther down, caused me to retain my seat, and go onwards.

This farmer is, as I afterwards learned, all and more than what he said of himself. He is an extensive grazier and corn grower; has had great experience; is a man of considerable property, and seemed to me remarkable for the off-hand way in which he delivered his opinions, the chief of which opinions was that no confidence could be placed in the stability of the corn-law. The passenger who sat on his left hand, and who was immediately opposite me, turned out to be a commercial gentleman from London, connected, I think, with the glove trade. He expressed very decided opinions on the corn-law question, having no hope for himself, for commerce, or for the farmers, but in the total and immediate repeal of the corn-law. Wishing to hear the opinion of an intelligent farmer expressed decidedly on this subject, although understanding quite plainly, when he spoke of the dog hanging, that he was alluding to the protective duties, I asked our fellow-traveller what he would do in the event of another election, whether he would support the Repealers or their opponents? He replied, that so far as he knew at present he would support neither. He had lost all confidence in public men. He had formerly supported those who supported the corn-laws. He still believed that the total abolition of these laws would give a shock to English agriculture, although he would not go the length of saying that the shock would be more than temporary. "On that point," said he, "I cannot give an opinion—neither do I think any one else can; but I shall say this, that let the shock be what it may that we are to receive from a total repeal, it will be safety itself compared with the gradual abolition which we now see going on. I am losing my money fast; and, what is worse, I am losing it in the dark."

To this it may be added, that after I had been about ten days among the farmers of Dorset and Somerset, and had talked with them on their farms, in their houses, singly by themselves, and in company with their neighbours, I found that, with few exceptions, the subject on which they were most eager to converse was that of *protection*. Many of them seemed to have little knowledge of the complicated interests of this great country, especially on the importance of our manufactures and commerce; they knew there had been complaints of manufacturing distress, but their knowledge of that distress was indeed very limited, and their notions of its effect on themselves was absolutely a blank. They could not see how they were dependent on manufacturers, and when I say *they*, I include the great body of the farmers, excepting only a few of the more intelligent, who, when they read this, will easily see the exception, and pardon me for writing as I do of their brethren.

A class of more hospitable, hearty, joyous, uproariously free-hearted men than these farmers I cannot conceive. I am bound in honour to say that in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, I have invariably found them free and hospitable to an excess. I have dined with them, fifty at a time, and from two-thirds of that fifty, and other fifties and forties, and numbers downwards, I have had invitations to meet them at their own houses on their own farms. I told them plainly that my object was to inquire into and report on the condition of agriculture and agriculturists; that my reports would be published, with a view to advance the interests of both; that party politics formed no part of my purpose; that I carefully avoided all controversial questions, such as the corn-laws, the tariff, &c., and confined myself simply to the home operation on the farm.

It was thus I offered myself to their acquaintance, and thus I was received; but not in this neutral capacity was I able to remain. The sudden fall in the prices of corn and cattle had prepared every man to speak on the subject of prices, to the exclusion of almost everything else; and instead of being averse to talk about the corn-laws and the tariff, as they once were, they would talk about nothing else. Here is a specimen of a conversation. We have walked over part of a farm of 200 acres. I have been shewn the small proportion which is cultivated, the large proportion which is in grass. Have talked about lime and couch-grass, and twenty other things. The farmer allows me to have everything my own way; and as we are returning to the homestead, I observe the liquid manure being entirely wasted, and offer a suggestion for its conservation and application to the field. "Now, stop thee," says the farmer, who, by-the-by, is a tenant of a celebrated banker of London, "we have been over the farm, and, as should be, have only talked of the farm, and we shall have time afore you go to talk to the end of farm works—what I want to know now be's something about our prices. It is mighty fine to say do this, and do that, and do t'other—what about the tariff and the corn-law?"

Again, I was in a Tory inn at Shaftesbury; all the inns there are Tory or Whig inns, or rather, the customers are Tory or Whig customers—exclusive dealing being carried on to a most lamentable extent. I was in an exclusively Tory inn. I was invited to meet a farmer who is considered the best cultivator of green crops in that district. There were about half a dozen more, and we entered at once on the subject of turnip culture. I had seen this gentleman's turnips, and had been so pleased with them, had praised them so much to some of his neighbours, that he came designedly to

Shaftesbury to see me, and talk about them. About an hour was spent on this and similar subjects, when all at once one of the company, a farmer, who pays upwards of L.600 a year of rent, and who has been a leading man on the Conservative side, said, "Ah, that be all very well, but what about the tariff, eh? what about the tariff? Come, let us hear what landlords be to do with tariff and corn-laws? and then we'll talk of what we be to do with farms!" And the old gentleman, the grower of the good turnips, immediately added, "Aye, *they* be the questions for farmers now-a-days." Following which, a young gentleman, whose father is one of the Marquis of Westminster's tenants, said, "*I* should like to hear somewhat on the tariff."

The tariff and the corn-laws consequently became the subject of conversation there, as elsewhere, whether I was willing to touch on them or not; and I was compelled to know, what otherwise I might not have known, that, generally speaking, the farmers in those parts have but a feeble glimmering of knowledge on commercial subjects. For instance, the tariff was to most of them a kind of "Boo-man behind the bed;" a "Yahoo;" a "Will-o'-the-wisp;" a "Jack the giant killer;" an evil spirit ever present, and yet invisible; it was their terror, and ever-recurring subject of conversation. They spoke of it much the same as the Scotch used to speak of the *fairies* in days not yet far distant. The fairies were called the "good neighbours;" and when any household article was lost, they concluded and said, while their hairs stood on end, and drops of sweat fell from their faces, that "doubtless the *good neighbours* had come in and taken a *lend* of it." To speak ill of the "good neighbours" was the most fatal thing they could do, and therefore they spoke kindly of them, and trembled.

So did I find it with the Dorset farmers. They never, or very seldom, spoke ill of Sir Robert Peel, or their members, whom, to support the farming interests, they elected; but the tariff and the corn-law were invariably the chief topics of conversation; and the tone in which they were discussed was very like that of those who spoke forbearingly of the "good neighbours," the fairies.

On one of those occasions, when the tariff was blamed for all that it has done, and a hundred times more than it has the power of doing, I pointed out to them in figures that all the cattle, and sheep, and pigs, and geese, ducks, turkeys, &c. imported from the continent, with all the provisions from America and elsewhere, did not amount, since the passing of the tariff, to as much as the people of Bury and Bolton consumed in the same space of time when trade was prosperous, and which they do not now consume. This assertion startled them, and it may startle others; but let others go into the calculation, and they will find it true. It is to the reduced consumption in our towns that the farmers must look for the cause of their dull markets. Those parts of Dorset and Somerset which I visited are dairy districts; and when the fact just mentioned, together with that of the *cheap cheese*, which had not been touched by the tariff, was pointed out to them, they soon comprehended that some more powerful cause of dull markets than the tariff was at work.

Note.—It will be understood that the foregoing refers to the tariff of 1842, not to that of 1846.

No. XI.

Shaftesbury and the Country around it.—Fonthill Abbey.—John Benett, Esq. of Pyt House, M.P.

December 1, 1842.

Shaftesbury stands on a hill—that is, when you are yourself on the hill. When you descend into the low country on the Dorset side, by the winding road, which all the ingenuity of man can never make a good road, you find that fragments of the town have come down to meet you. A couple of churches, a score or two of houses, and as many gardens, singularly irregular in shape, size, and situation, have apparently toppled over from the town, and taken the shortest cut to the bottom. Here they are headlong as they came down, the door of one house higher than the chimney of another, and the garden of that higher than its chimney. Here is a church, an old respectable church, that one would never suspect of taking any mad pranks into its head, down at the bottom, while its grave-yard, with all the dead of its parish, is left on the high ground, a hundred feet higher than the steeple, the white tombstones looking down like parted spirits in the world above, unable to comprehend what the church is, now-a-days, doing in the world below.

If we recede, the singularity of the scene becomes more marked. If we have read of "Waterton the Wanderer," who, when hunting an alligator in South America, was suddenly left to the mercy of the ferocious beast by the affrighted Indians, and who, mounting on its back, bestrode it as he would a horse, seizing one of its feet in each hand, twisting them over its shoulders, and subduing it to a kind of riding-school exercise—if we picture to ourselves Waterton on his alligator, we may see a representation of both when looking at Shaftesbury on its hill—a hill that may be taken for a collossal crocodile, whether as regards shape or beauty.

Approach the town by which road you will, you must toil, and climb, and blow. If on foot, you must halt, and rest, and begin again. If on horseback, and you love your horse, you will dismount. If you are the horse itself, you will find no difficulty in making your rider get off; you will never in your life again rear more easily than on the road to Shaftesbury. If you are her Majesty's mail-coach, you will certainly be astonished, that in such a little town there should be people with such government influence as those who cause you to be dragged up one hill-side by four persecuted animals, while your wheels are again dragged by chains, to keep you from running over four other animals on the other side. If you are a little boy, and your mother makes you carry all the water, you will inquire of yourself, as for the dozenth time you halt to rest on your way from the well, why the water must be carried up to the town rather than the town brought down to the water. But if you are a reader of history, you will know that in times gone by, when sword was drawn against sword, man's hand lifted against man, when a place of strong defence was more important than a place of good trade, Shaftesbury, or Shaston, as it was anciently called, was built on this hill. And if you are a commercial man, or philosophic man, or Christian man, you will hope that such times may never return; and to render their everlasting absence the more certain, you will do all that in you lies to promote the extension of commerce, and peace, and good will among fellow-men. When you surmount the acclivity, and set your feet in the ancient borough, you will regret to see so little of trade and hear so much of politics.

But trade, and politics, and the steep hill, and the bad roads, and all other troubles, will dissolve and be forgotten in the beauteous scene that lies deep below and far extended—opened to the eye as if by enchantment. So lovely and so unexpected is the vast breadth of country, that you cannot even praise it. Deep silence is its praise—silence, lengthened and unbroken as the distant blue into which it melts and dies away.

The fragmentary suburbs which we saw below are now winking in the sun amid their little gardens, as comfortably as cats that have nothing to do but bask and sleep. Beyond these are fields skirted by hedge-rows, the hedge-rows dotted with trees, and the trees, at the breadth of every two or three fields, holding in their leafy shade some cottage, or farm-yard, or village, as if these were too shy to be seen openly; too coy and full of rural simplicity to look town-bred Shaftesbury in the face. We are looking southward upon the bosom of

Dorsetshire, and see nothing to wish away. Everything is beautiful; each tree, and meadow, and bushy hedge, and cottage, and village, and village church, mansion, and wooded park, is beautiful; yet none of them have individually the power of fascinating the eye. It is their whole, as seen from this commanding height, that compels our admiration; the broad country, undulating and varied—varied until its breadth subdues the variety and its distance melts the undulations into a pleasing uniformity; this it is that fascinates and seals you to the south, even though you are told that the west, the north, and the east are all as broad, lovely, varied, and uniform in their variety.

Move westward, and the horizon is still the boundary; north, and it is the same; east, move to the extremity of the alligator's tail eastward, and the beauty and extent of the view is undiminished. Here there are no mountains abruptly rising to exchange, for a broken prospect, their own hugeness, and force upon you the sensations of your own finity and littleness. Here there is no burning Etna nor thundering avalanche, nor Niagara Falls, to oppress you with awe, and compel the confession that you are a mere atom, tolerated to exist only because these devouring mouths of nature in wrath cannot get hold of you. Here the spectator is the monarch of the scene. Nothing appears greater than himself, while the subjugation in which all things lie before him, and around on all sides, exalts his greatness. Were he the vastest giant that can be pictured in the mind, his feet on the earth's highest surface and his eyes looking over the edges of the world upon space interminable and eternal, the prospect would be but an enlarged copy, the sensations but an increase of the intensity of what may be enjoyed here. Here you may dream yourself into a forgetfulness of your own humanity, and only return to a sense of mortal littleness when the blue beyond the boundaries of your prospect, like the eternity it represents, is felt to be too vast for your comprehension, too unfathomable for your penetration; or, perchance, when the Shaftesbury bell-ringers break in on you with all the clanging of their bell-metal, because it is the first of November, and because Somebody, the shopkeeper, has been elected town-councillor, while Somebody else, his next door neighbour, has been defeated; and because the shopkeeperites and the next door neighbourites have declared war against each other; open war, pamphleteering, exclusive-dealing, tar-barrel-burning, bell-ringing war.

Or, perhaps, the mind returns to the realities and details of the scene before the eye, by having loved it too well. It may be that the green meadows, hedge-rows, trees, cottages, farm-yards, villages, churches, mansions, parks, and all the other items that make up the united beauty of these dairy districts, are so potent as a whole, that they invite us from our eminence to come down and examine them one by one. Let us go. Let us descend into the low country and its details, even at the risk of discovering that a beautiful country may be, like some other beauties, not the better of being inspected too closely.

In the first place, the soil is clayey as we advance into Dorsetshire, and has a tendency to retain moisture when it should not. Never was there a district of country more in want of surface-draining than this. Never was there a district where draining is less attended to, and where the materials for tiles could be more cheaply and abundantly produced.

Next there is the road we walk on, the road between Shaftesbury and Stowr, between Stowr and Stalbridge, and all its branches. The bottom is clay. The water is not absorbed, neither is it drained off. The road is often higher at the sides than in the centre. But as the people tell us that it is much better now than it once was, we must be consoled, and hope that it will get a better allowance of better stones: the stones are soft, and not suited for road-making.

Next we have the hedge-rows, with their trees, which gave such beautiful variety to the landscape as viewed from Shaftesbury. These hedge-rows are not less varied now. They hold fellowship with all manner of vagrant vegetation, which some people would call wild-flowers, which others would call weeds, but which would be eradicated and for ever banished in districts where it is common to have a good fence to a farm field. And again, the variety is enlarged by the openings which violence or neglect has made; there being, in some cases, good fences existing separately, but far oftener the good and bad bushes and gaps forming one row.

Next we have the farm-yards and houses that looked upon the landscape like so many spots of beauty. We did not then see that the manure is scattered about without much regard to propriety of taste, and much of it utterly wasted in regard of its fertilizing qualities—wasted in the sun, the air, and the ditch that drains away the richest substances.

Next we have the cottages which among their trees looked like so many dwelling-places of contentment, comfort, and peace. They, too, are best when seen at a distance, although they may be subjected to a closer outside examination, and the impression they gave at the first and distant view not altogether obliterated. But enter and see the interior, and hear of the pinched meals, the low wages, and the scarcity of employment, you will find they are anything but cottages of contentment or comfort, or even peace.

However, we shall leave these general remarks and proceed to some particulars. On the north side of the road to Shaftesbury from Salisbury is Wardour Castle, the seat of the Earl of Arundel. I did not see enough of this place and the estate attached to it to justify more than the mere remark that it is a lovely residence. But I visited the celebrated Fonthill Abbey, which is about seven miles from Shaftesbury, and lying, from the Salisbury road, two or three miles beyond Wardour Castle.

The money expended in the formation of this magnificent pile of modern ruins has been prodigious. To bring it to its present condition, the original owner, Mr Beckford, not only reared it on the vast scale of grandeur which no other house in the kingdom could match; not only did he furnish and decorate it until it became the envy of George IV., then Prince Regent, who sought to see it, but was not permitted; not only did Mr Beckford concentrate in it all that art and wealth, and voluptuous taste could furnish; but, as if ruin should be rendered more certain and complete when it came, he spent money on everything but the improvement of his land; and the stone which he piled on stone to more than monumental height, the luxury which he added to luxury, parted from him by the stroke of an auctioneer's hammer, and fell—not the lasting glory of the new purchaser—but into an irremediable heap of ruins. The great tower, 270 feet in height, fell among the minor turrets which stood around it, and crushed into wreck some of the richest specimens of grandeur and elegance that ever existed out of an oriental palace.

And now there is ruin and desolation at Fonthill Abbey. The night-bird, and the reptile, and the spider, inhabit there. Plants that were once the richest and rarest are now the associates of noxious weeds, or are themselves degenerated to the level of their companions. All is ruin, all is loss, all humiliation. The cultivation of the land has not retrograded, because it had never advanced. I was invited to visit some of the farms in that neighbourhood, on which I was promised specimens of some of the worst farming in England. Certainly, if crops of couch-grass and thistles, two-thirds of these to one-third of corn, are evidence of bad farming, I saw them. But I stumbled by chance on good farming in that neighbourhood, to see which gave me more pleasure then, to record a notice of which gives me high satisfaction now. I allude to the home farm on the estate of John Benett, Esq., M.P. for South

Wiltshire. This gentleman's residence is Pyt House, about two miles from Fonthill Abbey.

Mr Benett is a spirited agriculturist. I saw the finest turnips on his farm which are to be seen in any of the southern counties. In one of his plantations of oaks, where the trees stand at from ten to forty yards distance, and where a bottom of coarse brushwood had been growing, I saw as fine a crop of potatoes as any cultivator could reasonably desire. These potatoes were the property of the poor of Hindon and neighbourhood, who, with Mr Benett's permission, had grubbed up the brushwood and reclaimed the soil. I was told the wood which they took off the ground had paid the expense of the labour, so that they had this excellent crop of potatoes for nothing. Next year Mr Benett takes the land to himself, and gives the people another piece to break up. It may be remarked that this is the consequence of the Tithe Commutation Act.

I had no opportunity of seeing and talking to any person connected with Mr Benett's farm, therefore cannot say what the expenses were and what the profits of his improvements. One thing, however, was visible at a glance, that his crops were better than other crops, the land cleaner than other land, and the style of working different; also that, by *personally attending to his own estate, the poor were to some extent provided for, while his profits were augmented.*

The first information I received of him was to the effect that he was a high Tory. The last I heard said of him was a remark on his Toryism. All that I heard of Mr Benett, "John Benett," as he is familiary called, from first to last, during my sojourn in and around Shaftesbury, had reference to his politics as member of Parliament. Never once did I hear those with whom I held conversation speak of his character as an agriculturist. It is of Mr Benett in this character that I speak. He may be a Conservative in Parliament, but he is an innovator at home; a radical reformer in agriculture, a true patriot and benefactor of his country. I shall leave anti-corn-law men and others to deal with him on the subject of his politics, and only remark that it would be a true and unspeakable blessing to England if all landowners would attend to their land like John Benett.

No. XII.

From Shaftesbury into Somersetshire.

It has been a dismal night—rain, hail, wind, chimney pots and tiles howling and cracking; doors and windows doing all they can to keep out the storm, and not able to keep it out, making more noise than if they would fly open and let it in at once. The " boots" was told, before he went to bed, to be up and stirring, and to have me up in time for the coach; every one charged him not to sleep too long, and during the night everything has been determined that he shall not sleep at all. In lying awake all night and thinking, for the want of something more comfortable to think on, that this storm *may* be the worst that ever blew over Shaftesbury, that it is possible that a town which has stood on the top of a hill for a thousand years *may* be blown away at last; I endeavoured to console myself with the reflection that, if it should not be blown away this night, I shall be away from it in the morning, and that the storm will render the good service of getting me up in time for the coach.

But even the brawling elements exhaust themselves, and towards morning fall asleep; and slumber is uppermost inside the house and out, on myself, " boots" and all. We are almost too late for the coach, when, in a moment, as if all the disembodied spirits of all the " boots" that this life ever saw were suddenly awakened in some other world, and came riding on clouds, whirlwinds, and chimney-pots, to knock up the sleepers of this; in a moment we are all awake, and the firmamental elements and the old houses of Shaftesbury are holding racket and warfare as before.

No time is to be lost. I am inside the coach, and the coach is outside the town. We are going down, down, and down. Every road from Shaftesbury is down. In the sky there is just as much moon left as renders the clouds visible, and the coach lamps give as many small streams of light as separate the two cubic yards of darkness, which with me fill the inside, from the measureless blackness which covers the world without.

A brief stoppage to take the drag from the wheels indicates that we are at the bottom of the hill, and that we are *not* drowned in the enormous well which stands open by the roadside on the declivity, with a mouth capacious enough to take in both coach and horses, without even doubling up th traces.

We are at Gillingham. The coach halts; horses are changed; a warm fire is blazing in the inn; buttered toast and a hot cup of coffee are on the table as if by magic; and both, on such a morning, have a most grateful odour.

We are off again. I am now outside, for the day is dawning, the wind and rain have abated, and I wish to see the surface of Somersetshire, into which we are soon to enter.

One of the first and most important features of the country which the dawn reveals is the want of drainage. On such a morning as this, the accumulated water is shewn in a way that tells fearful things for pasturage in a wet summer, and poor things for cultivation in any summer. We are on the estate of Sir Richard Hoare, the banker. I have already heard of the style of management, and have been prepared to see what I now see. Two-thirds or three-fourths of the whole is in old grass. The tenants are bound to plough only a certain number of acres, and to sow on these certain crops, and all are tenants-at-will, with the privilege and necessity of exercising the parliamentary franchise imposed on them. Thus they have neither inducement to be good farmers, through the want of security, nor permission, they being bound to do only certain things, and these things at variance with the practice and theory of good husbandry. It is singular that, of all people, a *banker* should impose on his tenants the duty of expending capital without *security*; or, if he does not expect them to expend capital on his property, it is equally singular that he does not see in it a source of profit to himself. This estate is named Stourhead, from the river Stour, which rises on it. The estate is either all, or principally, in Wiltshire, for in this neighbourhood the counties of Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset join.

At a short distance in Wiltshire is the town of Mere, once a place with good manufacturing trade, now remarkable only for its enormous union workhouse. On the other hand, in Somerset, seven miles from Mere, is Wincanton. The common wages in these districts are seven shillings a-week for men; some have eight, and some only six. A few years ago the women were mostly all engaged in the shirt-button manufacture; but the pearl buttons being now used in preference to the covered wires, their employment has failed. Good land hereabout maintains one cow on three acres; what they call middling land has a cow to four or five acres; and indifferent soils are farmed at the rate of a cow to six acres! And it is asked if, with all our noise about improved cultivation, we mean to break up the old grass-lands? Break them up! Why not? Soused with water, or overrun with foulness, why should the grass-lands not be broken up and drained, and purified and fertilized?

Leaving behind me Stourhead, I entered upon other property, the chief of which, for several miles, was the Maiden Bradley estate of the Duke of Somerset. We changed horses at the Somerset Arms, in Maiden Bradley, a small village inhabited chiefly by labourers. The country had still the same aspect; that is, three-fourths of grass-land to the remaining fourth of cultivation. Dairy farming was still prevalent; wages still as low; the necessity for draining and cleaning the fields still as great; labourers to effect that still as plentiful; and as few employers taking advantage of the cry for employment as in those parts of the country I had just left.

The reader must not attempt to follow my course on a map, or, if he does, he will either lose the road or discover what I cannot find on any map I have seen. The fact is, the coach I was on took some out-of-the-way roads to call at out-of-the-way places, and I am not able to name them all. But the next great estate we passed over was that of the Marquis of Bath. It is named Longleat. The morning sun was now shining brilliantly, and, though it was November, the country was beautifully variegated. The rain had swollen the rivulets, and had left on every bush a thousand drops glistening like diamonds. The park at Longleat is twelve miles in circumference, containing a vast quantity of fine timber, and exhibiting a splendid variety of forest and meadow. The mansion is very large, and is said to be the first well-built house in the kingdom. It was erected on the site of a suppressed priory, in the reign of Henry VIII., purchased from Sir John Horsey by Sir John Thynne, ancestor of the present Marquis of Bath. It must have been a sweet paradise for the monks in the days of their peace and prosperity. It is now a delightful retreat to the noble family who through so many generations have inherited it. It *will be* a rich inheritance to future generations when its abundant resources are called forth—resources teeming with agricultural richness, but now as utterly neglected, as profoundly asleep, as in the days of the monks.

We entered the town of Frome, and saw, what was new to me in the west of England, some fine stone buildings. One was an hospital and charity school, erected, as an inscription stated, and as the coachman told me, by a native of the town, who had left it when young and poor, who had journied to London, lived and made a fortune in *Prince's Street*, *Drury Lane*, rather an unlikely place now-a-days for fortune-making, and who had returned to Frome to do this and other works of munificent charity.

There are several beautiful churches and other buildings in Frome. All the houses are substantially built of hewn stone. The town stands on the front of a declivity facing south or south-east, and, when seen from the rising ground opposite, it appeared to me lovely beyond all other towns which I ever saw. All was brightened by the morning sun, each window winking in his face, each house and garden looking after the rain, like a child that had been in tears, but all the sweeter for being washed. But excepting beauty, there was little to admire in Frome. Stricken with poverty, as a strong man is, whose family, with little wages and less bread, pines around him, this town, notwithstanding its substantial edifices of stone, is sinking into decay.

In 1831 the number of inhabitants was 12,200; in 1841, 11,279, having decreased 921. Pauperism has increased as the population has fallen away; the poor-rate in 1836 was L.5391; in 1840, L.6601. One-sixth of the houses are uninhabited, and the rents of those with tenants are lowered, I was told, fifty per cent. The staple trade is the broad-cloth manufacture. A few years ago there were twenty-eight mills fully employed; now there are but twenty of these partially employed; five are standing still, and the remaining three are converted into flour mills. This town sends one member to Parliament. His name is Shepherd. I saw his seat, on a lovely eminence, between Trowbridge and Chippenham, overlooking a low district of rich land. But, as there are several places to notice before I reach that, I shall at present halt where the coach halted, at the Commercial Inn, somewhere near the river which gives name to the town, which name the reader must pronounce as if spelt Froome, not, as it is written, Frome.

No. XIII.

From the Town of Frome in Somersetshire to Westbury in Wiltshire.—The Town, the Country, and the Country People.—Reflections on the Causes that obstruct English Agriculture.

Leaving Frome I journied several miles through a pleasant country to Westbury. Here I was once more in Wiltshire. Westbury has the appearance of a respectable, open, full-sized village, and, looked upon as a village, it is not to be found fault with. But a brief acquaintance with it, even drinking a glass of ale with the landlord of one of its inns, while the coach changes horses, informs the stranger that it is a borough sending a member to Parliament. Oh, bless you, yes! *a borough.* Why should it not be a borough? Its name is

Westbury; and Camden, the old and learned, says—"The name of Westbury is purely Saxon, derived, probably, from its being one of the considerable towns of the west, or from its situation west from a borough, or Roman station, as they call Selwood Forest in its neighbourhood the Western Wood by way of eminence." A borough! Yes; and it has a handsome town-hall, and a market on Friday, and three fairs, and a bank. There is the bank right opposite the inn; and there is, standing right in front of the bank, a young gentleman with moustachios and an imperial, a white beaver, kid gloves, and a superfine royal cigar, scented and scenting the morning air; that *he* belongs to the bank is as sure as the ornamental painting of the door. And the neighbourhood is honoured with the residence of several first-rate families too. There is the property of the Longs close by; one of them member for the northern division of the county, jointly with the great Sir Francis Burdett. And Sir Francis has property here and hereabouts as well; and there is Sir Ralph, member for the town—Sir Ralph Lopes—whose family have for a number of years done what they liked here—a rich family—made a fortune in the Indies at one time—bought land in Devonshire, married, and got land in Wiltshire! Great people! Oh, yes; a borough. Sir Ralph is member.

And Westbury has six hundred and seventy-six looms for weaving woollen cloth, and several steam mills for carding, spinning, and fulling. Of the looms three hundred and fifty-four are standing idle, while only three hundred and twenty-two have their shuttles moving. Some of the mills are working half time, and some are closed. The weavers are lounging about idle—idle as the banker (or the son, or clerk, or customer, or nuisance of the banker, I know not which) in front of the bank, but not so well fed as he, for they have expended their all for half meals of food; not so sweetly scented as he, for they live in poverty and filth, two qualities that adhere the more closely to each other when there is least ability to resist them; and not so well clothed as he, for their rags shew the truth of the evidence given by a dealer in ready-made clothes, who states that in Westbury, a few years ago, he sold to the amount of L.40 per month, while now he scarcely sells to the amount of L.2 per month, though his proportion of the clothes trade is as high, compared with other tradesmen, as ever.

Leaving this town on the road to Trowbridge, which is five miles distant, we have the land on each side of us much the same as before entering Westbury. The cultivation seems to become more general than beyond Frome, and the soil is decidedly of good quality. A chance field or two, may be a chance farm or two, shews good husbandry, which contrasts forcibly with the sluggish neglect characteristic of the majority of fields and farms surrounding them; and which supports the truth of Mr Pusey's statement, when he said that the improvement of agriculture, so common in Scotland, was not new to England, that certain superior methods of tilling the soil were common in some farms, but that farmers in the same county—I think he said, or *might have said*, in the same parish—do not know anything about them.

I heard a remark made recently by a gentleman* well acquainted with every peculiarity in the English and Scottish character, and as well acquainted with every circumstance past and present, leading to, or resulting from, the character of either people as any man living, that the English are more inventive than the Scotch, but the Scotch are more ready and discreet in the application of inventions—that they are, in short, more applicative. Without halting to discuss the propriety of this remark as regards general matters, I shall only say that, in regard of agriculture, the remark seems to be decidedly just. Almost all the established methods of improved cultivation now common in Scotland originated in England. Mr Dawson of Frogden introduced the Rotherham plough and the turnip culture to Roxburghshire from Norfolk. Mr Small of Berwickshire, finding the district of that county called the Merse too wet and tenacious for common cultivation, took the Rotherham plough of Mr Dawson as a model, or rather as a spur to his applicative genius, and effected, in its construction, such alterations as enabled the farmers of the Merse to plough, with two horses, a soil remarkable for its adhesive and stubborn qualities; a soil the same as in many parts of England, where, at this day, the ploughs in use are constructed as a hundred years before the Rotherham plough; where four horses are required to draw an implement not adapted to the soil; where four horses, by being so yoked, on such a soil, do a serious injury to its fertility; where four horses treading unnecessarily on soft clay, to the detriment of the crops, eat up, in provender and other expenses, a considerable part of the poor profits of the improperly cultivated clayey soils.

The question that arises from this is an important one. What are the causes that obstruct the general use of agricultural improvements in England? We must not attempt to answer this by saying the English are not so ready to apply inventions as the Scotch, though this may to some extent be true; because we have before us steam, and new, complicated, wonderful inventions, applied to all branches of industry and art throughout England save agriculture. We have new machinery making its appearance in one English town, and it is instantly applied in another; the keenest master spinner, or bleacher, or ship-owner in Glasgow—quick and applicative though he may be—is not quick enough to have an English invention many days, even if one day, sooner than his rivals of Manchester and Liverpool. But we find the case very different in regard of cultivating the soil. Advances are made in improvements so manifestly advantageous, that the fact is visible as daylight, of men who adopt such improvements becoming rich—rich in the very parish where men who do not adopt them continue comparatively poor. We see the poorer soils of Scotland producing crops, and the rich farmers paying rents, that stagger the southern agriculturists, even in speaking of them—as witness the effect of Mr Hyde Greg's account of the Lothians. Now there must be a cause for this other than the genius of the people. Most agriculturists, writing or speaking of the superiority of Scotch cultivation, seek to account for it by citing certain favouring causes, none of which, in my opinion, have been superior to circumstances everywhere ready to assist cultivation in England. Scotch advancement has not been the artificial result of fostering causes, it is the natural result of capital and industry having free scope; at all events, a more free scope than in England. But English agriculture has had, and *still has*, obstructions retarding its advancement, which Scotland has not had, and which have crippled the growth of English grain as effectually as the bandages on a female foot in China restrict its growth, and add to that which the *natives* call beauty. I have now lying before me a copy of the annual leases granted by an English nobleman to his farming tenantry. This nobleman is one of the best men in England in respect of his good nature, good intentions, and I may say good wishes to all men.* If he is not the richest landowner in England, he is one of the few who are the richest, and he would doubtless say, were he asked, that he gives every encouragement to English agriculture in his power, and that he considers it should be protected from foreign competition. I shall, in next letter, publish this document—not to hold this nobleman up to invidious remark, not to make his manner of entering upon agreements with his tenantry a peg on which to hang remarks derogatory to the whole of the landed aristocracy who do as he does, but to shew them, in the face of the nation, what are the hindrances to the advancement of English agriculture. Meantime, I shall only say, *that were all the ingenuity of man taxed to the utter-*

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* Mr Black, late Editor of the Morning Chronicle.

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* The late Marquis of Westminster.

most to produce a documentary tenure between landlord and tenant, which would have the design of destroying the energies of the tenant, if he ever had any; of restricting the appliance of improvements, were he inclined to apply them; of hastening land out of cultivation, were land in danger of being discultured—nothing, to wear a semblance of fair play to the farmer, could surpass this nobleman's leases.

As a branch of that subject which has led to so much discussion, namely, the superiority of Scotch over English agriculture, the question of labourers here presents itself. In several of my recent communications, mention has been made of the defectiveness of labour, of the inability of the English labourers to execute works, and to use improved implements, as in some parts of England and in most parts of Scotland. But this objection must be taken in a qualified degree. Give the labourers of the south-west of England a scythe, and a certain number of acres of hay or grain to mow, and the common men of them will surpass any picked men from Scotland. At many other kinds of work they will evince the same superiority, especially if promised *some beer* when done, or if aided with it while going on; but they are not steady, they cannot be depended on, and they will starve or go to prison rather than work in any way but their own way. A farmer in the Lothians of Scotland, in Northumberland, in Norfolk, and in Lincolnshire, has his work performed thirty per cent. cheaper than in most of the English counties, even though he pays eleven shillings a-week to the labourer, while in these other counties nine shillings a-week is only paid. This may appear singular, but it is a fact which has been put to the proof; and it depends entirely on the superior steadiness of the northern workmen, not, however, because they are northern. Look at the Scotch hind, whose master has a long lease of his farm, and who hires his hinds by the year, and encourages them to remain with him while he remains on the farm, or who, if they do not remain so long, still deals with them as men whose whole time and attention must be devoted to him; look at one of those hinds, (this is the name of the married Scotch ploughmen,) and you will find him invariably a steady sober man, not very bright in intellect it may be, not very well informed, not very much interested in the passing affairs of the day, unless on some topic of religious controversy; but you will find him zealously devoted to his master's interests, and always ready to work, that is, when his hours of working arrive. He is ever ready when called on, *because he is not called on but at stated and scrupulously observed hours.*

But look at the south of England labourer. Either he must be starved to compel him to work, or bribed by beer or some temporary stimulant to induce him to work. *He is only ready for his master when it suits himself, because his master deals with him on the same principle. He is hired one day and paid off the next, or at most his term is for a week.* Thus paid, with a little loose money, and much loose time, he meets others like himself, who spend their money, and, without work or food, betake themselves to poaching and thieving. The old poor-law encouraged them in all these practices, and doubled, in many cases quadrupled, their numbers over what they would have been if left to their own industrial resources, which increase of numbers makes their employment still more uncertain, still more unlike that of the Scotch hind; which uncertainty, again, renders their domestic comfort, that should be the centre of all sound moral habits, the very reverse of what a man feels who, let him work ever so hard, has his regular meals to come home to at regular hours; which makes the English farm labourer so much inferior to the Scotch hind in regard of domestic comfort, moral habits, and steady application to his work and the interests of his master.

But follow the hind's brother, who, as we shall suppose, served an apprenticeship to the village blacksmith, penetrated as far as Glasgow when a journeymen, served a second apprenticeship to engine-making, perhaps with the Messrs Napier. In due time we find him in Manchester or Leeds, and we see, working alongside of him, the brother of the farm labourer of Wiltshire, who also learned to be a blacksmith in his native village, who went to Bristol when a journeyman, who there learned the art of engine-making, and who afterwards proceeded to Manchester or Leeds, where we now find him. What is the difference between him and the hind's brother from Scotland? Nothing, unless it be that the Scotchman is the most unsteady workman of the two. We may see a greater number of Scotchmen in a first-rate English factory than of Englishmen; that is, if we compare the extent of the population from which they are supplied; but I think much of this depends on the fact of Scotchmen and their parents through many generations being left to their own industrial resources and the freedom of their own inclinations, rather than on any inherent difference of organization. That different circumstances will in time produce a different organization is perhaps true; but if so, it only proves that the *feebler energies of the rural populace in the south of England are the result of unwholesome restrictions on industry and personal locomotion, such as have been effected by several laws*, the Curfew and the old poor-laws especially.

Take from England the causes that have corrupted the rural population and introduce them into Scotland, and the same results will follow. If this be doubted, let the supposition appear in another shape. Bring from Scotland 500 of the steadiest hinds to be found in the Lothians. Place them with their families in the little town of Hindon, in Wiltshire. Make them pot-wallopers; that is, give to each man who boils his pot twelve months previous to the election the right of voting. Introduce among them ambitious men of wealth to purchase, bribe, and bestialize them, that they, the ambitious men, may become M.P.s, and in the course of a few generations, if not in the course of the first, these new comers would be as debased in morals, as dependent on their own baseness for the means of existence, as the old pot-wallopers of Hindon. And take from them, by the same schedule A, the means by which they lived, and they would become the same thieves and poachers, starving, though they added crime to every other resource they could devise for a livelihood, as the wretched pot-wallopers of Hindon are at this moment. Or, take the same men, the Scotch hinds, and give them the old poor-law of England, with all the old enactments that kept the villagers to their villages all the days of their lives, in addition to the poor-law's inducements to remain in the village; take away by these means all the inducements to industry, all the elements that make up the relationship, the mutual dependence of workman and master, and put in the place of such absent virtues the positive elements of idleness and discord, and the offspring of the hinds, in a few generations, would be the same hand-to-mouth, turbulent, unmanageable, unserviceable population as that now swarming in the south of England. And bring from Scotland the best farmers with the best implements of husbandry, and set them down with their hinds upon any farm in England they might choose; but let all the complication of English tenures exist—all those quirks and cranks of the law which render it more necessary for an English farmer to be a skilful lawyer than a skilful cultivator; let the lease or the annual agreement be that which an English lawyer draws out and an English nobleman exacts adherence to from his tenant; let all these be the conditions for the Scotch farmer, and he would find himself reduced to the limited operations of his English neighbour.

In conclusion, I believe much, if not all, of the evil now afflicting the rural society of England can be removed by removing the causes that produce it. The amendment of the poor-law was a great step in the right direction, if it had been accompanied by a necessary movement on the part of the landowners to employ those whom it deprived of parish pay. It took away one cause of a great moral disease, but the landowners should not rest satisfied with removing the cause of a disease now existing ; the disease of a redundant population of loose moral habits, of vicious prejudices, of confirmed idleness, should also be removed, for it now exists independent of its original cause or causes. Emigration to new countries would unquestionably assist ; but with so many prejudices to overcome this could only be applied to a partial extent under the best regulations. And when we see before us the fact that L.100 of capital applied to ten acres of almost any of the arable soils of England, (keeping off two or three counties already well cultivated,) that this capital would bring in a return twenty times greater on ten acres in England than on ten acres in the back settlements of the colonies, for a period at least equal to one generation, we may well throw aside emigration as a secondary consideration. The poor-law has been amended in so far as the false support of the able-bodied labourer has been removed ; but the landowner has not advanced to meet that labourer with a substitute. The vice, the ignorance, the idleness, the hostility to the rich, are now the same among the labourers as under the old poor-law, with the addition of irritated prejudices, withering hunger—in many cases cruel persecution—to perpetuate their degradation ; for these vices are monsters that generate and feed on each other. The landowner must amend his own system if he would amend the condition of the labouring poor. Happily, in calling on him to do so, we call on him not for a sacrifice, but to add to his own wealth by improving his good land, which will, without any other effort of his, improve the condition of the labourers. Give them work and wages, and they will have food and domestic comfort. Let them have food and domestic comfort, and they may be educated and preached to ; but with the landowners neglecting their own property as they now neglect it, with the labourers looking to them for support and not receiving it as they now do, all the parsons and schoolmasters at home and abroad will not mend the morals of a people rapidly sinking, deteriorating every year in physical comforts.

No. XIV.

The Form of an Annual Agreement entered into by a Nobleman and his Tenants-at-will in the County of Chester.

Much may be said, and truly said, illustrative of errors in tenures, but so long as assertions are unaccompanied by documentary proof or precise specimens of error, it is not to be expected that much impression will be made on those who remain content with things as they are.

The first we shall examine is a form of lease, or annual agreement, with a tenant-at-will. The nobleman who issues this agreement is an extensive proprietor in several counties, and is, unquestionably, one of the most amiable men, whether in respect of public or private reputation, in England, (the late Marquis of Westminster.)

LEASE No. 1.—ISSUED IN NOV. 1842.

" *Conditions for the letting and holding a messuage, outbuildings, and farm, situate in the township of ———, in the county of Chester, the property of the ——————— ; containing ——— acres of land statute measure, or thereabouts.*

1st. " The premises to be held from year to year, commencing from the 2d of February 18—, at the clear annual rent of L.——, the said rent to become due by equal portions half-yearly, on the 2d of February and 2d of August in each year, always a half year in advance; the first payment to become due on the 2d of February 18—. Any subsequent change of the days for receiving the half-yearly payments of rent for the convenience of the landlord or tenant, not to alter or affect the times herein fixed for their becoming due, nor the power of the landlord then to demand or distrain for the same: SAVE AND EXCEPT to the landlord the mines, minerals, quarries, gravel, sand, stone, timber, and other trees, with the usual power to search for, get, stack, fell, and carry away the same. Also the game and fish on the said premises, with liberty for himself and his friends, gamekeepers, servants, and other attendants, to take, kill, or preserve the same: Also the power of taking and making use of such parts of the said lands as he may require for plantations, roads, or other improvements, or cottage allotments, making a reasonable abatement from the rent, according to the value of the land taken, and a compensation for any improvement the tenant may have made thereon; the amount to be ascertained and fixed by the agent of the said ——— for the time being.

2d. " The tenant to pay and bear all rates, taxes, and impositions, (including the land-tax,) ———— the tithe rent charge payable in respect of the said premises; to maintain and keep in good repair the inside of the house and buildings; also all doors, gates, stiles, rails, and fences, ditches, drains, irrigation gutters, sewers, floodgates, paddles, and sluices, belonging to the said premises, being allowed bricks, lime, and timber; and to do all cartage required in repairs of, or in any additions to, the said house or buildings. To do for the landlord yearly —— days of labour with a cart or plough, and three horses and a man to attend them, when and where required by his agent. To keep a dog for the landlord. To consume on the premises all the hay, straw, fodder, turnips, potatoes, and food roots, which shall be produced on the said farm, except such turnips, potatoes, or other food roots as shall have been wholly raised with *purchased* manure; and to lay upon the meadow or pasture-land of the said farm all the manure which shall be made or arise upon the said farm, except what is used for the growth of potatoes, turnips, and other food roots *to be eaten on the premises*. At the time of quitting, to leave on the farm all the hay, straw, dung, or manure produced or made thereon. Not to plough, break up, or have in tillage any of the lands reserved for permanent meadow or pasture, *viz.*, the * * * (except such of the same fields as are now in tillage, and then only to lay them down for permanent pasture in manner hereinafter required.) Nor more than ——— statute acres of the said farm at one time, including summer and turnip fallows and green crops. Not to take more than two crops of corn during one course of tillage, unless the land have been at breaking up, or in such course of tillage, improved by a proper covering of lime or *purchased* manure or marl, and either a summer fallow made or a green crop taken; and in no case to take more than three crops of corn in one course of tillage; not to take more than one crop of wheat in a tillage; not to take more than two successive crops of corn without intervening summer fallow or green crops. To lay the land down at the end of each tillage in a clean state and neat form, with good seed, in the following proportions per statute acre; that is to say—Red clover, 9 lbs., white clover, 5 lbs., and fine perennial rye-grass, or other suitable grass seed, one peck; and not to break up the same again until all the other arable land shall have been tilled in rotation.

3d. " Not to mow any part of the land more than once in any one year, unless the same shall have been top-dressed with *purchased* manure. After notice to quit, not to turn any horses, pigs, or cattle into the meadow land later than the 20th day of November, and to give up possession of the said tillage land on the first day of November after such notice. Not to sow more than —— statute acres of the land with wheat after such notice; and, at the ensuing August, not to claim or be entitled to a greater proportion of the crop of wheat on the said —— statute acres than two-third parts on summer fallowed land, and one-half on all other land; and to leave the straw from such proportion of the said crop upon the premises; being allowed, however, one-half of the market price of all hay and straw left upon the premises. The landlord or succeeding tenant to be at liberty to sow clover or grass seeds upon any crops sown the autumn or winter after notice. Not to make marl-pits, except in such places as shall be pointed out by the said agent; and in every case in which a new pit shall be made, one old pit of equal size shall be filled up and made into land.

4th. "Not to fell, lop, top, or injure the timber, or any other trees or sapplings growing on the said premises, under a penalty of L.10 for each offence, over and above the value of the tree.

5th. "To pull up or mow, previously to the month of August, all thistles and docks growing upon the said premises, or on the roads and waste lands adjoining, and burn the same, under a penalty of L.1 per acre, and so on in proportion.

6th. "To reside on the premises, and not to let, set, or assign over the same, or any part thereof.

7th. "To use his best endeavours to preserve the game on the said premises, and to warn all persons from sporting or trespassing thereon; and to permit his name to be used in any action that may be brought against any person for sporting or trespassing thereon.

8th. "The tenant to pay an additional rent of L.10 a-year for every acre on or in respect of which the foregoing rules, restrictions, stipulations, and agreements, or any of them, shall have been broke through or disregarded; and the like additional rent of L.10 for every cart load of hay, straw, clover, grass, muck, manure, potatoes, turnips, or other food roots, sold or carried off the premises, (except such potatoes, turnips, or other food roots as shall have been raised wholly with *purchased* manure.) Such additional rents and all penalties hereby imposed to be respectively deemed an increase of the said yearly rent, and to be recoverable accordingly, and to be considered as fully due, and to be paid therewith on such of the said rent-days as shall happen next after such penalties, or any of them, shall have been incurred; and to pay an additional rent of L.10 for and on every day of holding over the said premises, or any part thereof, after the said respective days of giving up possession after notice.

9th. "The said —— agrees to keep in repair the roofs and walls of the said messuages and buildings, and to find all bricks, lime, and timber necessary for the repairs of the inside thereof; and for making new gates; to find quick for planting new fences, and for filling up gaps in old ones; to find stones or tiles and timber for draining and irrigation; such repairs, drainings, and irrigation, gates and fences, to be done and made under the direction of the said —— or his agent; and of whatever shall be done without such directions the said tenant shall himself bear the whole expense, and not claim any allowance for the same on quitting the premises. That, whenever the said tenant shall have received notice to quit, and shall have quitted, the possession of the whole, or any part of the said premises, if it shall appear that he has, within the last three years, paid any expense of improvements made under the direction of the said ——, or his agent, of which a benefit equivalent to such expense has not been derived by him, and that the said premises have, in all other respects, been maintained and managed according to the true intent and meaning of this agreement, then such an allowance shall be made and paid to the said tenant as the said agent shall deem a reasonable and proper compensation; also the prime cost of any good clover or grass-seeds which he may have sowed during the last year of his occupancy, and which shall have produced good and sufficient clover and grass roots, provided the same has not been grazed, but has been laid up and kept from trespass or injury, and provided the meadow land has not been eaten or trodden after the 20th of November. The tenant, on quitting pursuant to regular notice, to be allowed to occupy the house and outbuildings (except a lodging-room for workmen and a stable for horses) and an outlet or boozy pasture to be set out by the said agent until the 1st of May next following the day for quitting the land, and to stack his share of the corn upon some convenient part of the premises until the 1st day of August.

10th. "Provided always that, if the said yearly and penal rents, or any part thereof, shall be behind and unpaid for twenty days after the same shall have been demanded by the landlord or his agent, (although not demanded when and as the same shall have become due and payable as aforesaid,) or if the said tenant, his executors, or administrators shall break or omit any of the conditions or stipulations aforesaid, or shall underlet the said premises or any part thereof, or shall become bankrupt or insolvent, or assign over his or their effects for the benefit of creditors, or if the same shall be taken in execution for debt, it shall be lawful for the said ———, or his agent, either with or without any legal process, to re-enter upon the said premises, and to take and keep possession thereof, as if the same were unlet and unoccupied. In witness whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands, the day and year first above written."

Such is the agreement which a landlord ratifies with his tenants, a landlord who, I am well convinced, would not injure any fellow creature knowingly, in the slightest degree; a landlord, however, who leaves his vast property, and the vast interests to himself and the public of that property, to the management of those who are either unacquainted with a better system, or who are so wedded to old usages as to maintain them at the expense of the estate.

Had I no other object in reprinting and remarking on this document than to ridicule the author of it, I would at once proceed to its ungrammatical and singularly confused composition. Were I disposed to be severe with the legal agent who either enforces, or may enforce or relax, its clauses, and from whose pen it doubtless emanated, I would proceed to point out that in several clauses there is not only mystery, but provisions which no human being could keep clear of infringing; and that the penal provisions are so worded as to catch the tenant at each error, and fine him more than once for the one offence, if the agent thinks fit; as also to prevent him from taking advantage of the compensatory provisions, if again the agent thinks fit, even though the penalties may have been paid. Were I disposed to open a sharpshooting fire on this nobleman and other landlords, all the errors of the agent might be easily charged on the principal, and in the skirmish something sharp might be said of the tenant keeping a dog for the landlord, of the tenant being required to preserve the game which eats up his own crops, and so on; but all this would be nothing more than a skirmish—a mere affair of outposts. The keeping of the dog is but a frivolous matter, viewed on whichever side we may view it; the destruction of crops by game is a great grievance, but it must be looked to as so much of a rent charge. So long as our gentry and nobility *are* gentry and nobility they will have their sports, therefore it is hopeless to say another word on this point.

I shall leave all these secondary matters to be considered afterwards, or by other persons, and shall, as soon as space permits, enter upon the main arguments; namely, that no tenant having such a tenure as this can expend capital on his farm; that not only would he be restrained by a sense of insecurity, but he is positively bound down so stringently in regard of meadows, manures, croppings, and disposal of produce, that he cannot lay out money on improvements were he desirous so to do; and, further, that those very farms, held by copies of this document, do not now return, and at no time have returned, to their noble owner a rental within one-third of what they would return if differently cultivated, even though prices of farm produce were considerably lower than at present.

Meanwhile the annual lease is here exhibited as it stands. By the time I resume my remarks, I shall, in all likelihood, have personally inspected the farms held by this tenure.

No. XV.

A chapter on the Men of the League; being a Note from the Factory Districts, which must not be overlooked by those interested in Agriculture.

January 1843.

Having a day to spend in Manchester, previous to going into Cheshire to examine the practical working of the agreements between landlord and tenant, one of which was given at full length in my last communication, I determined to get a peep, if possible, at that extraordinary body the Anti-Corn-Law League. Being slightly acquainted with one of the members of the council, I inquired of him the conditions on which a stranger could visit the rooms, and was informed that any committee-man might introduce a stranger to his own committee, or a member of the council might take a stranger to the council-room; and that I might be shewn over the whole establishment if I attended at ten the next morning.

Accordingly, at ten o'clock I was in Market Street, a principal thoroughfare in Manchester. A wide open stairway, with shops on each side of its entrance, rises from the level of the pavement, and lands on the first floor of a very extensive house called "Newall's Buildings." The house consists of four floors, all of which are occupied by the League, save the basement. We must, therefore, ascend the stair, which is wide enough to admit four or five persons walking abreast.

On reaching a spacious landing, or lobby, we turn to the left, and, entering by a door, see a counter somewhere between forty and fifty feet in length, behind which several men and boys are busily employed, some registering letters in books, some keeping accounts, some folding and addressing newspapers, others going out with messages and parcels. This is the general office, and the number of persons here employed is, at the present time, ten. Beyond this is the *Council Room*, which, for the present, we shall leave behind and go up stairs to the second floor.

Here we have a large room, probably forty feet by thirty, with a table in the centre running lengthwise, with seats around for a number of persons, who meet in the evenings, and who are called the "Manchester Committee." On inquiring into the nature of their business, I was told they formed a committee as distinct from the League as the committees of any other town in England; in other words, while the League is *national* in its operations, this committee is *local*, and has the charge of issuing subscription cards to, and collecting subscriptions in, Manchester. The members are all persons who are engaged in their own business during the day. The moment they are clear of their counting-houses or shops in the evening, they hasten here, and find tea and bread and butter on the table. They partake of this refreshment in preference to going each to his home, or coffee-house, or hotel, and save time by so doing; at least such was the observation made to me by the person who introduced me to the room.

During the day this room is occupied by those who keep the accounts of cards issued and returned to and from all parts of the kingdom. A professional accountant is retained for this department, and a committee of members of council give him directions and inspect his books. These books are said to be very ingeniously arranged, so as to shew at a glance the value of the cards sent out, their value being represented by certain alphabetical letters and numbers, the names and residences of the parties to whom sent, the amounts or deficiencies of those returned, and so on.

Passing from this room we come to another, from which all the correspondence is issued. From this office letters to the amount of several thousands a-day go forth to all parts of the kingdom. While here, I saw letters addressed to all the foreign ambassadors, and all the mayors and provosts of corporate towns of the United Kingdom, inviting them to the great banquet which is to be given in the last week of this month. The amount of postage for letters going out during the week ending 7th January was L.18 : 2 : 6; but the amount of postage was frequently as much as this in one day—for a single day it had been so high as L.38. In this office copies of all the parliamentary registries of the kingdom are kept, so that any elector's name and residence is at once found, and, if necessary, such elector is communicated with by letter or parcel of tracts, irrespective of the committees in his own district.

Passing from this apartment, we see two or three small rooms, in which various committees of members of the council meet. Some of these committees are permanent, some temporary. Of those which are permanent I may name that for receiving all applications for lecturers and deputations to public meetings. The correspondence of each post having been opened, and read by the secretary and chairman of the council, the letters relative to lecturers and deputations are handed to this committee, who consider the merits thereof, and report to the council, at which a vote is taken decisive of the resolution of the committee. In like manner the letters relative to subscriptions are handed to the committee appointed to that department. Of the temporary committees may be named that which directs the arrangements for the forthcoming banquet. There are frequently as many as ten of these sitting at once.

Passing by the rooms in which the committees meet, we come to a large hall, lighted from the top by an expansive dome. This was formerly a picture gallery, and was fitted up by the League for public meetings; but of late the meetings have increased so much in importance, that a place called the Corn Exchange, in another street, has been taken, and there the public weekly meetings are now held.

In another large room on this floor is the packing department. Here several men are at work making up bales of tracts, each weighing upwards of a hundred weight, and despatching them to all parts of the kingdom for distribution among the electors. From sixty to seventy of these bales are sent off in a week, that is, from three to three and a-half tons of arguments against the corn-laws! The publications sent are twelve in number, a copy of each being put up in one cover for each elector and tenant farmer in the kingdom; one of them is the pamphlet containing the three prize essays. These single packages cost one shilling each for paper, printing, and preparation. They are put up into dozens or scores, I forget which, and these again into the bales of a hundred weight each.

Leaving this and going to the floor above, we find a great number of printers, presses, folders, stitchers, and others connected with printing, at work. But in addition to the printing and issuing of tracts here, the League has several other printers at work in this and other towns of the kingdom. Altogether they have twelve master-printers employed, one of whom, in Manchester, pays upwards of L.100 a-week in wages for League work alone. He sent in while I was there an account, which was shewn me as a specimen of the magnitude of the League's operations, an account for paper alone of nearly L.1000 ! all used within the brief period of a few weeks. The amount of money paid for the carriage of parcels must be high, but I did not find information on this point.

I shall now return down stairs to the "Council-room." These words were seen in white letters, raised on a door covered with crimson cloth. My friend pushed it open, and bade me follow him. There were about twenty persons present, chiefly seated around a long table covered with cloth, the cloth covered in most part with books, newspapers, writing materials, and elbows of members who leant thereon, and listened to what the chairman was reading.

The chairman sat at the further end of the room, facing the door by which we entered, his back turned to Market-street; on each side of him a window with crimson hangings looking out upon the street, and in front of him the table which stood lengthwise, and the members who, to him, sat sideways, except when they turned their chairs to front him. The room seemed to be about thirty feet in length. On one side was a fireplace and a rack for sticks, umbrellas, hats, great-coats, and so on; on the opposite side were two or three windows looking out upon a lane which turns at a right angle from Market-street; these windows had also crimson hangings. In one corner of the room was a curious, yet simple instrument, representing the sliding-scale, which had been presented to the League.

The chairman is George Wilson, a gentleman whose face and forehead shew a promising fulness of intellect, while his age—three or four years above thirty—his firm and full breadth of body, together with his daily avocations, promise that he will live longer than the corn-laws. On his left sits the secretary, who at first seems to be a copy, not excepting the nose, of Lord Brougham, or rather the Henry Brougham of fifteen or twenty years ago; his name is Hicken.

I looked with much curiosity upon the councillors, to pick from them the names which have become celebrated, or rather the heads, which, according to my ideas, should belong to the well-known names. Having seen the member for Stockport when attending his parliamentary duties in London, I at once recognised, in a gentleman who sat leaning on his left arm, the arm on the top rail of his chair, listening to the letters the chairman read, calm, reflective, and pale—I at once recognised in him Richard Cobden; and when he spoke, so mild was his voice, so unassuming his style of giving an opinion, so clearly was the opinion given, that I at once saw the source of much of that importance he has acquired. I have never heard him make a speech, and, therefore, cannot speak of his style, but am told he is forcible, and often warm; yet I could be sworn that he is never in his warmth so forcible as when he makes a calm statement. Neither is it his wealth and position as a great manufacturer that has given him his importance as a public speaker. At the council board of the League he has around him other rich men who make little figure in public, but whose wealth and mercantile operations are known for their vastness throughout the whole civilized world. I was shewn a list of the names of the members of council, which comprised men of all political parties, of all professions, resident in all parts of the country; and every day, for a period of two or three hours, from twelve to twenty of these men attend the council, to see that all the operations are being carried out in a business-like manner. Several of them who are there every day employ each from 500 to 2000 work-people.

Alderman John Brooks is one of the most remarkable members of the council. He is said to be very wealthy. He keeps a carriage, and when he has it out, which, I am told, is almost every night, he has it crammed with repealers. It is enough to Mr Brooks to know that the stranger in Manchester is a friend of the League; knowing this, he will be invited to a seat in the carriage even after it is full; nay, Mr Brooks will get out himself that the stranger may get in, and he will drive to any part of the town to set any one down. He has several great establishments, on one of which, at Bolton, he has lost L.60,000, but jokes at the loss, and declares that sooner or later it shall be made to pay. He is an elderly man, but full of vigour; he shrinks at no fatigue. To use his own expression, his words "come rolling out like potatoes from a sack, not in the most regular order, sometimes the one rolling over the other, and getting before when it should be behind, but always coming to the right point at last." Others who are acquainted with him say he turns a corner in his speech so quickly, so unexpectedly, that for a minute he is often lost sight of; but he as quickly re-appears, with an increased comicality, which elicits a peal of laughter or a cheer all the louder that he for a moment obscured himself. He goes off to distant towns after the earlier and more important business of the day, attends public meetings, travels home again all night, is attending to his leviathian establishment early in the morning, at the League-rooms at ten or eleven, at the Exchange till the close of business, and again doing something for the League, all without repose. And this is done by a man of whom it is alleged, by those who know him, that he would not take a seat in Parliament if the offer was accompanied with a recompence of L.50,000.

Another remarkable member of the council is Mr Bright, "John Bright of Rochdale," as he is called. He is one of the Society of Friends, not quite thirty years of age, judging by appearance. But, though the Friends are proverbially modest and unassuming; though John Bright is as a member of the society should be in demeanour; though it is asserted that the League will dissolve, and its public men retire to private business or private life when its purpose is accomplished; though the League may dissolve, and its men seek retirement; and though the Friends should continue to be as unassuming as they have ever been, John Bright will, if he lives long enough, be a leading man in the British legislature. I am not aware that he ever whispered the possibility of his becoming a member, to say nothing of a leader; but talents like his will take root too firmly in the public mind, long before the corn-law repeal is accomplished, to admit of his retirement, even were he desirous of repose. He is earnest, argumentative, eloquent; clear in statement, apt in illustration, fluent in words, abundant in resources. John Bright is, in talent, a second Peel; he was born in the same atmosphere. Let his career be observed—he has entered upon it.

To the other remarkable men of the League I shall devote a future chapter. Meantime, of the operations of that extraordinary body I may observe, that all the members being men habituated to business, they go to their work of agitation with the same precision in the minutest details as they do in their work of cotton spinning. The magnitude of their proceedings in printing, publishing, and distributing arguments against the corn-laws has been stated. The following is one of their circulars relative to details:—

"DIRECTIONS FOR DISTRIBUTING TRACTS TO ALL THE FARMERS AND COUNTY VOTERS IN THE KINGDOM.

"Procure copies of the last registration from the clerks of the peace of each county or division of county.

"Locate yourself in the most central town or city of the county or division wherein your operations are to be carried on. Get a small pocket map of the county or division, with all the parishes distinctly marked. Ascertain the number of polling places within the county or division, and the number and names of the parishes polling within each. Make each of the largest towns within such polling districts the central point from which the tracts are to be distributed throughout the parishes of that district.

"Having ascertained the number of parishes within the district you intend to cover with tracts, make out separate lists of parishes lying most conveniently together for the purpose of distribution. From three to four parishes will be found a good average day's work for a single distributor. For the purpose of saving time, let each list include a *double* line of parishes lying within a direct radius of about seven miles from the central town of the district. The first line of parishes to form the first day's work of the distributor, and the second line to be taken as a *returning* route on the *second* day. *Every* farm, house, and freeholder within each of the parishes must be visited, and a packet of tracts left at each by the distributor. Each distributor to be furnished with a sheet of paper, upon which the name and residence of every farmer *visited* within the parish must be written down. These *returned* lists of names to be compared with the list of registered county voters within each of the parishes, in order that your distributors may be kept in check, and security afforded that the work has been done. There will in each parish also be found many small freeholders, *who are not farmers*, but who have a little house and garden or orchard of their own, these should also be visited.

"The distributors should be men of some intelligence, and well acquainted with the districts in which they are employed. The best men for the purpose will be the carriers of county newspapers, wherever there is a *Liberal* county newspaper; or such men as are usually employed in rural districts by lawyers or auctioneers. When all the parishes within any given district have been completed, move into the next district, and pursue the same plan.

"In order to facilitate his operations, and prevent delay or losing ground, the distributor will find it convenient to ascertain the number of farmers in each parish, together with the readiest route to each farm house. This information he will generally obtain readily at the blacksmith's or wheelwright's shops in each of the parishes."

In what age or country of the world was there ever anything like this? By railways, penny postage, and printing presses, a mighty movement is in progress, which will achieve, *be it for good or evil*, what no other power or combination of powers ever achieved. By the railways some scores of men issue from and return to Manchester day after day over hundreds of miles of country to address public meetings. By the penny post several thousands of letters are daily sent and received, which, without it, would never have been written. By the printing press tracts are being distributed to each elector in the kingdom at the rate of *three tons and a-half weekly*;—the whole forming an amount of moral power moving from one centre that never before existed in the world; that was never before dreamt of as possible to exist. The *legality* of all this is an interesting question.

And look at the banquet. Their chairman has said to them, "If ten men come to any of our houses, what provision must we make?" It was not difficult to calculate this, and when it was ascertained, the whole was multiplied by 1000, which produced 10,000, and they prepared for 10,000 accordingly. But as the banquet is to extend over several days, they resolved on entertaining 4000 a-day. For that purpose they have built a prodigious hall, forty-five yards by thirty-five in the interior. Rows of cast-iron pillars support the roof; and, that there may be accommodation for the enormous quantity of stores, and attendants, *three adjoining streets* are to be roofed in as store-rooms and lobbies. For waiters, 150 men are being drilled for the occasion. In the Potteries 10,000 plates and 3000 other dishes are being made for the dinner and dessert. Sheffield is preparing for the same 12,000 forks and knives, and 800 salt and mustard spoons. Lancashire is making the glass, 4000 tumblers, 4000 wine-glasses, 400 salts, and 400 mustard-pots. On the first day there will be put on the table 200 dishes of tongue, 200 dishes of ham, 200 dishes of veal pies, 200 dishes of sandwiches, 200 dishes of sausages, 4000 small loaves, 4000 cabin biscuits, 200 canisters of wine biscuits, 3 lbs. each canister, 200 dishes of sponge and seed cakes, 4000 pies, 2400 Bath buns, 200 dishes of almonds and raisins, 400 lbs. of grapes, 2400 oranges, 2400 apples, 200 dishes of nuts, and wine as it may be ordered by the guests. The tickets of admission to be 7s. 6d. for gentlemen and 5s. for ladies. On the second day all the provisions will be increased by one half. I have not learned what the arrangements are for the third and fourth days, but the prices of admission are calculated so as to pay all expenses, and leave an overplus for the League fund.

I have stepped out of my usual rural walks to give these details of the League to the world; for to all readers, and especially to agriculturists, they must be full of singular interest.

No. XVI.

A Ramble in Lancashire.—A Lecture in Cheshire by a Member of the League.

"Well, sir, what have you to say about rushes?"

"Say! I have to say that through the county of Stafford, through Cheshire, and from south to north of Lancashire, I have seen very few fields of grass but which contained a bush of rushes to every three or four square yards of space. The farms are generally in grass, and, with few exceptions, they are overrun with rushes."

"Well, sir, and you find fault with those rushes, I suppose?"

"I do find fault with them; rather, I should say, with the farmers who allow them to usurp the place of a more respectable crop."

"Very good, sir; but do you know that many of our farmers think very differently from you? Perhaps you are not aware, sir, that cattle going out into a field, say on such a day as this, when the snow is covering the shorter vegetation, may pick up, and do pick up, a good piece of eating?"

"Yes, sir, I believe that on a day such as this, when all other vegetation is covered with snow, the tops of the rushes may be nipped off and eaten by cattle, if you turn hungry cattle out; but the same cattle would prefer to eat hay or straw, with turnips, under a roof, on such a day as this; and hay, and straw, and turnips, would grow on the land occupied by rushes, would they not?"

"Perhaps they would—I dare say they would—I have no doubt they would; but it is the cows giving milk that go out among the rushes. The cows, sir, are much benefited by them; the butter, sir, the cheese, sir, and the milk, sir, are better, and fetch a better price to the farmer, when the cows taste the rushes; oh, dear! yes, all are better; some of our most experienced farmers, sir, give a decided opinion in favour of rushes being preserved for the cows to pick at."

This is part of a conversation that I had with a gentleman whom I met in Lancashire; it is a singular conversation, and it was attended with singular circumstances. We formed two of the audience of a public meeting. We were entire strangers to each other. Accident brought us into the same square yard of sitting room, and, as it was an anti-corn-law meeting, the gentleman asked me, during a pause in the addresses, what I thought of the landlords' side of the case. "Here," said he, "we have heard about the master manufacturers, about their workmen, about the farmers and their workmen; we have heard a deal of argument to shew that all of them would be better off than now were the corn-law repealed; but what about the landowners? I am an owner of land, sir; I have an estate for which I paid twelve thousand pounds; now what am I to do? I am asked to subscribe to this league affair: I come to listen to the arguments, and I grant you the arguments have been very fair so far as they have gone; but while they have shewn a remedy for every one else, they leave me to draw my own inferences, to fear my own fears: now what am I to do with my land?"

In reply to this appeal, I said—"Since you have asked me what you, as a landlord, must do in the event of a totally abolished corn-law, I shall tell you one thing that should be done, whether the corn-law is repealed or not—you should make the most of your land by cultivation. Through more than a hundred miles of country, in fact from Birmingham to Lancaster, every third or fourth field, and every third or fourth yard of those fields are covered with rushes. I allow that you, as a landlord, have reason to be alarmed at the proceedings of this Anti-corn-law League: it is a formidable combination. You hear each speaker publicly avowing the determination of the League to wrest from the landowners the exclusive protection they now enjoy; therefore, if you deem the corn-law to be a protection, you cannot help feeling a lively apprehension for your property. I am deeply interested myself in the prosperity of agriculture; I am desirous to collect and publish to the world all facts relating to it which have hitherto been overlooked. I have come purposely into this part of the country to examine into the nature of tenures, and observe their practical operation. I am not burdened with the task of proving one thing or another in respect of the corn-law and the landowners, but I am glad to have it in my power to talk to an owner of land on the great question of cultivation, I should rather say on the question of *rushes*."

To which the gentleman replied, in the words with which this letter is commenced, "Well, sir, what have you to say about rushes?"

As the business of the meeting was resumed, and our brief conversation was broken, I had no opportunity of discussing the matter of rushes with this rush-grower; but I inquired of some other persons if they thought he could be sincere in speaking as he had spoken, and one of those persons seemed surprised that I should question his sincerity.

The rural districts of Cheshire and Lancashire present a melancholy sight at this time, not because winter is on the fields—winter is natural, and beyond it we see the coming seasons of leaf and blossom; but beyond the darkness now gathered and gathering in the dairy districts of the north, there is no glimmer of coming brightness. I have seen farmers, in the towns and on their own farms, in and around Stockport, Bolton, Preston, and Lancaster, and all of them have the one complaint, namely, "We cannot sell half of what we sold in the towns—neither milk, butter, cheese, fruit, nor vegetables; the factory people are not able to buy; work is scarce and money scarcer." This depression in respect of the ready markets which daily and weekly furnished the dairy farmers and market gardeners with ready money for their produce, is deepened in gloom to a stranger's eye, by the poor, spiritless style of management, which again is aggravated by the absurd conditions on which the tenants hold their land. Near Preston there is a considerable extent of corporation property. I talked with some of the tenantry. One of them had been under an apprehension of leaving for several years, and had not, as any one would expect, laid out a single sixpence on his land, though Preston and its manure were within two miles. It is needless to say that his farm was a vile wilderness—it could be nothing else. I inquired about the other landowners in that neighbourhood, and found that the principal one was the Earl of Derby, and I am sorry to say his estate is no exception.

The lecturers of the League are busy among these farmers. Having seen a lecture advertised to be given on a certain evening, in a village a few miles from Stockport, by a gentleman from Manchester, who promised to address himself exclusively to the farmers, I made a point of being present, never having heard before any such address. The lecturer was Mr Prentice, editor of the *Manchester Times*. He was listened to with earnest attention. Of course he said all that he could say against the corn-law—all that its singular history and his own high talent enabled him to say; but he also touched on the questions of leases and improved cultivation. He pointed to the poverty of Stockport, contrasting the great quantities of all kinds of farm produce carried into it by the farmers, his auditors, a few years ago, with the small quantities carried in now. He told them of the markets for Manchester and Sheffield goods, which we could open in America and elsewhere, if we could take corn and sugar in return. He shewed them the protection they would still enjoy, by reason of the great distance and expense of the conveyance of American corn. He shewed that each corn-law had promised the farmers what it had never fulfilled; and he asserted that all their engagements had been entered upon in accordance with the promises of this corn-law, and that on each failure in *its* intentions *they* had suffered. To which they responded with a tremendous outcry of "True! too true! We's be suffering noo!" and such like exclamations.

The lecturer, on the subject of leases, told them that, while they could not cultivate without a lease, they could not, and ought not, in the present condition of the protective duties, to take a farm on lease, if they had the choice; because, at no distant time, if not immediately, the corn-laws would be repealed; and that, even if not repealed, they would be the subject of continued alterations, and that therefore they could not estimate the rent which they would bind themselves to pay. In reference to some nobleman in the county who had opposed an application for a lease, on the grounds that a tenant should always depend on the honour and good will of his landlord, Mr Prentice related the following anecdote:—

A few years ago an English nobleman purchased an estate in Scotland. He found it was let to tenants on leases of nineteen years. Some of the leases were nearly expired, and his Lordship intimated his intention of restricting the future agreements to one year. The system of tenantcy-at-will, he said, had worked well in England, and he did not see why it should not work well in Scotland. Accordingly, when the first tenant whose lease was expiring came to ask a renewal of it, this preliminary notice was duly given.

"But," said the tenant, "what can I do with a farm for only one year? Your Lordship surely doesna mean that we are to shift frae our farms every year?"

"Oh dear, no!" replied his Lordship, "not at all; you may retain your farm as long as you like. I am not desirous, by no means, of changing my tenants. I only wish to cultivate that good faith that should ever exist between us, that of mutually depending on each other."

"*That's* what you mean, is it, my Lord? Very weel, I'm glad o' that, my Lord. So, if I take the farm again I needna stop the draining, and the liming, and a' that kind o' thing, that I carried on heretofore?"

"Certainly not," replied his Lordship, "certainly not; you will go on as you did before."

"Oh, very weel; and, of course, your Lordship will never think of putting me out o' the farm till I am paid for my draining?"

"Certainly not."

"And I reckon your Lordship will let me stay to make the most of the lime that I put on the land?"

"Certainly."

"And the muck?"

"Certainly."

"And the compound?"

"Most assuredly; I have no intention but to let you remain and take advantage of all these."

"Very weel, my Lord; I'm glad to hear ye say sae; but what for should na we just put that down *in black and white?* Ye ken it will be a' the same?"

The force of this anecdote, and the humour of the lecturer in telling it, drew forth a hearty cheer from the Cheshire farmers; they seemed to enjoy such anecdotal instructions exceedingly.

Mr Prentice gave them some others, and was warmly thanked for his lecture. One of his most effective points was on the question of "What are the farmers to do with their sons?" He called their attention to the fact of the present competition for land; asked if it was because farming was profitable, or because there was no outlet for young men as there had been in the neighbouring towns. "The farms," said he, "do not grow in number, but your families are annually increasing; what are you to do with them?" Then he pointed out, by special reference, that more than one-half of the shopkeepers in Stockport were the sons and daughters of farmers, which was confirmed by the responses of the meeting.

Mr Hyde Greg has land near Stockport let at L.2 per acre to tenants who cannot pay that rent, and the soil is not inferior, neither is the situation, in respect of manures and markets, to farms near Edinburgh, which he himself saw paying L.6 per acre. His tenantry are pleading to be let down to thirty shillings per acre, so wretched is their style of farming, so depressed is the demand in Stockport and Manchester for the produce of their poor farms.

Wages, too, are miserably low. Near Preston, and about Lancaster, able-bodied men are working to farmers for ninepence a-day. A shilling and fifteenpence a-day are the more common run of wages. The labourers in Lancashire are on a level with those of Dorset, Somerset, and Devon; but, so far as I have yet seen, the farms of Lancashire and Cheshire are not so well managed as in these ill-cultivated counties of the west. The world never saw, it is but charitable to the world so to believe, such a contrast as Lancashire exhibits. The most perfect machinery, the highest excellence of manufacturing art, the most untiring enterprise, are seen in company with the most antiquated implements, wastefulness of agricultural resources, and undisturbed indolence.

No. XVII.

A Chapter on the Agricultural Operations of the League; with some Words of Advice that may be worth the League's Notice.

About a month or five weeks ago, three sets of queries were issued by the League to all parts of the kingdom, requiring answers relative to the operation of the corn-laws. The first related to their effect on manufactures and commerce; the second to their effect on morality and religion, or, in other words, to their effect on the domestic comforts of the working classes, on which comforts a sound practical morality and a due respect for religion so much depend. In seeking information on these subjects, the League was following up what it had already done, and done well. I am not aware that anything new was expected, nor do I believe that anything new was obtained. The most important fact elicited by these two sets of queries was, that no amendment had taken place; that, on the contrary, manufactures, commerce, morality, and religion, were, this year as last, retrograding. Traders of all classes were still as a retreating army. Many who had struggled manfully and kept their places in the ranks so long as they could stagger on, had at last fallen out, and were in the enemy's hands. Forced sales without profits had been the order of the day, like forced marches without rations, to save those who, if they halted, would be overtaken by utter destruction, which, while they kept moving, there was a hope of escaping from. Commerce was still found to be kicking her heels in idle counting-houses, while her ships, that should have been full-fledged and cargo-crammed on every sea, were moulding in the docks, empty even as the rats that starved in them. And, as a natural consequence of this, the whole working population was in process of falling to the lowest level at which life can be sustained; many, very many, had fallen beneath that level, and had perished, or were perishing. And thus, between human affections, that cling to the world most strongly when the world is least worth clinging to; human passions, that live in the face of death, that grow strong with the strength of that which excites them; between these and the laws of social civilization there was strife, which neither the maxims of morality could reduce to peace nor the rites of religion terrify. The animal and the moral nature of man were at war; the animal was in rebellion against the moral.

In all this, lamentable, fearful as it is, there was to the

League nothing new; it was but a mournful confirmation of facts already known. Therefore, the first and second sets of queries, and their replies, and the digests of their replies, relating to manufactures and commerce, morality and religion, had only the effect of making the corn-law repealers determine to go on, and relax not in their work of repeal. They had before seen clearly, and as clearly saw now, the connection of the corn-law and limited commerce, of limited commerce and national poverty, of national poverty and moral degradation, and seeing this line of connection so clearly, they had no thought but to remove the first cause of the evil that its results might cease. It is a feature in the family likeness of all mankind, that persons thoroughly convinced of the truth and justice of a cause, in the promotion of which they are zealous, have not much tolerance for those who differ from them, nor much patience in watching the slow changes of those who are in process of being converted to that cause. " They who are not for us are against us," has been a maxim from the earliest times to the present. We find it in the oldest of histories, we see it in the most immediate of passing events; but it is not always true, and, as exemplified in the anti-corn-law movement, it is evidently erroneous. The most just argument and efficient that has been put forth by the manufacturers in favour of free trade is that wherein they point to their reduced profits, limited operations, obstructed markets, and, consequently, to the decreased wages which they are obliged to pay their working people. On the self-same ground, and justified by the same natural regard for their own property, the landowners who uphold the corn-law should be allowed to take their stand until the question is fairly discussed whether the protective duties have in reality increased the value of the land, or whether their abolition would tend to diminish it. The onus is upon the League to prove that the value of the land would be improved under a free trade, or, at least, not lessened; and until one or other, or both, is proved, the landowners should not be called on to surrender their posts of strength, far less be assailed with hard names and harder accusations of grasping avarice. If it is said that they should be acquainted with the merits of this question, and decide fairly on it of their own accord, and that they are blameable for their ignorance and unfair decisions, I would remind those who blame them that they, the free-trade party, should also be acquainted with the landowner's side of the question. Not only have they never discussed it with the landowners, but, with a few exceptions, they do not themselves understand it; and what, for the sake of free trade, is still more unfortunate, they are so well satisfied with what they know already, so zealous in the cause of repeal, so assured of being justified in their zeal, that they will not halt nor stoop to take up new arguments.

Now these observations bring me to the third set of queries. It was suggested to the League that, as the repeal is only to be, should only be, and can only be, effected by constitutional means, and that the constitutional means are the Houses of Parliament, wherein the believers in the virtue of a corn-law greatly preponderate; further, that as Parliament could only be induced to abrogate the corn-law by a sense of fear, sometimes called " the pressure from without," which implies incessant, and perhaps long-continued agitation, or by a sense of propriety and justice, which implies a change of opinion from what is held at present, and which change can only be effected by shewing the landowners that their own interests would be promoted by the repeal, it was suggested that, to accomplish this last, great, and all-important end, a searching inquiry should be made into the value of various kinds of soils as at present variously cultivated. The queries, as drawn out for this purpose, or as proposed to be drawn out, (so I have been informed,) were considered by a distinguished member of the council as too comprehensive and elaborate, not as regarded the importance of the information to be gathered, but in regard of the possibility of getting replies previous to the great meetings at Manchester, which have recently taken place.

Accordingly, the queries were abbreviated, and sent to all parts of the kingdom, through the usual and most extensive corresponding machinery of the League. I have had an opportunity of perusing some of the documents returned in reply. Several of them are highly interesting, all are instructive. A letter accompanying one of them from Alnwick, in Northumberland, states that about the same time the queries from the League were received there, a similar paper, containing queries almost word for word, was received from a government office in London. It has been known for some time that Government had ordered an inquiry into the condition of the agricultural population, but it is rather a singular coincidence that the League and the Government, without collusion, (for it is not easy to suppose that they are in collusion, consequently they must be in competition,) should issue, each of them to the same parties, a document so similar in character at the same time. As regards Northumberland, however, the League had the start, its queries arrived there before those of the Government. The return from Alnwick is very interesting, but it would suffer by abridgment. I intend one of these days to give it at full length, that is, if I succeed in borrowing it from the keeper of the League records; at present I do not know who he is.

The value of leases to farmers is also strikingly exemplified in those returns. Whenever leases are common, and have existed for a lengthened period, the agricultural labourers are in a superior condition to those who inhabit the estates farmed by tenants-at-will, and the primary cause of difference is, that a farmer who has security in his farm, not only employs more people on it, but hires them for lengthened periods, and thereby renders them more steady and provident than they are as day-labourers, occasionally employed and occasionally idle, as is too common with those who labour for tenants-at-will. A farmer in East Lothian (Mr Mackenzie of Spott) fills up one of the papers, and to the question, which is to this effect, "Does sheep-stealing and poaching prevail more when bread is dear than when it is cheap?" says, "We have no sheep-stealing in this part of the country, neither have we poachers, our people are better employed." To the same query it is replied from Worcestershire, "We have always sheep-stealers and poachers, but they are ready made, and neither dear nor cheap bread has anything to do with them." From a village in Yorkshire the answer to the same query is, that nearly all the poaching and sheep-stealing in the neighbourhood is traceable to necessity, and that when work is plentiful the crimes are nearly unknown, while when it is scarce they are common. This answer is the most frequent from all parts of England.

These documents contain a body of evidence such as was never before collected, and which, as regards the abolition of the corn-laws, was never before equalled in importance. I have been informed that in this session of Parliament Mr Cobden intends taking the new ground of arguing that the repeal would not injure the landed interest; and certainly, if he chooses to make use of these documents, he will have ample grounds for such arguments. Though by no means so complete as they should be, and perhaps might have been, these agricultural queries and their answers, together with practical observations made in all parts of the kingdom by practical men, give ample justification to those who assert that in England there are vast resources for agriculture hitherto undeveloped, and which have lain dormant because of various obstructing causes, which causes must and will be removed before land is suffered to go out of cultivation through foreign competition. By these returns, and by other evidences, it might be shewn, that one of the most remarkable fallacies that ever obtained credence and currency, relative to the value of land, is hugged, even by the members of the League, or a large majority of them, as a truth from which they cannot be parted; from which it is not to be expected they should part, seeing that those manufacturers and merchants of them who have become rich and have bought land, adopt and practise most of the vices peculiar to English agriculture, save perhaps Mr Greg and one or two others, and even he seems to have faith in this enormous fallacy. The fallacy is, that it would be a sacrifice of property to break up the pasture lands, and that the natural tendency of land, when its produce is depressed in price, is to go out of cultivation, or, in other words, to be laid down in grass.

Believing that this is true, the greater number of the members of the League with whom I have had an opportunity of conversing while in Manchester, whether manufacturers or agriculturists, or persons whose lives and property combine both professions, have taken the position of assailants of the landowners. Accustomed to hear even from their agricultural friends, that *some* land will go out of cultivation if wheat falls to forty shillings, but that they, the agricultural friends, are willing to continue friends, notwithstanding this, deeming it incumbent on them to make a sacrifice for the common good of the country, hearing this, and seeing nothing throughout several counties surrounding their head-quarters but the feeblest efforts at cultivation—even at their very doors, between Manchester and Stockport, for instance, which should be one luxuriant garden for the supply of these towns with vegetables, there is a wilderness of sour grass and rushes, the manures of the towns unappropriated, the markets ill supplied, all kinds of vegetables scarce and dear; accustomed as the manufacturers are to hear their agricultural friends speak of surrendering something for the general good of the country, and to see palsied agriculture exhibited around themselves, and practised by themselves, they have adopted the notion that if the abolition of the corn-law would put land out of cultivation or reduce rents, the landowners *must* surrender; for the abolition of the corn-law they, the manufacturers, *must* have.

This position of the League is not only calculated to render repeal all but impossible, and put it off, to say the least, for many years to come; but it is positively erroneous, and there is, therefore, comfort for those who have free trade warmly at heart, and who are not holding such opinions; comfort for those who are alarmed for their property by the advance towards free trade and the menaces of the League, to both and to all there is room for comfort in this, that those who in the League speak most freely about the landowners know least about the land.

At the late aggregate meetings there were anti-corn-law deputies from all parts of the kingdom assembled in crowds, morning, noon, and night. Morning, noon, and night, they were repeating the details of their mission, and melancholy enough the details were, yet there was not a sentence nor an inference that was new. Morning, noon, and night, they were provided with all manner of accommodation for repeating to the world, and to each other, the oft-repeated grievances attributable to the corn-laws. The clerical section of them had, I am told, several apartments allotted as committee rooms, so important were their statements deemed to be, and yet, at best, they only spoke of corn-law consequences; whereas, to the agricultural consideration of the question, in which *the means of getting rid of the corn-laws, the only possible means, was entirely involved*, there was no attention given whatever, not even a room provided in which those might meet who wished to converse upon the subject.

I mention these matters thus publicly, not so much to shew that this great question is, by many of the leading repealers, dealt with in a partial manner, but to draw their attention, and the attention of their friends in all parts of the kingdom, to that side of the question which is now the most important. Hitherto they have discussed the *operation* of the restrictive duties, they must now direct themselves in the right direction to their *removal.* If they set themselves up in hostility to the landed interest, they put a rivet in the endurance of the corn-law by every hard word they utter.

No. XVIII.

Remarks on the Undeveloped Agricultural Wealth of England.

In speaking of grass-lands that might and should be brought into cultivation, it is necessary to except the chalky downs, which, in many cases, would be positively injured by ploughing; yet, in excepting them from the plough, they should not be left entirely out of the question when speaking of deriving an augmented produce from the soil of England. It is quite within the truth to say that, on the downs of Wilts, Dorset, and Hants, perhaps also in Sussex and other counties possessing such soils, the number of sheep fed now is four times greater than the number fed forty years ago, and the downs are not to the extent of a blade of grass more fruitful now than then. The difference arises from the production of winter food on portions of the same downs, in shape of turnips and other roots. Therefore, if turnips have done so much in forty years, what might they not do if cultivated in a proper manner? If, instead of stupidly burning every piece of turf, everything that can be raked together to burn, the farmers would make lime, which they can always do in the chalky districts, and form a compost with the lime and the stuff they now burn, they would have a rich and (compared with the pitiable handful of ashes now obtained for turnip culture) an abundant manure. And if they would rationally use the farm-yard manure they now have, instead of wasting its precious gasses in the sun and air; and if they would appropriate the liquid now wholly neglected, the winter food of stock upon the downs might be greatly augmented. Also, if some attention were devoted to the herbage of the downs, there might be stimulating substances applied to its increase; and if landlords would encourage their tenants to make such efforts, there can be little doubt that such improvements would be effected. The most valuable manure on a stock-farm is the liquid, to save which reservoirs are necessary; but what tenant can of himself, at his own risk, construct them? No leaseholder should be asked to do so; far less should a tenant-at-will be expected to do so.

But the grass-lands to which I would more especially direct notice are those commonly called "meadows" in England, composed in most part of what in Scotland is called "old ley." These occupy extensive parts of the best counties of England. I do not know on what authority M'Culloch and other statistical writers found their computations, when they allot a certain number of acres to corn-growing and a certain other number to grazing; but, from personal observations, I have a strong opinion that hitherto the corn-growing acres have been greatly over-estimated, and the grazing or permanent pasture acres greatly under-stated. It would certainly be a valuable piece of information if the proportion of acres in grass to those under cultivation, with particulars of the soils and subsoils, as also the tenures on which they are held, could be obtained; but without more knowledge than we already have, I am fully justified in asserting that all the grass-lands in England, dairy and beef-feeding, save portions of the downs already excepted, should be broken up and put under a course of cropping. Many people think otherwise, and I would give them all credit for sincerity; indeed, no man can be insincere in an opinion which, to practise, lessens the amount of his own income; but he may err in judgment, or he may never have had facts laid before him on which to form a judgment. The most remarkable feature in the agricultural condition of England which strikes an agricultural traveller from beyond the Tweed is, that the estates are mostly all under the control of lawyers or persons not practically acquainted with agriculture. The complication of tithes, tenures, political serfdom, and various causes obstructive of good farming, has led to this; but most, if not all, of these obstructing causes must sooner or later be removed, and the land *must* be better cultivated.

In my last communication mention was made of a fallacy that has gained almost universal currency. It was stated that "the fallacy is, that it would be a sacrifice of property to break up the pasture-lands, and that the natural tendency of land, when its produce is depressed in price, is to go out of cultivation, or, in other words, to be laid down in grass." In this statement there are more fallacies involved than one. I shall direct attention to those that more immediately present themselves.

Before it can be called a sacrifice of property to break up the old pastures, we must be satisfied that it is better to let cattle roam at large in the fields, destroying much of the grass on the wet soils—and most of the meadows are wet—than economizing their food and their time of feeding at the stall; better to let the fertilizing results of feeding be prodigally wasted in the open air than carefully collected in the farm-yard; better to take forty shillings' worth of hay from a given space of land at a small expense of labour, giving five shillings of profit, than take two hundred shillings' worth of some other crop from the same space of land at a higher expense of labour, giving forty shillings of profit; that it would be better to leave land at the annual value of twenty shillings an acre than raise it to the value of sixty shillings an acre; in short, before the breaking up of the old grass-lands can be called a sacrifice of property, we must undo all that has been done, unsay all that has been said in England in favour of the best specimens of Scotch farming. I lately conversed with a Scotch member of Parliament on this subject, who doubted if such a profitable change could be effected in English landed property; "because," said he, "it is natural to suppose that the landowners, who are nearly all hard pressed for money, would readily adopt the means that would most quickly give them increased wealth." To this it was replied, that their pecuniary necessities operated against the improvement of their property in a twofold manner. First, they mortgaged their estates and committed their management to lawyers; and, second, their necessity compelled them to seek state appointments through political services, which to obtain caused them to subjugate their tenantry to a degree that left the latter no power to improve their farms.

On the same subject I lately talked with a Manchester manufacturer, a rich man, who had property in land. He said—"I do not see clearly that it would be proper to grow corn in our dairy districts. If all Cheshire, and Dorset, and Devon were ploughed, where would our supply of butter and cheese come from?" To this it was answered, that it might be wrong to plough up the meadows of those counties, if they were kept in grass from the merely benevolent desire of the landlords and farmers to supply the towns with butter and cheese; but as butter and cheese could be made whether the meadows lay in permanent grass or not, it would be as fair to expect a manufacturer to keep his looms going to weave muslins only, and not weave some other fabric on which there was double the profit, merely because muslins had been his staple trade hitherto, as to expect a landowner to keep his estate in grass at thirty shillings an acre when he might have it cultivated, and corn crops produced, at a rent of L.3 per acre.

But the manufacturer objected to the supposition that land could be so improved in value. "Look," said he, "to the expense of cultivation. Though the value of the produce be higher in amount when it is corn than when it is butter and cheese, we must not suppose it to be profit." "No," was the reply, "neither must we suppose that, because a piece of printed calico is dearer than a piece of the same quality that is white, that the excess of price is all profit. But you have extensive print works, in which capital is sunk, and from which profits are made, because you find the printed fabric produce a higher price than the unprinted."

This observation led me then, and it leads me now, to the second and principal fallacy, namely, that a depression in the price of produce has a tendency to throw land out of cultivation. The contrary is the fact, save in extreme cases, save in respect of land that never should have been cultivated, and of that there is very little in England. For each acre that would have been thrown out of cultivation through depressed prices there are five that would come into cultivation by the removal of the causes that obstruct successful agriculture, while, by the same process, nearly all the land now under the plough would be greatly increased in productive value. Before the assertion can be admitted that land will go out of cultivation through low prices, we must be satisfied that it cannot produce more than it now produces, that it cannot be worked more economically than it is now worked. And this would lead us to inquire what economy is.

Economy is not, in farming, the nominal reduction of expenditure; in most cases, among English farmers, it would imply an increase of expenditure. Sir John Sinclair has laid down as an axiom, which every good agriculturist has found to be true, that, supposing L.5 an acre to be the lowest sum, and L.10 the highest, which can be expended on the cultivation of a farm, the interest of the L.10 would be from ten to twenty per cent., while the interest of the L.5 would be from five to ten per cent. In my travels through England I have seen the truth of this exemplified on almost every estate.

No. XIX.

Through Berkshire to Strathfieldsaye, with some Remarks on the Division of Common Lands.

From Reading, the county town of Berkshire, to Strathfieldsaye, the Duke of Wellington's seat in Hampshire, the distance is about nine miles. There is much excellent land on each side of the road, with cottages and gardens, and orchards, and occasionally fifty or a hundred acres of common; the latter, in most cases, wet, sour, neglected, profitless, and hopeless of profit, unless we expect it to be enclosed and cultivated. Were those who have now a right of commonage to get a portion of the common, and compelled either to cultivate or resign their portion, much might be done, not only to improve their social condition, but to augment the general produce of the country. But it has, unfortunately, been the custom to exclude the poor from the advantages of the enclosure acts, and thus no one can speak or write in favour of the enclosure of the commons without incurring the odium of intending to oppress the poor. In my travels, wherever I find a common larger than what is requisite for a village play-ground, if it has the appearance of a good soil, I talk to the people living on and around it of the benefit they would derive from its enclosure and careful cultivation; and in all cases they reply with a bitterness expressive of no milder belief than that they think me an agent of some one about to rob them, about to invade their little privileges, and despoil them of an independence which, even if not worth a penny, they would still cherish, merely because it was a soil other than the bare highway, on which they could set the soles of their feet in defiance of the rich man, their landed neighbour.

Though there is a loose morality, consequent on a half idle life and an irregularly provided table and fireside, to be found on the verges of a common; though the mean condition of such a population who starve, and steal because they starve, and are not employed honestly, because they have been known to steal, and who cannot live honestly, because they are not employed, and who are of little use to employers, because idleness, whether constrained or voluntary, is the destroyer of industry; though such a population are the natural enemies of men of property and magisterial authority, and give to the world a species of criminals normally schooled in crime, they are yet possessed largely of those feelings which have been respected in other classes of Englishmen. Even their vices, as inhabitants of an English common, are virtues when seen in the whole people who comprise the English nation. The love of native soil, the desire to attain and determination to defend independence, the resolute resistance to all encroachments on territory, the openly expressed hatred of all persons who would dare, rightfully or wrongfully, to question the propriety of what they do; the generosity of to-day in helping a distressed neighbour, and the readiness of to-morrow in appropriating to themselves the property of some other neighbour; the regard for their own privileges and disregard for the privileges of other people; all these are characteristic of the rustic idler in England and of the English nation. What is a vice in one case, may not be entitled to the name and esteem of a virtue in another, if morality be the rule of logic. But be the characteristics vicious or virtuous, they are the distinguishing features of the English over centuries of years, at home and abroad, and to their exercise we owe all our liberty, all our extended territory, all our power.

Even our commercial enterprise and manufacturing industry as a nation, both of them positive virtues, are the offspring of those individual energies which in the rustic idlers of England produce vice; for, in fact, there are no people in England who can live in real indolence. Many of them are unprofitably energetic, as the fox-hunting, horse-racing, wager-speculating, political-plotting, dinner-giving inhabitants of palaces and mansions; or the hare-snaring, donkey-riding, beerhouse-betting, trap-making, dinner-seeking inhabitants of the cottages on the common; but all of them are constitutionally enterprising, and all, with better management, might be made to turn their energies to national profit. The dwellers on the common have not degenerated. They are still what the forefathers of other classes were. Walled parks, hedged-in farms, commercial warehouses, and moneyed banks, have grown up with civilization, and from their interior we look out upon the rustic whom we have left behind and shut out, and we punish him for infringing on the property which we have placed in his way, a respect for which, and an interest in which, we have neither taught him nor permitted him to obtain for himself. We find it is dangerous to ourselves, and not advantageous to him, to have our enclosed property and his open common, our state of art and his state of nature, our respect for law and his lawlessness, coming in close contact. We are not insane enough to propose to go back to his condition, and live on equal terms with him. Even my Lord Stanhope, though he would fill up the commercial docks, disuse machinery, throw down the factories, despoil the towns, and fall back upon the land, says nothing about throwing down the park walls and returning all the land to a state of commonage. None of us are insane enough to propose this; but we are unjust enough to attempt the removal of a social evil, to wit, our unsafe neighbours on the common, by taking from beneath their feet the ground on which they stand, knowing that when it is divided amongst ourselves, they cannot longer exist as independent enemies; that they must either perish at once or live; that, if living, they must either be at once honest workmen or transported criminals. The attempt has never been made, save in a very few cases, and in those cases the attempt was made unfairly, to divide a common for the good of the commoners. Though we know from our own feelings that we respect the property of others most when we have some of our own, we have always proceeded on the principle of teaching our rural population to respect property by taking all property from them.

When, in talking to the people who live on the commons, I shew them, either by printed or written documents, or conversation, or by the arguments of all united, that in some parts of the kingdom three or four acres of land, middling in quality, maintain by good management a couple of cows, winter and summer, a few pigs and fowls, and give an ample supply of vegetables to a family for daily use, and occasionally for market, and for which land of middling quality the holders pay double as much rent per acre as is paid for the best soil in Berkshire, namely, from L.3 to L.4 an acre. When making such statements, and offering to prove them, I point to their common, and tell them that, if divided amongst them, they might each keep a dozen cows all the year, where at present they have bare pasture for one during the summer months; that they might breed and feed pigs—having six fat ones for each starvling that now runs on the common; that instead of sending out their children to gather the miserable particles of manure falling from starved animals, they would have an abundance of rich manure from their cows, and pigs, and fowls, not only for gardens much greater in extent than those they have now, but for their little fields, which would grow corn to give them bread they do not eat now, and straw, and turnips, and wurzel, and cabbages, for winter food to the cows, none of which, neither food nor cows, they have now. When I speak of such changes, the people stare in profound astonishment or laugh in scornful derision. In the first place, all husbandry by plough or spade, which they are accustomed to see, or have ever seen, (*read* of, they cannot, few of them can read,) is so different in its results from what it might be, that they very naturally believe their own eyes rather than the mere assertion of a stranger. But they will believe any prodigy of produce to be within their reach rather than believe they have the remotest chance of getting a share of the common if it is divided. "Touch the common with a plough and it is no longer the poor man's property," was the emphatic remark of an old man with whom I lately conversed, and who seemed to have an oppressive horror upon him at the bare mention of a division. I asked him why they did not at least make or obtain some rule for restricting the number of sheep, donkeys, and cattle that were sent out to graze, these animals being sent out in such numbers as to eat up the very roots of the herbage. The reply was, that it would be better to have fewer cattle and better grass; but if the grass were better the farmers and the lord of the manor would send their sheep and cattle, and eat it all up even in one day; whereas at present nobody who had better pasture for sheep or cattle sent them to the commons.

Though some of the common lands are not worth cultivation, and would not yield a quarter of grain per acre, in obedience to all the agricultural arts yet discovered, many of them of very considerable extent are to be found in every county of England, respectable and often rich in soil, but invariably neglected and profitless. To the improvement of these the attention of the Legislature is now, it seems, to be directed; but they had better remain as they are if the division is to be on the principle of all former precedents of injustice and impolicy.

Between Reading and Strathfieldsaye there are several commons, with the usual stock of old horses, lean cows, sheep, donkeys, geese, and ragged children. The soil of the whole country thereabout is heavy, and not easily worked. It is but justice to the soil, however, to say that it has had little inducement to change its character from any ameliorating treatment. Some of the fields I saw, the soil of which was a fine deep loam, capable of bearing any kind of crop under skilful management, were one entire mass of weeds and couch-grass. The young wheat is generally fine, in some cases splendidly rich, and dark beyond anything I remember to have seen at this season. Beans seem to be a prevalent crop in this part of Berkshire, and they look well where not over-run with weeds. The farmers seem to depend on the hand-hoe for cleaning the crop, instead of clearing the soil before the crop is sown. On some of the Duke's farms I found that more than usual care had been taken to clean and prepare the soil, but even there I saw farming at which I was astonished, considering that his Grace takes a personal interest in seeing that judicious improvements are made. For instance, four horses, and sometimes five, going a-head of each other in a plough is ridiculous. But more of this in a communication which I shall specially devote to a description of Strathfieldsaye and neighbourhood. I find I have not space for matter so lengthened and so interesting in this.

No. XX.

A Journey to Harmony Hall, in Hampshire; with some Particulars of the Socialist Community in 1842.

Having heard a remark made at the inn where I was staying for a few days in Salisbury, that two travellers, who had left behind them two cloaks and two walking-sticks while they attended to some business in the market, were supposed to belong to the Socialist community at Titherly, in Hampshire, from the circumstance of their walking-sticks having engraved on the heads the resemblance of a beehive, and the words, "The Working Bees," I was induced to make some inquiry about the distance to and situation of their *beehive*. The correct information to be gathered in Salisbury was extremely scanty, and accordingly, on being told that the distance was only twelve miles to the village of Broughton, and that the community were located near that village, I procured a conveyance, and, in company of another gentleman, set off for Hampshire.

This was two or three days after the visit of the two members of the Beehive to Salisbury. It was a lovely day. If a country with so good a soil and so poorly cultivated could have afforded pleasure to a traveller at any time it would have done so on such a day as this. But the road lay through a section of that bare country formerly described as visible from Old Sarum, and there was nothing to be satisfied with but the excellent roads, which, being of flint on a hard bottom, are maintained at little expense. Leaving Salisbury, we had the seat of W. Wyndham, Esq., one of the members of Parliament for the city, on our left; and, for the next twelve miles, the entire distance, I saw nothing worth mentioning, save that a field of good turnips, and another of beautiful young wheat, would be seen as spots on a wide uncultivated common, much of the soil of which was quite as good as that sending up the young wheat and the respectable turnips; which turnips again might have been of a much better quality, but for the neglect which characterized their cultivation. I have said nothing more was seen worth mentioning; but, at an inn called the Winterslow Hut, I received information that the wages of labouring men had been reduced to seven shillings a-week by the largest farmer in that district, and that the other farmers were expected to follow immediately with a similar reduction; and the common expression of those who were present, some of whom were tradesmen from Salisbury, and one, the landlady of the house, was to this effect:—"God above only knows how the poor creatures are to be fed! What matters it to them that flour and bread be cheaper this year than last? They could buy little of either last year, and they can buy as little this. They must buy potatoes, not bread, and potatoes are but a middling crop this year; they are good, but small."

This place, Winterslow Hut, was the scene of a singular incident six-and-twenty years ago. On the night of Sunday, the 20th of October 1816, the Exeter mail was changing horses at the door, when an attack was made on the leading horses by a lioness which had broken loose from a travelling menagerie. There is a coloured print of the scene hung up in the parlour, which purports to have been executed from the description given by Mr Joseph Pike, guard of the mail, the said Mr Joseph Pike being himself, next to the lioness, the most conspicuous figure of the group. The ferocious beast is worrying the offside leader, having seized it by the throat, and the courageous Joseph is standing on his seat, with a levelled carbine, as if about to fire. A dog, which, as the hostess informed me, was the most efficient assistant in getting the lioness secured, is shewn in the foreground, in very small dimensions, perhaps to set off the enraged assailant as larger and more formidable than she really was. At all events, the scene is a startling one; what with the terrified faces at the upper windows of the inn and in the inside of the coach; what with the blue, and the red, and the yellow which paints the faces and the waistcoats of the outside passengers; what with each seizing his umbrella or luggage, as if determined not to die without a struggle; and what with the likelihood of the whole being devoured by such tusks as have already destroyed a horse, the spectator, not of the reality, but of the coloured print, is excited to call, even at this day, to Joseph Pike and the carbine, "Why don't you fire?" However, there is no sign of fire, nor is there any record. One horse was killed, and, by some means not fully explained, the lioness was secured in her caravan.

We arrived at the village of Broughton about one o'clock, and having put up our horse at the inn, we proceeded on foot to *Harmony Hall.* Broughton is but a poor-looking village, irregularly built, and surrounded by farms, which indicated that the Working Bee community would have no difficult task to compete with them. The soil all around is quite deep enough for common cultivation. It is deeper than many of those parts in the Lothians, or Roxburgh or Berwickshires, where a rent of from L.2 : 10s. to L.3 : 10s. an acre is paid for a middling soil. The subsoil is chalk, and I believe that wherever there is a sufficient depth of soil above chalk, that soil is, generally speaking, fertile. It might be shallow on some of the higher districts; but all that I saw, and I examined it in several situations, varied from twelve to twenty-seven inches in depth. The chalk was a variety well adapted for lime, but, except by the Socialist community, little advantage was derived from it; *their* lime-kiln was the only one I saw during the day's journey. The rent of the land about Broughton is from ten to fifteen shillings an acre. With other burdens, not borne by the Scotch farmers, it would amount to twenty shillings or twenty-five shillings an acre.

Leaving the village, we proceeded southward. For nearly a mile the lane in which we walked, hedged by coarse bushes, gradually ascended, and the soil on each side seemed wearing thinner and thinner. Having fortunately met a woman who directed us through a field towards the left, we followed a waggon's track, and in five minutes I was standing in a field of turnips which grew in drills, shewing a bulk of crop and robustness of health quite refreshing to the eye, after the poor specimens of turnip culture I had seen in that and adjoining counties. I observed to my companion that if these were "Socialist turnips" they promised well.

But, before going further, I should remark that I knew nothing of the Socialist property, nor of any individual connected with it. I had, like others, been reading wandering paragraphs in the newspapers about this community, some of which had not long before stated that the whole establishment was broken up, that the members were dispersed, the property seized by creditors, and so on. My companion knew nothing of them but by hearsay. In fact, though living within twelve miles, he knew as much of China as he did of Harmony Hall, and that was not much. He was one of those jolly countrymen well to do in the world, who believe the British army and navy can, and ought to, thrash all the world, if the world needs a thrashing; who grumble when the tax-gatherer comes round; who take in a paper which they seldom read, but who still grumble at the government—no matter what party is in power; who think no times are so hard as the present times; but who forget all grievances when the next hot joint comes on the table. Such was my companion. Little as I knew of the Socialists, I had been able to inform him that they did not wear claws, nor horns, nor wings, nor tails; that though they were human in shape they were not cannibals; neither did they steal little children and put them in boiling cauldrons just for the love of the thing. But though able to tell him all this, I was not able to obliterate the opinion which he had imbibed from the hearsay common in Salisbury, that the Socialists were an assemblage of the greatest vagabonds that a too-lenient law had left upon the face of the earth. In short, some of the stories I heard in Salisbury are too ridiculous, I might say criminally libellous, to be mentioned. Yet by many they were believed. My companion had seldom read for himself on any subject, and I was much amused with his account of what he had heard of the Socialists. He had a friend in Broughton on whom we called, and who gave us the first information of their property and personal reputation: it surprised both of us considerably. "Their property," said he, "consists at present of one thousand acres of land, and they are now in treaty for the purchase of another estate; they have paid down L.500 of a deposit on it, and it will be theirs next year." To this I rejoined that I was completely astonished, that I had never dreamed of their having such a property, and begged to know how it was cultivated compared with the farms I had seen in the neighbourhood. To this the gentleman replied (and I may state he is a man of property and respectability in the village) that, so far as he could judge, they were cultivating it very well. "But," inquired my companion, somewhat eagerly, "what sort of people are they? We have heard such strange tales about them, over our way, that I have been quite at a loss what to think of such people being allowed to live among you."

"Why," replied the other, "all that I have seen of them, or have heard, amounts only to this, that it would be a high honour to this parish if one half of our inhabitants were as decent in their behaviour as they are—it would indeed. And more, it would be a credit to our gentry if they would employ people in as great numbers and to as much advantage on the land as they do."

"Lord bless me! you don't say so?" exclaimed my friend from Salisbury, "and such stories as we have heard of them! Do you say all this of them in sober earnest?"

"I do," replied the Broughton gentleman. "As for their peculiar notions about property, I don't agree with them; but, so far as saying they are well-behaved people, setting a good example to this neighbourhood, I say it most sincerely."

"But," interrogated my companion, "are they not all *Deists*, that believe there is neither a God nor a devil?"

"If I understand the term *Deist*," replied the other, "it means a believer in God. As to their belief in religion, I suppose they are like other people, of different opinions. One thing I know is, that they come to our church, and some to the chapel. They sit and hear the sermons, and go away again as others do. They never introduce religion nor politics into any conversation with us in the village, but I once talked to two of them on the subject of religion of my own accord, and they told me they had the same opinions of religion now as formerly; that there was no peculiar opinions among the Socialists, save that each man might enjoy his own opinion without molestation; that they, the two, being believers in the Christian doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ, attended a place of worship, and that no attempt was made by any member of the community to dissuade them from going to church."

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed my companion, "you don't say so in earnest, do you?"

"But," I inquired, for I had not been prepared to hear this favourable account of their tolerance, "what do the clergy say of them; *they* don't like them, I should suppose?"

"The Methodists and Baptists, and such like, make an outcry against them," replied the gentleman; "but our clergyman of the parish church says nothing about them. All of us hereabouts were much alarmed when we heard of them coming at first, but we look on them now as very good neighbours; and as they set a good moral example to our population, and employ a good many of our poor; and as they never attempt to impose any opinion on us, we have no reason to dislike them. One of them married the daughter of a farmer in this neighbourhood a short while ago; the banns were put up in the parish church, and our parson married them. Oh, depend on it, they are doing good here in a moral point of view."

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed my Salisbury friend once more, on hearing this, "did the father of the young woman give his daughter to a Socialist?"

"Certainly," returned the other, "why should he not?"

"Because," said my companion, "they have a new wife whenever they tire of the old one."

"Nonsense!" returned the Broughton gentleman, "ridiculous nonsense. They have no such practices, and, so far as I ever heard, no such doctrines in theory. They propose, when they can get an act of Parliament for the purpose, to simplify the law of divorce, by allowing married persons to separate by mutual consent after several repeated notices, and repeated trials enjoined on them to try once more, and once more again, for certain periods of time, for some months each period, to agree; if after those trials they are still desirous of being parted, they may be divorced. As for any other laxity of principle, I know none. The most delicate and well-bred conduct characterizes them so far as I know; and nobody hereabout, however opposed to them, attempts to say a word against their moral character; *that*, as I said before, might be an example worthy of imitation to many in this parish. In short, the Socialists are very well but on one point, which concerns themselves more than anybody else; on that point I believe them to be fatally in error; and more, that sooner or later they will split and fall to pieces on it—I mean the community of property. There will always be idle men, willing to talk and to live at the expense of the industrious. Your talking men are not commonly the best workmen, and seldomer still are they willing workmen. In fact, those of them that are really the industrious men are pretty well tired of the numbers who come visiting and living idly from distant parts of the country. Besides that, if they were all willing alike, they are not able alike, nor used alike to such work as cultivating a farm; and I have heard that several of their carpenters, bricklayers, and such like, are but indifferent workmen when put to a job. In fact, the ignorance of most of those who came here at first of practical matters has led them into extravagant expenses. They have been imposed upon on every hand. Then, again, consider the folly of expending L.30,000, and upwards, on a building before improving their land. Instead of beginning like working bees they have done quite the reverse. The bees begin by making honey, using any place for a retreat that may fall most readily in their way. There we have the working bees and the drones living alike on the common store, building and building, and leaving the honey-making to the last."

Such was the account I received of the Socialist community in the village of Broughton, and it is given at full length, because of the opinions of others in the neighbourhood, who spoke to the same effect. When we reached the turnip field, as already said, I remarked to my friend that if these were "Socialist turnips" they promised well. They were Socialist turnips, and we soon after found seven hundred Socialist sheep, which made my friend exclaim, "Lord bless me! who would have thought it!"

Winding down a gentle declivity, we saw a red three-storied brick building near some large forest trees. These trees seemed the commencement of a wooded district, which contrasted pleasantly with the naked country we had travelled over from Salisbury. As we approached the red brick house we could observe that its outward form was tasteful and all its proportions substantial. It stood at about fifty yards to our right, while on the left was a farmyard, old and uncomfortable-looking, with some ricks of wheat, waggons, pigs, and cattle. Adjoining the farmyard was a new house, which might have been taken at first view for the respectable residence of a substantial farmer. This we found was built as a temporary residence for those members who arrived previous to the large house being built.

On every side of us we saw unfinished work; heaps of bricks, piles of mortar, logs of timber, half-built walls, and broken ground, as if in process of being laid out into gardens. No person being visible, we looked around us for some time; at last I saw three dogs approaching, which I proceeded to meet, supposing that, as it was Harmony Hall, there could be no harm in meeting the dogs. They did not deceive me; but one of them belied the reputation of the place by snarling at the other two. They growled in concert, and then departed on some errand of their own to a dust-heap, where one of them, finding a bone, produced a contention much in the same way as dogs do in the old world.

We advanced to the open door, which shewed a spacious lobby, from which stairs went down and stairs went up. I met a middle-aged female, who politely told me some one would speak with us presently. Following her were three younger women, plainly, but tidily and respectably, dressed. My eye was following them up stairs, when I perceived a man before me. He wore a cloth cap, and a respectable suit of clothes. After the preliminary courtesies, I told him that we had come to see the establishment, and any information he chose to give us would be received as a kindness. We were then conducted into an office, where two men were sitting, one as if posting a ledger, the other writing a letter. All the London daily papers, and several others, were on the table. A book lay open, in which we were requested to write our names, which done, our guide, whose name I afterwards understood to be Atkins, or Atkinson, told us to walk "this way."

We descended to the basement floor, which, on the other side of the house, looked out on a level with a lawn in process of formation. On this floor there were several large apartments; one of them a dining-room. Dinner was just over, and, as a finale to it, the members were singing in full chorus a beautiful piece of solemn music. We were not asked to go into their presence, but we went to the kitchen, after examining an excellent piece of machinery, which, through a tunnel, conveyed the dishes and the dinner from the kitchen to the door of the dining hall. A boy who was passing shewed us how it worked, and presently several other boys appeared. All of them were so clean and neat in their clothes, so healthy in their appearance, and at the same time so respectful in their manners to us and to each other, that I could not help staying behind to talk with and look at them.

In the kitchen there were three or four women with a very large assortment of dishes to wash. I did not know what the dinner had been, but judging from the refuse of bits and scraps, which seemed to me to tell more of abundance than economy, I supposed they had all got enough of it. The women in the kitchen were, like all the others, tidy and respectable in appearance. The only thing that puzzled me was how they should be so well as they were, with such prodigious piles of plates washed and unwashed around them. I can say nothing adequately descriptive of the fittings of this kitchen. At Broughton I was told that the London architect who superintended the erection of the whole, said that there were very few kitchens so completely and expensively fitted up as it in London. I am sorry to say that such is, to all appearance and by all accounts, the case.

Outside the kitchen there were commodious washhouses, cellarage, baths, and a well-arranged place for each member to wash himself as he comes from his work, before going to meals.

Ascending again to the next floor, we entered a ball-room, and going up stairs we saw the sleeping rooms, all as conveniently arranged as can be under one roof. Upon the whole, the house is commodious, but I was much disappointed at seeing such a house. A village of cottages, each with a garden, would have surely been more appropriate for a working community, and much cheaper. The sum expended on this building, not yet half furnished, is said to exceed L.30,000. Such extravagance previous to cultivating the land would stagger most people on the question of the sagacity of the working bees.

Mr Atkinson conducted us to the new garden, which contains twenty-seven acres. I was then introduced to a Mr Scott, the chief gardener, whom I found to be an intelligent and thoroughly practical man. His operations of trenching and planting, and indeed gardening in every department, were extensive. Brick-makers were making bricks; builders were building; lime-burners were burning lime; road-makers were making roads; the shepherds were with the sheep; nine ploughs were at work; a hundred acres of wheat were already sown, and more wheat land was being prepared; a reservoir was being constructed to save all the liquid manure; and, in short, everything was being done to improve the land which industry and capital could accomplish and skill direct.

Mr Scott was having portions of some of the fields trenched with the spade. He paid the labourers L.5 per acre for it, and expected them to work so as to make two shillings a-day. I remarked that this was more wages than common. He said it was; they only gave the ploughmen and other day-labourers nine shillings a-week; but as it was scarcely possible to get a good workman in that part of the country, he allowed a higher rate of wages to get them to work with some spirit. In answer to a remark I made about proselytizing their workmen to Socialism, he replied that they never made any attempt; but if they did attempt it, he believed anything might be accomplished, any change might be effected, but a change in the old slovenly style of working; on that point he believed the present generation of Hampshire labourers to be incurable.

It will be perceived by this that the members of the community do not themselves cultivate the land. Some of them work in the garden, but few of them, I suspect, are fitted for rough out-door work. Their number was at the time I was there sixty, thirty more were expected soon after. The quantity of land is 1000 acres, held on a lease of ninety-nine years, at a rent of fifteen shillings an acre. They have the power of purchasing it within that time at a certain price; and they have paid down a deposit on a neighbouring estate of 300 acres. Their landlord is Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid. There is some fine wood on the ground, and an avenue of fine old yews, which, for beauty and extent, is perhaps not equalled in any other part of England. The community intend converting a portion of that avenue into a summer ball-room. Adjoining are large numbers of full-grown trees, resembling the size and shape of the main-mast of a man-of-war.

I saw in several parts of the woodlands that the vegetable mould was gathered into heaps to be carried and used as manure. On almost every estate in the kingdom there is a rich soil of this kind, that might be collected and carried away without any injury to the trees. Mixed with lime it forms an excellent compost.

I did not see the agriculturist, but Mr Scott, the gardener, was conducting several experiments in the fields with the spade on alternate ridges with the plough. His manner of trenching was this:—The earth was lifted two spadefuls in width and to the depth of about a foot. This was taken in wheel-barrows to the place where trenching was to cease, there to fill up the last opening. A pick was taken, and the bottom of the trench loosened to the depth of eight or ten inches. This loosened subsoil was allowed to remain. The adjoining soil, two spadefuls in breadth, was then turned over, taking care to bury the weeds in the bottom. A second working with the spade, in the same trench, turned up a fresh soil to form the surface of the new seed soil. The bottom of this second trench was loosened with the pick as that of the first, and the next was begun by again burying the top mould. They had a subsoil plough on its way from Smith of Deanston's factory in Scotland. They were gradually introducing improved implements, but the greatest difficulty they found was to get the Hampshire labourers to work with them. They had thirty of these labourers at work.

I was told at Broughton that about one-half of the members ate no butcher meat, but lived entirely on vegetable diet. They at first brewed beer, but now they have curtailed that expense. One shilling a-week is allowed for pocket-money, but few of them are ever seen to spend even that in the neighbourhood.

To conclude, I may remark that I believe their land to be well worth L.2 per acre of rent, and they only pay fifteen shillings. They have an excellent bargain, if they manage it well; and whatever may be said of their Social crotchets, it must be said of them that their style of farming is of a superior kind. Those noblemen, gentlemen, clergy, and others who dislike the Socialists, would do well to shew the working population that good farming is not necessarily an adjunct of Socialism, else, perhaps, the working population will think the doctrines of those who pay best, employ most, and produce the greatest abundance of crops, are the best doctrines. This is no light subject. Missionaries of all religions, in all parts of the world, in all ages, have succeeded in proselytizing more by introducing arts and sciences, by teaching new means of acquiring wealth, than by preaching abstract theories. We have an eminent instance of this in New Zealand at the present time; and unless the landed gentry take a step in advance, or at least side by side in the same road with the Socialists, they will find the labourers of Hampshire voluntarily converted to the new doctrine. Again I say this is no light subject. Let the gentry and clergy look to it.

Notes on the Socialists.

The foregoing account of the Harmony Hall property attracted much attention at the time of its first publication. The Socialists reprinted and circulated 10,000 copies of it. Subsequent visits convinced me that I had not mistaken the good intentions and good moral behaviour of those persons. Indeed their effect upon the population around them, by their own example, in diffusing intellectual life, sober habits, and good manners; and upon the farmers around them, by the example of their hired agriculturists, in moving them to dig down ditch banks and make compost, clear away foul accumulations, and use wasted treasures of earth and rubbish for manures, was apparent to all visitors, and admitted by all dispassionate neighbours; yet neither had I mistaken the unsoundness of their scheme in its business principles. They were all intellectual men; but they were not all industrious men; while most of them, industriously inclined or otherwise, were unfit labourers in garden or in field. So long as money could be borrowed it was borrowed; it was obtained when prudent men of business would have buttoned up their pockets, the delusion of the place becoming an Elysium still lingering in the minds of some monied men, and in the minds of many working men living at a distance. At last, in 1845, as no profits arose, as L.30,000 had been contributed or lent to sustain the scheme, the contributors and lenders would not yield more. The resident members quarrelled, and split themselves into sections, spoke evil of one another and to one another, or became so inharmonious and unsocial as not to speak to one another at all. They dropped away, the wisest first, with such personal allowances as they could extract, such personal effects as they could collect, or had preserved; the most devoted and foolish at last, with nothing. Men and their wives who had come from the manufacturing districts, leaving behind them profitable work, at wages of thirty shillings, forty shillings, fifty shillings, and even sixty shillings per week, to labour in Hampshire on the land in competition with the Hampshire labourers, who were glad to work for nine shillings per week, sought their way home again pennyless, hopeless, and broken-spirited, empty in pocket, empty in stomach, filled only with grudges and revilings towards one another.

The governor, Mr Buxton, formerly a calico-printer's engraver, after suffering much privation, the farm stock and crops having been seized by creditors, and adhering to the deserted Hall of Harmony against all commands to leave, was, in the autumn of 1846, ejected by a creditor from Liverpool, aided by a number of Hampshire labourers. For some weeks Mr Buxton lingered on the spot, having built himself a hut by the wayside; but bad weather came on, and, hopeless and helpless, he too, with his wife and family, returned to Lancashire, to seek the profitable employment which he had been unwise enough to part from. Mr Bates, a creditor to the amount of L.7000, had risked that sum, his all, in the lucrative investment, and died broken-hearted. In vain the creditors have tried to sell or sublet the property. It was held by the Socialists on lease for ninety-nine years, and buildings which cost above L.20,000 erected on it. Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, the landlord, is the only party likely to gain by the adventure. When General Yates, who lives in the neighbourhood, saw Mr Owen, the originator of the Socialists, walking with Sir Isaac at the time of bargaining for the property, Mr Owen being in religion an unbeliever, and Sir Isaac Goldsmid being a Jew, he called the attention of some friends to them one day, and said—"There they are at their bargain; the infidel trying to do the Jew; the Jew trying to do the infidel; a thousand to one on the Jew!"

But Sir Isaac is far from deserving the imputation implied in this sally of General Yates. He is simply a man of business, able to calculate per-centages, and not disposed to make landed property an exception to sound principles of business. It would be well for agriculture if all landowners would do the same. It needed no deep sagacity in an observer like General Yates to foresee that a man of business-habits like Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, opposed to a visionary dreamer like Robert Owen would get the best of a bargain.

The Socialists, in trying to sublet Harmony Hall, have advertised it several times, setting forth the purposes to which it may be adapted by new lessees, of which purposes one is a ——— *lunatic asylum*. Poor fellows! it was so from the beginning, and only ceased to be so when the lunatics, through low diet, came to their senses and left it.

No. XXI.

A Day's Ramble at Strathfieldsaye.

April 1843.

Strathfieldsaye Park is on the northern border of Hampshire, commencing at about seven miles from Reading, the county town of Berkshire. It is irregular in shape, but, measuring it from recollection, three miles from north west to south east, and half as much from north east to south west, may be about its extent, exclusive of irregularities.

Approaching it from Berkshire on the north, amid hedgerows and farm-fields, and pieces of common, and cottages, and farm-yards, with trees of all shapes and sizes, and varieties of kind, now thick enough to obscure farm, and farmer, and all belonging to him, from view, and again thin and clear enough to expose them to the open world, with the addition of the common, and cottages, and geese, and goslings, and donkeys, and cows, and horses, the latter stunted as the over-eaten herbage they bite at. Approaching Strathfieldsaye through such a diversified country, so generally wooded, we cannot easily detect the commencement of the Duke's enclosures. But here is a man cutting a water furrow on the edge of a newly sown field. I shall let my two friends go on slowly in the phaeton which we have hired at Reading, while I get out and inquire where Strathfieldsaye is. I have inquired, and am told that all the country round here belongs to the Duke; that beyond the palings on the right is the beginning of the park; all those trees over yonder, down here, up there, all within view—if I do not look behind me—and the farms out-spread amid the trees, are the Duke's.

"The Duke must have a large estate here, if all that belongs to him?"

"Yes, he have a terrible sight of land. I ha' heerd how many thousand acres he be owner of, but forget now; it be a many thousand. He be a buying land and never done. Oh! the Duke be owner of a terrible sight o' land."

"Is his Grace supposed to be rich? Has he a large income?"

"Yes, he have a terrible sight o' money; nobody knows how much. They say he don't know himself. He can't count it, it be so much; he be terrible rich, the Duke be."

"Shall we get into the park? Are strangers allowed to go through it?"

"Yes; an' the Duke ben't there, you might drive all round, in at the one side and out at the other, or come back to where you went in. But I ben't sure an' you be let in at these times; for his Grace be here with company, and he be terrible particular they say. It be Easter now, and his Grace comes out of London to get some fresh air; and his rich friends, the great people, come out with him to keep him company. They say there be a great sight of rich people in London."

"Yes, there are many rich people in London, but there are also many poor; there are a hundred times more poor families than rich ones in London; many times more poor in proportion to the number of inhabitants in London than in this parish."

"Ah, that ben't true, we be all poor in this parish; and people in London ben't all poor."

"Why, you have the Duke in your parish, and you have other great people; and all the farmers, they are not poor, are they? and even the labourers, such as yourself—do you call yourself poor? You have always work enough I suppose?"

"Yes, I be always at work, but I be poor for all that. I han't but eight shillin' a-week—that ben't much to make six of a family rich, be it? And the farmers say they be coming down as poor as we, and can't afford no more wages. The gentry be the only rich people, and they go all to London to spend their money; they only come hereabout for their pleasure for a week or a month, or not much more—sometimes for a day only—to look at us, and they be off again to London. Ah! we be all poor as be working folks in these parts, and it be getting worse they say; we be like to be worse, not better."

"But wages are higher than eight shillings a-week, are they not?"

"Yes, some men have nine, and, for the matter of that, I may say some have ten, and may be eleven; but they be not common men as I be, they be one or two ploughmen on each farm, or somebody particular. The Duke's men as work in the park have ten shillin', but there ben't many on 'em."

"Do any of your children get employment?"

"Yes, one be at work now, he be twelve years old, and gets two shillin' a-week, and my wife be gone to-day to hoe wheat on the farm over that side—you can see it, about a mile off, by looking through that opening—and we ha' had a loaf of bread from the parish for one young un; but I ben't sure an we shall get the loaf now when so many on us be at work, and I ben't sure how long so many can be at work. The hoeing will soon be done, and, were it to last, my wife might not be able to leave the house and the children every day. She have more nor enough to do at home to contrive how we be to get somewhat to put on us, and how we be to get somewhat to cover us. It ben't easy out of our income to get a bellyful for so many, be it?"

"No, I fear not, nor clothes either, when you need them."

"Clothes, bless you! we never have no clothes, not new—not to speak on as clothes. We thought to have something new as bread was getting cheaper, but wages came down, and we ben't better nor afore; it takes all we earn to get a bit of bread, and not enough of that. They say meat be wonderful cheap in Reading, but what of it being cheap to we who can't buy it at no price?"

"I should like to know what you do live on, if you have no objection to tell me? Do you go home to your dinner, or is it brought here to you?"

"I fetch it in the morning. I live two mile away. It be lying there now in my bag, aneath my smock. Here it be; here be the greater part of it. I eat this bit of bread and drink some of that water in the ditch, and when it be done I be done with dinner. What be'nt here I ha' ate on the way out for breakfast."

"Breakfast! and had you no other breakfast before coming out, nothing but dry bread?"

"No, I ha'nt every day a bit of bread for breakfast. I be many a day out in the fields without breaking my fast till mid-day, and then, an I have a bit of bread and a sup of water, I be better than them as have none. There be some working all day, at times when work be scarce only a day or two in a week, and they be glad to have something to go home to at night, let alone eating in the day. Ah! we ben't put past working by eating too much, and I be many a day here with a hungry belly; but, thank God, I ben't the worst either, for I ha' work and eight shillin' a-week, and out o' that we get a bellyful once a day; if not sooner, we get it in the evening."

"You do get a bellyful in the evening, do you?"

"Yes, we pay a shillin' a-week of rent for house and little bit of garden; the garden grows some vegetables—not enough—but still it is a help to us, and something can be got to help that. Nettles, when in season, be good vegetable eating. We have a bit of lard or butter an we can; an cannot, why the salt must do—that be cheap, thank God; and if we have bread to eat to such a dish, why it ben't to be complained on. The worst is that we be as ready for another bellyful next morning and ha'nt got none."

"But all the labourers are not so badly provided for as this—some of them feed pigs, do they not?"

"Yes, they feed pigs, but they don't eat much of them; they sell them to pay house rent and to help to get some clothing. Them as be paid the highest wages ben't so badly off; but the most on us have the smallest wages, and many don't be always in work. Work be scarce all the year round in these parts, and in winter terrible scarce. The Union-house be full now."

"Is there any place forward here where we can put our horse, any inn or public house with a stable?"

"Yes; there be a good place enough for that on the common before you, at the new inn—Rogers'. They'll put up your horse for you, and shew you where to get into the park; that is, if there be any allowance for you to get in when the Duke is there. Perhaps you may get in, I don't know. You be some of the well-dressed folks as come here, and they get in when people not having such good clothes can't; but even they be not always admitted. The Duke be a particular man, I hear say terrible particular."

At the new inn, on the side of the common, we hastily disburthened ourselves of all charge of horse and driving, and things therewith connected, and, free for a pedestrian ramble, we set out to walk round the outside of the park. To me the outside was more interesting than the interior, as my object was to look at the farms and farming rather than the silvan beauties of Strathfieldsaye.

To my accompanying friends the outside was more than enough to fill them with all the joy that they were capable of containing; they were even filled to overflowing. And beside the happiness natural to myself amid such scenes—the glorious sunshine all around, save when the leafy trees of a precocious summer made a shade for flowers too bashful for the open world, the rich earth blending in sunshine and in shade, the green and the gold of grassy banks dotted with primroses, and a hundred other wild flowers, all varied, but all lovely; besides the happiness natural to myself on such a day, in such a place, the overflowing joy of two younger minds, formed by nature for the enjoyment of the associated beauty amid which we rambled, was poured upon me, and I was overflowing also. All above and around us was brightness and beauty, all within a desire to be satisfied and a pleasing sense of satisfaction.

There were whistling larks, which we could see like motes in the blue sky, and others which we could hear revelling in the liquid sunshine upon which we could not look. On each side of the way, on the hedge-rows, and on the trees that mingled with the hedge-rows, sat the thrush, musical and uxorious, filling the time with rich melody which his mate must devote to the domestic duty of hatching eggs. There were around him the linnet, grey and green, the goldfinch, the robin, the wren, and fifty other varieties of birds—innumerable in each variety, all noisy and full of life, building nests, or singing with joy that their nests were built. The saucy blackbird, hopping from sprig to sprig, with nothing to do, yet too proud, as all professed singers are, to give us a snatch of melody, save when it pleases himself, and that is not in the open air in the open day—he was there; and the chattering magpie, that would neither sing nor let us hear others sing, fluttering about; and the solemn crow, black, discordant, and abounding in noise, the street preacher of the woods—he was there; and the cooing wood-pidgeon sounding everywhere, but making a monopoly of the more quiet retreats with his hurdy-gurdy notes—he, the Italian boy of the feathered race, was also there. And we had the cuckoo, the Monsieur Julien of the whole, whose signal notes had told that spring was come, and that the grand concert must begin; from his first solo the music had increased in variety and strength, and now we had one general chorus, a thousand voices singing to the million.

We came to a gate, through which there was a road into a park. A neat little cottage was at the side of the gate; and a woman was at the door of the cottage. I asked her if strangers were admitted into the park, and she replied that usually they were; but, his Grace being at present there with visitors, she did not know how far she might be safe in admitting us. I begged her not to think of it for a moment, if there was the least restraint upon her; hearing which, she said no orders had been given for the exclusion of strangers, but that she and others had a general understanding that his Grace liked the park to be kept private while he was there; that she was a widow, to whom his Grace had been indulgent and kind, in giving her a house and the means of living; that she could not do anything, on any account, to give his Grace offence, but yet there could be no harm done, she thought, if we wished to see the park, by our going in.

This somewhat qualified permission we declined; and seeing before us a bushy waste on the exterior of the park palings, we intimated our intention of rambling there; for honey bees and honey flowers, and birds nestled and preparing their nests, were its sole inhabitants, so far as we could observe, and our pleasure was to be among them; but the old woman said we must take care of the "vermin," by which she meant snakes and adders. Those creatures are more abundant than makes wandering in unfrequented places quite pleasant, so we avoided them, and passed on.

For the space of two miles and a-half, or thereabout, we had the park palings and its thickets of marginal timber on our right. By the wayside we had cottages with ample gardens, enriched with fruit-trees full of blooming promise. On our left were farm fields bearing crops or undergoing preparation. Leaving them behind, and passing on, we came to an inn of some pretensions to gentility, called the "Wellington Arms." There we found a person belonging to the Duke's household, and who assured us there was not the slightest objection to our walking in the park.

The main entrance being at this point, we took advantage of it, and soon found that, lovely as the rich spring was outside the enclosure, she was richer within. A small river, which comes through the adjoining meadows on the south, enters the park, and, having a wide bed prepared, it exhibits a series of lakes and waterfalls, forming on the whole a fine crescent of water, reaching through the whole park.

From each bank the ground gradually ascends, shewing like a gem on its green breast the mansion of Strathfieldsaye on the south. The park is too fine in its form, and adornment, and fulness of extent, to appear as an adjunct to the mansion. The mansion is too trim and neat, and made up of littlenesses, to appear the chief feature of the park.

The park would retain all its beauty and grandeur if the mansion did not exist.

The mansion would have little beauty were it not in the park.

But mansion and park, and all that is in and around either, derive and give forth an element of interest beyond what is inherently their own. They are Wellington's. The trout that shot along the stream, and returned in playful gambols to the pool beneath the bridge, holding revel in dozens and scores, and fifties, delighting the eye, as such creatures of instantaneous motion always do, these could not be regarded as mere fish! They were Wellington's; and yonder was the boat in which the venerable hero sometimes puts off to catch them. Even the butter-cups and daisies could not hide their little heads in the meadow grass and conceal the fact that they were Wellington's. There was not a tree, nor its tiniest leaf, nor the softest breath of air, but seemed to me to say something of Wellington, and to demand that reverence should be paid to the master-spirit of the scene. More than once my hand took involuntary motion, as if it would lift from my head the irreverent hat that did not uncover in approaching such a place. More than once unbidden thoughts arose and depicted Wellington as the opposer of the favourite men of the people. More than once these thoughts were ordered to lie down and rest, if ever they were to rise again, until a suitable place and circumstance permitted them; and at last they were foregotten in the recollection of the twelve volumes of Indian and Peninsular despatches.

If these twelve ponderous volumes were as easily read as a newspaper report of a debate in the House of Lords, how differently would the multitude think of Wellington! When he not only warred with, and overcame successively, the armies of Junot, and Massena, and Marmont, and Jourdan, and Soult, and Napoleon, weakened as he was by the indolence and ill faith of his Spanish allies, but combatted the corrupt and unfriendly practices of the British government at home, listened to or read of the fiery-tongued orators who then calumniated him, and who now, though no better informed of his abilities than they were then, or then might have been, think fit, because he has been successful, to adulate him.

The general, who, in almost every letter expostulated with the ministers of the day against their feeble policy, that made the nation discontented at home and him weak abroad; who was weakened and crippled in power until he dared scarcely to make a corporal; who wrote, in shape of despatches to the government, essays on human character individually and nationally considered, taking a view, not only sound and sensible and new, but so accordant with the popular voice, that the public would have then, and would now, give him one of the highest positions as a popularly instructive writer, if they knew what he had written.

This general and philosophical practicalist is at present lost sight of in the political Wellington, and the great bulk of mankind do not know where to find him. Next to the Waverley Novels, I have read the twelve volumes of "Gurwood Despatches," with the highest interest, for pleasure alone, to say nothing of instruction. The lives of Wellington, as so often published, are but feeble summaries of military events. The life of Wellington is in the twelve volumes, it cannot be extracted. Some publisher, who would aspire to sell 100,000 copies of a work in penny or twopenny numbers, should bring out a weekly issue, without abridgment, of these national, and as yet nationally unread, documents.

When we had wandered through pathless places, and along paths that seemed to have neither end nor relief to their intricacy and seclusion, and when we had made ourselves familiar with the forms of a thousand hoary oaks, the most gigantic and aged that I had ever seen within the British shores, and with vast numbers of pines, spruce, and larch, but chiefly spruce, ponderous in bulk beyond all my preconceived notions of the size of British pines; when we had wandered amid these vast giants, and made acquaintance with the shrubs near them, and the flowery sward spread out among the shrubs, and the rabbits and other game that disported on the flowery sward; when we had watched the frisky little lambs and their sober mothers, the lambs loitering to play while the mothers grazed, and moved away as they grazed, until the young ones knew not where to find each its mother; when we had seen the temporary distress of the deserted innocent, and noted how quickly the mother came from a far distance when she heard its cries, and how eagerly it ran to her and drank her milk which with fondness she devoted to it, as a recompence for its recent grief; when we had delighted for hours in looking on the beautiful foliage of the green hawthorn trees that dotted the parks, and wished we had been three weeks later, to see them all in full bloom; when we had dwelt on the banks of the bright lake, with the snowy swans and shyer water-fowl for companions; when we had said, how much better the mansion would have been situated if standing on the north side of the park facing to the south; when we had noted that a great part of the park was newly tile drained, and had examined and found that the draining was done in the manner practised and recommended by his Grace's friend and relative, the Marquis of Tweeddale; when we had said that it was a pity so many hundreds of the giant oaks should be decaying of old age, and had added that they would afford a fine supply of money to some younger and poorer Duke of Wellington than the present; when we had seen and said all these things, and many more, and found that our faces were as red and glowing with the vehement sun as the sky in the red west, we bent our steps towards the new inn, on our way homeward, my companions asking, in a tone of regret—Would they really have to go away without seeing the old Duke?

This last observation may give rise to some reflections curiously illustrative of the natural history of mankind. Here were a brother and a sister, grown to maturity, or verging on it, both fond of reading history, born and bred in London, and yet they had never seen the Duke of Wellington. They had never thought of going to St James' Park, or to the entrance of the House of Lords to see his Grace; but now that they were forty miles from home, it was painful to them to have to move away and not see him.

Again, the fact of their being Londoners, would make some people, and all authors, set them down, when visiting the country, as ignorant of every bush, and tree, and leaf, and flower, making them commit, most probably, the most ludicrous mistakes in regard of vegetable individuality, whereas the cockney is, in nine cases out of ten, more learned in the varieties of plants and flowers than the countryman.

If we would find a person in London who has seen all the sights, and is familiar with the lions, with the features of great personages, such as the Sovereign, the Prince, the Duke, the Prime Minister, and Lord John Russell, go to a countryman who visits or occasionally resides in London, not to the cockney.

On the other hand, if we would find a person familiar with every plant and flower common to England, from butter-cups and daisies upwards, we must go to the Londoner who visits Hornsey Wood, Epping Forest, Greenwich Park, Norwood, Richmond, and Hampton, and Highgate, and Kensal Green, and the innumerable tea gardens, full of floral wealth, foreign and domestic, we must go to the visitors of those places—and what cockney does not visit them?—and not to the countryman.

Near to the southern verge of the park, four or five hundred yards from the Duke's mansion, and a few hundred yards within the outside fence, we found a church, churchyard, and a parsonage house. On inquiring at a person that was near, I found this was Strathfieldsaye parish church. My informant was able to say that the incumbent was the nephew of the Duke, and that it was said to be an excellent living; but he could not tell which nephew, nor did he seem to know that the Duke had brothers, or any other relative. We passed out of the park, sat down on the green bank that skirted a field, where a man was ploughing with four horses all in a line; talked to him, and some others afterwards, about farming matters, and learned from them that five horses were sometimes used; that they had too many new fashions coming up amongst them already; that the good land varied from twenty to thirty shillings an acre of annual rent, and that, with other burdens, it was too dear. To this I replied that, held as it was, without security, farmed as it was, without economy, I did not doubt but it was too dear; still it was land that, in some other parts of the kingdom, situated the same in respect of markets, would pay eighty shillings an acre of yearly rent, and yield a profit to the farmer.

Note upon the Duke of Wellington.

Certain parties with whom I was connected when the foregoing was published first, criticised it, and dissented from my observations about the Duke and his despatches. Perhaps they never read and studied the Duke's despatches and letters. I did, and under the following circumstances:—About nine years ago several lives of his Grace were in course of publication; all of them exalting the man as a military and moral wonder. A London publisher thought it would be a good speculation to bring out a Life of Wellington which would place him in an unfavourable light. My pen was idle at the time; the task was offered to me, and I began to read for its execution. I attended the reading-room of the National Museum, and read all the twelve volumes of despatches edited by Colonel Gurwood, and everything else on the subject which I could find there. The result was, that I told the publisher that I could not touch Wellington with my pen, unless it was to try to exalt him higher than any writer had yet done.

No. XXII.

A Rambling Letter over much ground, and many Arguments touching on the Farmers who Dined at Wallingford, with Mr Blackstone, M.P., in the Chair.

April 1843.

The imperfection of the tenures on which land is held in England, partly for the political subjugation of the tenantry, and in all cases for the accomplishment of purposes equally short-sighted and pernicious, is so universally apparent, that, go into which county we may, the tenure is seen by its effects. That certain estates are to be exempted from this remark, and that their improved condition gives relief to the traveller's eye, and forbids him to charge all England with agricultural negligence, is true; but these are so few, that the most to be said of and argued from them is, that they condemn the country which surrounds them; and even if this is said, whole counties may rise up and protest against the condemnation, inasmuch as within their entire length and breadth neither an estate, nor farm, nor field, nor acre of land is held on a tenure admissible of good cultivation, nor under cultivation fit to be copied as an improvement.

A few weeks ago there was exhibited in one field, on a farm near Abingdon, four ploughs at work, with four-and-twenty horses drawing them, that is, six to each plough. Two weeks ago, the farmer who thus ploughed and still ploughs his land, was at Wallingford dinner cheering and joining in the cry of Lord Stanhope and Mr Blackstone for "protection to native industry!" All round Wallingford, and from that town to Abingdon, from Abingdon to Oxford, and from Oxford to Banbury, again from Oxford to Bicester, and across the county to Buckingham, where I have recently been, everything in agriculture, whether in respect of the style of farming, the wages of labour, the condition of the labourer, or the ability and hope of the farmer, all is meagre, has ever been meagre, and is at present more than ordinarily depressed. The land, naturally good, much of it excellent, exhibits a most pitiful appearance. The miserable rents of twenty shillings an acre for land that should be paying sixty shillings, of ten shillings an acre for what should be paying thirty shillings, are not paid; the tenants cannot pay, and have no hope of being able to pay. On every acre of their land there is a demand for labour to drain, or clear weeds, or ameliorate by a mixture of soils; but there is neither the capital nor the security for capital to employ such labour. Even where money is expended on labour, the low sum of seven and eight shillings a-week, the able-bodied man's price, is higher pay than fourteen shillings a-week would be in Norfolk, than eighteen shillings a-week would be in Northumberland, or Berwickshire, or Roxburgh, or the Lorthians; and yet the labourer is employed a greater number of hours in Oxfordshire, and those parts of Berkshire around Wallingford and Abingdon, than in any of the counties named. The difference is seen in the economy of labour in the north, and its systemless waste in the south. We have here six horses yoked a-head of each other in a waggon, to carry manure, with three men *following* the waggon to fill and empty it, not carrying as much in a week as the same number of horses singly in carts, with three men to fill, one to empty, and two boys to drive, would do in a day. We have the same number of horses going with the waggon to market, and not carrying more than three single-horsed carts do in some parts, and should do everywhere. We have oxen and horses yoked to the same plough, the inequality of pace preventing the equality of draught. We have serpentine ridges, shapeless and measureless, with furrows following their prodigal eccentricity, until the four, or five, or six horses to each plough, not only lose, by the bend of the furrow in which they walk, a power additional to that which a line of horses always lose on each other, but they and the plough travel over an extra space of ground, such, in most cases, as if the field contained eleven acres instead of ten. We have numberless small enclosures, in which, by the turning of the plough, much labour is unnecessarily lost. We have between those fields masses of divisional fence, composed of ditch, mound, and shaggy bush, occupying space that should be the centre of a corn crop, or which, if necessary for a fence, is now useless, save, perhaps, to birds that build a nest, lovers that sit by a shady bush, or poets, who, not being farmers, can afford to praise such a nursery of blooming wildness, and write sonnets in praise of the wings of down that carry the seeds to new soils when autumn breathes upon their ripeness. We have streams abundant, and ready for water mills to thrash the grain, and thus enable the farmer to take the labour, wasted in his barns over the tedious flail, to his fields, to drain and fructify. But we have a population who would burn the houses, and haystacks, and barns of any farmer who dared to erect a thrashing machine—a population which, as it is, whether because they are ignorant, and irreligious, and immoral, or whether, in spite of being as intelligent, religious, and moral as the churches which crowd upon our eyes would indicate them to be, light the incendiary fires, taking awful vengeance on men of property, for wrongs real or fancied. We have those people always under-fed, even if always employed. We have many of them partly or wholly unemployed, seeking subsistence as paupers, or as poachers and thieves. We have the farmers paying rates, already heavy, and still increasing in weight, to keep them in the workhouse and county jail, in both of which they are punished—by the *test* in the workhouse to prove them paupers, by hard labour in the jail, because they are criminals. And they come out of the jail and the "house" sensible that they have been punished by men whom they look on as natural enemies—the guardians in the one case, the justices in the other. They go to work for a pittance which cannot secure comfort, or they again starve for want of work, and return as paupers to the house, or steal and go back to prison. Perhaps, seeing that to starve or steal is the same; that as paupers or criminals they are to be punished; that they cannot avoid being one or the other, and therefore cannot avoid punishment; they look upon the men who sentence them, the men of haystacks, and stables, and barns, the guardians and justices, as their natural enemies, on whose property they may make war, on whose haystacks, and stables, and barnfuls of grain, they do make war—fearful, savage, wasteful war. In London, though all the news of the kingdom concentrate, only a small portion of the rural fires are reported; the directors of insurance companies have been taught practical philosophy, and know that publicity makes crime contagious. The provincial newspapers agree with them.

It cannot be doubted that the landowners are full of good intentions as respects the improvement of their land, but the first step towards that improvement is to them so full of newness, or alarm, or humility, or some other element of unpleasantness, as to prevent them from taking it? That step is the emancipation of their tenantry from political subjugation by the grant of leases free of stringent clauses, to secure the outlay of capital. Without a liberal outlay of capital improvements cannot be accomplished; without improved agriculture, the general employment and fair remuneration of the labouring population cannot be secured; without employment and fair wages, the labourers cannot live honestly nor be contented; and if they are dishonest and discontented, they will either be punished or will punish; so that we return at once to the point where capital must be expended in the improvement of the land; but, before that can be done, there must be a security granted that the farmer shall have his fair return of profit.

In addition to a lease, free of the absurd conditions commonly imposed in the few leases that are granted in England, there must be a basis of rent agreed on, either on the principle of the tithe-rent charge, or something approaching to it.

Until the farmer is thus *protected*, it is vain, it is worse than vain, it is a heartless mockery, to lecture him at agricultural meetings about draining and manuring, and cleaning and ameliorating his soils. He might with advantage, even as a tenant-at-will, economize his horse and manual labour; discard his cumbrous implements, and save the manures he now wastes; but to do so implies the renunciation of prejudices old as his grandfather, and strong because they are old. And prejudices are only seen by onlookers; they are to their owners honest opinions. To shew a man that he is prejudiced, we must make him think as we think; if a farmer, he must travel further than his own market town, he must be induced to examine in all parts of the country all kinds of systems; he must be taught how to appreciate them; but before this can be done, there must be a sufficient hope of interest excited. This last he can never have as a tenant-at-will. In that capacity his mind and his movements are subject to the restriction of others, and he confines himself to his parish, or, at most, his county.

But limited knowledge on agricultural science is not alone the property of the untravelled, unread, unreading tiller of the soil. Let us look into the advertisements of estates to sell in the newspapers, and we shall find the estate-agents acute men, well versed in most things, experienced in all smart methods of turning a penny—we shall find them ignorant, almost without an exception, of the first and simplest principles that should guide buyers and sellers of agricultural property; and why? because all things relating to agriculture have been considered so simple, the science of cultivating land has been so completely disregarded in education, that nobody, save a few old merchants or money-lenders, who buy bargains and hold their tongues, has given the mercantile value of land a consideration. In the advertisements of estates to sell, we see a strong point made of the assertion that "the land is in the highest state of cultivation." Now land in the highest state of cultivation is the most hazardous landed property that can be purchased, while land in the lowest state of cultivation is the safest and most profitable. If land is wanted with a view to profit, that will be preferred by the prudent purchaser which will return ten, or fifteen, or twenty per cent. in preference to that which will return three, or four, or five per cent. This is an observation so trite that nobody will deny it; each reader will think his time wasted in reading it, so careful will he be of a due amount of profit. But let us see whether highly cultivated Lothian or poorly cultivated Oxfordshire would be the most profitable investment for money.

In Lothian little more can be done by way of improving, unless some new discovery in science is made, which may never be made; so that the capital expended in raising the land to its present high annual rental has already returned its profit, and the farmer who expended it has become rich, and has made his landlord rich. This landlord, in selling his estate, will not sell for less than a price calculated from the present high rent, say eighty shillings an acre, and, as there is no room to improve, the purchaser must be content with a per centage, perhaps as low as the bank interest. But in Oxfordshire—indeed in four-fifths of all England, but in Oxfordshire especially—the improvements are yet to be made, and the purchaser of land would have the usual profit on a twenty-five years' purchase of the rental, or whatever else the computation of price might be, while he would have, in addition, the valuable return of money laid out in improving.

A notion seems to be abroad that money laid out in advancing the productive powers of land is sacrificed. Nothing can be further from the truth, that is, if the expenditure of the money is directed with prudence, as it must be in any other commercial speculation. Sir John Sinclair lays down an axiom which all practical men have proved to be true, namely, that supposing L.5 per acre to be the lowest sum, and L.10 the highest, that can be expended profitably on the improvement of an acre of land; and if the L.5 returns a profit varying from five to ten per cent., the L.10 will return a profit varying from ten to twenty per cent.

At the present time, most of those that may be called "spirited farmers" are either singularly unskilful, or have not the power to practise their skill. When visiting the Duke of Wellington's estate at Strathfieldsaye, I was told, and could perceive, that the Duke intended his property to undergo a process of improvement. I saw tile-draining going on in the Home Park—I saw new houses built for labourers, with ample gardens of a quarter of an acre each, the best cottages and gardens given to the poor at their rent (L.3 : 10s. a-year) that I have seen in any part of the kingdom. Besides, there was a school erected by the Duke, and in other directions were to be seen marks of improvement. The tenants, at least some of them, had been "spirited" enough to purchase the new-fangled manures from shops, while they were neglectful enough to allow the best fertilizing agencies in their own homesteads to go to waste. Even their farm-yard manure, carried out to the fields, was lying as if laid out to dry and bleach, the air filching away the gases in which consisted its chief value. If we saw a shopkeeper buying goods from a distance and at a high price, while he trampled under foot in his own shop, or threw into the common sewer, goods equally saleable and valuable, we would call him insane. And what shall we say of the farmer who does the same thing?

Yet again the farmer is not so blameable. The fact of his purchasing expensive manures shews how he struggles to do his best according to his knowledge. There is no excuse for him in carrying out and spreading his manures to lie and be wasted in the open air; but the want of proper cisterns for saving the valuable liquids of the farm-yard, and other scientific contrivances for concentrating the essences of all kinds of fermenting matter, is to be attributed to the want of security in his farm.

No. XXIII.

A Digression from Agriculture to Dr Pusey and the Church of England;* with a few remarks relating to the Town of Oxford.

Though the self-imposed task of writing descriptions of English agriculture leads me into the thinly peopled rather than the populous provinces—into the villages rather than the towns; and though I have in a manner precluded myself from deviating therefrom, by stating my communications to be from the farming districts, I cannot altogether withstand the temptation of occasionally touching on other topics. Some months ago, being in Manchester, and having heard much of the Anti-Corn-Law League, I paid a visit to the League's head-quarters in that town, and was so struck with the newness, the comprehensiveness, and the vast national importance of the proceedings of that body—foresaw, as I then thought and still think, in the League's proceedings the future destinies of the British empire—that I could not refrain from giving to the public a detailed account of what I there witnessed.

A few weeks previous to that, I went a dozen miles out of my way to visit the Socialist community at Titherly, in Hampshire, rather for the gratification of a not very respectable curiosity—principally with the view of seeing with my own eyes what I heard others say, that they were a sect of idle visionaries—than with the expectation of seeing anything which, according to my opinion, should be written of and held up to the world as an example; but in the management of their very large farm I saw what all England should copy as an example; what will be copied; what at no distant time will be the common practice in the agriculture of England, namely, the scientific working of the sub-soil as well as the surface soil; the chemical application of manures; the frequent use of spade husbandry; with a careful provision for the physical and intellectual advancement of the working population. And having seen those things, I published to the world what I saw, with my opinions thereon.

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* This letter was the first newspaper notice of that remarkable sermon preached by Dr Pusey at Oxford, wherein he held forth the doctrine of the "Real Presence" of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and for which he was suspended from preaching for three years.

On Sunday, the 14th of May, being in Oxford, I was eye-witness and ear-witness to certain proceedings not less important as regards the future destinies of England than either of the foregoing. I saw the wedge which is now splitting the church receive a blow on the head, which will, with a few more such, send it home, and rive the establishment beyond the possibility of its ever being restored to what it has been, perhaps shiver it for ever. This symptom of church insanity, this evidence of her future suicide, shall be the subject of my present communication. And it is of such vast, in connection with other national movements, of such awful importance, that I need make no apology for making it my theme in preference to my ordinary remarks on agriculture. Perhaps agriculture, and commerce, and every national interest, are involved in this impending church commotion.

It was announced in the Oxford papers of Saturday that of the preachers for the ensuing day (14th May) "The Reverend the Regius Professor of Hebrew" would preach in the morning at Christ Church, (the cathedral.) This professor is the famous Dr Pusey. During the Saturday evening, in every shop, every house, at every corner of the streets where I happened to be, some one present, and frequently every one present, spoke of the excitement that would be to-morrow, because Dr Pusey was to preach. It was said that great numbers would crowd to the cathedral, and, hearing this, I resolved to be one of them.

About an hour before the time of service, students and others were moving in small parties of three and four, and five and six, towards Christ Church College. In fifteen minutes afterwards I passed through the magnificent quadrangle, and entered the cathedral, and found almost every seat occupied. A few forms in one of the side aisles were still empty, and on one of them I sat down. During the next fifteen minutes many people entered, and proceeded to reserved seats, or halted in the open spaces, there to stand. Among the latter were students in their gowns, several elegantly dressed ladies, (perhaps some of those who come from London and elsewhere, and esteem it a high privilege to tread on the same stones of the pavement on which they see the doctor tread, or are told he has trodden on; who gaze for hours upon the window of the room in which he is supposed to be sitting; and who crowd upon his steps, that they may even touch the hem of his garment;) these, with a mixture of ordinary town's people, filled up all standing room, and waited with seeming patience and resignation.

At last several venerable personages, one of them the Vice-

Chancellor, entered, and proceeded through the crowded passages, with some difficulty, to the seats reserved for them; and soon after, at, I think, half-past ten o'clock, the organ broke the silence that had hitherto reigned, and indicated that the doctor was entering the cathedral.

I turned my eyes towards the door, as in that direction all other eyes and faces near me were turned, and saw one or two official persons opening a way of approach down the aisle by where I was sitting. Immediately following them came Dr Pusey, wearing a gown, or robe of some other name, half black and half red; his head lowered until his chin rested on his breast, and his feet moving at a pace solemnly slow. He appeared to be of short stature, five feet four or five inches high, and somewhere between fifty and sixty years of age. Perhaps he is not so old. Perhaps the austere self-denial which he is said to exercise had fastened on him marks which, in other faces, are accepted as the indices of years. But whether so old or not, his thin features, seen through a shrivelled skin, bare and brown, contrasted forcibly with the full-fed, rosy faces of most of the other doctors of divinity present. I do not recollect to have ever seen a head, in the lower part of its fabric, so insubstantial, with a brow so full, so lofty, so dome-like as Dr Pusey's, save that of a hand-loom weaver, locally known in my native county as "Sandy Doughty of Pinkerton Hill," whose skin, and flesh, and grey hair, and family and friends, have been shrivelled and pinched by changeless poverty, while his capacious brain has been the intellectual store-room of all that is lofty in religion and poetry, all that is profound and speculative in true or problematic philosophy, and all that is useful and useless in general information; save *his* head, or perhaps that of John Tait, of the Cowgate of Edinburgh, a wood-sawyer, whose head is as high and intellectual as Dr Pusey's, and whose cheeks and jaw-bones, by reason of sweating profusely and eating sparingly, are as thin—save those two, I do not recollect to have seen any one so full of brain and so extremely thin of flesh. Yet in these three there is much difference as I now see them before my mind's eye. The wood-sawyer is much younger than either, yet he most resembles the Regius Professor of Hebrew in his external form. The hand-loom weaver is the oldest and most shrivelled with age and poverty, and, therefore, in respect of thinness of face, joined to witheredness of skin, bears the closest comparison with the Oxford professor; but then his head surpasses all other heads: though the world does not know him, the world has only one "Sandy Doughty of Pinkerton Hill."

When Dr Pusey had ascended to the pulpit, one of the audience, who was a stranger like myself, whispered to me if I recollected having seen Mr Cobden, the member for Stockport, and if I did not think Dr Pusey resembled him to some extent. I answered then with an unqualified *no*, that there was no resemblance; but this was hastily said, perhaps because he was about to speak, and because I was eager, as the deathlike stillness of the thousands there shewed them all eager, to hear him speak, to hear what sound the voice of that man had of whom the world had recently heard so much. When he spoke there was a mildness, and earnestness, and ease, and clearness in his manner of speaking, that resembled Mr Cobden's style very much. Were the latter gentleman sixty years of age instead of forty, and were he over those twenty years which lie between this and 1863, by the same course that he is now pursuing, or is said to pursue—that is, by working hard intellectually, and starving himself on cold water and the merest fragments of substantial food, he might very probably present to us that withered appearance which the Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford University now presents. But even then, those enormous organs of intellect, as seen lying above Mr Cobden's eyebrows, would distinguish him under any circumstances, at any time of life, from the professor. Dr Pusey has no remarkable developement of the reflective faculties, as seen phrenologically, nor as heard in his discourse of yesterday, nor, so far as I can discover, as shewn in his literary productions. But phrenologically he is strong in the higher regions of the brain—in veneration, hope, wonder, ideality, and so on. The earnestness of his manner of preaching carries to his hearers the belief that his mind feels his doctrines to be truth, and the largely developed regions of wonder and veneration, so visible to the eye, will leave no one who sees him at liberty to doubt that he is under the influence of those sentiments.

The doctor's first proceeding when he ascended the pulpit was to close the door, and kneel down in prayer for the space of eight or ten minutes, during which the organ played, and a few boys, feeble in voice and vexatiously out of tune, sung a piece of music, to what words I could not ascertain, which is commonly sung, and very commonly better sung, in the churches and chapels of Scotland under the name of "Handel's Hundred."

When the doctor stood up, this sweet but ill-used piece of music was allowed to make its escape in the echoes of the roof as soon as the current verse was ended, and neither it nor any other piece was again disturbed; there was no more singing.

The doctor read a prayer. It *began* by invoking a blessing on "our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria," on "his Royal Highness the Prince Albert," on "his Royal Highness Albert Edward Prince of Wales," on "her Royal Highness Victoria Princess Royal," on "her Majesty the Queen Dowager Adelaide," and on all the other members of the royal family. Having gone through these illustrious personages, it proceeded to "his Grace Arthur Duke of Wellington, Chancellor of the University of Oxford;" it included the Vice-Chancellor, all the heads of colleges, fellows, and scholars; it included the archbishops, the bishops, and all the clergy, their ranks duly specified; it included the ministers of state, the "great council of Parliament," and all magistrates; it invoked the blessing of "prosperity and peace to God's holy Catholic church, and especially this portion of it." It blessed God for giving unto them the founders and benefactors of the University, and particularized by name "King Henry the Eighth;" and having expressed a hope concerning them, much in the way that I have understood "prayers for the dead" to be uttered, (though, by the lowness of the doctor's voice at that passage, I am not certain as to each word,) the Lord's prayer was read, to which the people, or some of them, said "*Amen!*" and thus came to a brief end the only prayer of the day; and those were the only subjects included in it.

Dr Pusey next read his text. It was, *Matthew* xxvi. 28, "*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*" He opened his discourse by remarks on the "Divine love," much in the way as preachers usually preach on such a text. The first of his sentiments which I observed as in any way peculiar to himself, were not doctrinal but circumstantial. Speaking of the "holy joy" that the Christian feels in the contemplation of this divine love, he said—"Would that we could at all times live under its influence rather than hold vain disputations on the question of whether some of us have spoken too much of it or too little. Would that at all seasons of holy rejoicing, and especially at this season of Easter, we could rejoice under the divine love rather than question each other's knowledge of it, rather than seek to fathom that which is unfathomable!"

These sentiments were expressed in a subsequent part of the sermon, at a period when they did not seem to me to be so appropriate as at first; because the doctor proceeded to enlarge on the nature of the divine love, and the sacrament of the "Holy Eucharist," and very soon arrived at a point which, I believe, has been the main subject of dispute ever since the Reformation between the Roman Catholic Church on one side and Protestants of all denominations on the other, namely, the doctrine of *transubstantiation.* He did not use that word; well known as that word is, he used plainer words; and plainly and repeatedly said that communicants, in partaking of the sacrament of the "Holy Eucharist," drank the blood and ate the flesh of the body of the Saviour. He spoke pointedly and somewhat bitterly of the negligent habits of the university men as regarded their due attendance on, and due preparation for, religious ordinances. He said that, though this was the university of Oxford, and though he was preaching in the cathedral church, they were not so well supplied with the conveniences for joining in the sacraments as in some village churches; nor did they avail themselves of the opportunities they had of performing that bounden, indispensable duty of joining in the sacrament of the "Holy Eucharist" so frequently as they should do, which should, at the least, be once a week. He referred to the opinions of "St Andrew" (did not say who St Andrew was) for the enforcement of the doctrine of the "Real Presence;" and several times he quoted St Chrysostom and other saints. Only once, so far as I could hear, did he quote the Scripture. Having again and again reiterated his doctrine of the sacrament of the "Holy Eucharist," and deplored that divisions should exist in the church, he concluded, pronounced in a few words, the benediction, and the people dispersed.

Now I hope that no believer in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church will think that an opportunity is here taken to say something against his faith. I do not write of this subject to say that Dr Pusey's doctrine of the "Real Presence" is untrue; but to say that such doctrine is not that of the Church of England. As a matter of private opinion, it might be of little public importance; but the assertion of the clergy being able to perform miracles, which this doctrine leads to, is of very great public importance; and the inevitable schism which it will lead to is, in every respect, religiously and politically, of the most profound importance.

Three weeks ago the Oxford University paper quoted a passage, as worthy of approval, from the lecture of one of the professors. The passage stated that it would be well for us, now that we heard so much said in favour of education, "to be taught the value of ignorance;" that, instead of the young being taught how to live for the "good of society," they should be taught how to "live for the good of their own souls." This antithesis may be admissible in a religious sense, but the practical meaning of it is, that there should be no secular education, no education but that of the church, which, now that she is, by the voice of her most conspicuous and most potent teacher, putting forth the pretence that she can work miracles, must be guardedly observed. That the English Church, with her newly-adopted paraphernalia of candlesticks, crucifixes, relics, and miracles, or the Scotch Church, with her arrogant assumption of superiority to the civil power; that both of them, were they to *unite* the attributes of Papal Rome, which they now *divide* between them, would ever succeed in turning back the tide of progressive civilization, we have no reason to fear; there is not the remotest possibility of even their temporary success. What we have to fear is the consequence of their failure. They are both insane. Each day their madness becomes more manifest. Each day there is a new symptom of impending suicide. The danger to society will be seen in the holding of the inquest when their dissolution comes, if they should be mad enough to go on as they are going.

In the cathedral yesterday I observed several parties holding conference together while the doctor was preaching, particularly when he uttered some of the doctrines startling and new to the Church of England; and I observed that, while some listened with reverent attention, of whom might be those who are said to pay that homage to the doctor that more sober Christians pay to Almighty God, others had, perhaps through disrespect to Dr Pusey, lost all reverence for the ministers of religion who were there with him. When still in the cathedral, I heard some one near me naming certain of the learned and venerable doctors present, one of whom was called "Potato Dick," a name affixed to the reverend gentleman, I understand, in consequence of his having spoken at some public meeting approvingly of five millions of the poor "*rejoicing* on potatoes."

It is a fact that, in Oxford, which may be called a town exclusively engaged in the manufacture of churchmen, there is, perhaps, more practical infidelity than in any other town of its population in the kingdom; and its politics are either the narrowest Toryism or the wildest Liberalism. And it is no less worthy of note that female prostitution and general vice is there found to a degree not known in towns where wealthy idlers are more rare and industrious employment for rich and poor more common. There is at present an attempt made by the tradesmen not dependant on the university to have the colleges rated for the relief of the poor. This attempt is resisted by the trustees of the college funds. But the other party persist in the justice of their effort. They say they are legally and morally justified: legally, because the colleges are not exempted from assessment; morally, because the town is heavily burdened with old servants of the university, for whom no provision is made, and illegitimate children with their mothers, girls from the rural districts, who come here and are seduced and deserted by the collegians.

I have not yet heard what the university men are saying of yesterday's sermon; but I understand it contains doctrines which Dr Pusey has not heretofore ventured to utter in public.

No. XXIV.

Facts from the Banks of the Thames, about Abingdon and Oxford, and a few miles beyond.

I had lately the privilege of looking over some official documents of a very interesting kind—they were statistics relating to the condition of the rural population in various parts of the kingdom, from Cornwall to the Shetland Isles. I observed by them that certain districts of country had fewer crimes against property than others. For instance, in East Lothian, in Scotland, the crime of sheep-stealing was totally unknown to the most of the farmers who had filled up the documents sent to them for the purpose of collecting information; while of poaching there was very little, and no professed poachers at all. In the same county the labourers were said to be hired by the year. They had *regularly* four meals a-day, and all of them had a stock of provisions laid in; the tenants had leases of nineteen years' duration, and there were no unemployed poor.

Now these somewhat gratifying facts were not peculiar to East Lothian alone, nor to Scotland. In whatever part of England the system of letting farms on lease had been adopted, the labourers were seen to be in a superior state of physical comfort; their engagements to masters were more lengthened and secure; their employment more regular, and better paid; their meals more regular, and of a better quality; and the crimes of sheep-stealing and poaching least prevalent. But most of those who filled up the documents in England, wrote down the fearful truth of sheep-stealing, poaching, incendiary fires, want of employment, occasional hiring by the day, piece-work, and the words "no lease," as nothing extraordinary. The farthest they went in making remarks, was to compare the amount of crime in various years—never considering it possible that those crimes should have been unknown for one year; and generally adding that the system of long leases had never been tried in their neighbourhood, and that, therefore, they could not give an opinion on their practicability.

But they gave evidence in favour of leases, or, in other words, *secure tenures*, by shewing what evils prevailed under the tenancies-at-will.

I have lately seen some remarkable instances of the mischievous effects of this strangely absurd yet common mismanagement of landed property in Oxfordshire. Indeed Oxfordshire is little else than one broad unvarying evidence of it. I saw one farm, however, the other day, 500 acres, purchased fourteen months ago by a manufacturer in Derby, which is let on lease to a tenant who entered upon it in April last year, and who has already done more to clean, fertilize, and generally improve these 500 acres, than all the tenants of the present Duke of Marlborough's vast estates have done since he became Duke, or ever will do, so long as they hold their farms under the bonds they now hold by. Indeed they are expressly bound down not to do some of the best things which this tenant of the Derby stocking-maker has done, namely, to cut their hedges and clear away the accumulated mould on ditch banks. I was sorry to observe that this farmer had got hold of the burning system; for all his turf, and couch, and foul earth, instead of mixing them with hot lime, were burned; but, excepting this, he was going on in the right direction with everything, and on the fair road, *while paying more rent than ever the same land paid before*, to carry away L.10,000 at the end of his lease. Is such a man as this, who raises five quarters of grain where three grew before, not a patriot and a blessing to his country? He has a beautiful stream of water, just enough for a thrashing mill, and he contemplates using it for that purpose; but he is very uncertain about the result. Though he is employing, and will employ, one half more men than are employed on any other 500 acres, he apprehends, his friends apprehend, and it is extremely probable, that the ferocious population of the neighbourhood will burn down barns, corn-ricks, and all, if he erects a mill.

Having alluded to the Duke of Marlborough's estate, I may mention, in passing, that his princely domain of Blenheim is, palace and park, the most noble, regal-like, that I have seen in any part of the kingdom; but worse farming, poorer farmers, and poorer labourers are not to be found within the British shores than on the Duke's property. The estate is one vast wreck; and political thraldom has rendered more feeble those heads and hands that were always weak.

The Earl of Abingdon's estates are very extensive in this county, and particularly around Oxford. I was told the other day that the Earl had interfered to prevent the wages of labouring married men being reduced below nine shillings a-week on some part of his property; and the person who told me, added that his Lordship was not a man that could be called hard to the poor; that he did all he could to have all surplus poor removed from his estate, but that he liked to see those who remained have better wages than the farmers were willing to give.

If the Earl of Abingdon is justly entitled to this praise from a farm labourer, for it was a farm labourer who spoke to me, there is something ungracious in finding fault with him on any other topic. But I am afraid that on other topics, and even on this, his Lordship is not blameless. It may be an act of friendship to the labourer to prevent the reduction of his wages from nine shillings to eight shillings a-week; at all events, it cannot fail to make the labourer believe that his Lordship is the friend and the farmer who would reduce wages is the foe; but if we see, as I have seen on many of Lord Abingdon's farms, that half the work is not done that should be done; that more land is lying waste in huge ridges at the ends of fields, in undrained bogs, bearing on their surface rushes and stagnant water, and these only, than would employ all the poor of the union at a profit and higher wages than nine shillings a-week; we may very properly inquire if his Lordship is justified in making his tenants such slaves of uncertainty that they cannot employ labourers to the requisite extent of their farms, and yet, poor as they are, order them to pay a certain amount of wages.

Another evil which afflicts his Lordship's tenants most grievously is, the game with which the farmers are overrun. One of the farmers told me that last year, in one field only, he calculated a loss of ten quarters of grain by the vermin—pheasants, hares, rabbits, &c. He said, and said truly, that no compensation as a drawback from rent was an equivalent to a farmer for such a loss, (that is, if a drawback were allowed;) because a field of grain exposed to game, either at seed time or in the young blade, was as likely to be despoiled, if prepared at great expense, as if only the smallest expense had been devoted to it; that while tithes had formerly prevented the improved cultivation of land, this was still worse, the tithe having left the nine-tenths uninjured, while the game destroyed some and injured all.

But the fact of his Lordship having ordered his tenants to pay nine shillings a-week to married men, and the fact of most other farmers in the county and on the Berkshire side of the Thames, near Oxford, paying eight shillings a-week to the same class of men, does not prove that the manual labour of the farm costs eight or nine shillings a-week per man. I find that on the most of the farms in this district two out of three ploughs, and two out of three waggons and horses, are managed by young men under twenty years of age, whose wages vary from three to five shillings a-week, never exceeding, and seldom reaching six, but sometimes for boys, who are hired by the year, and who are at work sixteen hours a-day, as low as two shillings a-week.

Two shillings a-week for lads twelve and fourteen years old. From two and sixpence to three and sixpence a-week for lads fourteen to sixteen years old. Four shillings and five shillings a-week for young men seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty years old! And by those youths and young men two-thirds of all the ploughing and carting of the farm is done. They are hired from a distance in almost all cases; are hired by the year; provide themselves with food and clothing out of their wages; sleep in a stable-loft or barn, having no fireside to go to; no hot dinners, but everlasting bread and lard, bread and lard, bread and lard!

Here is a conversation with one of them on a large farm near Abingdon:—

"You hold the plough, you say; how old are you?"

"I bees sixteen a'most."

"What wages have you?"

"Three shillin' a-week."

"Three shillings! Have you nothing else? Don't you get victuals, or part of them, from your master?"

"No, I buys them all."

"All out of three shillings?"

"Ees, and buys my clothes out of that."

"And what do you buy to eat?"

"Buy to eat! Why, I buys bread and lard."

"Do you eat bread and lard always? What have you for breakfast?"

"What have I for breakfast? Why, bread and lard."

"And what for dinner?"

"Bread and lard."

"What for supper, the same?"

"Ees, the same for supper—bread and lard."

"It seems to be always bread and lard; have you no boiled bacon and vegetables?"

"No, there be no place to boil 'em; no time to boil 'em; none to boil."

"Have you never a hot dinner nor supper; don't you get potatoes?"

"Ees, potatoes, an we pay for 'em. Master lets us boil 'em once a-week an we like."

"And what do you eat to them; bacon?"

"No."

"What then?"

"Lard; never has nothing but lard."

"Can't you boil potatoes or cook your victuals any day you choose?"

"No; has no fire."

"Have you no fire to warm you in cold weather?"

"No, we never has fire."

"Where do you go in the winter evenings?"

"To bed, when it be time; an it ben't time, we goes to some of the housen as be round about."

"To the firesides of some of the cottagers, I suppose?"

"Ees, an we can get."

"What if you cannot get; do you go into the farm-house?"

"No, mustn't; never goes nowhere but to bed an it be very cold."

"Where is your bed?"

"In the *tollit*," (stable loft.)

"How many of you sleep there?"

"All on us as be hired."

"How many are hired?"

"Four last year, five this."

"Does any one make your beds for you?"

"No, we make 'em ourselves."

"Who washes your sheets?"

"Who washes 'em?"

"Yes; they *are* washed, I suppose?"

"No, they ben't."

"What! never washed? Do you mean to say you don't have your sheets washed?"

"No, never since I comed."

"When did you come?"

"Last Michaelmas."

"Were your bedclothes clean then?"

"I dare say they was."

"And don't you know how long they are to serve until they are changed again?"

"To Michaelmas, I hear tell."

"So one change of bedclothes serves a year! Don't you find your bed disagreeable?"

"Do I! I bees too sleepy. I never knows nought of it, only that I has to get up afore I be awake, and never get into it afore I be a'most asleep. I be up at four, and ben't done work afore eight at night."

"You don't go so long at the plough as that?"

"No; but master be always having summat for we to do as be hired; we be always at summat."

Now, if the reader chooses to read on, I shall shew him the picture in which this young Englishman is a subordinate character—those who have been accustomed to read of, or look on, the rural beauty of England, must not, because of this, think that rural England is not beautiful.

Look at the distant hills—the Chiltern and the Cotswold—whose bare downs and beechy woods are veiling themselves in the cloudy blue, which, from this spot, forms the far margin of the landscape. See the forests, and meadows, and farm-fields, and farm-yards, and villages, and village-churches, how they emerge from the indistinct distance, and advance in fuller and fuller form upon the eye, until they stand before us there; the forest, and meadows, and farm-fields, dipping their edges in the Thames, and the villages and village-churches bathing their shadows in the same bright element. And observe that noble stream, how he comes down from Oxford University; prodigal of his youth and strength, how he rambles over the country, never halting, yet often turning, as if he preferred the scenes of his boyhood. As yet, he is not the hard-working, toiling Thames of London barges and merchant ships; he is taking his pleasure among the races of eight-oared cutters, gentleman wherries, and fancy yachts, bearing on his breast the young of England's aristocracy.

But now he leaves these, and in a valley meets, lonely and alone, the youthful Summer, at whose feet he loiters love-sick, and she gives him her hand, and they are wedded; and the union of Summer with the lordliest river in England is attended as it should be. The tall limes, and the elms, the sturdy sycamore, and the beeches of plebeian race—not the less lovely that they are plebeian—she has arrayed in early and simple green; the noble chesnut, like a field-marshal, comes out in a decorated uniform; the laburnum, like a 10th Hussar, comes loaded with trappings; and the tall pines have added to their winter livery shoulder knots of summer buds; the ash tree, always late, is hastening to put on his narrow leaves; and the oak, like other veterans, is ready when wanted—there he stands, trigged out as if he were young again. The bride's nearest and dearest relative in England, the hoary hawthorn, gives her away; and troops of laughing flowers, blooming and about to bloom, come to see. There is the little white-headed daisy, straggling through the meadow, some of its kind far in the rear, and those in front so eager to see, yet so short that they must get upon the very edge of the grassy bank to look over, and the ground-ivy is elbowing them and disputing, while the lilies have lifted their heads to see the bridegroom, and, now that he offers to kiss them, they blush and turn away. The blue-bells are trooping along the old hedge-side, and the cowslips are running through the fields at the nearest, only avoiding the wet places; while the young forget-me-not, in the wood, is looking out and crying, "Stop and take me!" and all across the meadows, among the cows, the butter-cups are hastening, and in their haste saying, "Cow, do not eat me!" And there they are, in front of all others, laughing that their dimpled chins are reflected in the deep Thames, and that their more timid friends, the daisies, can see them look in without being afraid.

And in yonder thicket that hides the wedded pair when evening falls, and with them conceals the nightingale, there is at this moment music in all the riot of a thousand songsters. And yonder, by the lordly mansion in the woods, which miles can only measure, do the richest of England's melodists rejoice; and their joy is all the more that they love summer and summer loves England. Above there, by *that* church, and down here by *this*, and over by that other, and all around by the houses of the churchmen, which we here see embowered in trees, ten thousand choristers of nature's making pour out their happy noises. And in this very tree where we stand—this hawthorn, whose blossom loads the evening with sweet odours—the warblers have their nests, and are singing to their nestling young. Who would say that England is not lovely; that Englishmen should not be happy? On one side of that roof the hawthorn is resting his branches, as if the blossom and perfume thereof were too weighty for him to bear. On the other side are the lofty elms, leafy, and ready with their leaves to ward off wind and rain, or either, when they come here too roughly. On the elms, as on the hawthorns, the little robin, the blackbird, the thrush, and other birds cheerful as they, are singing the same notes as are sung in yonder woods around the lordly mansion. Surely no unhappy beings can have homes here? Let us inquire what house this is, and what this roof covers.

Well, we have looked into it, and have seen one of its inmates. We have talked with him, and he has told us—what we need not again tell the reader—we told it before. That roof covers the *tollit*, where sleep the young farming-men whose bedclothes are changed once a-year; who do two-thirds of all the work on the farm; and who have for breakfast "bread and lard"—for dinner "bread and lard"—for supper "bread and lard." Nothing but bread and lard, and not always enough of that!

If we look minutely around us here, we shall see as much liquid manure running to waste as would, after paying the expense of its own collection and application, produce an increased crop, sufficient to pay all the wages of labour, all the poor-rates, and all the other taxes paid on this farm. And if a similar advantage were taken of everything else that is now wasted by neglect or ignorance, or inability to sink capital through insecurity of tenure, not only might the labourers be paid a reasonable day's wages for a reasonable day's work, but rates, taxes, and 50 per cent. of higher rent, leaving the tenant a handsome profit, might and *would* be paid.

This farm belongs to a Peer of Parliament. At the distance of a few miles there is another as large as this, or larger, belonging to the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, of which all may be repeated that has been said of this.

No. XXV.

On the Causes which determine the Value of Farm Labour.

June 7, 1843.

A Mr Bennet, of Bedfordshire, is represented to have said, at a recent public meeting, held at Hertford, on the subject of the corn-laws, "that a country in a high state of civilization, like England, paying so dear for labour, cannot possibly compete in growing corn with countries where the labourers eat rye bread and labour is comparatively cheap;" and this sentiment is echoed and re-echoed at every agricultural meeting throughout the country. I propose to question its correctness. I propose to the reader to accompany me into other countries of the world and into several districts of England, and Scotland, and Ireland, and I shall shew him, if he does not already know, that wherever the wages of the labourer are highest, labour is cheapest; wherever wages are lowest, labour is dearest. We shall see that where the labourers are most skilful, tractable, moral, intelligent—in short, in the highest state of civilization—a higher amount of income is received by them than by those who, in other districts, are distinguished for the opposite qualities; and we shall see that the real value of the labour of the civilized population rises in a ratio far beyond the increase of their wages.

First, however, I take leave to deny—most emphatically deny—that Mr Bennet has truth on his side when, in calling England "highly civilized," he includes the English farm-labourers. There is refinement enough in England, we all know. In my travels through the country I find, by all my conversations, that the farm-houses and farmers' families are much finer than twenty, and thirty, and forty years ago; so much more refined, with richer furniture, and "accomplished" manners, that the unmarried labourers are no longer permitted to live within the farm-house, nor eat at the farmer's table, nor step within the farmer's door, but are committed to out-houses, at a small rate of wages per week, to furnish themselves with food—to out-houses, where they have no meals cooked, no comforts of any kind, no cleanliness, no good manners set before them, no examples of good morals, and no influences whatever tending to instruct, restrain, and civilize; but are, on the contrary, left to themselves, as ignorant and uncivilized as any serfs of feudal Europe, with just this difference, that they are not fed as the serfs, are not allowed to eat as much of the farm produce as they choose, as a first and foremost condition of their labour. I have been on some of the best soils in England, within these last few weeks, in the districts watered by the Thames, where two-thirds of the farm work is done by persons who live in this deplorable condition, and I, therefore, say that whatever may be the progress of refinement in England, among all classes above the labourer, the labourer has, during the present century, retrograded in condition in every respect.

In saying this I contradict Mr Bennet, and those who speak as he speaks, in one sense. I do not allow them to deceive us with the assertion that the progressive civilization of England carries with it the rural labourers; but I fortify them in this, that I admit the price of farm labour to be high in England, which they say it is. We, however, differ; we diametrically differ in respect of the reason of its being high priced. That we must now discuss. We shall take the border counties of Scotland, where the highest wages are paid to farm labourers which are paid in Great Britain, and where, as shall be seen, labour is cheaper than in any part of Britain. We shall take these agricultural counties and compare them with the regions of the Wolga and the Baltic Sea.

In those vast plains of Europe where the soil is tilled, and sown, and reaped by serfs, the frost comes early and lasts long. Even on the banks of the Vistula, where the best

European wheat is grown, and where the latitude is the same that encircles England and part of France, winter grasps the earth with a firmness, an annual regularity, an enduring obstinacy, unknown to us in this variable island of the sea. Attracted by the undrained marshes, and undisturbed by the oceanic and mountain tempests that vex and exhaust him elsewhere, the tyrant of the year spreads himself on the broad plains, seals up the earth, closes the rivers, the lakes, the roads, (such as they are,) and all labour, (such as it is,) that he may have four months of unbroken rest. During this time all field labour ceases, and almost all other labour. The bread which the serfs eat may be coarse, it may be black—it is sometimes made from rye, and no doubt it is black—but they have enough of it to eat, and during four months of the year they eat and do no work; the cattle are not fed for beef, they are only kept for working in the fields, and they, too, eat during this season at an expense which returns no profit. In short, the land belongs to the feudal lords, and the serfs and working cattle are the live stock upon the land. Live stock is never denied anywhere a sufficiency of "keep." The serfs, being the property of their masters, have at least the advantage of being fed and kept in working order. Indeed they have the feeding of themselves; they are entrusted with the whole produce of the soil, and being unable to use more than what they require to eat—there being no market within their reach at which they can sell anything and misappropriate the price—they eat what they require, and the agents of the chief collect the rest as revenue equivalent to rent.

Now, in the counties on the Scottish border there is never a working hour of any day of the six, of any week of the fifty-two, wasted. If there is frost, and the plough is frost-locked, the manure is taken out to the fields, or the thrashing-mill is put in use, and grain is carried to market, also drains are filled, coals carted, and many things else done; at all events, every man and horse are kept at work. Such a thing as horses occasionally idle is never known. Men and horses have their set hours, and they adhere to those hours to a minute. The farmer hires his married men by the year, his unmarried by the half-year; and if they were to go occasionally idle he would have to pay them their wages, as the feudal lords of the continent have to feed their serfs, for doing nothing. But the comparison must go further. There being few cattle kept as stock for feeding on the plains of the Vistula to produce manure, and the soil being in a frequent state of exhaustion, it is the custom to let the land lie fallow every second year, not to be enriched by manures as fallows are *supposed* to be in this country, but merely to rest. Now this shews that continental agriculture is in a very profitless state; and how can it be otherwise, unless those serfs were more than human? Aye, more than any human beings are or ever have been, instead of being the debased, spiritless bondmen they are. Without intelligence to direct, without capital and means wherewith to work, and utterly without interest or necessity to apply intelligence and capital to the culture of the land, if they had both, they are now, and ever will be, so long as they are the mere live stock of the feudal lords, the most profitless cultivators of the soil in Europe. In England, we find that, whenever a farmer, or indeed any tradesman or merchant, ceases to have an interest in a speculation, be it farm, or shop, or ship's cargo, or if the interest is weakened and rendered insecure, industry at once flags and becomes feeble. Human nature is the same everywhere; and there is not the remotest probability of the agriculture of the feudal estates of the continent being improved, even if we began at once to purchase regularly a part of their surplus produce. There are greater obstacles in the wheat-growing districts of the continent to improvements in agriculture than in England, where markets are comparatively high priced, and where an incessant demand for farm produce is continually urging to a larger supply. Yet we see that in England the science of agriculture drags far behind the spirit of the age, because it is not *protected* from insecurity.

I hold, therefore, that the serfs of the feudal wheat-growers will continue, for ages to come, to be what they are now, the most expensive labourers in Europe; and that not even their enfranchisement as free citizens would enable them, in any part of the present century, to compete with England in the growth of corn; because, even if we purchased 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 of quarters from the Baltic annually, (which, with free trade and America ready to take and give, is barely probable)—but suppose 3,000,000 quarters of wheat came from the regions, shipping it by the Vistula—the increased demand would not be as a loaf of bread to each acre, it would be no inducement whatever to stimulate to better agriculture, and without better agriculture, of which the value is not known in those countries, the serf labour will continue to be, as it is now, the dearest labour employed on any land in the world.

What Mr Bennet should have said, and what those who are daily declaring their fears for the English farmer should say, is this:—" The land being so much more plentiful on the continent, and the population who consume its produce so much less than in England, the continental supply, therefore, so far exceeds the continental demand, that there is danger to England, notwithstanding the extra expense of continental labour, in admitting the Baltic wheat into our markets." This, for such as fear the free introduction of foreign corn, would be the true statement; and it would be for those who combat them in argument to shew that their fears were groundless; in my opinion a task so easy, and already so often accomplished, that I shall leave it in the hands of those who make it their business to defend the propositions for free trade. For myself, I look chiefly to the advancement of English agriculture in writing these papers, I look forward to its ultimate excellence with the highest hopes, the most unwavering faith; yet for the present I feel much anxiety. Seeing the vast resources contained in the soil of England, to be yet developed by the joint application of capital, science, and industry, otherwise than now applied, I look with eagerness to see what advances agricultural men are making in agricultural knowledge. To hear a practical man, for I suppose Mr Bennet is a farmer, evincing such ignorance of the very alphabet of practical knowledge, is indeed melancholy. But remarks of this kind will be more appropriate when, in one or two other communications, I have shewn the cheapness of the higher-priced labour of the border counties, and compared it with the dearness of the lower-priced labour of the midland and southern counties.

No. XXVI.

Further Observations and Evidence on the Causes which determine the Value of Farm Labour.

We have seen what the *Quarterly Review* says, that "one Middlesex mower will mow as much grass as six Russian serfs;" that "the making and getting in of a certain quantity of hay will cost to an English farmer but one-sixth or one-eighth of what it costs a Russian proprietor." This is decisive of the question at issue, whether labour is cheaper in England, where the cultivators have *some* interest in the produce of the soil, or in feudal countries, where they are entirely without interest, consequently without energy, capital, and knowledge. We shall now compare the prices of labour in one part of Britain with another, and take the border counties, where the cultivators' interest in the soil, by security of tenure, is much stronger than in the southern counties of England, and we shall find that labour is cheaper there, though nominally higher priced, than in the south.

The right honourable the present speaker of the House of Commons was, in 1836, chairman of a committee appointed by the house to inquire into the state and prospects of British agriculture. Prices had been low for several preceding years, and in England agricultural distress was loudly complained of. In some parts of Scotland, and by some farmers in all parts of that country, complaints were made; but most of the Scotch farmers examined by the committee said that the only thing they desired from Parliament was to be "let alone;" that legislation in any shape, promising them a benefit, would be a delusion; that it had hitherto been so, and that they verily believed that human wisdom could make it nothing else.

The English farmers examined thought differently. They not only believed that Parliament could help them, but expected that Parliament would; and from the fact of being summoned to London to be examined, they formed the highest hopes for future legislation. A voluminous report was published; and subsequently Mr Shaw Lefevre gave to the world the following facts, in his capacity of a landowner and private gentleman, I presume, not as chairman of the committee; but, in whichever respect the statement was made, officially or otherwise, it is enough to say that it was made by the Right Honourable Charles Shaw Lefevre. The evidence of three English farmers and three Scotch, whose land, judging by its produce in wheat, was of nearly equal value, reduced to a tabular statement, stood thus:—

Name of Witness.	Rent, tithe, and parochial burdens.			Annual average expense per acre.			Total.			Quality of land estimated by average produce per acre in wheat.
ENGLISH.	*£*	*s.*	*d.*	*£*	*s.*	*d.*	*£*	*s.*	*d.*	
Breckwell...	1	15	0	3	19	0	5	14	0	30
Rolfe	1	11	6	3	13	6	5	5	0	24
Cox...........	1	15	0	4	2	2	5	17	2	30
SCOTCH.										
Hope.........	2	3	9	2	12	0	4	15	9	29
Bell...........	1	8	8	2	0	7	3	9	3	28
Robertson...	1	19	0	2	16	0	4	5	0	30

This table does not shew all that should be shewn. For instance, the value of the land is only to be judged by the produce per acre, whereas the produce per acre depends on the style of cultivation, as well as the intrinsic value of the land. It so happens, however, that I have visited and closely observed some of the farms held by the farmers here named, both last year and this; last year at harvest, this year at seed time and subsequently; and I can take upon myself to supply information on the value of the soils, irrespective of cultivation, which the farmers themselves could not supply, being unacquainted with each other's farms, which some of them could not supply, because the comparative value of soils had never been to them a subject of study.

But as the table now stands, it shews that Mr Breckwell (near Buckingham) pays L.1 : 15s. in rent, tithe, and taxes, per acre, while Mr R. Hope (near Haddington, in East Lothian) pays L.2 : 3 : 9 in rent and taxes per acre. I have seen Mr Breckwell's farm and I have seen Mr Hope's. The former, compared with the latter, is not only easier worked, but is naturally a soil of a very rich quality. Mr Hope's is a wet clay, which, up to 1836, he could not with all his skill reduce to a state friable enough to grow turnips ; and without a course of turnips, to feed cattle and produce manure, the cultivation of land is additionally expensive. Mr Breckwell's farm is what is commonly called a deep loam, which, with proper management, can be made to grow the best and largest quantity of almost all crops. Now the annual cost of working Mr Breckwell's farm is L.3 : 19s. per acre, while the annual cost of working Mr Hope's is L.2 : 12s. per acre, yet Mr Hope pays higher wages to his labourers, and employs more of them, than Mr Breckwell.

Mr Breckwell says to the committee of 1836 :—" I have known the farm I cultivate eight-and-forty years. Some part of the farm was not in cultivation, but the part that was cultivated was as good as now." And again, he says of the neighbourhood—" The land is getting very foul and over-cropped."

Mr Hope says :—" I have done a good deal by *deep* draining within the last twenty years. Having got a new lease three years ago, I have, during the two last years, begun to furrow drain. The furrow draining costs me from L.4 to L.5 per acre. Almost the whole farm was done with lime at L.9 per acre, carriage included."

At this the committee seem to be surprised, and they ask Mr Hope if this has been done at his own expense. He replies, " Yes." He then adds, that during the two years of his new lease he had laid out L.120 in each year on furrow draining.

Mr Breckwell, in answer to questions, says of the Vale of Aylesbury :—" Has seen L.20 or L.30 laid out by farmers and deducted from the rent by the landlords." This was for draining the wet lands of the " vale." Of the farmers, he says, —" When the tenant cannot pay the rent out of the produce, he has been curtailing his expense in various ways ; in many cases not cultivating the land so well as he used, for want of means."

So far we can see that labour, though more money be paid for it, is cheaper on Mr Hope's farm in Haddingtonshire than on Mr Breckwell's in Buckinghamshire. But the population around Mr Hope is a constantly employed, regularly paid, and regularly fed population; they are neither poachers, sheep-stealers, machine-breakers, nor stack-yard incendiaries. Steam-engines of six, eight, and ten-horse power are used to thrash the grain in Haddingtonshire. A wheat stack, containing twenty or thirty quarters, is seen under its thatch in the morning, it is carried into the barn by "all hands," the sheaves are given to the mill, the grain is separated from straw, chaff, and all impurities, measured and bagged up, and might be, if necessary, in the market town the same evening. Thus Mr Hope can take advantage of any change of markets, or any other emergency.

Mr Breckwell can do nothing of this kind. He can neither take advantage of a favourable market nor a favourable day nor *week* for his seed sowing. He must pay dear for his thrashing, and await the tediousness of the flail; or if he attempt to erect a thrashing-mill, he has it broken by the unruly population amid which he dwells. Perhaps his barns are burned, and stables and rickyard, and all his stock, live and dead; or, if not actually burned, he dreads that they may be, and never reposes on his pillow, himself nor family, in peace. He insures his premises, but must pay a higher premium than Mr Hope, because he is not so secure from fire, even though Mr Hope has the furnace of his steam-engine blazing in his barns!

By all these disadvantages it is clear enough that the English farmer pays dear for his farm labour. But what is the cause of the dearness? Mr Bennet of Bedfordshire says it is because of the refinement and *civilization* of England!

No. XXVII.

Contains the Model, by the Earl of Stair, for a Landlord's Address at an Agricultural Meeting, with Remarks, and a quotation from Earl Fitzwilliam.

October 31, 1843.

During the last few weeks the agricultural meetings have been abundant, and the flattering speeches of wine-warmed landlords to the farmers have constituted the stock in trade of all country newspapers; but, so far as I have seen, not one of those landowning orators has uttered a single sentance shewing a real friendship for the tenant-farmer.

Presuming that some of them may not know what real friendship is, I shall here quote from a speech delivered by the Earl of Stair to 400 of his tenants on 8th September 1840.

His Lordship, better known as Sir John Dalrymple of Oxenford, a lieutenant-general of the army, and formerly member of Parliament for the county of Edinburgh, had, shortly before, succeeded, at an advanced age, to the Earldom of "Stair, and was there meeting and dining with the Stair tenantry." He had, therefore, in this initiatory discourse the advantage of lengthened experience to justify him in what he said.

Those portions of it which apply to the welfare of the tenantry with greatest force, and which should be adopted by those of the English landlords who are really in earnest when advocating a reform in agriculture, are printed in italics.

"I rejoice to find myself," said his Lordship—(but in saying this he was commencing as most others commence, the only difference, and a great one it is, between his speech and all other speeches of landlords is, that he does not leave off as they leave off)—"I rejoice to find myself in the midst of my tenants. The cordial reception I have met with amongst you, and your kindness in coming here this day, both tend to rivet the link that naturally unites us, and equally to an increase of that interest which I am disposed to take in you as part of my family and as my friends. I have said before, and I cannot say it too often, that no separate interest can subsist between landlord and tenant.

"If you thrive I thrive. On your well-doing will depend my comfort, my honour, and my character; for I shall stand high or the reverse (and it is right that it should be so) as I act justly or unjustly by you.

"Entertaining such sentiments, my first duties will consist in an encouragement of moral and religious feelings among my tenants, and a gradual improvement of my estates. The most likely way to make them happy and good, is to teach them when young to know right from wrong, and that can only be effectually done by education. Whenever, therefore, I can encourage good and moral feeling, you will find me anxious to do so, as the best means of effecting it. I shall willingly contribute to the improvement or increase of schools, to be open to all, so that every child on my estate may be brought to know his God and the duty he owes him.

"The next object of my solicitude will consist in an encouragement of improved agriculture. The first of all improvements consists of draining and enclosing. My tenants will, therefore, find me willing to assist in both so far as my means will admit. In the best cultivated districts of Scotland, sheep stock is universally encouraged. I observe in the Stair leases the tenants are in general precluded from keeping such stock.

"I am willing, where it is advisable, to alter such clauses. I have my doubts too whether the growth of turnips is sufficiently attended to in this county." His Lordship was speaking of Galloway, (a district comprehending the county of Wigton and stewartry of Kirkcudbright,) on the south-west coast of Scotland, where farms are smaller, and the land inferior to the Lothians described by Mr Hyde Greg.

The English reader will, therefore, be pleased to bear the inferiority of the soil of Galloway in mind. But I may state that, even in Galloway, the turnip husbandry thus complained of by Lord Stair was then in a more advanced and profitable condition than it is even now in any part of the six counties which I have recently visited in the south and south-west of England. On some of the finest soils in Kent, Hampshire, Bucks, Berks. and even in Middlesex, where the unappropriated pollution of London should cover a hundred miles of country with the most luxuriant vegetation, the turnip husbandry is sadly neglected, the crops being mean and ill cultivated, even to a state deserving no better name than wretched. Lord Stair went on to state the amounts of the premiums which he intended giving for various improvements, the announcement of which drew forth hearty cheers from the tenantry; but, as an ignorance of the locality to which they were applicable precludes the southern reader from judging of their value, I have omitted them.

"But," said his Lordship, "I will give no prize to any tenant who burns his wreck, (I mean the weeds gathered off the fallow-land,) which I observed was much done when I was here in the spring. Wreck, when carted and put into heaps, forms, when mixed with lime, the best of all composts; or, when first gathered, if put at the bottom of a muck-hill, it will greatly increase the quantity of manure; but to burn it is absolute waste; and, for myself, I would as soon think of burning straw."

Had his Lordship travelled in the south-west of England, particularly in some parts of Bucks and Berkshire, near the Thames, he would have seen this wreck, the long roots of the couch-grass, in such quantities as to astonish him. On some of the finest soils of England, owned by landlords and farmed by tenants who say the repeal of the corn-laws would ruin them, he would have seen couch-grass overtopping the crops of beans, and robbing the wheat of strength and space, to the positive loss of from one to two quarters an acre, while the labouring poor, who should have hoed and eradicated such weeds for wages, were crammed into the Great Marlow Union Workhouse, ill fed and unprofitably employed, with hundreds more, literally unfed and unemployed outside. While, again, if his Lordship had gone over those counties which I have traversed within these last two months, he would have seen this wreck or couch-grass, so prodigally allowed to exclude the grain and rob the soil, being raked together and unprofitably burned in every direction, that is, I should explain, in every direction where any trouble was being taken to get rid of it. Moreover, within a mile of Cranborne, in Dorsetshire, and almost within the same distance of the Earl of Shaftesbury's residence, Lord Stair, were he to be in that direction, would see, at the present time, a field which this year bore a crop of oats, which oats, to save the expense of harvest labour, was cut with the scythe, raked together without being bound in sheaves, the universally wasteful custom in that district, and which, in consequence of this saving of labourers' wages, were shilled out until more than the quantity of seed from which the crop grew is now growing up green and absolutely wasted. I say "more than the seed;" but a countryman, who was passing the field when I looked at it, gave it as his opinion that more than double the amount of seed was wasted. And this is where many people are unemployed, where all are ill fed and ill paid, and where many starve until sent off ten miles to the Union Workhouse. But the climax of Lord Stairs' address to his new tenantry is yet to come; hitherto what I have quoted of him has occasionally been said by others. What I am now about to quote has been said by none, so far as I have seen, save himself. It should be the golden rule of all other landlords; it is the first, and immeasurably the greatest, principle of all improvements. The evil which an opposition to it spreads and perpetuates in England, is such, that all the agricultural societies and all the familiarity of after-dinner speeches can never overcome. "I said," observed his Lordship in conclusion, "that I wish to see my tenants comfortable and happy. I hope I may be permitted further to say, that I shall have a pride in seeing them independent. *Whatever is due to me I will expect them to pay—whatever is not due I will never exact. Whenever, therefore, they are called on to exercise their political privileges, I wish them to do it honestly and manfully—not allowing themselves to be dictated to by me, were I disposed to attempt it, but only asking how their consciences bid them vote, being assured that he who obeys his conscience will never displease me.*

"*I should feel degraded myself were I compelled to vote one* *way while my known opinions were another ; and I shall never attempt to inflict upon you what would prove humbling to myself. I believe the poorest voter has his own notions of what is good and right as deeply implanted in him as I have ; and it is by allowing him to act up to his honest feelings that he is to be made a happier and a better, a more prosperous, and a more thriving man.*

" This is a subject on which I have thought much, and it is one on which I have had experience."

Lord Stair says of his tenantry—" Whatever is due to me I will expect them to pay ; whatever is not due, I will never exact." And when saying so he gives that true independence to the tenant which will enable him to pay. On this important point Earl Fitzwilliam has commented with great force and truth.

In his letter of 1831, addressed to the landowners, he says, speaking of the corn-laws—" Year after year the value of the farmers' produce had been diminishing, till it fell to little more than half the price at which Parliament considered he could be remunerated for his industry. Year after year he was deluded by fallacious hopes excited by the law itself ; his rent was paid out of his capital, and not out of his profits, till that capital became insufficient for the proper cultivation of the land, and then you yourselves began to feel the calamity by which many of your tenantry had been already overwhelmed.

" Compare, then, the situation of that tenantry under the protection of the corn-law of 1815, with what it probably would have been had the trade been avowedly free, or if you had been contented with the protection afforded by the law of 1804, under which it would have been practically free.

" Prices would indeed have lowered, but no such extravagant hopes would have been excited, no such erroneous calculations would have been made ; rents would have fallen to a level corresponding to the price of grain, the agricultural capital of the country would have been unimpaired, and the land would have remained in a better state of cultivation. Your nominal rentals might have been diminished, but your rents would have been collected with facility, and you would not have been driven, time after time, to the wretched expedient of returning a per centage to your tenants at each successive audit, in order to induce them to remain on their farms—an expedient that proclaims to your fellow-citizens that those who resort to it are in the habit of demanding from their tenants a larger rent than they are capable of paying. Nothing, I must confess, is more distressing to me than to witness these half-yearly annunciations of this miscalled liberality of certain portions of the landed interest. Has it never struck you, fellow-citizens, that this proceeding is no evidence of liberality, but rather of extortion. That the return of a part of the rent may be proper when called for by temporary calamity, by the effect of flood or storm, or by some accidental misfortune overwhelming a particular tenant or class of tenants I do not deny, but that, when resorted to habitually, is not to be justified; that it convicts those who have recourse to it of continued attempts to extract from their tenantry a rent not warranted by the value of agricultural produce, and, so far from proving the liberality of the landlord, it affords evidence of a very different quality?"

I have no knowledge of the Earl of Stair's opinion of the corn-law question.

He has been an actor rather than a speaker. I can recollect that, as Sir John Dalrymple and an officer of high rank in the army, he incurred the excessive displeasure of the anti-reformers, as the Tories were called, in 1832, for his attendance at, and active share in, one of those vast meetings which alarmed the Duke of Wellington, and forced the success of the Reform Bill. I can recollect the public demand for his name being erased from the army list, but have no further knowledge of him.

I have quoted his address to his new tenantry on succeeding to the Scotch peerage, and offer it to other landlords as a rare example worthy of general imitation, independent of any political views. Whatever his personal belief in politics may be, he is a noble instance of a noble landlord; and although I have many rural details to communicate from the counties in which I have lately travelled, I deferred them to give place to this address, the republication of which must do good at a season of agricultural meetings.

NOTES FOR FUTURE HISTORIANS.

February 1843.

Each reader of a newspaper is now for or against the League; there is no neutral position, unless it be the painful one of hanging between two opinions. In whichever category the readers of this chapter may be, they cannot fail to have a lively interest in the League's proceedings. In whatever way this movement may end, whether in success or failure, it is at the present time pregnant with events on which will turn the future fortunes of mighty England.

Since writing a brief account of my visit to the League rooms, I have formed the design of collecting for the future historian as many particulars connected with this unparalleled combination as any single individual can gather together.

Finding, on my arrival in Manchester, that there would be no public meetings for some days, I was about to start for Cheshire, to pursue my examination into the practical results of the agreements between landlord and tenant, when, in the public room of the hotel where I was staying, I saw a paper announcing that a great tea-party would be held that evening at Bolton, in aid of the L.50,000 fund of the League. As the *waiter* in a Manchester hotel is not the person to put coals on your fire, (the same in Lancaster and Preston, by the bye,) he is not, it seems, the person to answer questions about railways, and trains, and fares, and hours of starting. Either he is too great to be so condescending, or it is not in his department to give such information. Perhaps the division-of-labour system, so common in the factories, is introduced into the inns of the factory towns; if so, it may be worth the attention of the landlords and landladies to consider whether they promote their own profits by rendering it necessary for a waiter to go down stairs in search of an assistant to answer those questions which he might reply to while going outside to ring his bell for the more accommodating and seemingly better-informed personage named *Boots*.

But be the cause what it may, the waiter is *not* the man who knows everything about luggage, cabs, cars, coaches, trains, fares, and how many miles, but *Boots* is. Accordingly, on seeing the Bolton advertisement in Manchester, and putting some queries to the waiter, the ubiquitous, obliging, and obeisant Boots was summoned. He came.

"Boots, how far is Bolton from this?"

"Twelve miles, sir."

"By what conveyance can I get there this evening?"

"By rail, sir; train goes at four, sir; quarter to four now, sir; just in time, sir; omnibus starts for the station directly, sir."

Accordingly I was at Bolton in due time. I had the offer of an introduction from two gentlemen who were with me in the railway carriage; but being resolved to go to the tea-party alone, to see, and hear, and judge for myself, I left them at the inn to which we drove from the railway, and proceeded to the meeting alone. They followed soon after.

At the door of a large chapel-like building, called the "Temperance-Hall," I paid 1s. 6d. for a ticket, which I found marked with the letter E. and No. something, which I now forget. This letter E. and No. something on the ticket corresponded with a seat in an extreme corner of the house, to which seat I might have gone, but only by walking over caps, and combs, and curls, and lace, and ribbons, which seemed to form a pavement resting on a substratum of human heads; or I might have got along the forms by making every one who chose to have their seats and dresses marked with my muddy boots rise; or every couple who sat together, and they were equally distributed, husbands with their wives, lovers with their loved ones, fathers and mothers, little sisters and little brothers, I might have got along by disjoining all these; or by creeping beneath the tables, at the risk of rising too soon, and, like an earthquake, overthrowing a multitude of cups and other crockery, cakes, sandwiches, dishes of oranges, dishes of grapes, and other et-ceteras of teetotalism; or I might have got myself into hot water, and moved along the tables as that did which filled the teapots and tea urns; but I did none of those things. I stood still, and looked if there was any other corner into which I could retreat. While so standing, the company seemed to consider me a part of the entertainment. All were seated, to the number of 1200 or 1300. There was a dead silence. Eyes which up to this had rested on eyes beside them, the lovers and the loved; eyes which, up to this, had been patiently resting on nothing, the old and the companionless; eyes which, up to this, had devoured the cakes, and the grapes, and the oranges, twenty times over, the little sisters and little brothers, not excepting most of the fathers and mothers; all these eyes were suddenly and resolvedly turned upon me. The great men of the deputation from the League had not yet arrived; the meeting was waiting for them, and seemed willing to believe that any stranger was one of those they were waiting for.

Anxious to escape the public gaze, I hurriedly penetrated, by one of two intersecting thoroughfares, to the further side of the house, and in my eagerness to get out of view went too far. I went behind the scenes, further than the public were expected to go. Some twenty or more waiters, male and female, and twenty or more kettles, with two or three larger boilers, kept up a buzz buzzing in this department, which prevented a stranger from being so quickly detected as in the body of the house. " Now it is positively wrong, James, to do that." " Pray, let me have my own way." " We must have some order." " I seay, soome o' ye'll be scealded to deeth an ye take nea better ceare." " Oh, my cap! oh, my new ribbon! to put boiling black kettle joost off feyre owre a body's head! How can I be seen now?" " Never mind, never mind; make way." " Why don't 'em begin, I wouldn't wait not a moment longer, I wouldn't." " See! who is that? Make him go away and get a seat and keep it; strangers must not come in here." "Pray, sir, allow me to shew you to a seat."

And I was shewn to a seat, and such were some of the expressions heard, where I should not have heard them, heard above the murmur of voices of stewards, and waiters, and kettles; stewards and waiters directing and contending each with each; kettles boiling and blubbering side by side, the steam contending with the lids and the lids with the steam.

Having seen what was not intended to be seen, I now directed my attention to what was intended for special observation—the most prominent of which were the flags and mottos exhibited in various parts of the house. Sometimes flags and mottos say a great deal; sometimes they say what the boldest orators dare not say; sometimes they are considered dangerous, sometimes highly criminal. At the Bolton meeting the mottos were exceedingly innocent.

The house had a lofty roof, having been built for public meetings. Facing the two entrances, and stretching between the two passages which ran the whole width of the house, and divided its sittings into three divisions, was raised a permanent stage eight or ten feet high, surmounted by a canopy, and hung round with two or three banners, of which I could not see the inscriptions. I was asked to a seat on this platform, and having no choice, the body of the house being completely filled, I accepted the offer.

While mounting the narrow steps, and stumbling over some baskets which had once contained the good things now displayed on the two platform tables, displayed there with all the artistic beauty which lady hands and lady tastes could devise, preparatory to filling the eloquent mouths of the deputation from the League and their friends—while stumbling over these baskets, I heard a voice read out two lines of a hymn, and commence singing it to the tune called the "Old Hundredth Psalm." Judging by the incompleteness of the singing, I suppose the audience were as much taken by surprise as I was, at this not very appropriate nor very harmonious attempt at religious worship. It was soon over: four lines, if I remember rightly, made a finish, and then there was—oh! such a clatter of cups and saucers, spoons, and little plates! and such a sudden falling to!—such an issue of boiling kettles and steam, and waiters trotting about like so many locomotive engines, in all directions! Such a many compliments paid:—"If you please, sir, allow me to hand your cup!" "Pray, pass this to the young lady next you." "Do you take sugar, sir? And you, ma'am? And you? And you, sir?" "Out the way! Out the way!" "Oh, my! some of you will run one another down with those jugs of boiling water; I am really surprised that you don't have more care." "Have more care yourself, sir—you are the only one I have seen in the way." "Now this is really——." "Huzza! Hurrah! Clap—clap—ap—ap!" The deputation coming in! "The who? Who are they?" "John Bright, of Rochdale, and R. R. R. Moore, of Dublin. Hurrah! hurrah—urah—rah—rah!" "Clap—ap—ap—ap!" "Now, pray be seated, gentlemen; pray be seated." "Ah! John, how d'ye do!" "Hope you're well, Mr Moore? Hope you have not got wet? Hope this cup will be to your taste? Oh! I forget, *you* don't drink tea! What *will* you take? Pray do take something. We know you don't use any article that pays duty to the excise or the customs, if you can help it; but after your journey, and with such a *task* before you, you must really take some refreshment." "Certainly." "Anne, get Mr Moore——get this gentleman a cupful of hot milk. And you never take anything to breakfast or supper but bread and milk? Is your tea to your taste, Mr Bright? I know you don't take sugar; you don't pay *that* tax to the government and the monopolists. You don't like green tea, I think? not any green? not even mixed? Oh! very good; we shall have some all black in this. Anne, let tea be made in this pot for Mr Bright, and all black, no green, nor mixed. Oh dear! I'm so sorry we had not thought of this sooner." "Now is *your* tea to your taste, sir?" "Ah! Mr Brooks, how d'ye do? Well? eh? glorious meeting this, is it not? splendid turn out for Bolton this, is it not? Ah! *that* is the point, the money—the subscription is the thing; well, I think we shall do something that way also—something good—something worth talking about." "Who is this sitting at the table behind us?" "Which one do you mean?" "He next to ——, close behind us?—speak low—the next but one to Dr Bowring." "Don't you know him?" "No; I never saw him before this evening. He came from Manchester by the train the deputation came by." "Did he? I shall inquire of Mr Moore if he knows him." "Well, does Mr Moore know who he is?" "No; he thinks he comes from London, but is not sure; but he is not one connected with the League. Nobody here seems to know him."

So he who was not one of the League, and whom nobody seemed to know, having heard all that is here related, drank three cups of tea, which were presented to him by the fair hands of a lady, who most kindly and politely did the honours of the table, and by the time his three cups were finished, everybody else was finishing.

In less than ten minutes after everybody was finished, the cups were entirely cleared away. In five minutes after that the mayor, a fifty-year-old pleasant looking but rather timid gentleman, was moved and voted by acclamation to the chair. Five minutes after that he was at the end of his speech; and in five minutes more Joseph Brotherton, Esq., M.P., was through the introductory sentences of his.

Joseph Brotherton is a mild looking man, five feet eight or nine inches high, apparently above fifty years of age, a little inclined to corpulency, with a round face and black whiskers neatly trimmed and pointed forward. He is, in Parliament, remarkable for his regular attendance and his opposition to midnight legislation. In the country he seems to be remarkable for his readiness to attend any meeting when called on for the promotion of free trade, also for his solid good sense, which never fails to instruct his hearers, though it seldom excites them to high applause. On the occasion under notice I did not hear him with the attention he deserves, and which I was disposed to pay to him, inasmuch as a gentleman sitting beside me undertook, on finding I was a stranger to every one present, to inform me of the names of those on the platform, as also of their professional and personal connections. The following are, as nearly as I can recollect, the words and manner of our conversation:—

"Well, sir, that is Joseph Brotherton, member for Salford, who is speaking. This is our mayor, Mr Walsh, who is in the chair. That gentleman sitting on his right, next but one, wearing spectacles, he with the high full forehead, that is one of our members for Bolton, Dr Bowring. Our other member, Peter Ainsworth, has cut our connection, and gone over to the enemy's camp; but we shall cut him at the next election."

"Will you?"

"Oh, yes; why should we not? I have always supported him, but I shall not do so again; we must have out and out free-traders, such men as the doctor and John Bright, for instance. Do you know John Bright?"

"I think I do; this is him, sitting on the back seat next the door, to our right, is it not?"

"Yes, that is John—a clever man—extraordinary debater. On the subjects of wages and machinery he is one of the ablest men of the League. He carries on large works at Rochdale. All his family are repealers; they give both their time and their money to the cause. No one acquainted with that man's movements could believe it possible for one individual to undergo the fatigue he does in this cause. Every day and night he is at some meeting or other. His sisters are as zealous, and in the getting of money for the fund as successful. They are all of the Society of Friends. Excellent people all. Highly esteemed by their factory hands.

"But, look here. Do you see that lady sitting opposite; the one that sat next to Moore when the tea was going on, second from the corner?—Yes, that is her, rather pale. Why, as to her age—you know we never talk about ladies' ages—yet her's may be talked of; two or three and twenty, I should say. That is a most remarkable young lady; her name is Heyworth, Miss Heyworth, daughter of Lawrence Heyworth, Esq., of Yew Tree, near Liverpool; a retired merchant, rich, and a most zealous member of the League. Oh! he is a determined worker in the cause. And his daughter, bless you! she is not a whit behind him. He makes speeches—he is to speak to-night—excellent speeches he makes; but his daughter goes even beyond him in working for the cause. She goes everywhere in Liverpool; into the richest man's mansion and the poorest man's cellar; gives tracts, collects money, reasons on the propriety and necessity of repeal. Oh! bless you, she deserves—I don't know what—she deserves at the least our thanks and our prayers.

"This gentleman, with the round, good humoured face, who wears a white neckcloth, is John Brooks, Alderman Brooks, of Manchester. He employs a great many people. He has built a flax mill in Bolton, and lost L.60,000 on it. We shall have a speech from him. Always humorous, always pleasant; good man; hits hard at the parsons sometimes; but full of the milk of human kindness; either laughing, either smiling with a face like a schoolboy, or——I tell you what, I have seen that same John Brooks listening to some of our pathetic speakers, who, in describing the distress of the unemployed, have worked on his feelings until the tears fell from his eyes.

"These are some of our Bolton friends next us: you will hear the names of most of them when the subscriptions come to be read. Moore will undertake that part of the business. A clever young man he is—clever, very clever; you would not think, merely to look at him, before hearing him speak, that he could make such an impression on an audience; but he has a fine manly voice; he is eloquent, is witty—a regular Irishman at repartee. He and John Bright will take a couple of hundred pounds out of such a meeting as this more than any other men of the League. They do it in a way that nobody ever thought of before. They get up a complete piece of auctioneering; and, talk of George Robins! George Robins is a bagatelle in exciting an audience to competition compared with Bright or Moore. Who *is* he? Who is Moore? He is an Irish barrister, a young gentleman of property; oh yes, a young man of respectable connexions. He will be called to the English bar next summer. He is clever, decidedly clever; and his natural eloquence and Irish banter tell splendidly on an audience. People that never thought of subscribing come out with their money, or down with their names, when they hear Moore at his auctioneering. Subscribers of L.10 put their names down for L.20, the twenty pounders increase their subscriptions to fifty, the fifties to a hundred, and so on. He gets hold of a particular trade, for instance, the tea-dealers, and he will make them subscribe in competition with one another; the shoemakers the same, and the tailors; he keeps at them, and puts the meeting into such good humour, such roars of laughter, and gets up such shouts of applause, administers to their love of approbation so vigorously, that they cannot help themselves; they are completely led off their feet as it were. Oh! he is just the man, he and Bright, for this kind of work. It is a great mistake to have so many speakers; the people get tired. What we want now in our towns is not arguments against the corn-laws, not lectures; we are all convinced of the justice of our proceedings on this question, and we want nothing but money, and men who can take it out of the pockets of those who have it, but who hang back. Bright and Moore are the men for that business. Cobden can do little at it, he is too diffident. You will hear them at their auction by-and-bye."

With this information of the men before me, and the manner of their proceedings, I now listened attentively to what was said. Mr Brotherton had finished; Mr Heyworth was just begun; John Brooks succeeded; and Dr Bowring followed him in a powerful oration, which drew down thunders of applause. I must certainly say that, so far as I can judge, it was a most eloquent harangue. Were it possible for Dr Bowring to use somewhat less of his violent gesticulation, he would, I think, be more effective. Being member for the borough, he was listened to with great interest, but not greater than the importance of his subject and his manner of treating it demanded.

Following him came John Bright, who read a letter from the other member of Parliament for the borough, Peter Ainsworth, Esq., excusing himself from attending the meeting, because, having voted for the tariff last session, which gave protection to certain manufactures, he was not now prepared to repeal the corn-law, which would be taking away all protection from the farmers. This letter afforded a text for a very effective speech, delicate in its satire, but all the keener that it was delicate.

Next came Mr R. R. R. Moore, whose initials being interpreted signify Robert Ross Rowan; and with him came the subscriptions and the auction.*

NOTES UPON SCOTLAND.

Journey to the Farm of Mr Hope of Fenton Barns.

September 1843.

It will be recollected that the Anti-Corn-Law League advertised last year that they would give certain prizes for essays "demonstrating the injurious effects of the corn-laws on tenant-farmers and farm-labourers, and the advantages which those classes would derive from their total and immediate repeal." And it will be recollected also that the first prize was awarded to Mr Hope of Fenton Barns, near Haddington. The Hon. Fox Maule and some other landlords of high standing, formerly friends of protection, have publicly ascribed their conversion to total and immediate abolition to Mr Hope's essay. The essayist spoke of himself, his farm, and the corn-laws thus:—

"As a tenant-farmer in an exclusively arable district of Scotland, paying a rent depending on the price of grain, and averaging for several years past L.1500 a-year, for a farm possessing no peculiar advantages from vicinity to a market town or anything of the kind, and upon a lease originally of twenty-one years, of which there are a considerable number yet to run, and during which period repayment is confidently expected of large sums expended in thorough draining with tiles more than five hundred acres, and otherwise improving and enriching the farm; thus situated, I should rejoice were the corn-laws to be abolished whenever Parliament meets."

Being in Haddington, and within five or six miles of Fenton Barns, I went one day to see that and some other farms in the same direction. I may state that the town of Haddington stands in a valley through which runs a small river called the Tyne. With our faces southward we have a cultivated country before us, gradually ascending for eight or ten miles, until it merges with the heath of the Lammermoor Hills, which hills run across the country from east to west, a distance of seventy or eighty miles. We are now in view of the centre of the range. At our back, rising abruptly on the north side of Haddington, is a minor range of hills called the Garleton. We must cross these to go to Fenton Barns. The road is steep on each side, and by its steepness places a farm distant from the market town six miles at as great a disadvantage as if it were ten miles distant on an easy road.

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* The "auction" was carried on by blank cards and pencils being handed round the assembly. As the cards were returned with the name of a subscriber and the amount which he intended to give when called upon at his own house, Mr Moore read the name and amount, commented on the individual and his profession; if he were a shoemaker, shewing how he would be served by free-trade, and exciting other shoemakers to rival him; so on with all the professions. A great deal of money was got in this way which never would have been got otherwise. This sketch may suffice as a specimen of all the League tea-parties in the provinces.

Having gained the summit of the ridge, and parted with the road for a brief period to pay a visit to a monumental column, which stands on a rocky eminence, we scramble through whins and over rocks, and arrive at the column, and find it is, what we had been told when inquiring thirty miles off, a monument to a late Earl of Hopetoun, (the Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope of the wars of Wellington.) As this is conspicuous from the sea and many distant places, so the sea, that arm of it called the Frith of Forth, twenty or thirty miles broad, and the county of Fife beyond, and many noticeable objects at greater and lesser distances, are public to the eye from the hill on which stands this column. Far in the north-west, beyond the shires of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan, stand the Ochills, the advanced guard of the Highland mountains. At a fourth part of the distance, hiding from us the comparatively level country of the Forth and West Lothian, rises the smoke of Edinburgh, and amid the smoke the Calton Hill and the many monuments thereon; while above all, above the Calton pillars, above the city and the city's smoke, rises Arthur's Seat, as if keeping at bay the more distant Pentlands, which we see scowling beyond him, and the Lammermoors cold and bleak.

From that point in the west, where the Lammermoors are lowest, we have them crossing on our south, as before said, until they reach the sea at Fast Castle, forty miles to the east of where we now stand. In that range they encircle between them and the sea what is generally known as East Lothian and a small part of Berwickshire; but the hills themselves, the very bleakest and most profitless of them, form a large portion of the shires of east Lothian and Berwick. Fast Castle, on the very peak of a headland overhanging the sea, where deep water vexes itself upon the perpendicular rocks in its everlasting disquietude, because it has no beach to play upon, and is unable to make one, is the farthest point discernible in the east. It is the Wolf's Craig of the "Bride of Lammermoor," the nestling-place of Caleb Balderstone and old Mysie.

From that point many miles of the sea-shore and of the rich fields lying between the shore and the hills are hidden from our view by intervening heights, chief of which is Doon Hill, above Dunbar, both places, hill and town, of more importance in the days of war than in these times of trade and commerce, seeing that Dunbar is every day becoming less and less, and more feeble and poor. Following the line of sea-coast towards ourselves from Dunbar, we see the ruins of Tantallon Castle, once the stronghold of the Douglasses; as also the Bass Rock, two or three miles out at sea, once the state prison of Scotland. Nearer us is North Berwick Law, rising a hundred feet high from the level country on the sea-shore, between us and which lies a well-cultivated district, all in large farms, and on each farm a steam-mill, with a tall chimney rising up, as if it were one of the "factory districts,' instead of being, as it is, "purely agricultural." Sir Thomas Hepburn, who is member for this county, may be as truly called the representative of tall chimneys as are the members for Stockport and Manchester.

Continuing our eyes along the coast, we run into the line already viewed, because the sea, west of Preston Pans, which is eight or ten miles north-west from us, forms a bay which bends inland between that place and Edinburgh. We shall therefore retreat; and we do so along the line on which Johnny Cope retreated from Preston Pans to Dunbar, and along which it is proposed to have the North British Railway,* which is to connect the North of England, and, through that, London and the South of England with Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Having returned to the road, I was told that, of the many tall chimneys I saw over the country, the one which was smoking at the distance of about four miles was Fenton Barns. We descended the hill, and in due time I approached it. Some English friends and others were with me, intending to go to the sea-side, but as there was one who had never seen a thrashing mill, we left the others at the distance of two hundred yards from the farm-yard, at which distance the public road passed on to the village of Dirleton. On our right hand were the extensive farm buildings and enormous stackyard; I did not go over the offices, as they were seemingly such as I saw in every other part of Lothian, commodious and compact, well arranged for the due economy of labour, and as unlike the farm offices of England as can well be, where we see a barn in one field, a stable in another field, a hay-rick here, and a corn-rick there, the houses, and produce, and implements scattered over the whole farm. The compactness of Mr Hope's farm-yard is common to Lothian, but I soon observed something about it not common to Lothian; to the shame of that otherwise fine county and the owners of the land let the words be spoken. In front of me was a cottage, and on my left hand was a row of cottages, covered with roses and adorned with many other flowers and shrubs, the rarity of some of which told, as well as the inmates could tell, that their culture had been assiduously cared for. If a cottage is flowery outside, and the flowers carefully trained, we may be sure that inside there is neither a want of cleanliness nor a neglect of moral training. But Mr Hope has not only induced his workpeople to depicture that comfort outside which should be an indweller in every cottage; he has, by building an extra room, and a small dairy behind each house, rendered comfort, neatness, healthfulness, and moral decency practicable, or at least he has made the want of them less excusable. I went into several of these houses, and the scrupulous cleanliness and the abundance of provisions and furniture in each were a pleasing contrast to what I have seen in most other parts of the kingdom. As the Lothian hinds have usually a year's provisions laid in at the beginning of winter, and as they have a cow giving milk and butter for market and for use all the summer, their houses are never the home of hunger; but in nearly every case their houses are so small and ill-constructed, that social comfort and a due respect to decency are impracticable. Mr Hope has, at his own expense, as the people told me, done the great service of improving the physical and moral comforts of his workers, though he be only a tenant, and the houses are the property of the landlord.

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* This Railway is now made, and used as the thoroughfare to England.

We saw the thrashing mill at full work, but it was within ten minutes of stopping when we entered the barn. The time was between three and four in the afternoon, and already a large stack of wheat, of probably eighteen or twenty quarters, which had been standing in the yard in the morning, was nearly ready for market.

They do not build the stacks larger in Lothian than can be conveniently thrashed in a day; and thus at any time they can take any advantage of a change of markets, if such be in the farmer's favour. Nor do they employ fewer people on the same breadth of land. The money saved by Mr Hope's mill is as so much more capital to him, and he pays it away in wagês for some other description of farm work, which, without it, he could not perform. The more economy that is observed in a manufactory, the more people can the manufacturer employ; and so it is with the farmer—the farmer is a manufacturer of food. If anything distinguishes him more than another from manufacturers of cotton and broadcloth, it is that he goes into business with too little capital, and depends on other chances than the certain calculation of what capital will produce for his profits.

Not having any personal knowledge of Mr Hope, I did not call on him; moreover, he and his father—an aged gentleman, who, I believe, has been many years opposed to the corn-laws, seeing that their only effect was to mar good farming, by unsettling the prices of corn, and thus unsettling all the farmer's plans—had gone out on horseback to visit their shearers, who were at work in a field lying at some distance from our road. I found the people speak very highly of both the elder and the younger Mr Hope, as kind and attentive masters. Quarrels, reproofs, and disputes were unknown among them. Some of the ploughmen had been ten, twelve, and sixteen years there.

The Cottages of the Hinds—The Marquis of Tweeddale's Improved Land and Unimproved Cottages—Mrs Fergusson's Beautiful Village of Dirleton—The Neglect of the Cottages on other parts of the Estate.

Having mentioned the improved dwellings of the labourers on Mr Hope's farm of Fenton Barns, and stated that he had, at his own expense, added a small bed-room and a dairy to each, I may still remark that they are not even yet such houses as should be provided for labourers. Still they are, by Mr Hope's addition to them, and by his benevolent attention to the welfare of his workpeople, in advance of the ordinary dwelling-houses of the rural districts of Scotland. To have made them better than they are would have required new structures on new foundations, which, as a mere tenant himself, with a limited lease of the farm, he could not do, neither in point of law as regarded his lease, nor in point of propriety as regarded the expense to himself. But if the landlords, who must surely see that they have an interest in promoting a high tone of moral feeling in the working population, were to take notice of the cottages, they might soon do what such tenants as Mr Hope cannot do. As it is, I saw nothing in East Lothian or elsewhere, so far as the houses of the farm labourers were concerned, that indicated any improvement, not even where new cottages were in course of erection.

On the Marquis of Tweeddale's estate I saw a new farm-steading in course of erection. I noticed it the more particularly, as the Marquis has of late years devoted himself to the practical improvement of agriculture in a manner at once energetic, comprehensive, and successful. Previous to his departure for India, he, by his ceaseless attention to the practical details of draining, tile-making, and the amalgamation of soils on his own property, had given a stimulus to landlord agriculturists in all parts of the kingdom, but especially in Scotland. Doubtless the Marquis intended, as a primary object, to improve his rental—a most honourable intention; but, in producing turnips over many thousands of acres of cold wet land, where turnips never grew before, to feed cattle where cattle were never fed before, supplying markets with butcher's meat better than markets were ever supplied before, and on the same description of land producing wheat where wheat had never grown, and five bushels of oats where only three grew; in doing this on his own estate, by his own devices and superintendence, and on other estates by the example of his success, the Marquis was most truly a benefactor of his country, even though his own profit might have been the primary cause of action. Indeed, if he acted with a view to profit, he acted right, and would have done wrong with any other view. The severest losses to agriculture and to landowners have arisen from the fact that men of rank and wealth have either entirely neglected the management of their own property, or have attended to the beautifying of it without any regard to substantial and permanent profit. All parks, gardens, plantations, roads, lakes, bridges, and fancy farms, erected for the mere adornment of an estate, of which England presents such abundant specimens, preserved at great expense and no profit, might have been, and might yet be, kept up in all their beauty, while paying their own expenses. Even more; the face of England might be changed from what it is to an Eden-like beauty and fruitfulness, to the benefit of the whole nation, but more especially to the augmentation of the landed rent-rolls, if landowners would manage their own affairs. The Marquis of Tweeddale being, in my opinion, a rare instance of a nobleman managing his own affairs in a businesslike way, that is to say, as a manufacturer does, who, looking to ultimate profit, improves his machinery and makes a web-and-a-half instead of one web, thus giving more employment to mechanics and more cloth to the markets of the world, enabling millions of women and children to have two cheap dresses, who before could not appear but in one dress or in rags—the Marquis being a rare instance of one in his position endeavouring to enrich himself, while, by manufacturing food more plentifully, to be sold at a cheaper rate to the consumers of food, he enables them to save something from food to expend in clothing, thereby increasing the trade of the manufacturer, I looked to the result of his agricultural reform with much interest.

Fields, now enclosed with fences, substantial and beautiful, at the distance of only a few years, wet, cold, and worthless, smiled now in the face of heaven with crops alike abundant in quantity and excellent in kind. Others, which had been cultivated for ages, but which had been nothing better than "a cold hungry clay" up to a few years ago, and incapable of bearing that turnip crop which is so important to a farmer who would feed cattle, produce manure, and raise good corn crops, were now loaded with turnips that would turn off at the rate of twenty and thirty tons an acre. Yet, amid all the beautifying and enriching of that district of the country, the dwellings of the working population stood the same, small, uncomfortable, odious looking huts, that they have ever been. The new houses in process of erection were so far improved as to have the stone walls plastered inside, with a boarding over-head, instead of the bare roof, which is so common ; but in respect to size, of their utter incapability of allowing a decent distribution of a family, the new cottages seemed as faulty as the old. The wholesomeness of situation, to say nothing of that pleasantness of situation which should be attended to in order to make happiness of spirit attainable in the family of the cottager, happiness of spirit, having so much responsibility as a parent of morality, and morality in a working population so much to do with the peace and welfare of all society, up to the nobles of the land—wholesomeness of situation, to say nothing of pleasantness, was not attended to.

There are some cottages to be seen in Scotland, and some in all parts of England, which are an exception to the general rule ; but these are found only in some pet village near a nobleman's park, or in the park itself, and only there because they are ornamental to the rich man's residence. So truly is this the case, that we very frequently find such ornamental cottages and lodges at park gates as destitute of comfort as the hovel on the farm ; mere ornament being everything, the comfort of the indwellers nothing.

A few miles from Mr Hope's farm, in East Lothian, there is a village called Dirleton. I visited it on the same day I was at Fenton Barns. I had never seen it before, but had read of it, and often heard it spoken of. Its simple beauty had been extolled as unmatched; and now I must say that, in all my travels, south and north, I have seen nothing so sweet, so pleasing to the perceptive powers of the mind, so satisfactory to the reflective. The excellent and amiable Mrs Fergusson, under whose patronage art has so liberally given its aid to nature in beautifying Dirleton, must have a high satisfaction, when she makes her occasional visits to the neighbouring mansion, to see so much outward comfort, and hear that the people, in the internal economy of their dwellings, and in the moral rectitude of their lives, are so worthy of what she and the late Robert Fergusson, Esq., M.P., her husband, have done for them. But Mrs Fergusson's rich property extends far beyond this village. Besides the Dirleton estate, there is Biel, ten miles southward; and where are there finer farms than those encircling Biel? Where a more independent and wealthy set of tenants? Where a more industrious class of workpeople? And yet the dwellings of the farm labourers are really very wretched, as, for instance, in Peatcox, a place which might be made equal to Dirleton, and which probably would have been so made had it been as near a mansion and a park.

But as it is some years since I saw Peatcox, and as it is possible some of the wretched hovels have been replaced by better houses, some of the filth drained away, and the people not so continually suffering from fever as they were, (though, judging by the want of cottage improvement on other parts of the property, this is not probable,) I shall only speak distinctly of the houses on the Biel estate which I have seen lately.

There are four enormous farms detached from the main body of the property, lying twelve or fourteen miles east of Biel, and about twenty miles from Dirleton. Those farms are Innerwick, Crowhill, Skateraw, and Thorntonloch. The first has six or seven ploughs, the second has seven, the third has nine, and the fourth fifteen. There is also a range of hill pasture belonging to the first and fourth. What the annual rent may be I cannot say precisely; but for the whole, it is little if anything below L.7000, probably L.8000. On each farm powerful machinery has been erected for thrashing and winnowing the grain. The most ample barns, and stables, and sheds have been erected. Houses more fit to be called mansions than what are often so called have been built for the farmers. Each keeps a professional gardener and a groom. One, when I knew them some years ago, used to have his butler as well, which butler had also his horse to ride on. But amid all this opulence, the hinds' houses continue the same as ever. I passed by Crowhill on my late visit, and remarked, in a tone of satisfaction, to a friend resident in the neighbourhood, that the new farm-house had a noble appearance, and was quite an ornament to the place.

"Indeed it's no such thing," replied my friend, "it's rather a disgrace; it's far owre fine."

"Why so?" I asked.

"Because," said he, "look at its grandeur and look at the hinds' houses; look what shabby places they are, what pudges of places they are, hardly big enough for a swine's cruive, some o' them, to say nothing of a family of eight or nine bairns, and faither and mother."

"But," said I, "the fault is that the hinds' houses are too small, not that the farmer's house is too large." And I added, what I have before said in the *Morning Chronicle*, and shall again repeat, that I would like to see the farm labourers lifted up, not that I would like to see a farmer or a landlord brought down; that I would like to see, not only every castle, and hall, and mansion, with their parks and gardens, to remain the pride and ornament of the country as now, but that I would like to see the whole country as carefully beautified as the park or garden of the mansion, being persuaded that, while this would elevate the working population, it would add to the wealth of those who are already rich. To this my friend replied, with a shrug of his shoulders,

"Ah! there's no use talking about that; every improvement that takes place is for the rich, and not for the poor; the poor are aye hin'most, and, the farer the world goes, the poor seem to be left aye farer ahint."

"That sentiment," said I, "is unfortunately a common one; I find it prevailing south and north, in town and in country; but it only proves that the poor have been left behind, not that the gentry have advanced too far. The hinds of Crowhill might have three-roomed houses, with a better garden, with a dairy for their cow's produce, a good stye for their pigs, with roses and flowers of every kind embowering every house, instead of the miserable den of one small apartment which they now inhabit; and they might have all this, while their master retained his fine house and garden, and Mrs Fergusson, to whom all belongs, enjoyed her various mansions and parks, without her abating one pound of rent."

At the distance of half a mile from Crowhill is Thorntonloch, and there the houses are probably the meanest of any on the estate. They were old and dilapidated at the earliest period of my recollection, and they are the same now. Except two or three, they are all inhabited by people who work on the farm. There was a tailor lived in one of them once, and I remember having gone with my mother to his house on a visit. I was then only about seven years old, but was tall enough to stand outside and touch the roof of the house. It so happened that for seven or eight years afterwards, when new clothes were to be made in our family, and the tailor and his men had to be sent for to come and make them, it fell to me to go and "tell the tailors." As they made many appointments to come, and, if busy, did not keep them, which was quite usual, and very grievous to me when my new clothes were in question, I had to go again and again to "tell the tailors," and to urge on "Thamas," the father and master, how "Awfu' wearying I was, and how needfu' for my new claes." On each occasion I made it a point to ascertain how much I had grown from the last time, by going along the front of several of the houses, and touching the roofs with my hand. When there a few weeks ago, I had the curiosity to try once more, and found that, with many of them, my shoulder was now higher than the roofs.

These houses have steps downward at the door, so as to admit of a full-sized man standing up inside. There is no ceiling or lofting of any kind below the roof, save what mats, or canvas, or boards, the people may put up; and outside, though the ground is so much higher than the interior floor, there is no drainage whatever. When the furniture is in the house there is but one apartment eight or nine feet square.

I hope the excellent lady—of whose property the gigantic farm of Thorntonloch is but a fraction—or her agents and friends, will receive these remarks in the spirit they are written. The late Mr Fergusson was the most popular landlord in the county; of which fact the monument erected to his memory at Haddington is but one of the proofs. Mrs Fergusson is not less popular, and she has done much to deserve all the good that is said of her. But the very fact of her having done more than other proprietors, while so much remains undone, proves what a neglect of the comfort of the working people prevails in East Lothian.

A TALE FOR THE TIMES.

When the progress of the National Anti-Corn-Law League became really national, and men of all ranks and of all politics, people numberless in multitude, and newspapers, magazines, reviews, and printer's devils of all degrees, rushed to lay hold of the League's traces, and drag its triumphal car to the final consummation of success, the lusty *Times*, bludgeon in hand, shirt-sleeves tucked up, paper cap on head, and broad back bent to the yoke, rushed with the multitude, and roared in the national din to "Make way for the League !" Its services at the last moment, so far as they swelled the multitude and gave glory to the triumph, were not despised, though, if it had then chosen to remain behind, or even to pull behind backward, or to jink round corners and throw dirt at the Leaguers, picking up from choice the foulest handful which it could select, throwing the filth always at the moment when it could do most harm, and could do it with most safety to itself; if it had still employed itself thus, the League would have just had the same success at the same time without it as with it. But when it could do no more harm, and might have received damage itself had it continued to walk stealthily with the crowd, and from behind a lamp-post throw a handful of something vile in the faces of the Leaguers, as it used to do when League work was hard to perform, and League men were not strong, and had no multitude to cheer them on and rebuke the vile who attacked them from behind lamp-posts, it came out vociferously, and laid hold of the triumphal car with all its robust might, drowning the voices, kicking the heels, and treading on the toes of those who had been working at the task long and patiently. This was its conduct in the last month of the year 1845, and in the last months of the League 1846. It was, as a free-trader, a strong bold man then. In 1843, it was a large boy of ill-behaviour hanging behind, pulling back, tripping up, and flinging filth. Hoping that better education might make it a better boy, the following tale was written and published for its instruction in 1842 :—

THE HISTORY OF THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs Jenny Getapenny lived in a shoe. It was a large shoe, large enough to be a house to her, for it belonged to a giant. One day, as she was going to market, she found a penny on the road, and she said, " I will buy a sow and a pig with this penny." So she bought a sow and a pig with the penny, and kept them in the giant's shoe. And the big one grew fat and the little one grew big ; and, in the course of time, the fat one became bacon, and the big one, that had once been a little pig, had little pigs of its own.

About this time the giant who owned the shoe said to the dwarf who collected his rents, " I am going into far countries to visit the kings and queens of the earth, and I must have money." And the dwarf rose, and straightway went to Mrs Jenny Getapenny, and said, " I am come for the rent." And having got the rent, and paid it to the giant, he said, " Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lives in a shoe, has more pigs than ever she had, and more bacon. She is increasing in wealth; she can pay more rent." And the giant said. " Though I am a giant, and powerful over all other men, I am not a hard landlord; but I am much among the great men of the earth, and my expenses are great; I shall want all the money you can get." And, having said this, he departed on his journey. And the dwarf came to the shoe, and said, " Mrs Jenny Getapenny, his honour the giant has ordered me to get more rent." Whereupon the old woman who lived in a shoe looked out of her house with a long face, and said, " I cannot pay more than I pay." But the dwarf said, " You must, else the shoe will be let to another tenant." So Mrs Jenny Getapenny promised to pay the high rent, and resolved to do all she could with her bacon and pigs to get money. And fortunately there lived, outside the shoe, merchants who brought merchandize from far countries, and needed bacon, and pigs, and bread, and many things, for their working men, who ate so much as to increase the price of bacon and young pigs, as well as bread.

CHAPTER II.

Soon after this the old woman who lived in a shoe was going to the well, and she found another penny; and when she had turned it over and over, and looked at it, and thought about it, she said, " The merchants are giving work to more men; the men want more food; the markets are rising. I will buy a cock and a hen, and hatch chickens." So she bought a cock and a hen, and hatched chickens; and these brought her eggs and other chickens, and she was every day growing richer and richer.

And she was sitting one day counting how many she had hatched, when in came the dwarf for the rent; and when he had got it, and paid it to the giant, who had returned from his journey in far countries, he said, " Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lives in a shoe, is growing richer every day; she has now cocks and hens, chickens and eggs, in great abundance, which she sells at market to the men who make cloth, and iron, and ships for the merchants; these men are making money, they pay good prices, your honour must have higher rents." Whereupon the giant answered and said, " I am not desirous of wealth for its own sake, nor for my own pleasures; but thou knowest my son, the young giant, spends all the money he can get of me, and runs in debt. To his brothers and sisters I must give a portion, and whether I pay that portion directly from my own purse, or procure them places of profit in the service of kings and queens, it must be the same. I must spend my money to maintain the family influence that procures these places, just the same as if I paid it to the young giants, my younger sons, direct; therefore I must have money. The increased value of my estate is mine by right; let the rent be raised." Hearing which command, the dwarf went once more to the old woman who lived in the shoe, and told her once more that her rent must be raised; at which she once more put on a long face and said, "I cannot, and I will not." Whereupon the dwarf said, "Then I must seek another tenant." But he did not seek another tenant, for the old woman who lived in a shoe once more resolved to do her best, and the increasing wealth of the merchants, and the increasing mouths of the men who wrought in cloth, and iron, and ships, favoured her with increased prices and increased demands.

But soon after this the giant died, and was succeeded by his son, the young giant, who immediately called to the dwarf, "Get me money: my father hoarded it up; I shall spend it." Whereupon the dwarf said, "Nay, honourable sir, thy father hoarded up no money, it is all that a great giant can do to make ends meet; thy father was prudent, and tried to make the high expenses of the times meet the low rents of the land; he hoarded no wealth for the wealth's sake; pray thee be moderate." Hearing which, the young giant said, "Shall I have no pleasures in the days of my youth? Shall I have no money for my pleasures? Shall it be said of a giant that he is poor? And shall a dwarf tell him so? Nay, by the heads of a hundred ancestors, I will have money! Go, get me money."

And the dwarf came to the old woman who lived in the shoe, and said, "I must have the rent." To which Mrs Getapenny replied, "The markets are looking down, and I have not yet sold my fowls and my pigs; moreover, the rent is only due this day; surely you will give me time." But the dwarf said, "I cannot wait; his honour, the young giant, must have money; giants cannot live without money. You must sell at once, and pay." Whereupon Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, sold at once, and paid her rent; and, having sold at a low rate, she said, "The rents of cheap years must now be restored; I can no longer pay the high rents." But the dwarf shook his head, and said, "That is for his honour the giant to consider, not for me."

CHAPTER III.

Soon after this, as the old woman who lived in a shoe was going out for a holiday, she got a letter which told of the death of one of her rich relations in the West Indies, who had left her all his wealth, and that was a penny. So she considered what she would do with this penny; and when she got it, she hid it in the shoe, lest, if she increased her poultry or pigs, her rent might be again augmented, or, if the rent was not augmented, she might lose it in the fall and change of prices. So it lay in the shoe, tied up in a napkin, and, for a whole year and more, she did not know what to do with it, for prices were still changing, and the dwarf still kept to the high rent. But one day the giant, having summoned the dwarf to his presence, said, "Now it's no use all this humbug, I must have money." To which the dwarf said, "The rents are not yet due; and besides, your honour must know they cannot be paid; prices are falling, and rents must fall also; such is the theory of rent and prices." Whereupon the giant said, "Theories be blowed! what have I to do with theories? I must have money; let the rents be mortgaged. There are all my expenses for the last election to pay, and we are about to have another: I cannot shew face until the old score is cleared." To which the dwarf, being loath to offend his master, answered nothing, save that it was not easy to collect rents now-a-days. "But they must be collected," said the giant. "Is it not a fact that my money is spent in maintaining my influence with government to pass laws for keeping up prices for the good of those who pay rents? Tell them it is for their own good they pay the high rents; tell them——but the short and the long of it is, I must have money; and as we shall be able to restore high prices by some means or other, we must draw on future chances; the rents must be mortgaged."

So the rents were mortgaged. And at the appointed day the mortgagee demanded his money of the dwarf, and the dwarf demanded the rent of Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lived in the shoe, and she told the dwarf that the profits of all she had sold were not enough to pay him, and that in these bad times she could not pay the high rent; but the dwarf knew there was a penny in a napkin, and he knew the mortgage money must be paid, so he pressed for the rent, and would take no denial; seeing which, Mrs Jenny Getapenny went to the napkin and took out her last penny, even that which she had inherited from her Indian relation, and paid the rent.

CHAPTER IV.

And having nothing but fear before her for the next rent day, unless some great change should arise, she went to a wizard, a wise man, whose fame was great, and inquired of him if there would be any change for the better. And the wizard had a scythe, and a long beard, and three books, marked "The *past*," "The *present*, "and "The *future*:" the first and the last were shut, but the second was open, and on it and over it were written those words—THE TIMES. With a look of great wisdom, the wizard heard the old woman who lived in a shoe speak of her rent, and he said, "*Rent is that which remains of the produce after remunerating the producer.*" To which Mrs Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, said, "But, sir, I am the producer; I have had to pay my rent as usual, though none of the produce was left, and though I am not remunerated." To which the wise man replied, "This cannot be: how could you pay your rent if you had no residue after being remunerated, or if you were not remunerated? This is quite contrary to the theory of the law of rent, quite; you must be mistaken, my good woman." But Mrs Jenny Getapenny replied and said, "I had pennies that I need not tell how I came by, besides what my rich relation left me, and I have paid these in rent; and also all my profits that were saved in the time of high prices. What I want to know, Mr Wizard, is—if you can tell me—how long we are to have low prices, or if ever we are to have high ones again. I care not what the learned men may say about the *theory* of rent, as they call it. You spoke of a residue of produce." Whereupon the wizard again looked wise, and said, "*Any diminution in the value of produce falls not proportionally on all parties, but almost wholly on the residue*; that is, after you, the producer, are remunerated." "But," said Mrs Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, "I am not remunerated, I tell thee once more. My rent rose as prices rose, but now when prices fall my rent does not fall, not so long as I have a spare penny to pay it. What am I to do with the low prices?" To which the wizard once more replied, "*It is almost a truism to say that any improvement or* deterioration *in the value of land or its produce must fall mainly on him who* owns *it*, *not on him who* hires *it for what it is worth*."—(*Times*, *9th December* 1842.) Whereupon Mrs Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, said, "Ah! I dare say them as be college-bred understand this; but it be too learned an explanation for one as has a rent to pay. Good day, Mr Wizard, I must go somewhere else."

CHAPTER V.

And Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, went to another wizard who professed to know all manner of secrets, even the secrets of other wise men, and when he saw her he knew what she wanted, he was so wise, without inquiring. He, too, like the other, had three books, the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*. He opened the past, and said, "Look here, Mrs Jenny Getapenny—look here, and tell me what you see."

And the old woman who lived in a shoe put on her spectacles, and looked upon the *past*, and the wizard said, "Tell me, old woman, what do you see?" And she said, "I see bones bleaching in the air; and I see banners lifted up and words of inscription on them. Some of these banners are ragged and worn, and by reason of the mist upon the hills where the battle has been and the bones are bleaching, I cannot read them distinctly. Pray, wizard, tell me the words of these inscriptions and the meaning thereof."

And the wizard answered and said, "I shall make all clear that you may see, and all plain that you may understand. The highest hill, now deserted, on which, and around which, the bare bones are bleaching, on which the mists of departed times are settled, and on which the foot of man shall never again be set, is an old stronghold of the giants; it is called the 'Height of a Hundred and Twenty Shillings.' There is a deserted standard on it, with an inscription, which was erected when the giants lived upon the mountain and defended it against the assailing enemy, who carried the flags of 'National Distress' and 'Give us this day our daily bread'—the deserted standard, I say, has for an inscription the words 'A Hundred and Twenty Shillings, or no quarter,' which words gave name to the mountain.

"Now, look to the left and you will see a lesser mountain, to which the giants retreated, and on which they built castles and towers of great strength. It is not so far distant as the other; look at it, old woman, and tell me what you see."

And Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, looked upon this lesser mountain, and saw on it also a deserted standard of the giants, on which standard she read the words, "Final Position of Eighty Shillings." On all sides of this mountain lay the bones of the slain in battle, who had fallen in the wars of the giants, the bones of those who perished in the assault, of those who perished in the defence, and of those who perished in the retreat; for the giants had retreated from this mountain to another. And Mrs Jenny Getapenny was amazed at the numbers of the bones of those who had perished, and she said to the wizard, "Tell me the meaning of what I see." To which the wizard said, "Nay, old woman, look once more to the left and you will understand for yourself." And the old woman, Mrs Jenny Getapenny, who lived in a shoe, looked once more to the left, and she saw indistinctly a foggy mountain, with another deserted standard, with nothing left but the word "Seventy," and she told the wizard what she saw, but he bade her still look farther to the left, for the mountain on which was the word "Seventy" was only a part of that where the great battle on the ground called the "Final Position of Eighty Shillings" had been fought. And she looked still farther to the left, and said, "I see a lesser hill with many walls, and battlements, and ditches, and drawbridges, all in ruins. Here also are heaps of slain, some of the bones still with the flesh on. What is the meaning of this?"

"The meaning of that, old woman," said the wizard, "is, that the giants, driven from other mountains, intrenched themselves here; and, professing to have a desire to live at peace with the hosts of those who had driven them from a greater to a lesser height, they had these drawbridges constructed on the principle of a sliding scale. They called the place the 'Intrenched Camp of Sixty-four Shillings;' and although the fortifications were constructed under the approving observation of the immortal Wellington, they were singularly defective. Battles took place as before; the giants were again defeated; their standard was again deserted; and thousands upon thousands were again among the wounded and slain. Many of those bodies you see among the dead have no flesh on them, though they seem to have. Those of them who fought under the banner of 'National Distress' and 'Give us this day our daily bread' are only skin and bone, not flesh and blood, as you think; but the bodies of those who fell defending the positions of the giants have still flesh on them; in fact, many of them are still warm, having only recently died of their wounds; while others, though wounded, still live. You will see the banners under which they fought prostrated beside them; the inscriptions and devices are various, but the principal of them are 'Farming Tenantry' and 'Labourers' Wages.'"

"But tell me," said Mrs Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, "tell me how it is that amongst all the slain there are no dead giants." To which the wizard said, "I will shew you by setting before your eyes the warfare as it is now conducted, and as it has ever been carried on. I will shew you; but, in doing so, I close the volume of the *past*, and open that of the *present*.

"See here," he continued, "see here—you observe the giants in the intrenched camp, with the flag of '*Fifty-six*' hoisted. Since they fell from the 'Height of a Hundred and Twenty Shillings' they have carried on the war as you see them now. Hitherto you have only seen the remnants of the different battle-fields; here you see the battle itself. There is no difference in it from the former conflicts, as far as defence goes, but the assailants are better equipped and drilled, and more firmly *leagued* together. Mark well the assault and the defence, and you will at once comprehend the whole mystery which you came here to have explained."

And the old woman who lived in a shoe looked steadfastly at the battle which was being fought around the intrenched camp of "Fifty-six Shillings." Whole battalions of men well armed marched against it, bearing flags with the words "Ships," "Colonies," "Wealth," "Foreign Customers," "Free Trade," "Peace and Commerce with all the World." And their trumpeters sounded a flourish, while the leaders proclaimed to the giants terms of peace, offering to live in friendly intercourse, giving to each a share of the profits of good trade. But the giants would not listen to the terms. A few of them proposed to surrender, but their voices were drowned in the strife. Others proposed new terms of a *fixed kind*, as they called them, to the assailants; but they only received a fillip on the nose from the other giants, and were turned to the right about by those who cried, "No surrender!"

And now Mrs Jenny Getapenny, the old woman who lived in a shoe, saw how it was that there were no bones nor bodies of giants seen on the former battle-fields. Whenever a heavy onset was made from the ranks of those bearing the banner of "National Distress," the dwarfs, one, and sometimes half-a-dozen of whom attended each giant, came behind several hundreds of the men, and also their wives and children, who carried the banners of "Farming Tenantry" and "Labourers' Wages," and thrust them into the front of the battle, so as to ward of the blows which otherwise would have prostrated the giants. These dwarfs possessed enormous strength for their size. A single man of them could do anything with any number of the battalions of the "Farming Tenantry" he chose. He possessed not only all the strength of the giant to whom he belonged, in addition to his own, but there was some power of enchantment which concentrated the entire strength of all the giants, and gave it to each and all of the dwarfs, without in any way diminishing the power of each individual giant. This, the wizard explained, was sometimes called "Class legislation."

And the old woman who lived in a shoe saw in the ranks of the assailants many of the men, workers in cloth, and iron, and timber, who had at one time purchased her pigs, and chickens, and eggs, and who now, with ghastly faces and skinny arms, carried the banners of "National Distress" and "Give us this day our daily bread." It was curious to observe, though deeply to be regretted, that certain dwarfs came into the ranks of these forces in disguise, persuading them that the giants were the friends of men who prayed for daily bread and got none—that the hungry men should fight for those who prevented them from eating bread. And it was still more to be regretted that many of these men in their desperation listened to and followed the disguised dwarfs, and were in consequence more plentifully and pitilessly slaughtered than ever.

And while Mrs Jenny Getapenny was grieving to see the success of the dwarfs in disguise, who thus deceived the men with the banner which said "Give us this day our daily bread," her own dwarf, who collected her own rent for her own giant, seized her in his arms and thrust her into the hottest of the battle; and she was knocked down by those who aimed at the giants, and as often as she struggled to rise, she was knocked down again. Some giants cried, "Hold, enough! let us give in." But the mortgagees came behind, nine out of each ten of them, and said, "Nay, fight it out; stand to the last." Whereupon the battle became desperate, the men of the firm battalions drove back the "farming tenantry" who covered the breaches, which seeing, the main body of the giants retreated, as before, to new positions, leaving the bearers of the flags "Farming Tenantry" and "Labourers' Wages" once more behind, to cover their retreat. But they had no peace, not for a moment. And the wizard who had unfolded the *past* and the *present* was now on the battle-ground collecting the stragglers, and giving unto the new recruits the courage and perseverance of veterans. He opened to them the volume of the *future*, and shewed a vision of the world, which had on every sea, and lake, and river of the great globe, the national flag of England, inscribed with the words "Peace and Commerce with all the World." The luxuriant fields of England were more fruitful than ever. Necessity had stirred up energy; energy had laid hold of science; agriculture and manufactures went hand in hand, and both were flourishing. The population and the demand for food were increased prodigiously, and the giants were now living in contentment with all around them.

And when this was seen, the people called to the wizard, "When shall those things be?" To which he replied, "When the giants and the evil dwarfs, and those who join them in the warfare, surrender." Whereupon the multitudes, as with one voice, called out, "Let us go to the battle; let us *league* ourselves together; let us hasten the happy day for old England!"

And foot to foot, hand to hand, man to man, they waged war on the giants. Many of the latter proposed a surrender, and some retreated altogether, which weakened their ranks; yet still they were strong. The dwarfs, like spirits of mischief, rushed with the tenantry, as pioneers with sandbags, to fill up the breaches; and busy above all, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, was the wizard who first expounded the mystery of rent. When the giants resolved to hold out, he whispered to them to capitulate; when they proposed to capitulate, he told them they would be put to death; that, whoever might be saved, *they* would be sacrificed; and when they paid him an enormous price to stay with them, and give his friendly advice, he stole away in disguise, and visited the camp of the enemy, offering to betray the giants for the same price that they had paid for his services. Men who saw this unblushing Iscariot, and who grieved for what they saw, exclaimed, "O the disgrace and baseness of the *Times* we live in!"

But, despite such treachery, the cause of the hungry against the giants prospered. The visions of the true wizard were realized. Agriculture and manufactures were joined hand in hand. Old England became young again, and grew in wealth. The giants waxed richer, though less proud; the dwarfs used their power to protect, and not to oppress; and many of those who carried the banners of "Farming Tenantry" and "Labourers' Wages," and who fell in the fight, got up again. Even Mrs Jenny Getapenny came out of the struggle, though more than once she had almost lost her shoe.

Anti-Bread-Tax Circular.

JOURNEY FROM NAVAN TO TRIM.—VISIT TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON IN 1843.

We left Navan on the 16th of August, the day after the Tara meeting. Having hired a car to Trim, distant towards the south about nine English miles, we had a pleasant journey, on one of the loveliest days with which Heaven ever blessed a fruitful earth. My object in that direction was chiefly to visit Dangan Castle, the birthplace of the late Marquis Wellesley, eldest son, and of the Duke of Wellington, sixth son, of the Earl and Countess of Mornington; also the birthplace of another distinguished individual, Feargus O'Connor, chief of our English chartists. It is not a matter of undoubted certainty, but it is extremely probable, that the Wellesleys and the O'Connors were born in the same chamber; at all events, they were born in the same house.

We had a fine rich soil, wretchedly cultivated, on each side of us, journeying from Navan to Trim. I saw some dozens of able-bodied men in Navan standing idle in the streets, seeking employment, and no one asking their price. I saw others at Trim similarly situated, and was told at both places that had it not been fine weather, and the hay-harvest just at its height, I would have seen hundreds where I only saw dozens. I spoke to several of those men, and found them eager to be engaged at eightpence and ninepence a-day. In Kilkenny I had seen several hundreds of able-bodied men seeking work at sixpence a-day; but in Meath the wages were higher, many of those employed at haymaking having tenpence. Passing between Navan and Trim, those whom I saw at work near the road, and within reach of conversation, were receiving eightpence and ninepence, few as much as tenpence. Others, again, had threepence and fourpence a-day and their diet, which diet consisted of potatoes and butter-milk twice a-day; if oatmeal was used, once; if the latter was omitted the potatoes were used thrice; but many families could only afford one meal a-day. With a superabundance of labourers at such wages, a soil, equal to Northumberland, or the richest parts of Berwickshire, was lying with its crops overpowered by the rank ripening weeds; docks overtopping the corn; thistles contending with the docks in the cornfields, and literally subduing the hay and pastures; rushes displacing both thistles and grass, and proclaiming in the face of bountiful Heaven that they had the best right to a wet soil, when that soil, though rich, was too wet to grow anything else. Potato-fields, too, struggled with foulness, and they struggled feebly; for the ill-managed farms of Meath do not produce the necessary manures to make crops profitable. Waste ridges lay at each end of the fields, and frequently a piece of the enclosure, the very richest piece, lay worthless and idle, because ten men for a-week were not employed to make a cut through some rise to admit of this being drained, which, after being drained, would have been profitable to its owner for ever.

But however applicable these remarks may be to the country between Navan and Trim, they are still more so to the country lying between Trim and Dublin. I saw farms in that district which, in luxuriant foulness, exceeded anything seen elsewhere. The reader who has travelled by railway through Staffordshire and Cheshire to Manchester must have remarked the many miles of country in which every second or third field is yet in the state it was in on the landing of the first Roman on British soil; he must have noticed the stagnant mires and rushes, and all manner of *home-grown* aquatic weeds, on the low wet ground; and the thistles, and docks, and charlock, that occupy the drier soils on the higher ground. But no part of

Staffordshire is worse cultivated than many miles of the county of Meath lying south and east of Trim; while there is this to be said against the landowners of Meath, that their soil is richer, kindlier, far more fertile than Cheshire, Lancashire, or Stafford. The very rankness of the Meath weeds proclaims the richness of the soil. But there are occasionally fields of grain seen, which, happening to be cultivated by persons who dare to cultivate well, they being protected from ejectment, shew us what the soil can produce. Yet even such tenants as these go unskilfully to work; none of them that I have seen or heard of can produce a good crop of wheat without wasting an entire season in fallowing the soil.

Everywhere in Ireland, so far as I have yet seen, the land is comparatively profitless for the want of labour. And I find, in talking with the small tenantry, particularly about Kilkenny, that they are not ignorant of this fact; but even where they have this knowledge, and have in their own families a sufficiency of labourers, they choose to let their land assume an appearance of poverty which it should never wear. They have no security of tenure, and sad experience tells them that to enrich the soil is to invite an ejectment. Many of them in that county have leases, but even a lease in Ireland is no security. A landlord has only to make a profession of a wish to exchange a Catholic tenantry for Protestants, and, under cover of such a pretence, he may commit, *and does in this very year*, 1843, *commit* the most damnable and detestable robberies. He has only to assume the profession of political protestantism, and he becomes the defended and rewarded of the leaders of that party; all his sins are covered by the cloak of his political religion through the newspapers; and if aught be said against him on the other side—if he be only called a "notorious landlord," he prosecutes; and by moving the venue to some county where the dependant may not be known, he gets there—or, if he chooses, he may have the same in his own county—a jury of political Protestant landlords—men of his own station, of his own feelings, of his own character; he may have such a jury to try his cause, and give him a verdict.

Such is the present state of domestic affairs in Ireland. The landlord can do anything. The press of the dominant party protects and adopts him; and if the newspapers of the prostrate party expose him, or take but a step thereto—breathing but a whisper—he has the law and the jury of his own class ready to shield him.

I press these facts on the notice of the public, because the soil of Ireland is capable of producing crops far beyond anything yet common to agriculture, because her people are easily induced to adopt new theories and modes of working if their confidence in the experimenter or employer be first secured, and because, at the present time, in their own country, they regard with extreme jealousy any new doctrine in agriculture, any new specimen or lesson from a new comer, seeing, as they have invariably seen, that such doctrines, and specimens, and injunctions to improve, were only preparatory to their being sacrificed and their land seized. And in a country almost devoid of trade and manufactures, to be turned out of a holding of land is a calamity falling on a family like a death stroke. There are people in England who have insanely said—and they are only worth referring to because they are not yet shut up in madhouses—that England would be as rich and powerful a country as she is were all her factories and factory towns hurled into the sea, and the sites they occupy furrowed by the plough. These people also allege another untruth, though its fallacy is not generally so apparent, namely, that a fall in the price of agricultural produce, caused by an influx of foreign grain, would throw a large portion of the soils of England, Ireland, and Scotland, out of cultivation. They assume that if a certain quality of land, at a rent of L.2 per acre, each acre producing four quarters, does nothing more for the cultivator than pay its expenses, with wheat at 55s. a quarter, it will cease to afford any rent when wheat falls to 45s. a quarter; and they add, that when wheat falls below that, say to 40s., such land will go out of cultivation altogether.

Now, at first sight, this proposition seems plausible; but practically it is the reverse of true; and, startling as such a declaration may be to mathematical theorists writing pamphlets and leading articles, and making legislative speeches in London, or to well-meaning noblemen and other landowners, too rich or too busy with trifles to look after their own affairs and study their own interests, it is easily, though it cannot be briefly, substantiated. In this article I would be departing too far from my subject—a visit to Dangan Castle—were I to enter closely upon it. I will not, therefore, repeat the arguments and facts hitherto adduced in "*Notes from the Farming Districts*" of England, nor enter upon the still stronger facts tending to the same point which I see in Ireland; these I promise to use on an early occasion, when the proposition here asserted, in contradiction to the theorists, shall be fully proved. Meantime I give them the following truths to ponder over; they are not less at variance with the assumed facts of mathematical politics than the other proposition, and they do not require arguments and proof; they are visible to the eye.

Any one travelling through the rural districts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, as I have done, and am now doing, may see the facts to be as I state them; indeed the traveller cannot shut his eyes upon them, for they press upon the sight so unceasingly, stare him in the face so palpably, that he has no choice but to see and believe them. These facts are—

1. That wherever the supply of labour is most plentiful and cheap (and it is always cheapest where most plentiful) the land is worst cultivated.

2. Wherever the land is naturally richest it is worst cultivated and least profitable to the cultivators.

3. Wherever the expense of cultivation is greatest the comfort of the working people, the profit of the farmer, and the rent of the landowner are highest.

These truths will puzzle the rule-of-three writers as much as the denial of their other assertion; but they must see the world as the world is, before they presume to say it moves like clock-work. As seen through our agriculture, the world is a pig driven to market; it gets there by turning its head the other way, or it is like a crab, moving side-ways or back-ways, any way but the way right a-head.

The scenic appearance of the country I have been speaking of, the district of Trim, in Meath, where the soil is so rich, the agriculture so poor, the people so plentiful, wages so low, and so few labourers employed at wages—the scenic appearance of this district is soft, luxurious, and seductive. The country, on a far stretch of the eye, seems level, but it is gently diversified by undulations. The river Boyne winds through the rich green meadows, and the hedge-rows and dotted woods add to the beauty, until variety itself forms a broad unchanging sameness.

The farms are from twenty up to fifty acres; but more of them vary from fifty up to two hundred acres. I saw a fifty acre farm, held by a gentleman tenant, who did not work himself. He kept only two labourers in constant employment, and being in constant work at ninepence a-day—no other perquisites—they were considered well paid by the people who worked in the neighbourhood for less. There was not a good fence on the farm, the land was wet, foul, and most unsightly to an agricultural eye.

The cottages of the poor are poor indeed. They are mostly clay huts, thatched with straw. Some of them are very tidy, whitewashed outside, and, besides having good windows and doors, are ornamentally thatched and decorated. But for one of these there are ten that are neither pleasing outside nor comfortable within. In respect of darkness and dampness, being without windows, having clay floors, and being small and ricketty, they resemble what the dwellings of the farm labourers used to be in Berwickshire, and what on many estates in Northumberland, near Berwick, they are to this day. Coming out of Navan, on the Trim road, I passed between two long rows of miserable hovels; one of the rows so very long and so very miserable, that I at last stopped the car, and went into some of them to see the interior and talk with the people who, from strange choice or unfortunate doom, inhabited them. One of them was four paces wide and five long. I could touch the thatch with my hands. There was no light but what came in by the low doorway. A partition wall of clay, four feet high, parted off an apartment for a pig and a bed occupied by four children. The father and mother and two more children slept in the front apartment. There was no fixed bed; whatever the bed was, it was stowed away during the day. Some articles of crockery were arranged, not without regard to show, on shelves, and a couple of iron pots, a table, a wash-tub, two or three seats, some of which were large stones, completed all the furniture I saw. The father of the family was at work to a farmer; his wages were ninepence a-day. Last year he got tenpence, but this year he had, like others, been reduced. The mother complained of headache, and said her health had been bad for years. All the children had been in fever, and fever was never out of the row of houses. They were the property of the Rev. Mr Hamilton, the Protestant clergyman. The rent paid for that one now described was eightpence a-week. Since wages had been reduced, they tried to get house rent reduced, but had not succeeded. Some of the other huts were larger—as large as eight paces by five; but all were equally dark, dirty, and ill furnished. The rents were as high as a shilling a-week; the average being tenpence. The tenants were not suffered to run into arrear; the custom being, both in Navan and in Trim, to eject, by warrant of the magistrate, as soon as a fortnight's rent becomes due and is not paid. This Rev. Mr Hamilton is said to be rich—at least, he holds a good living, he has also landed property, which partakes of the management of other land in those parts.

Having visited some of the remarkable ruins around Trim, chief of which is a vast pile called John's Castle, we hired a car, and at six o'clock in the evening drove off to Dangan Castle, four miles south, or south-east. Arrived at the margin of the domain, we entered a narrow avenue by an iron gate, which was opened by a woman whose house was one of two or three low thatched huts. There were no trees shading the avenue, but a high thorn hedge, bushy, wild, and lofty, skirted it on either side. When we had proceeded three or four hundred yards, the park, that had once been finely wooded, but which, like a bald head, with a tree here and two or three there, and a few more, stunted and denuded of their ornamental branches, beyond, this park, with its fine valleys and finer eminences, once so magnificently wooded, now so shabbily bare, opened upon our view. The road went towards the left and again wheeled to the right. On the brow of a gentle slope stood the castle, like a huge ill-shaped barn—grey, treeless, shelterless, and in most part roofless. Broken cars, and waggons, and ploughs that were idle, because it was summer, and harrows idle as the ploughs, lay strewed about, and told of people who were as idle as any of them, else they would have had them put tidily out of the way. Cows were lowing in rear of the house to be milked, and calves were clamorous for their allowance of what the cows were to give. The gates that crossed the road, at various places, keeping vagrant pigs and cattle asunder, were kept to their posts by old ropes and stones, which had to be rolled away ere they could be opened, and rolled back again ere the pigs could be restrained from accompanying the visitors to the front of the castle; and even then, a sharp admonition over the snout was requisite to make them remember they were pigs. The dogs, which were ready to bite them on the ears, or to bark at the refractory cows and calves, or at strangers like us, until told to be quiet, were lying on the dunghills that lay on the roadside; and those who bade them be quiet were leaning idly on the hay waggon or the stone wall, doing nothing more than trying to make us think they were not looking at us.

On being spoken to, one came and opened a gate to allow us entrance to the front of the castle, and another went the back way to carry our compliments to the inmates and our request to be admitted to the interior. The front shewed us the windows partly built up and the roof wholly carried away. It may have been a pleasant house, it occupies a fine situation, and is surrounded by ground which, if it has not been, might be made, one of the finest pleasure parks in the world; but at all times the house must have been plain. A red-painted door, made to fit its place by a great portion of the doorway being built up to fit it, being opened to us from the inside, we entered and found the main portion of the building entirely cleared of its partitions and party walls. It was all open above; and what had once been the dining-room, parlour, and library floors, was now a flower garden. During the time the house was occupied by the O'Connor family, who rented it from the Marquis Wellesley, it was burned, save in the wing towards the rear, where the present inhabitants now live. To this wing we proceeded; and the young lady who kindly led the way, on taking us to what is now a comfortably furnished parlour, told us that the common belief was, that in this room the Duke of Wellington and the other members of the Mornington family were born. There was a spacious bow window looking out upon the garden and farm-yard, which occupied ground sloping from this to a streamlet below, distant 100 or 200 yards. Inside the room was a large circular recess, now shelved round, the shelves filled with articles of ornament and use—glass, china, and such like. This recess is quite large enough to have held a large bed; and, as we were told, did hold the family couch of the Countess of Mornington, and subsequently that of the mother of Feargus O'Connor.

When about to leave Trim on this visit, I put a few questions to an old gentleman who stood by the doorway of the hotel, such as, "How far to Dangan Castle?" "Who lives there now?" and so on. He told me that he was a tailor, still carried on business in Trim, and had made clothes for the young Wellesleys when boys. He made clothes for the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, now Duke of Wellington, when a boy. He also did work for him when he was the Hon. Captain Wellesley, and came to Trim on the recruiting service. He remembered, "as distinctly as if it had been but yesterday," when the corporation of Trim elected this young officer to be one of their members in the Irish Parliament, when it was alleged that he had not attained his majority. On that occasion the nurse who attended at his birth was brought into the Court House at Trim, and he remembered seeing her, "as plainly as if it happened but yesterday," put on the witness's table and sworn, and she proved that that very day one-and-twenty years she saw the Hon. Arthur Wellesley born at Dangan Castle.

I found this venerable tradesman intelligent and instructive. His name is Sherlock. He and his brother still conduct a respectable business in Trim.

On leaving Dangan Castle we drove through the park, and returned by a road skirting its exterior. The sun had now gone down, and the marshy hollows wore a thin covering of white fog; which, as we came along, rose gradually thicker, until it seemed to be a sheet which the fields, tired with the heat and labour of the day, had drawn around them on going to bed. Where there was a height to which the fog had not reached, we had only to suppose that the world had gone to bed without a nightcap, and that this was its bare head.

NOTES FROM YORKSHIRE IN 1842.

"JOLLY good fellows the Yorkshire farmers; always ready with open door, open countenance, open hand, and open heart. Fact! They are, indeed, the best of fellows. You have been over a great part of England—so have I; but I doubt if ever you saw such honest, industrious, hospitable, well-doing, well-deserving men as the farmers of this district, all the way down the Tees, between this and Northallerton. I never did. Fact! Never saw a better set of fellows. We shall pay some of them a visit to-morrow."

So spoke a gentleman connected with public business in the north of Yorkshire and south of Durham, about the time that Lord John Russell's eight-shilling motion first startled the country last year, 1841. He so spoke to me; and I replied that I needed no further proofs of the hospitality of the district; all I had witnessed then and heard of previously convinced me that the people were a generous people; that, in fact, hospitality to strangers was characteristic of all English farmers in all parts of England.

"But," continued I, "that circumstance would prevent me from accompanying you to their houses. A day, being all I have to spare, would be consumed in a visit to one farm, if I may judge from what I have already experienced and from what you tell me."

"No," replied my friend, "we should merely call at one for a few minutes, and be mounted and off again to another, so that you might see the country. It is a splendid country."

"Why not go to-day?" said I.

"I cannot to-day; cannot, indeed," was the reply.

There was some mystery in this reply. It had been intended to go the circuit proposed on this very day; and now, without any reason being adduced, my friend put the journey off, so far as I was concerned, until next day. Having accompanied him a couple of miles or so, and walked round a farm-yard while he transacted some business with the farmer, he introduced me to the latter and departed, fixing the time of the grand tour for the day ensuing. I had heard of this farmer, and indeed had entertained a strong desire to see him, inasmuch as he was the reputed original of Boz's John Browdie, in "Nicholas Nickleby." Whether Mr Dickens copied this gentleman rustic, or ever saw him to copy, I cannot tell. But at no great distance the locality of Squeers, the Yorkshire schoolmaster was pointed out; and several other persons and circumstances depicted in the truthful fiction of Nickleby which nobody could mistake. I had expected to see a hearty, jolly, well-fed, well-to-do farmer, when I heard of his being *the* John Browdie, and I was not disappointed. But I saw him under great disadvantages; John (for such I shall call him, though that is not his name) was in low spirits. He had heard bad news; bad news from London; so very bad, that, after many preliminary signs of alarm and vexation, he said—"Aw dunnot knaw what to think on't. Aw's never be yable to haud on ageanst it."

Having a fear that some family affliction had befallen the good man, and that my presence could only be painful, and, moreover, having particular business to attend to at the neighbouring post-office, three or four miles distant, I offered my early farewell. But John said he would be glad to accompany me. He would be glad, he said, to tell me anything I wanted to know, shew me anything I wanted to see, direct me in any way I wished to proceed, if I would just tell him downrightly what my candid opinion was "aboot fwok i' Lunnon."

"There are such multitudes in London," said I, as we walked along, "such varieties of people, varieties of interests, varieties of means by which interests are pursued, such worlds within worlds in London, that to tell of the people who live there is impossible. In fact there are few regions on the face of this great globe so seldom and inefficiently explored as London."

"There's a most terrible din on street, Aw knaw," responded John. "Aw've been at Lunnon. But it beant fwok on streets Aw's axin aboot. Aw want to knaw aboot Parliament fwok."

"Oh! the Parliament. I suppose you have heard about the proposed alteration of the import duties; the lowering of the duties for the purpose of making sugar, and timber, and corn more plentiful?"

"Aw dunnot knaw nowt aboot sugar and timber, and nowt as to coorn, seavin' this, 'at Squire's sent a peaper doon fra Lunnon with orders 'at we bud write oor neames to't, if we wouldn't be every yan o' us ootreeght ruined."

"A petition against the alteration of the corn-laws, I suppose?"

"Aw dunnot knaw as to that; bud Aw've heerd a bonny teale aboot what some o' gertfolk at Lunnon 'at dunnot knaw nowt aboot what they dea are seayin they *will* dea. Squire knaws all aboot it, an's sent peapers to steward; an' steward's gooin' gettin' oor neames, an' seays we mud as weel droon oorsens i' Tees as not pud oor neames doon."

"Drown yourself in the Tees! Surely not. You must have heard a wrong account of the danger you are in, it cannot be so bad as you imagine. What did the paper say, the paper you signed?"

"Aw dunnot knaw; but oor neames wor wanted to't. Squire sent it frae Lunnon, an' steward brooght it when thoo came, an' told me such a teale aboot coorn not needin' to be sown no more, that Aw scarcely knaw what gertfolk can be dean, that Aw dunnot."

It was not difficult to perceive, now, that my friend had other business to do with the farmers, over whose farms we had proposed to ride a circuit of ten miles, than that which a stranger could be a convenient witness to. I could see clearly enough that he had touched John Browdie on the quick; for John had no other idea, no other expectation from an alteration of the corn-laws, than absolute ruin. I spoke of the sugar and timber duties, which were a part of the same question at that time; but he had heard nothing of them. He admitted, however, that better timber and cheaper sugar would be great benefits; and so would cheaper bread, he ultimately admitted, *were it possible to get it.* I saw ample evidence around us to prove the possibility of getting cheaper bread.

There was within view the beautiful woods surrounding Rokeby Hall, the seat of Squire Morritt. Also the woods, and water, and rocks that alternately soften and embolden the scene in which the castle of the ancient Cliffords is hidden. Also the continuation of the same woods, and water, and rocks, which shelter and beautify, and give magnificence to the lordly seat of Archdeacon Headlem. Also the woods and preserves that shelter the pleasant retreat of Squire Craddock. Further off, and on higher ground, the woods and Hall of Barningham. Further still, in another direction, the princely domain of Raby Castle, the seat of the Clevelands. At a nearer distance, the towers of Barnard Castle, which have withstood the shock of many a siege; which are the remnants of feudal times, when lords held rule within and serfs did homage without; which now have no lords within, save the snail and the worm, and no serfs without, save creatures more miserable than they, the *unemployed*, unfed, ragged, barefooted carpet-weavers, crawling on the ledges of the rocks, and beneath the ancient walls, seeking from the dark surges of the Tees what the fair fields of the broad estates deny them; namely, *food.* However, to look at the hungry dyers and weavers, either fishing in the river or idling on the streets, or murmuring at hard times in their unfurnished houses, was not our object.

The situation of the town of Barnard Castle is perhaps too low to be seen from the spot on which I stood previous to this digression; and the condition of its inhabitants is most certainly lower than I had intended to go in relating my conversations with the farmers. I had only intended to take a glance at the parks, and halls, and castles, and name a few of the landlords, which having done, we shall revert to John Browdie, and with this intermediate observation, that I need neither say whose tenant he is nor adhere to the very letter of his dialect.

"Those fields through which we have passed," said I, "and this now on our left hand are wet—they want draining. Those tufts of rushes, and that bent and sour grass, prove the soil to be wet. How much of the field is lost in this way do you think?"

"Why," he replied, "you see the whole field is the same: in fact, the soil hereabouts has a tendency to run that way when it lies long in grass."

"Why let it lie long in grass?" I asked. "Why not cultivate it? And that immense meadow beneath, entirely overgrown with rushes, that must be excellent soil if drained and limed. And this next field, and the one beyond, seem much the same. Why not plough, and sow, and reap, and increase the supply of corn?"

"Because that would require me to have more horses, and ploughs, and men, and I do not find the corn crops so beneficial as to induce me to plough oftener than I do; at any rate, the place *pays* as it is."

"How much of the farm may there be in grass?"

"Better than half; or somewhere thereabout."

"And of this field fully one-third is rushes and foul grass."

"Yes, I should say there is; but in winter time, in frosty weather, we find our cattle pick up some of that roughness, it is not all loss as you seem to think."

"But good straw, and hay, and turnips would be better for the cattle than anything they can get here?"

"Very true; but these are not grown without expense."

"No, not without expense; but why not pay the expense—the expense of reclaiming this very field, for instance?"

"*And who might reap the benefit?*" asked John Browdie.

Thus the subject came to a point—the main point—at once. We were now led to talk of leases and a security for the repayment of the expense of improving land such as that around us. Having taken particular notice of the rocks which formed the barriers and beds of the Tees, the Greta, and other rivers and streams in that district, I was well assured that limestone was to be had in any quantity. I found, however, that no advantage was taken of its abundant presence. Instead of public limeworks issuing their fructifying agency to the soil, and drawing in wealth to some enterprising practical chemist, aye, a princely income, as I know some lime-burners to have reaped, (the late Earl of Elgin for instance,) there were at six or seven miles' distance a few wretched pits, and these only half in use. I stood aghast when I saw those miserable contrivances for burning lime, and asked the workmen if they had never seen a proper lime-kiln, at the same time describing one; but they knew of no other mode of burning lime than the primitive method they used. I cannot here enter on a description of proper lime-burning—for of itself it is a large subject; but these pits, with an inexhaustible supply of rock, were within half-a-mile of the great London-road, overlooking the great *coal* county of Durham; and the rock was easy of access, with no difficulty as regarded the clearance from water. All which conveniences I have known purchased at the price of L.12,000, with a continuance of machinery to continue those conveniences, which were here natural or ready-made.

Here, then, was one of the best agencies of fertilization utterly neglected; for John Browdie and his neighbours did not even patronize these works, easy as they were of access, the cause of which neglect was the want of security in their farms. At an average John's farm was worth twelve shillings an acre as it then stood—that was his rent—and I have not the slightest diffidence in comparing the soil to that of farms which I know (say portions of the Marchmont estate, belonging to the member for Berwickshire) situate at a distance of from twenty to thirty miles from lime, and which pay *two pounds an acre*, producing a proportionate quantity of grain over that of John Browdie. Has the nation, then, no right to demand that the soil of England shall be better cultivated?

As that part of Yorkshire and adjoining border of Durham which I have been speaking of is in such want of lime properly applied, and as lime might be so easily obtained, I proceed to give a few proofs of the great changes produced by this article in some parts of the kingdom where it has been judiciously used:—"When lime, whether freshly burned or slaked, is mixed with any moist, fibrous, vegetable matter, there is a strong action between the lime and the vegetable matter, and they form a kind of compost together, of which a part is usually soluble in water. By this kind of operation, lime renders matter which was before comparatively inert nutritive."—*Sir H. Davy.*

"The application of lime occasionally has effected a complete change in the husbandry of Scotland. Since the first introduction of turnips and the sown grasses, the condition of the live stock has been greatly improved; and, from applying lime in the cultivation of sheep, dairy, and tillage husbandry, which require to be administered to the above plants, an immense quantity of waste and hitherto unproductive land has been brought into active fertility."—*Jackson's Prize Essays.*

"By the aid of lime, immense tracts of land have been brought into cultivation in the southern parts of Scotland. Lime in unison with turnip husbandry has rendered fertile eminences on the banks of the Tweed which were formerly inaccessible to the plough."—*Highland Society's Reports.*

It is necessary, however, to have some chemical knowledge of the soil (an easy matter to acquire) to know when lime should be applied by itself or in connection with other materials. If the soil is not fibrous, like John Browdie's, the lime would require to be prepared with vegetable matter.

Latterly, lime has been applied with astonishing success to such rough fields as that of John Browdie without being ploughed. Accident prevented a farmer from ploughing a moorland field which he had spread lime on, and to his astonishment the following year brought a beautiful crop of white clover and sweet grasses, instead of heath, bent, rushes, and coarse grass. When this became known, other farmers tried the appliance—a "top-dressing," it is now called; and here are a few of their experiments, with their results:—"Mr Purdie's sheep-farm in Tweeddale was rented at two shillings an acre; was moorish land, with rough bent and heath; got a top-dressing of lime, and produced natural white clover and sweet grasses; pays now a rent of L.1 an acre, and has done so for some years with a profit. The expense, including cartage, was L.5 per acre." "At Whim, fourteen miles south of Edinburgh, the top-dressing was applied at the rate of fifty bolls an acre," (four Winchester bushels is a boll.) "At the period of our inspection, May 1835, the grass was excellent, feeding a fine flock of sheep, and neither heath nor bent could be discovered, although the field was covered with these plants in its original state. The expense was about L.3 : 15s. per acre in dressing. The extent of drainage could not be ascertained. The field was enclosed and surrounded with plantations, which must have long since paid themselves, leaving the present stock of timber as profit; and it cannot be rating the whole reclamation too low at L.6 or L.7 per acre, and the ground is at present rented at L.2 per acre. There are few situations in Scotland or in England, where improvements could be undertaken with less prospect of success than at Whim."—*Jackson.*

"In the parish of Muirkirk, Admiral Stewart limed thirty acres of moss-land all covered with heath, and which per year was let for L.5; but, in a few years after the application, it rose to L.30 per annum."—*Farmer's Magazine.*

"Mr Maclean of Mark gives a statement of the top-dressing of his moorish soil. The original worth of the land he estimates at five shillings per acre, which, at twenty-five years' purchase, is L.6 : 5s.; six bushels of lime at one shilling and sevenpence, carriage, &c., L.5 : 15s., making in all L.12. In two years it will be worth L.1 per acre at the most moderate calculation, and some of it is even worth L.1 : 10s. This, at twenty-five years' purchase, is L.25, giving a profit L.13 per acre."—*General Report of Scotland.*

These are a few instances of what lime will do on the *very worst of soils and worst of situations.* It renders land that would be absolutely worthless, if in the hands of a tenant without a lease, more profitable than the badly cultivated, yet naturally good, land of the district of Teesdale. In some grass fields, near the lime pits, I observed the moss plant in such abundance that grass was quite subdued by it.

"Who farms those fields?" asked I of a carpenter who accompanied me from the village of Bolderon to shew the lime pits.

"They belong," said he, "to a butter-merchant of Islington, near London. He got them some years ago, intending to make them assist his London business, but they have been a loss, and he is tired of them."

"And no wonder that he should," I replied; "but if he does business in the butter and pork line in Islington, as you say, there is some excuse for him in not attending to a farm at 250 miles distance. Yet how easily might that pernicious moss be eradicated and the sweetest of grasses produced in its place, by an application of hot lime, by those means which surround the very fields requiring their agency."

"We have an opinion here," observed the carpenter, "that lime does not work the good effects near to where it is produced as it does at a distance."

"That depends entirely," I replied, "on how the lime is applied. If spread hot and powdery on this moss it would destroy everything for a season; but the most luxuriant natural clover would rise the following year. If this was ploughed and lime applied, the effects might be otherwise; but a slight knowledge of practical chemistry would enable the farmer to know if those ingredients were in the soil which would act prejudicially with lime; and if they were, or rather, I should say, if those ingredients were not present which would act beneficially, the effect could be controlled by mingling the lime with vegetable matter. But the presumption is, that nothing is required save the lime itself; the abundance of that moss pleads strongly for lime."

To this my companion replied, as indeed did all others in those parts, that he never heard of such a thing as an application of lime producing an entire change of plants, without any other aid. It seemed strange, he said, that hot lime, applied to the surface of mossy or heathy lands should produce white clover. And so it is strange, all nature's works are strange, but it is true nevertheless.

But as it is the good land of England that more especially requires improvement, and as these instances of improvement, now adduced, refer chiefly to the worst of lands, I shall at another time take other instances in other situations. Meantime the following facts seem to be supported by the foregoing:—

1. That landlords, to maintain a political control over their tenants, sacrifice a large pecuniary interest.
2. That they do so, and the tenant submits thereto, through ignorance of what might enrich both.
3. That leases would give rise to energy, energy would improve the soil, and the improvement of the soil would add to the wealth of landowners, cultivators, and consumers.
4. That Teesdale, like Lancashire, Buckingham, Kent, and other districts described in former letters, is badly cultivated, and that fewer people are employed than might be.
5. That the means of improvement exist there as everywhere else, and only need to be taken advantage of in union with capital, skill, and industry, *to give us more bread at a less price.**

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* About two years after the publication of this letter, a landowner in Teesdale wrote to me saying that he had acted on its suggestions with great success in his first efforts, and expected to do much more. I have not heard from him since.

TEESDALE.

"I should be sorry, gentlemen," I observed, in the conversation which still continued in the King's Arms, Barnard Castle, between A., the Tory farmer, B., the Tory farmer and innkeeper, C. the Whig farmer and cattle-dealer, John Browdie, and myself; "I should be sorry, gentlemen, to let you remain in the belief that I boast of the improved agriculture of Scotland, because I have been a ploughman on the other side of the Tweed. I admit at once that the Scottish farmers borrowed their first improvements from England. Previous to 1759 there was not an attempt made in Scotland towards the cultivation which now exists; and though Mr Dawson of Frogden, Roxburghshire, returned from Norfolk, and commenced operations in the Norfolk style in that year, it was not until many years after that his system took root. He had first a difficulty in getting Scotchmen, so wedded were they to old customs, to learn to plough the land as he sought to teach them. Ultimately ploughmen bred on his farm got situations elsewhere, at higher wages, and in preference to all others, still his system of ploughing, cropping, and manuring was not followed; nothing would excite the emulation of his neighbours but the fact of his becoming rich. They at last opened their eyes, and saw that he was rich; and what example, and reason, and argument had failed to do, *avarice* accomplished. Mr Dawson had become rich, while his neighbours, who spoke of his 'maggots,' and 'whims,' and 'new-fangled notions,' remained poor. They had no love for the 'new-fangled notions,' they had no ear for the arguments with which he defended them; but they had a desire for the wealth; and they arose and opened their eyes, and put on their strength, and became competitors in the race of improvements, until (without any original design) they completely changed the face of their once sterile country.

"If it is any comfort to those of the English farmers who have been standing still while the Scotch have been advancing, I will at once admit the meanness from which the latter took their start. A more wretched population, as regards industry and domestic comforts, than the Scotch of eighty years ago, is, perhaps, not now met with in the civilized world. But the system, which has so completely changed the face of a country and the condition of a people, is only the more remarkable, and worthy of being imitated. I am at this moment in possession of some documents from which I shall read you extracts. The 'New Statistical Account of Scotland,' drawn up by the clergyman of each parish, speaks thus:—

"PARISH OF MELROSE, ROXBURGHSHIRE.—'The displacing of the old small tenants was at first viewed with deep regret, but the introduction of a better and more spirited style of agriculture, which immediately followed the rapid improvement of the country, which in a limited period *has raised the rental* (mark this, and mark it well) *of this parish from* L.4000 *a-year to nearly* L.20,000 ! besides, the improved condition of the agricultural labourers seems to shew that it was a change for the better.'

"PARISH OF MOFFAT, DUMFRIESSHIRE.—'In the cultivation of the arable soils a very great improvement has been made; and by removing obstructions, duly manuring and working the lands, observing a proper improved rotation, and keeping down or destroying noxious weeds—and further, by cultivating the most valuable crops—it is not too much to say that, within forty years, the returns of the arable soils have become far better, as well as more abundant. *Let any one now look into the cottages, and he will find them nearly, or fully, as comfortable as the farm houses were forty years ago; and let him compare the dress of the cottagers and their mode of living with that of the farmers at the above distance of time, and he will find that at present they are not greatly inferior!*'

"Such, gentlemen, is the change in Scotland only since the beginning of the present century; but you Teesdale farmers, save in improving the breed of your stock, which in itself is meritorious, so far as it goes, have been, comparatively speaking, standing still. Here is another extract, which, from my personal knowledge, I know to be applicable to many parts of Scotland; it is from the

"PARISH OF UDNEY, ABERDEENSHIRE.—'There is an emulation in most cases between the proprietor and his tenants, whether the former shall be the more liberal or the latter the more industrious. The result has been, that the rental of the parish, forty years ago little more than about L.2000, is now above L.7000, and the farmer's capital has increased more in proportion. At the time of the former statistical account (1794) a great proportion of the parish was covered with broom, whins, (furze,) and bulrushes. These are now extirpated, and the eye meets with nothing but cultivated and neatly enclosed fields.' Here also is the

"PARISH OF JEDBURGH.—'Since the period when the last statistical account was written, the state of the parish has been much improved. Farms which were entirely pastoral, now bear luxuriant crops, the fields have been neatly enclosed with hedges, waste ground has been planted, the style of dwelling-houses is now vastly superior, the means of communication have been greatly enlarged, the population has been nearly doubled, and all classes seem to enjoy a large share of the comforts of civilized society.' To this may be added, (from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,) 'The progress of a correct system of agriculture is generally allowed to have been more rapid in Scotland than in England; the effects, at least, have been more conspicuous. Not only the rents paid in Scotland, but the actual produce per acre, *and, still more, the disposable produce*, seem to be greater than in England, wherever the comparison is made with land of similar quality, and with an allowance for the difference in climate and markets.' To these I shall make one other extract, and only one. It is from the excellent 'Treatise on Agriculture,' by Mr James Jackson, (published by Messrs Chambers, Edinburgh.) Within the last ten or fifteen years the improvements in Scottish husbandry have been conducted on a most extensive scale. Steam power has been introduced in many districts to move thrashing machinery, *and a stack of grain* (mark this, you who have no thrashing-mills of any kind) *may at any time be dressed and bagged for market in a few hours, and at an inconsiderable expense.* The use of the subsoil plough, by which fresh materials are constantly thrown into the mould available for vegetation, is another important improvement; but both of these sink into insignificance when compared with the system of thorough draining by means of hollow tiles, which for the last ten years has been extending over the country, and everywhere immensely increasing the productiveness of the soil. The consequence of all these agricultural improvements, in combination with the progress of commercial wealth, is, that the Scotland of the present day is a very different thing from the Scotland of sixty or seventy years ago, when its poor and wretched condition excited the sarcasms of Churchill and Johnson.'

"Now, Mr John Browdie, those fields of yours, so much in want of draining, require the following outlay:—For an acre, your drains, two feet deep and fifteen feet apart, will cost L.7 : 7 : 9; eighteen feet apart, L.6 : 3 : 1¾; twenty-four feet apart, L.4 : 12 : 4; thirty feet apart, L.3 : 3 : 10. If three feet deep, and fifteen feet apart, they will cost L.9 : 8 : 0½. The other distances of eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty feet apart, being respectively L.7 : 16 : 8, L.5 : 17 : 6, and L.4 : 13 : 11¾. These sums include all expenses; the cutting of the two feet drains being threepence per rood of six lineal yards; and of the three feet drains, fivepence halfpenny. But it is necessary to remark that the acre thus calculated is a Scotch acre, and the wages Scotch wages. You would, therefore, accomplish it somewhat cheaper than at these sums, as four Scotch acres make five English, and your wages to work-people are not one-fifth more than those paid in Scotland. Sir James Graham, a spirited agriculturist, made an experiment on a field of eight acres of the wettest and poorest land on his Cumberland estate. It was in pasture of the coarsest description, (not worse, however, than some of yours, Mr John Browdie, although yours is naturally much better land,) overrun with rushes and other aquatic plants, and was rented at *four shillings and sixpence an acre.* The field was drained and ploughed by the subsoil plough (of which I have not yet spoken) and manured. Lime was not by any means attainable there as in Teesdale, and therefore common manure was used. The crop planted was potatoes, which that year turned out a failure all over Cumberland, but which were on this field above an average crop, yielding twelve tons per acre."

After adducing several more instances of profits reaped from draining by those who were either owners of the soil or leaseholders, I mentioned the virtues of saltpetre and nitrate of soda, as ascertained by several farmers, particularly by a gentleman in Kent, who communicated the astonishing result to the *Farmer's Magazine.* But John Browdie would not hear of such nonsense, as he termed it.

"Yan mud as weel believe 'at man o' muin meade coorn grow, as soda an' saltpetre. Nay, nay," said he, "thawt wunnot dea; thawts beant nea better nor bean dust; nonsense."

"And yet," said I, "bone dust has proved a powerful agent of fertilization."

Our conversation was now diverted to "ships, colonies, and commerce," by C., the free-trader, in course of which "steamboats and railways" were spoken of.

"I'll tell you what it is," said B. the farmer and innkeeper, "if you would search the history of inventions through and through, you would find no two to equal in mischief steamboats and railways. They've ruined parts of this country already, and they'll ruin it more, and that will be seen."

"Why did you, as a posting innkeeper, not protect yourself as the landlords do by the corn-laws?" asked C.

"How could I?" demanded the innkeeper.

"How could you?" retorted C., "why, by passing a law forbidding the construction of steam-engines and the building of steamboats, and by refusing assent to all railway bills."

"But," objected the other, "how was that to be done?"

"How was it to be done?" said C. "By returning a majority of innkeepers as members of Parliament, to be sure."

"But," urged the other, "we were not powerful enough."

"No," said C., "you were not; but you are monopolist enough to have done it if you could; to have prohibited the making of all engines and railways, if you had had the power. And you would have done so, forgetting that our fathers set up the chaises, and mails, and turnpike gates, and posting-houses, to the deprivation of our grandfathers, who travelled with packhorses on bridle-roads, and were content with a journey to London which occupied a fortnight. There is a majority of landowners in Parliament, and hence the shackles on ships, manufactures, and commerce. Had there been a majority of post-boys or innkeepers, we would have had no railways nor steamboats; and had our grandfathers returned a majority of packhorse carriers, there would have been no stage-coaches nor posting for you to lose? Therefore, according to your own admission, the strongest protect themselves, and to enable them we are called on by the estate agents to sign petitions. As an innkeeper they left you to perish, but as a farmer they send intimation to you from London by express to sign petitions, else you will be ruined."

Such were the home-thrusts of C., the cattle-dealer, to which John Browdie responded,

"Ods maakins! an they'd let us aleane we'd dea weel eneaff."

"With your rushes, and sour grass, and foul water?" said the cattle-dealer.

"Friend," responded John, "look at yersen; look at yawm, afoore ye coom t' maw faults."

"And so I do," said the cattle-dealer; "but I cannot improve land without a lease any more than you can; and there is this difference between us—you would let things remain as they are, I would have a change for the better."

At this moment John Browdie heard some sound, or smelt some flavour, which in a moment unpoliticalized him. He started to his feet, and exclaimed,

"Dang politics! Dang parliamenters! Let's oop steairs an' topple into pleaces for guid dinner!"

HOW TO GET MORE BREAD AT A LOWER PRICE, WITH PRESENT RENTS TO THE LANDLORDS.

March 9, 1842.

My Lord Stanley,—Your duties as Colonial Secretary; your recent announcement of a new measure to regulate the sale of land in the colonies; your able exposition of the evils arising from the present system of land sales; the insecurity which the frequent changes in land sales have produced; the stoppage of improvements which insecurity has produced; the necessity for a new law whereon to found security ere the colonies can improve as your Lordship desires to see them improved; these circumstances, united to my recollection of the insecurity, waste land, and unmoving condition of your own tenantry in Lancashire, embolden me to address you, and crave the advantage of your great talents and high position to the better cultivation of England; to the production of *more bread at a lower price, with present rents to the landlords.* Surely there can be no objection to this plea? There is no objection to it, I believe, so long as it exists in mere words; but the moment we require a practical compliance, it is objected to. How many advantages the landlords may count on from the present tenant-at-will system beyond the political subjugation of the farmers, I know not; but I never heard one of the advantages named in any conversation, even with those who advocate the letting of old things alone; while on every hand, in every county of England, the disadvantages stand before the eye with a melancholy reality. There is no advantage gained politically, because tenants, even with twenty years' leases, will always have a tendency to coincide with their landlords. The Conservatives returned for such counties as Berwick and Haddington, where the great majority of the voters are farmers holding leases from Conservative landlords, prove this. If a farmer has a fair bargain—and it is always a landlord's interest to give him a fair bargain—he will have no desire to leave the farm when his lease expires. He will have a desire quite the reverse; because the interests and the personal associations of himself and family with the neighbourhood they have so long lived in, will always remind him that he must not stand in hostility to his landlord. On this point, therefore, you have no plea of advantage. But I do not advocate the granting of leases with any idea of the farmers becoming politically independent. The subject is a more important one than that of party strife; it is a national question, and points to benefits for all, with injury to none.

Presuming then, nay, claiming of your Lordship to admit that you have no advantages from the present system which lease-giving would not secure to you, I shall shew you a few of the many disadvantages accruing to all, to corn growers and corn eaters; and in doing so, shall take the liberty of conducting your Lordship to those vast estates which belong to your family.

We shall not at present go to Knowsley. We shall first go to that broad tract of land comprising the townships of Pilkington and Bury. As we emerge from smoky Manchester, we get a glimpse of the estates of Lord Wilton and others, but I must be understood to include all the landlords of your county, whether Whigs or Tories, or, like Trafford of Trafford, moving with five hundred tenantry in an entire lump from one party to the other, and *vice versa*, different at each election. There is no exception to be made in favour of a single landlord, and therefore they need not be named. Even the great mill-owners who have bought estates, and who might be supposed to have acquired some practical experience of the productive qualities of *capital, security, and energy*, sit down on them, too happy at having arrived at the rank of landowners to advance beyond the point at which the aristocracy are halting. Emerging from smoky Manchester, as I said, we see grounds belonging to various proprietors. If our ears have been open and our eyes, and if our minds have not been more insensible than ears deafened and eyes shut, we must have seen enough of poverty in Manchester. Enough of dirty mud, of dirty wretchedness, ill health, squalid hunger, and unanswered surprise at inquiring why those thousands of human beings so ill clothed, ill lodged, and ill fed, with bread so scarce and dear, do not die faster than they do! But what should we think when, once clear of all this, and breathing God's fresh air on Lord Wilton's and Lord Derby's estates, to see within a short distance some three hundred fields, which ought not to make more than forty moderate-sized enclosures? To observe that not only is the land wasted by seven times more fences than is necessary for either shelter or subdivision of property; but that each five hundred yards of fence occupies space enough for a quarter of wheat to grow? To observe that in most of those fields, in addition to the waste, by enormous double hedges, and open ditches, and ditch banks, in seven times greater number than requisite, there are waste ridges at the ends, neither ploughed, nor delved, nor sown, nor planted? To observe that in ploughing, the loss of time for men and horses must be, in turnings, seven times more than necessary; and that, supposing the waste ridges not to exist, but to be ploughed up and sown, there must be in all drilled crops, as potatoes and turnips, much waste by the trampling of horses? To observe that the land is generally sour, and wet, and foul, undrained and unweeded; that the waste ridges and ditch banks produce weeds, the seed of which the wind sows in all directions; that the wide ditches contain foul water, the malarious effects of which impregnate the air, and the presence of which destroys even the natural drainage of the soil? To observe that these fields do not belong to small cultivators, and that, therefore, there is no plea for not breaking the mup? To observe that a man with a spade in his hand could be employed in every corner of every field, letting the water run off, and thereby saving often an acre of grain in wet weather; but to observe that the man with the spade is not employed at that or any other work of a like kind? To observe that there is no thrashing-mill on the farm, and to hear some of the farmers declare, as they are living men, that though Lancashire has mills and machinery for almost all kinds of work, *they never heard of machinery for thrashing corn!* To observe, in the last place, that every improvement of the last fifty years (as introduced with such great advantage on well cultivated farms) is there awanting; and that every evil, by good farmers discarded, is there present; and that your tenants call out—"This Anti-Corn-Law League will be the destruction of us! If we are not protected by the corn-law, how are we to cultivate our land?" To be observers of such monstrous absurdities as we would see and hear on those farms, my Lord Stanley, (and in all parts of Lancashire,) would astonish us more than our Manchester surprise; namely, why don't the hungry, ragged, diseased poor of Manchester die faster than they do?

There is a green hill, a beautiful piece of ground, moderately elevated, on one of your farms in Pilkington township, on which I stood last year—a bright summer's day it was—and had pointed out to me the various towns, and factories, and landed estates within view of it. It is not too much to say that the globe's surface has no such other display of the vastness of human enterprise. The great manufacturing towns of Lancashire, Manchester, Salford, Oldham, Rochdale, Bury, Bolton, Blackburn, Wigan, Ashton, Leigh, Newton, and the numerous factories which have arisen and given birth to villages in the intermediate distances, stand distinct before the eye, or are represented by their atmospheres of smoke. Railways intersect the county on all sides, and heavy trains shoot along in every direction. Canals, too, despite the railways, have their heavy traffic; and all manner of arts are in operation to increase manufacturing wealth. In all of those towns there is a bread-eating people, none of whom, judging by wages, have cheap bread, many of whom have not enough of bread, some of whom have no bread at all—aye, none at all, my Lord. While standing on that elevated spot, and thinking on the subjects which the view suggested, particularly the poverty of the working people in the towns, all the sides of free trade rose before me ; also over-populousness, over-speculation, unsound currency, expensive government, and unwholesome legislation ! all sides of those questions rose before the mind's eye with their difficulties, and, class interests considered, presented more reasons for despair than hope. But there was one remedy unconnected with legislation, and against which no class interest should be urged, one means by which the towns within view could be better supplied with corn, namely, by the land within view being better cultivated.

My Lord, a word about Knowsley Park. You could not fail to observe last summer the splendid crops of potatoes and Swedish turnips that grew on each side of the approach to the Hall from the Liverpool Road. You are aware, perhaps, that the preparing of the soil for the seed, with the summer clearing of the crops, was done in a different manner from the common style of working in Lancashire. You must, doubtless, know that the soil was previously sour, wet, and profitless, and that your noble father has allowed the Tweedside ploughmen, who within these last few years have been brought to Knowsley, to break up portions of the vast park that surrounds the ancient hall of your forefathers, for the purpose of improving the soil, to be again laid down in permanent grass. Perhaps you may have heard that your noble neighbour, Lord Sefton, has had one of those Tweedside men from Knowsley, whom he has elevated to the management of his own farm. Knowing those circumstances, the improvements made and still making in Knowsley Park, the splendid crops raised from a formerly unproductive soil, your Lordship must also well know that the Tweedside system of working is superior to the Lancashire system. But it can never be introduced to the Knowsley estate beyond the bounds of Knowsley Park, *unless the tenants obtain leases.* Within the park, Lord Derby's money pays the first expense of the improvements, and the improvements afterwards pay for themselves. Beyond the park, the farmers have either no money or no security to obtain it; and if they have both, they are still without the security of reaping the profits derivable from the Tweedside style of working within.

You are aware, my Lord, that the cultivators of the soil of New South Wales must have security in their property.

Why then withhold it from the tenants of Knowsley? At least, why not use your influence with your noble father to obtain it? Were agricultural emigrants as unprotected, and, consequently, as void of enterprise and as wasteful of natural advantages as your tenants, our colonies would perish; your office would be the registry of famine and death.*

LETTER TO THE LANDOWNERS OF ENGLAND.

March 9, 1842.

My Lords and Gentlemen, owners of the soil of England,—My father had a kailyard. It was the same piece of ground through all my recollection; for he laboured many, very many, years on the same farm. He was poor. This kailyard (cottage garden) was small; about one hundred feet long by forty-five feet broad. We could not afford an inch of it to lie waste. We dug into the roots of the hedge, encroached on every thorn or holly-bush, above and below, until they were trained into respectable fences, seemly to look on, serviceable for their purpose, and unobtrusive on our little portion of the land of Britain. Five hundred square yards was not much. Yet though deaths, separations, and dispersions throughout the world, have severed us from that spot and the old thatched house for ever, it is a dear spot to me. Falsely do the owners of the soil estimate the feelings of the labouring poor who betake themselves to towns and trade, if they think that such become their enemies; and yet we hear such false things said. This world has not a holier place to me than our old kailyard! Save the grave in which my father lies, it was all of this great globe that was ours, though that only by sufferance. We had hard struggles, but from it we had some of the necessaries of life every day of the year, and occasionally the luxuries—aye, the luxuries; for we were not insensible to the melody of a thousand warblers on the surrounding bushes; to the hum of bees innumerable, busy as ourselves; nor to the beauty of summer Sabbath days, when, in addition to the furnishings for dinner, we could cull a nosegay; and we have had more substantial luxuries when winter came and these disappeared. Many is the time and oft, my Lords and Gentlemen, that I have taken a hare or a rabbit out of our kailyard, how I got hold of them I shall not tell you. They came there of their own accord. They could not live without eating. We were like them, and none of you were one whit the poorer, nor had one day's less sport.

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* Since the date of this letter, the Knowsley tenants are assisted with advances of money to drain their land.

But why do I speak of this nook of earth? The next sentence will tell you. It was cultivated every inch; but not better than a farm might be, and as many around it were. Few farms in England, keeping off Northumberland, and *yet* patches in some other counties, are so well farmed as that district was; and yet I do not recollect one year in which some new improvement did not arise. The fact is, the farmers in that part (I speak of the sea-coast district of Haddingtonshire) made profits. They paid rents of such an enormous amount as would make farmers in Kent sink into the earth, yet by their leases and capital they made profits. Improvements became a passion among them. The boisterous member for Knaresborough taunted the manufacturers the other day with having no other object in view when they built mills and employed cotton-spinners than the making of profits, which taunt is about as wisely conceived as the Rev. Mr Harris' celebrated prize-essay on *Mammon*, in which the sin of covetousness is most unmercifully belaboured. Wealth may be called Mammon, and profits covetousness; but where would arts and industry be developed without profits? What are our ships about on every sea, loaded with every nameable thing, from oysters to missionaries of the gospel; what are all intended for and intending, but profit? Did not Shakspeare write his prodigies of genius for a price, and amass wealth?

Did not the reverend essayist burrow in obscurity himself, until an advertisement proclaimed that L.200 would be given for the best essay on the greatest sin? And did he not then step forward, with a rare display of talent, denouncing the sin of covetousness, and win the prize of "filthy lucre?" And what does the member for Knaresborough wring his income from? An increase of wealth, a desire to possess, a desire to be something more than we are, to have something more than we have, is the very soul of all human energies. We should be sluggards, dying as wretchedly as we lived, had we not this principle, this motive to action, within us. It has been the dormancy of this principle in English agriculture, and the activity of it in trade, that has caused the present collision of those interests. Trade has arisen and struggled with a noble energy, because, without energy, it could have not only no profits but no existence. Agriculture has slept, because, sleeping, there was still a harvest to reap; the earth, and the air, and Heaven's goodness provide something, in spite of the sloth of the farmer and poverty of the farm. Trade has been going ahead, but agriculture, yoked to her by legal harness, has held her back; and because the one will not move, the other must stand still.

In East Lothian, Berwickshire, Roxburghshire, and Northumberland, the passion for profits has been as energetic, for many years past, as it has been in the manufacturing districts, and the production of wealth has been the same. The energy once awakened feeds itself. One improvement produces the necessity for another. If ever the saying that "every rood maintains its man" could be applied with justice to any country it could be applied to each rood in those countries just named. There is not a foot of land left untouched; and though those who eat, *or should eat*, the corn grown there, do not delve the roods of land, and eat and sleep on them, they produce the clothing and comforts of those that do. That desire to possess, which necessity excites, and that desire to possess which a love of wealth excites, have been and ever will be the motives to exertion. The first desire always begets the other, and so invariably, that there is scarcely any improvement in our industrial arts but has had its origin in necessity. Many of the mechanical inventions now in use in factories are the results of "*strikes*," and a necessity to supply the place of workmen. Others are the result of local obstacles in regard of situation. In the county of Berwick, the beautiful plough now in use on all properly cultivated farms, which performs better work, and more of it, with one half of the horse labour formerly required, and still wanted in most parts of England—this improved plough was the result of necessity. The Merse of Berwickshire is an extensive tract of rich clay, now so fertile as to yield the finest crops of wheat that reaper ever reaped, but formerly so stiff as to be, in many seasons, incapable of tillage. The olden ploughs still used in England would not enter it in a dry season, and the number of horses required to draw them sunk in it in a wet season. A mechanic, named Small, observing this, applied all his skill to the scientific construction of a new plough, and produced the one which has wrought such wonderful changes in the value of land *and quantity of crop raised* wherever it has been used.

I shall relate another result of necessity; and my reason for pressing those instances, truisms though they be, is, that I believe every foot of land in England will one day be cultivated in the best possible style, but not until sheer necessity has broken up the present wasteful and hunger-spreading system. I shall relate this instance of what necessity will do, and it will illustrate more doctrines than that which immediately suggests it. It is rather closely connected with personal affairs, but it may not be the less forcible because of that: the principle is a public one.

When Napoleon fell, prices fell: the war was done, and so were war prices. You, the landowners, protected yourselves by the corn-law; but the labourers, whose wages also fell, not because corn was cheap and the farmers unable to pay them, but because men had become plentiful, since war needed neither fresh stores nor fresh blood. Labourers, swarming in over-abundance, offered themselves at wages far beneath those of former years. Corn, equally tending to abundance, was prevented by your law from accommodating its supply to their ability. Well, there came the years 1816 and 1817. I was not old enough then to know the events which are now history. I must look into a book to find that in the first of those years the average price of wheat was 75s. 1d., and in the second 84s. 2d., with oats, and beans, and barley, the only grain which we could get a smell of, when eating was the question, at rates proportionably dear. But though only in my seventh year in 1817, I need no history to tell me what that season was. Oh Lord, that year! never can the memory of it perish in me but with myself. The prices give no idea of our difficulties. The rain poured and poured all the summer. The barley was maltened in the ear, the beans were bitter and clammy, and the oats either heated or rotten; all had to be kiln-dried ere the miller could grind them, and when the meal came home to us, any attempt to make it into the common bread or porridge was defeated. But even the supply of it failed. There were ten or eleven of us at home, all inclined to eat good bread, all unable to get even enough of bad. The potatoes had been a failure, bad and few of them. My father was at that time working for money wages, not as some others did, for payment in corn. What the wages actually amounted to I do not now know; but I know that every farthing of all that each member of the family, who could work, earned, went to buy the worst, and only grain within our reach, and of that there was not enough. As the winter came on, it became scarcer and scarcer, worse and worse, until, about that season of the new year when cares are thrown partially aside, and joy mollifies the labourer's heart for a day or two, the awful truth became known that the potatoes were within a week of being done. Those who buy a daily or weekly supply can have no conception of the dismay which this circumstance created in a family that never bought any, and had nothing now to buy them, *though in full employment.* The pig had been killed to save the potatoes before it was half grown. The cow ceased to give milk long before the usual time, in consequence of the unwholesome fodder. With two such years, there had been no money to buy clothes; and it sorely taxed a mother's toil and ingenuity to mend the old ones, night after night, week after week, while we lay in bed to allow of that operation, and cheat hunger of its supper. This might not have been so bad, landlords, had you allowed prices to fall to the level of wages. But we got over the winter in some way—God and my father and mother only know how; but *we* got over it, and *you* maintained your high prices and spent your high rents. And, mind you, this was in a part of the country where farm labourers are in a better condition than any part of Britain, and in the family of a man who said then, and said to the day of his death, that he had not spent "forty shillings on drink for forty years." But this only brings me to the instance of *necessity* already promised as an illustration. It might puzzle most economists to know what such a man as my father, with no ground of his own but the kailyard, could devise to avert such another year of distress. He did this:—During the spring and early months of summer, he devoted an hour or two every night, three or four when there was moonlight, all the time, in short, which he could steal from the twenty-four hours, after devoting ten to his employers, taking meals and rest, and performing family worship both night and morning, which last I never knew him omit under any circumstances. He devoted all the time spared from those offices, or, I should rather say, wrung from the hours of rest, to digging by the sides of the stone dykes that enclosed the farm fields and planting potatoes. Had he planted the waste ridges, the wide double embankments that skirt the fields of English farms, he would have made a fortune. But our ploughmen had ploughed to within eighteen inches or a foot of every fence; and there were no broad banks bordering the ditches, and ditches on each side of double hedges, which hedges between them, in England, contain another ridge of waste ground; our fences occupied the smallest possible space, and being regularly pruned to compel them into economy, they grew solid, and ornamental, and useful; they became, in reality, a fence.

However, it was at the narrow strips which skirted the stone walls that my father obtained leave to labour. The farmer was kind; but he objected to the roots of the thorn fences being disturbed. From these narrow sources we raised an additional and valuable supply of potatoes. Ultimately my father convinced the master that to plant them at the roots of the thorn hedges would do good to the latter, and it was done. In the course of a few years the neighbouring farmers perceived that those hedges so associated with the planting, weeding, hoeing, digging, and replanting of potatoes at their roots, were in a more healthy condition than others;

and the consequence is, that what was at first done by a poor man from necessity, is now universally done by the farmers from motives of prudence. They do not now tear the horses, the harness, the hedges, and the ploughman's hands, by ploughing so very close as they did before. They send men with spades to plant potatoes; and they have not only a crop on every inch of ground, but they have no weeds growing to seed, and spreading foulness over every field, as we see throughout the neglected farms of England.

Two years ago, when travelling over some of the best farms on the Duke of Buckingham's estate, I asked a farmer why he did not let some of his poor labourers (and there the labourers are certainly the poorest I have seen in any part of the kingdom) plant potatoes on the ample banks of waste ground by the hedge sides.

"Bless you," was the reply, "they would destroy all my hedges; they would break down everything; my fences are bad enough as they are."

"Yes," said I, "but I am pointing out an effectual way of restoring them. Give one of your men this bank (that on which we stood) to plant potatoes on for all the years intervening between this and next rotation of grass in this field, on condition that he keeps the fence in order; and by that time you will have a good hedge, depend on it you will."

"Ah!" asked he, "where might the man be before that time?"

"It would be an inducement to make him stop with you, if he were worth keeping," I replied; "while, if he went away, you would get another to take his bargain."

"But," objected the farmer, "where may I be myself?"

"Why," replied I, "you may stay here as long as you pay your rent and fulfil the conditions of your lease, I suppose?"

"Lease! Bless you, sir, I've got no lease: no, no, we don't have leases here; one year of a bad bargain is enough. The Duke can get rid of me, or me of him, when we tire of each other."

"And, therefore," said I, "it is not worth your while to mend your fences, level down those banks, cover in the ditches, drain your land, uproot those stumps and briars, and plant a neat hedge?"

"No," replied he, "it is not worth my while; the place as it is will do for me; it will do my time."

And thus, because the miserable satisfaction of compelling a tenant to vote for a particular party is an object with landlords, sloth lies on the fair fields of England and hunger wails on her city streets.

EMPLOYMENT FOR THE WINTER OF 1842–3 BY SPADE LABOUR.

Being no advocate for spade husbandry where the same results can be obtained by the plough, as, *perhaps*, by Smith's subsoil plough; being no advocate for a system of working which would make employment plentiful for a short period of the year and leave an increased number of labourers unemployed during a large portion of the year, I ask no one to abandon the plough and adopt the spade. All I ask is, that those gentlemen who have land overstocked already with labourers, and who would rather see those labourers at work for wages than hear of their being idle, starving, poaching, and rick-burning during the present winter, would set them to work. Having said this to guard against objections about creating a pauper population, and such like, which would be urged against a universal system of spade cultivation, I shall state the benefits to be obtained from its partial use in districts already over-populated.

1. *Of mere Digging, without Trenching.*—The late Sir John Sinclair, in his "Code of Agriculture," speaking of the neighbourhood of Hamilton, in Lanarkshire, says:—"A field was taken, which was cropped with beans the preceding year and the previous year with oats. Two ridges were dug and two ploughed alternately, and the whole was sown on the same day. A part both of the ploughed and dug was drilled with the garden hoe. The whole was reaped the same day, and, being thrashed out, the result was, that the dug land, sown broad-cast, was to the ploughed sown broad-cast as fifty-five bushels to forty-two; while the dug and drilled was as twenty and a quarter bushels to twelve and a quarter upon the ploughed and drilled. The additional grain produced was not the only beneficial result gained by digging; for in this instance there was also a great deal more straw, and the land was much more free of weeds and more easily cultivated next year."

Two objections may be urged against the foregoing, as an example for this recommendation; first, that Sir John Sinclair has not recorded the difference of expense between digging and ploughing, and that this year is now too far advanced for using the spade on a soil to be sown with wheat. To both objections I say, first, that though the expense of digging is not recorded, the augmented crops prove a considerable profit to have been obtained, and that *trenching* with the spade, which is an operation distinct from common digging, may be carried on for spring crops during all the winter, save in very hard frost or very deep snow.

2. *Of Trenching with the Spade.*—Mr James Jackson, author of several valuable essays on agriculture, and of a work entitled " A Treatise on Agriculture and Dairy Husbandry," the latter published by the Messrs Chambers of Edinburgh, and which, for less money than a farmer pays for his dinner and glass at an ordinary on market-days, may be had of any bookseller in the kingdom; in this eminently practical treatise Mr Jackson says—" The most correct account which we possess of the comparative value of spade husbandry in professional farming is that given by Mr Archibald Scott of Southfield, near Addington, Great Lothian, in an essay which he wrote upon the subject, and for which he obtained a prize of L.100. The following extract from it is well worth the consideration of practical farmers :—

" ' I am quite convinced there is but one way of employing the surplus population of England and Ireland, and that is by a judicious introduction of spade husbandry. And I am also convinced that a system of management can be pointed out, whereby every labourer in Great Britain may be employed, with profit to his employer and advantage to the country.

" ' I should think it will hardly be denied, by any one at all versant in agricultural operations, that work done by the spade is superior to work done by the plough, and that the only drawback is the great additional expense. Now, if I can shew that at a particular period of the rotation spade husbandry is not only superior, but less expensive, I shall have got over this difficulty.

" ' To shew that I am not a mere theorist but a practical man, I may mention that I rent a farm from the Earl of Wemyss in East Lothian, consisting of 530 Scotch acres; that I have cultivated land to a considerable extent with the spade for the last three years, and that the result has exceeded my most sanguine expectations. As facts are stubborn things, I shall lay before you my system, crops, expenses, and profits.

" ' In 1831 I determined to ascertain the difference of the expense and produce between trenching land with the spade and summer fallowing with the plough, in the usual way. I therefore trenched thirteen acres of my summer fallow break in the months of June and July. I found the soil about fourteen inches deep, and I turned it completely over, thereby putting up a clean and fresh soil in the room of the foul and exhausted mould, which I was careful to put at the bottom of the trench. This operation I found cost about L.4 : 10s. the Scotch acre, paying my labourers one shilling and sixpence per day. The rest of the field, which consisted of nine acres, I wrought with the plough in the usual way, giving it six furrows, with a suitable harrowing. I manured the field in August; the trenched got eight cart-loads per acre, the ploughed land sixteen. The field was sown in the middle of September. The whole turned out a bulky crop as to straw, particularly the trenched portion, which was very much lodged. On thrashing them out, I found them to stand as under:—

By trenched wheat per acre, fifty-two bushels, at 6s. 9d. a bushel,		L.17 11 0
To two years' rent, at L.2 : 10s. per acre,	L.5 0 0	
Expense of trenching,	4 10 0	
Seed, three bushels, at 6s. 9d.,	1 0 3	
Eight cart-loads of manure, at 4s.,	1 12 0	
Expenses of cutting, thrashing, and marketing,	1 10 0	
Profit,	3 18 9	
		17 11 0
By ploughed wheat per acre, forty-two bushels, at 6s. 9d.,		14 3 6
To two years' rent, at L.2 : 10s. per acre,	L.5 0 0	
Six furrows and harrowing, at 10s.,	3 0 0	
Seed, three bushels, at 6s. 9d.,	1 0 3	
Sixteen cart-loads of manure, at 4s.	3 4 0	
Expense of cutting, thrashing, and marketing,	1 10 0	
Profit,	0 9 3	
		L.14 3 6

"'I now saw that though it might be difficult to trench over my fallow break during the summer months, it was by no means making the most of the system, as the operation was not only more expensive, owing to the land being hard and dry during the summer, but that *it was a useless waste of time to take a whole year to perform an operation that could be as well done in a few weeks, provided labourers could be had.* And, as in all agricultural operations losing time is losing money, as the rent must be paid whether the land is carrying a crop or not, so that in taking one year to fallow the land and another to grow the crop, two years' rent must be charged against the crop, or at least there must be a rent charged against the rotation of crops for the year the land was fallowed. As I felt satisfied that by trenching with the spade *the land would derive all the advantages of a summer fallowing, and avoid all the disadvantages attending it,* I determined on trenching thirty-four acres of my fallow break, immediately on the crops being removed from the ground, and had it sown with wheat by the middle of November 1832. I may here remark, that I did not apply any manure, as I thought the former crop was injured by being too bulky. As it is now thrashed out and disposed of, the crop per acre stands as follows:—

By average of thirty-four bushels per acre, at 7s.,		L.15 8 0
To rent of land per acre,	L.2 10 0	
Expense of trenching,	4 0 0	
Seed,	1 1 0	
Cutting, thrashing, and marketing,	1 10 0	
Profit,	6 7 0	
		L.15 8 0

"'The advantages of trenching over summer fallowing are, in my opinion, very decided, as it is not only cheaper, but, as far as I can judge, much more effectual. I am so satisfied of this, not only from the experiments above noticed, but from the apparent condition of the land after it has carried the crop, that I have this autumn cultivated about a hundred acres with the spade, and the crops are at present very promising. When I first commenced I was laughed at by my neighbours, but now, when they see me persevering in what they considered a very chimerical project, they are suspending their judgment, and several of them have made considerable experiments this year. I should think there are at least 250 acres under crop cultivated in this way this season in East Lothian. In 1831, the year I commenced, there was not a single acre. *I have, therefore, the satisfaction of knowing that I have been the means of causing* L.1000 *to be spent this year amongst the labouring classes in my immediate neighbourhood;* and I feel confident that, should the season turn out favourable for the wheat crop, and fair prices be obtained, their employers will be handsomely remunerated for their outlay. I do not say that this system will succeed on every description of soil, as it must necessarily be of some depth to admit of the operation; but there are few districts where such soils will not be found in sufficient abundance to give ample employment to the surplus population of the neighbourhood.'"

Mr Jackson's work, from which the foregoing is quoted, contains a note, stating—"We have been informed that the Earl of Wemyss put an early stop to trenching on his farms, under a belief that the system pursued was calculated to exhaust the soil." Observing this note, and being aware that trenching was still pursued in some parts of the Lothians, though prohibited on Lord Wemyss' farms; also, having seen the labourers of the West of England swarming in poverty and idleness; and having designed to call attention to a means by which many of them might be profitably employed, I addressed myself, by letter, to Mr Scott, the originator of the trenching system, and also to Mr Jackson, who quoted Mr Scott's essay on the subject. A few days ago I received a letter from each of those gentlemen, in reply to my inquiries. Mr Scott says of the essay:—

"It was widely circulated at the time it was written. Every newspaper in Great Britain and Ireland got a copy of it, though many of them, I dare say, did not think it worth inserting in their columns; and every member of both houses of Parliament got a copy, besides almost every one else at all interested in the matter." This only shews how much trouble and expense may be incurred by individuals for the public benefit, and yet no benefit arise, because there happens to be no public excitement. Throughout all the south-western counties I did not, on my recent tour, meet a single farmer or agriculturist of any class, save the *Socialists* in Hampshire, who practised, or had ever heard of, trenching by the spade in lieu of ploughing or summer fallowing. Mr Scott, in the letter I have received, continues:—"You are quite right in supposing that I was prevented carrying out my system by my landlord, the Earl of Wemyss. I was also landed in a law suit with him, which cost me L.500, in consequence of my pursuing the system. The foundation of the suit was my infringing on the terms of my lease. * * * * I was therefore compelled to abandon the system, thoroughly disgusted at the treatment I received."

Mr Scott goes on to answer some queries I put to him about subsoil ploughing, and states that, without thorough draining, the subsoil plough is worse than useless. His remarks are valuable, but they are not connected with the subject immediately before us, save that, by thorough draining, many labourers might be employed who are now idle and starving, or idly working and poorly fed in the workhouses. But draining is expensive to be worth anything, and a tenant must be something more than tenants are generally under the present system of tenures before he can expend a large sum of money on draining, which is only to be repaid in future years. But many tenants might employ people to trench with the spade during the winter, and by sowing spring wheat have a profitable return. Though Mr Scott has been compelled to abandon the system, he is still as sanguine in its favour as ever; and Mr Jackson, in the letter which he has been kind enough to forward in reply to my queries on this subject, says—

"Trenching in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh has been practised in a different form than by Mr Scott. A strong furrow is first taken by the plough. This is followed by as many men as can keep the plough going, who dig spade deep, and throw the under mould on the top of the ploughed land as the plough proceeds; and its effects in the improvement of the potato, the turnip, and the clover crops in particular, have been astonishing. This method is much cheaper than that of Mr Scott; it is equally effective, and must admit a more free percolation of rain, or other water, *than subsoil ploughing does*."

Now, then, if the farmers cannot, through some impediment in their tenures, betake themselves to this means of improving their crops, employing the pauper population, and lessening the poor-rates, surely some of the nobility and gentry will try the system on their own account. Unless it be on the barest soils, this trenching may be successfully tried. Surely there is now excitement enough to draw the attention of the land-owners to the necessity of employing the poachers, the fire-raisers, and the starving population, out of whose superabundant numbers these criminals steal forth to commit crime. And here is a safe mode of employing them. Next year's potatoes, or turnips, or clover, or spring wheat will give an abundant profit.

THE MARKET PLACES AND MARKET DINNERS OF ENGLAND.

READING, IN BERKSHIRE.

9th May 1843.

Reading stands on both sides of that fine full-bodied river of third-rate magnitude, the Kennet, close by its junction with the Thames, thirty-seven miles west of London. The town consists of about thirty streets, besides lanes; has twenty thousand inhabitants, six parish churches, eight chapels, one theatre, sixteen principal inns, two places for public assemblies, three banking houses, one savings' bank, two newspapers, eight free schools, a county jail, a town hall, a county hospital, a medical dispensary, a public cemetery, several literary and scientific associations, two gas works, a water company, a railway station; two inspectors, two sergeants, and eighteen privates of police; a mayor, recorder, six aldermen, and eighteen councillors, two members of parliament; a good trade in flour and malt; a growing trade in farm implements, and all things for domestic use; a declining trade in the manufacture of silks, sacking, pins, ribbons, crape, umbrellas, floor cloth, and sail cloth; four annual fairs, and a corn and cattle market every Saturday.

The inhabitants are reputed to be religious, very sober, and very moral; but their town seems to have been dancing and not very soberly. Full-sized streets are thwarted in their course by small; the short confuse the long; the genteel mingle with the vulgar; and hard-working houses hold companionship with the idle; crooked lanes, narrow and unseemly, are seen in the company of flowery gardens; and the gardens, in their gaiety, have led away desert streets to places where you would not expect to find them. All seem to have been in confused motion at some time, and to have halted at that moment when the market place was squeezed out of all shape and just proportion. Like an Irishman's hat, it is bent in and bent out; narrow above and wider below; is down on one side, up on the other; looks round a corner; has its widest openings where least required; and in its various uses is the most unsuited for that use to which it is publicly devoted.

The cattle, sheep, and pigs have each taken apartments in other districts of the town; and latterly the greens and fruit have moved to where they can be seen. Sacks of wheat, oats, barley, beans, peas, tares, grass seeds, and ploughs, harrows, waggons, and sowing machines, all for sale, with some butter and some eggs, and some specifics in hawkers' trays, warranted to cure corns, toothache, rheumatics, lumbago, and many other troubles, internal and external, fill up the market place, save and except the ground occupied by corn factors, farmers, and farmers' men. Of these, in all, there are two or three hundred—let us mark some of them.

This tall, dark-featured gentleman, so well dressed, so frequently spoken to by others, is the cultivator of his own land. He feels the pressure of dull markets little himself, but he feels for others who suffer by markets. Observe the group around him. Two years ago they spurned him and his opinions, and shouted and cried what they will not now repeat—what they now most fervently curse, and wish they had never cheered and cried for. Can we hear their conversation? Yes; snatches of brief queries and briefer answers. "Parliament—Peel—no—yes—fact—Canada—flour—ruin—petition—useless—must—never—damn them—majority—Peel—betrayed—impeachment—beheaded—no—damn—yes—Peel—what—yield—curse—Peel—Conservative—no—damn—ruin—land—church—sinking—Peel—pigs—Canada—smuggle—Peel—Tories—League—Cobden—never—atrocious—Peel—cheat—votes—majority—curse—damn—true—swear—never will—trust—no—vote—no—Tories—no—damn—yes—condition dreadful—hope for the best—League tracts—Peel—take in—no hope—worse and worse—lower to-day—dinner—good bye—Peel—good day—Peel—dinner—Peel—good morning." Such are the fragmentary words heard over the shoulders of this group standing around the tall dark gentleman who farms his own land. All that he says is—and he says it with a shake of his head—"You would listen to no arguments two years ago; experience has convinced you."

Who is this youngster with the boots of patent polish, the wasp-like waist, the gold chain, the oily ringlets, and the under lip pouting in supercilious scorn? He is one of the Mark Lane gentry. He has come to buy, or to cheapen by not buying. See with what a professional swagger of the arm he dives his open hand among the wheat, shovelling it over the mouth of the sack, purposely to spill some of it on the ground, and shew by spilling it that he belongs to the profession. He shakes his head; and how remarkably unconcerned he looks! But his lips move; he speaks; he offers a price; no, he asks a question; the farmer replies; the buyer gives no rejoinder, but walks away to another lot, having scattered some of this on the ground, and having made the farmer feel that there will be no rise this week.

And who is this farmer? He lives near Three-Mile-Cross, "our village," the celebrated of Miss Mitford. It was but three days ago that he came over to the village to pay his poor-rate, and as he paid it he said to our friend who gives the receipts, "This is paid; thank God, this is paid; but where, or when, or how I shall pay the next, I know not. Where my Michaelmas rent is to come from is more than I know. I paid the winter half at Lady Day, but I shall have nothing to pay with at Michaelmas. I paid at Lady Day, thrashed out every bushel, sold all, all but five sacks, and they must be sold on Saturday for money to pay my workers—sold all but them five sacks to pay at Lady Day—not another bushel left of last year's crop. What is to be done with Michaelmas I know not. Peel, they tell me, is out of all possibility of helping us; they say our members be as bad as him; the Lord help us at Michaelmas!" Such was the articulate grief of this farmer when paying his last poor-rate with his last shilling—his last shilling until he sold the last five sacks of his crop, which he cannot now sell but at a reduced price.

Who is that young gentleman on horseback? He is one of the young Walters of Bearwood. What! He who lately stood for Nottingham? No; a younger brother. And who are those in the carriage, those ladies? Those are his sisters, Mr Walter's daughters. A fine family! Oh, bless you, yes; a large family; very good people all of them, very.

It is one o'clock. The various steeples proclaim the farmers' dinner hour. Every inn has a public ordinary; which shall we go to? The George is round here; the Angel is near at hand; here is the Broad Face; onward there is the Wheat Sheaf, the Wheel, the Elephant; and there is the White Hart, the Ship, the Black Horse, the Mitre, the Peacock, the Turk's Head, and several more to which we may go. This one round the corner will do; let us see, what is it called? Ah, never mind what its name is. Here we are in the public room, just in time. The clatter of knives and forks has just begun. Some of the guests are too busy filling themselves to speak; but the most are too full of the topics of the day to remain quiet. Let us open our ears.

"Roast beef, sir?—Robert Peel dare not—help you, Mr Jackson?—labourers' wages—potatoes?—Sir Robert Peel—salt?—waiter!—yes, sir—Robert Peel—potatoes—carve this pig—knife—cut off his head—Peel—roast pig?—roast—Peel—waiter! — Canada flour—fowl? — majority of votes—this way, gentlemen; seats disengaged here—turn them out—Conservative ministry—boiled mutton—church extension—over done—take in—glass of ale—no relief this year—coming, sir—waiter, remove—county members—help you to—parliamentary—greens—Peel—no more tongue, thank you—two thousand miles off — American wheat—cheated—petition—clear the table—thrown under and never read—petition—quite enough, thank you—Wallingford dinner, Mr Blackstone—powerless—nearly—false pretences—farmers—always suffering distress—Peel—so help me God—language in parliament—the League tracts—read—digest—old cheese—Cobden's speeches—relish—Wellington—1815—not the better of being too old—good port—porter with a head—ministers have, before now, lost their—Peel and Cobden—porter with a head—debate in the house—with a head—would have given something to have seen—porter with a head—in a passion, striking the table—the head—unseemly to be in a rage—Dublin stout—Conservative members in a tumult, applauding—Barclay's—the indignant manner of—porter with a head—retaliation—stout—gentlemen, silence please—silence—silence!"

And Silence having come when those who called for her held their tongues, and not before the chairman said, that as dinner was now over those who chose a pipe and a glass would adjourn to another room. Whereupon one half, or more, of the whole adjourned; the remainder, not choosing to smoke, nor to be smoked, remained where they were. They disjoined themselves and reunited into small parties.

AYLESBURY.

Monday, the 8th of May 1843, was a wet day in the Vale of Aylesbury. It was the day of one of the annual sheep and cattle fairs held in that little town, and perhaps never, since the town had a fair, was it filled with such an assemblage of hanging heads, of down-mouthed animals, quadruped and biped, as on that day.

Wet, weary, unsold, and unsaleable, stood the ox tribe, of all breeds, all ages, and all lengths of horn. The sheep, though not numerous, returned to whence they came. The horses, though inspirited by the cracking of the whips, the whooping of chanters, and the presence of little bits of ginger, kicked about, changing places in the market, but in only a few instances changing masters.

And the masters of all that were there, lean beasts, fat beasts, milk cows, and cows with calf; short horns, long horns, and oxen hornless; the masters of sheep shorn and sheep to shear; of pigs eager to eat and pigs ready to be eaten; of donkies few and horses many; the masters of all these, and of animals like these, not at the fair, hung down their heads, and (save and except the horses that had ginger to make them spicy) moved as slowly, as dispiritedly, as unhappily, and as hungrily as any poor brute in the market. They moved as slowly and as hungrily because they had nothing to do before dinner, and because the usual time of dinner had come, and still they could not dine. They were to go to the Town Hall to dinner, where the table was to be spread by the host of the fashionable inn, the White Hart, and where they were to sit down at the table with a lord! They were to dine with Lord Stanhope; and the dinner was to be, not a "commercial" nor a "King's-Head" dinner, but actually a "White Hart" dinner; and all for three shillings each.

It was painful to wait over the usual dinner hour on any day, and particularly on a day that was dull and wet, and at a time when markets were as dull as the murky weather, and falling, falling as the cloud upon the vale. But the inducements were great; and what with "snacks" and "crusts," and "least bits in the world," at the various inns; and what with glasses of "sherry and brandy mixed," "just to keep out the wet," the time passed on, and the Stanhope dinner-hour came.

Having mingled with various parties in the market place and in the inns, and talked with "town people" and "country people," I soon perceived that grumbling was the order of the day; and a little attention to the grumblers enabled me to record the following matters of public interest.

Messrs Cobden and Moore had been in the town on the previous Saturday, and the town's people who heard them were desirous of telling the farmers who did not hear them, (and few farmers did; for there were few farmers in Aylesbury on that Saturday, owing to the fairs in that and neighbouring counties, owing to the wetness of the day, and more especially owing to the orders they received not to attend;) the town's people were now desirous of telling the farmers what the deputation of the League had said; while, on the other hand, the farmers were desirous of venting their complaints. As usual, Peel and the tariff, and the false friends of the voting tenants, were complained of. Those farmers who came out of Bedfordshire or Hertford, or who belonged to the eastern parts of Bucks, adhered to the old topics of unhappiness and want, and went no farther than Peel and broken promises; but all those from the west of Aylesbury, from about Buckingham, and Brill, and Thanse in Oxfordshire, and Bicester, and Banbury, and Oxford, and Abingdon, were full of a new subject. Van Amburgh had been in those towns, or some of them, with his cream-coloured horses, driving eight in hand; and they had all been to see Van Amburgh.

"You didn't come to hear Cobden?" remarked a tradesman to a western farmer.

"No; went to see Van Amburg."

"Cobden seems to be an exceedingly plain and simple man, yet very clear and forcible," observed another inhabitant.

"Ah! that wur a grand turn out, wur it not? Eight on 'em all alike cream-coloured; eight on 'em all in hand, going like lambs. My precious eye! but it wur grand. What a fellow that Van Amburg must be, to be sure, to travel from town to town like that!" This was from another western agriculturist; and the conversational powers and propensities of all present were now heard in continuation thus:—

"And all the harness mounted with silver! Eh but that was a fine sight!"

"Cobden contends that the corn-law has never done good to the farmers, and never can; that it is only a pretence on the part of the landlords, that they may cajole the tenants."

"Van Amburg, I say, makes it all outside show. When you go to see his wild beasts, it ben't nothing after all. What say you—you saw him as well as I?"

"Nothing more than a take-in; a *do*. An elephant comes, with two or three or half a dozen codgers on its back, and goes round, and steps ower a man what lies down in its way; and then it goes out again; and then we have Van and a lion and leopard, or something; and then the lion lifts his paw, and Van orders him to lie down, and he lies down; and the other beast puts up his paws on Van's shoulder; and then they all growl; and then Van goes out of the cage, and says, 'Ladies and gentlemen, the performance is ower.' I say this be only a *do;* it ben't not half so fine as the outside show bes, driving the eight creams all in hand in silver harness; had I known I should never ha' gone inside."

"The farmers be always sacrificed. Let the promises be what they may; made by whom they will, the farmers are cheated. I says landlords be all alike; governments and prime ministers all alike, all tarred with one stick, as the saying is; all of 'em look to themselves, and only serve us with pretences."

"Now, for my part, I don't think it be he as I seed at Drury Lane Theatre at all. I'm a'most positive sure it ain't Van Amburg; for *he* gave something for our money. This chap do little more than shew us how he drives along the road. I think he should be called Van *Humbug*, what do you think?"

"But what a sight of money he must have took. They say he had more than three hundred pounds out of this here place, and as good as two hundred pounds in Buckingham. He gets a precious sight of money, that Van Amburg do."

"The League won't do much among the farmers, let 'em say as they will. Farmers see too clearly what the object of them Leaguers be to be caught with chaff; they ha'n't got much money for their League Fund in them parts; have they, Mr Brown?"

"No; an they got no more money than I'd give 'em, they'd leave off going about."

"And I say the same; an they got no more than they could get out of Buckingham they'd let Buckingham alone."

"Where be Van Amburg off to next?"

"He be to enter Oxford a Tuesday I hear say. They say he won't have less than five or six hundred pounds during the two days he bes to be there."

"Wilt thou go see him again? I thought o' going to Oxford to-morrow to see him go in, wilt thou?"

"I don't mind much; it be only ten mile to ride, and I can be back to dinner. I think I shall go. Wilt thou, Mr Smith?"

And thus proceeded the conversation. A few complaints about Peel and the tariff, a few fears about Cobden and the League, and three times as many accounts of the sayings and doings of Van Amburgh and his lions. There were some intimations of displeasure from more than one landlady and landlord of more than one inn, that their regular customers, who dined on market days, were holding off to keep themselves in readiness for the Stanhope dinner. There were some other detached grumblers; and, through the dull markets and dull weather, the outside show of Van Amburgh's caravans and the small doings within, the large promises of Peel and the dissatisfaction with what he has done, the speeches of the League and the hopes for better times, were the chief subjects of plaintive dialogue; there were other topics brought forward and despondingly discussed. Indeed, during several hours that I listened, few matters escaped a sigh of regret, save one; this was never touched on. Never was a word said of the hundreds of thousands of our population who are daily pining for want of food, because they are not employed and paid. Not a word of the additional hundreds of thousands who may have food of a certain kind, but who never taste butchers' meat, because the demand for their labour is so small, and their wages so very like the demand. There was never, amongst all that I heard of Peel and the tariff, and Van Amburgh and his lions, and the League and Mr Cobden, and all that was said of the unsold and unsaleable animals standing in the market place on their tired limbs, with drooping heads, because there they stood and nobody came to buy; amongst all these topics not a word was said of the hungry people of the town, who once ate beef and mutton, and now cannot; who in hunger droop their heads because trade droops; and who will never revive, and eat beef, until trade revives. Not a word of complaint escaped a lip, in my hearing, on this subject.

The dinner hour came. I presented my three shilling ticket, and, entering the Town Hall, found one hundred and thirty square yards of agriculturists at dinner, there being at the rate of, to each square yard of floor, a knife and fork, a plate, and a man.

Here the dissatisfaction that had filled the farmers with complaints outside, which, while they were hungry, had fed on every subject of discontent which they could possibly find, always excepting that just now mentioned, and which should have been their leading, if not sole subject of complaint, namely, the non-consumption of the beef and mutton which they fed and could not sell; here they found other matters wherewith to be discontented.

The dinner, for the tickets to which they had paid three shillings each, was a dinner, as the advertisement said, "to Lord Stanhope." But as it is customary when a dinner is given to a guest for the givers to partake with the guest, the farmers in this case found the phrase, "a dinner to Lord Stanhope," rather too literally verified, and they did not like it. In short, they once more grumbled at those who call themselves "friends of the farmers." They had expected that in giving a dinner to Lord Stanhope they would get one to themselves; and that the condescension of his Lordship in coming to dine with them would be a sufficient recompence for any inconvenience they might have incurred in coming to town in a wet day, and, wet or dry, in sitting down on rough deal boards and barrel heads, at rough deal tables, to pick their bones; the condescension of a peer of the realm, the very Quixotte of "farmers' friends," to join them at a three-shilling-a-head dinner like this, was enough to reconcile them to many personal inconveniences, and most of them probably pronounced themselves to be reconciled and pleased.

But when they saw his Lordship evincing the very doubtful taste of eating with a select few at one end of the hall, *waited on by his own servants in livery*, the farmers, at least all near where I sat, grumbled rather indecorously, though not without excuse. They expected that a "friend" to dinner would have come as a friend, as a partaker of a plain dinner in a plain way; but my Lord came with a retinue of servants, that he might not touch nor be touched by anything so common as what the farmers ate and drank and were served by. Besides two or three gentlemen whose rank as landholders entitled them to sit near the person of his Lordship, he had Dr Sleigh "of Brill House," and John Bell of the *Bucks Herald*, once of the "fierce democracy," who being to make speeches, were admitted into the circle from which were arranged to proceed, *and did proceed*, all the "hear, hears," the "yaw, yaws," and the "yees, yees."

A FOX HUNT IN DORSETSHIRE—1845.

The following account of a fox hunt, at which I was present, is, as nearly as can be written, literally what I saw. The introductory dialogue, supposed to occur on the previous night, is also a sketch from fact.

"Bill?"

"Well, Jack, what be it?"

"The hounds be coming to draw Gorse-hill cover to-morrow."

"Be they? Sha'n't I be after them?"

"And sha'n't I?"

"Bill?"

"Well, Jack, what be it?"

"Give up one of them tatoes thee be's a doing on in the ashes."

"Na; they ben't for-to-night, they be a doing on for breakfast. We ha'n't no bread, and father be to go out at five. He be gone to bed now; and I be doing his tatoes for him. Mother be laid down as well, and all of them. Why ben't thou, Jack?"

"Why ben't I a-bed? I been with old Tom and young Harry a stopping the holes. Them foxes be all out at night seeing what they can get. We have stopped their holes for them; and won't they find it queer when they go home and cannot get in, and have the pack come on them in the cover. I do so wish, Bill, to-morrow morning was come."

"I wishes, Jack, this precious cold night were over. We be a starved up in that topmost room, with no things a'most on us. There be such a lot on us in our house, we ha'n't got no money to get bread enough, let alone things to cover. See how us be obliged to stick them tatoes into our insides. It be a terrible cold night. I be afeard to go to bed for the cold."

"What I be most afeard on as to cold, Bill, be's this; that it be frosty, and squire won't hunt. I wouldn't lose it for ever so much. Would thee, Bill?"

"Na, Jack, I shouldn't like to. Wilt thou go to cover first thing, or wilt thou go to work and chance the hounds coming down where thou be's a-doing that job on the road? I sha'n't go to work myself. I would rather lose half a day than not have the sport. Half a day's pay ben't much to win, and it ben't much to lose. What says thee, Jack?"

"I say this. I wouldn't think on it. Five shilling a week, for half a day be only fippence. And then the chance of a something to pick up. Morris got half-a-crown to open a gate the last time squire hunted over here; and when young Lord What-do-ye-call-him fell off his horse that time, Courtney, and Mason, and Jones, and What's-his-name, got two sovereigns for carrying him on a litter, and had such a blow out of drink and victuals on the head on't as thee never seed. Besides, there be the digging out of the fox, if he run to earth, and twenty more chances to get a trifle. But for my part I would go after the hounds for the sport. Split me if I wouldn't."

"So would I, Jack. And so would any one."

Such may never have been the precise words of any two men in Dorset. But these words are indicative of what may be seen or heard in every village of Dorset where hunting is known. And few counties are more remarkable than this for the spirit of the inhabitants, rich and poor, in running after a piece of diversion.

There are more people by half than get profitable employment in the county. So sporting is not much loss of time to them. It is sometimes a loss of shoes in the mud; but the shoes are always found again. Sometimes a loss of skin and clothes in scrambling and tearing through bushes; but skin grows on again, and clothes are tacked together somehow. The greatest advantage it does is, that while the mounted men who dined late last night ride to-day to find their appetites, the men on foot who did not dine at all are running to lose theirs, and for a while forget them.

Let us suppose the morning come. The meet is at some gate—I need not say what gate. From east, from west, from every side, horses and men, scarlet coats and green, jog along at a trot. What jolly happy-looking fellows they are, every one of them. Who could believe for a moment that, mounted on such nags, with such bright stirrups and shining boots; white leathers and well-fleshed limbs to swell them out; such broad chests and ruddy faces, the faces wearing a hue which may indicate either last night's wine or this morning's early rising and fresh air, just as you think fit to imagine—for theirs is a mixture of both; who could think that any of these are "farmers in distress?" But farmers they are, many of them.

This gentleman nearest us, on the bay mare, is not a farmer —not strictly speaking. He has land and he farms it, and he also complains at public meetings of agricultural distress and hard times; so he is doubtless an agriculturist. But he is also a clergyman. And that is the reason why young Sparks, the whipper-in, swears so. Sparks was once a lad in a smock-frock and round hat, and leggings just the same as those lads sitting on the style; but he was taken notice of and put into the stable, and in time mounted into office, and got up to where he is now. The fineness of his clothes and polish of his boots astonish those who recollect his old leggings and smock-frock. But his great card is to swear at the dogs, and at anything else, so close to the parson as to make them wonder that he is not afraid.

Here comes a farmer. One precisely after Squire Bankes' heart, the squire having declared a landlord's pride to be, "when he knows that his tenant is the best mounted in the troop of yeomanry, and that he now and then takes a good gallop with the squire's hounds."

Who better mounted than this tenant? Who oftener galloping? He even subscribes to another pack of hounds that hunt in another district. Yet this gentleman is one of Squire Bankes' own tenants, and he is not able to tell what the squire says—continuing the sentence already quoted as the greatest joy of a landlord—namely, "Proud, above all, if the farmers shall tell him 'there is not on my farm nor in my parish one single able-bodied man out of employ.'"

This well-mounted tenant may, I say, do the squire's heart good as far as horse flesh, horsemanship, and a good spurred, booted, and scarlet-coated turn out can go. I believe he has never been in arrear with his rent; that must be another matter of satisfaction. But in this parish there are rather more than the half of the able-bodied labourers out of work and out of wages; and the wages of those in work—in work to this farmer—are five shillings a-week to able-bodied men—young men, so able-bodied that they are five feet eight inches high, can carry a sack of wheat with any man in Dorset, and eat bread and bacon with any man in England if they could get it to eat. The wages of those in work who are married and have families are more. They are as high as six shillings and seven shillings, in two instances as high as eight shillings, and in one as high as nine shillings.

Are any of the children of these highest paid men here—here at the gate—at the meeting of the hunt? No; this is not in their locality. Here are young ones enough, and old ones too, but not from Mr Bankes'.

Here are two officers of the army, and three lords, two of them members of Parliament, but neither belonging to this county. All are well mounted. The master of the hounds, the squire himself, meets them.

Who would not be a farmer, even in hard times? One of the lords has nodded to one of these farmers, and the squire himself has introduced them. Is that nothing?

Here comes old Bob the shoemaker. The Gorse-hill cover has not been drawn once these twenty years but old Bob has been at it, he and all his apprentices for the time being. He had work to do to-day, shoes to make which were wanted; but who would work and the hounds out? Who, indeed, but some thrasher or ploughman that must?

And though old Bob is only on foot, he is somebody here. A farmer nods to him, just as a lord nodded to a farmer.

And here is a sporting draper mounted on the butcher's horse. And here is the butcher himself on the young horse that he thinks of buying. Here is the landlord of the inn where the magistrates hold their sittings. He is a high man, and mounted, of course. He is so high a man, permitted as he is to take the field with lords, and with squires richer even than the lords, that he looks upon all those foot people with the most thorough contempt. But on none more so than on that man who is a beershop keeper. "The impudence of some persons! that a mere beershop keeper should pretend to take an interest in fox-hunting! and, though on foot, to make his appearance within the same palings with the landlord of the head inn!

Here is a jolly good fellow on a jolly good horse. And one of these bystanders says that he hasn't come away without his breakfast this morning. Another adds, "No, nor without knowing that everybody else had a good breakfast. He be a trump to his men, he be."

Another parson comes up and joins the one already arrived. Young Styles and Norman have been so fascinated with the manly courage of young Sparks, the whipper-in, who swore in the parson's face, that they swear also. They cannot help feeling themselves to be more than mere eaters of dry bread and cold tatoes warmed on the gridiron already. They call one another B.'s and D.'s close to the clergymen's horses' tails; and do not doubt but such courage may elevate them into the stable some day, if not into a whip's saddle.

Here is little Josh Something, with his little smock-frock all in tatters, and his toes, cold day as it is, bare and red, through the old shoes he has on. He had no time to eat his tatoes, hearing of the hounds, so he brought them with him, and is eating one in each hand now; he calls one bread and one cheese. He is an original in his way, that little Josh.

But the time is up, and the principal men have come. It is considered the best field of the season. There have been more numerous fields quite as well mounted; but there has been no such brilliant company as this. The officers, the three lords, two of them county members, one or two baronets, and not less than half-a-dozen landed esquires. The farmers, butchers, drapers, and innkeepers, who hunt in such company, are up in the stirrup indeed, and they feel it.

"Get out, you young rascal; why ben't you at home, and not come here to be rode down; get out with you!" This is from the butcher to little Josh and his cold tatoes. It is accompanied by a cut of a whip sharp enough to have made Josh cry on ordinary occasions. But he only dives into a bush and says, "Thee ben't no squire; thee be nought but a butcher!"

There is an old fox in the cover who has known what a hunt is before to-day. He is alleging to an inexperienced companion that there is no danger; that, though the holes were closed up when they came home from the pheasant preserves or the hen-roosts, or wherever they were this morning, there is no danger. "Now they hear dogs and men, and the young one cannot believe but there is danger. The old one still denies its existence, if the young one will only take his advice. The young one knows not what to do. But the hounds come nearer, and he is surer than ever that there is danger. The old one admits now that there will be, if the young one does not get up and run. But if he runs at once he will be safe; he, the old one, will keep between him and the hounds, if hounds there be. The young fox starts up and runs accordingly; the hounds see him; they seek no farther for another; they open their mouths; lay down their heads; join in the cry and the pursuit; and as the old fox hears them leaving the wood, and going off at a greater and greater distance, he says, or thinks the saying, which is all the same, "I wish you no harm, young friend; but that was good policy of mine. Better you before the hounds than me."

There is no time here to moralize, and compare, and make suppositions; yet it may be that this old fox, at some feast in the cover, had called himself the "foxes' friend," ever ready to *protect* the young ones, and ever regardless of himself.

But we are in haste. The young fox has discovered, as other creatures have to their cost, that the protection of his "friend" was simply to turn him out into the front of the danger; and, now that he is in it, he tries to leave it as far behind as he can.

First of all, he tries to find how the wind blows, that he may run with it; but he has no time to make experiments. Unluckily he is out on the wrong side. He is off at a great dash; but he knows his course to be wrong. So does old Bob the shoemaker. He can tell already that this is a young fox; and he can tell that, before long, he will turn; he will wind by the upper heath, and come down upon the Stour by the common. And old Bob breaks away in a different direction from that taken by the fox, and hounds, and hunters, assured that he will meet them again. Save a few of the very rawest of the mob—the young foxes of it, who run the wrong way, because it is the way the hunters went—the whole follow Bob, who has had twenty years' experience.

And now for the chasing and racing. The racing first. The swiftest soon take the lead from even the most experienced in short cuts. Mr Hurst's meadow gate is opened in almost no time. If Mr Hurst were there he would give it to some of them, to run through among his sheep and cows, yelling that way, and then over the fence through his young tares and wheat. But he is not there; he is with the hounds, and riding by this time through somebody else's fields. It would have been much worse for his sheep and cows in the meadow, and young tares and young wheat, if all the pack and fifty horsemen had gone over his fences and lands. But then it is an honour to have one's fences broken and one's farm trampled by the hunters, saving always such men as the sporting draper, butcher, innkeeper, and two or three more who have no land of their own to be trampled by others.

Then ensues the running to earth in a drain, the digging out, the new chase, new fields of wheat scoured over, ewe sheep great in lamb driven about in terror, and all the "farmers in distress," hallooing and rejoicing with voices loud and joyous as they in the company of the lords and squires, break down each others fences, cut each other's newly sprung wheat, and scare and drive in terror each other's breeding ewes, and cows, and fattening sheep.

A JOURNEY TO THE MEADOWS OF HERTFORDSHIRE.

Persons acquainted with the thoroughfares of London, know that they are sometimes choked, blocked, or locked with their traffic. It is as difficult to ascertain, when a lock occurs, which of the draymen shouting, cabmen whipping, or butchers' boys "chaffing," has been the cause of the stoppage, as it is to discover who have caused the lock in the political world. But there is a lock in the political world. Never was the line of street from St Paul's to Temple Bar more completely and inextricably choked, by its vehicles locking together, than is the Parliamentary thoroughfare at this moment, by which bills travel from the House of Commons to the House of Lords, and from the House of Lords to the House of Commons. And yet in the line of Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill, with the crossing at Farringdon Street, there are occasionally lockages in the traffic so inextricable that the most skilful of the police are baffled in making a clearance; and no clearance is made until some unlooked-for condescension on the part of a few drivers, who back out, leads to a general movement forward, as the unlooked-for perseverance of a few jolly waggoners, "all of a row," with their ponderous vehicles from the country—a "country party" in the street, formidable enough to obstruct the traffic, dogged enough to get into a fix and remain in it—led at first to the stoppage.

Being a passenger the other day for the country, to obtain a glimpse of the spring, the fresh green of grassy Hertfordshire, the new buttercups and daisies among the grass; the suckling lambs and their fleecy mothers among the buttercups and daisies; the farm fields, with new crops upon them; the farmers, with new notions in their heads about their fields and crops of corn; and, perchance, the Lord of Essex, or his park and mansion, or his farms, who has become a kind of League lecturer, putting new notions into the heads of farmers about crops of corn, and corn-laws, and competition with foreigners; being a passenger for the country on the outside of one of those busses which gather from the multitudes of the metropolis, one by one, the railway passengers, and transfer them by the score to the mouth of the iron giants, who swallow them by the hundred, I got fixed in one of those locks in the street which are unpleasant at any time, and particularly so when one's appointment is with a railway train. Still, it was not all lost time. Having nothing to do but to look and listen, to sit and see, I looked and listened, and sat and saw; and the parallel between the street police and the political police in urging onward the loads which would not be urged onwards. seemed to be remarkable enough to justify me in drawing my pen on the subject, as some of them drew their batons, or as others have been drawing, or threatening to draw, their pistols.

There were several waggons loaded with grain or with flour. From their bulk, they were conspicuous among the other vehicles. They had come down the street, and were warned in their progress by others loaded with straw crossing from the bridge, and halted at the crossing. One or two butcher's boys in light carts, whether in joke or in earnest I did not know, demanded that the policeman should turn the corn-loaded waggons back, and allow them, the said boys in the carts, to get past, they being charged with the safe and early delivery of joints of meat for that day's dinners, to those rich enough to have prime joints of meat sent home in light spring carts. But though these impetuous youths, with all the volubility of tongue, all the forwardness, most of the impudence, and some of the "chaff" and the "slang" peculiar to them, insisted that the police should make the corn-loaded waggons go backward to let them and others in light vehicles get on, no such counter movement could be effected. I do not know that the street police said, but they might have said, as one of the political police did—one not unknown in Fleet Street and elsewhere, for his services in clearing a passage for obstructed traffic—"that as well might the corn resolutions of the House of Commons move backwards, or be turned aside, and left in the siding, as to think that those ponderous corn waggons, each with a tonnage of loading, should be backed up hill to let butchers' boys and the light fry of vehicles go by." I say, I do not know that the street police spoke thus; nor am I sure that the political policeman, to whom I allude as celebrated for his services in clearing obstructed thoroughfares, used the comparison as it is given here; I rather think it is reversed from him; at all events, whether speaking of corn-loaded waggons in the streets or corn-charged resolutions in Parliament, he said it was impossible that they could remove backwards, or even be set aside, to make room for butchers' boys or the butchers themselves, who had come whip in hand at an impetuous pace into the street, getting into a fix by their impetuosity, and only stopped from running over some one (some of those poor Irishmen with heavy loads on their backs) by being stopped in their headlong career.

And speaking of Irishmen with loads on their backs, I am reminded that in the street-stoppage the humblest carrier of a load fares worst when he cannot get along. He has not only to bear his burthen and make no progress, but very often, and particularly if an Irishman, and known to be one, he has to bear the "chaff" of the thoughtless, and even the back-handed cuts of the impetuous boys, who have whips in their hands, and who drive, or attempt to drive others that they themselves may get along.

I cannot say that I observed any Irish gentleman with his cab and his tiger, though gentlemen with cabs and tigers were there, who at a moment when there was some hope of an early extrication, drove into the confusion, to the locking up of himself and the hindrance of all who were about to move; and yet there were cases not unlike this, of vehicles being driven in which might have been kept out, for no purpose apparently but the strange satisfaction of being locked up, to the great annoyance of those seriously active in clearing the thoroughfare, and to the pleasure of their own drivers—if pleasure it could be—of being in the midst of confusion, delay, angry words, and personal accusations, of which there were enough to serve all the streets of London, including Billingsgate Market, for as long a time as the length of a session of Parliament.

Some brewers' drays, loaded with beer, had stopped the countrymen loaded with straw; or, which amounted to the same thing, the men of straw would not move, because they said—and swore it as they said it—that the brewers stood in their way, and that they had done nothing to be called on to make way for the heavy waggons of the millers and the corn merchants, which were coming down Fleet Street, and were blocked there.

The police took hold of the reins and led horses, drivers, and vehicles where they found an opening, whether the drivers assented to it or not. They did so even against the loud protests of such drivers, that they were not to be led in that way by the "Peelers," (a phrase more commonly applied to the police in London than any other,) yet allowing themselves to be led notwithstanding.

Then one driver shouted to another that the lockage and confusion had been all that other driver's fault; and that other retorted the accusation; and cabmen shook their whips at one another, and gave significant hints of what each would do to each, if they had not happened to be where they were. And the drivers of such light vehicles as those we see in every street, with soda water and ginger beer, interfered with the stormy cabmen to quiet them, but made the confusion greater by adding new elements of discord. The tradesmen of the streets had their business suspended; customers could not approach the shops; or if they were in, they could not move out; and passengers who could move on some parts of the pavement were obstructed at others, and could not proceed on such business as they had intended to proceed upon. The very dogs of the street seemed to join in and add to the noise and confusion by their barking; and to the great hindrance and annoyance of those actively engaged in effecting a clearance, men, snarling more snappishly than the dogs, barked at and found fault with everything and every body that was engaged in doing something useful. Were it not a daring flight of imagination almost equal to that of the author of the "Revolutionary Epic," one might have thought that some snarling dogs had been bitten by some other dog labouring under Peelphobia, that sad looking dog for instance, which was unmuzzled at Shrewsbury in 1841, and became Peelphobious two years after, and bit the hand that he begged a bone from.

But a riddance was made at last, and the lighter carriages were obliged to give way to the heavier, and the heavier moved on and got out of the way; and we at last reached the railway station too late for the train.

A FARM-FIELD RAMBLE IN HERTFORDSHIRE.

In a farm-yard, with an orchard of cherry-trees and apple-trees clothed in blossom beyond it; and a field of green pasture with cows in the pasture beyond the orchard; and a field with ploughs, and horses, and men, and women, and boys, at work in it beyond the green pasture; and other pastures and meadows of grass for hay beyond the ploughed field; and white daisies, and yellow buttercups, and cowslips, in all of them; and hedgerows in green leaf and fragrant blossom surrounding the fields—large, rough, and rustic, though green and blooming, like the men of the fields; not free from vices, but possessing virtues, and much to be pleased with; the woods of the lord of many acres rising above the fields, and looking down upon them, as lofty above the humble shrubs of the hedgerows, as the lord who dwelt within them in his noble mansion was above the humble workers in the fields who dwelt in tiled sheds. In that farm-yard, with pools of rain-water large and foul in it, and wet dung which had been washed by the rain-water; and heaps of bean-straw and chaff upon the wet dung; and young pigs and old sows with their snouts burrowed in the straw and chaff in search of cast-away beans, as some legislators may be seen in search of cast-away arguments, gathering minute particles of fact with full mouthfuls of fallacies, and swallowing all—digesting them, and existing on that kind of provender scattered on the political dunghill by men who have winnowed the grain from the chaff long ago, only because it is their nature not to have a higher taste nor a higher power of discrimination, in filling their mouths with chaff and dirt for the sake of the one, or two grains of fact which may be there. In that farm-yard, with the pigs in it, some of which are grown up hogs, and are old enough to remember—if hogs have such memories or such knowledge—the time when the lord of the land on which they were bred and fed, was a monopolist, which he is not now; when he was all for the confining of hogs like them to the mere grains of "native grown" corn among the chaff on the dunghill, and not as he is now, in favour of hogs getting food good and clean, that Englishmen may have enough of native fed bacon, even if that bacon is fed on foreign grain. In that farm-yard, in the occupation of a tenant of that remarkable lord—the Earl of Essex—I met that tenant, and had a conversation with him; and after talking on several topics, such as the making the most of the manure which lay around, much of it wasted, and converting it into a productive element of new crops, and of the rearing of hogs and the conversion of hogs into good hams and bacon, we talked of the conversion of the landlord from a monopolist to a free trader, and the process by which it had been done; and of the effect which the conversion of a monopolist landlord was likely to have on a monopolist tenantry.

Farmer.—You know that I have always been in favour of the corn-law. I cannot say I have changed my opinions as Lord Essex has changed his. Probably I have not the capacity of judgment that he has; perhaps I have not seen the same arguments presented to me in the same way. He is a landlord and I a tenant. A landlord may see things differently from a tenant. If I were a landlord I might have all the high hopes for the future prosperity of agriculture which his Lordship has; but I do not see what a tenant has to hope for. If he augments the produce of his land, by sinking capital in the land, he has his rent augmented upon him. If he does not improve his land, he loses by it. I see no hope for the tenant farmers.

Whistler.—It is to be fairly expected that Lord Essex will not stop in his own exertions to advance agriculture. He says there are some tenant farmers who never should have been farmers; but there are landlords who never should have been landlords. As landed property has hitherto been managed, and must still for some time to come be managed, the landlord's services in promoting agricultural improvement are more necessary to it than the tenant's services. As tenures and conditions of agreement now exist between landlord and tenant, the power to improve the cultivation of the land is almost entirely in the hands of the landlord. But I think there is much to hope for from Lord Essex. On the question of free trade he adopted the opinions and prejudices of his class without inquiry, as he now confesses. May we not suppose that he has adopted the customs of his class in letting his farms on insecure tenures to his tenants, and loading those tenants with conditions as only asses are loaded—and they only so loaded by very thoughtless or very cruel boys—may we not suppose that his Lordship has as thoughtlessly adopted and acted on the tenurial customs of his class, as he confesses to have adopted and acted on the opinions and prejudices of his class about free trade? He says that, until the corn-law question came to a crisis, he had never given it any serious consideration, save on one side—his own side—that of protection. But when it came to a crisis, he was induced to inquire, and read, and study the arguments on the other side—the free trade side—to see what it was that had converted Sir Robert Peel; by which inquiry, reading, and study, he found himself converted. And listen to what Sir Robert Peel confesses the other day, and not only confesses, but proclaims as a legislative fact. "I will not deny," he says, "that, during the debates on the question, my opinions have undergone a change—and it is this, that restrictions which I at first believed to be impolitic I now believe to be unjust."

Farmer.—But Sir Robert Peel is not a tenant farmer, with a rent to pay. He is a receiver of rents. Now, as I said before of Lord Essex, I might think as he thinks if I were a landlord, and had seen all the free trade arguments as he has seen them; but as a tenant I see nothing to hope for. Explain to me, if you can, how improved agriculture is to do the tenants any good when his rent goes up with his produce and seldom falls with the price of his produce.

Whistler.—This is the very point at issue between landlord and tenant; but it is not the point at issue between the League and the tenant farmers, between free-trade and agriculture, between Sir Robert Peel, a prime minister, and you, a farmer. Sir Robert Peel as a statesman and Sir Robert Peel as a landlord is not the same. The conditions upon which you should hold your farm must be these:—That you will receive the profits of your improved agriculture for a term of years which no caprice or cupidity on the part of your landlord, and no accident to his life, can deprive you of. This is, and must be, the first principle in all agricultural improvement. Lord Essex will do nothing to achieve that success which he foretells to the agriculture of England, unless he adopts a system of leases liberal and long enough to secure practically to his tenants the profits of their capital and skill.

Farmer.—Do not you think that if tenants-at-will were to be legally entitled to compensation for all their improvements on quitting their farms, it would be a great benefit to them—as good as if they had leases?

Whistler.—A benefit, compared with their present state of helplessness as tenants-at-will, but not so good as a lease. I observe that farmers' clubs in different parts of the kingdom are discussing this question, and I regret exceedingly to see them wasting valuable time and a fair opportunity on such a worthless object as the improvement of tenancy-at-will. Under no form whatever, with no possible qualification, can tenancy-at-will be rendered fair and equitable to the tenant, or beneficial to the landlord and the progress of agriculture. I will say more, that no *honest* landlord, if not a weak-minded or ignorant man, will seek to have tenants-at-will upon his land, to expend capital, and skill, and health, and strength on that land. Many landlords who are honest men, let their farms on yearly tenancies, dismissing the tenants when they think fit; but if honest, they are ignorant, having never studied the subject, as Lord Essex says he never did until the corn-law came to a crisis; or they may be, unlike his Lordship, so weak-minded that they cannot study and understand such subjects; or, unlike his Lordship, they may be so inveterately prejudiced in favour of their territorial supremacy—the remnants of feudal power—that they will not yield independence and security to their tenantry, even when convinced that such independence and security would be to their own advantage. And it is possible that there are some, a good many perhaps, who have used their tenantry as political instruments in the polling booth, as mercantile men use their bills of exchange, bonds, and notes, and take them to the money-market to make profit of them, the profit being places of honour and emolument under Government, in the army, the navy, the church, the law courts, and the palace. But I believe the time has arrived, or it is not far off, when subserviency to a political party in Parliament, through the use of such men as you at the hustings, will be impracticable. We may therefore hope that you tenant farmers will be looked upon by your lords as farmers employed in the advancement of the national agriculture, and not as political beasts of burden, employed in the advancement of families to high prizes in the lottery of politics and plunder. And so I return to the point which I say is the one at issue between you and your landlord—that of security of tenure by a lease—and a liberal lease, untrammelled by game-law covenants, and all the other feudal covenants which you know well, but which are too numerous at present to mention.

Farmer.—Do you think we are, landlords and tenants, so near that age of prosperity and general well-doing foretold by Lord Essex, as to need nothing but a repeal of the corn-law and a system of leases? If you think so, I must say about you as I have said of my landlord, that I cannot see things as you see them.

Whistler.—But I must take the liberty of saying, my dear sir, that while you, like your landlord, did not read or listen to any arguments save those on your own side of the question, up to the coming of the corn-law crisis, you, unlike your landlord, have read nothing, or almost nothing since, on the free-trade side of the question; you told me that yesterday. You say that you have read the debates in Parliament during the present session, or so much of them as appears in the *County Herald;* and you complain that if the free-traders have good arguments in favour of the farmers seeking free-trade they do not state them. But, sir, the free-traders in Parliament are done with the argumentative part of the subject; that is taken out of their hands. Their business is now to vote, to consummate by enactment that which they have taught for years. When they were teaching, and you were not listening, that was not their fault; you should have listened to what concerned you so much. If you were to say to your clergyman, at the conclusion of the church service, "You must preach your sermon over again; I was not listening to you. I and my neighbours here were asleep, or we were playing and idling while you were praying and preaching; we must have it all over again, and the congregation must be halted here until we have it all over again." If you were to say that on Sunday, and every Sunday, to your parson, and go on sleeping at church, and idling, and never listening from week to week, from year to year, what would that large majority of the congregation who had been listening say to you?

Farmer.—I hardly see how this applies. But, admitting that it does apply, I want to know what we idle boys, the farmers, as I suppose you will call us, are to do now that we are woke up?

Whistler.—I do not call you idle boys. You are a most hard toiling and struggling class of men; but the best of your energies and the greatest of your struggles go for nothing. Some of them are mischievous. You must not only do new work, but you must undo some of the old. You are not "idle boys," but you are sometimes "mischievous boys," and you must undo some mischief by abstaining from a repetition of it. If you will let me, for a few minutes, compare you to school-boys, I will tell you what some of you have done in Hertfordshire. A boy who was far in advance of any of you, who sought to teach you and make you equal to himself—you, to please your master, (you do not do so now, when your master confesses that he was wrong and that boy was right,) you, though knowing that your neighbour was a better farmer than any of you, getting the best of crops out of indifferent land, and profit from cultivation when you were getting loss, you scouted that boy, fell on him, and abused him, and called him ill names in the market place. You must not do so again. Indeed you will not, for Lord Essex is now of opinion that this farmer was right, and he and you were wrong, and you only called that neighbour ill names in the market place, and hissed him and hooted him, because you knew Lord Essex was pleased at your doing so, and, like some other "bad boys," you had never been taught better. If I had nothing else to rejoice at in the conversion of your landlord to free-trade principles than the fact that his tenants will have no interest, or supposed interest, in ill-using their free-trade neighbours, I would rejoice, for that alone is a great gain in Hertfordshire.

Farmer.—Who do you speak of as the boy so far in advance of us, and whom we ill-used; the tenant who wrote against Lord Essex about the game, and whom his Lordship turned out of his farm?

Whistler.—No; I mean Mr Lattimore of Wheathamstead.

Farmer.—Because I was going to say, that it was not his neighbours, the tenant farmers, that said anything against him who wrote against the game; quite the reverse. We were all too well pleased to say anything against him; and as for Mr Lattimore, I do not think he was ever opposed by us but in a fair way. We did not agree with him, and opposed him as we would have opposed you.

Whistler.—But you would not listen, and hissed, and shouted him down at public meetings. You now listen to him; you now listen to me. Two years ago, though you are still of the same opinion as then about the corn-law, so you say, you would not have permitted me to have stood here, not because this is your farm, but because the farm is Lord Essex's, to speak of free-trade as I have been doing. The truth is, you dared not have done so. Now my object with you farmers is, to get yourselves raised to independence as occupiers of the land; not that you may dare to differ in opinion with your landlord, but that you may be able to cultivate your land as it should be cultivated. I have spoken of leases, but a lease is not enough. It is absolutely requisite to secure you against the landlord, or his agents, or his successors, when he dies. But there are things which must be effected, through the united efforts of tenants and landlords, before agriculture can reach that healthy state predicted for it by the free-traders years ago, and now predicted for it by Lord Essex. The rights of lords of manors over copyholders must be qualified to allow copyholders to cut down hedgerow timber, divert springs, water-courses, or, in other words, to drain. The copyholders and their tenants being the parties interested in the improvement, and the lord of the manor, or other superior, as the case may be, having no direct interest in such improvements, the latter is a fatal obstacle in the way of progress.

Farmer.—What do you think of the Duke of Richmond's bill for charging the expense of permanent improvements, by drainage, on the heirs in-tail?

Whistler.—The object is good, and the machinery, so far as it goes, is good; but it reaches only a very short way. And so does Sir Robert Peel's proposal to pass an act, if the new corn-law scheme passes, to lend money from the treasury to assist in agricultural improvements. Sir Robert's intention to lend public money, as I view it, is not only useless but bad. Where proper security is offered for money, it can be got now to improve the cultivation of land to any amount, from private individuals or from banks. If the security offered is not good, the money ought not to be lent, not alone because public money should be as carefully parted with as private money, but because, to lend money to landlords or tenant farmers who do not give such security as a private lender would accept, is to offer a bounty on the continuance of the present loose system of tenures. Private individuals lend money fast enough to landowners, when it is notoriously for their private expenditure, when it is not for the improvement of their property, but when there can be no doubt it will involve them in debt for life, and their property in bondage and bad cultivation for many years. Why then should there be any difficulty in obtaining money to improve the property? Let a tenant be properly protected from mortgagees, from the landlord, and from the landlord's creditors, by a lease of twenty years' duration at least. Let him be the borrower of the money, and his lease the security, (I speak of estates where the landlords are already drowned in debt, and cannot borrow money.) Let the tenants in this and all cases pay their rents according to the prices of farm produce. Let the lawyers have as little to do with the land as possible; but, above all, let the tenant be efficiently protected from his landlord, and there is no fear but that the time will come, and come soon, of which Lord Essex speaks so hopefully, when he says he sees better times coming for landlords and tenants, and for all.

CORN AGAINST CATTLE—CATTLE AGAINST CORN.

Here we are in 1845, past the middle of April, in a cold backward spring. This year has not yet given a leaf nor a blade of grass. Last year produced deficient hay and turnips, which makes the denial of early vegetation this year all the worse. "There is corn in Egypt;" beans, plenty of them, which would have brought our cattle over the winter, and sent them fat to market; but no, they must not come. And the manure must not be made to produce heavier crops of corn and heavier turnips for the ensuing season.

Instead of sending for beans to Egypt and for oats to Poland, the cattle must be sent to market only half fattened; and many farmers must sell, as perhaps one-half of all the renting tenants in England have done during the last autumn and winter, a large portion of their live stock at a dead loss to save a greater loss. And while doing this they must buy guano for manure. They may buy from one part of Africa the manure ready made to fertilize the land at home; but they must not bring from another part of Africa food for cattle to manufacture manure for themselves, and get the profits of it to themselves!

If they completed the fattening of their cattle on Egyptian beans, and paid thereby all expenses of purchase and labour, and had the manure for nothing, would it not, saying nothing of actual profit on the cattle and sheep, and the saving of the actual losses, be a great advantage over their present condition?

In the last number of the *Mark-Lane Express* the complaint—unfortunately too well founded—is reiterated of the heavy losses sustained from deficient winter food for cattle. And a correspondent of that paper, who joins in the cry of hard times for farmers, has the following passage:—

"Sir Robert asks the agriculturists what they want. He is a modern Isaac, who blesseth, not Jacob, but the manufacturers; and says, 'Yea, and they shall be blessed.' The agriculturists say unto him, 'Bless us also, O our father.' He answers, 'Thy brothers came with subtilty and stole away thy blessing.'"

Now, if Sir Robert Peel were to quote the words of Jacob when he himself was a patriarch and gave law unto his sons, and apply the words to the distressed farmers, viz.—

"Why do ye look one upon another? Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get ye down thither and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die."

That our cattle and sheep may be fed, and that the millions of our population who do not now taste of their flesh may eat, and repay you abundantly. Such should be Sir Robert's addition to the admonition of Jacob.

What would the farmers who "stand and look one upon another" say to this? In all likelihood they would say, "It requires a large outlay of money to buy food for cattle. Though we might have more manure by so doing, we would have to be at the expense of more labour to prepare it. As it is, the money paid for guano gets it for us direct and ready for use." And they might add, most consistently and truthfully, "It would do us no good to produce manures ourselves; we lose the greater part, certainly all the best, of what we now produce."

Suppose a manufacturer of cottons took the same position with regard to his business that a farmer takes, who would rather have the ammonia of the excremental offal of the birds of Africa brought to his land than the ammonia of the excremental offal of his own bullocks fed on the beans of Africa, that manufacturer would say, "Cotton costs me money; it is bulky in ships; it takes carriage expenses from me; I must pay for coals for a steam-engine; and for the engine and all that expensive machinery which is its offspring; I must pay for many people to make all these things, and for many people to work them, and to spin and weave the cotton. No; I will not send to Egypt (or America) for cotton. I will rather sell off such of my looms as are now standing, and such of my premises as are now empty."

The position of the farmer selling off his half-fattened cattle as he now does, and of this manufacturer as he would then be, is the same.

Let not the farmers deny it by putting forth the plea that manufacturers' profits from the use of an imported raw material to make cloth are larger than his would be from the use of an imported raw material to make beef. Were the question of profit or no profit on the importation of Egyptian beans and Polish oats raised, it would be easily demonstrated to be a real profit, and that too not a small one. Such food with grass cut in summer, and with turnips and straw in winter—for *hay* should then be sparingly made, the grass being more valuable as grass joined with corn-feeding than as hay—such food, I say, would produce an undoubted profit.

But our protectionists halt at an earlier stage than the question of profit. They deny the soundness and practicability of the principle of getting food from foreign shores even for cattle. Yet strangely enough they will let all their liquid manures run to waste, let the precious gases escape into the air from their manure heaps, and yet they will buy the same substances that they have themselves wasted from a foreign shore.

A WEEK IN THE WEST.

Remarks on the Hindrances of Agriculture.

27th December 1845.

I FOUND the following in an old parish record in the county of Hereford a few days ago:—"It hath been ye custom from time immemorial, now gone in part into disuse, to take ye boys in need of ye flogging to ye boundaries of ye parochial on perambulation day, Holy Thursday, and flog them as ye procession went round ye bounds, that it might so be in after-time to come, ye boys being men, would remember ye marches of ye parish."

It appears also, that in these perambulations certain mystic services were performed at the boundaries of farms and estates, "for the good of the harvest." Probably this was the agricultural protection of those days; and doubtless the farmers paid for it as they do now. Now-a-days, the boys are emancipated from the infliction of the rod at the parish boundaries; and there is no reason to suppose that they forget or neglect to care for the good of the parish because they are emancipated. They live in an age that rejoices to call itself civilized, when, to carry staves in procession round the parish would not be deemed a protection to the harvest against "the enemy;" when a flogging, as the procession walked along, would not be necessary to make wayward boys mend their ways and be good parishioners.

But if the boys have been emancipated from such hard management, many of the men have not, civilized though this age is called. There are certain things to be done "for the good of the harvest" with as little reason to justify them, and as much hardship in them as there was in the old preambulations and the flogging of the boys.

In the same parish where I saw the old record, and to which it refers—namely, the parish of Ross, in the county of Hereford—the following case occurred within the last two years. It only needs to be put into words a little antiquated to make it appear a specimen of the times of the flogging of boys round the parish to make them in after-time remember the marches.

"There hath lived in this parish, in all grace and honesty, a worthy man, for many years, by name Joseph Cross; and he hath one farm of 200 acres and more, and payeth ye rent thereof to his landlord, the Lord Alexander Baring of Ashburton, who, being careful for the good of the harvest, doth perambulate ye acres, and mark out ye bounds which ye tenants must walk on, and no other; for if they walk not unto ye marks laid down to them by ye said Lord Alexander Baring of Ashburton, and other noble lords and gentlemen, they will be punished, and made to remember it in after-times to come. And it so fell out that Mr Joseph Cross did plant of potatoes one-half acre of land less in the year 1843 than he was in power to do by permission of ye said Lord Alexander Baring. And also it fell out that in the year 1844, ye said Joseph Cross did plant one-half acre of potatoes more than ye said Lord permitted to be done, thinking thereby to make even with ye time when he did not plant so much. But ye said Lord did hear thereof, and did say that his tenant must pay 800 shillings for not abiding within ye rules laid down at ye time of marking ye boundaries by which he was to walk; at which time also ye said Lord Alexander Baring did say all his care was for ye tenant-farmers, and all his services were for their protection. And ye said Mr Joseph Cross did take out of his pocket forty pounds, being 800 shillings, and did count it over to ye said Lord Alexander, who put it in his own breeches pocket, did button ye same, and walk away.

"And Mr Joseph Cross did suffer this punishment when ye parish was perambulated for protection to ye farmers, and for good of ye harvest, inasmuch as that he did first walk within and next without ye Lord's boundary."

It is not necessary to adduce new arguments in this paper to prove that wherever there is the worst cultivation, the poorest farmers, and the worst conditioned labourers, there we shall find the most stringent covenants existing between tenant and landlord.

I was lately on the estate of a gentleman not unknown to fame in the proceedings of agricultural protection societies—Sir Alexander Hood. This landowner is a great stickler for the corn-law for the sake of the tenant farmers, and especially the labourers. As to the labourers, it may be enough to say that their wages in full employment, including harvest, does not average over 7s. 6d. a-week; that 1s. and 1s. 6d. a-week is paid for house rent; and that for years past their daily diet is potatoes for breakfast, dinner, and supper, and potatoes only. This year they are not living on potatoes, because they have none. In the county of Somerset, everywhere, the potatoes are lost, with few left for seed. In the neighbourhood of Glastonbury, Sir Alexander Hood's country, they are utterly lost, seed and all; and the wretched farm workers are now existing on half diet, made of barley meal, turnips, cabbages, and such small allowance of bread as small wages will procure. No advance of wages has accompanied the advance in the price of bread. So much for Alexander Hood's labourers, and the benefit they derive from protection to agriculture. And it should be added also, that there is only wages paid at the rate of one man at 7s. 6d., and one boy at 3s., to each hundred acres of land. A great deal of the land lies in grass; it all wants draining.

And now for the tenant farmers. One of them, taking a lead among the rest, the rest intending to follow, or promising to follow, made an attempt to drain and cultivate a portion of his farm, only a few acres out of several hundreds, so that he might grow some more winter feeding for his cattle, employ two or three more men, and thus lessen the parish rates. But he was proceeded against for penalties, was forced into litigation, was sold up, expelled the farm, beggared, and made an example of, to deter others from daring to attempt to cultivate their land as they might think best.

Not long ago Sir Alexander Hood was at Wells. He was making a speech about protection being requisite to save the farmers from ruin. "Look at this man," cried some daring citizen of Wells, who, taking the ruined farmer by the hand, presented him in front of the platform. Sir Alexander had the virtue of being ashamed; he turned and addressed that part of the meeting on his right. But in a few minutes the remnant of his ruined tenant, led by the daring citizen, appeared there, and again the latter said, "Look at this man!" Sir Alexander turned to the left, and spoke with his face in that direction of his advocacy of protection for the benefit of labourers and tenant farmers; but again there came before him the same couple of tormentors, the one the picture of ruin staring him in the face, and the other calling, "Look at this man!" He drew his speech to an abrupt conclusion and retired.

The worst part of all this mismanagement of land by landlords is, that many good men do so conscientiously. There are many excellent men who cling to this illusory shadow of protection, believing that such cultivation as they have on their soils of middling quality (much of Somerset is of that character) would cease. The bugbear that inferior lands would go out of cultivation by the abolition of the corn-laws is constantly frightening them. I saw an excellent letter in the *Times* the other day, written by Lord Kinnaird, shewing that the inferior soils now in cultivation would not be abandoned, but that free-trade would improve them. To this I add my humble but emphatic testimony of affirmation.

The first practical operation of free-trade on the middling and inferior qualities of soil now under cultivation would be to increase their fertility and productiveness. It is an expensive and profitless way to fertilize such soils by the purchase of guano and other manures not made on them; but it is a cheap way to fertilize them by purchasing low-priced oats, beans, lintseed, maize, and barley, to feed cattle and sheep, mingled with the straw and chaff, and the root produce, turnips, carrots, clover, &c., grown at home. The cattle and sheep will pay for their provender, and the best of all manures will be on the farms free of price. More acres must then be under turnips and other root crops than now on each farm, which increase will be practicable because of the increase of manure. This will augment labour. Fewer acres on each farm will be in wheat, but superior fertility will give a larger crop of wheat. The cost of its production will be less than now; the amount of its produce more than now.

The first principles of successful agriculture are security of tenure, regularity of price, and cheap fertility. The first of these might co-exist with a corn-law; it does not. The other two cannot exist with a corn-law, and never will come into operation until agriculture is free.

One other extract from the antiquities of Herefordshire will be pardoned; it is also from Lord Ashburton's parish, and is a continuation of the history of the perambulation day, when the boys were flogged to make them remember the parish boundaries, and when the people carried staves and crosses, and made use of mystic words, "for ye good of ye harvest." The records go on to say that after the perambulators returned, the backs of the boys still smarting, I suppose, "They did all of them go into ye church after dinner, and there being a figure of ye devil made of wood, it was placed upon ye altar. They did then, with a rope upon its neck, lift it up clean out of sight; wherefore they did let the rope slip, and ye devil made of wood fell down, and was broken in many pieces by ye boys falling upon it with shouting and joy and much loud noise."

It is not recorded of the boys whether they were so delighted with breaking this wooden devil to pieces "*after dinner*" as to forget the smarting of the forenoon floggings; nor is it quite clear whether the chastised tenantry of Sir Alexander Hood and the Lord Ashburton who, *after dinner*, at agricultural meetings, shout and knock to pieces the made-up images of the *evening*, forget their previous chastisements, or have no fear for the next perambulation day. But it may be assumed that the joy of demolishing a wooden devil would evaporate when the boys coolly reflected that the real devil was not dead, and felt the stripes of perambulation day upon their backs. So also, I presume, will those grown-up men, who in this age of civilisation are treated as the boys used to be in the half barbarous ages; they will feel their stripes, and have an unhappy certainty that the real enemy of agriculture is alive, even though they shouted and demolished some bogle made up for the purpose at a protection society's dinner.

WHAT IS RENT?

Sussex in the South; Haddingtonshire in the North. To the Farmers of both Counties, and all whom it may concern.

Rent-Payers,—It is not a mere whim of mine to particularize the two counties named above on such a general subject, though at first sight it may seem so.

The county of Sussex contains some remarkable farms, so does the county of Haddington. Sussex contains some of the best land and some of the worst in the kingdom, so does the county of Haddington. The one county skirts the sea, and so does the other. The one county contains the estates of distinguished public men, and so does the other.

But it is for none of these parallels that I join the two in the matter which I am about to introduce to you, to explain practically what rent is and what rent is not.

Neither is it to make the contrast which these two counties afford—one having, as a cultivator of its soil, Mr John Ellman of Glynde, author of the Sliding Scale, and zealous advocate of monopoly; the other having, as a cultivator of its soil, Mr George Hope of Fenton Barns, author of the first of the League's Prize Essays, and the zealous advocate of free-trade.

It is neither for parallels nor contrasts that those two counties are particularized; but it is, in the first place, because the Presbytery of Haddington (the local ecclesiastical court of the parish clergy) has appointed a day of "Solemn fast and thanksgiving to be held in the several parishes, to return thanks to Almighty God for the great blessing which He has vouchsafed in giving us the *abundant harvest*;" and because Mr John Ellman of Glynde, published, in the *Brighton Gazette*, while the northern harvest was still in the fields, a letter of hope and cheerfulness to the Sussex farmers, congratulating them on the continuance of wet weather, which for some weeks threatened to damage the harvest in the north, while the crops in Sussex were safe in the stackyard; bidding them keep back their corn from market, because the "muggy weather" would damage the northern crops and raise the prices of the southern. It is, I repeat, *in the first place*, because the greater portion, if not all, of the parish clergy in Haddingtonshire are in favour of the corn-law; that in Sussex they are the same; that Mr John Ellman, the mouthpiece of the corn-law clergy of Sussex, professes to be a religious man, and in that character congratulates his fellow-farmers in Sussex that the crops of the north will be damaged by the providence of Almighty God, and the crops of the south will be enhanced in value through scarcity; while the clergy of Haddington Presbytery, all supporters of Mr John Ellman's sliding scale, return thanks to Almighty God that the harvest in the north was abundant, and was not damaged.

But, in *the second place*, I particularize these counties—Sussex especially—because a correspondent of the LEAGUE is publishing in this paper a detailed description of some of the Sussex estates and farms; and I know that such descriptions will be read in that county; the paper will be sought for; it will be bought and borrowed, sold and lent, and one will ask another if they have seen it. So, while that letter is drawing your attention to the paper by describing your own farms, I will take advantage of that circumstance to turn your attention to the question of *rent*.

But, by all the sorrows that afflict humankind! you need no writer to call your attention to the subject of *rent*. Michaelmas reminds you of that, or, if you should forget Michaelmas, the Browns of Cowdray and the Rusbridgers of Goodwood will put you in mind of it.

Forget! You think of it all day, dream of it all night; and, sleeping or waking, you are planning, or sinking into despondency because you have no plan, how to get the rent paid. This wheat stack must be thrashed out and sold; those young heifers must go to market; so must two score of wethers, that would be fitter for market when they have eaten the turnips and got fat; but off they must go for ready cash to pay the rent. You would drain some wet soil, as they told you at last public dinner, and as you will be told again when you pay your rent, and listen to the speeches delivered on the day you pay; but how can you drain? You must pay your rent, and you have no more money.

No more! you have not enough! you must get a bill discounted; the bank will not do it with your name to it only; you are a tenant-at-will, and are no security. Your uncles or brothers live in Chichester or Brighton. You have got them to join you in a bill before; they did not like it. You know that, and rather than do so again, your wives must go; and, under pretence of having come to the kinsman's house to have a cheerful cup of tea, the poor woman, with palpitating heart, manages, after much difficulty, to tell her real errand. She tries to make things look as well at home as she can. I dare say she makes the crop and stock worth more than their value. Mr John Ellman's letter in the *Brighton Gazette* is a good card for her, poor woman, if her kinsman is as blind a bat as John Ellman presumes the farmers to be. She says, "Corn is low now; but the weather is muggy, and the northern harvest is not yet saved; it will be damaged; prices will rise in Sussex, and there will be no fear at all but we will be able to meet the bill when it is due."

But no delusion of "muggy weather" or of corn-law—neither the *protection* to Sussex farmers of the one nor the other—will set the mind of the farmer's wife at rest. She spoke confidently to her kinsman; but she looks forward and fears the worst. Experience has taught her. Year after year everything has gone away in rent—year after year has she been to have some new article of furniture, but as often has the purchase been postponed until better times.

At last this dreadful rent-day is got over. The sleepless nights and the dreams of agents and no money to pay the rent; and of lawyers who come in the nightmare in the shape of bulls and of cows which run after you where you cannot escape, and where they get you down and gore you with their horns. O God! what horrid dreams are those dreams of a farmer in September! But Michaelmas past, all will be pleasantness and repose—at least for another year.

Will it? The bill comes due at Christmas. And a bill dishonoured is even worse than a rent not paid to the very day. It is one continual round of vexation. You know that your farm would bear many improvements. You know that you would breed a better stock, if you could pay a high price for rams and bulls. You know that liquid manures might be saved if you could lay out one or two hundred pounds on cisterns and the requisite accompaniments. You know that in many ways your crops might be increased if you could devote the money to the labour and the science. But you must pay all the money in rent. This dreadful rent-day, with corn lower in price than you had calculated it to be when you took your farm, is ever recurring; and each, as it passes, leaves a new train of difficulties to you.

But why should there be any trouble about the rent if Mr John Ellman is a true teacher in all things concerning the farmer? Mr Ellman tells you that *rent* is the surplus profit after paying for labour, seed corn, keep of horses, rates, tithes, tradesmen's bills, interest on capital, and for farmer's remuneration for his personal labour. Why should rent be any trouble to the farmer when this champion of the farmers lays it down as an indisputable truth that rent is neither more nor less than the surplus *after* paying all those charges?

Brother rent-payers, you know well that, whatever this may be in theory, it is a fiction in practice. You know that you must *first* pay rent, and then pay tradesmen's bills, and find for draining, manuring, and ploughing, and sowing your farm. You know that neither yourselves nor wives, nor sons and daughters, must indulge in one bodily comfort or luxury, nor even necessary, until the rent is paid.

Moreover, you know that the landowners for whom Mr Ellman speaks and writes, and takes the chair at corn-law county meetings, have, sitting in Parliament legislating for themselves, made a law which secures the payment of rent before anything else is paid. Yet you are taught to believe in what Mr Ellman tells you! you are taught to *deny that the landlords have legislated for themselves, and themselves alone.* You are told to believe that they have legislated for the universal good—that the farmers and labourers have been their special care.

Why, their nearest neighbours, the farmers, and the creditors of farmers, are the first that are victimized. The law of distraint gives a direct contradiction to Mr Ellman's doctrine. Your kinsman who lent you money to pay last year's rent cannot be repaid this year should you fail until this year's rent be paid. No money can be set aside for interest on capital, nor for personal remuneration, nor for tradesmen's bills, until the rent be paid.

You know this every one of you. Yet Mr Ellman is your guide, who tells you that "*rent is the surplus after paying interest on capital, tradesmen's bills, wages of labour, keep of horses, and personal remuneration.*" He said so at the protection meetings last year, and he said so in his essay on agriculture nine years ago.

I shall not in this letter pursue the subject farther; but shall return to it and give you practical proofs, so plain that you cannot mistake them, that Mr John Ellman is just as wrong in respect of the theory of *corn-law protection* as he is in the theory of *rent.*

Meantime let those of you who can, refer to the first volume of the "History and Antiquities of Sussex," published in 1835. The section on agriculture is written by Mr Ellman; his name is at the top of it. And let these questions be asked:—Why is it that Mr Ellman complains of corn being at a ruinously low price in 1835, the same as he does in 1844? Why is it that he told us last year, and at the Steyning meeting this year, that the Anti-Corn-Law League was the cause of our low prices and difficulties, when the same low prices and difficulties existed, as he himself records, five years before the League was formed or even thought of?

Ask the same question as regards the new tariff, which was only passed in 1842, *seven years* after the low prices of 1835, which Mr Ellman speaks of in the book. And then read what he says of *rent;* and compare what he says of rent being the surplus with your own experience of what it really is.

The work is not easily purchased: it is expensive. But it may be borrowed from the libraries of the nobility, gentry, and most of the clergy in Sussex. The Duke of Richmond and Sir Charles Burrell are amongst the subscribers to it, I perceive. They will probably permit some of their tenants to borrow it. And Mr Ellman has doubtless a copy himself. Perhaps he will lend it to his neighbours, and explain to them how his theory of rent, when he is *writing for* the landlords, agrees with their experience of rent when they are *paying to* the landlords. At all events I shall explain the matter to them; and, without leaving a shadow of doubt, I will shew them that he is as practically in error with protection as he is with rent.

LETTER FROM ANDOVER ABOUT PAUPERS AND CONVICTS.

11th October 1845.

ANDOVER! The very name of this place must be to the public by this time like a well-picked bone, a bone which, falling to the daily newspapers at a season of scarcity and dearth of news, has been snapped up—*The Times* carrying it off for its own use, to gnaw it in its own corner, and growl over it as it gnaws—a bone which is now so bare, so old, so emptied of its marrow, a disagreeable bone of contention from the first, that even a pauper in the workhouse would hardly gnaw it.

Still, I think it possible that the "dailies," keen-scented as they are, eager and industrious as they have been here, may have overlooked some little morsels of fact, which a "weekly" may take up and turn to a useful purpose.

The name of Mr Hugh Munday of Down-farm has been frequently mentioned in connection with the poor-law inquiry at Andover. It was his petition to Parliament, praying for an inquiry into the allegation which he set forth, that the dietory was so low in the workhouse, as to starve down the paupers to the necessity of eating the rotten gristle off the bones which they got to break for manure, that led to the recent inquiry after much delay, much cavilling, and some attempts on the part of the Poor-law Commissioners to wriggle out of it. Personally, Mr Munday has taken no active share in promoting the charges against the late master of the union. These charges have been taken up as secondary thoughts, but promoted and proved so far as they have been proved as primary objects by other parties. Some of the parties may have been very honest, very pure, very humane in their motives; but if so, I must confess that, so far as I can see, the honesty, the purity, the humanity, seem sadly obscured by personal ill-feeling, political partisanship, (aye, even political hatred, strange as it may seem,) and by a rather large amount of that cowardice which affects the bravo to hound on the public indignation against one man's deeds, that it and its own misdeeds may escape. The honesty, purity, and humanity of the promoters of the charges against Macdougal, the late master of the workhouse, have been sadly clouded by such moral impurities as these; and also by the fact that some of the persons who gave evidence against him on the score of immoral character, and others who did not give evidence against him personally, but who worked hard behind the scenes to get up damnatory evidence, ransacking the memories of themselves and neighbours over a period of nine years, for everything that would tell against the man whom they once called friend; making friends of paupers, and of persons who had been paupers, and had always been odious to their new friends of to-day, and scornfully kept at a distance because they were paupers—prompting these persons, cramming them with stories which they were to remember the dates of, but which they could not remember the years of, when they came to be sworn—I say the fact of such opponents of Macdougal being now candidates for his vacant situation, throws an additional cloud over the alleged purity and humanity of their motives in getting him removed from his situation.

It has always seemed to me a grievous error in the national economy to shut people up within workhouse walls because they sought employment and could not get it, and that in a country whose soil has treasures buried and wasted in it for the want of labour—a grievous error in moral economy to think of making the idle industrious by shutting them up where they have no useful thing to do, and where they can learn, and feel, and understand nothing but how to hate their fellow-men. It has always seemed to me a grievous error to deny out-door relief to families in temporary distress, whereby they are compelled to undergo the most cruel privations, or submit to break up their little homes, sell off their furniture, (their houses and gardens it may be, as in the parish of Heyshot, in Sussex, and in numerous other parishes,) and become thorough, confirmed, irredeemable paupers. To me it has seemed cruel, terribly cruel, to take the aged and infirm from the cottages they have laboured to keep above their heads.

and which they have sanctified with their affections, and shut them up in the workhouses, drilling them in their old days under the discipline of a barrack-yard, conducted by some non-commissioned officer of the army, whose fitness for keeping the workhouse in order is estimated by his success on the drill-ground and in the barrack-yard over a long period of years, (Macdougal's service in the Royal Horse Artillery was thirty years, twenty-seven of which he was a non-commissioned officer, and five of which regimental serjeant-major;) terribly cruel to break up "the old house at home" of an old couple whose eyes see "home" written in every corner of it, in every crevice of the walls, whose affections rest upon the old stools where their young babies sat, on the old table where many a scanty, yet many a happy frugal meal was eaten; to part them from all and from each other, and drill them in their old days into military habits, under military men, as if they were young recruits! The impolicy of shutting up the able-bodied who cannot get work outside, compelling them to do worthless, profitless, filthy work inside, merely to punish them, is only surpassed in enormity by this cruel treatment of the aged and infirm, whose helplessness only compels them to submit. All others leave the workhouse walls as soon as they can. *They* only leave to go to their graves. And to put the deeper shame on age and poverty, most workhouses present them with graves within the walls, as prisons do to the most felonious of criminals. All, save the aged and infirm, and the incapable of acting for themselves, can escape, and do escape, from the stupid punishment of the workhouses. They escape to kill game, steal sheep, rob hen-roosts—to do anything, to take any chance, rather than be punished in the workhouse for seeking parish relief; they escape from the dietary of the unions to the better fare of the prisons and the hulks, and the better fed convict gangs of the Bermudas, Gibraltar, and New South Wales; but the old, the venerable fathers and mothers of the villages, cannot escape save into their graves; and, that even the hope of the grave may not be too comfortable to them in the imprisonment of their old age, they have the certainty placed before them that since they are such vile creatures as to be old and poor, they will not be buried in the old church-yard with their kindred, but will be consigned to pauper's ground.

Say the best that can be said for the workhouse system, and even then there is a frightful balance of ignorance of human nature, irrational efforts to reform the idly disposed, and of cruel irreverence for the holiest affections of mankind left in it.

Strange that in an age that boastfully calls itself the nineteenth century, and boasts of reforming its criminal code; of banishing the criminal code; of banishing the birch from its schools; of working upon mind rather than upon matter; on hopes rather than fears—an age in which even the cruelties of naval and military discipline are relaxed and amended; and which promises at no distant period to abolish capital punishments in obedience to the progressive cry of charity and peace, and tolerant rationality instead of intolerant barbarism: strange, that in this age called the nineteenth century, and in this country called England, a systematic code of punishment for the aged, the infirm, and the unfortunate should for the first time in the world's history be adopted and rigorously applied.

And the strangeness of the fact does not seem less when we call to mind that many of those public men who have been foremost—most sincerely and earnestly in the front, as I believe—in softening the rigours of the criminal code, for the better reformation of criminals, and in advocating a more comprehensive and rational system of education for the young, that they may be led and induced to imbibe education as a pleasure, ceasing to be treated as ill-used brute-beasts, and beginning to be treated as rational beings—that such moral reformers should at the same time be foremost in making industry compulsive, not by leading the idle to work, but by driving them in one common herd, idle, unfortunate, aged, infirm, and sick, as the worst-used of brute-beasts are driven, to compel them to work or die quickly at little expense. Strange that men, foremost in civilizing, and humanizing, and leading on the moral armies of the nineteenth century, conquering old prejudices and old barbarities, should turn back to use cruelty and coercion in the rear of their moral army, upon the aged, the infirm, and unfortunate—upon the *helpless*, who in all ages and countries the most ignorant and barbarous, have been spared and protected.

This is no idle sentimentalism; it is but a feeble expression of what I have found during the last three years in my travels through almost every parish (two or three unions excepted) in the south and south-west of England.

I have said that Mr Hugh Munday originated this inquiry by a petition to Parliament. The inquiry had thus a respectability of birth which gave it a higher character throughout with those who know Mr Munday than it might otherwise have had. He is a practically liberal man. I paid a visit one day to Down Farm, and found nestled among some trees on the left-hand side of the Basingstoke Road, between two and three miles from Andover, Mr Munday's residence. He at one time, after succeeding his father, had 1800 acres of land in occupation. As his brothers grew to manhood, and got married, and needed farms, he parted the land with them. He occupies now, I think, about 500 acres, quite enough for one management, and has yielded up the parental house, with the best portions of the farm, to his brothers, he, being a bachelor, betaking himself to a smaller house; also to the worst portion of the land. This is mentioned to shew that the gentleman whose genuine humanity led him to interfere in behalf of the famine-stricken paupers, has kindly feelings in him for other uses, and at other times, than to be exhibited for holiday show.

I found his work-people more comfortably provided for than is common on many other farms. But what pleased me still more, I found them greater in number, in proportion to the acres, than on most other farms; and Mr Munday answered me that all the progress he had made towards this increase of employment on his farm had been attended with additional profit. He does not believe that his agriculture is by any means perfect; he expects to advance; but, as he now stands, he is far enough to say, that if all farmers employed as many hands as he does on the same number of acres, there would not be an idle hand in Hampshire, nor in rural England. And if every employer encouraged and assisted his work-people as he does, to feed pigs, keep bees, grow their vegetables, and live regularly, soberly, and be industrious, there would be no need—at least less need—to ask relief from the poor-rates at times of sickness and temporary distress.

Walking in the garden and orchard behind his house, I observed a row of beehives, five-and-twenty in number I think, and made the remark to him that he had a goodly share of them. He said they were not his; they belonged to two of his work-people, who had not a convenient place for so many elsewhere; and he had invited them, as he kept no bees himself, and had a good garden, to put them there. The bees belonging to these two persons produced L.12 last year, being L.6 each; a small matter to people whose honey and money are always overflowing, but a great matter to agricultural labourers.

The current wages are 9s., 10s., and 11s. a-week; but with such employers as Mr Munday, other advantages, some of them not to be estimated by money—I mean the moral advantages of being always cared for—are additional to the current rate of wages.

It being on a Friday when I was at Down Farm, I observed that Mr Munday had established the good and convenient custom of paying his work-people on Fridays.

The readers of this paper know that it is an axiom with Mr Cobden to say, "Shew me a good farmer, a man cultivating better than his neighbours, and I will shew you a man not afraid to part with protection." Such a man is Mr Munday. He is not a political man; and, I believe, neither an orator in practice nor in ambition; but being at Winchester on the occasion of Mr Cobden and Mr Bright's well-known visit to that city, he was asked, as a tenant farmer of Hampshire, to take a part in the proceedings. He consented, and proposed and supported a resolution to the effect that the corn-laws had been of no benefit to the farmers, and that agriculture and the agricultural labourers would have been in a better condition than they ever have been in, had there been no corn-laws.

Being at Winchester the other day, I returned to Andover—the regular distance being about eleven miles—by way of Sutton Scotney, which made the distance four miles farther. Sutton Scotney is a goodly-sized village—a thousand people in it, or thereabout. It has the village of Newton, in which parish it stands, half-a-mile eastward, and Barton Stacey, a parochial village, a mile westward. It was in these villages conjointly that the Swing riots of 1830 first began. Several persons belonging to them were convicted and transported, and one hanged. One of those who had been sentenced to seven years' transportation, but got off with two years' imprisonment at Portsmouth, was mentioned to me, and I sent for him, and drew him into familiar conversation. His account was to the following effect:—

"My name? my name be's Joseph Carter. Ees, I had seven year on't for them mobs; but they let me off with imprisonment at the hulks for two years and one day. That was the exact time. The way I got off was this—they found out when they put me to school there that I never could read none; no reading nor writing. I never had a book put afore me never in my life, not as I minds on, till I went aboard ship a prisoner to serve my seven year at Portsmouth. I wish I had ha' served my seven year. They would ha' made me a scholard by this time. They learned me to read the Testament a bit; but did not make me much of a scholard, 'cause, why you see, I wor only but two year and a-day there. But they finding out as how I had never been no scholard, they knew it could not have been I as old Barrowman called in to see if it wor a good ten-pound note. That old Barrowman was the father of young Barrowman as was hanged. The old one was transported. Both they were from Barton Stacey.

“Well, about the ten-pound note, it was in this here way. The mob goes up to Mr Callander—he is Sir Thomas Baring's steward—and they said they must have money, or they would do mischief. Well, he said, don't do mischief, come in with me and I will give you money. Old Barrowman went in to get the money; but he could not read a word of figures or writing, and he did not know if it wor a good note. So he comes out and gets another man to go in with him, to see if the note wor a good one. Mack was the man who went in. He be here now, and everybody knows he wor the man as went in. But he be a tall man like myself; and, i' faith, somebody swore it wor me; and they took me. But when they found I wor no scholard, they believed it might not be me.

“Oh, ees, ees, I wor with them. But then, everybody was forced like to go. There was no denying. I be an old man now. I was not young then. It was the young men as did it. They worked, you see, for little wages, as they do now. They suffers most. They get but 4s., and 4s. 6d., and 5s., and one or two may get 5s. 6d. a-week. At that time the married men got 9s. and 10s. a-week. But it was the young men as led the others and forced them into it. I was took afore Squire Wickham and the other gentlemen, for the squire to shew as how I had no business to be mobbing. I was a hurdle maker and thatcher, and jobbed at hedging. The squire shewed as how I got L.64 a-year from him for work of that kind for seven years. But then he did not shew that I had most times a man to help me, and two women besides at times. He did not shew that. I paid as much as L.20 some years for helpers. Oh, I did not say I paid the money away that way, because they would ha' thought I complained, and would ha' taken that as guilty of going out to mob. I said that I wor forced out agin my will. And so I wor.

“But you see, I wor at the meeting across the street there, in that corner house, the night as Joe Mason read the letter to us all, that came from Overton. There was no name to the letter. But Joe said he knowed who it came from. Joe was a good scholard. The letter, I know, came from old D——'s; he be dead; and it came out of Newton; never came from Overton. It said we was all to leave off work; and the Sutton men was to go out and stop the ploughs. They was to send home the horses for the farmers to look after them themselves, and was to take the men with them. And they was to go and turn the men out of the barns. And they was all to go and break the 'sheens' as the farmers had got to do the thrashing. That was what they was to do. They ha' got three sheens now in this place, now at this very time; and one farmer borrows one; and them four sheens does the work of eight men. They be a doin' of that at Sutton in this moment; and men be again doin' nothin'.

"Well; about the letter. Joe Mason read it. We did not then know who it came from. But we knows, all on us now in this here place, that old D——s had a hand in't. He was a great friend of Mr Cobbett. He used to write to Mr Cobbett. He never got into no trouble about it. He was too good a manager to get other people into trouble to get in himself. No; I do not blame this on Mr Cobbett. I mean old D——s, the shoemaker, Mr Cobbett was a good master. I ha' nothing to say agin he. I lived with him at Botley, and would never wish to serve a better master.

"About the letter; well, it was this: I was there at the reading on't, and that came all out, and you see that went agin me. And then some of them told as how that I carried the money; and, ecod, you see that was true. Joe Mason was by far the best scholard, but they would not trust Joe with the money; nor yet old Barrowman. They said I wor honest, and they gave it to me to carry. I had L.40 at one time—L.40 every shilling. Some people ha' told me since that I should ha' gone off with it. I did think of doing that once. The coach came by when we was up on the London Road, and it did come into my head to get on the coach, and get away from the whole business, with the L.40. But I thought about leaving my wife behind, and about what a vagabond they would all call me, and the coach was soon past. I never had another chance. But had I ha' knowed I was to be tried, and sentenced to be transported, I'd ha' got up on the coach.

"I needn't ha' been tried at all. They came to me times and times after I was in Winchester gaol, to get me to speak against the two Masons. They offered to let me clear, if I would only tell what I knowed agin them. Had I told what I knowed, they'd ha' been hung, as sure as Barrowman, and Cooke, and Cooper, was hung. I was took out with the other prisoners to see they hung. They tried to frighten us by it to tell all we knowed on one another. But I wouldn't split. So the Masons was only transported, and they transported me, too.

"Ees; the mob took me agin my will; but then that was not enough to make me split, 'cause you see, I stayed with them. They took many a man agin his will. They took Harry Mills of Barton Stacey, and carried him a mile and a half. Harry Mills be alive now. He wor yesterday. I seed him in this here place. He have a pension of one shilling a-day, he have. He wor in the 63d regiment, and stood guard over Bonaparte at St Helena. The mob carried Harry Mills a mile and a half, and forced him to go with them. It wor the young fellows did it. The worst on them never got nothing done to them. Some of those as got most done to them, some as got hanged, never done half so much as some I knows on in this here parish."

"Were you ever in a workhouse?"

"Was I ever in a workhouse? No, thank God, I never did no harm to be put in a workhouse."

"But I do not mean a prison; you have been in a prison. I mean a union workhouse; were you ever an inmate of the union?"

"No; I never did nothing to be sent to the union."

"Do you mean by that answer that they send people to the union as a place of punishment?"

"I don't know, I ha'n't been in; but I hear tell it be a terrible place; and I knows this, that if a man does not please his master here with his work, the master says he'll be d—d but he'll send him to the union. An' if a man seeks more wages, and the master ben't willing to give more, and the man say he can't live on what he be getting, the master says, 'D—n ye; I'll send thee to the union; see how ye like that!' No, I never was in the union myself; hope I never shall be so bad as ha' to go."

"What kind of food had you on board the hulk at Portsmouth the two years and a day you were there?"

"Why, sir, not always good alike; and not always bad alike. The bread was mostly always bad, 'cause one man, who had great favour, had the contract all the time I was there. The butchers took the contract for six months; and there was a great deal of difference in one six months from another six months, according as to who might have the contract. The worst on't was better than I can get now in Sutton Scotney. I do not mean but there be's good meat to be got in Sutton by them as have money; but it ben't no working man like me as can get it. I wish I had as much meat now as I had in the hulk; and I wishes the same to every poor hard-working man in Hampshire.

"The allowance we had, sir, was this:—We had four ounces of biscuit a-day—the best of biscuit. The bread was one pound; it was black, and not good. We had oatmeal too, and pea soup; and we had garden vegetables that we bought with the money we worked for. We had fourteen ounces of meat each time, four times a-week; one six months the meat was beautiful. That man gave always good meat when he had the contract. We had plenty of victuals. The only thing was the bread. I wishes every poor, hard-working man in this here parish were as well fed with meat, and myself with them, as I wor in the hulk.

"Oh, sir, you are very kind. You need not say you are sorry to have troubled me. A man once came from Winchester and took down in writing, like you, all I had to say. He was a shoemaker somebody told me. I do not know his name, but he said he was going to make a history of the mobs. I never heard no more of him.

"Oh yes, sir, you are welcome to know all as I know; but to tell you the truth, I thought, at first, when you sent for me, it was about that old horse. You see I was to pay one shilling a-week, and that for twenty-six weeks, and it only lived a month. So they want to make me pay the whole price for it. I thought it was about that, and I was rather afeard. But I ben't the least afeard now."

So much for a Hampshire peasant in the year 1845.

THE HOP GROWERS AND THE HOP CULTIVATION.

The hop is used in the brewing of beer. When the liquor is drawn off the malt it is sweet; hops being added to it produces an acidity. The longer beer is intended to be kept, the more liberally it is "hopped;" for instance, the directions to brew strong ale and strong beer are the following:—"Twelve bushels of malt to the hogshead for beer, (or fourteen, if you wish it of a very good body;) eight for ale. For either pour the whole quantity of water hot, but not boiling, on at once, and let it infuse three hours close covered; mash it in the first half hour, and let it stand the remainder of the time. *Run it on the hops* previously infused in water. For strong beer, *three quarters of a pound to a bushel* of malt, if for ale, *half a pound.* Boil them with the malt three hours from the time it begins to boil. Cool a paleful to add three quarts of yeast to, which will prepare it for putting to the rest when ready next day; but, if possible, put together the same night. Turn as usual. Cover the bung-hole with paper when the beer has done working; and when it is to be stopped, *have ready a pound and a-half of hops dried before the fire,* put them into the bung-hole, and fasten it up. Let it stand twelve months in cask, and twelve in bottle, before it be drank. It will keep five, eight, or ten years. It should be brewed the beginning of March."

Such are the uses to which the hop is put. The nature of the plant and the portion of it used will be seen presently.

The cultivation of the hop is a species of husbandry principally confined to that part of the island comprised in the counties of Kent, Surry, and Sussex. Each of these counties presents a great variety of external features when taken by itself; but when collected and compared together, they exhibit a remarkable uniformity and sameness. The great formations of the wealden, the sand, and the chalk, belong to each and to all. In the core of the district lies the wealden, comprising the wealds of Kent, Surry, and Sussex. This large and central tract of country is girt with a belt of chalk hills, which, rising from the sea about the Isle of Thanet, range in a westerly course over the north of Kent, and, passing through Surry, return in a circular sweep along the south of Sussex to the channel. A fringe of sand forms the union between the chalk and the wealden.

These three varieties of soil govern the kinds of agricultural occupation afforded at different seasons. The woodland is the great feature of the wealden. The sand, as it rises into the chalk, furnishes some of the most celebrated hop gardens and orchards. The most highly cultivated arable land is found upon the chalk of the Isle of Thanet.

There is perhaps no produce in the country that requires so much or such varied human labour as the hop at the different stages of its progress. The ground is at one time a field, at another a garden. Great outlay of force must be expended on the soil as on the corn-land; but the force is that of the human arm, not that of the beast of burden, which in some plantations, as those about Farnham, scarcely enters. Unlike corn, too, and other produce, which, when the soil has been prepared and the seed committed to the ground, is left in the main to the course of nature and the order of the seasons to bring to perfection, it must be trained and tended from its first shoot to its ripening. Then it is not gathered like corn, and stored upon the stalk, but is culled at once by the finger. It thus calls into play the energies of all ages and of either sex. The soil is handled and subdued by the man; the plant is trained and tended by the woman; in the gathering, are united all—man, woman, and child. The practice of taking taskwork, however, has in some places the effect of engaging both woman and boy, and sometimes the girl, in the more laborious treatment of the land. The woman shares much of the man's labour at taskwork—the boy all of it, even to the digging, which is the most severe of any. It is, however, only the lighter parts of the ground which boys usually turn up with the spade; they dig what are called "the slips"—spaces between the "hills," which the man leaves in digging the gravel down, and which are left by the plough in order to drain the surface-water off.

In describing the various processes through which the hop passes before it reaches the market, I will begin at the beginning.

Digging is usually begun in the month of December, and performed by the acre. The rate of payment is from 18s. to L.1 an acre. A man and a boy will dig about an acre in the week. The next stage is *opening the hops*—that is, levelling the hills which have been piled round the plants in the preceding summer. Women and boys are occasionally employed at this; but it is usually done by the men as taskwork. Sometimes they contract to do it by the acre, but it is nice work, and therefore seldom done in this way. When the woman is hired to do it by the day, she gets about tenpence or one shilling. It lasts for about a week in the month of March. It is hard work for a woman; the moving the ground is heavy. When men contract, they are paid about fourpence per hundred.

About the month of April, when the hop plants begin to shoot, the poles are fixed in the ground. It is common for men to contract to do this by the acre. It is called "*poling* the hops." The wife often assists at this, generally by carrying the poles to the hills, where the man fixes them, and by fastening them after he has done so by a "rammer," with which she beats the ground into the hole. This commonly lasts about a fortnight, but it depends on the weather, and some farmers will only do it when the moon is new. 1200 hops are planted on an acre, and when it is done by contract, it is at the rate of about fourpence per 100. After the "poling," boys and women are employed at "choqclearing," or picking up the chips and old pieces of poles from the ground; they are hired to do this by the day. It lasts only for a day or two. At the beginning of May, or latter end of April, the hops are "tied." Neither boys nor men are ever employed at this work. It is an "endless" job for a man; a man cannot get on with it. Women generally contract with a farmer to "tie" for the season, at nine shillings an acre. A woman will generally take two acres, or two acres and a-half. The trouble depends on the weather. If it is boisterous, she has to bind them over and over again, as the wind blows them from the pole, or blows them round in a wrong direction away from the sun. She can bind about two acres and a-half in about a week, and must visit them to rebind them every three or four days, till they grow out of her reach. This takes place on an average in five or six weeks.

The next process is that of "shimming," which is effected by an implement called the "shim;" in other places it is called "breaking," "nidging," or "nidgetting," from the term "break," nidge, and nidget, being applied to the implement, which during the summer months is occasionally drawn by horse through the hop gardens and between the hills, to loosen the earth and remove the weeds. Boys of various ages are made use of to lead and direct the horse, which must, in the narrow spaces through which they are driven, be held in strict command. When the hops reach the top of the poles, it is a common occupation with the women to fasten the bines which may have been blown off again to their places; this is called "horsing the hops," and is so named from a kind of ladder they mount for the purpose.

The hop is now prepared for the last out-door process, that of "picking." Few things are more beautiful than a hop-garden in this state. As the plant approaches to maturity, the numerous green and overarching alleys are brightened by the light-tinted flowers, which hang in clusters from the top to the bottom of the poles. The air is scented with the pleasant perfume they exhale to a considerable distance, and many who wander into foreign lands to look at the vine-clad hills of the sunny south, leave a much more beautiful sight unvisited at home, in the fertile and highly cultivated landscapes of Kent and Surry.

Hop-picking begins generally about the second week in September. All hands are employed at this—men, women, boys, and girls, down to the youngest that can work. The better the crop, the less money is given for picking the same quantity. In an average year, one shilling is given for picking seven bushels, and a good picker in the same year could pick fourteen bushels. Picking is usually continued for twelve hours in the day. A woman can pick rather more than a man. Immediately after the poles are gathered, the poles are stripped and stacked. Labourers commonly contract to do this at from five shillings and sixpence to seven shillings an acre. Their wives and children often assist them; the refuse bine is their perquisite, in addition to their pay.

Rags are extensively used in manuring hops. The women are occasionally employed in cutting them; but it is more generally done by the men on rainy days. The average price is about ninepence per cwt. In some parishes, where the population is large, the "beck and spud," which are used manually, do the work of the "shim," and horse-power is but little used. The work is very laborious, and the same observation applies to all the work on hop-grounds which men perform.

The "Report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture," presented to Parliament in 1843, contains some interesting statements with reference to the physical, social, and moral condition of the population employed in the culture of the hop. It does not appear that any dangerous disease is generated by the occupation; on the contrary, it seems to be decidedly healthy. W. Newnham, Esq., surgeon, Farnham, says—"There is no work performed by women or children in the hop plantations calculated to produce disease, or to which these disorders can be fairly traceable, with the following exception:—If the hop-picking season proves a wet one, they are exposed frequently to become wet, and to stand for many hours upon the ground saturated with moisture; and when this happens to be the case, disorder of the digestive functions ensues, commonly shewing itself in the form of diarrhœa, and not usually of an obstinate or severe character. With regard to the imported population at this [hop-picking] season, they, of course, are exposed to the same causes of disorder, aggravated by their being lodged in very crowded and ill-ventilated apartments, and by their great want of cleanliness and generally imprudent and dissolute habits. Even here malady is not of a severe character; and a death among the imported population is scarcely ever heard of. . . . . I have never been able to trace any endemic or epidemic malady, arising after the hop-picking season, which could fairly be attributed to it as a consequence."

Much evil results from the intermixture of the "imported population" here spoken of with the regularly employed inhabitants of the hop districts. As the season approaches, a new population of men, women, and children is poured into them. The crowd is motley, and differently composed in different districts. Mr Paine, a large grower, states that there resort to Farnham about 4000 or 5000 strangers, being an addition not far short of the whole stationary population, which is 7000 for the parish. These strangers "come chiefly from the towns and villages within twenty miles of Farnham, some few from a greater distance, and others are labourers who have no settled home: among these last are gipsies. Various means are provided for their reception; part are admitted into barracks constructed for the purpose, others into spare rooms in cottages which are specially reserved from the tenants." This vast influx of strangers, in addition to the confusion which their very number produces in a small town or village, often bring with them habits and language calculated to degrade if not to pollute their companions. Farnham becomes thronged with a temporary population of country people, vagrants, and gipsies; the last of whom are in some few instances preferred to the others, from their wild and active habits, which speed the work during the day, and are content with any lair to rest in at night. The intercourse between them and the inhabitant work-people is more complete; because it is the custom for the mother of the family to take the very youngest into the hop-gardens, where the children pick, and the infants rest and play while the work goes forward; and at night many are crowded into the inhabitants' cottages by virtue of the reservation already mentioned. The Rev. R. Sankie, curate of Farnham, says—"I think the parish stands under considerable disadvantages from the peculiar nature of the labour which is employed at the hop-picking. I have seen the cottages crowded with strangers and their families at this season, who so much disturb the order of the household, that *provisions are bought for the day* instead of a longer period, lest in the confusion they should be lost or made away with. The crowded intercourse, both on the hop-ground and in the cottages, must be productive of mischief, especially to the young. There is little uproar until the close of the picking. The labours of the day, and, as is commonly alleged, a soporific influence from the hop itself, disposes them to be quiet. At the close of the labour in the grounds, when the workmen are being paid off, the scene changes. There is much drinking, fighting, and bad language."

The rector of the village of Brede, in the neighbourhood of Rye, speaks of the same influences in a different part of the country. "I am of opinion that the imported hop-pickers do much to demoralize the parish, as they are generally persons of the lowest character in both sexes, the very effect of whose manner of living while here is sufficient to produce the worst feelings and consequences. It is by no means uncommon to see from eight to ten, or more, sleeping under one shed, without any other partition between them than that which the darkness of the night may provide. It is a common practice for servant girls at this season to give their employers notice to quit their service, assigning no other reason than that they wish to go to hop-picking!"

Those who frequent the neighbourhood of Maidstone are stated to "come from all parts of England and Ireland, and amongst them may be found many unfortunate members of various classes. A great number of the English come from St Giles', Saffron Hill, White Chapel, and Kent Street, and they are the most vicious and refractory. The Irish, who are the most numerous, are extremely dirty, both in their persons and habits, and are very indelicate in their conduct and appearance. They frequently bring contagious disorders."

All the witnesses concur in representing female chastity as being at a very low ebb—and some go to the length of saying that in many instances the women are utterly devoid of the feeling. This, however, is not entirely attributable to the periodical influx of strangers into these districts. It has its root deeper, and is to be sought for in the disgraceful physical condition in which the labourers generally are permitted to rest by those who profit by their toil. The undivided state of the larger families acting upon the scantiness of house room and general poverty, or high rents, often crowds them together in their sleeping apartments, so as seriously to infringe on the decencies which guard female morals. Mr Hart, a professional gentleman of Reigate, says—"The great difficulty is to say *at what age brothers and sisters do not sleep together in one apartment*, but generally until they leave home, *be that at ever so late a period.*"

In the neighbourhood of Cuckfield, in Sussex, it is common for children of both sexes to use the same sleeping-room *and bed*, up to the age of twelve, and even fourteen. The Rev. W. Sankie of Farnham in Surry mentioned a case where two sisters and a brother, all above fourteen, habitually slept together. These are mere glimpses of the ordinary and every-day influences to which the labouring classes are subjected, and it can be no matter of wonder that they lose, or rather never acquire, that delicacy and purity of mind which is the origin and the safeguard of chastity.

Nor are the deteriorating effects of these vicious domestic arrangements counteracted by an education likely to promote the growth of principles of resistance or self-restraint. But upon this wide subject I have left myself no room to dilate, important as it is, and necessary to be fully understood, in order to form an accurate idea of the state of society in the hop-growing districts. It may briefly be said that education, in the ordinary sense of the term, is almost unknown. Superstition as a censequence lurks among the labouring classes of these counties to an extent of which the career of Mad Thom, *alias* Sir William Courtenay, at Canterbury, and its fatal termination, affords a melancholy illustration. The belief in charms for the healing of bodily hurts is not uncommon; faith in the same means of fertilizing the ground and trees is said to exist; and that in witchcraft has not yet expired. A very substantial farmer in the north-east of Kent, within a few years, used to arrange scythes in a particular order around his stables to secure his horses from witchcraft.

RIDGLEY WOOD.

A TALE OF A PUNCH IN THE HEAD.

CHAPTER I.

The Poachers, and the Men whom the hard Winter makes Poachers.

In the village of Ridgley, which, measured by the down mail-train, is not four hours' journey from London, there were six men standing near the corner of a house where three roads meet. It was on the afternoon of a December day, a cold day; a day so cold that the very sun, afraid to come out, rolled himself up in folds of gray, and, like a miser, to save his light, went to bed while it was yet noon.

Three of the men, Rice, Reeves, and Russell, stood in the shelter of the house wall, their backs towards the wall and their faces to the road; their hands wrapped in the skirts of their smock-frocks, and so cold that they could not blow their noses with them, which were so red you could hardly have known them to be noses. Each stamped his heavy boots, with iron on them, on the frozen ground, hard as iron, to keep his feet from freezing like the ground.

True, they had some articles of wirework in their hands which had been hanging up in the chimney at home; and as these had never yet seen daylight, they might prefer to let the drops hang at their noses rather than take their hands from their smock-frocks to expose the wirework while they wiped the drops away.

Two others of the six, Mason and Masterton, caring less for the cutting of the sharp wind, or more eager to enjoy the coming adventure, or desirous to talk by themselves about what powder they had and what shot; what stocks, locks, and barrels certain other men were expected to bring under their clothes and in their pockets, and of the propriety or impropriety of having such associates as Rice, Reeves, and Russell, who put such long faces on the thing, and were not heartily in it—they stood in the middle of the road.

"I be as hard put to it to get a bit of bread for my young uns," said Mason, "as Rice be, or ever a man in Ridgley, and I be as ready to pick up a turnip as he; but may I never see

Ridgley Wood, or never come out of it alive this night, if I would pick up an old frozen Swede as he has done to carry with me all night to Ridgley preserves, and wherever us may go."

"He be a good fellow at work or at the fireside," rejoined Masterton; "but he ben't a good un for a job of this sort. I be as hard put to it as he—harder as I may say, for there ben't nothing doing in my way in the gardens in this here frost; still it ben't for that alone I go to Ridgley Wood. I likes it; likes to fetch down a bird as well as ever a squire this side of London. I'd be a rare un, I would, for my dog and gun, wor I lord of a manor! But Rice don't go with me because he like the sport, he go only for what he can pick up—a Swede for his supper, or a bit of paling to make a fire."

"Every man on us counts and makes a show against the keepers," said Mason. "The number frightens them more than the picking of the men. They'd engage three, or from that to six of the best on us; but they won't tackle twenty—not even twenty like Jem Rice."

"Still," rejoined Masterton, "I likes a chap as has his spirit in him. I likes to see it done for the sport, as well as for what us bags and brings away."

"Thee bes always for the sport of the thing, Bill; thee bes a rare un for sport."

"Ben't I? Was I in squire's place, would not I be a sportsman! I think I'd match him whenever he liked."

"But was thou in squire's place, squire would be in your'n mayhap; working for eight shilling a-week, and nothing for broken time; nothing in the wet, and nothing in the frost. Ben't this a terrible frost, Bill! What would squire do with a wife and six little uns, and only eight shilling a-week when at work, and no work in this here hard weather?"

"Do! why he'd go to Ridgley Wood to the preserves, and get a bird or take a hare in farmer Buncle's field, as we be going to do, to be sure! What else would he do, so fond of game as he bes? So fond of not going too long without a tuck into som'at to eat? So fond of his wife and little uns being well taken care on, and never worse nor he can help? What else *could* he do?"

While this conversation was in progress between Mason and Masterton, George Preston, the sixth of the men, kept himself in warmth and amusement by dancing, by singing, and by swearing how delightful it was to have such an adventure in prospect; but how terrible long it was that the time took to go by, and the other men took to come. But three hours past, and twenty-one men, seven guns, two nets, and wires not numbered, are two miles from Ridgley, in two parties, in two of farmer Buncle's fields.

CHAPTER II.

The Snares and the Nets, and what was Caught in them.

(This chapter is omitted, as it is chiefly filled with an account of how snares are made and set in frosty weather. It contains also some account of why some of the poachers thought it no sin to break down the fences of one farmer, and why they thought it a sin and a shame to break down the fences of another farmer. After drawing the fields and taking up their wires and nets, they find they are twenty-men, all alive and well, with twenty-five hares and seven rabbits; and that Rice had got two more turnips, and Reeves and Russell, each one. They then draw lots to decide if they shall or shall not go that night to Ridgley Wood with their guns.)

CHAPTER III.

The Dark Wood—the Punches in the Head—the Pursuit—the Retreat—the Bloodhounds—the hard Winter worse than all.

To Ridgley Wood! the lots are drawn, and it is decided that the birds shall now be disturbed in their feathered rest. To Ridgley Wood. Silence, every men. Barrels are put in their stocks, and powder and shot in the barrels; seven of them. Silence, every man, till the wood is gained. If George Preston is to have that old Duke of Marlborough musket, whose barrel has been cut in half, let him look to the lock; it goes off at half-cock, and the pan spills the priming; he must keep his hand over it, and his thumb on the hammer above the flint. And he must mind that no tree-root trips him up, else the piece may go off and shoot somebody in front of him. This old blunderbuss belongs to one who neither likes it nor the use to which it is to be put. He is here, but would rather be anywhere else. There is a sympathy between him and Rice, and since the latter has got one hare, and three turnips, and a piece of paling, and knows where to get two pieces more on the way home, to make a fire, he would now like to see with his own eyes his own pot set a-boiling on his hearth. He does not like to see young Preston with that old gun; it is so very old, and he is so reckless. It may burst, and kill himself and all near him. He will keep as far from it as he can.

And now they descended into the darker thickets of the wood, and the silence deepened. Though they knew that their guns would ring and re-echo from the pine thickets over the meadow and across the river to the rocks beyond, and again down the beech grove to the very confines of the squire's mansion, yet they whispered, as if they thought the drawing of a breath would awaken the solitude in which they moved. The thick trunk of a forest oak, that had been alderman of the ward in which he lived long before the pines which stood around him were planted, stood up in the dim moonlight, as if it had just heard strange footsteps, and had risen from rest to see who intruded at that dreary hour. And it seemed to listen to every whisper, and to stretch out its large naked arms to push aside the pine branches and pry into the darkness to see whose feet those were that made the fallen twigs crackle among the frozen leaves.

And the pines looked black, and frowned upon the men who were now where they had no business to be. They extended their branches and bent them down, and now scratched a face, as if to mark it to know it again, and then pushed off a hat, as if to see whether the head that wore it was bald, or had black or brown hair; and again they would turn a man round, as if to look him in the face and shew him to their companion trees, who were to bear witness that such a man was there that night.

And then the trees would whisper together as if a light wind rustled through them, and they would gently stir their branches, as if drawing the covering of the night more closely over the endangered birds that slept in their bosom; tucking it into their backs, and bidding them lie close, and not let themselves be seen. And the moon, which had been watching the progress of the long winter night behind a cloud, as a policeman watches in a doorway round the corner, came out, and resolving to keep awake, opened her eye and proceeded on her rounds, and looked as wakeful as if she had never been winking.

Mason and Masterton spoke together in a low voice.

"There he sits!"

"Where?"

"There!"

"Where?"

"Don't thou see?"

"No!"

"Right up agin the second branch, just under the edge of the moon."

"I see him now; I've got him clear!
Has the three guns gone to the meadow to catch them flying as gets out of this?"

"Yes!"

"Then here goes!"

And Masterton fired, and a pheasant fell, and twenty more fluttered, and some screeched and flew out above the trees towards the meadow, and were shot there; and the repose of the night was broken. A moment before, and Ridgley Wood was in peaceful slumber. Now it was like a conscience with a crime upon it suddenly awakened. A pang shot through its darkness. A rebound went through the thick solitudes and tore the silence in pieces, and made perturbation of it and disorder.

The rebounding guns and the fire that flashed from them, and the screaming birds, and the echoing rocks that doubled all the din, gave to some of the men an excess of pleasure such as the mere shooting of pheasants in the preserves in daylight can never give to those who stand and slay without trouble, without exertion, and without danger. This had in it all the wild ecstasy of the excited senses, heightened by the presence of danger, and the daring that defied it. Daring and danger, which to invite, to go in quest of, which to delight in when found, whether for sport or for pain, at home or abroad, on land or on sea, now or heretofore, is often spoken of as one of the highest distinctions in the English national character.

Others there—waiters on the men with guns—who watched at different points, had more leisure and some of them more inclination to be alarmed. True, the consciousness of wrong-doing did not sit heavily on them. The question of trespassing where they had no right to be, of killing pheasants which they had no right to kill, they balanced in some way with a recollection of the squire having allowed the birds to go where they had no right to go, to feed where they had no right to feed; most of them on Mr Buncle's farm, who gave that as a reason for employing fewer men to work on the farm. And they recollected farther, that in the village of Ridgley it had been settled by the "best moralists," the parson only excepted, that to kill game was no sin. Else, said they, how should the payment of four pounds and tenpence for a license to kill it take away the sin?

Still there was a lively consciousness of being where they should not be in those who had time to think of it. Rice intimated to Reeves and Russell his inclination to retreat to the edge of the wood farthest from the keepers and nearest home; and they thought it would be best for all of them to keep in as dark a place out of sight as they could get into.

Rice said he wished he were not there; and with his hare and his three turnips, his piece of paling and his wires, he turned to retreat. But as he did so, he received such a "punch in the head," that he fell to the ground; the personal property just named rolling up hill and down hill and on each side of him. He attempted to rise, and got on his knees; but another punch in the head levelled him to where he was before.

Reeves was also punched, and lay alongside of him; so was Russell, twenty yards off, to which he had run in attempting to escape. There he was, like his two companions, undergoing the process of head-punching; and there could not be three more agreeable heads to practise upon. They were precisely of that kind which those inclined to break heads in such a situation as that like best to encounter: they took much, and gave little. Luckily they were hard heads: and after a short while, the prostrate bodies that owned them one by one lifted them from the ground; and, seeing no one near, they got on their feet, got each hold of his hare, and Rice his three turnips, and ran.

Hark! the firing of the guns has ceased, and the shouts of men calling upon men has filled its place in the echoing air.

The shouts cease too. Deep silence has taken hold of everything, and of every man. Has it seized them, and said they shall not fight? No: the silence is again broken. A voice breaks it, and an accompanying blow breaks a head. Another head is punched; a man falls, and a cry for mercy rises from where he fell. Another blow is struck, and a bludgeon is the weapon. Luckless weapon, and luckless hands that wield it!

They are the same that levelled Rice and Reeves; and, when these men rose to their knees, knocked them down again.

They are those of a strong man—a bold man; still he would attack six such as Rice and Reeves rather than him whose head he has last made a punch at, and whom again he strikes.

He gives the blow, but it is stopped, and he gets one in return. He receives another. He is before one who is his match.

He is the best man in the squire's service—the head gamekeeper—no coward; but he falls—falls heavily; groans—struggles—groans again—stretches his limbs—contracts them—struggles no more—dies—and lies there until he grows cold and rigid as the frozen ground beneath him.

It was but yesterday that he told the squire for the tenth time that the man who is now his slayer should be made an under gamekeeper; that nothing would prevent his being a poacher but being shot dead, or hanged, or made a gamekeeper.

Had he known that this man was the one he struck at, he would have selected any one else to punch on the head, and would have avoided him; but in the heat of the strife he did not distinguish, and he has fallen by the hand of the man he has always feared, by the hand of William Masterton!

See!—a flash of fire!—a gun off! O George Preston! have you also killed a keeper? And to shoot him! it is dastardly to shoot him and he only armed with a stick—you with a gun! No; he is not mortally wounded. He struggled with you for that old Marlborough musket, and it went off in the struggle. But he will know it again. Away with it! carry it to an everlasting hiding-place! Sink it in the sea! the sea is not here; the river—the river is frozen! Then if you would save your neck and the neck of him it belongs to, home with you instantly and burn it, or bury it; bury it below the hearthstone, twenty feet down if you can. Yet stay; do not take it home. Kill the man dead that will be witness against you? No; do not—for Heaven's sake, do not! Hide the gun here; it will be found if taken home!

Ah, you cannot hide it here! You have not time! Every one runs, and you must run with them. Now you are upon the heath, among the furze; hide it among the furze! You have done so; that is so far well.

Listen! the bloodhounds! Your companion, who comes up breathless, tells you he heard them called for. They are on your track! Fly, every man!—fly for your lives! The hounds are in the leash, but they will be set loose the moment you are seen. They come unerringly forward. Here is a tree.

Hark to that voice!—it says, "Stand, men; stand round this tree!" The voice is Masterton's. "Stand firm, every one, or we shall be torn in pieces! Load your guns, stand back to back, faces outwards, guns in front, and be firm!"

"Who are they that have not come up?" "Rice and Reeves?" "No; Reeves is here, and there comes Rice." They have unleashed the bloodhounds. They come! Heavens, they are upon Rice! Run, man, run!" "He can run no faster; he is breathless!" "God have mercy on poor Jem Rice!" "The first bloodhound is on him!"

No; it is not. That was a good shot, Masterton. And so is that, Mason. Would to Heaven no other lives had been taken this night but the lives of these two bloodhounds! The keepers will not come nearer; their dogs are dead.

And they did not come nearer, the pursuers returned. And each of the pursued found his way home to his own house as soon as means had been taken to conceal everything effectually that might witness against them and tell of their being out that night. They had done more injury than they had received. They had given quite as many punches in the head as they had gotten. They admonished each other to be cautious about next day.

The next day came, and the next, and still no officer of the law was openly seen in Ridgley. It was known that this parish had furnished the poachers on that fatal night; but the parish had one hundred and fifty men in it, and the greater part of them were as likely to be poachers as those who had been actually out. Still there were suspicions, and some of them well directed; but these did not light on the men who had received punches in the head and carried marks of the conflict under their hats. Nobody was apprehended.

Yet day after day did the stern unyielding winter hold in his hand the spots of blood, and invite the world to look upon them. He had laid a white sheet of snow upon the earth and taken impressions of guilty men's feet, and of the blood that made them guilty. He treasured up evidence against them; set his seal upon mother earth; put her under lock and key; told her that though the criminals were her own sons, she should not be permitted to soften and melt, to obliterate the traces of their footsteps and of their crimes. No. So careful was he to preserve the fearful evidence of blood, that he denied even one additional particle of snow to obliterate it so long as he could hold the earth in his hard bondage.

And while men were secretly searching, and asking who they should suspect and accuse and punish, he, the stern winter, took the law into his own hands, and punished the poachers unrelentingly. He would not give them work, hard-hearted winter that he was! and he screwed the worm of gnawing hunger into them. They dared not go to the game, for he scared them with the prints of their own feet, and the drops of blood he would not wipe out. He loaded them with heavy dread, which they carried upon them all day, and made them afraid to sleep at night. And when weariness bore them down and sunk them in slumber, he came and howled down their chimneys and awoke them, and rattled at their windows, and whistled at the keyholes, as if calling the constables to come and take them to prison. And in the daytime he would put out their fires, and wring and pinch them with hunger and with cold, until they almost wished themselves hanged and out of the world. And he would lay hold of the children, and make holes in their shoes, and benumb their bare toes and make them cry, and make their mothers weep and pray for summer to come, and ask why it was that Heaven had ever permitted poor people to be born.

And all this time he would sit with roast beef, and red-faced jollity, and rich wine, at the squire's table, and with toast and ale in the squire's hall; and he would heap the fires with coals and blazing logs, and roar up the chimneys that all England was well-fed and happy, save the idle fellows about Ridgley, who should be all hanged.

CHAPTER IV.

The end of Winter and the end of Rice.

But a change came, and winter ruled no longer; he was dethroned; and May, queen of the summer months, reigned in his stead. Where the imperious tyrant went to, none can tell. Some said that May had banished him to regions where human foot had never trodden, and that he had become king of the solitudes of the everlasting snow. And they said his palace was in the icy mountains, and that his vengeance was so cruel upon those who loved May better than him, that he came out upon the ocean to look for men and for ships that might have come from his old dominions. And they said, when he found the ships and living men in them, he hemmed them in, and went into them and put out every fire and every lamp, and nipped their noses off in the dark, and their toes and their fingers; and then took the life out of them. And then, they said, he would toss the ships about in their ragged sails and laugh at them; and, when he was tired of that, he would take two icebergs and crush the sides of the ships together, and grind them to atoms, and then go out upon the ocean to get more.

Others said that he was dead and buried in the deep caves. They said he must be dead, for more than once they had seen his ghost at dawn of day. They said they had seen little cherry blossoms with their eyes put out, and peaches smitten, and withered, and dying, all in the night—even in the gardens of May. And they had seen something white on the green meadows, which, the moment the daylight came, dissolved and disappeared, and was not seen until the next night, when it would once more appear and again dissolve, leaving the youngest flowers dead on the bosom of the leaves that nursed them. They said it must be his ghost, it was so like him. It could not be himself, it moved so silently, and was so timid.

But May, who had dispossessed him of his rule, knew it was himself, and feared him. And she rose early every morning; and with her attendants went out to look for him, and chase him away until he was gone altogether; and then she took leaves and flowers and clothed those whom he had stripped naked. And then she made every living thing happy that belonged to her; and she bloomed and sung in her gardens and in her fields; and thus it was that they called her "Merry May."

No longer did the river gather its waters and rush from old winter and his angry storms over the meadows and the farm-fields. It was all placid and clear now, and its little trouts disported themselves on its sunny bosom as if they had no fear.

And Ridgley meadow was no longer battered with broken ice and fragments of frozen earth, as if it had been the field of Winter's Waterloo. It was now all gaiety and greenness; with cows upon it, rich in milk as they were rich in grass; and maidens singing as they milked the cows; and laughing children trooping along with handfuls of buttercups, and celadine, and cowslips, and daisies, and violets; and the lark carolling in high air, as if earth was not large enough for all its joy, and had to send to heaven and borrow more room.

And Ridgley Heath, with its furze in bloom, had arrayed itself in green and gold, and it gave fragrance to the soft south wind, and loaded it with the hum of bees and the industry of ten thousand of the insect working classes. Thither came the laughing children with their happy voices, and their flowers, and the rushes they had pulled on Farmer Buncle's meadows, where there was more than enough of them; the flowers to make palaces for butterflies, and the rushes to plait into helmets, and swords, and whips for themselves; thither they came, the leaders and the led, those that were always in front, and those that were always behind.

There was young Jem Rice, that carried his little brother Bobby on his back, and led his sister Fanny by the hand, and lent his shoes to young Bill Masterton who had none, to go among the furze with Fred. Mason to look for nests. There were the Russell's three little girls with blue eyes, three buds from one stem; they tripped together hand in hand with little Mary Reeves between them, who had no mother; and she was always led by the hand because she had no mother. And when the house was made with rows of stones upon the grass, she was put inside to be mistress. And Bill Masterton's little baby sister was put with her, for he had promised to bring flowers to them from where nobody could go but himself, and also the magpie's eggs from the top of the lofty elm tree, if they would keep his little sister while he was away, and put her in their house. And they also put Jem Rice's little Bobby in the house, and called Jem "father," because he plaited the rushes for them and made helmets, and caps, and baskets, and made dishes upon which to serve out the buttercup feast.

In this did young Jem Rice delight rather than to go among the furze to rob bird's nests. But Mason and Masterton were keen nesters; and Mason looked into a cluster of bushes, and said he was sure he had seen a goldfinch fly out. And then he exclaimed, " By goom, if here ben't a gun !" upon which young Masterton looked in and said, " By goom, if it ben't !"

They had both been well taught by their fathers that no gun nor aught pertaining to a gun, nor any word relating thereto, must be seen or spoken at home. Would they then leave this here? Some other boys might come and carry it away. Would it not be better to get Jem Rice to take it home to his house? His father had never been suspected of having a gun, nor of using one; he had only been suspected of going out with other men.

They accordingly told the finding of the gun to young Jem. And proudly happy was he, when, after much scheming to get it home unseen, (though it was not unseen,) he deposited it in the empty pig-stye; for his father, so hard had the winter been and so late, was unable to buy a pig to put in the stye.

Secret and sweet was the pleasure he enjoyed when young Masterton brought some powder from the place where his own father had hid it, and in which only the son of such a father could have found it. Secret and sweet was Jem's delight when he found that he could purchase the whole right and title to this old Marlborough musket from the other two boys, as also some powder to flash in the pan, by giving Masterton his live rabbit that he got from his uncle, and Mason all the marbles he had, and the blade of a knife, and a bow and arrow which wanted only the string to be complete.

But he had possessed his bargain only a few days when he began to see what a dangerous purchase he had made. And the July assizes, when they came, revealed the awful fatality of it in the stark-naked horrible truth that his father was to be hanged for murder, the finding of this gun hidden in his pig-stye being a chief circumstance against him.

In what manner all the evidence was made to bear, it would be too tedious to relate. The Judge, in passing sentence, said he had never seen a clearer case of circumstantial evidence, and he could hold out no hope of mercy to him in this world.

And James Rice received no mercy. He was hanged by the neck until he was dead, and buried within the precincts of the prison.

And his wife, who, being a woman, had the heart of a woman—it broke; and she received a pauper's funeral. And his children—young Jem, Nanny, and Fanny, and little Bobby, who was his mother's darling—where are they? In the workhouse; and they are known by the designation of "The children of the man who was hanged for murder."

THE SHADOW AND THE PANIC.

A WITCH STORY FOR NEW YEAR 1846.

In my western travels through the grazing districts of Hereford, Brecon, and Monmouth, I heard complaints everywhere of the terrible disasters of the panic which followed the enactment of the tariff of 1842, that tariff admitting foreign cattle at L.1 per head of customhouse duty. The graziers thought they were to be ruined, and rushed to the markets to sell their cattle which, with the diminished consumption of butcher meat consequent on five years of depressed trade in the towns and factory districts of the kingdom, brought down the prices of cattle to a ruinous extent. The political landowners who supported protection and their newspapers made the case worse. They, in their efforts to make the farmers stand forth strong and bold to defend protection, never ceased to sound the alarm of agricultural ruin. The farmers and graziers, naturally inclined to timidity on policy which they did not understand, were urged into a state of desperation by those who professed to be their friends. One Mr Matthew White, an extensive grazier, was not only a loser by the panic himself, but, having some influence in Herefordshire, frightened many others, and made them run and sell. He is introduced in the following story. In Monmouthshire, to which it more immediately refers, some of the great landlords, foremost in frightening the farmers about the tariff, were not backward to distrain upon them for rent when the panic caused them to lose their farm profits. On this the story is founded.

CHAPTER I.

Some Account of where and under what circumstances.

How long it is ago can hardly yet be told. It may be known before we are done.

The time of the year was December. There were misletoe about and holly; there were carcases of prize cattle, which told of Christmas; but the weather did not belong to Christmas. It was not weather to rejoice the well-fed of the world. The butchers did not like it. It was not weather to rejoice the firesides of the very poor, for benevolent coal clubs did not open their hearts, because it was not a *hard* winter. It was foggy, muggy, muddy, chilly, shivery, drizzly, windy, cold, and wet weather; that is what it was.

It was like as if December had not taken his natural rest, and had not risen from his bed the sound-headed, hard-footed, Christmas-faced, dancing December which he used to be. It was as if he had turned his days, short as they were, into nights, and had been spending them with November in carousals of heavy-wettedness; coming home to the performance of his own business dosing and winking; bespattered from head to foot; refusing to be brushed and look respectable; storming and blustering; driving poor people about who were obliged to carry loads on their heads; wetting every body all over; tearing the soles from bad shoes, and the shoes from wayworn feet; spoiling the prize beef and mutton, and the geese and turkeys, and threatening to do the same with the mince-pies, and make Christmas, like himself, sour and unhappy. Such was that December in which occurred the events of our legend.

I do not know that our legend belongs exclusively to any one place. I have reason to believe it does not. We often find different towns in possession of the same legends. For instance, twenty villages in England, and nearly as many in Scotland, contend with half as many towns for the distinction of having buried a lady who was only in a trance, and of having had a sexton who opened the grave at night, and cut her fingers off to get her rings, who thus broke her trance, and enabled her to get up and tap at her own door for admittance, within which the bereaved husband was heard to declare that if his wife was not dead and buried he would say that she was at the door!

Some towns dispute as to which burned the last witch; some dispute as to which of them gave birth to the man who sold himself to ——, no matter whom; and others contend for the distinction of having had a ravine dug out, a bridge built, or a road made by that remarkable old "navvy" who bought the man who sold himself. It has even been disputed to which parish some ghost belonged, which made its appearance in several, as if it had been a parish ghost seeking a settlement.

There is no doubt but the events of our present story have occurred in more places than one. I believe there is scarcely a town distinguished enough to have a cattle market in it in which they have not occurred. But I adhere to a West of England version, as it happened in the county town of a shire which has the Bristol Channel on one side and South Wales on the other. This town stands on the banks of the river Wye, near to its confluence with the Mon, and they were both in high flood. It is a genteel river the Wye, but had then been getting in its first winter contributions, a kind of water rental from the plebeian working streams, and it looked familiar with them, and was not so genteel and reserved as it had been. It was of a fustian-jacket colour, but not so black as its vassal the Mon, which issued from the womb of the Welsh mountains, deep into which the human ants—worms, if you will—had penetrated for coal and iron to make wealth and strength for England. The Mon was a working river, embrowned with its coaly toil and with the iron rocks in the deep caves, and with the red earth which seemed to yield its very blood to give England treasure. A hundred humble streams of its own industrious order joined with it, and were swallowed up by the genteeler Wye, which, in its turn, was gobbled by the Severn, he rolling along like a tax-gatherer to the ocean to feed the great monopolist of all; where the dyed waters from the Welsh hills bore no more evidence of having once been the water of working streams than do any three halfpence paid for a pennyworth of bread bear evidence of having been once a working-man's halfpence when they are in the treasury of a duke—the fractional part of an ocean of guineas.

The Mon rushed down in full flood, as if it could not spare a moment from business to linger anywhere. Its neighbours, larger and less, were all alike. The very springlets, by far too young as yet to do any work, imitated their elders, put their little feet in their father's shoes, put his hat on, which fell over their eyes, rambled about knowing not where they went, and raised their voices as if they bade all England bear witness that they had now grown big.

But it was a dreary day to such men and beasts as were obliged to be out in it. How the shepherd who had been twenty years in that one service, having his choice between the shelter of the hedge where the ground was wettest, or the windy side of the hedge where the ground was driest, longed to see ten other Decembers over his head, that he might then perchance get a "premium of a sovereign and a great-coat, with the society's buttons on it, for long service!" How strongly did he feel a conviction that stall and shed feeding for turnip eating sheep was the best! and when he saw his flock knee-deep in earthy mortar, their food as deep in the mud as their feet; and how the cattle in the wet meadows shivered, and felt what it was to be on farms which had not plenty of straw for them and winter food; how they would have understood the operation of a corn-law, which their owners did not understand, had they been farmers as well as beasts; how they would have said, bring oats and beans for us to eat and be fat with, and we will make the farm rich to grow wheat and plenty of warm straw to lie on, and much provender to be added by you to our oats and beans!

But shepherds, and sheep, and meadow cattle, shivered and were drenched, and nobody seemed to think they ought to be warm and dry. What between the ploughmen sinking in the undrained land when they ventured on it in the day time, and sinking in their potato burrows when they put their feet on them at night, unconscious that their stores of winter food had been transformed into heaps of rottenness; what between their master seeing the wheat which was sown for next year's crop rotting in the ground, because the land was undrained and the weather so continuously wet; what between his knowing that he had no money to drain it, and not much chance of getting the profit if he had money and did drain it; what between having his hay spoiled in the summer by a month of rain, and the flooding of the rivers upon meadows where his rheumatic sheep now stood—rheumatic because they were in the wet, in the wet because they must pick up scanty grass, there being little hay, no corn to eat, and little straw to lie upon; what between all these things, the continued gloom of the weather, and a gloomy foreboding of something which was once far off, but which was now coming near and nearer, and which such friends as they ever took pleasure in listening to, said was to be a terrible calamity; what between all these things, they were every one, both masters and men, as low in spirits as the weather-glass in the parlour or as the cattle that hung their heads in the meadows.

But amid all this dreariness of man and beast, of earth and air, there was, at least in one place, a spot of joy, a focus of happiness, where the light spirits of youth, released from school for the Christmas holidays, had assembled. A young tradition says it was in the town which stands at the mouth of the Mon, or rather where the Wye snatches up the Mon in its mouth, that these light spirits, heroes and heroines of our tale, were assembled.

CHAPTER II.

An Account of the Giant Child and his Grandmother.

In that town indicated in the last chapter lived a fortune-teller, one Sally Morgan. It was often a subject of dispute with the townspeople whether old Sally really believed in her power of telling fortunes, or only professed to do so for the pence which the practice brought to her. If she did not believe, she simulated belief with wonderful fidelity. My own opinion is that she believed. The fact that out of hundreds of prophecies there was hardly one instance known of her being correct, only proves that her system of fortune-telling was false; it does not prove that she did not believe in it.

She was grandmother to one Benjamin Morgan, a man of large stature and weak mind, who walked on crutches, and did not look straight with his eyes. He was old enough to be a man, but hardly wise enough to be a boy. He passed his time as a boy; as a small boy; as a boy petted and made much of—even unto spoiling.

There might be some excuse for this, inasmuch as he, being of weak mind and of feeble health, and being entirely under the charge of his grandmother, she had a tenderness of regard for him, increased by his helplessness. But this tenderness of regard led her to confine him entirely within doors, not suffering him to go out either for the increase of health or strength, or to assist in adding something to the family income. Indeed, on the last point, it was sometimes alleged that Old Sally made more money through the pretence of having a poor helpless, fatherless, and motherless "innocent" to look after, than she would have done had he worked for and looked after himself. And there is no question at all that her practice of fortune-telling was far more profitable to her than a more honest course of life would have been. And there was something in the appearance of the gigantic child in her house, always there and never out of doors, save when he peeped out at lonely hours, and instantly drew in again if he saw himself observed—there was something in this giant whom she "protected" that deepened the mystery of her own life, and thus added value to her prophecies; for prophecies must be planted in deep mystery to take root and grow, and be rank, and rear themselves up with dark shadows, and look terrible. If there be no mystery at their roots, there is no life in them; they are seen, and they perish. The world's eye withers them up.

The giant was not an unhappy creature; though, by a kind of "whining"* noise he made whenever a stranger came within hearing, that stranger would have thought him greatly distressed. He begged halfpence from all who came to his grandmother to get their fortunes told, and it was her custom to foretell an indifferent fortune to those who in the least hesitated to give him halfpence. To those who refused, she prophesied disasters not much short of ending their days upon the gallows.

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* "Whining" was made an agricultural word by the Right Honourable Sidney Herbert, one of the members for Wiltshire, who told the farmers that they must set themselves to the better cultivation of their land, and not come always *whining* to Parliament for relief. The word became a fixture on landlords as well as farmers.

The gigantic Benjamin, by the halfpence thus obtained, and by other means to be explained presently, provided himself with toys for his amusement; rather, it should be said, for his employment, for he had no employment but his amusements. He had a box of earth in the front window, and another in the back window, and in these he would plant a bean or two, and half a dozen grains of wheat. The hearthstone was his farm-yard; and he had not only wheeled waggons and ploughs upon it, but horses on wheels. He had cows which lay down because they could not stand—not for fat, but for the want of feet to their wooden pegs. The floor was always in confusion. It was bestrewed with wooden hounds, foxes, and hunters, which stood still, save when he moved them; and when he was tired of moving them, and tired of play, he grumbled to his grandmother, who comforted him with the assurance that somebody would soon be coming to get their fortunes told, of whom he could beg a few more halfpence to get a few more toys. And when they came, this he did accordingly.

It was a pitiable sight to see a creature, and that creature human, bearing the name, nature, stature, and years of a man, thus growing into mature life, year after year, with no higher enjoyment, and no higher purpose, than the play of a child. Pity suggests that we should hide such a helpless being, so humiliating to human nature, in obscurity for ever; but duty says that he who could learn nothing himself must be made a lesson of instruction to others. The giant Ben had certain propensities and habits, and did certain acts which led some people to doubt if he was so harmless and weak-minded as he outwardly seemed to be. He was not altogether an innocent; he was not free of guile; but that I attribute to weakness of intellect and the teaching of his grandmother rather than to any inherent propensity to do mischief. He was taught to live by his helplessness, as has been already told; how he acted up to that tuition we shall now in part discover.

It was in grandmother Morgan's house that the holiday children, who had escaped from school, were assembling to have sport with one another and with Ben. The old woman had this peculiarity about children coming to her house, that she did not hate them, else she would not have permitted them to come; but she only loved them for what they brought with them. They brought their holiday halfpence; and their fathers and mothers gave them liberty to take presents to her, that she might not cast an evil eye on them in after life. She also contrived to be friendly with the parents, and she was friendly with them because she foretold the good fortune that was to happen to the children, to such children at least as shared their cakes with her gigantic grandson, Big Ben. The children were also excellent listeners to her stories about witches, ghosts, fairies, and enchantments; and as she loved to hear herself talk, she loved listeners. Thus far, and thus far only, did she love the children.

They, on the other hand, thought it such prime sport to see Big Ben, larger than any of their fathers, playing with toys, and they allowed to mingle their toys with his, that nearly every one, whose parents would permit, and who had a toy, or a box of toys to bring with them, were there in the play led on to the sport by the great man-child. And they put all the oddest looking toys and the most expensive together, and made a show of them. Their cows and bulls that ran upon wheels, and their pigs that had not a leg to carry them, they put them together, and clapped their hands and laughed; Big Ben clapping his hands first, and laughing loudest. They called this their Christmas cattle show; and then the little ones clapped their hands louder and louder, because Big Ben continued to clap his hands.

The world has many pleasant things in it; things at once happy and beautiful. It has months called May and June, and they have fruit-trees and blossoms in them, and flower-gardens. The world has weddings. It has also first-born babies, and young mothers nursing them. Christmas belongs to the world, and boxing day, and so do many happy things that belong to Christmas and to boxing day. The assemblies of happy little children belong to both; and the world has no lovelier sight than an assembly of little children, entertaining one another with their own cakes and fruit, with their own miniature table spread and surrounded by themselves, making their own mirth, singing their own songs, dancing their own dances, laughing their own laughter. They are fairies at such a time; but, like the fairies of the summer groves, you must be good friends with them, and approach them discreetly, to be admitted into their society without spoiling it. They have come too recently from fairy-land, have advanced but too short a way into the mortal world, to have their joys fully understood or partaken of by mortals who cease to be mirthful as they grow into the world, and think they grow wiser as they cease to be mirthful.

There was not a happier assembly of young spirits within the regions of Christmas mirth than that which met at Sally Morgan's; there might be a few, perhaps a good many, who had some distrust of both Sally and her grandson, but they got such a warm welcome, and were so caressed by the old lady, and so assured of friendship that would never vary by the very large and silly gentleman, Mr Benjamin, that they were speedily relieved of all distrust, and they proceeded with their show of toys, and their play as farmers and farmers' wives, led on by Big Ben himself, most gloriously and uproariously.

So long as the cakes and halfpence they brought with them lasted, and the apples, nuts, and oranges which the halfpence were sent out to purchase lasted, Big Ben was the best of friends. It has since been alleged that when he could get no more halfpence, cakes, apples, nuts, or oranges, from them, he began to help himself to their toys; and his avarice growing by what it fed on, as a prize pig does, he, in conjunction with his grandmother, who told them such ghost stories as nearly frightened them out of their senses, and who raised ghosts, or who made them shut their eyes that they might not see the ghosts which she said were there—his avarice growing by what it fed on, to wit, friendship for children's halfpence, and cakes, and toys, aided by his grandmother, who told him it was quite right that they should make dupes of those who would be duped, he proceeded to take from them things which they never intended to part with, and which they never knew how they lost.

But in saying this I am perhaps speaking too fast; too fast in respect of time and place, if not in respect of act and fact. We shall see.

CHAPTER III.

The Shadow, the Witch, and the Panic.

The gigantic child led on the play, by telling every one what they were to do. They were to play at farmers; and, as they were all in his house, he was to be landlord, and they were only to do what he bade them. And they all clapped their hands, and said they would only do what he bade them. And it was comical to see the large creature, with the body of a giant and the mind of a baby, directing their play; telling them how he would teach them to make nice pretty farms all over the floor and on the hearth; how he would tell them the best way to put out their toys to be like a real farm, while he had never seen a real farm in his life, and knew nothing of one but what his grandmother told him; and she, old woman, had been short-sighted, very, all her days.

His own eyes not serving him perfectly in estimating the number of children in the room, who contended for space to spread out their toys, and less perfectly in estimating the space of floor proper to each, according to the toys each had to put upon it, he gave some a great deal too much, and left none to others. Mat White was one who had not many toys, but who was to have all the room between the arm-chair at the fireside and the table at the front window. John Button, who had a great many toys, and no room to make a farm, seeing how much space Mat White had got, looked on in silence for a while, and at last said he did not care about playing at farms; he would make a shop. And others, who had been looking on, like him, and for the same reason, cried with delight at the discovery of this resource, that they would keep shops too.

"I won't have no shops," said Big Ben. "What do we want with shops? We be a playing at farmers. You are all farmers, and I am your landlord. I won't have no shops now, I tell you. And I tell you what it is, Button, if you don't do like the rest, you shan't play at all."

"But I can't do like the rest," replied Button. "There is Mat White making his meadows all under his grandmother's arm-chair, and over half the floor, just for his own few sheep and cows; and see how he is just getting anything, pieces of stick and cinder, and calling them bulls and cows! There is no room for me. I should keep a shop, and they as have farms should come to market and sell butter, and cheese, and corn, and buy things at my shop; and I should pay rent to you for my shop, as well as they do for their farms.

Upon which Mat White said pettishly, "Now, Button, you are always for something new, and spoiling the play, I'm sure Mr Benjamin knows better how we should play than you do, and he says we are to play at farms, and have no shops. What do we want with shops? Aint it genteeler to have farms than shops? (whispering) I'll let you have part of mine for one of your seed cakes."

And thus the first attempt was made at the middleman system and sub-letting. But in this case it was prevented. Big Ben had the merit of seeing his own interest in this instance. He saw the seed cakes in Button's pocket, and heard some jingling of halfpence, so he gave him and several others who had seed cakes and halfpence in their pockets leave to play at shops. He, however, impressed on them, or tried to do so, the fact that it was a great favour to let them play at shops; and though the space required was small, they must give him much more seed cake for that than any one gave for the same room who played at farms. Button said he did not mind giving one of his seed cakes and another halfpenny, only he did not think it was fair to make him pay for just half the top of the smallest stool in the house, while Mat White had all the room from the arm-chair to the table for a seed cake and two halfpence. He asked, in addition, how could they play at farms if there was not somebody to pay them for what they brought to market; and to sell that again, and to get the implements for them to work with, and the clothes for them to wear that played at farms?

At which Big Ben only laughed, and said, "Ah, Button, you don't know how to play; what has a farm to do with a shop? You mind your shop, that is all you have to do. Now all of you as have shops, put your things in them."

And the little shopkeepers clapped their hands, and said how nice it was to keep shops; and they called to Mat White, and all the little boys that had farms, and to the little maids that called themselves farmers' wives and dairywomen, to be quick, and make their butter and cheese, and fetch it to the shops; and to be quick and sow their corn, and get it reaped, and thrashed, and winnowed, and measured, and bagged, and carried to market. And all their little voices shouted, and called out, "Let us get butter, and cheese, and corn to carry to the market."

And so they went on as busy as little bees, and as noisy; and some never stopped, no, not for an instant, until long after they had seen Mat White stop and sit down on his farm, and let his cows fall down flat on their sides that had no feet to their wooden pegs. He was listening, and then they all listened, to a tale which Old Sally was telling of a witch that was to come across the Bristol Channel to the shores of Monmouth in a ship; and the witch was to take hold of all little children, and open their mouths, and put food down their throats until they bursted; and was also to fill all their fathers and mothers until they bursted; and all their big brothers and sisters until they bursted; and all the parsons, and doctors, and lawyers until they bursted; all the lords and ladies of the land until they bursted; and all the cats, and dogs, and pigs, and fowls, and horses, and cattle, farm-labourers, and all; paupers too, in the workhouses; every beast, and bird, and fish, and living thing was to be filled with food by the witch until everything bursted! And everything, with itself bursted, was to live and never eat another morsel of food, nor move from the spot upon which it was rent asunder by the fulness of the one great burst of food which the witch was to give it. All green things were to wither and die; nothing was to live to see the desolation but the creatures that had bursted with fulness of food. They were to live for punishment if they allowed the witch ever to set foot on dry land in Monmouthshire.

Mat White was so frightened that he was almost running away from his farm, but he was as near to Old Sally's arm-chair as he could get; so he held on where he was, and crept under her arm, and never looked over his shoulder to see if his toys were all safe. It was said that Big Ben took advantage of this diversion, and got hold of both cakes, and nuts, and pence, and toys. But, if it was true, it was only Button that saw it. There was such a panic among the little creatures, they could do nothing but hold on by one another, and cry in terror, "Oh, if the witch should come, and fill us all till we burst!" and look at Old Sally earnestly in the face to see if there was hope of her being able to save them from the witch.

And Old Sally understood their looks, and said there was only one way to be safe from the witch; they must each of them give Benjamin a halfpenny and a nut to crack, and not forget herself with something that was soft to her old teeth; if they did that, she and Benjamin would keep the witch away, and they would not be filled till they bursted.

Button murmured, though in a very low voice, "This is not playing at farms and shops, listening to a story about a witch. If you be all at work, as you should be, the witch will never catch you to fill you till you burst."

However, Button paid his halfpenny and his nut to Big Ben along with the rest, and gave a sugar plum to Ben's grandmother; "For," said he, "if I don't, Ben will take more out of my shop." And then he called to Mat White and the rest, saying, "Come, now; get on and fetch your things to market, and let us buy them; and then you will get what you want out of our shops."

And Big Ben cried, "Yes, come; let every one come and be at the market selling their corn. Now you are all on the road to market. Now you are all in the market. Now you are to be all ready to sell your corn; but you are not to begin until I tell you; you are to do nothing until I tell you. Button, what are you about, buying and selling before I bid you begin? Grandmother, look at Button; he won't wait till I give the word; he *will* buy and sell; make him leave off, grandmother."

Whereupon old Mrs Morgan said something, and did something, and moved forward and then backward, and again said something, and once again did what she did before, and a black shadow was seen rising upon Button. And all of the little graziers and corn-growers, and the little maids that acted as if they were their wives, with butter and cheese to sell, saw the black shadow upon Button, and they started back and would not sell anything, nor exchange anything, nor do anything, neither with him nor with one another. They would not move; they could not. Their little hearts smote within them, and they trembled; for it was a real black shadow.

After it was gone, Button professed not to care for it, and said there was no use being frightened at shadows; and he told Mat White that he never would do anything on that part of the floor between Old Sally's arm-chair and the table, if he was to be frightened at shadows, for there were always shadows there—her shadow and Big Ben's. Indeed, he thought that when they were all frightened at the black shadow which Old Sally made, he had seen Ben's hand, his real hand, not a shadow of it, on more of the farms than Mat White's, and on that among the rest.

And so two or three of them suspected. Mat White found that some of the cows, which he had left lying for want of feet to their wooden pegs, were missing, and the remaining halfpence which he had been persuaded to deposit behind the arm-chair, on that part of the floor called his farm, and close to Big Ben's seat, were all gone.

He did not hide his loss. He grumbled loudly. At first, Ben and his grandmother frowned upon him for complaining. But when he blamed Button, or some of those who played at shops, for having taken his halfpence when the black shadow was in the room, they joined in the complaint, and said it was a shame to have taken Mat White's halfpence; and Button, or some one who was not friendly to Mat, must have done it.

Button denied that he had done it, and said that it was done when the shadow came, and when, as they all knew, he was trying to find out what the shadow was, for he did not believe it was anything but a trick; and perhaps it was not hard to guess who made the shadow and who stole the halfpence.

Whereupon Old Sally called him a little unbelieving cheating rogue, who would go to a bad place when he died. And all the children who believed Old Sally, and all who were afraid of her, though they did not believe her, called Button an unbelieving rogue, who would go to a bad place when he died.

But Button persevered in the truth, and asserted that it was not he that had robbed Mat White, nor was it any of the others who played at shops. He knew who it was, and he would tell plainly who it was. It was Big Ben. And he could prove to them all that more had been taken out of the shops when the witch story was told, and when the black shadow was in the room, even than from the farms.

Children as they were, and frightened as they were of Big Ben, lest he should be angry, they looked as if they believed Button rather than Ben and his grandmother. Seeing which, Old Sally told them she would let the witch come upon them all and fill them till they bursted. "There is the witch at the door!" she cried. "The witch will be here directly. Here she comes!"

Whether it was a witch, or goblin, or ghost, or shadow, or fancy, may not be told. But there, before the wild imagination and the disordered senses, stood a mysterious something, with bags all hung around her, or his, or its body, and all the bags stuffed with penny rolls; and the hands of the thing were also full of cakes. And the thing advanced and laid hands on Button, and opened his mouth, and held it open, and stuffed cakes and penny rolls into him until he nearly bursted.

And as they saw this, and saw the thing putting out its hands to stuff them and make them burst, they all ran, some leaping out at the window and breaking, or nearly breaking their limbs; some escaping by the door, and so getting away; but the greater part running one another down in the dark passage.

Pen cannot write, tongue cannot tell, the height and depth, length and breadth, the intensity, enormity, and disaster of that panic raised by Ben Morgan's grandmother. One thing only did not happen; not one child, not even Button, was filled until he bursted. But the victims of it who survived lost their toys. Some, alas, were never more seen. Mat White was one of them. Whether Big Ben devoured him up bodily, as some have said, or whether in his haste to escape the flooded river swept him away, is not yet known. Some were bruised and some broken, all were stripped. Button asserts that Big Ben and his grandmother did it; and they say that the children, waylaid and plundered, and misused by the witch, got no evil treatment from them; that in their house they received nothing but "protection." And, strange to say, the children themselves believe it, or say they believe it. Such is the influence of Big Ben and his grandmother. They can bring together, alarm, disarm, and strip their little victims with impunity. Button says he knows better, and one day all the world will know better.

A VISIT TO THE BIRTH AND BURIAL PLACE OF WILLIAM COBBETT.

If any person who has the convenience or the inclination will look at a map of the county of Surry, it will be seen that, on the right-hand corner at the top, there is the mark of London. Proceed to the left hand, up the river Thames, and come round by the border of Berkshire, then down the border of Hampshire until the point is gained where the one county is dovetailed into the other, and there will be found in the Surry dovetail the mark of a town called Farnham. That Farnham is the birth and burial place of the late William Cobbett, who said that, rather than see the working people of England reduced to live upon potatoes, he would see them all hanged, and be hanged with them, and would be satisfied to have written upon his grave, " Here lie the remains of William Cobbett, who was hanged because he would not hold his tongue without complaining while his labouring countrymen were reduced to live upon potatoes." I lately paid a visit to Farnham and its neighbourhood; to the farm which Cobbett occupied at his death, to the house where he was born, and the grave where he is buried; and believing that many readers would have willingly shared in such a journey, had all circumstances permitted, I shall endeavour to take them with me, by briefly describing to them how I went and what I saw.

On a lovely morning, the sun so bright that the fog which at first shewed itself durst shew itself no more, I was seated on a stage-coach, and bounding at a sound rate out of London over Putney Heath. We had just taken up the last of the passengers and the luggage, and the coachman said he hoped there were no more people waiting with luggage to be taken up, for he had no more room, and he was behind time. So away we went, competing with the railway, which has not swallowed up all the traffic down through Surry and Hampshire.

We had sometimes a heathy common, sometimes a mansion and a park, occasionally a village, and very frequently the enclosed fields of a farm, and the farmery itself on each side of us. We rattled over the heathy downs, through the lofty woods, and athwart the grassy meadows. We saw the churches and the beershops, had a glimpse now and then of a policeman sauntering along, saw occasionally a boy with six or eight, or ten or twelve pigs, which were eating the acorns that fell from the branches of the oaks that overhung the road, he at the same time shaking such branches with a long rod to force them to drop their fruit to his hogs; all such things we saw, and many more.

We were in due time in the town of Guildford, thirty miles from London, and were dragging—oh! such dragging—to keep the coach from taking a leap to the bottom! down that most singular of streets, before we could see what a very curious old town Guildford is. Surely there is no other town in England nor in Scotland that has such a street. Berwick-on-Tweed has a street that very nearly stands on the crown of its head, but acts of Parliament do not allow Berwick to belong to either England or Scotland. Neither is the Berwick thoroughfare so long as that of Guildford.

Everybody and everything answerable for the safety of passengers is used to it, however, and the drags allowed us to come down safely enough. But where to go seemed the next puzzle. There was a river in the deep valley, the river Wey, and there seemed to be no room up nor down by its banks for coaches. But, by some quirk to the right and again to the left, our coachman managed to get his horses' heads turned up a road that might well make us congratulate ourselves on not being coach horses. Yet on they go; and up, up, never halting. On each side the land is cultivated, but the soil is whitefaced and ill-looking. If we look behind, there is a fine view of Guildford clinging to its hill-side, and looking over to us as if it laughed at rather than pitied our poor horses. Below, in the valley, is a railway making, to connect Guildford with a station upon the South Western seven or eight miles distant. Across the country, over two or three miles of farm fields, hedgerows, and thickets of forest timber, and beyond that, over two or three more miles of open heath, we can see a long earthy-coloured line intersecting the heath for several miles, which line, we are told, is the South Western Railway. We are with our faces to the west while thus looking to it; and far to the north-west, as far as the horizon, we can see some dots of white upon a dark ground, and these dots of white, we are told, are the stands and other erections upon Ascot race-course.

There is a twinkle in the eyes of some of our fellow-passengers, who have travelled this road often, who point out those places to us, and who agree that the view westward and round to the north is broad and fine. They seem to indicate that something is coming. What can it be? The railway goes almost in the same direction that we go, and keeps at that respectful distance; and they tell us that the country through which it goes continues to be the same brown heath which we now see it; what is it, then, that we are to see? We have been kept with our eyes turned to the west for some length of time looking to the right of the coach; let us wriggle ourselves round, and look to the south and the east; for surely we must now be at the top of that whitey-brown hill which stretched up to our left a while ago.

Great heavens! what sight, what scene, what enchantment is that? A new world—a fairy land—lies down below us. What is there elsewhere on the earth to compare it to? We are on a high narrow ridge. Our road is along the summit of this ridge—along its very back bone; and there, on either side, we might almost leap down into those woody countries which lie below. This narrow hill, so long, so thin, so bare-sided, is seven or eight miles in length. We might fancy it some enormous reptile; if so, its huge head has been cut off, and Guildford has been disgorged. We got up somewhere about the shoulders; and now we are travelling at the rate of ten miles an hour, until we shall get off at the tail, which tail ends imperceptibly in that low country between our vision and the smoke which issues from a hollow. That smoke comes out of the chimneys of Farnham, and Farnham is lying in that richly wooded valley, out of which this vast hill seems to have crept, before its head was cut off and it could go no farther.

But before we descend by the tail let us look upon that broad stretch of woody country. It is all below us, but it is not a level. It is a succession of hills and valleys of several sizes and many shapes. If we could imagine a garden twenty miles in breadth, all turned up by the snout of some monster which would do to twenty miles of country what a sow would do to a bed of onions, then we may have some idea of the shapelessness and brokenness of this mass of fantastic little hills below us.

Descending by the tail, I found myself, in the course of three or four miles, forty-one miles from London, in the town of Farnham. It consists principally of one street, from a half to three quarters of a mile long. It is stretched in a valley, or rather gentle hollow, by the side of a stream. Some green meadows with cows in them separate the main part of the town from the stream—I am not sure but it is called a river; if so, I beg pardon—a river; it is separated by the meadows from the main town; and the meadows are somewhat broken and disjointed by gardens and hop grounds.

The cultivation of hops is the great staple of this neighbourhood; and a good staple it is. The soil is exceedingly rich, and the hops are said to fetch in the market a price one-third over that obtained for hops grown elsewhere. One grower will sell L.10,000 worth of hops this year. Land is very high-rented, and much money is paid in wages for labour. As much as L.500 per acre has been paid of late for the purchase of prime hop ground; and an annual rent of L.10 per acre is said to be common. The wages of labour is higher here than in the corn-growing districts. The work is all done by the piece; but the men average 12s. a-week, besides which their children and female relatives work with them. At the present season the chief thing to be seen in connexion with hop-growing is the setting up of the poles upon which they grow singly in summer, in piles formed by a quadruple alliance.

Four pillars of poles of fifty or more each meet at top and form a mutual support; and, as they are from twelve to twenty feet long, these piles, studded over some miles of country, look singular to a stranger.

There is a great fair for the sale of Farnham hops at Weyhill in the second week of October. All that I saw of the hops was when being packed into long bags called "pockets." This seems to be a serious piece of work for the men who pack. They must not put less than two hundred weight and a quarter in each; to effect which, the empty bag is slung up and kept open by a hoop at the mouth. A man goes in naked, or nearly, with an iron weight, to which is attached a rope. This weight keeps the centre, and he tramps and dances all round it, pulling it up as the hops rise; and these are let down upon his head in small quantities at a time by some of his children, or other young assistants. It is most suffocating work the packing of these bags.

Though I did not see, I was told of the other processes of hop-growing and gathering and preparing; but I shall not at present say more on that head.

COBBETT'S GRAVE.

Having ascertained at the Bush Hotel, where I took up my quarters, what the various *sights* in the town and neighbourhood were, I walked out to see some of them. There was the Bishop of Winchester's residence; the castle, standing aloft among old forest trees on the north-west or right-hand side of the town, our backs being towards London; there was Waverley Abbey two miles off, and there was More-park not quite so far; and in More-park there was Mother Ludlam's Cave, in which Swift wrote some of his works; and there was the house close by in the town where Cobbett was born.

Nothing was said of where he was buried, but I knew he lay in that churchyard, and I had heard in London that there was a tombstone; so, without any questions, I set out to the churchyard. It is rather spacious, is well filled, and has a great number of neat headstones of various shapes. As there are paths through it, I saw several people of whom I might have inquired for the particular stone I wanted to see, but I preferred reading my way to it. I was, after much reading and several journeys round the church, obliged, however, to inquire, and a person led me to it, almost close to the front door of the church. It is a flat stone, seven or eight feet long, and about three wide, laid upon some coarse brick-work, which raises it about twenty inches high. It occupies a triangular point of ground at the junction of two paths, and is most conveniently situated for a seat. And what between being used for a seat by the lazy and the tired, and as a platform for the boys to leap on to, and off from, it being a soft stone, is wearing rapidly away. Some carpenter or painter of ploughs and waggons has rested himself on it with his blue paint, and has amused himself while he sat by daubing his broad brush upon some parts of it. Others have chipped out part of some of the letters; and one corner is chipped away two inches or more. The last time the roads had been muddy, some youngsters had been jumping on to it from a certain distance, for the mud from their nailed shoes stuck to the edges where they had got their feet to, but lost their balance from, preparatory to their falling backward.

I asked why it was not better protected, and was answered that it first had been the intention to put a railing round it; but that for some reason it was not done. Perhaps this notice of its present condition will remind the relatives or political friends of the deceased of this unperformed duty. In the course of a very few years, if it remains exposed as it is to the ruthless feet of the young "chopsticks," the inscription will be illegible and the stone a wreck. The inscription is as follows:—

"Beneath this stone lie the remains of
WILLIAM COBBETT,
born in the parish of Farnham, 9th March 1762. Enlisted into the 54th Regiment of Foot 1784, of which he became Sergeant-Major in 1785, and obtained his discharge in 1791. In 1794 he became a political writer. In 1833 was returned to Parliament for the borough of Oldham, and represented it till his death, which took place at Normandy Farm, in the adjoining parish of Ash, on the 18th of June 1835."

Next to this stone and grave is an upright stone bearing the name of George Cobbett, who died at the age of 59, in the year 1760. I did not see the name on any other gravestones.

I found the house standing near the stream of water aforementioned, where report says Cobbett was born. It is at present a public-house, and bears the sign of "The Jolly Farmer." Across the stream, amid some houses which skirt the road leading up to and over the high ground between us and Waverley Abbey, I saw a mean-looking beerhouse, bearing the sign of "The Farmers' Retreat." I remarked that if the corn-law continued, the workhouse was more likely to be the farmers' retreat, as it had been to many of them and their labourers' during the last thirty years. The delusion practised upon the farming class by that most treacherous thing called corn-law *protection* has made the whole labouring population, but with a few local exceptions, paupers, or poorer than paupers, and it has brought the farmers to the verge of insolvency. Where was there, or when was there, in this country or in any other, a whole class, and so large a class, spread all over the kingdom, in such difficulties? Who ever saw master tailors or master shoemakers, or shopkeepers of any class, so universally and so very often, so almost continually, in distress as the farmers are? Can they have any doubt that something must be wrong? Yet many of them think they must not, not a few dare not, listen to any instruction which would explain to them why and by what means they are kept in distress; they must not listen to anything affecting their condition but what comes from the gatherer in of the rents.

Whether the little beershop has been the retreat of some broken farmer who has become its landlord, as is very often the case with beershops and broken farmers, or whether the sign indicates that any farmer, vexed with the world's cares, may hide his head in that little hole, and pour beer into his throat to kill care, as water is poured into rat-holes to drown rats, I cannot say; farmers, amid all their difficulties, generally find a better place to drink their beer in than that now referred to at the bottom of the hill. But from what I saw of the game, and from what I heard of its destroying practices to the farmers occupying land on the hill and over the hill, I should deem it the most natural of consequences if they, whose crops are so destroyed, were to rush down and hide themselves in this or any other hole, and never to go near the farm again. It is, in short, enough to break the heart of any man whose heart is not cast iron, to see his crops destroyed by vermin bred there, and preserved for the pleasure of some one who bears no part of the expense.

But of this hereafter. Bad as it seemed there, I have since seen it worse elsewhere.

WAVERLEY ABBEY.

Having come over this high ground, instead of coming round its elbow and down the valley, I descended by a steep road into this valley, and by a road overhung with lofty trees, the trees towering on the sides of the bold height on my right hand; a succession of green meadows lying to my left, with the river in the centre, or sometimes loitering in the shady places by the side; with deep, heavy woods rearing their heads beyond the meadows, I journeyed downward to the south, and at last found a gate, which I was told led into Waverley Abbey.

This was a famous settlement of Cistertian monks, who dispensed their hospitality to all comers and their bounty to the poor, previous to the spoliation by Henry VIII. Cobbett gives a glowing account of the monks' garden in his "English Gardener." It continued to exist in the time when he was a boy, and he says it was the first garden in which he "learned to work, or rather to eat the best kinds of garden fruit." It has since been, as he expresses it, all pulled to pieces. The old Abbey still remains; but a new house is built, and the old gardens made into a lawn. It has changed proprietors several times since the monks' garden was destroyed, one of whom was the late Poulett Thomson.

MOTHER LUDLAM'S CAVE.

Leaving Waverley on the right, I crossed the river, and turning into the dark shady woods on the east side, turned up by a path which I was told would lead back to Farnham by the bottom of the woods and the verge of the meadows. The greater part of this way was within the enclosures of More-park. The cave is in the bottom of a sandy hill overgrown with branchy trees, and a spring of water issues from it, and, crossing the path, falls down to the river.

Dean Swift used to visit Sir William Temple at More-park, and was fantastic enough to come (so tradition says) and study and write in this cave. I went into it as far as I could get, and drank of its water. As a cave it is nothing better than a sand-pit. It may be twelve feet high, and twenty feet wide at the mouth, and fifty or sixty feet lengthways into the hill. It was probably dug out to collect the various springs of pure water which ooze through the sand into one. Or probably it was dug out for the purpose of putting good Mother Ludlam's story into it. Being in the bosom of a forest, secluded from every human eye, it answered the purpose of those who had an interest in keeping up a belief in ghosts and witches exceedingly well.

Mother Ludlam was reputed to be a spirit of rather amiable temper, a kind of benevolent witch in *profession*. She was to the villagers of Farnham and people round Waverley in those olden days what the corn-law is to the farmers in our days. At great trouble to themselves, and at the cost of much dread and terror, they, when they wanted assistance—when, for instance, they wanted to borrow some utensil of domestic service, which their own want of skill or their poverty—poverty caused by those who deluded them—had prevented them from acquiring in a more direct and reasonable way—they went here at midnight to ask Mother Ludlam to help them, or to lend to them. It was of course absolutely requisite to profess not to be afraid of her. They were obliged to call upon her by saying, "*Good* Mother Ludlam, come and give me" so and so. If they had no faith in her *goodness*, or if they spoke evil of her, some *agent* of hers punished them. If they were not punctual to the very letter of time in repaying her for the assistance lent, she was very severe with them.

Her manner of lending was this:—They called upon her at midnight; and, if they spoke her kindly enough, she put what they wanted at the mouth of the cave, which they found waiting for them in the morning. The whole was beyond question an imposture on the part of those who had an interest in keeping up a spiritual terror over the common people. To keep the *good* Mother Ludlam from doing any harm there was enough to be paid to the priesthood. And as those visiting the cave to borrow from her had to be prepared by faith and prayer with some priest, it was always known beforehand what they wanted to borrow; consequently the article was procured and conveyed to the cave.

So much for Mother Ludlam, and so much for the delusion of the corn-law.

COBBETT'S FARM AT NORMANDY.

The name of Farnham is said to be derived from the abundance of *fern* that once grew there. I doubt not but the fine deep soils where the hops now grow were at one time covered with fern. That plant is to be seen yet in great quantities on some parts of the Surry and Hampshire heaths. I have observed that, in all parts of the kingdom, wherever the heath and the fern grow vigorously together, the soil, if broken up and planted with potatoes, brings forth first-rate crops.

Thus it is at Farnham. Notwithstanding all the prejudice of Cobbett against potatoes and potato eaters, the finest specimens of this year's crop which I have seen in any part of England I saw at Farnham. And in the country lying between that place and Normandy, where he had his farm, I saw some pieces of potato-ground bearing excellent crops; pieces of ground newly reclaimed from the heaths which, in the natural state, did not produce one shilling for each twenty shillings produced now, besides not employing labour then as now. And there is such good land of that description still lying unreclaimed. Talk of emigration! of sending people to Canada or Australia, to get rid of a superabundant population! our superabundant people there have to make war upon primeval forests, and waste half a lifetime in making corn-land, wasting more than a whole lifetime in getting a good market for the corn, the good market at best being a low-priced market compared with the lowest in England! Talk of the backwoods in Canada when there is so much of Surry in England to cultivate; not the shallow heaths, but the good land!

But, unhappily, the parish of Ash, or a very considerable portion of it, cannot be cultivated as it should be because of law-suits arising out of mortgages, which mortgages and law-suits arose out of the corn-laws. But of this presently.

Having seen the birth-place and the burial-place of William Cobbett, and the place where he first learned to work in a garden and to eat garden fruit, I was desirous of seeing his farm. I knew it was a considerable distance from Farnham; but could not call to mind the name of it, although in the latter part of his lifetime every person that at any time glanced at his publications, or by any chance listened to one of his lectures, must have heard of *Normandy Farm.*

I had seen it in print and had heard of it many a time; yet could not recollect it now. So I was about to inquire, when, passing along Farnham Street, I read the following among other advertisements of farm property for sale:—

"*Normandy Farm, in the Parish of Ash, Surry.*—All the live and dead farming-stock, and part of the household furniture, comprising three useful cart horses; waggons, dung carts, and raved cart; three Guildford swing ploughs, and light and strike furrow ploughs; drags, harrows, rollers, ladders, corn lines, trace, thill, plough, and foot harness; Bennett's seed machine, corn screen, barley chomper, chaff box and knife, pair clasp drags, sieves, prongs, shovels, sheep bells, &c. The household furniture comprises fourpost and stump bedsteads, beds and bedding, chairs, glasses, card and other tables, fenders, fire-irons, butter tumbler, mash and tun tubs, barrels, copper, pots, tubs, kievers, stools, and a variety of very useful effects, which will be sold by auction, by Messrs Thomas Baker and Sons, on the premises, Normandy Farm, on Tuesday the 1st of Oct. 1844, at eleven o'clock precisely."

The tenant now selling off is the *second* since Mr Cobbett's decease in 1835; and he told me he was very glad to get out of it—he was losing money. He paid L.40 a-year more for the 160 acres, which is the extent of the farm, than Mr Cobbett paid. Cobbett's rent was L.160; this tenant's rent was L.200.

It was the evening before the sale that I saw the advertisement, so I resolved to go to it next day. Next day having come, I hired a conveyance, which bore the dignified name of a "fly," but which was rather a primitive machine of the fly kind, and jogged away at a rate which was by no means too fast for making inquiries about land, cultivation, tenures, lawsuits, mortgages, wages, potatoes, and so forth, as we went along.

THOMAS PAINE'S BONES.

When we arrived at the village of Ash, I stopped to make some inquiries of a general kind, or rather, to talk with anybody I met on any subject, to see what kind of topics might be introduced. Those to whom I spoke supposed at once that I was going to the sale at Normandy Farm, so that was the readiest subject of conversation. I inquired if the present tenant had been long in the farm, and also how long Mr Cobbett had been in it. To which it was replied, that no one had been long in that farm since Mr Weston left it; that he had been twenty-one years in it, and left it when Cobbett came. We then spoke of Mr Weston's present farm; and, on my saying I would like to see that gentleman, they told me that I had nothing to do but to drive on a mile and a half and stop as I came to his door, (I would know it by the new barn,) and I would not only see himself, but see "Tom Paine's bones" as well, if I chose.

It was, as every person old enough knows, a matter of public notoriety once, that Cobbett brought Paine's bones from America. I believe it was this that caused some public writer, in a fit of ill-nature, to call Cobbet the "bone grubber."

The bones were found in a chest at his death, and would have been sold at the public auction that followed, but the auctioneer would not offer them. They told me at Ash, that the auctioneer said "he had never sold any man's bones *as yet*, and he would not begin now with Tom Paine's." The chest and the bones, on everything else being cleared away from Normandy by the purchasers at the sale and by Mr Cobbett's family, were removed for a temporary deposit to Mr Weston's house, about half a mile off, and there, I was told, they still remained.

I proceeded to Mr Weston's accordingly. I would have done so for the sake of a conversation with him on farming affairs, especially on his olden recollections of farming in Surry. But all these became secondary to my desire to see the chest and the bones, to see the skull of "Common Sense" and the "Rights of Man."

I knew Mr Weston's farm and residence when I saw it, as I had been told I would, by the *new barn*. There were a pair of sawyers sawing boards, and carpenters nailing up the boards, for all the barns are wooden ones; and Mr Weston was in the barn also. On his being sent for to the house, I found him a most willing and intelligent informant on many matters; but, by my not knowing precisely how to introduce the subject of Paine's bones, I felt myself in a difficulty. At last I became bold, and asked the question broadly, if it was true that he had such curious relics in his possession. At which he shook his head and said, "Not now." He had them up to about six months ago; but at that time a gentleman came from London and got them away to bury them there. He seemed unwilling to say more; and as I had no right to inquire, I did not pursue the subject; but I was told elsewhere in the neighbourhood that this was correct. I heard names mentioned; but as it seems some secrecy had been enjoined, I do not repeat the names. I think the parties performed a very proper duty if they really did take the bones to London *to bury them.*

NORMANDY FARM—RENTS AND MORTGAGES.

The fact of there being a *new barn* and other new wooden erections in progress on Mr Weston's farm, as also on some other farms which I had seen in the neighbourhood, led to conversations between myself and several parties on matters connected with the tenures and ownership of land.

An estate here had fallen into ruin through a mortgage which swallowed up its rents. The landlord, or a relative, his predecessor, had borrowed about L.30,000 on mortgage of the rental. The borrowing, as was too often the case in mortgages of the last thirty or forty years, was a corn-law speculation. The money-lenders, depending on the power of the Legislature to keep up prices of corn and rents of land, had lent more money than enough. The owner, depending also on legislative prices, borrowed more money than he could pay the interest of.

Normandy farm is on this estate, as is also Mr Weston's present farm next to Normandy. In the year 1811 Mr Weston commenced his occupation of Normandy at a yearly rent of L.210. At that time the war and the political fictions which accompany war had raised prices, and he got on pretty well. So he hoped to do when the corn-law of 1815 was passed to keep wheat up to eighty shillings a quarter *at least;* but that corn-law, like all others, was a delusion, and up to 1822 Mr Weston had a continued struggle for bare life. Having paid everything in rent, and more than everything—for, owing to the depreciated currency of 1819, he paid in the three succeeding years a rent much higher than he contracted for in 1811, as all farmers did—he paid at least L.250 a-year instead of L.210, and he did this with low markets—with wheat down to forty shillings a quarter in one year, while he had contracted to pay a rent which the stupid and most treacherous delusion of the corn-law had caused him to calculate to pay, with wheat at from eighty shillings a quarter upwards—having, as all other farmers had at that time, paid away everything derived from the farm in rent, and more than he derived—having paid away all spare cash, the savings of the years of war prices—he could not keep on at such a rent. He got an abatement, and for the next nine years paid L.170 a-year.

Mr Cobbett came after him, and had the farm four years, at an annual rent of L.160. He must have entered upon it, I presume, in 1831, as he died in 1835. No person since 1811 has had a chance of doing much in it save Cobbett, not unless they had a good capital. It is a farm capable of great improvement. Had Cobbett been long enough in it to have done much, I would have been exceedingly surprised to see it as it is now, even nine years after his death; but he had not time to do much. Yet Normandy farm, as it is now, and was when he took it, is a proof of his sagacity. It is an excellent piece of land, which, from the day that the dove went out of Noah's ark to the day that the Farnham "fly" conveyed me to it—namely, the 1st of October 1844—has never been treated in a manner deserving the name of good cultivation. Mr Weston had nothing but a continual struggle with difficulties, paying everything away in rent. Besides, I must take the liberty of doubting whether either he or the present generation of farmers in Surry are likely to do all they might do for themselves and their land, supposing them to have the money power.

Next to Cobbett came a Mr Thompson, or rather a company with Mr Thompson at its head. The rent was now L.200, a higher rent than that of the war prices of 1811, be it remembered, yet a rent which such land should easily afford where there is sufficient capital, good security of tenure, liberality of covenants, and *no game;* that accursed game is the ruin of these counties.

BEETROOT SUGAR.

It is said that Mr Thompson began well, would have continued well, and would have found his rent of L.200 an easy rent, as his intention was to grow beetroot and manufacture sugar. Just, however, as the apparatus was got ready, and much expense incurred, the West India sugar interest took the alarm, and said to the government, It will never do to make sugar in Surry and refine it into loaf sugar to compete with us; it must be taxed.

The owners of land naturally said, Why is beetroot sugar to be prohibited by this tax? Shall we not be allowed to produce what we choose from our own land, if we can make a profit from it? To which the sugar interest replied, You cannot make a much larger profit off your beetroot sugar than you can off your wheat. If you make sugar in competition with us, we will not help you to keep up the corn-law. Give up sugar-making to us, and we will help you to maintain your corn-law.

And accordingly Mr Thompson, who had no doubt but he could easily pay L.200 a-year for Normandy farm if allowed to make sugar, was prevented from making sugar, and left the farm; and a Mr Wood, believing that the corn-law would be kept on, and that it would keep up the rising prices of 1837 and 1838, undertook to pay as much rent as Mr Thompson had undertaken to pay, namely, L.200 a-year.

Thus, taking this farm as a specimen, the landed interest seemed all right. The attempts to make sugar had increased the rent from twenty to twenty-five shillings per acre, while the alliance with the India sugar monopoly, which promised to maintain the corn-law inviolate, obtained for the land the continuance of twenty-five shillings an acre—the sugar price.

But the corn-law never did and never will keep up prices. So far as the sliding scale is concerned, it unsettles prices, and unsettles them to the farmer's disadvantage; while the whole law tends to make the whole nation poorer and less able to buy and consume that which the farmer has to sell. The corn-law has cheated every farmer, and it cheated Mr Wood of Normandy like others. He found the corn-law did not keep up prices, and yet he had L.200 a-year to pay, with L.30 a-year of other burdens, tithes, rates, and taxes.

THE CORN-LAW INJURIOUS TO LANDOWNERS.

Moreover, he not only paid away all that he had in rent, but he suffered part of that evil which results to the owners of land from the corn-law. The estate had been mortgaged. A lawsuit ensued. It was for several years apprehended that the mortgagees would get possession of the estate, when, in order to take legal possession, they would eject the tenants who held from the landlord. This the mortgagees have at last done. And during the years of dispute, the tenants dared do nothing that required an outlay of capital. Barns and other buildings, and fences and gates, went to decay; no draining was done; no means taken to make the land fruitful to pay the rent. Yet the rent had to be paid. Receivers had been appointed by the courts of law, and to them the rent had to be paid with rigid punctuality.

And all this arose from the landlord and the mortgagees having expected that the corn-law would be able to keep prices and rents at an extravagant height. The landlord has lost his estate, the mortgagees saw it fall into dilapidation, and must now bear the expense of comprehensive repairs. The tenantry suffered for the want of suitable conveniences, and also because they had no security in laying out money in properly cultivating their land. All of them lived from hand to mouth by reason of the corn-law, hoping for something better, and all of them were cheated. Mr Wood had an agreement for fourteen years, and must have remained until that time was out, or until he became insolvent and was sold out, had not the success of the mortgagees given him the chance of escape, which, being cheated by the corn-law, he was but too glad to avail himself of. He was served with a notice of ejectment, and he took that opportunity of quitting so bad a bargain as he found Normandy farm to be at L.200 a-year.

A neighbouring gentleman named Warren has taken it at L.180 a-year from the mortgagees. But it is said the dispute is not yet settled, as the landlord is to make one more effort to regain possession.

But this is a rare instance of a farm being at present let for less than the old rent. I have been assured by several farmers, who are now offering for farms, that there is no chance of getting a new holding but at an advance on present rentals. This may not be so with the very large farms, for which there is not so great a competition; but for small ones, or those of moderate size, for which the competition is great, an increase of rent is asked everywhere. Some landlords, Lord King for one, near Guildford, are reducing the size of their farms and getting a higher rent.

This reduction of the size of farms will become universal in the course of a few years. From the discoveries in chemical science, and other circumstances, tenants cannot cultivate farms of from 600 to 2000 acres properly: they have not capital. A farm of from 150 to 300 acres is far more likely to be profitable than one of 1000 acres, to a man of moderate capital. The desire for the reduction of farms is extending rapidly in the southern counties of Scotland at present, especially among the sons of farmers. The young men find they cannot get farms at all, the parcels of land are so large and so few. And they find that, to carry out the comprehensive new system of tillage requisite in such a district as the Merse of Berwickshire, they should not encounter more than 200 or 300 acres, even if they could get more. The sum of L.4000 laid out in draining thoroughly; in subsoiling and in trenching with the spade; in saving and applying every particle and drop of home-made manure; in the raising of superior green crops and in stall-feeding; they understand quite well that L.4000 would bring a larger profit out of 400 acres than that sum would out of 1000 acres. Yet 1000 acres is a medium-sized farm in Berwickshire.

Not so in Surry, unless where there is a wide range of heath, and not even there, so far as I have seen; but on some estates there are large farms in Surry, and, as already said, some landlords are reducing them, and, from the competition that exists, are obtaining higher rents.

OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF NORMANDY FARM.

It is but a humble-looking place. The farm-house and offices stand at the top of a common, removed from the farm land, which to a good farmer is a great annoyance, and to any farmer is a loss. A wide range of heath, variegated with furze, gravel pits, and tracts of absolute sterility, extends for many miles behind the farm-house; and on either side, right and left, the heath extends for several miles, variegated only with a few clumps of pine trees, chiefly Scotch firs.

In front lies a heathy common, in complete disorder, as commons usually are, and beyond it, to the front, looking eastward, is the farm land, enclosed in small fields, with very badly kept fences. There are trees in the hedgerows; and, in some parts, more of them than should be upon a farm where there is a tenant bound to pay rent.

The land is wet, and wants at least L.1000 expended on it, to be repaid out of a lease of twenty years, before it can develope fully its natural good qualities. At present it is poisoned with weedy foulness and the sour wetness of its subsoil. Nothing has been done to cure this effectually, not even by Cobbett; yet, had he lived longer, he would have, doubtless, had it in a much better condition than it is now in.

It is an excellent soil for potatoes. I never saw better potato-land in the kingdom than in this parish of Ash. In Farnham the land is more profitably employed in hop-growing, by far, than it could be in potato-growing. But were the farmers in those parishes who occupy that land which was originally heathy and ferny, and which is not used for hops, to turn their attention to the culture of *seed*-potatoes, they could make an excellent profit. The railway is near; the London growers of potatoes are always in want of changed seed; the soil in this part of Surry is that kind of soil which produces the best seed-potatoes. I mean by *seed* the potatoes that are to be planted again, not literally the seed of them from the apples.

VICTIMS OF PROTECTION—LETTERS TO INDIVIDUAL SUFFERERS.

No. I.

To my old Master, Mr W. T.—a particular Victim.

Sir,—Though you are not so rich as you once were, you are not dishonoured. Your money credit may be gone, but your moral credit remains. You struggled with a bad bargain, and only yielded in the struggle when you had paid away all your farming capital and private fortune in rent; capital derived by inheritance, and not accumulated by any former profits from the farm. Some persons have said you were foolish to do so; but, at the least, they must admit you were honest. In truth, you could not help yourself. With a large family to provide for, with no alternative if you left the farm; but without the power to leave it, you being bound by a lease, what could you do?

Some have said you were imprudent to have taken such a lease at such a rent; and, perhaps, you were so. But your imprudence was comprised in this, that you did not think it necessary to inquire into and understand that delusive corn-law which promised to do so much and which did so little, save to transfer your capital to the pocket of the Laird of ———, your landlord.

That you should have taken the farm upon a fixed money rental was, perhaps, indiscreet. You would not now do so. Nor would any of your friends. But when you took your lease corn-rents were not so common in your county as now; and, I believe, had not been then introduced upon the ——— estate at all. However, I am not perfectly informed on that point; but I do know this, that when B——— was sold out of your family, you were desirous to retain it even as a farm. You had a love for it; it was natural you should. You knew nothing about the corn-law; it was natural you should not. The education of young gentlemen, such as you then were, did not comprise a knowledge of the causes which affect the value of property; which make corn dear at one time and cheap at another time; which shew that high prices are not always profitable, nor moderate prices always a loss.

The attempt to raise corn to an exorbitant price, and keep it up when it was up, had, through the failure of the East Lothian bank—that instrument by which wheat was never to be allowed to fall below ninety shillings a quarter in East Lothian—the attempt to secure such a price by such an instrument, resulted in the downfal of the projectors and shareholders of the bank, who included some of your nearest relations. This led to the farm of B——— going out of your family as an estate, and still it brought no instruction to you on that pernicious corn-law which first made you a tenant instead of a proprietor, and then ruined you as a tenant.

But even to this day the farmers, your late neighbours, are not taught by what they have seen and should have studied. I am told that many of them still cling to this agricultural "protection," as the corn-law is most absurdly called. Some of them may know better, yet fear to go against the landlords who uphold it, and the landlords' deputies—the factors. But I believe the greater part of the farmers do not know which is the right side and which the wrong of this question.

I have seen most parts of England since I left you, and have paid close attention to both sides of the corn-laws—the agricultural side and the commercial side—and I therefore place before myself the task of helping the farmers to a perfect knowledge of this all-important question. It is not so difficult to explain principles as it is to get those most concerned in them to listen to the explanations. It is not so difficult to bring facts together, and place them before a farmer's eyes, as it is to get him to open his eyes and look at them. "One man may take a horse to the water," we used to say, "but twenty men will not make him drink;" that is, if the horse is not inclined to drink. So, one man may put the whole history and mystery of the different corn-laws—their delusive promises and their disastrous effects—before a farmer, clear as the looking-glass in which he looks to see if he be clean shaved; and he may be shewn by that one man in that glass how the corn-law has shaved him; but twenty men will not make the farmer look into the glass if he be resolved not to look.

The only way I know of accomplishing this desirable end is to go to some of them singly, and tell them that they bleed—that in the dark they have been wounded; and then, being addressed individually, they may open their eyes and behold each his own suffering and disfigurement, before any factor or agent can come and tell them not to look, not to read, not to understand.

To such as you, Mr T., I need not say you are hurt. You know that too well. But, if I am not much misinformed, you do not yet see clearly how you have been hurt. You will say by too high a rent; but why did you contract to pay too high a rent? It was not, as some say, that you were not a proper judge of the value of land—it is easy to say this after you have lost your all upon it—Job's comforters are always ready with their sayings; but the real cause of your contracting to pay L.3 per acre for B——— was, that the corn-law promised you a price which would have got you a profit at that rent; but the corn-law deceived you, it cheated you, and you have lost your capital, your patrimony, your farm, and your family's bread.

At one of the contested elections for the county, which occurred after you became a tenant of the Laird of T———, when much popular interest was excited in behalf of one of the candidates, you were asked by one of your workmen if you would not vote for that candidate. You replied—and your reply was, like all your actions, straightforward and honest—you said you knew no difference between the merits of the one candidate and the other; that the one was a Whig and the other a Tory; that both were alike to you, save that the Tory was your landlord's candidate, and that he would be yours; that it was safest to keep on the landlord's side, "because," you continued, "what is for the landlord's interest must be for my interest, and the interest of all of us on his estate."

In this you spoke as it is common for a tenant to speak; in this you voted as it is common for a tenant to vote. I blame you not for seeing no difference in the candidates. If Toryism be Conservatism—the principle of conserving the British nation as it now exists, and of extending and elevating its greatness and glory—then I am as much a Tory, though I do not like the name, as your landlord was who swayed your vote to the Tory side. If your landlord be a Conservative, so am I, though totally opposed to him on the subject of the corn-law. Indeed, the free-traders are the most thorough Conservatives of any party. Were the maintenance of the corn-law a part of Conservatism—Conservatism being the preservation of the national power, prosperity, and integrity—then it would be to uphold the national power, prosperity, and integrity, that you were made to pay to the Laird of T——— every penny of the fortune you inherited out of B——— estate, and were at last driven from your farm with a helpless family.

It is rank deceit to mix up the preservation of the corn-law with the patriotic principle of Conservatism. The one is personal, the other is national; the one aims at the meanest of objects, the other at the highest.

You have lived to prove, unhappily, that the interest of your landlord was not your interest and that of your men. By his parliamentary power you expected he would procure you such a price for your corn as would enable you to pay him L.3 per acre and provide for your family. You entered into a bond that you would pay that rent every year, for a certain term of years; the landlord gave no bond that he would not take all the money you promised him if you did not get all the price he promised you. On whose side was the best of the bargain? You knew the best of the bargain was on his side. Hence your reasons for the vote you gave.

But did that satisfy him? Did he not exact his bond—his "pound of flesh?" He did; and he got it too, and the blood with it. After you had paid him all your profit, all your capital, and every penny you possessed, and begged for time to pay the rest, you were only saved from being sold out even to the last wheel-barrow, even to the pillow upon which you laid your head in that house which had once been your father's mansion, and which had descended from that to be what it now was to you and your helpless family, by the landlord and the landlord's corn-law, and these alone—you were only saved from losing the last stick and the last pillow, to satisfy that landlord whose interest you said was your interest, by the intervention of two friends—family friends—not "farmers' friends."

I do not say that all landlords would have done as yours did; far from it. I do not say that yours would have done the same to every other tenant; and yet there is no reason to suppose he was harder upon you than he would have been upon others who might have had as bad a bargain as you. But he proved in your case, against your own words, that a landlord's interest may not be always a tenant's interest. So long as the corn-law exists, or legislative protection to agriculture exists in any shape, the interests of landlords, tenants, and labourers cannot be identical, unless a landlord acts toward them in a spirit the very opposite of the spirit of the corn-law, which is personal and selfish, enacted for private ends by those who have had the power to enact it.

But here I may remark that the landlords have even injured themselves by it. See how many estates have passed away from their former owners by these owners speculating on excessive rents, indulging in expenses they could not support. See how many estates have been mortgaged, and all but the name of the property taken from the once independent owners. Extensive as the Laird of T———'s estate is, it is not clear of embarrassments. He has had an expensive family to provide for; and though he had the support of your votes and the votes of his numerous tenantry, to procure them admission where none are admitted without high influence, still that was not enough for them. To support his family he wrung from you the last penny which should have supported yours.

He is now no more; and I hope, for the credit of his memory, it was necessity on his part, and not greediness, that made him take your money from you which never belonged to the farm as such. But, whatever the actuating cause was, he took it. He never could have done so had not the delusion of high prices promised by the corn-law, which the corn-law could not fulfil, put you in his power.

I shall resume the subject in another letter. Meantime I am your old cowherd, stable-groom, plough-boy, &c. &c.

No. II.

To my old Master, a particular Victim of the Corn-Laws.

Sir,—The time that has elapsed since I was in your service has worked a great change in both of us. The change has been to your disadvantage, I grieve to say; but it has been rather favourable to me. Whether there be any person, situated as I am now, who could look back upon such a service and such a master, and not grieve for your misfortunes, I know not. I am not that person.

Neither am I one who, separated from the farm-fields where I once toiled in summer and harvest days with scythe and reaping-hook, with bended back and sweaty brow; in winter days clearing out the watery ditches with feet immersed, or picking the frozen turnips to the snow-bedded sheep—I am not one who looks back to despise those times and those employments. With much toil there was much satisfaction.

There were the merry days of spring, when we whistled along at harrow and at plough, committing the seed once more to the earth, and our hopes once more to God for a succeeding harvest. Then there was the annual winter supper when harvest was over, when every man, woman, and child gathered around you—the young with more joy than they could contain, the old joyous as if they were young again; when my venerable father, being the oldest there, said grace, thanked Heaven for the harvest we had had, and prayed for another as good; and then, old as he was, solemn as was the piety of his life, danced among the dancers, and sung some of the merriest songs, the songs of his young days, among the singers.

Then there were the long winter evenings around your kitchen fire, on which the piled up logs and the coals that made them fierce drove us back, as they blazed and reddened, into a wider and a wider circle, into the circle where one would mend his shoes or his horse harness; where another would stitch her new apron or knit her stocking; where one would nod in the snoozy heat, where another would sing or tell a story; where I would sit and listen for the sound of your horse's feet to meet you at the door with the stable lantern ready lighted; where, on returning from the stable after grooming up your horse for the night, I would perchance find you, if it was market night, warming yourself for a brief period before you went to your parlour, asking the men what had been done while you were away, and telling them what was to be done to-morrow—whether the thrashing-mill was to be going or not, and whether the markets were in such a state as to make it desirable that the thrashing-mill should be set a-going. At this kitchen fireside I was a member of the circle; and on such occasions have been referred to, to say whether there was straw enough to last the cattle in the close, the cows in the byre, and the horses in the different stables over Sunday; and if there was, then perhaps you did not thrash until next week. And so the work which the men and horses were to go to next day was decided upon; frost and thaw being the only doubtful questions.

And think you I have had no pride in sending you out in style to market or to a distant dinner? If field work took me out, which it often did, before the stable work was completed, and some one came and called me, as often was the case, by the message, "The master wants his horse!" have I not been in the stable and stripped to the shirt before the echoes of the voice that called me had well died away? And there have I brushed and wisped, and wiped down, and combed the mane, and sponged the hoofs and brightened them; and have saddled and bridled, and have drawn the girths tighter, and have wiped the reins and the martingal once more, and the stirrups and the bit; and have sent you away with a curb-chain shining. And when you have gone, and I have watched you through the trees cantering beyond the holly bushes, and have seen you fairly into the public road, with nothing but your hat visible bobbing above the hedge of the upper Butterlaw Park, I have shut the stable door, have thrown a fork over my shoulder, and my jacket over the fork, preparatory to going to another job, and have sung or whistled on my way to the other job from pure pleasure and satisfaction that there would be no stirrups, or bridle-bits, or curb-chains on the road to market that day brighter than yours were.

And you to have had at that period an independent fortune of several thousand pounds, besides all your working capital invested in farm stock; and to have lost all—to have been deluded by the corn-law, to transfer all to the pocket of your laird in whom you reposed as in a "farmers' friend!" it is indeed, grievous.

There are those in the world, and there may be some of them concerned in the land on and around B——— now. who look upon an enemy of the corn-law as their enemy. There may be many farmers in that district of country who will read this, I know there will be some, and who will think that some lurking recollection of them, or fretful dislike to agriculture, prompts me to contend against the thing called *protection*, and thus bring the argument to their own doors by reference to the farm of B———.

If such there be they will do me wrong. I have paid close and widely-extended attention to this momentous subject, and am convinced, beyond the slightest possible doubt, that it is not more clear that commerce will be benefited by free-trade, than it is that agriculture has been wronged by monopoly, by the delusion of the corn-laws being a benefit to the farmers.

I have no dislike to agriculture: my interests and sympathies are with it. I have no disagreeable feelings towards any of those concerned in it whom I knew in my youth; I have kindly recollections of every one of them. I have a constitutional veneration for agriculture, strengthened by my connection with it in early life, even though then I was not a master in it, but a servant, and one of the very humblest. But it does not follow that, loving agriculture, I should love the corn-law. On the contrary, every circumstance of past days which memory and history supply me with, and every observation of the present day which travel and business-transactions afford me the means of making, unite in dissociating the welfare of agriculture and the existence of the corn-law. In England the pernicious influence of "protection" is more apparent than in Scotland. Yet in Scotland protection has done its work of mischief, as we see by your own case. Let me bring to your recollection some facts.

The first harvests I have any distinct knowledge of were those of 1816 and 1817; and I remember them more by their results than their realities. I was then a child, and you were a young man. It was one of those years I first saw you to know you from your brothers. And a very trifling event it was that made me distinguish and remember you—a trifling event in itself, yet not to me, and destined to be fixed in my mind until nails are fixed in my coffin. It was intimately connected with the famine-stricken harvests of the two years just named, and with that corn-law which has robbed you of your farm and all your patrimony.

The crops of those years were great failures. In 1817, which I remember most distinctly, the whole crop of the Horse Hill, which was peas and beans—and which you know grows as good wheat and beans as any on the farm—the whole crop of that very good field was carted home for the cattle to trample into manure—it never went to the stackyard; it was absolute *muck*. Barley was that year growing in the large field south of the Horse Hill. Though earliest ripe, much of that barley was never even thrashed; it was lost by the continued dark wet weather. I have no recollection of where the crops grew, though, in after years, I heard the crops of that year often talked of; no recollection save of the potatoes, which were at the west side of the Pond Park: they were small, few in number, and bad in quality.

Yet corn was so excessively dear, this being a second bad harvest, that my father's and brother's wages did not go far enough to procure us half—not more than *half*—the usual supply of oatmeal for porridge and barleymeal for bread; and, moreover, what we did get was bad, very bad. The bread was black, wet, and *clammy*. Foreseeing the failure of the potato crop, my father kept no pig in the stye; we had, therefore, no pork. There were either nine or ten of us almost dependent on what the wages of *two* could procure. So dear was everything, we could not even afford salt herring at every time we ate the miserable diet of small watery potatoes. When brose was made of the oatmeal, we could neither afford butter nor lard to our brose, but were only too happy to get brose in any shape, made of water and oatmeal only.

As a matter of course, we could get no new clothing. The previous year had been a famine year, and parents such as mine hoped that the next (this of which I now write) would enable them by its plenty and cheapness to restore the clothing of themselves and children. They were disappointed. This year was worse than the last; two famine years were worse than one. We decayed into rags, and almost to barefootedness, in the depth of winter. The nightly upsitting of my mother (who is still a living witness of that dreadful time) to mend and remend, to set patch on patch, contending as she did for nine of us against the united attacks of winter, nakedness, and famine—against all these, and the corn-law, and the East Lothian bank—the corn-law being to keep foreign grain out of the country, and the Lothian bank to keep home-grown corn out of market until it had reached the highest possible price at the longest possible period to which the farmers could hold it and not sell—my mother, I say, sitting up night after night during that dreary winter to stitch and stitch, patch and patch our clothes when we were in bed—she contending for nine of us—one woman for nine of us, against the united hostility of winter, nakedness, famine, corn-law, and the farmers' combination bank—one woman against all these—the task was unequal. She could not mend as fast as our *duds* decayed. They went to pieces, and she could not help them.

I am now at the point where I first saw you to know you. At that time my chief garment was a pinafore. The famine years had reduced me to one, and even that one was made up of the best parts of several that had fallen to pieces. I had only that single one, and it was ingeniously shaped and extended in size to hide the poverty of the clothing beneath it. When it was washed I had to stay within doors; and I never went out without being charged to keep that garment clean and untorn. I was careful of it; for, young as I was, the unequal contest which my mother held with famine and decaying clothes was bitterly felt by me. But I was out one day playing on that green knoll where the whinbush grew in front of the barnyard gate, and you and some other young gentlemen came along with your greyhounds. The dogs were playful. Perhaps they were kind; but, whatever their humour, they leaped upon me, pulled me down, one behind and one before, rolled me down the steep declivity, and did not leave off until that best garment of mine was equal to the worst. I ran home in the bitterest distress. I could not tell in the fear of the moment how it had happened; but a neighbour, who had seen the wreck and its cause, said it was done by "Master William's dogs." My mother took the rags, one by one, and looked at them; and knowing she could not go to a draper's shop to buy calicoes to replace them, she mingled tears of despair with my tears of childish fear, and sat down and asked in anguish, "What *was* she to do?"

Ay, what was she to do, indeed, with such a confederacy of famine-making seasons and famine-making men against her? My father was in full work at full wages; so was my eldest brother. One or two of the younger ones earned something; and even my mother went out and worked at the thrashing-mill, and in the fields rooting and "shawing" turnips amid wet and snow in those winter days, the nights of which were partly spent in sleepless toil to mend our clothes which she could not replace. And all who worked at anything were working on the farm, and yet could not earn enough to get enough of mere food of the coarsest and meanest quality, to say nothing of clothing.

And what was the value of the exorbitant prices to those who received them? They had less to sell, and, *therefore*, it will be argued it was proper they should have the highest possible price. Look at the result.

For nearly three years my mother did not go to the shop of Mr M'Intyre in Dunbar, which was the one and the only one she dealt at for cloth goods. You will remember M'Intyre's shop. And here I may remark, that at that very time, so I have been told, Mr Duncan M'Laren of Edinburgh, the highly talented enemy of corn-law famine, was an apprentice with Mr M'Intyre. See, therefore, how early the Edinburgh champion of free trade must have observed the evil influence of the corn-law!

We did not for nearly three years give custom to the draper's shop, and very, very little to the grocer's shop. The hinds of Lothian, who have a corn payment, would be in better circumstances. They have a similar advantage over fluctuating markets that the farmers have who pay corn rents. But the hinds in receipt of corn payments are but the merest fraction to the whole working population of the kingdom. Even in Lothian one-half, at least, of working persons were at that time in receipt of money wages; all in a similar state to our family.

And what was the consequence throughout the kingdom? The shopkeepers could not sell, consequently they could not buy from the wholesale merchants. The merchants could not buy from the manufacturers. The latter stopped their works. Every one, from the shopkeeper upwards, dispensed with some of their domestic servants; with clerks and workmen. These again could not buy grocery goods and clothes. Tailors and shoemakers, and every one employed in making and providing the materials for things that should have been made, were wholly or partly stopped. Carriers inland had less to carry, and ships were laid up idly in the docks. Sailmakers, riggers, and shipbuilders were thrown out in their turn. So were sailors. In thickly peopled districts mobs met and rioted. Soldiers were called out to disperse them. Men were hungry and clamorous, and demanded political changes. Demagogues found them ready to listen to and act upon the wildest suggestions. They essayed to overturn the government, and blood was spilt. The Habeas Corpus was suspended, and the gibbets were loaded.

And while the mobs of unemployed working men were thus starving, and plotting, and threatening, because they were unemployed and did starve, mercantile men were cracking to pieces, their bills dishonoured, credit broken, and all enterprise stagnant—a panic sweeping them into a backward gulf, as a receding wave sweeps back the broken sea-weed.

And all these, comprising millions of individuals, had to retrench their family expenses. Millions had, like my father's family, to live on less than enough of the worst of food. The farmers got high prices for the little they had to sell; but the people were famine-struck, and the nation was shaken to its centre.

And what came of the farmers? The succeeding years brought better harvests. But the population was now too poor to *pay* for what the farmers had to sell, and markets fell far below what they would have been had the general population been fully employed. The farmers had thus to pay the high rents, calculated upon a continuance of dear years, out of low prices. In England they were worse off than in Scotland, and in some parts of Scotland they were worse off than in Lothian; but even in Lothian they were so badly off that they could not meet their engagements in 1818 and 1819. The combination bank broke, and it broke some of the most substantial men in the county with it.

No. III.

Mr W. T., of Branxton.

To glance over a table of prices for fifty years we see the "ups and downs" of corn to be very frequent and very abrupt. An eminent publisher of maps in London has given to the world a map of the prices of wheat from 1790 to 1840. The map also contains the fluctuations of the public funds, and the amount of bank notes issued in each year; the revenue and expenditure of the Government; the value of the goods exported out of, and imported into, the United Kingdom; together with remarks of peace or war, or other circumstances causing fluctuations. The map was not published for or against the corn-law; but it is nevertheless eminently useful as an assistant expositor of the national disasters arising from famine. I shall here endeavour to give you a view of it.

The lowest average of a year's prices of wheat between 1790 and 1840 is 40s. per quarter. This was the average of 1792 and of 1835. And that is taken as the base line divided into fifty parts; one part for each of the fifty years. From each year there rises a pyramid, or a small mound, or, as the case may be, a gigantic tower, shooting up abruptly from a deep valley, and the top of each elevation rises to the point to which the average prices of that year rose, the scale of ascent being by intervals of 5s. per quarter, each advance of 5s. measuring about the twelfth of an inch on paper.

All persons interested in securing equal prices and in putting agriculture on a sure foundation should study this map. The causes that affected prices before 1815 are not precisely the same as those after; but it was to perpetuate the high unequal prices that preceded 1815 that the corn-law of that year was enacted.

And first, you must admit that equable prices are of the greatest value to the farmer. To know in any given year what the price of his corn will be the next year, or that time five years, or that time ten or fifteen years, would be worth much more to him, as regards his rent, his plans for making a profit, and his plans of improving his land, than any chance, however sure, that at some time or other, yet not knowing when, some year of high prices will occur.

Move with me in imagination over an uneven space of ground, and let us compare it with the passage of the farmers over the space of time between 1790 and 1845.

Let us suppose ourselves at the cove just above the sea-beach, and that we have to journey westward to the sands at Thorntonloch. There is a good, smooth, hard, level road, if we choose to turn into it. Common sense would suggest to us that our comfort and convenience, and even the safety of our lives, would decide us in favour of the even road, instead of going down among the rocks and precipices which lie on the other side of us.

It is pointed out to us that everything comes to a level at last, that all nature adjusts itself to an even scale in course of time, however much men in their folly may disarrange it; but another "friend" advises us to go the other way. We stand, as it were, upon the ground of 50s., the price of 1790, and we are going to the point of 45s. in 1845. There is not much difference in altitude between the two; and we would never have known there was any difference at all had we come by the even road.

But we submit to the guidance of our very kind *friend*. Our first movement is down. The year '91 gives us 45s. the year '92 gives us but 40s. We next rise, and '93 gives us 45s. "Come on," says our friend, "the year '94 will give you more." And it does so; it gives us 50s. And now for a lift. All at once, in '95, we are up to 75s. How we love our friend, and shout for him and vote for him now! And the next year, '96, is the same. We may fancy ourselves secure, and sure for ever of 75s.; but we are only on one of those abutting precipices which lie in our road, as if some fairy had lifted us from the level and put us there. We are all at once dashed down to the level of the beach, and there we sprawl for two years, '97 and '98, at 50s. We sprawl only because we are bruised by the fall. Had we never been higher we would have known no fall, and had no bruises.

I have a shrewd suspicion our friend had his hand in our pockets while we were prostrated; but he befriends us again, and we rise in '99 to 65s. We begin to rejoice once more, and are so full of spirits that we rejoice to mount on the top of one of those fantastic pinnacles of rocks that have been erected on the line of our rough road in some great convulsion of nature. You have seen the pinnacles near Bilsdean shore. Well, we are on one of them in 1800, and its height is 110s. Five pounds ten shillings! How we shout now, and wave our hats, and dine, and drink, and dance, and hunt, and vote, and raise the price of corn. And next year, in 1801, we rise a step higher, and stand on the giddy pinnacle of 115s. The year 1802 is before us, and we cannot miss it. We got up; how are we to get down? The famine-stricken labourers—such as my father and his family—the hecatombs of famine victims gnash their teeth and cry in vain for bread. But, secure in our *guide*, we heed them not; when, all at once, we are in that gorge below, which is 50s. deep, though still 15s. above the point we first started from. Yet to leap from this wild turret of convulsed nature the whole depth of 50s. is a leap indeed. But down we must, and down we come. We plunge from 115s. to 65s.

Bruised and broken, we groan and cry of our distress. Our pockets are turned inside out while we lie there helpless. All our plans are frustrated. Our farms go to weeds and wreck; not because sixty-five shillings would not pay, but because we have been hurled from one hundred and fifteen shillings, upon which we reared our lofty heads.

And now our bruised bodies are rolled into a deeper gully of the broken rocks in 1803. Here we once more sink to 55s.

Every penny that we got in our glory we have lost in our humiliation. We crawl to our feet, still holding by our guide, and we move a step. In 1804 we reach 60s. Our guide tells us to cheer up, he is always our friend; and we do cheer up, and reach the point of 85s. in 1805. Once more we rejoice; but once more we are rolled down. The fall, however, is more moderate: 75s. in 1806; 70s. in 1807; and 75s. in 1808. In 1809, we take a flight to 95s.; and in the following year, 1810, we get five above the even hundred. Five pounds five shillings the quarter is again the price; and we hope to go higher, but go the other way. Not so far, however, as we fell from some other precipices. We are caught on a ledge of the rocky point. We have only fallen in 1811 to the distance of 95s.

But here stands 1812 before us, the pinnacle of the temple. And Buonaparte or the Devil, or both together, with our particular *friend*, our *guide*, take us to the pinnacle of our glory, one hundred and twenty-five shillings.

Now, thought the men of money, is the time to take farms and buy estates. Branxton was bought at this time. Consols, which were at 98 when wheat was 50s. in 1790, were now at 64; that is, the public debt or credit of the nation sunk to 64.

We fell, first to 105s. in 1813; and then, oh what a fall! to 70s. in 1814; and we writhed in our agony into 65s. in 1815.

It might have been supposed we had broken bones enough in this rough road, and that we would have been glad to get out of it. But no. Gambling has a mysterious charm in it, especially to those who have lost and have still something to lose. We got the corn-law of that year to perpetuate what we had suffered in the previous twenty-five years, and in 1816 we reached 75s. This was the first bad harvest in my recollection; and that of the year following, 1817, was still worse. Wheat now rose to 95s.; and that it so rose for *the last time*, let us pray to God and give thanks.

Then, *with* this corn-law we rolled down to 85s. in 1818; to 70s. in 1819; to 65s. in 1820; to 55s. in 1821; and to 45s. in 1822.

There we groaned and cried aloud; not complaining of the mad career we had pursued; but because we, having gone aloft in our journey, had to descend.

The year 1823 gives a slight rise, and things look up. The legislature promises a rise, and rents are calculated accordingly. You believe, and contract to pay L.3 per acre for Branxton, which is not worth more than L.2 per acre. In any county of England south of Yorkshire, such a farm as Branxton would not be taken at more than 30s. per acre, including tithe and poor-rates. Such is the difference between Scotch contracts and English; between the value of land where security of tenure and equality of rent and prices are comparatively good, as in Scotland, and where they are bad, as in England. Rents paid by the prices of corn protect the Lothian farmers from excessive loss by fluctuations; and leases secure them in the profit of their improvements, and give to them an improving spirit. They accordingly pay rents from 50 to 100 per cent. higher than the same quality of land pays in England.

But you made the mistake of contracting to pay a fixed money rental, without regard to the prices of corn. I know you put faith in the promise of future high prices. You were deceived: 1824 gave a price of 60s.; 1825 gave 65s. But 1826 gave only 55s.; and 1827 the same. 1828 and 1829 gave respectively 60s. and 65s.; 1830 and 1831 continued the last amount. But 1832 and 1833 gave only 55s. each. 1834 saw you running to the bank to draw out your money to pay the laird his rent, because wheat was only 45s.; and the following year, 1835, with wheat at 40s., saw you do the same.

Now, bear in mind, you *had* the old corn-law, which engaged that you should never have less than 64s. You *had* your guide, that farmers' friend, "protection." And it protected you in your rough road, by getting you down on your back and rifling your pockets, and by compelling you to go to the bank with your deposit receipts to draw out your money to pay the high rent which protection induced you to promise.

But the impossibility of investing money in the cultivation of the soil was the greatest disadvantage. From 1835 prices rose to 50s. in 1836; to 55s. in 1837; to 60s. in 1838; to 70s. in 1839; and fell to 65s. in 1840. With varying changes we have wheat now at 45s., or from that to 50s.

We have arrived at the point I bade you look to. Would it not have been better to have travelled by the even road, instead of coming over the precipices, so often raised up to be so often knocked down and robbed, and left with broken head and empty pockets?

The more extensive the space from which supplies to market are brought, the more equal will the supply of the market be.

And remember, the prices of food depend upon the ability of the consumers of food to buy it and pay for it, as well as upon the quantity supplied to market.

Whenever corn has fallen to a moderate price, the national trade has flourished and wages have advanced. So also has the revenue of the country. When people have not to pay all their money away for bread, they buy butchers' meat, and sugar and tea, and the various other things that make commerce profitable and the government strong and rich.

The liberation and extension of commerce is the true conservatism of England, and the best protection to agriculture.

No. IV.

To the Rev. Thomas Skipworth, Rector of Pickwell, in the county of Leicester.

Reverend Sir,—" Protection is the bane of agriculture," so says Lord John Russell; " Protection is a delusion," so says many an agriculturist who once believed in its truthfulness; " Protection is the Will-o'-the-wisp which is ever deluding the farmers, and leading them where they should not go, deterring them from following the lights they should follow—the light of agricultural science," so says your humble servant.

Sir, you are, it is exceedingly probable, a reader of the Church organ, the *Standard*, and of such papers only; you are probably a believer in the so-called "protection," and a believer in whatever the newspapers of your party say of the opponents of protection. I will, therefore, in sending you a copy of the League paper which contains this letter, send you the previous number of it, containing the speech of the honourable member for Stockport, delivered in the House of Commons on the 13th inst., descriptive of the evil effects of protection; and I beg of you to read that speech. As a practical agriculturist myself, and acquainted with the state of agriculture and the condition of the farmers in almost every county of England, I agree with everything said in that speech. You will see from it, should you not have already learned the fact, that the free-traders are the best friends of agriculture. You will perceive that it proves that to be true of all England generally which you allege to be true of your own glebe particularly—that a larger expenditure of money in changing the culture of the soil would enlarge the profit of the cultivator. You will see that the doctrine taught by Mr Cobden, as regards the evil of restricting the enterprise of the cultivators of the soil, by making them entirely dependent on the will, and caprice, and ignorance of the men of law who manage most of the

English estates as agents under the landlords—you will see that this doctrine, laid down on Thursday night in the Commons' House of Parliament, was the same as you sought to establish next day, on the Friday morning, in the Rolls' Court, before Lord Langdale. The only difference between you and the honourable member is, that he attempted to do that for twenty millions of acres of land which you attempted to do for twenty acres. He attempted to liberate from the thrawl of insecurity and poverty, and bad cultivation, the major part of all England and Wales. You attempted to do the same for your own glebe.

It seems you were appointed to the living in 1814; that, subsequent to that period, the Duke of St Albans purchased the patronage of the living. It seems the glebe has been used as a pasture; but has become next to worthless, being overrun with moss and weedy foulness. You asked the advice of a skilful agriculturist, who very properly advised you to plough it up; to clear it of weeds; to crop it for some years; to manure it, and again lay it down in grass. It is quite possible, indeed I think it very likely, that a different course of treatment might have been used more effectually, *seeing that your design was to restore the glebe to pasturage.* Being overgrown with moss it is very likely that an application of hot lime, applied as a top-dressing, would have eradicated the moss by destroying all vegetation for a-year; or it is possible that some other kind of top-dressing might have effected the same end. But this cannot be alleged positively unless one had a local knowledge of the soil, the subsoil, the rocks beneath, and such like matters. And here I may remark that the difficulty of determining what is right and what is wrong, in such cases, is one of the reasons why the occupiers of land should not be subjected, as they now are, to rules laid down by lawyers who have no practical knowledge of agriculture; to rules which apply to whole estates of great magnitude, the soils and subsoils and requirements of which are exceedingly various, and the treatment of which should be as various; rules which are the offspring of *law*, and not of agricultural science, even though administered by agents who are sometimes professed agriculturists.

Lord Langdale, in your case, seems more inclined to judge it by the rule of common sense than by any rule of the statutes. He inclines to follow Liebig, the chemist of agriculture, rather than Blackstone, the commentator of law. His Lordship is thus reported:—"He had (himself) had occasion to obtain agricultural advice; and he could say that, having followed it, he had found it most advantageous." That is, his

Lordship had used the science of agriculture instead of the science of law to his land, as you attempted to do to your glebe. This good sense is creditable to his Lordship as a lawyer. But Mr Parkinson, agent of the Duke of St Albans, being accustomed to rule the culture of the Duke's estate by *law*, and not by agricultural science; being accustomed to keep the tenantry in leading-strings *by protecting them*; being accustomed to keep everything out of their reach that might lead to enterprise and experiment, by laying down the law to them as to what they shall do on their farms and what they shall not do; being accustomed to threaten them that they will not be *protected* if they dare to think or act as cultivators for themselves—being accustomed thus to treat the tenantry, he has proceeded thus to treat you, though you are a life freeholder of your glebe.

The law of the case as applied to the incumbent of a living I shall not inquire into. While I write, Lord Langdale has not given his judgment. But he has remarked that, though the case be of no great importance in itself, it is of great importance as regards the effects its decision will have on the occupiers of other glebe lands. He said—"If the law was as alleged, it would prevent the incumbent from making a potato ground or an orchard upon the glebe when he could not shew that at some former time the grass land had been broken up."

But this case opens other questions to our view of infinitely greater importance as regards the laws under which the farmers are bound and held down, powerless to do good for themselves, for the land they occupy, and for the multitudes who must be content with the small amount of food they produce.

Law is the primary subject for an English farmer to study. It is the Alpha and Omega of English agriculture. The late James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," left Scotland at one time to take charge of an agricultural project in England, but did not remain long. When asked why he had left it, he said he was not qualified to manage a farm in England. And when it was said that he had surely as good a knowledge of the best manner of breeding and feeding flocks as any man in either Scotland or England, and as good a knowledge of farming matters in general, he replied that such might be true, but the first thing required in England to make a successful farmer was *not* a practical knowledge of breeding, and rearing, and feeding sheep and cattle, of manuring and cropping land. Every qualification, he said, of an agricultural kind, was entirely subordinate to a knowledge of *law*. And he said the laws affecting the cultivator of the soil were so numerous, so completely interwoven into everything which a farmer could do; and the lawyers were so keen-scented and so plentiful—the estates being almost entirely committed to the management of lawyers—that it was next to hopeless for a stranger to learn the laws which beset him and hindered him in all his actions, utterly hopeless, before a stranger, led by common sense and agricultural science, would break through them and incur ruinous penalties.

In this way you have been caught by the net-work of the law. Mr Parkinson, the Duke's agent, heard that your glebe, being overgrown with worthless moss and weeds, was about to be restored to fertility and usefulness; full of that spirit of protection which controls the tenant-farmers, he stepped forward to protect your weeds and worthless moss; to protect your glebe from being made fertile and profitable. He stood forward to *protect* it from having monied capital and manure applied to its cultivation. He stood forward to *protect* those labourers whom you would have employed in ploughing and digging and weeding, from being employed to plough and dig and weed. He stepped forward to *protect* the paupers, who, it may be, are now living on prison fare within the workhouse walls, from being liberated and elevated to the dignity of working for honourable bread by honourable and useful labour. He, full of protection, and in the full flow of protection, the everyday current of the protective spirit, arrested you, by an injunction of a court of law, from raising more human food from your acres than they now produced.

The advantage to the occupier of the land; the advantage to the labourers who have not enough of work, and who, being more plentiful than their work, are obliged to submit to the lowest amount of pay and of food which will sustain life; the advantage to the general consumers of agricultural produce, who augment their consumption as the supply and their ability to buy increase—all these, and also the advantage to agricultural science, were at once arrested by Mr Parkinson, the Duke's agent, who brought the law which binds the tenant-farmers to arrest, and bind, and tie you, and make you powerless and helpless, as the tenant-farmers are—miserable men!

He who is, at the Duke's instance, as other agents are at the instance of other duke's and of other landlords, the man who is first to lead the tenants to the hustings to vote for protection; who is the first to bid them declare, in dolorous whine, that they cannot cultivate their land if they be not protected; who bids them cry out that they are in distress, and who, to make them cry the louder, pinches them behind as the whining beggar pinches the alleged motherless baby whom he has stolen and professes to fondle, to impose on the public: this same Mr Parkinson, and those whose office is like his, are the first to prevent the farmers from cultivating their land to relieve themselves from distress.

It was laid down as an axiom by Sir John Sinclair in his "Code of Agriculture," and repeated by Brown of Markle, the first and long-continued editor of the "Farmer's Magazine," a thoroughly practical and successful tenant-farmer; repeated also by Jackson of Pennycuick in his excellent treatise; repeated and *acted upon* by the best experimentalists in England, and most successful practicalists in Scotland—the axiom is this:—

"Assuming always that the expenditure on a farm be *directed with judgment*, it will be found that the profit upon the outlay increases in more than a proportionate degree to its amount. Thus, suppose that L.5 be the lowest and L.10 the highest sum that can be employed in the common culture of the same acre of land, it is more than probable that, if the L.5 return at the rate of five per cent., the L.10 will yield twenty per cent., or any intermediate sum at the same progressive ratio. Now, admitting this to be true—and it is to be presumed that no experienced agriculturist will doubt it—it follows that L.1000, expended in the cultivation of 200 acres, will only yield a profit of L.100; while if applied to no more than 100 acres it would produce L.200. For this reason, although a farmer of limited capital may not be driven to the extremity we have already supposed, and although he may be able to carry on his business with a certain degree of advantage, it is quite evident that *his profit would be increased by diminishing the quantity of his land.*"

(See "Treatise on Agricultural and Dairy Husbandry," by James Jackson of Pennycuick; the successful competitor for some of the Highland Society's prizes as a practical writer. This valuable treatise is published in the "People's Edition." by the Messrs Chambers, at the low figure of 2s. 3d. It should be carefully read wherever a spade or a plough penetrates the ground, or wherever a scythe or a cow crops the grass; and particularly where the Mr Parkinsons of England interfere with their absurdities to keep monied capital out of agriculture and lay enterprise prostrate.)

But what is the use of either knowledge or money upon such estates as that of the Duke of St Albans? The tenants are not rich in knowledge and monied capital. They have had no means of obtaining either. But had they both, they could not use them. All their attention is turned to protection by act of Parliament. They are but puppets in the agent's hands. He leads them by the nose and squeezes them, and bids them whine and cry out for help.

If they would help themselves, they would break up some of their wet meadows to drain the wetness from them, to eradicate the rushes and make the soil sweet and fertile which is now sour and barren. But the agent steps up and says, "No, you mustn't. Let the wetness, and sourness, and rushes alone."

The tenants may see the huge banks between the double hedges, also the ditches and superfluous hedgerows; they may see that all of them are nurseries of stagnation, foulness, and vermin, and exceedingly wasteful in horse labour in ploughing, by the frequent turnings and unavoidable trampling of the ground: but if they offer to cut a branch of the hedge, or build and cover in a ditch, or dig down a useless bank, the agent comes and says, "No, you mustn't."

They see their old pastures overgrown as your glebe is with moss, and, like you, they may be told by skilful agriculturists to plough them up and clear them of weeds, and crop and manure them, and lay them down to grass again: but the agent says, "No, you mustn't." And if he found them offering to do it, he would not go to the expense of getting an injunction at law, as in your case; he would at once expel them from the land. Had your reverence been a *rector-at-will*, removable by the Duke, your case would never have come before Lord Langdale. You would have been at once turned out of your parish, a terrible warning to all rectors.

Should the tenantry see the trees standing round their fields and in their fields, as they very frequently do, injuring five acres out of twenty, defrauding the crops of the requisite sunshine and free air, and should they seek leave to cut some of them down, or to lop their branches, the agent says, "No, you mustn't."

Should they be persuaded of the truth of the established fact, that to feed cattle in the yard to produce manure is the foundation of all good husbandry, and that cattle should not waste their grass, their manure, and their fat by running at liberty in the fields—save milk cows and young cattle; and the latter may be more profitably reared on farms unsuited to the culture of corn; should the tenantry be convinced of these established truths, and offer to raise food for yard-feeding where they now have meadows, the agent says, "No, you mustn't."

Should the farmers say the liquid manures they can thus save from their cattle will be equal—over all England in one year—to the whole of the guano of Ichaboe when the first ship loaded at it; and further, that they require the erection of cisterns or tanks to preserve the whole accumulations, or some chemical apparatus to extract the ammonia; and that they will apply one year's or two years' rent to such works, the agent says, "No, you mustn't."

If they say that they are too poor to erect such works at their own expense, or that, having the money, they cannot venture to expend it on works of improvement without the security of a lease; and that they must have leases to enable those to obtain money who have it not to improve their land, and to enable those to lay plans for future profit who have money, the agent says, "No, you mustn't."

If the farmers urge that they could thus employ many more labourers than they now employ; that they could give full work and better wages to every labourer, had they leave to do to their farms what they think best, the agent says, "No, you mustn't."

If the farmers urge that all other persons engaged in trade conduct their business as they think fit, adopting any improvements they may deem advantageous, trying any experiments they may deem profitable; on the same principle that the tailor makes a coat from whatever cloth he thinks best fitted for a coat, and makes one in a new style when he chooses; or on the same principle that a manufacturer works up his raw material into whatever kind of goods there is most demand for; if the farmers urge that the whole success of trade, and of tradesmen of every degree, depends on their freedom of enterprise, and the comparative security with which their money is invested in business, and they, the farmers, ask to be secured in the profits of their own business in a similar way, the Duke's Mr Parkinson, or any other landlord's Mr Parkinson, says, "No, you mustn't."

It is "No, you mustn't" to everything asked or attempted. "You are *protected*," say the Parkinsons. "You must get more protection if you can; or at all events cry lustily about your distress and keep what you have got." And, to say the truth, the great bulk of the tenantry follow this advice, and are exceedingly well contented to live without an effort to make themselves independent and their farms fruitful and profitable.

They might very well ask what protection has done for them; they might point out the fact that the corn-law allows corn to come in, if it comes at all, just at harvest, when prices are highest, and the English farmer cannot take advantage of such prices. They might shew that under the corn-law their losses are greater by sudden fluctuations than they ever could be by steady prices, even though those prices stood at what they are now, 45s.; they might very well point to the ruinous price they pay the landlords, for their protection by being bound, as the now are, hand and foot, led by the nose by one agent, pinched behind their backs by another; obliged to pay high poor-rates to maintain a pauper population whom they cannot employ; compelled to endure game, and pay for the crimes and punishments arising from game, because they dare not complain; compelled to be put to all manner of mean uses in political prostitution; and, worst of all, while everybody else advances with the intellectual spirit of the age, they remain hopelessly and helplessly behind.

POSTSCRIPT.—LORD LANGDALE'S DECISION.

His Lordship decided the cause, "*The Duke of St Albans* v. *Skipworth*," and removed the injunction, affirming the right of an incumbent to break up his glebe, should it be in old grass, if he so chooses.

What a blessing to England if Cheshire and some ten or twelve other counties could be so broken up and put to profitable uses!

No. V.

To the Wife of Francis Horlock of ——, in Dorsetshire.

MRS HORLOCK,—You are the wife of an industrious man, who loses no time, wastes no money. You have kept an exact account of your incomings and outgoings for a year, and as you have allowed that excellent clergyman, the Honourable and Reverend Sidney Godolphin Osborne, to make the items public, I shall take the liberty of addressing you thus publicly, as the first of several mothers, in different parts of the kingdom, to whom I shall probably write a series of letters.

You live in a county remarkable for its production of butter —Dorset. The Vale of Blackmoor is said to produce the best butter in England. At all events, "Dorset butter" is well known.

Now, butter is what is called "protected;" that is, no foreign butter is allowed to come into England, lest it should reduce the price of English butter. It may be introduced, and is introduced, in large quantities; but before it leaves the docks where it is landed from the ships which bring it across the sea, it is mixed with tar, to prevent its being used as human food.

I perceive that, from the 1st of January to the 11th of December 1843, just forty-nine weeks, you paid the following sums for butter, for the use of yourself, husband, and four children. On the 15th of January you paid 8d.; 9th of February, 4d.; 13th of March, 4d.; April, nothing; 3d of May, 6d.; June, nothing; 5th of July, 6d.; August, nothing; September, nothing; 23d of October, 6d.; 13th of November 4½d; 3d of December, 6d. Total, 3s. 8½d.

Three shillings and eightpence halfpenny, Mrs Horlock, is the sum of what you contribute to the "butter interest" of Dorset. At 9d. per lb. this is very nearly five pounds weight; but you are well aware that, as a general rule in Dorset, you cannot buy butter at 9d. per lb. It costs you from 11d. to 13d., fully one penny per lb. more than the same butter is retailed for when it reaches London. This, to many people, seems a mystery; but it is accounted for in this way, that the dairy-farmers will not sell quarter pounds and half pounds of butter, such as you buy once a month, or once in two months. You must get it from the village shopkeeper, who, selling small quantities, and few of them, must charge a higher price, and must often give uncertain credit.

Your reason for buying so little butter is simply that all the family earnings are spent on something else which, with you, is more absolutely requisite than butter. Butter is an absolute necessary of life to everybody who can afford it. And in such a family as yours we need not doubt that it would be an indispensable necessary were you able to get it, and use it always.

Butter is what the lords and gentlemen who come out of Dorset to Parliament call *protected*. And it is *protected for* the sake of the labourers—so those lords and gentlemen say—that is, the tar is mixed with the butter which comes in ships to make it unfit to be eaten, and all for the sake of you and your family, and such as you.

The gentlemen of the Parliament were making a law on this subject on Wednesday last. One of them, Mr Bramston of Skreens, in Essex, was afraid that if grease was admitted free of duty, butter would come into this country in the disguise of grease. Sir George Clerk of Pennycuick, in Scotland, who is one of the Government members, said, to console Mr Bramston,

"That, so far from the agriculturists" (I am now giving his words as reported in the daily newspapers of Thursday morning) "being injured by the remission of this duty (on grease) they would be benefited, seeing that the uses to which it was put were agricultural. For instance, large quantities of it were made use of by the sheep farmers of the north for the purposes of smearing their sheep as a precaution against the effects of cold. The honourable gentleman need not fear that the article would be made use of as food—('Hear, hear, hear,' from the Opposition benches)—the Custom-house officers took effectual means to prevent fraudulent traders selling the article to the poor as food—(renewed cries of 'Hear, hear,' from the Opposition benches.) He did not understand what the gentlemen opposite were cheering; but he would repeat that the Custom-house officers took care that the article introduced as grease should not be sold as butter by mixing a quantity of tar with it before it passed the Custom-house."

Sir George Clerk means that the butter which is to be admitted duty free *as grease* has tar mingled with it in the Custom-house, after which it is unfit for human food, and is called grease.

Now, Mrs Horlock, you know well that 7s. a-week is the full average of men's wages in Dorset; you know that unmarried men only get 4s. and 5s. a-week. You know that, at this time, many men have no work at all. You know that fully one-half of the whole are out of employment for several months every year. Yet your husband, with 8s. a-week in 1843, and you, with your careful housekeeping, could only spend 3s. 8½d. on butter during forty-nine weeks. In cheese you expended 7s. 3d.; your total expenditure in butter and cheese was 10s. 11½d. And your total for butchers' meat was 10d.! just *tenpence.* So that those great staple products of your county, which are protected for the especial benefit of the labourers, as Lord Ashley, Mr George Bankes, and Mr Sturt, your county members say, were purchased and used by your family of six persons to the amount of 11s. 9½d.

I know well that every other family were not in a condition to buy so much; but assuming that they did, 48,000 men, women, and children, which is the full amount of those employed in agriculture, or unemployed, and calling themselves dependent on it, would annually support the beef, mutton, butter, and cheese interests thus:—

Beef and mutton, . . .	L.316	13	4
Butter and cheese, . . .	4383	6	8

Those familes who feed a pig sell it, more frequently to pay for shoes and rent than they eat it. Thus, in a manner, they may be said to be in competition with the farmers rather than supporters of them by the consumption of their farm produce. But in many parts of Dorset no pigs are allowed to be kept by labourers. The dictum of the father of Sir John Tyrrell, in Essex, is understood and acted on in Dorset—"No labourer can be *honest* and feed a pig!" But if every labourer's family did feed and eat, which they do not, a pig eight or nine score weight in a year, it would be no reason why they should not eat beef and mutton, butter and cheese, if they could afford them. A working man in London, or Liverpool, or Manchester, who has meat for dinner every day with his family, consumes more than a pig of nine score weight in the shape of bacon or ham for breakfast and supper, in addition to the beef or mutton from the butcher's shop for dinner; so that we have it proved that consumption is only limited by the power to purchase, and consumption is the true protection to agricultural produce.

If we take fifteen journeymen printers in London, employed, say on the *Times* newspaper, whom we shall suppose to be all steady men and not drunkards—else they would not be employed there; and suppose them to have each a wife and four children, as Francis Horlock, your husband, a steady agricultural labourer, has—those fifteen working men and their families, according to the London style of living and expenditure amongst people earning so much wages as theirs, will consume as much butcher's meat in fifty-two weeks as the whole 48,000 men, women, and children fed by protected agriculture in Dorset consume. A family man, like Francis Horlock, receiving from 30s. to L.2 a-week in London, will, for six of a family, give an average of about 8s. a-week for butcher's meat. At 8s. per week it will be found to amount to as much for ninety persons as the consumption for 48,000 in Dorset.

I may tell you, Mrs Horlock, that at the beginning of this session of Parliament, a great many lords, and squires, and farmers, all of them persons who live by selling cattle, some of them from your own county, came to London, and went before the Prime Minister and complained of distress—of being poor—of not getting such a good market for their produce as they once had. One of them dwelt especially on the fact that, in the great Smithfield market of London there were occasionally some foreign cattle, one hundred or so, to 2000 home-fed cattle, and to 18,000 or 20,000 sheep; and that prices fell because of these occasional cattle. And it was urged that, as cattle were what the farmers so much depend upon—and especially the farmers in such districts as the Vale of Blackmoor—the foreign cattle should be prevented from coming to London.

Now, Mrs Horlock, there is a mode of doing business vulgarly called "Robbing Peter to pay Paul," or taking money out of one pocket to put it into another pocket. The system by which the lordly cattle-dealers of Dorset wish to make the nation prosperous is by robbing Peter to pay Paul; by taking money out of one person's pocket and putting it into another person's pocket; they representing Paul and somebody else representing Peter. They say if the Londoners pay dear for butcher's meat for the sake of making them, the landed gentry, rich, they go back to London to spend their money on the Londoners.

Now, according to this logic, they might with as much propriety, and certainly far more humanity and benevolence—and your Dorset lords and gentlemen are prodigiously humane and benevolent: you, of course, know your noble county member, Lord Ashley—they might with as much propriety and more humanity give their labourers the wages paid to printers per week to buy butter, and cheese, and butcher's meat. Fifteen journeymen printers in London, with their families, patronizing such farming interests as are involved in Smithfield market to as great an extent as the whole 48,000 men, women, and children, dependent on agriculture for their existence in Dorset, affords a wide scope for speculation. What would be the demand for cattle and sheep if, proceeding on the system of robbing Peter to pay Paul, the lords of Dorset should give the 48,000 men, women, and children money enough to buy and eat as much beef and mutton as the same number of journeymen printers with their wives and children buy and eat in London?

But you might as well put your husband's 8s. a-week first into one pocket and then into another, three times over, and say that he has 24s. a-week, as say that the robbery of Peter enriches Paul. Yet the lords of Dorset do say so when they ask people, and *compel* them, to pay high prices to them, that they may return the high prices in their lordly expenditure.

Wealth is only produced by giving a greater value to something by labour than it had before it was laboured at; or by exchanging something of which we have too much for something else of which we have too little.

And the only way to make the butter interests of Dorset richer, the Vale of Blackmoor more thriving, and its native population better customers for its native produce, is to direct money, and skill, and industry to its better cultivation.

All that is said in the letter immediately preceding this of mismanaged land, and the loss thereby to labourers, tenants, and landlords, applies most emphatically to the butter county of Dorset. All that Jackson declares to be absolutely requisite to profitable farming is absolutely wanting in Dorset. And it is certainly remarkable that Sir George Clerk of

Pennycuick, the political landlord, should be professing to *protect* the butter-makers by assuring them that foreign butter will be mixed with tar when it comes to this country to prevent its use as human food; while Mr James Jackson of Pennycuick, the practical agriculturist, is shewing that such farmers as the butter-makers of Dorset would be enriched by doing the reverse of most of that which they now do.

Mrs Horlock, your sugar-basins and tea-kettles want looking into. Meanwhile, I am a sympathizing friend, well acquainted with the struggles of poor mothers.

PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF AN ENGLISH FARMER.

Passage I.—Indicating what kind of Man he was.

Mr Hurst took a hammer from his pocket and a nail; and when he had closed the gate of the Wellburn field, he drove the nail into the post above the latch. He then tried to lift the latch, and could not; and then he shook the gate with his arm outstretched, and it was firm. After that, he took the faggots of thorn which old Adam had cut from the hedge with his bill-hook, and warped them into the bars of the gate—the rough heads undermost, to keep out the pigs. When all was finished, he looked across the field, and said the second week of May was late to sow barley: still, if it pleased God, they might have a good crop even yet.

And old Adam said, "Ees, master, an it please God."

Mr Hurst then bade Adam go home with him to the farmhouse. Whereat, when they arrived, the other men of the farm, who held the ploughs, and the lads who drove the ploughs, and the head carter, and the thrashers, and the shepherd, were all seated in the kitchen on the forms around the large table. And Mrs Hurst had put bread on the table and beer, and the round of beef, and the cold chine of pork, and the cheese; and Mr Hurst said he was glad to see it all ready, and bade the men begin. It had always been his custom, and the custom of his father and grandfather, in Berryhill farm, to give God thanks and the men their supper at the end of seed time and harvest; and he would not, he said, let the custom go down, if he could keep it up. Yet this might be the last seed-time they would all see in Berryhill together. The great event which had just happened, and which they were all to be engaged in, the last duties of to-morrow might bring about changes on the Berry estate which none there assembled would like to see.

All of them said they hoped nothing would happen to put

Mr Hurst out of Berryhill farm; or, if they did not all say so, they looked as if they would have all said so, had it been necessary for all to speak. Even the boys who drove the teams at plough, and scared the birds from the seed corn, seemed as if they would have said they hoped Mr Hurst would never go out of Berryhill, had not their mouths been so full of bread and meat that they could not speak. Old Adam said he remembered that time one-and-fifty years as if it had been but yesterday, when the last event of the kind happened, and that was the year before Mr Hurst was born, and he was not sure but there was barley in the Wellburn field that very year.

And then he reckoned how many times he had known barley in that field; how many times he had mown it, and how often it had been reaped; and how many bushels an acre he had known on it in the best years; and what was the price of barley in those years, and what the price of wheat; and when wheat was at a certain price, what bread was at a gallon. And Mr Hurst told what he had made per acre from that field, after paying the rent and all charges, in some years when it was barley and some years when it was wheat. And the shepherd told of the ewes with two lambs and the lambs which he had seen in that field when it was grass. And the ploughman said they had never turned up soil and harrowed in seed in better order than the soil was that day. And Mr Hurst said, that, to their credit, he must say the ridges had never been more neatly finished off, and the water furrows drawn more evenly and expeditiously in any field on Berryhill farm since he had known it, as had been done in the Wellburn that day. And the two young men who drew the water furrows in the ridges after they had been sown and harrowed, were so pleased to hear their master speak of their work in such a measure of praise, that, tired as they were, they would have gone out on that instant and furrowed up twenty fields if the work had been required, and never have felt the shadow of discontent upon them. They would have done anything to please Mr Hurst and one another—run a race, leaped the hurdles, danced a hornpipe, or sung a song; and they were so near the singing point of good fellowship, that Mr Hurst, perceiving it, said "No, not on this occasion. We have always had a song on such nights as this before, but the solemn and mournful duty we shall be all engaged in to-morrow must forbid singing and jollity to-night."

And then, speaking of what was to be done to-morrow, he said the horses not wanted to go in the procession would be turned into the meadow to grass. Diamond and Dick, the two black nags, would be taken to Crookley Down, to join the procession; and as Adam was old, and not able to walk as he once could, he had better get the second riding saddle and put it on Rosy, and ride. But Adam said he would not ride. Mr Hurst pressed on him that for his own comfort he should do so. But Adam said no, it would trouble him too much to get on and off; he was too old to ride. Besides, the nobles and the gentles would be all riding, on horses or in coaches; no, he would not ride; he would walk on foot. He had walked on foot on the last occasion of the kind, this time one-and-fifty years, and he would walk now.

Whereupon, Mr Hurst said they would, in that case, turn Rosy into the meadow with the other horses. And he soon after bade them all good night, and reminded them that tomorrow would soon be here. Upon which the men departed, and went to their own houses, and agreed as they went that the sky looked as if to-morrow would be a fine day.

Passage II.—Foreshadowing a Change.

The morning of to-morrow came, and it came early. It had no mountains of clouds to climb over to make it late; no fogs to wade through, to make it ill-humoured and out of countenance. It came overflowing with the joy of the year's youthfulness. It came hand-in-hand with young summer; not the full-grown, full-dressed, blooming June, but with May in her girlhood—fairy-footed, happy, romping young May. On her head were the first of the forest leaves, and sprigs of budding hawthorn from the hedgerows. Around her feet were the flowers that childhood loves—the field-daisies and the cowslips. She tripped along the copse-wood sides, where the cowslips grow, and stood on tiptoe and looked into birds' nests. She found the diligent thrush on her warm eggs, and dried the dew from her back, and bade her mate sit on the next bough and sing to her, and make her happy. She bade the bees, that had not been with her since last year, come with her, and she would shew them where blooming gardens were, and orchards. And the cherry blossoms that had slept all night in the darkness and the dew, awoke, and opened their eyes as infants do; and she kissed away their tears; and bade them, and the birds, and the bees, join all together, and bloom, and work, and sing. She found the young forget-me-not, infant of its race, and she embraced it, welcomed it to the world, and called it pretty. The primroses, then growing old, and the daisies, that are never old, she found on the grassy margin of the farm fields, where horses, and ploughs, and heavy-footed men had trampled and crushed them; and she lifted their bruised heads and healed them, and made them look up and bloom as if they had never been trodden on.

Wherever she set her young foot and breathed her sweet breath, deadness came to life and age took upon itself a new youth. So frolicsome was she, that she would touch the log, felled last winter, that had neither root nor branch, but which lay at the carpenter's shop to be sawn into boards, and even it would put out buds and leaves. Not even the despised turnip from the farm-fields, which had fallen into the winter ditch, and was there abandoned as too worthless to be recovered, did she despise and think too mean. She touched it, and it felt the hand of life upon it, and put forth its feeble shoot to lay hold of that hand. And it grew in strength, and raised itself higher and higher every day, until it burst forth in bloom, as if in gratitude and praise to the Author of all life, whose summer angel had come upon the earth and had not overlooked even it, the lowliest and the lost.

Early as the morning came, Mr Hurst and his men came forth from bed as soon. The horses not to be used that day were turned out, for the first time for that year, to grass; and the very oldest of them, even old Captain, who could hardly reach a slow trot on other days, snorted and threw up his hind-heels, and lay down and tumbled, and got up again and cantered, so pleased was he with liberty and the first day of summer grass. As for the younger nags, they careered at the gallop to the farthest end of the meadow, below Berry turnpike and up again, and into the river itself. And the ass followed them routing with delight; and the cows, always sober and disposed to graze peacefully at that time of the morning, raised their tails and hobbled after the ass and the slowest of the horses. And the geese with their goslings, and the old drake. waddled to the meadow and cackled and ate grass, though it was ordered they were not to go there; and the sows and the young pigs went too, and gave much trouble to those who were sent to bring them back again.

And the boy Adam, grandson of old Adam, was out at the Wellburn field as early as any bird of the morning, to keep the rooks and the wood pigeons from the barley-seed sown yesterday. And never had rooks to contend with a more vigilant watcher of a newly-sown field; for this was young Adam's first day at working for wages. All the work he had done before had been voluntary, and paid for by a hunch of bread and cheese. Now he was hired, and this was his beginning. Not a rook alighted or came within sight of him, even on wing, but he shouted to it. And he not only walked round and round the field—he sometimes ran; and though he more than once asked himself what he was running for, he ran again, he was so light-spirited, and so pleased to be working for wages. He knew the squire was dead; but if he had been made squire in his stead he could not have been more happy than he was at being advanced to earn fourpence-halfpenny a-day, and to have his dinner in a bag with him, to eat in the field, at whatever hour he chose. He knew all the people were going to meet the squire's funeral coming from London, at Crookley Down, or that those who did not go to Crookley Down to meet it would go to the top of Morton Hill to see it coming, and that Morton Hill was three miles away, and that nobody would be left within that space of three miles but himself. Still he was pleased even to be left alone, because he had been told that the care of everything on the farm had been left to him.

And by the hour before mid-day not a human being but himself was left on three miles of country between Berry Hill farm and Morton Hill—all had gone to meet the squire's funeral coming from London. But, long before that hour, the rooks had discovered that the watcher of the seed corn had nothing more formidable to keep them off than his loud voice and a stone thrown at them if they came near enough, and which stone they could avoid, and still pick up the seed.

And they did pick up the seed, and the solitary watcher could not prevent them; but at last they flew away, one after the other, until only two were left, and everything round them was silent, and he almost wished that those two would not go away. But first one of them, and then the other, flapped its wings and rose into the air, nd circled round him, and went away and left him alone. And the shining sun had also gone, and the south was black. Morton Hill had its darkly-wooded north side towards him, and it was black. Everything was still, not the chirrup of a bird was heard, and he thought he felt the shadow of the dark woodlands of Morton Hill, and of the black clouds above them, falling upon him, and going into him, and taking all the pleasant thoughts that were in his mind and turning them upside down, and making them horrid and fearful. One of these fearful thoughts was, that this might be the last day; that everybody and everything was perhaps dying or dead, and nobody left in the world but himself; that the whole world was putting on black to go to its own funeral.

There was a tree; he would go up into that tree and look all round, and see if there was any living or moving thing within sight. And he did so, and almost fell from the tree with fear when he saw the white roads in the valley below him covered with a moving black line of people, and horses, and coaches, more than a mile in length.

It was the squire's funeral; and as it moved on, the darkness of the sky grew deeper, and the air became denser and hotter, and more silent and solemn, until about the time when the coffin was laid in the family vault of the old Abbey, at which time there was not an unweeping eye in or near the Abbey grounds—for he had been a good squire, and many mourned for his death, and those who did not weep for grief wept because others did so—they could not restrain tears upon a sorrowing day in sorrowing company.

The darkness of the sky grew deeper, the clouds came nearer, and pressed the hot thick air to the earth; and as the people turned from the death vault of the Abbey, and came out of the Abbey doors, the firmament seemed to have come down from its place in the heavens, and to stand upon the earth, and crowd into a heap the hearse and mourning coaches and black horses, and the horsemen and the foot people, as if it would suffocate them, and lay them all where they had been laying the squire's coffin.

Not one of them but expected to see every moment a flash of lightning followed by a burst of thunder. But there was no thunder. Drops of rain—slow, large, and uneven in their slow dropping—came down. Then they ceased. Then they began again, and once more ceased. And gusts of wind, that seemed to rise from the dead, came through the Abbey doors and made the plumes of the hearse flutter, and made weak women, and men weaker than women, think they saw ghosts upon the wing escaping among the trees by the chance of the Abbey vaults being open.

And the wind rose into conflict with the rain, and neither yielded to the other; both came on pouring and blowing, and the heat went as if it had never been a warm day, and left nothing but cold, and people shivering in the cold and the wet for the remainder of the day; or marvelling when they kindled good fires at home to warm and dry themselves, that the weather should have changed so unaccountably, or prophesying, when they tried to warm and dry themselves, and could not become comfortable, that "who could tell but this day was the forerunner of evil days to Berry estate?" The old told the young of such foreshadowing of changing fate, which they had heard of in their young days. And the young did not resist the prophecy.

The evil days to Berry estate did come, and to Berry Hill farm before long. But when we recount, as we may possibly do in a few other passages of Mr Hurst's life, the causes that brought about those evil days, we shall see that the state of the weather at the old squire's funeral was not one of them, though the death of the squire was.

Passage III.—Giving some Account of his Landlord.

Mr Hurst's farm contained 490 acres, including roads, hedgerows, ditches on each side of the hedgerows, banks raised on the side of the ditches; marshes containing willows and wild ducks—the willows for himself, the wild ducks for the young squire; copses for game; a covert of furze (only in part on Berry Hill farm) for foxes; and the ground on which stood the farm buildings and some cottages forming the outskirts of Berry village. On the Berry Park estate there were from fifty to sixty farms as large as this, and upwards of one hundred smaller. Altogether, including 3000 acres in Berry Park, and 750 acres of copse and fox covert and common, outside the park walls, the estate contained nearly 47,000 acres.

And there was not an estate of land on the beautiful face of England more fair to look upon than that of Berry Park. There was not one less deceptive in its outward beauty; for below that beauty lay all the elements of excellent agriculture; and, as Mr Hurst has since said, they only wanted money and men's strength, and two or three other advantages which the young squire could have added to money and men's strength to have worked those elements into activity, to have made him a richer squire than his father was. And his father was rich enough to charge the estate only with £1000 of annuity to an elderly relation, and L.2000 a-year to his widow, the young squire's mother. All his other children, daughters as well as sons, and the widow, in part, were provided for out of his personal property.

No; there was not at that time a fairer inheritance of land in England than that which fell to this young squire by his father's death. Larger properties there are in England and in Scotland too. It would not have measured with the acres of the noble Cavendish of Chatsworth, Grosvenor of Eaton Hall, Percy of Alnwick Castle, nor with the acres of twenty or thirty other lords and commoners. Least of all with the regions of the grouse and the red deer of Athole or Argyle, or the sheep-walks and the fields of oats and barley of Buccleuch. Yet it was a rich and a beautiful inheritance, large even amongst the lordly lands of England.

But fair, and fruitful, and exceeding lovely as were those 47,000 acres of woodland, rock, river, green meadow, and corn field, they lay not on the face of England more pleasant to the beholder than stood the young owner of them, generous and beloved, among those who enjoyed his personal friendship and favour. To have said to him who never heard the alms-seeker ask for a halfpenny without giving a shilling, who never had an act of duty or generous service done to him, so far as he knew it, without rewarding the duty with more than its payment and the generous service with five-fold generosity; to have intimated to him that to sustain his dignity and provide himself with the pleasures which he was educated to desire and enjoy as necessaries of life, he would make poor men of men not then poor, that men of honesty and industry would be by him driven in old age to the workhouse—to have told him of this, he would as soon have leaped from the tower of his college at Oxford headlong, and broken his bones, every one of them, as have believed it: nor, believing it, could he have continued to ride his racers and steeple chasers across break and bar, ditch deep and hedge high, and drive his mail coach to Woodstock and Banbury and back again, loaded with young noblemen, and the heir of a dukedom, in the uniform of a guard, blowing the guard's bugle. No; such was the native generosity of his nature, that he would not, and could not, have made the pleasures and pastimes to which these college exercises were but initiatory, the necessaries of his life, had he known to what they would lead. But if he had been told to what they would lead, or might lead—had he been told what as a certainty they would prevent him from doing, namely, his duty to himself and his country, as the owner of 47,000 acres of land, he would not have believed those who so told him. His education led him to form different opinions on the duties of a rich landowner.

Had it been intimated to him by some friend who sat near his ear when he first went into Parliament, a young member and a young man, two years before his father's death, that instead of being a protector of agriculture, as he was sent to Parliament to be, and believed himself to be, he was its enemy though its owner, he would have deemed that friend unfit for farther confidence, kind and forbearing as he naturally was. Such had been the purport of every thought implanted in him by others; such the bent of every opinion which had grown within him of his own conception; for men's opinions, like a plant's leaves, grow to the light by which they are cherished.

We need not now take time to recount in detail all the elements of agricultural wealth which were then known to be on the Berry estate, but though known, not applied to use; nor the greater store of unapplied resources on it, and not then known—not known by reason of the traditions of agriculture having been for centuries deemed superior to new discoveries; not then known, because it was left to the English manufacturers to take science by the hand and say, "Come, work for us," while English farmers turned their backs on science, and would not let it even touch their dunghills, saying, " We have always done as we do ; we will do well enough if let alone ;" the farmers speaking thus, because landowners had no higher knowledge of their duties and their interests than our young squire had. We shall not occupy time and fill space by putting into this narrative the details of the wasted wealth of the 47,000 acres of Berry Park, nor yet to put into form and shape, palpable to the understanding, that which is almost impalpable to human perception—the legal intricacies which are interwoven with all English tenures, and in such seemingly simple tenures as tenancies-at-will ; and which, unhappily for English agriculture, ensnare it, and mar its progress at every step. We may have yet time and space to give these in detail. At all events, we shall soon see in this little history what their effects are.

But at present let us proceed to say that the young Squire Thorncliffe—Francis Augustus de Aubrey Thorncliffe—at the age of 25, succeeded his father, Francis John de Aubrey Thorncliffe, who died at the age of 63. Let us proceed to review how the young rich man, now the possessor of property in land, the market value of which was about L.1,500,000 sterling, exclusive of timber, minerals, buildings, furniture, much valuable live stock, six church livings, the great tithes of several parishes, and the almost undisputed power to return two borough members to Parliament ; let us proceed to review how he, already two years a legislator, pledged to support the interests of agriculture in Parliament, and honestly inclined so to do according to his best ability, (his natural abilities were good,) and according to the political opinions which he had inherited with his high rank and great wealth ; let us see what he did to advance that great interest which he believed to be beyond comparison paramount to all others in this country—the agricultural interest. And as we write and read in this paper for instruction, and not for mere amusement, let us put the actions of his early life in that point of view where they will be most instructive, though at the risk of being less entertaining. And let us touch upon some of those facts of occurrence and traits of character which have sober truth in them, though little romance.

Squire Thorncliffe was not a frequent speaker in Parliament. He had little time and not much inclination to attend the House of Commons. His two packs of hounds, his horse-races, steeple-chases, yeomanry cavalry, game preservers, and grand battues among the game ; his coursing and breeding, and buying of hounds and horsesfor coursing, and hunting, and racing, his betting on all events and amusements, and paying of bets to gentlemen less wealthy, but sharper or more fortunate than himself; all these left him little time and less inclination to spend his evenings in the House of Commons. Still he was often there when a vote was required for the party to which he was attached by inheritance and education, and always there when a vote was required to support, as he honestly believed it was to support, that interest which was his interest, and to which he was voluntarily pledged.

He had spoken in Parliament before succeeding to his estate in deprecation of some motion for Parliamentary reform, and, in doing so, founded his objection to reform on the ground that it would weaken the agricultural interest, and transfer its political strength to the manufacturing and commercial towns. He spoke then slightingly of the men called cotton lords; and even seriously warned the legislature of the national danger involved in the increasing magnitude of English manufactures; and he has at times, when opportunities served, spoken similarily since. And when he has not spoken, his votes have conveyed to the public the fact that he has not altered his opinions.

Now it so happened that, in the year of his succession to the Berry estate, there died, at about the distance of 200 miles from London, a gentleman who was both a manufacturer and a merchant, and who left one son, the sole inheritor of his wealth, that wealth consisted of two coal-pits, with steam-engines and all the gear in working order; two large ships trading to the United States; shares in seven ships trading to the West Indies and South America; one steam-ship going between Liverpool and Dublin; shares in steamers working as pilots and ferry-boats on the Mersey; shares in several of the Midland Counties canals; one canal and the wharves on it all his own; a warehouse in Liverpool, and shares in a Marine Insurance office in the same place; also a cotton-mill, steam-engine, and machinery for spinning and weaving in the neighbourhood of Manchester; which last was leased at an annual rental of several thousand pounds to a manufacturer. Indeed, the greater part of all the property enumerated was under the management of second parties, who hired it and paid rent, or freightage, or dividends, as the case might be.

This young man of wealth, though not so rich as Squire Thorncliffe, was richer than most of the squires and many of the lords in England; and he might have used his property for pleasure, and pleasure only, as they used theirs, if he had been so inclined. Where he was educated, and what the maxims of his education were, cannot be now told with certainty.

But he did not stop the engine of the coal-pits and the pump, and go down into the pits for sport, and be hauled up again, and again let down for sport at break-neck speed, shewing courage and spirit on his part, yet hindering the work of the coal-master who rented the pits, and of the colliers who worked the seams of coal.

He did not, when the ships were loaded with cutlery, and crockery, and plate, and calicoes, and silks, for Boston, New York, and Baltimore, and Charleston, go and fill them with vermin, for the pleasure of hunting the vermin, and killing some of it, and holding some of it by the tail, and cutting off the tail; overturning bales of goods upon the deck in the pursuit; breaking the cutlery and the crockery; defacing the plate, and treading the calicoes and the silks under foot; ordering the merchants, whose goods these were, and who had freighted the ships, to leave the ships, if they complained, with their goods instantly, before the voyage was made, he still taking freightage from them, by cumpulsion, because the goods were in his ships, and the law authorized him to take freightage whether the voyage was completed or not; he did not do all nor any of these things to the merchants his tenants.

He did not prevent those who held shares jointly with himself in the ships trading to the West Indies and South America from making the most of any new merchandise or new mercantile project which the most sagacious of them deemed to be profitable.

He did not load his steam-ship, going between Liverpool and Dublin, with idle passengers, who paid no fares, merely because those idle passengers were agreeable companions, well-dressed, and pleasant to be seen in a steam-packet, even though that packet was entirely his own, and he might have got a premium for making such a shew.

He did not, for the sport of taking pleasure-trips every day for nine months of the year in the ferryboats on the Mersey, hinder the trade and the profit of those boats, and pay penalties to those who owned them jointly with himself; thus losing his own share of the profits, and making good their losses also.

He did not let the canal, which was all his own, flood the wharves and the warehouses, by defective drainage and broken flood-gates, nor keep that canal for the mere breeding of fish, with a force of armed men round it to preserve the fish, and keep away all fishers, and all boats and barges, and the navigators of them, who might attempt to use the canal for the common sense uses of its construction.

He did not, when he let his spinning and weaving factory to the manufacturer, bind the latter to keep it all in repair, and yet allow him, the owner, to come into the mill with hot-headed associates, whose life was idleness, to get the steam up to a pressure which the safety-valve could not ease, that the machinery might be made to go at a rate which wheels, shafts, pulleys, cranks, spindles, and shuttles, never went at before—all to see which wheel could go fastest and longest without breaking down. Nor did he bind this manufacturer to spin only certain kinds of cotton, certain numbers of thread, and weave certain breadths and lengths of pieces of cloth, under penalty of being fined triple, quadruple, and quintuple, the value of the threads and pieces of cloth made against rule. Nor did he depute the power of doing all or any of those things, in his name, to lawyers who know nothing of ships and factories, and spinning and weaving, yet who like a job to do, and cannot live without a job to do.

He did not do all those things, and profess to be the especial friend, protector, and encourager of ships, canals, factories, and of the occupiers and workers of ships, canals, and factories. He offered his tenant, the manufacturer, no protection, but security that he would not interfere with him until the term of years for which the factory was leased had expired, save to draw the rent, and see that the machinery was not wilfully injured or destroyed. He gave the merchants who freighted his ships, and the captains and crews of the ships, no promise of protection—only liberty to sail with what tide they chose, and what wind, and to whatever port they chose, with whatever cargo—wisely judging that they knew better than he how to choose a cargo and take advantage of wind and tide. As for them seeking redress for his stocking of the ships with vermin, that he might hunt the vermin over the bales of goods, shouting and tally-hoing as he hunted, and hold the vermin up by the tail when it was caught, and cut off the tail, and each of the four nearest of his companions cut off a foot as a trophy; as for the merchants and the captains seeking redress for goods damaged, and time wasted thus, they never once thought of such a thing. In commerce, and also in the dealings of the manufacturers, such waste of property, and of the resources and energies which produce property, are not known.

Not so in agriculture. The young Squire Thorncliffe believed that he did only what it became a squire to do, and especially one so largely possessed of land as he was, in doing to his property, and to those who hired it and paid rent for it, all those things which the young merchant did not do to his mercantile property.

And yet he continued to marvel why this adventurer in merchandise and manufactures became richer every year, and added to all his business that of a banker, and to all his ships and canals, and shares in these, more ships and shares in railways, and, before long, to all his wealth a landed estate; while he, the owner of land, born to it, and bred a landowner of the first-class, advanced not in wealth, but sank into debt. And farther, he and many more of his Parliamentary party, continued to marvel why the manufacturer, who only rented the factory, should become so rich as to build a new one for himself, and extend his business far beyond its former limits, while those who were tenants in land became no richer, and could not extend their manufacture of corn and cattle and human food without loss or complaints of loss.

Yet did he continue to keep his two packs of hounds that he might hunt four days in the week, and also all the horses necessary for so much hunting, and many more than was required even for that. And his packs of hounds were the most complete in his county, and the hunts were the best attended. So was his mansion noted for its hospitality, as he was for generosity in all personal actions. Yet he was only a fair specimen of the richest of English landowners, and a specimen of what even the most moderately endowed of the squires attempted to be; for though they could not all spend thousands a-year on the mere items of hounds and horses, they all hunted and spent as far as their land, and those who lend money on land, would let them spend.

They rode with Squire Thorncliffe, and were proud of the honour and the privilege of hunting with his hounds four days of the week. And a hundred of them, and sometimes half as many more, would scour at the gallop across the farm fields, a fox first, hounds next, and the fleetest of them at the tails of the hounds. Some would halt not at hedge, or ditch, or high wall, but clear these, or any other obstacles, at a bound, plunging into another field of October sown wheat, it might be, or fold of fattening sheep, or meadow with cows in calf, striking terror into the sheep and cows, and making them run and stand appalled, as nothing else on earth can terrify them; others, and by far the greater number, did not clear at a bound every hedge, ditch, and high wall; they rode through gaps in the fences, if there were gaps; they pulled down palings to make gaps, if there were none, or they rode to the gates and forced a way through them, and rode on and left them broken and open. And even the richer of the tenant farmers rode over one another's land thus; and were proud of the permission to ride with their squire and the fifty other squires there. And they holloed and tally-hoed like the best of the squires, and called that farmer a "muff" and a "knave," whoever he might be, that grumbled to have his fields of new wheat, and his fences, and cattle, and sheep thus ridden upon, broken, and terror struck.

And least of all was it admissible for a tenant farmer to make deep drains, to draw the water from his fields to the great ditches, and cover in the drains and make conduits into which foxes could run for shelter in the hunt; nor was it pardonable to do anything, no matter what agricultural philosopher might recommend it, that would interfere with the pleasures of the chase, the breeding of foxes for the chase, and the preservation of game of all kinds for the dogs and guns, and great days of killing, wounding, and unwinging.

But, in sooth, there was little heard of the murmurs, if there were murmurs. It was in the conditions of their occupation of the farms for the tenants to submit to all those things, and to many more. The four-footed game, and the winged birds of the woodland coverts, and of the weedy wastes by the ponderous hedges and ditch banks, the farmers were bound not to injure, depredators though these were; but, on the contrary, to aid in preserving them until they were of numbers exceeding in multiplicity even the rooks, the sparrows, the mice, and the rats; yea, exceeding these, when added to all the fowls and chickens, ducks and ducklings, geese and goslings, hogs large and pigs little, on the broad estate.

Then, when the harvest had been gathered in, and the game could get no more of that, and the wheat seed and the winter vetches had been sown, and had sprung up, and they could not eat more of either than they had eaten, and longer life would have led to leanness, the birds and the beasts, which ten armed gamekeepers and assistants, with sticks in their hands, and as many Acts of Parliament as there were gamekeepers, and more magistrates than there were men with sticks—the birds and beasts which they had preserved to that time, by and with the assistance of the farmers on whose crops they were chiefly fed, were encompassed in the woodlands and in the weedy boundaries of the fields, and driven forth in the face of the squire and many lords and lesser squires.

And men, expert in loading guns, with powder and shot, loaded them and put caps to the locks, and handed them to the noble lords and the squire, and even to the lesser squires, who all of them fired at the shrieking birds as they rose above the copse one after another, and half dozens at a time, and brought them to the ground broken winged or killed outright, and never halted in their killing until they had brought many hundreds of pairs to the ground, and could tell of an excellent day's sport.

And then, when the shooting and hunting season was over, and birds were allowed to be at peace, and choose their mates, and hatch young birds for next year's battue, Squire Thorncliffe and the other squires and lords, who sat in Parliament, repaired thither, and sat on their legislative eggs and hatched them into new Acts of Parliament, still more to protect agriculture and preserve game.

And again was money lavished on London life, beyond the measure of income, on mere consumption without production. And again did the racing come round, and the betting and the cheating of those rich enough to be cheated. Again the hunting came, and the *battues*, and the steeple-chases, and again and again the Parliament.

At last Squire Thorncliffe had mortgaged Berry Park estate —even the whole of the 47,000 acres; and what with the bonds of the mortgagees added to all the other disabilities of the tenants as agriculturists, and the breeding and feeding of game, which was not now lessened, though the squire went abroad and let the sporting out for hire; and what with the inevitable consequence of augmented rents to pay the mortgagees their interest, and still allow the squire L.10,000 a-year, agriculture was marred and buffetted, and put back, and compelled to linger on the road a beggar for alms, while commerce and manufactures marched on, and gained strength, and wealth, and independence.

Passage IV.—The Amended Poor-Law, when it was New.

It was a warm day in June—one of the days on which maidens who have butter to make, make it in the morning and go out to wash it at the springs, with dew on their feet; a day when the mowers of the new hay rise with the birds, when birds are up before the sun; a day when June hastens before the day is done to the wheat that's green, and looks for young ears, and gives them dew to drink; and finds them again in the morning, and dries them and makes them strong enough for the hot sun, which, by God's command, must, for the sake of men and women and children hungry, be as hot as wheat can bear, to hasten on the harvest—it was a day when June gives her freshest greenness and her coolest breezes to those who deserve them best—the workers who go soonest out in the morning; a day when the luxurious, idle, and indolent of all conditions, who lie late abed, come out to pant for breath, and to be broiled in a sun which is up high, and hot in the performance of other duties than that of caring for their comfort and their skin; a day when, happy ordinance of Nature, even the mower in the fields is relieved by his violent exercise and his perspiration from the languor that afflicts the idle.

It was on such a day that Mr Hurst said to his men that they would all be required in the afternoon and the evening to wash sheep; that they would begin sheep-shearing next day; that all the flock would need washing, but those that grazed on the hill where the sand holes were would more particularly, as they had stained their wool by rubbing against the red sand. And he said two of the men and some of the boys must go at once and make a dam across the stream, stemming the water deep enough to take a man up to the middle, or nearly, but not deep enough to drown anybody standing on his feet.

It was on this same day that the venerable Adam, ten years older than when we saw him first, and now past all work but to rock the cradle of the fourth generation—a future Adam of the fields—was sitting on the bench within the honeysuckle porch of his cottage, winking his aged eyes as if he slept, yet not asleep. He said to Mr Hurst who was passing, and who stopped for a few minutes to speak with him, "Ees, master; it be God that gives the weather; it be well for we that the hand of man does not hold the wind, and rain, and sunshine; it be well for we that we ha'nt to go to the parish for the showers and the shining sun, master, now that they have made that new law. I have been trying to understand the grounds of it; but I ben't able to see through it. I have tried it with Scripture, but I can find no Scripture for it; no, all Scripture be right against it. I have even tried to forget that I am the poor man, and have put myself in the place of the rich man; yet I cannot see why this law should be as they have now made it. It be seven miles going and seven miles coming, and I have been twice, once this week and once the week before, at what they call the board of guardians; all that way, ill able to go; and I sat down on the door steps four hours until they called me in; and then they said I must give up everything I am possessed of to them, and go into that great new house. Oh, master, what terrible things some of them as have been in and out again tell of that union house. They are put to their work and to their victuals like soldiers to drill. The unions, they say, are to have all masters out of the army and from the men-of-war ships as have been used to severity over other men; and they say we be all to be drilled and punished if we do not obey the word of command. And I do not doubt it; for him as they have got to this union came out and gave orders not to sit on the steps of the door, and orders for this one to come in, and that one to stand aside, just like as we used to hear the drill-sergeants speak in the time of the local militia and the volunteers. It be a very hard case, master, for they as have worked a long life like I, and went, as you know, when I need not, for I was above age, and offered to be a volunteer at the time of all the fright about Boney. It be a hard thing when they would not drill me then because I was too old, though I was young enough to have the spirit to defend my country, that thirty years after, when I am old in spirit and body both, they are going to put me into the hands of a severe man, chosen because he has been a breaker in of men in a barrack-yard, to break me in now in my old days to what they call strict discipline; to learn me and poor old Sarah, who have lived in this cottage, man and wife, nine-and-forty years come Michaelmas, and brought up a family in honesty and the fear of God—to 'sunder we whom God did join together, that we may live apart and meet death in our old age each alone, to deter, for they say that is it, to deter other poor creatures from coming on the parish. I never believed, Mr Hurst, it could have been true. When they spoke about mending the old law, they never said a word about this, as I heard on, never a word."

"No, Adam; nor did I know what kind of new law it was to be when I complained like many other farmers of the old one. Here am I now leaving this farm where I and my fathers before me have been so long—obliged to leave it because I have not submitted quietly to imposition; here am I with my last crop in the ground, with men working to me, all brought up to work by me and my father, all of them good workmen."

Adam.—"Good masters get good men."

Mr Hurst.—"It may be so. At any rate I have good men here, and I do not expect to find as good where I am going. Now one of the worst, if not the very worst, parts of the old poor-law is preserved in this new one, indeed the most mischievous part of the old law; I mean that which prevents me from taking the people who work for me now, or any of them, or even you yourself, Adam, with me to another parish out of this union. This is a great hardship both to me as a farmer and to you all as workmen. I must submit to employ such as I find in my new parish, be they good or bad, and leave my best hands here to my successor in this farm, be he a good master or a bad. This is one of the evils which I see the agriculture of England suffering under; and I must confess that since our young squire has run in debt as he has, and the management has got into the hands of the lawyers, I see many things more which I did not once think to be so detrimental to a farmer as I do now. Since the squire has mortgaged Berry estate, the game has been let with the mansion and park, as you know. New sets of game-keepers have been put over us, and that which was disagreeable before is now a pest. I have stood out against it, and here is the consequence—at six months' notice I am obliged to leave Berryhill. I begin to think that both farmers and their farm men need some different kind of laws than any we have now, or else not so much law as we have now. I am grieved, more than I can tell, that I had ever signed a petition against the old poor-law; but I had no thought of such a change being made as they have made. To deny an old worn-out man and woman, like you and Sarah, relief, until you give up and part with all your old furniture, and that you must even then go into a place ruled as the House of Correction is ruled, to deter others, is indeed grievous. I hope we may yet prevent this. It is that 'cold-hearted,' new-fangled doctrine, called political economy, that has led to this new law."

As old Adam had, perhaps, never heard of political economy, or, like many others who use its name, knew nothing about it even if he had heard of it, he could not make any remark upon it in response to Mr Hurst. We shall, however, take this opportunity to make a few remarks on this popular error, that of charging the oppressive clauses of the new poor-law on the principles of political economy.

In the first place, nobody supported those provisions of the poor-law which have severity in them, and which are intended to deter the poor from seeking relief, more zealously than the landed gentry and landed nobles, in Parliament, who make it their boast that political economy is neither believed in nor understood by them. They, as their ancestors, the feudal barons and knights of chivalry, who deemed it derogatory to acquire literary education of any kind, even the ability to write their names, boast now, in the same spirit, that the merest elements of political economy are a mystery to them. The time will come when their boast of being ignorant of political economy, at the very time they are sitting as political legislators, will be looked upon as evidence of intellectual barbarism, as truly as the declaration of the Norman knights, that they were not dishonoured by not having learned to write their names.

But even where persons professing to be political economists supported the cruel clauses of the poor-law, it is no more a proof against those principles which they professed to believe in, than was the cruelty of the inquisition by one party of believers in religion, and the enactment of penal laws against that party by another, a proof that religion justified the inquisition of Rome or the penal laws of England.

The principles of political economy are as true and unerring as the principles of gravitation, attraction, or repulsion in natural bodies, if political economy is freed from political superstition. There never has been any legislation unmixed with what we may call political superstition. The present free-trade measure is a step towards it, yet it is not more than a step upon the threshold.

PASSAGE IV. CONTINUED.—The Sheep-washing.

Mr Hurst said again, that he hoped some plan might be devised to prevent Adam from incurring the terrible calamity of breaking up his old home and going with his aged wife into the union house, to be separated worse than by death and the grave—to be separated in life, in a grave alive. And he then asked if Adam would take his staff in his hand and walk up the dell, and sit down on the knoll by the green birches, and see the sheep-washing. He believed that Adam had never once been absent from a sheep-washing at Berryhill since the year he was born; and as this would be the last they would have in Berryhill while he was farmer, he would like to have it in all respects like the sheep-washings of days gone by.

And Adam took his staff in his hand and went up the dell above the pool to the knoll where the birches grew, and sat in the shade and looked down upon the sheep-washing, as did other old people and all the young children not engaged below. It made the old people young again; every one of them declared that, and they even rebuked some of the more timid of the young ones for not going to help; they, when they were young, never stood looking on. See how the young tegs, that had never been washed before, were breaking away.

At which all the youngsters—the very youngest that could toddle alone—ran to bring back the young sheep that were running away without being washed; the boys that were helping to swim the sheep along the pool to the men who stood in the deepest place got out and ran; the dogs barked and ran; the young women who came to look on, and be very timid in going near the edge of the pool, though they knew well they would be, before the evening was over, pursued and caught, and brought back and soused in the pool according to the custom of sheep-washings—they ran to bring back the fugitive sheep; and the shepherd called to them all to keep back, his dog would do more than the whole. But dogs, and children, and boys, and women, and sheep that would not be turned, went out of sight up the dell, each making their own noise, the sheep and the shepherd's oldest dog being the only parties to the uproar really in earnest; the rest in part or wholly in fun.

Meantime the more sober three-year-old wethers were brought forward from the corner beneath a crag where they were awaiting their turn. The shepherd, who knew best how to lay hold of them, introduced them to the water. He did it thus:—He got a wether by the long wool of the neck, and by the shoulder and fore feet. He lifted his fore feet from the ground, and stood astride over him, and made him walk on his hind legs to the water's edge. The wether did not like it, and did not go willingly in; but when he really was in, and felt his hind part getting wet, he made a bold spring, such as would overturn a man that was not prepared for it into the water. Here two men stationed for the purpose caught him, and his only struggle was to get further into the pool, and further from the shepherd who put him in. But as soon as he was afloat and off his feet, he quietly resigned himself to be washed, which was done by a man standing beyond the two men, who held his head above water by the wool of the neck, and guiding him by the shoulders, which were below water, kept him thus on end for half a minute or more, rolling and plunging him to the left and to the right.

This man, the shepherd having another ready, turned his wether over in the water to another man who, like him, stood three and a half or four feet deep. This last held the sheep in the same way, and in his turn gave him to another man a yard or two farther in the pool. That man treated him in the same way, and gave him to a fourth, and perhaps a fifth, who at last pushed the drenched sheep to shore on the opposite side, where he climbed his way up the low bank, dripping and in silence, until he saw those that had gone before him dripping also. They greeted him and he greeted them, and then he turned round with them to watch the others, and salute them with the language and sympathy of sheep as they came out of the water in their turn.

Then the flock of tegs was brought back, and they were washed one by one the same way as the wethers. And beer and bread and cheese were handed across the water to the men who stood in the pool, for they declined to come out to get it. They said to stand in the water for a long while was not so bad as to come out and go in again; and the old people who now came down to the side of the pool said that was true; and some of the young ones said the best way to keep from cold was to be wet all over; and they had no sooner said so than one of them was pushed in, and laid hold of by the men who had washed the sheep, and dipped deeper even than the sheep. And the young women threw water from the bank over the men in the pool to wet them; and the men came out to catch the women, who in their turn ran, and screamed as they ran. And some of them were caught and carried back —the oldest matrons there, the grandmothers and great-grandmothers of the village telling the young men that it was well done, only to be gentle with it. And no on-looker thought wrong of it; save, perhaps, some very young child, whose eldest sister or aunt it was that struggled in arms which were too strong for her, and put her in the middle of the pool. And there was more cases than one where three women, or four or five, would pursue and get hold of one man, and carry him and throw him into the water, and some of them roll over on the top of him, where they might have been drowned but for the more grave of the old people, who drew them out again.

If anybody ever took cold at such a time the case was rare. Still rarer was it that such rough sport produced ill-humour. On this occasion so joyous was every one, they forgot even that this was Mr Hurst's last sheep-washing; and old Adam, after he had gone home and had his supper, and said family prayers, confessed that until he was on his knees beseeching Heaven for grace and mercy to himself and all men, he had forgot even the union workhouse, and the barrack-yard drill-sergeant who was set to be master of it. But at the solemn hour of family prayer solemn thoughts came back upon him, and he prayed fervently that he and his might be delivered from that great oppression in their age of helplessness—the oppression of the men who were possessed of riches, strength, and injustice.

Happy morning was it in Berryhill next day, when Mr Hurst mounted his horse and rode to the market town, six miles distant, to meet the agent of the estate and the solicitors of the mortgagees, who had written to him to meet them there, to see if they could not make a new arrangement to keep him as tenant of Berryhill. And when he returned and said the farm was again his, if he chose to take it at an advance of rent, the people were still happier, for Mr Hurst had said often before that he would rather pay a higher rent than leave it, provided only the game was kept within bounds. He had been told that day that prices, which had lately risen, would rise farther and be maintained; that the Conservative party was gaining strength in Parliament; confidence would not be shaken again as it had been in 1835, and prices would not fall as the Whigs had made prices fall. The only thing required now of the farmers was to support the efforts of the Tories to put down the Whigs.

Mr Hurst was not clear upon this doctrine, either for or against it. But within a few days of giving in his new offer for Berryhill, news came that the king was dead, and a general election was pending, and Mr Hurst was called upon by all that was valuable to a farmer and to the labourers of the farms, to the landed estates and to the nation at large, to assist those who were now contending to rescue England and the young Queen from the counsels of "Whigs and destructives."

Mr Hurst's sheep-shearing was not yet done; his ewes were still to shear when this political sheep-washing began—an immersion of one party by another far more uproarious and far from being so harmless as that at Mr Hurst's pool in the dell.

PASSAGE V.

In which the political uses of the tenantry at an election are given. This is omitted.

PASSAGE VI.

Which relates how Mr Hurst kept his old farm, and, not getting rid of his new one, how he, like many others, had more land than he could manage well, is also omitted.

PASSAGE VII.

Which relates how the mortgagees caused Berry Park and mansion to be let to a sportsman who brought a new corps of gamekeepers on the estate, and preserved the game more than ever, is also omitted.

PASSAGE VIII.

Containing an account of the movement (metaphorically) of heaven and earth, in 1841, to return Tory members of Parliament, who were to protect such men as Mr Hurst from the enemies of agriculture. This is likewise omitted.

PASSAGE IX.

In which it is related how Mr Hurst, having followed the recommendations of the Royal Agricultural Society, in his efforts to make his farm more productive, was prosecuted for penalties, and made to pay them at the instance of members of that society for so doing. An instructive passage; but also from necessity omitted.

PASSAGE X.

Shewing how Mr Hurst examined closely for the first time, and found the conditions of agreement between him and his landlord to be such, that he was bound hand and foot not to improve the culture of his farm. This, too, must be omitted.

PASSAGE XI.

In which Mr Hurst, being in London, is going up Fleet Street, and sees a notice on the house, No. 67, that a League meeting is to be held that evening in Covent Garden Theatre, and that seats will be reserved for tenant farmers who may wish to attend it, tickets to be had on application within. How he, always a believer in the virtue of the corn-law, went in, his political conscience smiting him at the same time, and got a ticket, and went to the theatre and heard Mr Cobden and Mr Bright; the first exposing the delusion practised on tenant farmers by the political landlords; the latter the wrongs to agriculture and to society by the feudal landlords in stocking the country with wild beasts, and preserving them by savage laws. This we must also omit.

PASSAGE XII.

Setting forth how Mr Hurst thought he had heard the real farmers' friends speaking for the first time in respect of the feudal landlords and the game-laws; and how the corn-law was after all not such a sacred law as he had hitherto deemed it to be. How Mr Cobden's exposition of it took root in his mind as seed sown upon new soil, and how he applied for and obtained copies of all the League tracts, read them and believed them, and endeavoured to make his brother farmers believe them. This too is omitted.

PASSAGE XIII.

Shewing how he had struggled to succeed, and had succeeded, in making his two farms pay the high rents that he had a few years before contracted to pay for them, notwithstanding the obstacles of unfriendly gamekeepers, swarms of game, and conditions of agreement which bound him not to improve his agriculture. How he employed more people per hundred acres than his brother farmers, and raised better crops; but how he had his character as a farmer decried because he had been to a League meeting, and now said that he believed the corn-laws had never been of any benefit to the farmers or to agriculture.

PASSAGE XIV.

Tells how he went before the Parliamentary Committee on the game-laws, and gave evidence of the great injury done to himself and to the agricultural interests of his county by the excessive waste committed by the game; but owing to the parliamentary forms forbidding the publication of the evidence for the present, his statements are not inserted; and this passage of his life is also omitted.

PASSAGE XV.

Shewing how he was received by his brother farmers, whose interests he had served as well as his own in giving evidence against the game-laws, he being now an avowed opponent of the corn-law.

It was rent-day, the receiver of the rents was an elderly gentleman, a lawyer from the precincts of Lincoln's Inn. He came down to the Royal George Hotel in a glass coach; and when he alighted from it, there would have been no violence done to truth to have said, he looked as if he had come out of a glass case; so prim, so scrupulously perfect was this elderly little gentleman in his dress. From the gold spectacles on the wig of his head to the silver buckles on the shoes of his feet there was no spot upon him.

And his professional conduct was as precise and formal, his moral character as spotless as his dress. Fiction will have it that lawyers living in the deep recesses of the temple and inns of court, in those caves of social life called chambers, are the spiders of human kind reposing in dust and cobwebs, sleeping with their eyes open to dart out upon any human flies that may go too near them. But this is only fiction, or if there be such lawyers, ours in the glass coach was not one of them; ours in the glass coach, if we may be so irreverent, was like a cockroach, or a black-beetle, to whose glossy exterior no impurity adheres, rather than a dusty spider. He had dealings with the world, and, as a lawyer, not unfrequently with those who bring upon it the appellation of "wicked world;" but he never touched wickedness, as we may say, with his bare hands. He read his law books through his glasses, and he knew mankind through his law books. He knew there were bad men and good men. He knew there were bad men, because laws had been made to hang them. He knew there were good men, because laws had been made to hang the bad ones. He knew the world must have more good men in it than bad, else the bad ones would have been strong enough to hang the good ones. He ranged himself on the side of the laws and of good men—thus, of mankind generally.

Individual men were revealed to him in a similar manner. He knew there were good farmers and bad farmers, because some were always ready with their rents on rent-day and others were not. He knew the relationship of landlord and tenant, because it was written on parchment. He knew the progress of agricultural science from the applications made to him by the tenants, when paying their rents, for authority to make and deduct the expense of making, next rent-day, new gates or repairs of old ones; repairs of floors and roofs of barns; construction of cesspools to save wasted manures; farm roads; drains to dry wet land; drains to keep the wasted manure of the yard from defiling the pond where the cattle had to drink; palings to protect young quickthorns; young quickthorns to supplant old ones; and other improvements akin to these. He knew that those who applied to have these things done had not done them. He knew their farms needed such improvements else such applications would not have been made; and he inferred that those who made no such applications for repairs and new works did not require them. Therefore it was logical to conclude that the tenants who, being content to have broken gates, dilapidated roofs and floors, wasted manures, poisoning the ponds and pools where cattle got drink, bad fences, who never made a new fence or repaired an old one, who never drained wet land nor cleared out a ditch that made land wet—it was a logical consequence to conclude that such tenants, who made no complaints and no demands, were the best farmers, and had their farms in the best condition, seeing agriculture, as he only saw it, through his gold spectacles on a map or on parchment, riding in a glass coach.

He was the very perfection of a legal land-agent. His integrity was as firm as the bank buildings; the cash committed to his keeping as safe as the bank cash. His rules of procedure were so squared off by a legal straight edge, that, as the clauses in the agreements between landlord and tenant were provisive of penalties for the landlord against the tenant, the latter never made a claim that was allowed to be good, so, as there were no good claims preferred by tenants, there were no decisions in their favour. He decided the claims made by the tenants according to the parchment. And, on the same authority, he decided the complaints preferred against the tenants. The complainants in such cases were the gamekeepers, for disturbance of the game, (some fields of hay being mown, when it was ready to be mown with pheasant's nests still in it—a grievous crime, if the farmer did not make friends with the gamekeeper,) or the woodman, the farmer having, perhaps, cut some overshadowing branches from a hedgerow tree; or the secret informer, never known precisely who, that had a farm on the estate, and kept his eyes open to see if all the crops were sown in the exact rotation written on the parchment, according to the rules of the agricultural science dwelling in the legal chambers of the Temple of Lincoln's Inn. The more numerous the informations laid by those servants of the estate, for disturbance of pheasants on their eggs, for the lopping of an overhanging tree, or for judging what crop would grow best by the quality of the soil rather than by the provision in the parchment, the more vigilant were they held to be, and the better claim did they feel themselves to have for augmented salaries and ultimate pensions.

Well, it was rent-day, or, as it is more genteely termed, the audit. Those to whom it is the pleasantest day in the calendar call it by the pleasantest name. Those who see it coming on them long before it does come, coming as certainly and as sternly as an annual day of judgment, call it by the name which they know it best by—the rent day. It was the rent day at the Royal George Hotel, at the nearest market town for the Berry tenantry. They met there to pay their rents and to prefer their complaints. Let us look at some of them.

There sits in a private room of the hotel the little elderly gentleman with his clerk beside him. There stands before him Mr John Bull, with his hat in his hand. He has got his receipt—what more does he want? He might be as bold as any man that ever trod on English ground, yet he is timid. He has paid his rent, and owes no man anything. A little ago he was so bold in the public room as to tell Mr Hurst to his face that he and all like him who went to League meetings were "no good to their brother farmers," that all who minced matters now-a-days, and did not speak out for protection, would deserve to lose protection. Why does this Mr John Bull now hesitate in presence of this one man and his clerk to say his say? He has not a farm gate that will hold in a cow, or a horse, or a pig, and has not had for half a dozen years; they have been patched and patched, and again broken and broken, and at last thrown down by the fox hunters and by his own work-people, who found them more trouble than service, so often, that the wreck is fit for nothing else than firewood. He has no timber to mend gates and fences, and he is trying to ask for authority to have the old ones replaced by new, the expense to be paid out of his next rent. He has a mind, too, to ask for repairs to the old barns, which let rain through the roofs and the corn through the floors; but he has asked such favours before, and there is a feeling within him that those who have asked most earnestly and frequently to have their farm buildings repaired, have been least successful. Yet his have got into such a state of absolute wreck that he cannot help urging the request once again. He bears in mind the very eminent services rendered at the last election in getting in the candidate for whom the gentleman now before him was concerned, and he gives hints, imperfectly expressed, that he should not be overlooked in any *favours* which are to be conferred.

Here is Mr John Bull's error, the fatal error of farmers in submitting to ask for rights as for favours. The man who exacts rent for a farm of land which he does not provide with suitable buildings, and which he professes to provide, and at the same time lets the farm to the tenant on the condition that he shall quit at six months' notice, thus rendering it utterly impossible for him to supply the requisite buildings or fixtures himself—that man, be he agent or landlord, is no better than another Pharaoh, exacting the bricks from the bondmen without supplying the straw.

But look at the bondman, this John Bull, whose voice is as loud as a lion's—as a British lion's—so loud as to be called the British lion's voice, when he happens to roar on the same side of the table, or the same side of the subject, with the agent and the landlords. Listen to him, then, while now on the right side of a good cause—his own cause—in which the first principles of justice are involved, he dares hardly open his mouth to that one little old man.

But listen to the old gentleman. Mr Bull is to be *favoured.* Authority is to be given for the expenditure of L.100 in repairs. The tenant is pleased beyond expression. He bows low and is grateful, and retires. He should be grateful for a favour. He should be polite under any circumstances. But has he anything to be grateful for? Will this expenditure of L.100 in repairs be a favour? Will it not rather be a perpetuation of unfit buildings, make-shift gates, and fences? Will it not make it requisite for Mr John Bull to go again, next year or the next, begging once more to have some other part of his farm put in repair?

Then here is another tenant in the private room paying his rent. He has determined for the last nine months, and has sworn it a hundred times in his daily conversation, that he will not quietly submit to have his fields nearest the sand hills eaten up with rabbits any longer; again and again has he even this day formed in his mind what he would say to the agent when he paid his rent. But he cannot now say it. And why? because there is no door to his stable, and the stable itself is flooded whenever wet weather comes, and he has lost two horses by death, and the use of one or two more by disease, because the drainage cannot be made complete without leave to alter the water course and money to make another. If he begins to talk about rabbits, he will take the ground from under him to ask for a new stable; for his ambition, or daring, does go as far as an entire new stable on a dryer piece of ground. So he talks of the stable, and omits the rabbits.

Then comes Mr Hurst. He also is in the private room, and has paid his rent. He has taken it into his head that all patchwork repairs are useless, and that no thorough improvements can be effected without he obtains a lease of twenty-one years. He thinks if a new set of farm-buildings were erected, and new fences also, at a cost of L.3000, on which he would pay five per cent. of additional rent, it would be of greater benefit to him and to the farm than if he received an annual drawback of ten per cent. from his present rental to repair the old buildings. He offers to prove this, and the old gentleman listens; but at last stops him by saying he has no power to alter the present system of letting the farms—which is true.

Others of the John Bull family enter, and pay their rents, and tell how dilapidated their farms are, if they have any hope of an allowance for repairs. Some express a hope that they are not going to lose "protection to agriculture," to which the elderly lawyer says that is impossible; it can never be taken away and never will; and though he may grant them no drawback for repairs, no redress for rabbits, tell them he has no power to interfere with the game, doom them to their undrained bogs and sour cold clays, without an allowance for drain tiles, or for any one thing recommended by the Royal Agricultural Society as needful and indispensable to agriculture; they retire comforted and happy in heart that they are not to lose "protection." They retire to their dining room, and in due time the dinner is on the table, and the elderly gentleman who came from Lincoln's Inn in a glass coach, and who reads his law books though his glasses, and mankind through his law books, is chairman of the dinner.

This was in the autumn of last year, 1845. The dinner might be worth description, and the speakers worth reporting, but they were the same as have often been given to the public in print. The "enemies of agriculture" were denounced, and the hints that there was only one "renegade" to the good cause of protection in the room, and on the estate, was cheered.

The only man who had dared to go before the parliamentary committee, to expose what they all suffered from—the overswarming game—and the only one who had the courage in the private room to speak of those requirements which alone would have been favours, if granted by the old lawyer, was Mr Hurst, who was roared at by the British lions around the dinner table as a "renegade to the cause."

I conclude this brief sketch. If the names are not real, the facts and the persons are; and deeply do I regret to say that what is here written is too true, and too generally applicable all over England.

JOURNEY TO EARL SPENCER'S ESTATE.

THE FIRST DAY.

I WAS a passenger on the London and Birmingham Railway on the 31st day of May last, 1844, coming from the north; and calling to mind that Earl Spencer's seat was in Northamptonshire, I bethought myself of going thither to see his Lordship's cattle and his celebrated breeding and feeding establishment. I was wrong in supposing this establishment to be at Althorp, in Northamptonshire; it is in Nottinghamshire; but of that hereafter.

Not knowing where Althorp was situated, save that it could be reached from Northampton, I came on to the Blisworth station, which is the nearest to Northampton, though, as I subsequently ascertained, I was nearer Althorp at the Daventry station, which I had passed.

Blisworth is between four and five miles from Northampton, westward, and Althorp Park is six, or perhaps seven miles northward from Northampton. It may be worth while to remark that the railway has its station at Blisworth so inconvenient to the principal town of the county, which should have been a principal station, because of the bitter, resolute, and expensively-continued hostility of the corporation of Northampton to the railway project when it was before Parliament. The corporation, and all the inhabitants who sided with it, have lived to repent their hostility to the railway, and that before they were much older than when the line was made. It is pleasant, however, to see that they gain in wisdom much faster than they grow in years. They are as eager advocates of railway intercourse now as they were hostile opponents to it before. The staple trade of Northamption, which is shoemaking, has been much improved by the railway, even though it did not come to the town. Thus it will be hereafter with many of those who are the bitterest enemies of the extension of trade and the facilities of intercourse between nation and nation. Freedom of intercourse will be carried on in spite of them;

they will reap their share of the general benefit; and then they will be the most hearty approvers of it.

Thus it will be, that those who now suffer reproach and contumely for their labours in the liberation of commerce, will return to their enemies good for evil.

To be at Northampton, with one's face turned towards Althorp, and one's thoughts turned upon Earl Spencer, it is impossible to forget the question of the corn-laws. The simple honesty, the political integrity, and benevolent nature of Earl Spencer would excite at any time a high interest in the mind of a stranger visiting in his neighbourhood; and all the more so, if that stranger listened to the repeated and never-ending testimonies of respect and love which the tenantry and their workpeople are ever paying to his Lordship when his name is mentioned by the stranger. And, in addition to that, the interest in the mind of the stranger is heightened, if it is remembered that this amiable nobleman is personally and untiringly engaged in advancing the increase of human comfort, by increasing the first element of comfort, human food; but how much greater is the interest heightened, when we call to mind that this eminent agriculturist,who led when it was not fashionable to follow, but who is now followed because it is fashionable to be, or to seek to be, good breeders and feeders of cattle; how unspeakably more interesting is it to approach his estate with the recollection that he has declared it to be his decided and well-considered opinion that a free-trade between England and all other nations would not injure agriculture, but would, on the contrary, be for the good of agriculture, and the great good of all England.

I went out of Northampton on the road to Harleston, a village on Lord Spencer's estate, with all those things revolving in my mind. I knew no one in that part of the country, nor did I know if his Lordship was at Althorp. I had rather some reason to believe that he was in London; but I had no doubt that I should push myself into a right channel by some means or other for seeing his estate.

The village of Harleston is pronounced as if written *Alston.* I had inquired at Northampton if it was a place which was likely to afford me a night's lodging, and, being told there was no doubt of that, I hired a gig, and a man to drive me there and take the gig back; so I went in the evening, that I might have a walk in the early morning amid the fine old woods, which I was told covered the country about Harleston.

I entered the village by going down a rather steep road, midway by the side of which, facing upwards, stood the inn, or public-house of the village, as if it were looking out for customers, and waiting there to receive them.

Such was my impression while my face was to its face and we had not yet met. But I was much disappointed to find that its landlady was not disposed to admit me as a lodger for the night. I inquired if there was no other house, and there was none. I asked for the next village, and found that was some miles off; and when the landlady said I could soon go there in my gig, I suggested that they might be as unwilling to admit me there as she was here; and again I pleaded to be allowed to stay, for she had not said there was no room for me; she only said that she did not think I could stay there. The man that drove me knew, however, what string to touch. He intimated that I was going to Lord Spencer's in the morning on business, and that it was necessary that I should stay in the neighbourhood all night.

The mention of his Lordship's name and residence, and of business to do there, was enough. She had no objection now, save a fear that I would not be satisfied with her accommodation; but such as it was I should be welcome to try it. I did try it; and never was I accommodated with a bed chamber more delightfully fresh, and fair, and comfortable. I might have almost formed an opinion that it was too spotless and perfect to be intended for use, had it not been that my experience in travelling has proved, long ago, that if the most perfect cleanness, and freshness, and general comfort are to be found in any bedchamber, that chamber is to be found in the little village inns of rural England.

Nothing could be more delightful than this. Floral richness adorned the outside and fresh flowers were gathered and brought within. In the lofty trees that overhung the roof, blackbirds and throstles, and their musical companions of the evening, sung to me almost at the very window; and for several hours after they were done, during the whole night indeed, the nightingales kept up the sweet discourse. I had only to sleep with their voices in my ears, and dream myself into Elysium. I had only to wake in the morning, and find that to be in Elysium was no dream. The brilliant sun of four o'clock in the morning of the 1st of June was out; and the flowers of June were out with him; and thousands of vocal birds, from the full-voiced thrushes—the Wilsons of the woods—to the sparrows that were so happy as not to know what key to sing in, nor which of them to make most noise; all these, in such a place, make an awakening out of sleep glorious beyond my power of telling.

But I go too fast. On my arrival there, in the evening, I walked out to see the village and its neighbourhood; the road still descended until it came to a clear streamlet, which issued from the deep shady woods on the left hand, and which, after watering the garden walls and hedges at bottom, went on its way, wandering farther than I could see into the country eastward.

I do not know how many houses the village contains; they can never be seen all at once. With but little stretch of the imagination, one might believe this village to have descended upon the earth from some place more blessed than the earth, and to have brought the beauty of blessedness with it. One might suppose that the more grave and aged houses were sitting quietly in their gardens, while the frolicsome and the young houses had run off into the woods and were hiding there, while others wandered out and scattered themselves to look for them. And if we could speak of smiling cottages as of smiling children, and speak of them peeping from beneath the lofty elms, decked in their roses and twining flowers, looking out to see if the pleased face of a mother was upon them, we might be at no loss to discover that mother—not only that a full-sized mansion looks down upon them from the gentle eminence upon which it sits, as if pleased to see their rosy faces through the trees, but that this mansion on the eminence is, in many respects, a parent to the little cottages below.

I did not, however, turn this way at first, which to have done, would have required me to turn to my left westward out of the public road. I kept on the public road and ascended, going northward, an acclivity upon which the road toiled, similar to that which brought me down to the village on the southern side. Gaining the top of this rise, I at the same time gained an unexpected view of a portion of the village which lay about three hundred yards to my left on the brow of an opposite height, separated from where I stood by a narrow deep valley, the height crowned with lofty towers of green branches, and the valley dotted with gardens and green enclosures, in each enclosure some of those remarkable cattle grazing, the breeding of which distinguishes the House of Spencer.

I say the House of Spencer, for these cattle did not belong to his Lordship, nor was I yet at Althorp Park. The mansion, of which I just now spoke, is that of the Honourable Captain Spencer, brother to his Lordship, and the cattle belonged to the captain.*

The scene before us, from that rise of the road on which I first caught a view of it, is most lovely; and it is most thoroughly English. The chiefest object on the opposite height is the village church, venerable and grey in its old graveyard. Next to it is the parsonage-house, with its bright windows and slated roof, its shrubberies and its garden, and its elaborate floweriness. Lower down are barns and stables and a farmyard, all substantial and new. And all around are those matchless beasts grazing in the dewy sunset, which help to make up that most matchless of exhibitions, the London Christmas Show. But, not being yet put up to be fed at the stall for Christmas, they are not so loaded with fat as then, and are consequently more comely and handsome to look upon.

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* The captain has succeeded his lamented brother, and is now Earl Spencer.

I here turned direct to my left, went down a narrow road, crossed the streamlet in the hollow, and went up to the churchyard and the church. As is always my custom in a strange place, I went there to read the epitaphs and the ages of the dead, and to pay my respects to the church. It may be fantasy in the eyes of some and superstition in the eyes of others; but whichever it may be accounted, I must confess to it, that I never feel that I have formed a full and fair acquaintance with a village until I have become acquainted with its graves and its tombstones.

Leaving the church, and keeping on the footpath that led towards Captain Spencer's mansion, I found myself in the park. Here there were also cattle grazing; and such splendid cows some of them were! But the cattle, fine as they were, did not as far surpass the inferior and ordinary runts, such as we may see in Galloway or Wales, than did the trees of this park surpass all ordinary trees.

There they stood, each tree towering like a dome, and spreading out its branches like the roof of a great cathedral. And, looking along, they seemed in number and in breadth as if all the cathedrals of Christendom had been collected and formed into one; their huge trunks, vast as if they had stood there in the days of the giants, forming a succession of pillars, each of a magnitude which would take three or four or more men to encompass with their outstretched arms. And high overhead among the millions of leaves there was a solemn humming, that sounded as if the worship was just dying away with the closing twilight. And it was a place which infused into the soul thoughts of solemnity whether the soul desired them or not.

There was so much of the greatness and the glory of the Creator present, that the creature was overpowered thereby with a sense of his own nothingness. And such thoughts partook still more of devotion when the eye could see and the mind could understand that all this majesty of nature was not walled round and separated from the world to make one man proud that it was all his own, and that nobody else could look upon it. It was in this park, sheltered by the most magnificent of forest trees, and looking out upon the meadow-sward that intersected their groups in many parts, that the houses of the village lay scattered about; and it was pleasing and most grateful to the mind to reflect, after being told, that of the industrious families who inhabited there, no hand was unemployed, no mouth was unfed.

Finding the night coming on me fast, while I had to return by paths of which I knew not the intricacies, I turned back, and, in doing so, forgathered with a man who came down another road. He was going towards that part of Harleston where I was to lodge for the night, and offered to conduct me. I remarked to him that this was a place of most singular beauty; and he replied that he had been, in his time, in nearly every part of England, but he had seen nothing to equal this; "and more," said he, "I have seen few people to equal those who are the owners of this place." Which remark of his led us into farther conversation, and I found that he was a mechanic employed in the building of new cottages, which on all sides of Althorp Park, in several parishes, Earl Spencer was at that time providing for the labouring population. His Lordship was pulling down the old ones, not so much for their inferiority or age, for they were equal and rather superior to the ordinary class of labourers' houses; but they were pulled down, and new ones of a very superior kind were built in their room, because the old ones did not come up to the class of dwellings which his Lordship thought the families of working men should inhabit. But I have here expressed myself erroneously. The old houses were not pulled down and new ones built in their place. The new ones were built first, and then the old ones were pulled down. But, as I saw these new cottages on various parts of the estate next day, I shall defer a farther account of them until I describe my proceedings on the next day.

THE SECOND DAY.

As stated before, the morning of the 1st of June was a lovely morning. The weather had been long dry, and rain was looked for, hoped for, and prayed for—prayed for by those who never prayed for anything else. And in the absence of rain the copious dew was only the more delightful.

It was at that hour when dew is freshest and clearest and most pleasing to look upon, when it is brilliant as diamonds and far more precious, the hour of sunrise, that I went out of the village towards Althorp Park. So far as I remember, the distance might be a mile from the village to the park gates. But I went out of the direct way into some fields where people were beginning, or waiting to begin, to work, and talked with them.

Here I saw a lad, thirteen or fourteen years old, who was plying himself well at a large hunch of bread. I said to him he would not get through it soon; and asked him how long he thought it would last. "Well," said he, "I cannot tell you how long it will last; all I know about it is, that it will be done too soon." He was sitting on the sunny side of a high thorn hedge, and some other lads of the same age were near him. One of these looked at me as if he saw an old acquaintance, and laughed; I looked at him, and laughed; yet I did not know him. Again he laughed and looked exceedingly familiar, so I laughed once more and looked familiar also. And then we both laughed together, and all the others, old and young, laughed. And we seemed to do so the more vigorously, that no one knew what the other was merry at. Eventually the youngster managed to say, "Don't you know I am one of the boys you gave the money to buy a new bat?" And again he lost himself in mirth, and winked his eyes in the bright sun, and screwed his face about most comically.

And then I called to mind that on the previous evening I had overheard a discourse amongst a number of boys who had been playing at cricket, or some game resembling it, and who, having broken their bat, were holding a little parliament under the hedge, and were discussing how to raise the ways and means to get a new one. They were rather astonished and somewhat pleased to find a mysterious stranger step out and relieve their difficulties.

I passed a space of two hours or more out of one field and into another, and off one farm upon another. And I had much satisfaction in talking with the persons whom I met. For the first time in all my travels I found, in society completely rural, on the estate of an extensive landowner, on the very verge of a nobleman's park, nay, almost in front of his gate, that I moved in a moral atmosphere of free-trade. The farmers spoke freely and unequivocally, and condemned the corn-laws without reserve. The labourers also seemed familiar with the question, and were not afraid to speak about it. Everybody knew Earl Spencer's sentiments on the subject, and everybody had discussed the question of corn-law delusion.

I subsequently discovered that much of this familiarity with the free-trade arguments here and all around the neighbourhood resulted from Lord Spencer's retirement from the Northamptonshire Agricultural Society. It may be remembered that certain of the members of that society intimated their intention to withdraw from it if Lord Spencer continued, he having declared that agriculture would thrive better without the delusive protection which is no protection; and that his Lordship, rather than have the society broken up, which he believed had conferred some benefit on the county, chose to withdraw from it himself. This generous sacrifice of himself for a supposed public good, together with the undoubted fact that he had been persecuted out of a society which he himself had founded and advanced to maturity, by those members of it who never, of their own accord, would have founded nor supported any society for any good public purpose whatever until led to it by such a leader as Lord Spencer; these various circumstances resulted in a general fire-side discussion on the merits of the corn-laws and free-trade. Because the population on the Althorp estate would not submit to see their venerated landlord come out of a society without discussing his merits and the cause of his retirement. They knew it must be a good cause of which he was the friend, and of which at least *some* of the other agriculturists in Northamptonshire should be seen as enemies.

Remarks on the merits of Earl Spencer led to the merits of the general question. His Lordship's tenants are, of course, at liberty to read what papers, or pamphlets, or printed circulars come in their way, without being reported and reproved at head quarters by the agents. They did read. They were enlightened, and they have enlightened others. Thus, though the ungenerous treatment of Lord Spencer is to be regretted for the sake of his Lordship's feelings, it has done great good to the progressive cause of free-trade. In no county in England has any single event done more to advance that cause than has the attempt of the Agricultural Society to persecute its founder and its chief patron, Earl Spencer, done in Northamptonshire.

As I said before, I moved in an atmosphere of free-trade in the vicinity of Althorp Park.

The park does not hold within its bounds such large old timber as I saw in Captain Spencer's mansion on the previous evening, yet the timber is generally large, and the park is picturesque. It seemed to be a mile or rather more across either way, and the house is in the centre, in a hollow. This house contains the most choice and comprehensive library (so I have been told) that belongs to any private individual in England. I saw the library; but, to me, books are not worth looking at if there be no time to read them. I was more interested in his Lordship's pictures, especially the family portraits. And of these, the most interesting were the portraits of Lord Spencer himself. I could conceive nothing more pleasing than to see the infant, the playful child, the youth, the young man from college, the young statesman in Parliament, the grave statesman a leading member of the Government—all following in succession; and then to see them all merged in the fine old English gentleman that had retired from public life, and now walks about at home enjoying the high luxury of doing good to his fellow-creatures in private.

I entered the park by a gate from the Harleston road, and walked by what seemed to be a carriage way. I soon saw cattle grazing; but there was nothing remarkable about any of them. As I subsequently found, they were nearly all bought in from different fairs and markets, and were only to be grazed for the season. There were, as nearly as I can recollect, between fifty and sixty of them. They were in two divisions. With those I saw first there was a boy who was keeping them in a certain part of the park, to allow the grass to get up in another part. The drought had kept the pasture very low, and they deemed it better to let the cattle eat one portion bare, so that another might get up for them to be eaten the week or fortnight following, rather than to have it all bare alike.

After going across the park, and out at the opposite side towards the west, I found that the morning was advancing; and having heard that Lord Spencer was at home, I thought it would be most appropriate to ask leave to go over the estate to look more minutely into things. This leave I intended to apply for from the head steward, Mr Elliot, but he had not then arrived. He lives at a farm about three miles from Althorp. But when I heard that Lord Spencer was at home, I thought it better to address a note to his Lordship.

It is not with every lord I would presume to take such a liberty. But I felt well assured that Earl Spencer would not take it amiss. And I was not mistaken. Yet his Lordship's personal condescension prevents me from writing as particularly here as some might wish me to do, and as otherwise I might have done. Suffice it to say, that though his Lordship was going to London that day, and though business extending over a year had to be transacted with the steward (it being a day of annual reckoning) I had his Lordship's attention for some time, and subsequently that of the steward, to whom his Lordship introduced me with orders that I was to see all the cattle, and everything else that might be of interest. It was now that I heard from Lord Spencer himself that his breeding establishment was not on this estate, but in another county. This was to me some disappointment, as the young cattle and calves were the chief of what I wanted to see.

However, as I have been describing, I may proceed with my progress here; for, being here, I felt an interest in looking over the estate, simply because it was Lord Spencer's.

When we parted from his Lordship, Mr Elliot took me to a district of the park where a number of cattle were grazing, of the most of which he gave me some account; such as saying how old they were, at what fair such a couple were bought, how long they had been grazing, and so forth, none of which particulars I noted down, nor, if I had, would they have been of sufficient interest for publication here.

We went westward, and, by a door in the park wall, which Mr Elliot opened with a key which he took from his pocket, we went out into an avenue of trees, near which we again saw cattle and sheep at grass; but they, I think he said, belonged to a tenant-farmer. Here we had a fine view of the adjacent country, west and north. It was what is called a fine fox-hunting country; that is, bold in its heights and hollows, with high fences, deep ditches, and covered with farmers' crops and farmers' interests. A good fox-hunt is rarely carried out without a very considerable loss to the farmers, on whose fields of wheat newly sown, or newly sprung through the ground, or among whose sheep it takes place; for it cannot be a *good* fox-hunt if not in an enclosed and cultivated country.

Lord Spencer is too much of a kind neighbour both to poor and rich to deny the rich the privilege of the fox-chase on his estate. Consequently there are some great hunts there, and in the neighbourhood, as I was told.

On this western side of the park we soon came to a village called Brington; and, first of all, we came to its church. Into this we entered. There were workpeople cleaning and repairing it, who, when Lord Spencer's steward entered, came to him for orders, for he seemed to be chief man everywhere, even in the repairs and alterations of the church. When he had given his orders, he shewed me the different tombs and monuments of the Spencer family; for they had been buried here for many generations.

It was in the village of Brington where I saw the first of the new cottages in process of being built on different parts of the estate; they are generally formed so as to have four apartments, besides other conveniences. Some of them, at another village, were built so as one cottage with two or with three apartments should stand between two with more apartments; the outside architecture, a kind of Gothic, being particularly attended to. These were built in groups, and each group had a middle cottage, as it might be, for a widow or two poor women; while on each side dwelt the married people with families. In the largest houses there were two rooms up stairs and two below. The doors were of massive oak, pannelled and polished; the window frames were large and convenient. The people were encouraged to keep all clean inside, and flowery and weedless without; for they had flower gardens in front and potato gardens behind. They had also to each four houses a bakehouse and a washing-house. They had pigstyes conveniently removed from the cottage, &c. &c.; and the rents were to those who paid full rents £2 a-year, but some poor people had them cheaper, and some had their dwellings altogether free.

They had allotments of land also at a moderate rent; at 15s., and 20s., and 30s. per acre, according to quality. The quantity of ground was regulated in some cases according to the number of persons in a family. But these allotments were mostly all at too great a distance from the cottages to be as valuable as they should be. Some of them were a mile, and some more, and none that I saw were nearer than half a mile, except at Brampton, (I think that is the name of another of Lord Spencer's villages which I saw,) where the allotments are close to the village.

In one of the new cottages at Brington which we entered I discovered that the person who inhabited it, an elderly woman, had only been in the village twelve months, and that she came from London. I had some curiosity to know why she had come from the metropolis to live there, and was informed she was a midwife. The want of such a personage had been felt in the neighbourhood; so Lord Spencer provided the people with her services, by giving her a house and garden, and some portion of an income. I was not told how much, and did not inquire. But this little circumstance is a pleasing instance of the kind respect of Lord Spencer for the poor.

When I had left Mr Elliot, and met another person belonging to the estate, I heard many more proofs of such kindness. "In fact," said my informant, "Lord Spencer does harm with his generosity. When I came to this part of the country first, we had the old poor-law, and to get the labouring men to work a day's work was beyond my power or the power of any other employer. The men just did as they liked, or did nothing if they liked; but, after the new poor-law came into operation, things began to change. It took some time; still they were growing better, and were obliged to work for their wages. But his Lordship came to live here, and, after a while, he just began and spoiled them again. They came about him, some really poor and needy, but the greater part impostors; or, what is as bad, persons who fall out of work because they will not work. Well, on certain days of the week, his Lordship gives them audience. There he stands, twenty, or thirty, or forty people about him. Some have one tale of distress, and some another—some true, and some a parcel of lies. He pretends to make particular inquiries into their stories, and does do so, and learns that they have been trying to impose on him. But what of that? He puts his hand in his pocket to every one of them. It is not in his nature to refuse one of them—no, not one of them—who pleads poverty, no matter how undeserving they be. He says they must be needful, or they would not run the risk of telling him such lies! In fact, sir, Lord Spencer has virtually repealed the poor-law, so far as the people about him are concerned."

Some of the Lancashire readers of this paper will recognise a striking similarity in one point of his Lordship's benevolence to that of a late manufacturer remarkable alike for his generosity and his wealth. The gentleman whom I heard relate the anecdote illustrative of that one point says he was one day in company with the benevolent capitalist, when a man of very bad character, known to them both, but who had seen better days, came to beg. In his better days the man had done a deep injury to the manufacturer; he had libelled him and cheated him; but he was relieved with a liberal sum from the benevolent man whom he had injured so much. Observing which, the visitor said, "Mr G., you surely know what a vagabond that is? a libeller, a liar, a swindler, a common cheat, who never did good in his life, and will never try it; if I mistake not, you have suffered by him yourself?" to which Mr G. replied, with some uneasiness of manner, "Yes, yes; he is all that; but then what a dreadful state of poverty he must be in before he would come to beg from *me?*" And Mr G. turned the conversation into another point as quickly as he could; for, in fact, his benevolence had been excited, and he was glad to get an excuse for his generosity, as if he had done something wrong in letting a third party know that he was benevolent.

That generous and in all respects good man and his brother were the originals of the *Brothers Cheeryble* of Dickens. Mr Dickens says, that for the honour of human nature he is glad to say, that, at least, two of his characters in "Nickleby" were not fictitious; and that these were the two brothers, who had done more good in real life than would be readily believed in fiction.

Having heard many anecdotes of the generous doings of these two brothers in their real characters, there appeared to me a most pleasing resemblance to their actions in those of Lord Spencer. His Lordship seemed to be under the necessity of getting excuses for himself even to his own servants for his benevolence to those who did not deserve it. And all this made me think the more highly of his Lordship, even though his generosity might have had the effect which my friend attributed to it, of virtually repealing the poor-law.

Having gone over different parts of the estate, first with one guide and then with another, I went to the farm at which Mr Elliot lived. Here were three fine animals put up to feed, each in a box, for the London Christmas Show. And, instead of so many beasts as his Lordship has been in the habit of sending to the show, these will be all he will send this year. Owing to the scarcity of grass at that time other cattle were to be put up to feed on oil-cake, corn, &c., but they were not of a class admissible at the show.

His Lordship has also begun the breeding of race-horses at Althorp; but I am not aware of anything connected therewith that deserves notice. I shall therefore proceed to another topic.

OF THE OCCUPANCY AND CULTIVATION OF THE FARMS.

Earl Spencer still keeps up the tenancy-at-will system on his estate. This is all but universal in Northamptonshire. I think it is much to be regretted that his Lordship does not break through this, for the sake of public example, if for nothing else. No doubt his tenants are safe enough. And, if all landlords were to be Spencers in this and every other generation, there would be no need of leases. Neither if all men were honest would there be any need of laws. But there is a need for laws, and there is a need for leases. His Lordship and some of his tenantry are first-rate breeders and feeders of stock; they are, in fact, eminent graziers. They stand much higher in that respect than as cultivators. Now it is in cultivating crops where the benefit of leases is most apparent. From what I heard, I can believe that great advances have been made there in cultivation within these few years; but there is, unquestionably, much to do yet; and the more so, as the culture of crops and the feeding of cattle must go hand in hand, if the highest rate of profit is to be extracted from the land.

There is a farm in that part of the country, but not on Lord Spencer's estate, which I shall here notice. It is the farm on which is situate the battle-field of Naseby. A Scotchman has found his way to it, and is now growing very fine wheat on the ground where Prince Rupert wheeled round to give Fairfax battle, and where Fairfax, and Cromwell, and Ireton overthrew the royal troops as a preliminary to the overthrow of the throne. This farmer has been draining and enclosing, and ploughing and sowing, and reaping on that ground, devoting it to better purposes than that of war. He has been increasing human happiness, not diminishing human life. Yet, from the day that the rebels and royalists slew each other on it up to a recent period, that ground, and much of Northamptonshire, has remained the same. Here is its description by a writer thirty years ago:—

"The open field is extensive, and in as backward a state as it could be in Charles I.'s time, when the fatal battle was fought. The lower parts are moist, rough grass, with furze, rushes, and fern abounding; the rest of the field a strong, brown, deep loam, in the usual bean and wheat culture; pasture enclosures near the village, and a good many cows kept. The parish is as much in a state of nature as anything I have seen in the country. The avenues across the field are zigzag, as chance has directed, with hollows and sloughs unfilled, except with mire. The village contains a good many dwelling-houses and other buildings, all of which I observed built with mud and covered with thatch, except the church and two dwellings. The walls of many of the houses were apparently shivering under the pressure, and seemed to indicate that a small weight or force additional would convert them and their contents into a ruinous heap. Yet neither the soil nor the aspect are by any means contemptible."

The appearance of this place is much altered now; but many parts of Northamptonshire have remained the same as in the days of Charles I., even unto this day. The soil is generally good; for grazing it is exceedingly good. But agriculturists have established the fact elsewhere, that even the best grazing land would be more profitable if cultivated. Of course the breeding of cattle and sheep requires grazing farms; but the feeding of them is most decidedly obtained with the largest profit by cultivating crops, by economizing food, and by saving all the manures that can be made while feeding the cattle.

On Lord Spencer's farm at Brampton this is partly attended to; and on some other farms a movement is made in this direction. Still, with excellent soil, the farmers of this county are very profitlessly employed, both for themselves and landlords; and I do not expect it will be much otherwise with them until a new spirit is infused by giving them leases of their farms.

I found the rent of good land to be from 20s. to 30s. an acre, if not used for garden ground nor nurseries in the immediate vicinity of a town. Wages 9s. and 10s. a-week, except at Lord Spencer's, where they generally ran about 2s. a-week higher. I should say, however, that 10s. a-week is fully the average of that part of the country.

Some people do not attach the same importance to the improvement of the dwellings of the poor that I do; but they have not, perhaps, attended so much to the subject. A good cottage, a good garden, and a tasteful adornment with flowers, is worth all the county police for making people stay at home and cultivate good behaviour. It was intimated to me that the expense of building Lord Spencer's cottages was too great for general imitation. I did not ascertain what the expense was; but I understood the steward to say that L.2 : 10s. of annual rent would not pay the expense. This I can well believe. But, in most counties, the meanest hovels are rented as high as that. In most of the wretched villages of Dorsetshire, for instance, where the traveller sees the worst of houses and the poorest of labourers, the cottage rents are L.3 and L.4 a-year, with not a yard of garden ground.

But I hold that, apart from the mere expense of building, there is another question of expense; that is, of keeping a demoralized population in the old hovels; the expense of shifting them alternately from their hovels to the prisons or to the workhouses. With good gardens and allotments for the labourers, according to the size of their families, that they may have an anchor, as I may say, to hold on by; with good cottages, that they may have pride and pleasure in their homes, we would soon see a saving of expense and of loss to both farmers and landlords in prisons and workhouses.

I just now spoke of Dorsetshire as containing the worst houses and the poorest population. The poorest population is correct enough; but on calling to mind that there is on the other extremity of England a county called Northumberland, where but a few years ago the houses were worse than ever they have been in Dorsetshire, I must retract the superlative degree of badness from Dorset, the more so as, on many estates, the Northumberland hinds' houses are not changed one whit, save to the worse, up to this very day of writing.

But even where they have been building new houses, both in Northumberland and in the neighbouring counties of Scotland, particularly Berwickshire, they have only built mere sheds. On the estates of the princely Duke of Buccleuch in Dumfriesshire, new houses for the farming men have been built recently, and they have neither ceiling nor lofting of any kind. Neither are they plastered inside; neither have they any partitions, nor inside doors, nor cupboards, nor conveniences for any purpose whatever. There is nothing but the bare walls, about twenty-four feet long and twelve feet wide, inside measure, and seven feet high; one door in front, and a little square window. The walls are built of stone and mortar, and, as said before, are not plastered. Into that shed, with the bare roof above their heads, the Scotch hind and his family are crammed, men and women, young and old. And these are the houses which are the *new* dwellings of the hinds on the Duke of Buccleuch's farms.

Though Lord Spencer should do nothing more than he has already done, agriculture is deeply indebted to him for his advances in the breeding of cattle ; and humanity is not less indebted to him for his advances in the moral science of advancing the comforts and the virtues of the labourers.

Let us hope that his Lordship will take the lead in his county in improving the condition of the farmers and their style of cultivation, by reforming the tenures of the farms. Landlords need his example.

LETTERS FROM WILTSHIRE IN THE SUMMER OF 1845.

LETTER I.

Meeting of Labourers at Upavon.

THE first who spoke was David Keele, an elderly man, who was chairman on the occasion. I did not arrive in time to hear him address the meeting. Mr Westell, a schoolmaster, from Marlborough, was speaking when I arrived; and with him I afterwards found David Keele, and had some conversation with him. He seemed to be a sensible man of retiring manners. He is said to be a man of strict moral character, and a good labourer. He had once been at a labourers' meeting on the corn-law question in another village some months ago, and in consequence was discharged from his employment. He has been taken into work again. He was asked to come and be chairman at the Upavon meeting, as it was feared no labourer there would dare to make himself so prominent. And this was supposed, because twelve months ago the head agent of an estate there had said, in the name of himself and master, that no Anti-Corn-Law meeting should ever be held in Upavon; and, further, because it was threatened that this very meeting should be prevented. A consultation among the farmers and gentry was held, however, on the previous Saturday, and it was then resolved to let this take its course, and not to interfere with it.

When I got there, I saw a temporary stage raised against the gable of a cottage, and facing to an open space of ground in the centre of the village. A very large tree—elm, if I remember rightly—prodigious in trunk and branches, overshadowed the space ; and underneath it, and from it up to the cottage gable, there were at least one thousand men, women, and children standing. The men constituted about two-thirds of the whole, and the greater part were in smock-frocks or fustian coats, just as they had come from their work. Two policemen stood in one part of the crowd, and two more stood singly. David Keele sat on the little stage, wearing a clean white smock; but the crowd in front made it difficult for me to see him. The persons who had invited him to the meeting had undertaken to his wife that they would bring him safe home. She said she did not care how far he went out of her sight to do good, as she hoped the meeting was to do good; but it would be the end of her if anything happened to him.

His opening address was as follows—a reporter from the *Wiltshire Independent* being present to report:—

"He said he was glad to see so many of his fellow-labourers assembled. He wished it to be understood that it was not their intention to break the laws of the country, for whatever laws were made by their legislators they were bound to obey, as far as they could according to the dictates of their consciences. Neither did he wish them to break the laws of their masters; it was their duty to follow their employment diligently, and if their masters did not give them sufficient wages to support their families, that was no reason why they should leave their employment. If John, or Thomas, or Harry steals my shirt, that is no reason why I should steal his. They were met to speak of those arbitrary laws called the corn-laws; and he would ask their opponents, or any reasonable man, if the legislature issued a law which did not work according to just expectation, whether they had not a right to petition for its repeal? (Hear, hear.) It was the law of free-trade they were met to advocate—a law which would be every way beneficial to them, to their wives, and to their families. (Hear, hear.) It was very evident that distress existed among the labouring population; he knew it by experience, and he doubted not many of them did also. (Cries of 'Yes, yes, we feel it.') There is many a man who goes out to work with a little bit of bread, and after working all day, returns home to potatoes and salt. ('We don't get half enough of that.') Was it not right, then, that they should seek out for something better? The poor man had an equal right with the rich to attempt this, and to send his petitions to Parliament, to endeavour to get his grievances redressed. They would recollect the case of the four lepers, whom they read of in the Bible, that sat in the gate. They said, 'If we sit here we shall die, and if we go to the Assyrians perhaps they will save us alive; and if they kill us, we shall but die.' You and I (said Keele) are in the case of starvation, (cries of 'Hear, hear,' and 'That's true enough',) and if we remain quiet much longer, starved we shall be. If we petition Parliament, it is more than a peradventure that we shall be heard; and if we are not, we can but starve. (Cheers.) Our opponents, in my part of the country, serve the people like as the carters used to do the ploughboys when I was a boy. They would give the boys the whip, and threaten that they would give it them again if they told their parents; and so it went on from day to day. The case is the same with the labourers. Your masters say, If you come forward to tell your case you shall be turned out of employment, (Hear, hear,) and thus they keep you in fear; and you will never be better as long as you are kept down in this way. But if you come forward boldly and tell your case, you can't make it worse. ('That's true.') If the ploughboy had told his father of the carter, the carter would have been punished, and that is what he was afraid of. You are prevented coming forward by the arbitrary conduct of your opponents, (Hear, hear,) but fear not their frowns; they are in the hands of the Lord, and can only go so far as he permits. Always remember, however, that whatever law is issued by the Legislature we are bound to obey; whoever resists the powers that be resists the ordinances of God. It is the arbitrary corn-law that has done all the mischief; and we believe free-trade will be beneficial to ourselves and families. (Loud cheers.)"

After this Mr Westell spoke, and then William Perry, a labourer from Charlton, a village distant about a mile and a half, offered to make a statement. Perry, as I have since asertained, is a man of the best moral character, a steady good labourer, and deeply imbued with a sense of religion. He is, I think, a Baptist, but of that I am not sure, as I did not ask him. But having heard him speak reverentially of his hopes and trust being in God, I mentioned it to some of his neighbours, and they told me that he was a man of strict piety, who "never eat a mouthful of bread without asking a blessing on it;" who "never went to bed at night without kneeling down by the bed of his children to pray." I had a lengthened conversation with him and some of his neighbours two days after the meeting, but I then confined the subject to their social condition.

Perry appeared to me to be about 35 years of age. He was of middling stature, wore a straw hat, red neckerchief, and a fustian coat. The following was his address, as reported; and, having myself heard it, I think it is fairly reported, except, perhaps, that it does not convey to the reader that he was rather agitated at first, and hesitated so much as to make some of his neighbours call, "Don't be afeared to speak, William." It was to this that he alluded in saying that he had no reason to be afraid to speak. The report proceeds thus:—

"William Perry, a labourer, living at Charlton, then said he was come forward to speak to his fellow labourers, and he had no reason to be ashamed to speak before any man. He had five children, the eldest ten years of age, the others of the age of 8, 6, 4, and 3. He had 7s. per week to maintain his family. If any person present could tell him how to manage this for all to have enough he should be glad. There were 21 meals to be provided out of 1s., leaving no provision for clothes, firing, candles, and soap! When he came home, two or three of the children were generally going to bed, but when he came in, they began crying, 'Father, bring me up a piece of bread.' He had often heard this cry during the winter, and even within the last week. What could he do?—he had no bread to give them. Then there was rent and shoes to be paid for at Michaelmas. How could he do this in an honest manner? His desire was to live honestly, in a godly way, but he could not do it. Perhaps he met a man to whom he owed money; of course he did not like to meet him; these were not the feelings of an honest man; but what could he do? If there were not some good and charitable people in the country he should be starved. (Voices—'The same here,' and ''Tis too true.') He was thankful God had spared him and his family to the present moment. This day he had walked three miles and a half to his work. He took a bit of bread with him, and had a drink of water; and had a little when he got home. ('We all know that's true.' A voice—'What makes you tremble so?') If, said Perry, I had been home to a good supper and a quart of good ale, I should not tremble. He wished every labouring man to have three or four acres of land at the same rent as the farmers gave. They would pay this, and gladly. (Loud cheers, and cries of 'Yes, yes; and we would give a little more than that.') Yes, said Perry, we don't mind 10s. an acre more. (This speech was received with loud marks of applause, and repeated confirmations of the truth of the statements contained in it.)"

Next came a labourer, also of Charlton, named Ozias Seeley. His address is not reported, nor was it easy to do so, as it was rather long, and not very well connected. It took well with his hearers, who understood the topics introduced. This man, it seems, some years ago was a widower, with a family of children. He then married a widow and children; and now they had a third family, in all seventeen children, eight of whom were, during the winter dependent on his wages for support. His address was a mixture of the pathetic and ludicrous. He told of how he had one night in the previous week had only two potatoes in the house, and how eight children "scrambled" for them for supper over forms, stools, &c.

Here I may remark that, owing to the unmarried men receiving the inferior wages of 3s. a-week in winter and only 4s. and 5s. in summer; and, also, as they are most commonly sent to the workhouse to prevent men with families being sent there, they strive to get married as soon as they can; and, if a young man finds a widow with children willing to have him, he involves himself eagerly with a ready-made family, that he may not be compelled to go again to the workhouse. Moreover, the inferior payment of the young men renders a provision for marriage by economy and good conduct utterly out of the question. Hence they rush into marriage without furniture, or a lodging, or clothes, or without any hope but that of soon having a family, which will compel the farmers to give them employment.

All the worst features of the old poor-law are retained here and the best banished. At the meeting complaint was made of the parish-road system common here, of men getting relief from the parish by being sent to work at under wages.

Several little incidents attracted my attention. One of the speakers was telling the labourers that they must *tell* their masters this and they must *tell* their masters that. A labourer called out, "But how be we? Masters never gives us a chance to speak to them." This was subsequently explained to me to mean that some of the farmers always communicated through the bailiff with their men; never spoke to them themselves. Again, there was a point made by one of the speakers, which seemed to be well understood, about "pitting potatoes," to keep them until required. On inquiry I found this to refer to a farmer who had said that he did with his labourers as he did with his potatoes: he did not keep all the potatoes out for use every day; and he did not, like some farmers, try to find work for the men all the year round. When he did not need them he put them in the workhouse until they were needed.

All such topics as had bitterness in them against certain local ruling powers were warmly welcomed; and I could not help feeling, and also saying, that I thought such topics were most improperly dwelt upon by some of the speakers.

I was glad to hear that the bulk of the men assembled gave earnest and loud shouts of "No, no!" when they were asked if they would ever again submit to be marched into Devizes at an election to drown the voices of any of the candidates. It seems that from this very place, at the last Devizes election, more than a thousand men, many of them those comprising the Upavon meeting, were paid a day's wages and supplied with beer to go into Devizes to make such a noise when the free-trade candidate or any of his friends offered to speak as to completely prevent him or them from being heard. They did this successfully, being marshalled and led on, and signalled to when to make a noise and when not, by the very agent and gentlemen near Upavon who threatened to prevent them from holding this meeting, and from making their grievances heard.

I saw a labourer the other day in the village of Charlton eating a rhubarb pudding. He kindly offered me a piece of it, which I declined. He again offered it, saying, "It be made of good flour and good rhubarb; I grew the rhubarb myself. The only thing as be against it is the want of sugar. Rhubarb want a good bit of sugar to make it sweet; and sugar be terrible hard to get by the like of we."

"You were one of the band of men," I said to him, "who went last year to Devizes to prevent the free-traders from being heard at the election; now, do you know that you prevented those men from being heard who would have told you how you might get sugar to your rhubarb puddings, and you did all you could to prevent them from getting sugar plentiful and cheap for you and such as you. Do you know that?"

"Why, you see," said the man, "it was not of our doing, as you may say; we was forced to it like. We had nobody to tell us what was right. And they said Mr Sotheron was a good sort of gentleman, and we was all to help him."

"Well," said I, "what would you have thought if a number of men had been brought to the Upavon meeting last night, paid a day's wages, and furnished with beer, to hollo and make a noise to drown the voices of such honest men as William Perry from being heard? Would you not have thought that those who did so were afraid to hear the truth, and afraid to let you who listened hear the truth?"

"Ah!" said the man, "we been told many times since the election that we did terribly bad to go there. They said we made terrible fools of ourselves."

This man's remark relative to Mr Sotheron, one of the county members, is, I believe, well founded. That gentleman is highly spoken of as a kind-hearted, good man, and as such he must surely disapprove of the means taken to stifle all discussion upon the momentous question which gave that election all its importance.

LETTER II.

It does not follow that every poor man down here is poor despite his efforts to the contrary. Some are quite willing to shift on any way rather than work. One of these spoke rather candidly to me. He said, "What we wants, master, is victuals and drink, and a little work—ever so little work." The listeners exclaimed, "That be just your fit."

The land about Charlton is the property of Lord Normanton, so remarkable for his game-preserves thirty miles further down the country. He has not had this estate long, and there is no game preserved on it. I asked some men if there was, and they said no, they wished there was. They said they would not be so hard run up for victuals then. "But the gaol," said I; "you might be caught and sent to gaol?"—"Well," they replied, "the gaol itself ben't so bad as the workhouse; and better do anything than starve."

Having ascertained that William Perry was a man of good character, I took occasion to see him and some others, to hear from their own lips an account of their income, expenditure, &c.

First I went to Perry's house. This was on the day after the meeting, at about twelve o'clock. Perry, being with other five men at a distant part of the farm mowing, did not come home to dinner. They had bread and cheese and a bottle of ale (small beer) with them. It must be always borne in mind that in Wiltshire and the west the liquors which in London are called strong ale are called beer; and the small beer or table beer of London is ale in Wiltshire. Thus Perry in his address, speaking of his desire to have a "quart of good ale" to his supper, meant a quart of good small beer.

I saw his wife and some of his children. She told me that Mr W. the farmer for whom Perry worked, had been to her in the morning, and complained that her husband should have gone to the meeting on the previous night. And then asked if she meant to say that she and her family were badly off? She told him yes; that there were seven of them—the eldest child only ten years old, and that a girl—who could not go out to do anything; and they had only 7s. a-week to pay house rent and get food and clothes.

Mr W. then reminded her that she herself might have been at out-field work when she did not go. The woman told me that she replied that she was, with so many young children, not always able to go out to work in the fields. Whereupon Mr W. told her that she must go out that afternoon; that he needed hands to the hay; and that, since they complained of poverty, she must go out and work or her husband must leave his employment. He then repeated what he had before said, that "he wished he could only find out which of his men it was that spoke first at the meeting; he would find means to make them regret it."

The woman told me this; and subsequently Perry himself. And both he and his neighbours said that, had any of them gone to the meeting prepared to tell their grievances, all might have done so, and more would have done so than did. They said it could do them no harm publishing what had occurred; they thought they were as bad as they could be.

Perry's wife was accordingly out at work in the afternoon. He and the five other men were mowing vetches—the clover of last year having failed for hay this year, Mr W. was making hay of the vetches. The men told me that when they asked how much an acre they were to have, he said 1s. 6d. They said they could not do it at that; and at last they went to work without any bargain. They said they would try to get 2s. per acre if they could, but perhaps he would only give them 1s. 6d.

This is one of Lord Normanton's farms. This tenant has not been long in occupation of it. He manages the land much better than some of the farmers near him. He may pay low wages—yet not lower than others; but he employs everybody he can get at this season of the year in keeping the farm clear and orderly. His crops look splendid. If anything is what it should not be, the wheat is too thick. It seems as if it would suffocat itself. Thick sowing, I understand, is common thereabout; but it is surely a great loss both of seed and of crop.

The chalky downs which rise above the village have rich crops of fine dark-bladed wheat upon them. Mr W.'s farm extends between three and four miles into Salisbury Plain. A portion of it on the plain was broken up two or three years ago, and has borne heavy crops every year since. Last year the crop was of the prodigious magnitude of fifteen and sixteen sacks of wheat to the acre, and the wheat, as also the straw, of superior quality.

Talking of this, the men who reaped it said they had to walk three and a half miles out to the downs in the morning, and the same back at night, and reaped that prodigiously heavy crop at 8s. per acre.

If any of these statements are incorrect I shall be glad to publish a correction from Mr W. himself. But I believe them to be correct; and, moreover, when he and his neighbours do all they can to prohibit inquiry and stifle complaints, and still ask the public for the thing called "protection" to themselves, they must allow us to publish such statements as we find presented to us.

One great grievance of the labourers is, that there being such large farms, and consequently so few farmers, two or three of the latter rule a whole parish. If a man gives the slightest offence to his master he is paid away, and a message is sent to the other farmers not to employ him; and he is not employed save at hay time or harvest, when they cannot do without him.

If large farms are to continue and the corn-law also; or rather, if the smaller farms are to be swallowed up by the larger ones, as is yearly the case now, what do the farmers expect to do with their families? They cannot get farms to their sons, nor get farming husbands to all their daughters. Must they not go into trade? or follow some profession? Whether has the farmer with 1000 acres and a large family most interest in the corn-law, which, in seasons like the last winter and spring, starves his stock, or in a fine flourishing trade which will afford outlets for his family?

Men of fewer years than forty have worked in the parish of Charlton when there were six farmers in it; and a man still living there remembers when there were fifteen farmers. Now there are only two; and now the labourers are worse off and fewer of them employed than at any former time.

LETTER III.

Diseased Meat sent to London—Causes thereof.

July 5, 1845.

In one of the many villages which occupy the fertile valleys beskirting the great range of sheepwalks known as Salisbury Plain, I met a person a few days ago, who, in the first three minutes of our conversation, told me that he was a general dealer in sheep, cows, pigs, and any other sort of animals that offered a fair chance of profit. And, as a return for this information, he at once demanded to know what I was, who I was, and where I came from. I told him I had come from London; but had not time to say more, when he asked if I knew a certain salesman in London whom he named. I said no. Upon which he rejoined, "It be well you ben't known to he; he'd a done ye as he have done me."

Starting upon this topic, he went on to tell how he had sent some lots of sheep to London for sale, and how this salesman had alleged that they did not fetch more money than paid the expense of transit and the commission for selling them. He did not, however, tell me all the facts of these transactions ; and, as they seemed to me to be of public interest, I made further inquiries. The result of the inquiries shewed the case to be as follows :—

That all the sheep were diseased ; that some of the lots were so bad that the salesman dared not expose them in Smithfield market ; that they were not even taken into London as live animals ; but were sold and killed somewhere in the suburbs, and taken into town in the carcase, and there sold at a low price in some of the low districts, where filth and fever and poverty associate with the meanest kinds of food.

I farther found that, though at all times the dealers in diseased meat in London can get supplies from dealers of the same stamp in the country to some extent, the supply of carrion has been this year very large, particularly from Dorset, Hants, Surry, and Sussex.

The dealer with whom I was first in conversation was by no means the only one in his district of six or eight miles ; but even he had during this spring sent such large supplies of the famished, the diseased, and the dying—sometimes the dead—that his salesman at last found them unsaleable save as absolute carrion, and that therefore he could not return any payment for them.

Coming over the extensive sheepwalks, which extend from the farm-land in the valleys rearwards upon Salisbury Plain, I had ample demonstration that the flocks were in a pitiable state. I saw them in that district before some of them were clipped, and all the unclipped ones—the ewes more especially —were ragged and ill-fleeced ; while perhaps six out of every score had bare spots on them from which the wool had literally dropped off. And again the flocks that were clipped shewed bare, scraggy carcases, painful to look upon.

And this was the case, though the downs were greener and in finer condition (so the shepherds told me) than they had been for some years. The starvation had been in the winter and spring, and its effect promised to last not only throughout the summer, but into succeeding years. First, because the condition of the breeding flocks, as breeders, was deteriorated. Secondly, because the cows and farm-yard stock had been robbed of their hay and straw to keep the flocks alive, by which means the cultivated fields were defrauded of manure which should have been made in the farm-yard. And, finally, because many farmers had been paying more cash for hay than was actually their own, to keep the flocks alive; by which means they are crippled, and will be so for a considerable time to come, in all their movements—marred in many of their designs.

All of which are the results of that "protection to agriculture," which only intends to restrict the supply of human food, but which does so by restricting the supply of sheep, and cow, and swine, and horse food as well.

LETTER IV.

Fallacies about the Price of Hay.—The Isle of Wight.

In continuation of the foregoing subject I may draw notice to one of the reasons urged at a meeting in the Isle of Wight, the other day, why there should not be a railway in that island. As to the propriety or impropriety of an Isle of Wight railway I know nothing and care nothing. Were I resident there I might, if a despiser of trade and tradesmen, be one of the objectors to the intrusion of railways into that place of quiet retreat. I allude to the matter only because of the statement made by Colonel Harcourt to the farmers present at the meeting, urging them, for the sake of the high prices of hay and corn, not to favour the introduction of the railway. The colonel goes on the old fallacy that high prices and scarcity are the best for farmers. At the present time the Hampshire farmers will not believe that doctrine as regards hay. The colonel is thus reported:—

"He said that, for the last twelve months, he had paid L.6 and L.7 for a load of hay, and L.5 or L.6 for a load of straw, while the prices were only half that in the London market. Would the farmers wish to see their prices reduced so low as that? If so, they should vote for the railway?"

The colonel is not correct in saying "the prices were only half that in the London market." The prices, according to quality and kind, have ruled in London, from L.4 : 10s. to L.6. But the matter of fact can answer for itself; it is the inference which the colonel draws from the alleged difference in the prices of hay in London and in the Isle of Wight that I write of. The Wight is a part of Hampshire, and partakes in almost all things of the fate of Hampshire. It has some rich meadows, producing, says a "Statistical Description," from "one to twelve tons of hay per acre." The other crops for cattle and sheep feeding are "clover, turnips, vetches, ryegrass, and trefoil." The same authority says, "The chief grains cultivated are wheat, barley, oats, peas, and beans. The wheat produced in the southern parts is about twenty-four bushels per acre, and in the northern about eighteen bushels. The production of barley per acre is averaged at thirty bushels and oats at thirty-five bushels." And then it is stated that the island produces considerably more than its consumption. " The downs," continues the statist, " stretching across the island, furnish excellent pasturage for sheep, the number fed thereon being computed at 47,000, sending 5000 lambs annually to the London market."

In all these respects the Isle of Wight is much the same as the rest of Hampshire. There may be a difference in the size of the farms. In the middle and northern parts of Hampshire the farms are very large, running from 1000 to 2000 acres of arable land. In the Isle of Wight they are from 100 to 500 acres, a few being 800. But the condition of the farmers, their soils, products, and style of cultivation, are similar throughout the whole of that great county. And, taking it as a whole, its farmers have paid and are paying a fearful penalty in the deteriorated condition of their flocks and cattle for the fancied advantages of the price of hay being L.6 and L.7 per load. Low as the condition of stock is in Wiltshire, from farm-yard famine, and from that " protection" to the farmer which locks his gates against foreign provender, cheap and profitable for his unfed sheep and pigs and cattle, the condition of stock is still lower in parts of Hampshire. I went over some farms the other day in Hampshire, where sheep and cattle have died, and are still dying. One farmer, with a flock of 1200 sheep, assured me that his loss this year upon that flock—to say nothing of the ultimate loss arising from the absence of profit—but his absolute loss up to clipping time, inclusive of deficient wool, was equal to one year's rent. His rent, I was informed, was about L.800 per annum. Now this farmer did not buy hay; he made his own last out as best he could. He did not buy it, simply because it was L.6 per load.

So much for the statement addressed to the farmers in opposition to the Isle of Wight railway, that those of them who wanted hay reduced from L.6 and L.7 per load to " half of that sum, the price in London," might vote for the railway.

Here, perhaps, I should drop this part of the subject; but it occurs to me that a few more remarks, suggested by Colonel Harcourt's opposition to the railway, may not be misplaced.

He either meant that the railway would displace the use of horses in the Wight, and so reduce the consumption and the price of hay, or that hay was to be brought into the island to make it more plentiful and cheap. This last the railway could not by any possibility do, as it is confined to the island itself. He must have meant that horses would be displaced. But if this argument were sound, hay should have been cheap all through Hampshire and Wilts, the South Western line being on one side and the Great Western on the other, instead of which, though many coaches have ceased to run through such towns as Andover, Basingstoke, Salisbury, and Winchester, hay has been as high-priced there as in the Isle of Wight.

What the inference to be drawn from that article being but half the price in London that it is in the Wight—supposing the assertion to have been true, which it is not—is by no means clear. If it is meant that there are fewer horses in London now than formerly, because of railways, to consume hay, and that therefore it is cheap, the colonel is in a deep delusion; the number of horses in London is vastly increased every year. At the present time this number exceeds that of any former year. So in many other towns connected with railways.

But the question at issue between us and such gentlemen as Colonel Harcourt, who says it is good for the farmers to have hay at L.6 and L.7 per load, is simply whether it be good or not to have it at that price. The statements published in this paper last week and this week may be sufficient at present to prove that the scarcity and dearness of hay do service to nobody, but much mischief.

LETTER V.

Salisbury Plain.

It is far from being correct to call the extensive region of Salisbury Plain "waste land." All the dells and valleys which intersect it are cultivated. But even the higher levels which are not under cultivation are not waste. At this season of the year the beautiful herbage of these downs is most delightful. The wild thyme variegates the green grass, and both are kept down short and soft, as if ten or fifteen miles of country were covered with a soft carpet. The freshness of the herbage is alike sweet and nourishing to the native sheep and seductive to the loitering stranger. At no very distant time the "plain" extended from Winchester in the east to Salisbury, twenty-four miles; from Salisbury to Dorchester and Weymouth, west and south-west, twenty-two and twenty-eight miles. The breadth from north to south was about thirty to thirty-five miles. But this great district was not a uniform plain. It is intersected in all directions by hollows, called "bournes," with streams in them, and several hollows that have no regular streams, but through which there sometimes come torrents of water. A village called Shrewton, situated in one of these waterless bournes, was visited with a sudden flood a few years ago, and almost all swept away. It stands in the hollow of a wide though shallow bason, into which the rain poured and the melting snow accumulated; and out of which the rain made egress by swelling up to the cottages of Shrewton, into the doors, into the windows, floating the furniture, drowning, or threatening to drown, people in their beds, if they would not get up to the lofts and upon the rafters; and then, when it got them there, undermining the walls and hurling them down into universal wreck, daring the outlookers on the high ground to bring in the heavy waggons and horses to the rescue. It was a terrible catastrophe; and maimed creatures who still survive are witnesses, yet they say they cannot tell—no, they shake their heads and say tongue cannot tell—how awful it was.

There is some fine rich land here under cultivation. The farmers are few, the hands employed few, wages low—seven shillings per week—and the farms very large: one person occupies 4000 acres.

Many people who never saw Salisbury Plain have heard of its dreariness to travellers; its cutting winds; its cold drizzling rain; its killing of the weary-footed and wrapping them in winding sheets of snow; its slaying man by the hands of man—the robbed by the robber—and leaving to solitary crows the unburied flesh for which it could not even afford burial. Travellers have told stories of Salisbury Plain until the listeners have shivered with thoughts of cold before the warmest fires, and crouched together for fear in the bravest companies.

And travellers, and those who tell their tales, may be right in all such dismal reminiscences; but it is not always gloomy on Salisbury Plain. I came over it from the direction of Devizes towards Salisbury, not by the public road, but on the untracked greenness, on the carpet of grassy velvet and wild thyme, nearly twenty miles in length, which, for its beauty and the fresh air upon it, and the odour that filled the air, one might imagine had been spread on that high ground—the level nearest heaven—for angels to tread upon. It was a warm day in June. Occasional divergencies to the brow of the high levels enabled me to look down upon the haymakers in the meadows and farm-fields below, and upon the corn-fields full of growth, and the villages in endless succession in the valleys, and the shady trees that obscured the villages; and the church steeples which at every mile or less reached, some of them could hardly reach, above the trees; and upon the little river which threaded its way through the clustering cottages and trees, and round the village churches, and behind the graveyards out of sight, as if it had found the dead there, and had gone with them to eternity. It was a day upon which the village bells were rung in honour of the Queen of England; in honour of that day when flowery June gave to England a young Queen.

Up came the tinkling sounds from the steeples among the trees, through the cawing rooks, across the meadows, and over the haymakers; not upon the breeze, for there was no breeze, June had no breath that day to come up the steep hill-sides; in the haymaking meadows below and in the gardens it was more than she could do to give breath to the hard workers and the idle loiterers; still the merry sound of bells came up and went over the broad downs, until they died away in shepherd's ears, telling them to sleep on in the warm sun. This was June, and this was England.

How easy to fancy and persuade one's self to believe that it is here that true happiness is to be found on earth, if earth has happiness at all! The clear blue sky above; the rich green fields below; the village churches with their bells; the village cottages with their blowing roses clinging to the walls; wells of pure spring-water issuing from below the chalky hills, and the meandering rivulet in the meadows; the meadows with cows upon them, the cows giving the richest of milk, and the milk yielding the sweetest of butter. How easy, sitting on the cool elevation of the grassy downs, to be poetical about the new-mown hay, its odour scenting the breath of June; and the hedges encircling the fields bestudded and sweetened with honeysuckles and enlivened with the songs of birds!

But look at those mowers—William Perry is one of them. He is not in a worse condition than others; he is in a better condition than many, for he is a sober and industrious, hard-working man. He goes home to yonder cottage with the flowery front. He has but 7s. per week, pays a shilling for rent, a shilling for fuel, and has five children and their mother to supply with food and clothing, and with the requisites always wanted to mend clothing with the remainder. Having five children under ten years of age, he has, or fancies he has, a right by the poor law to relief for one of them. He applies for that relief, (he did so last winter,) and is told, after some demurring, that he may send one of them into the workhouse. He goes home—home to that cottage of which a poet would say, "If there's peace to be found in the world, a heart that is humble might hope for it here." He tells the children, and tells their mother, that one of them is to go to the workhouse, "there ben't enough of bread for them all at home." "One says," (I quote his own words to me,) "Oh, father, don't send me ;" and another says, "Oh, father, don't send me ;" and their mother says, "I be sure any one of them will break their heart if they go." The father says, "But what be us to do? we be without enough of bread now, and tatoes be all gone, or about; what be us to do?" Then the oldest girl says, "Oh, don't send me, I be willing to eat less bread not to go, and Billy says he be the same; father, we will not cry for bread when we be hungry no more, so be's us ben't sent to the union." "Then," said the father to me, "what could I do with them?" (Speaking in tears.) "I could only take up the little dears in my arms one after t'other, and kiss them and say, No, my loves, father be 'termined to go without bread himself rather than part with you." And he continued, "If I ben't going without bread every day, I goes most days, and works hard without enough." Many are the cases similar to this man's in every one of the villages.

Another of those men doing the "Poetical" among the odoriferous hay would tell us—he told me—that, during last winter, out of his 7s. per week he paid 50s. for potatoes, purchasing them at great disadvantage in small quantities. He says, had he been allowed 50s. worth of land to grow potatoes, he would have had, though paying 10s. per acre for it more than the farmers pay, three times as many potatoes, "or double as many potatoes, with some bread corn," as he could buy for 50s. last winter. "But," said he, and "But," said several who heard him, "they has more land than they knows what to do with, more, some of them says, than they can get profit out of, and yet they be afeared to let me have a lug." (perch.) Surely those "merry bells of England" would not ring less joyously, nor the church stand less secure, nor the cornfields be less luxuriant, nor the scene before us be less English—not even less poetical—if those labourers were somewhat better fed and better clad and lodged? They grow rhubarb in their little gardens, and gooseberries. They would make puddings and tarts, but they are without sugar. Cuba, and Porto Rico, and Brazil offer them sugar cheap and good. "No," says some Gladstone, in ostentatious godliness, "the sugar of these countries is grown by slaves; we must not encourage slavery."

But what are those men and women in this Wiltshire valley? If they obey not the master that owns them, he may doom them to starvation or shut them up in the workhouse—man and wife, children and mother separated? Talk not of slaves and slave labour, serfs and serf labour. It is not yet three weeks since a Wiltshire newspaper, commenting on the recent corn-law debate in Parliament, repeated the absurd untruth —repeated it in the face of a thousand facts and proofs to the contrary—that the object of the corn-law repealers was to lower wages by lowering the price of food; that newspaper reported this in the face of the well-known fact that, with cheapness of provisions, wages have risen, wherever there is not a great superabundance of population, as in Wiltshire; and though knowing that in Wiltshire young men, working at 5s. per week, have been offered within these last two months 14s., 16s., and 18s. per week to go into the county of Durham and parts of Yorkshire as farm labourers, the labourers there having gone to other employments. And speaking of serf labour and of serfs, the same paper, on the same occasion, said that the dearness of labour in England and the cheapness of serf labour on the continent of Europe would, under a system of free-trade, make cultivation of land in England impossible. Yet what says the "Quarterly Review?" One English labourer will mow an acre of grass in the same time which six Russian serfs would take to mow it. In the valley of the Avon in Wilts, into which, from the downs, we have now, by supposition, been looking, grass is mown at the following rates:—1s. 6d. per acre for light field grass; 2s. per acre for heavy field grass; 2s. 6d. per acre for good meadows; and 3s. per acre for the very heaviest meadows. The hay mown at 2s. per acre is, in ordinary years, worth L.7—this year it is worth from L.12 to L.14. Therefore, in ordinary years, the Englishman whose labour is said to be so dear gets 2s. out of the grass that is worth L.7; and out of this he maintains himself and family. Whereas, out of the produce of the same breadth of land, six Russian or Polish serfs individually, and with their families, have to be maintained out of the land, at the expense of the lord who owns both them and the land. Taking the different counties of England and comparing them, we find the highest paid labour to be the cheapest labour; and so also when comparing the different countries of the world.

A JOURNEY IN SUSSEX.

The rent of land in the Midhurst district of Sussex has not advanced much during the last thirty or forty years. Perhaps it was quite as high forty years ago as now, but of this I could get no distinct information. If a stranger inquires of a farmer what he pays for his land, and what his predecessor paid, he will not readily get an answer, neither here nor elsewhere. The farmers are apt to suspect that you have some design upon them—some intention of bidding for their farms over their heads. The insecurity of their tenures and the great competition for farms—the increasing number of farmers and the decreased number of farms—render them naturally jealous of persons who put questions to them about the produce of the land and the rent they pay for it.

But though rent may have remained the same as thirty or forty years ago—though it be even something an acre less—it is in reality higher, taking the prices of corn as the standard. And it is a matter of regret that farmers should be so unwilling to see that, while each successive corn-law has fixed upon a lower and a lower price—first 80s., then 70s., then 64s., then 56s. as the prices at which the farmer might afford to sell his corn—the makers of those laws never proposed an adjustment of rent to such prices. This one fact, or series of facts, should alone make farmers question if there is any real friendship evinced towards them by those who say they are "farmers' friends."

It struck me as worthy of remark, that in this hilly part of Sussex, as well as on the richer soils lying level between the downs and the sea, the farmers were laying out all their manure to dry in the fields. It was dry weather, high winds, without a shower of rain, for three weeks together, and all that time I saw the farm-yard dung carted out, and laid in little heaps; and fields which were dotted with these heaps when I went first into the county still retained them when I left, excepting in some cases where the dung had been spread out, as if to dry more effectually.

What a curious thing it is that the ammonia brought from the coast of Africa in the guano should be so carefully preserved, so eagerly sought after, so dearly paid for, and that the identical same substance, the ammonia of the stable-yard, should be given to the withering winds and the scorching sun.

Mr Brown (Lord Egmont's steward) has said that nothing will teach tenants but difficulties—nothing will stir them up to good farming but distress. I do not believe Mr Brown. A tenant will farm better if he can pay his rent easily than if he has a hard struggle to pay it. But to me it would be amazing if they farmed well when they are liable to be ordered to leave their farms at any time a landlord bids them, liable to be told what men they shall employ and what not, as is the case now.

THE GAME AND THE GAMEKEEPERS.

I went through Cowdray Park one day, and walked to Petworth, six miles from Midhurst. Before I had gone many hundred yards beyond the park, the bottoms of the fences on each side of the road shewed that rabbits and hares were frequent visitors to the fields within the hedges. Over a space of road not quite two miles and a half I counted between five and six hundred *runs* into and out of the different fields. While counting them I met a farmer who owns some fields and rents a farm close by. He told me that from the fields he owned he had not this year got more barley than would pay seed, labour, and poor-rates; had he been obliged to pay rent for that land he said he must have paid it entirely out of his capital, or have been distrained upon. I remarked to him that, the land being his own, he was surely at liberty to kill the rabbits upon it. He replied that he was; but it mattered little what he did, when his neighbours on each side of him bred the rabbits which came to him to be fed. "But," said he, "they be getting pretty well sick on't." And he went on to prove to me that rabbits and hares, though let at a good rent to gentlemen who shoot them, or though sold in the market by those who feed them, are not profitable: they eat a great deal; but they destroy—he thought he could prove it to any one's satisfaction—twice as much as they eat. He told me, and so did some other farmers, that Colonel Wyndham of Petworth did not do them so much harm as a preserver of game. He turned his attention more to foxes. They said the colonel took most interest in breeding, and then hunting and killing foxes; and that where foxes were numerous the rabbits and hares would be kept within bounds.

It was to the north of this road to Petworth, about three miles from where I then stood, that some of the Cowdray tenants were obliged to kindle fires around their turnip-fields last year to frighten off the hares. One of these tenants alleges that he suffered damage from the game last year to the amount of L.70. The size of his farm I could not ascertain precisely, but it is not above 200 acres. This year he alleges a loss of L.20 in one field. He has had it valued, and the valuers give that sum as the amount of damage done. The gentleman who rents the game on this part of the estate from Lord Egmont has offered L.6 for the damage. The tenant had refused to take it; but he had no remedy save at great expense, and then it was doubtful if he would succeed in recovering higher damages. He was, however, leaving his farm. And I was informed of several others who had been told that they were at liberty to go if they did not like their bargains. The renter of the game, and not the landlord, employs the gamekeepers in these outlying districts. It is the business of these gamekeepers to have as much game for their masters as they possibly can; hence they and the farmers are not on the best of terms.

On the road between Cowdray Park and Petworth, where there were so many *runs* through the fences, I observed that almost every field had a gate formed of upright spars of wood nailed to the cross bars. These spars were about two inches apart, and were, when entire, a sufficient barrier to the rabits, but every one of the gates had one or more of these spars broken away at the bottom. I asked the reason why, and was told that the gamekeepers had broken them to let the rabbits and hares get more freely into and out of the turnip fields. There being so many patches of common, so many thickets of furze, and so many coppices in the neighbourhood, the farmers were obliged to resort to many schemes to defend themselves from the game; but the keepers generally took the part of the game and of its owners against the farmer.

WHAT IS MACHINERY ?

Petworth is a small town, belonging to the Wyndham estate, containing, with its parish, 3364 inhabitants. Its streets are narrow, intricate, and indifferently paved, but its situation is lovely, on the rising bosom of a beautiful country. Close behind it, and looking over its head, is the park and residence of Colonel Wyndham, both of them extensive, pleasant, and fit to be inhabited by the noblest of the land.

The only thing that struck me at Petworth as noticeable, after looking at the handsome church, with a spire rarely equalled in elegance, was the House of Correction, and not the house itself so much as a board stuck up against the wall, painted and lettered. It set forth that a variety of articles could be bought at the house, the work of the prisoners, such as horse-clothes, girths, sacking, canvas, and other textile fabrics of a similar kind; and persons visiting Petworth were recommended to buy these in preference to what could be bought elsewhere, these being said to be *all woven by hand, and superior to anything made by machinery.* How long the woodcutters and farming men, who get lodgings in the house for poaching and pilfering, take to learn to make goods in this superior style I could not ascertain; but they must get long sentences if they learn to be such very superior weavers; and must be very extraordinary criminals indeed if they can make such articles without *machinery*, with bare teeth and nails.

Rents vary from 15s. to 30s. but 30s. including taxes, is a common rent for the average quality of land. Upon this barley is a more frequent crop than wheat; but there is fine wheat land in the lower grounds lying between the sandy heaths behind us and the chalky downs four miles in front of us. Some of that land is as high as L.2; and I have heard of some which, including rates, was little short of L.3 per acre; but this is an exception. Wages were commonly 9s. a-week on the farms; for every man that got 10s. a-week there was a man only getting 8s., taking all the estate into estimate, and a great many men were not employed at all.

HEYSHOT PARISH—BIRTHPLACE OF RICHARD COBDEN.

I went one day out of Midhurst in another direction, namely, to the south, whereas Petworth lay in the direction of east or north-east.

The sand hills, covered with heath, and in parts planted with scrubby trees, were more frequent on this side, and extended almost to the very bottom of the downs, interrupting that range of clayey soils which elsewhere bordered the base of the chalky ridge; and yet, amid these sandy heaths, there were spots of high fertility and great beauty. Here, again, I found the noble oak tree strong and healthy, enjoying himself on such soils as he would die upon in the north. Again I found the rabbit warrens and the game preserves on and under these sandy heaths; and again, wherever there was a farm-field, devastating inroads were made upon it by the game. Wherever there was a cottager's garden, complaints of the same kind were made.

At the distance of about two miles from Midhurst I descended from the heath and entered a narrow green lane, in which was a waggon track, hedged on each side by thriving thorns overhung with brambles, the brambles loaded with berries black and ripe. I came to a gate where a footpath led over a stile into the inside of a field, still going the same direction as the waggon track upon which I stood, but keeping the bank above, while the waggon track went down a cutting between the high banks of soft sandy rock, getting deeper and deeper as it went.

I continued in this lower way; found a little spring of clear water, which trickled in the wheel track, and went by its side until a level was reached, where it spread itself and made a mire across all the road knee-deep and more. From this it was necessary to climb to the bank, where the wisdom of the path that kept itself high and dry was demonstrated. But this soon descended to the level of the marshy road, only it did not wet itself. There was a brook, which at a short distance higher up drove a flour-mill, and over this brook the path crossed by a small wooden bridge; then it left the ravine in which the brook ran, and went direct forward to the south, having high ground thickly wooded on the left, and ground not quite so high, yet quite as thickly wooded, on the right.

This wood on the right soon ceased; and where it left off a garden and orchard and house occupied its place, and beyond these one or more farm fields were indistinctly seen.

The path was still in the hollow, but the hollow widened, and there was an acre or two of a grassy green. In the centre of this green stood a waggon-shed, and at the waggon-shed I stood for some minutes, considering whether I would turn off and go up to the house. I knew nobody lived there but working people; but, for some cause or other which I cannot account for, I feel always a diffidence, as if doing something wrong, when going to a working man's house unbidden and without business that particularly and immediately concerns him. I have heard it complained that those who are in the habit of visiting the houses of the poor do so with an air of freedom that is highly offensive; and I believe there are some such people; but, so far from everybody behaving in that way, I have often stood near a labourer's cottage, or have walked past it and back again, and past it once more, all the time as if looking at something else, before I could muster sufficient assurance to go in. When a man is met in a field at work or on the road breaking stones, it is easy to talk to him. The hardness of the stones he is breaking is an introduction immediately to all you want to know. You remark that they are either very hard, or rather too soft for road metal, and he, ten to one, answers that "they be too hard to make a living from; too hard to get enough of bread out of for a family." The information of the wages he earns, the number of his children, and the kind of food he can afford to eat, follow this as naturally and as easily as you can desire.

So also, when in the cottage where there is a family of children, they retreat from a stranger and get behind their mother, or stand up in a corner. But a few pence and kind words never fail to bring them out and elicit their names, ages, and so forth. I never addressed them thus with any other design than to make them feel at ease, and to gratify a natural feeling of my own which takes delight in their friendship; but I would advise those whose sole object is to obtain information from the mother not to overlook the children. In a great majority of cases the wives of farm-labourers introduce the subject of their incomings and outgoings, which I am unwilling to speak of first, because I am speaking to a child whose toes are out of its shoes, whose pinafore is torn, or whose clothing is otherwise scanty and much worn; and, unhappily, we may go over many miles of country, and across some entire counties, and not alight on a family where this is not the condition of the children's clothes. In these cases the mother very commonly makes a remark on the difficulty of getting clothes for them. Seeing you notice the children, she says, "Ah, poor dears, I had intended all summer to get some new things for them after harvest; but now winter is coming on, and I have not got them yet." Then she says she owed some rent, and that had to be paid out of her husband's harvest wages. It grieved her much to see her children going barefooted; but it was all they could do, even by selling the pig, which they should have kept to eat themselves, to pay the shoemaker for her husband's shoes, for he *must* have them to work in; and to pay for some other small things which they could not possibly do without, unless they went naked altogether.

I have almost always found a conversation of this kind arise out of an attempt to be friendly with the children. Two things ever ready to a mother's thoughts—the love of her offspring and the struggle she maintains with the world to fill their little mouths and clothe their little backs—are at once appealed to and excited by merely speaking to them, if they be any way ragged. But the pleasure of holding converse with innocence, with those whose souls came latest from Heaven—the mere pleasure of making them feel that the world does not contain such very bad men, as that every stranger should be one come to steal little children from their mothers and carry them away in bags, as even kind mothers will foolishly frighten them to a belief of—the mere pleasure of receiving and giving gratification has always secured to me a free and easy conversation with their parents, as soon as I got seated at their fireside.

But I have never been able to overcome the first difficulty of an introduction to a poor man's house with whom I had no business to transact and from whom I had no invitation. On the occasion now under narration, I stood a short while by the cart-shed on the green, gathering as I best could as much confidence as would introduce me to those who inhabited the old farmhouse, which, with a small garden before and a larger garden behind, stood about a hundred yards to my right.

I went up to it, and entering that part which had once been a scullery or back kitchen, and where a labourer and his family of wife and five children now lived, I inquired if this was Dunford, and was answered in the affirmative. A few observations about the transition of farmhouses into the dwellings of labourers, and the amalgamation of one farm with another—the making a few large farms out of many small ones—soon brought out the fact that the farm to which this house belonged was still of the same size, or nearly, as when "the late Mr Cobden occupied it." The farm itself was now occupied by a farmer who had a flour-mill, and who lived at the mill. The family in the kitchen paid L.3 a-year for their rent; and each of the others paid L.4. The garden was divided about equally among them; and was little more, if more at all, than a quarter of an acre. They got turf to burn, and some wood; but never had any coals. The wages were 9s. a-week; but the farmers of the parish had just had a meeting, and had given their men notice that they would be reduced to 8s. a-week. One reason for this reduction was, that they had all got allotments of land, and they could thus live cheaper.

W. A. told me, and on a subsequent day shewed me, that his allotment was at best of little value to him, and that this year it had been a loss. In the first place, it was a light sandy soil; next, it was three quarters of a mile from his house, and the nearest road by which he could convey manure to it was two miles; worst of all, it was part of a small field situated with plantations full of game on three sides of it, and a heath on which the game was also preserved on the fourth side of it. Everything which he sowed or planted upon it was eaten up by the game, save his potatoes, and they were also destroyed, less or more. I myself counted sixty and odd rabbit holes, mostly made by young rabbits learning to excavate, as young rabbits do, among the potatoes. He had sown peas, expecting a few dinners of green ones with a bit of bacon in the summer; but he only had in all about a gallon, where he should have had at least a bushel. This was entirely the result of the game. He had tried both last year and this to get some turnips and greens for the winter; every blade went to the rabbits. All his neighbours were in the same predicament, less or more. This land was rented from Colonel Wyndham of Petworth, and the game was his game.

But W. A. was rather worse conditioned this year than any of the others. The neighbouring farmer turned out his hogs into the wood to eat the acorns, and the hogs had got into the allotments; and W. A.'s quarter of an acre being the first met with, they had employed themselves a whole half day rooting up his potatoes with their snouts, and eating them.

He was not better situated with the hogs than with the game; there was no redress for the damage done by either of them. All he could do was to give up his allotment, and that he was about to do; for he said it was a hard thing that it should be no profit to him, and that wages should be falling a shilling a-week because it was said that the labourers could live cheaper having allotments.

The difficulty of getting manure to it operated in a twofold degree. It had been the custom for the farmers to cart home the turf for fuel to the labourers on condition of getting the ashes and the dunghills in return. If W. A.'s dunghill were taken to his allotment, it would not only cost the hire of a cart to take it round two miles of road, but he would have to pay for getting his turf carried home.

This turf is very inferior: the vegetable substance is exceedingly thin. The soil is nearly all sand, so that there is only a blaze of dry heath, and then the fire is nothing but black sand. Where there is a thick vegetable mould comprising the turf it is excellent fuel; but this is not the case in this part of Sussex.

W. A.'s wife told me that were it not for the potatoes they would die in the winter. "But, sir," said she, "how it hurts the constitution of a man to work hard on potatoes, and nothing else but a bit of dry bread." And then she told me that, on an average, there were four days of the week that they had nothing more than potatoes and dry bread. They said nothing evil of their master, far from it; he was as good as the best of them; but this was to what they were reduced in common with all other labourers whose families numbered the same as theirs. W. A.'s mother lived with them, and she had two shillings and sixpence a-week from the parish.

While I stayed in the house I observed what gave me great pain. His wife was preparing some little articles of baby linen; her slender stock, of even the merest fragmentary rags, was collected, from which to patch up one or two of those indispensable articles required for new-born babies. All that "over-production" of clothing, which ill-informed politicians sometimes complain of as coming from the factories, afforded nothing to her. Cheap as the fabrics of the loom now are, the cheapest of them were too dear for her. Her family could not get bread enough. The amount of her purchases in tea and sugar in a week was a penny for the one and a penny for the other. They had often to sit in the dark for want of a candle, because the money must first go for bread. Now there was another mouth coming to be filled, another back to be clothed; and though the world teems with human food, and though those who keep up the corn-law to keep up the prices of food in England, *all for the good of the labourers*, proclaim that the looms are making too much cloth, there was neither food nor clothing in waiting for the expected little stranger. At best, some of the veriest fragments of rags, more than worn out, were all that awaited it; and for food it would have to compete with those who had not now enough.

A little boy in this family, twelve years old, sometimes got a job to do. He got threepence a-day, and had been some days picking potatoes, where he got fourpence a-day. He sometimes drove the plough, for which he got threepence a-day. The hours at plough were eight; but his real hours on the farm altogether being twelve each day, I mention this only to remark that the earnings of a boy at such work for such hours will not supply him with the bread he could eat. I have a lively recollection of my keen appetite when I used to be in the fields for so many hours at this age.

HOW ALLOTMENTS OF LAND BECOME NECESSARY.

Heyshot is the name of the parish in which this farm is situated, and I proceeded to the village of Heyshot. The most remarkable circumstance which came to my knowledge there was the reduction of a class of small copyholders to pauperism by the united working of the reform act and the poor-law. The labouring men, who had homes and gardens and orchards of their own in the village, were obliged to part with them—all, save one or two, who have as yet withstood the means which are brought to bear against them. The farmers refuse to give work to such owners of houses and gardens save in harvest time, or when there may be a great scarcity of hands, which seldom happens. These owners of houses and gardens thus find themselves without work; they cannot get parish relief until they have sold their houses and have spent the money; so, to get work, they have been obliged, one after another, to sell their houses. The money was not difficult to spend. Colonel Wyndham has bought the houses, and has managed to turn them into parliamentary franchises, over which he has the complete control.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND'S COUNTRY—1844.

Going down to Chichester, and from that to Bognor, I found the farms getting larger and the soil richer. Three, four, and five hundred acres were but moderate-sized farms there. It is a fine wheat soil, which seems to be fallowed once in every rotation of crops. The want of labour upon this land is very striking to a stranger, such as I was, the more so as there is a large union workhouse close by the Duke's estate, full of people, most of whom are able and willing to work.

I was told between Chichester and Bognor what is the reason that the farmers in that part are making so many complaints. I do not give the reason as my own, but simply as that given by a gentleman resident there. "I shall tell you, sir, why it is. The farmers have been ruined because wheat was once L.40 a-load. Had it never been so dear, they would have been more prosperous now. They became gentlemen all at once; they paid high rents, and yet they could live like gentlemen; they got their blood-horses, their gigs, their servants, and their greyhounds. Prices have come far below L.40 a-load, but they cannot get down their rents. And why? Because the present generation of them have been bred to be gentlemen, and gentlemen they will be. And what says the Duke of Richmond, who is landlord to so many of them just here? Why, he says this:—'If my tenants can cut such a dash as they do, with their gigs and silver-mounted harness, and blood-horses to ride on, and greyhounds with them when they ride, they cannot be in great distress; they must be able to pay their rents. If I have a farm to let, there are many of them all ready to offer for it. They offer a high rent, why should I not take it?'"

This may be true. But the Duke should understand that it is not the worth of the farm that makes them compete for it: it is their own numbers; they must get farms or be without the means of living. I am not one who would cavil at their being gentlemen. Every man has the right to live the life of a gentleman if he can do so honestly. The farmers may not be able to live so well and so easily as they did when wheat was L.40 a-load. But it is the rent-burden that wants reduction. It is the delusion of the corn-law which wants removal—the delusion that has led them to bid high rents in the expectancy of high prices, which high prices cannot be maintained but by the high prosperity of the consumers of food.

The rents are about L.2 in this district; but the poor-rates are heavy. The gentleman with whom I talked had no doubt but one-half of the whole labouring population would have to seek relief at the workhouse this winter. He remembered since there used to be seven and eight men employed on each 100 acres, that was when farms were smaller. Now the highest number was five to the 100 acres; and that number only on a very few farms.

I may remark, however, that the coast of Sussex was a great smuggling coast once, and the farm-labourers, over many miles inland, used to be in the pay of the smugglers; so that when a seizure was about to be made, in conveying contraband goods inwards, the labourers were ready on an alarm to turn out, with pitchforks or more deadly weapons, and help the smugglers. This was part of their employment.

I saw on the wall of a barn, which was near the road, two miles from Chichester, a board nailed up with this warning on it—"Man-traps and spring-guns set on every part of these premises." On inquiring why this should be put up—knowing, as I did, that no one was allowed to set "man-traps and spring-guns"—I was answered that everybody did not know that, and that there was no keeping corn from the labourers now-a-days, neither in the barns nor in the stacks. In reply to a question it was added that, in the first place, the morals of the population had not recovered the deterioration undergone in the days of smuggling; and, in the second place, there was neither work enough, nor wages to get food enough when there was work; and that hunger drove men to steal corn. One who had stolen some wheat at that place had been taken to prison, and had committed suicide, so desperate was his sense of misery.

On this farm of 300 acres the number of hands employed was five men and two boys. Some of the men were getting ten shillings a-week, but were afraid of a reduction. They had to pay two shillings a-week of cottage rent, and there was only a very small garden to the cottages.

I found it customary in some parishes to have the men who sought parish relief at work upon the roads. For instance, at Easebourne, near Midhurst, there were twenty of them working one week and lying out of work one week alternately, at the wages of nine shillings a fortnight. Most of these had large families; all of them were married. Some of them had allotments of land, and it was only by having these allotments that they could exist on four shillings and sixpence a-week. Thus the allotments, though good in themselves, if allied with full wages, are made instrumental to a depreciation of wages. In short, they are in this case made to reduce wages and to reduce the poor-rates at the same time. The number of persons who are in the workhouse at Easebourne is great for such a population, even though the married labourers be thus disposed of upon the roads.

It is certainly a curious question to inquire how such a population as this is to support that *home market* which the manufacturers are so often told is their best market, and the only one they should seek to sell in.

POOLE IN DORSETSHIRE IN 1843.

Leaving Wimborne once more, I proceeded towards Poole, by a road which, for the first four or five miles, turned neither right nor left, but which, skirted on each side with rows of Scotch firs and miles of heath, joyless and hopeless as any Scotch waste, led dully on until a marshy fringe of the sea, stretching far inland, turned it aside. Another couple of miles brought me to Poole, which I found to be a town possessing the following characteristics:—

Between six and seven thousand inhabitants, with empty houses for the accommodation of many more. Warehouses and workshops shut up, the unopened doors and shutters worn with weather, not with work. A spacious quay with water frontage deep and ample, and capable of being amplified to any extent. Ships of various tonnage, barques, brigs, schooners, smacks, sloops, and fishing boats laid up for want of trade; the seamen idly lounging about, save those belonging to the only vessel that had a cargo on board, and they were raising from the hold and selling by retail half a ton of coals to a farmer, who, with his cart, was on the quay. The farmer had three or four bundles of straw for sale, and sought to have a customer in the landlady of the —— inn, close by, who said she could not afford to buy them at his price, and he said he would have his beer and bread and cheese in the house if she bought the straw; if she did not, he must sell it somewhere else, and get his beer somewhere else, or take it home and go without beer, that he must, "for them be ticklish times."

Such was what I saw during half a day's wanderings in Poole, three or four hours of which time I spent upon that noble spacious quay, in which time I saw, and saw only, the shipmaster sell half a ton of coals, and this farmer, who told me he farmed 200 acres in Hampshire, try to sell his straw. I saw about a dozen ship-carpenters at work repairing an old vessel, and, on inquiry, learned that when that job was done they would probably be paid off; that, some years ago, there were several hundreds of them employed in Poole, and some of the finest vessels, of two and three, and four and five, hundred tons, launched there that ever navigated any sea. I found a cooper at work, doing a job at anything, as he said, to keep him in amusement, for he was not entirely dependent on work, though if he were he would not obtain it. He told me there were but five or six coopers in the town now half employed, while some years back there were above fifty with full employment.

The trade in Pool had once been the manufacture of sailcloth, rope, twine, nets, oilcloth, ship-building, wearing apparel, and the furnishing of all kinds of sea stores, as also extensive shipments of clay for potters' work. It was connected largely with the Newfoundland fisheries, and does yet a good deal of business, in the proper season, with the London fishmongers, chiefly in oysters; but all these branches of trade have decayed, and, save the last named, are dead or dying. How long London may be able, as the head of this great empire, to open, and eat, and enjoy its oysters, when the outports, like palsied limbs, are decaying or decayed, is a question which time can only solve, though reason may conjecture; but already is Poole lying on the brink of its 20,000 acres of inland water helpless to relieve itself, hopeless of all relief unless steps, speedy and well-directed, are taken to re-animate national commerce. Unbroken stillness pervades it, and at first sight, and upon first description, one might suppose it will have the privilege of dying quietly; but if the ear is applied attentively, and for a time, the sounds of internal commotion will be heard; uneasy sensations are following the days of ill-regulated prosperity, as fevered dreams follow great excesses. Men who were combined as a corporation to help each other and each other's friends did so, regardless of all consequences save immediate success. Present enjoyment was succeeded by ultimate adversity. They quarrelled, and are now quarrelling, about the spoil and the obligations to pay, and action at law is succeeding action, and threats of disclosure have followed threats, until all is disclosed, and the whole fabric of corporate combination and confidence and mutual patronage is broken up, with its secrets as openly revealed as is the vast breadth of Poole harbour at high water; while the discordant members, that were once bosom associates, are as unpleasantly fixed in difficulties as are the unlucky pleasure parties who, abandoned by the tide, make their way to shore through miles of Poole harbour mud.

Save the bickerings of those defunct corporations, and the unanimous grumble at the income tax, and the whisper which occasionally conveys to the ear that Mr Such-a-one, so long a Tory, and Mr Such-another, so long a Whig, are, now that parties are not what they were, changing their opinions, and are saying that nothing will save Poole but free-trade;" save these sounds, nothing disturbs the repose of that trade-stricken town; and, save the last sound, nothing that the town does for itself holds out a hope of redemption.

I received while there, from a gentleman who is a merchant and magistrate, the following account of the shipments of potters' clay from the harbour:—

In the four years preceding the present, there were shipped 30,000 to 35,000 tons per annum, two-thirds of which went to Liverpool for the Staffordshire potteries, employing about 350 vessels annually. During the three months ending 28th of February 1843, the amount shipped had been but half the average of the three corresponding months of each preceding year. But not only had the quantity decreased; the freights to Liverpool had decreased also from 13s. per ton in 1839 to 5s. 6d. and 5s. 9d. in 1843. The decrease had been gradual; 12s. in 1840, 7s. 6d. in 1841, and 7s. in 1842. One-half the vessels only are now employed, and the wages paid to the boatmen who bring the clay to the ships have been equal to L.1500 a-year; they are now reduced by one-half. The wages paid, and the demand for labour at the clay pits, were also much reduced, and the labourers were either in the workhouse swelling out the rates or were offering their labour to farmers at reduced wages.

About two days after receiving these statements I was in conversation with a labourer who worked for one of Mr Bankes' tenants near Studland. We talked of wages, the prices of food, the rent of cottages, the value of perquisites, and such like matters. The man told me that he had 7s. a-week, paid 1s. a-week for rent, and had no perquisite whatever, save the furze and turf that he might cut on the common, which, however, he could not cut himself, as he had not sufficient time, and which he could not have conveyed home when it was cut without paying for. He added that things were seeming every year to be getting worse and worse. He had once been employed at the clay pits, and received there 12s. and 14s. a-week, but now work could not be had at the pit for many of the men, no matter what wages the might offer to work for.

In a subsequent part of our conversation, he told me that some of the anti-corn-law tracts had been given to him to read. They had been sent from Swanage; but he was told it was all no good; that the tracts were not fit for Christians to read; that they were full of infidelity and treason; and could have no effect on the price of bread and the amount of wages, but to bring down both; and that he had been told so by those who knew more about those things than himself. On requesting him to say who were the parties that knew more about those things than himself, I found that they were a clergyman on one side and the farmer for whom the man worked on the other. The one had frightened him about infidelity and irreligion, and the eternal consequences of reading anything therewith connected; and the other had frightened him with a loss of employment, until, between both, the obnoxious tracts were resigned to be given to the flames, like the most, if not all, of those distributed in that parish. I called to the man's recollection what he had said about the clay pits, and told him that wages were reduced there and workmen thrown idle because there was so much less clay shipped from Poole than formerly, because there was a stagnation of trade in the potteries; that there was a stagnation of trade in the potteries because some of the countries to which we had sent our earthenware now refused to take it, because we did not take corn in return; that at home, owing to all branches of trade being so bad and people so poor, earthenware when broken was not replaced by new supplies, and thus the demand for the manufactures of Staffordshire had fallen off; and further, that if he had read the tracts which had been taken from him to be burned, he would have found that a demand for potters' ware would have made a demand for clay, a demand for clay would have made a demand for men to dig it, and wheel it, and boat it, and ship it; that a demand for these would have raised wages, that a rise in wages would have enabled him and his family to live more comfortably; while living more comfortably they could have devoted more time and attention to religion and all its duties. To which the man replied, that he, for his part, could not read; but if he had known that there was nothing against religion in the tracts, but so much good information about wages, he would have kept them, and would have got some one to read them to him; "some of the coastguard men, perhaps, for they could all read," he added.

The Newfoundland fisheries have been of great importance to Poole. I saw a curious specimen of free-trade while in that town. A trader had received from Newfoundland a consignment of salted cod. The payment was to be a shipment of goods, partly made of clothes and partly of grave-stones. The grave-stones were in process of manufacture, the letter of advice specified the length and breadth and thickness of the stones, and gave the names, ages, dates, and so on, of the parties to be commemorated; with the addition, that all of them must have four or more lines of religious verse at the bottom, the verses to be made in Poole. "You see," said the trader, "what we can give in exchange for human food, when we are allowed to bring it in. The Newfoundlanders would go without tomb-stones were we not to take their cod, for they have nothing else to give us; but as we are allowed to import their cod-fish, we can give our stone-cutters a job; perhaps if we were allowed to take corn in exchange, we would supply some other part of the world with grave-stones; at all events, we would supply some other portions of our workpeople with work."

Leaving Poole, I proceeded across a barren country, eleven miles westward, to Wareham. Several shabby farms were passed; but three-fourths of the country, or more, was covered with brown heath. I joined company with the relieving officer of the Poole Union, who was travelling outwards to dispense pecuniary relief to the infirm paupers who were not able to attend personally at Poole. He was also engaged part of each week in visiting the houses of those who applied for parish relief, to see if they were as poor as they represented themselves to be. His account of their distress, of the unqualified poverty of the entire rural population, was most appalling. The stagnation of trade in Poole had thrown outwards the country people, or prevented them from coming in as usual. They could buy no clothes, and few of the necessaries of life, as sold by shopkeepers ; consequently shoemakers, tailors, grocers, shipmasters, and all others, required no apprentices. The youngsters were at home starving like their parents, and the poor-rates were continually on the increase. In many of the cottages there was almost no furniture ; in some of them absolutely none. The people, he told me, were driven by sheer hunger to thieve.

When I left this gentleman and got within the parliamentary boundaries of Wareham, which extend seven miles outward, I found, on inquiry, that I was on the estate of Mr Drax, M. P. for that borough. The hopelessly barren brown heath still continued on each side of the road, unbroken, save by a few rows or clumps of firs and the wooden boxes, four feet square and six feet high, which are scattered over this moorland, to constitute L.10 borough votes. Wareham returns one member to parliament; and the majority, which has elected Mr Drax, is thus made up by fiction. It is only needful to put a trifling article, such as a spade, or shovel, or hatchet, into the wooden box, to constitute occupancy as a workshop, and the person registered for it can vote. Thus an elector of Salford, or Rochdale, or Dundee, or Greenock, or any large town returning one member, and who, from a connection with, and interest in, commerce, would vote for a candidate who in his turn would vote for free-trade and commercial redemption to the port of Poole, is neutralized by the fiction of one of these fictitious votes of the wooden boxes.

LETTER FROM HAMPSHIRE OF NOV. 8, 1845.

While the question of opening the ports for the admission of more food is occupying the attention of all who are learned on such a subject, or who should be so, in London, the disease in the potatoes, their actual dissolution into nothing but rottenness, is occupying the attention of those in Hampshire who know little about port opening and little of the potato disease, save that they are likely to have much hunger during the ensuing winter and very few potatoes.

It has appeared to me very extraordinary that so much should be written of the potato disease in Ireland, and so little said of it by the newspapers, or apparently known by them, or cared to be known, in England. I speak of the west and south of England more especially, as the districts with which I am best acquainted. If the state of the potato-crop in Ireland is to decide the opening of the ports, surely the English potatoes are not to be overlooked, nor the English labourers, whose chief article of diet potatoes are. With bread high in price, and likely to rise, even a large supply of potatoes would not be enough this year. How much greater must the suffering be when to dearness of bread there is the companionship of scarcity of potatoes! Bacon is now 9d. per lb. in Hampshire. No labourer can buy it; and, what is worse, those who have hitherto fed pigs to have some bacon to sell to pay the shoemaker and the tailor, cannot keep their pigs—they have no potatoes. Those who raised good crops, and stored them away apparently sound, find the mystery of rottenness upon them, and the heavy misfortune of want upon themselves.

Notwithstanding the advance in the prices of all kinds of food, and the repeated assertions of master agriculturists, that wages rise and fall with the prices of food, no rise whatever is taking place in many parishes; and even where there is a rise, it is not in any degree commensurate with the asserted rule.

In the parish of Wallop, Mr Lewis, a farmer, with a good character for fair dealing, and who, like most others, settles with his men once a month, told his men last Saturday, at the monthly settlement, that he would advance their wages from 8s. a-week, at which figure they have been paid for a long while past, to 9s. The men begged hard to have the sum set at 10s.; but Mr Lewis said he could not promise it until he saw how his neighbours would do, some of whom objected to give the 9s. Thus, though bread has risen between 40 and 50 per cent. since last year, wages are only now rising at the rate of about a fourth of that rise in bread. Yet almost every shilling of these wages is expended in food; and this at a time when the potato mystery is emptying every cottage of its potatoes.

Already the village shopkeepers and tradesmen feel it, and complain that the labourers are neither paying what they owe for clothes and groceries, nor are they making new purchases. They are rapidly sinking by the high price of bread to that state in which they would live almost exclusively on potatoes; and this while they have no potatoes, or soon will have none, to live on.

LABOURERS AND LANDLORDS.

On Monday (20th of October 1845) I was present at Stockbridge, in Hampshire, when premiums were awarded to about 80 farm labourers, ranging from boys up to old men, and also to some women; the premiums, 101 in number, being given for long service, for cleverly-executed work, for careful attention to live farm stock, for the best cottage gardening, for the best managed allotments of a quarter of an acre each, for the virtue of foresight, and for generosity to suffering relatives. The premiums varied from L.5 to L.3 for each individual.

I shall not at present halt to inquire into the moral worth of these sums of money. Whether their amount and manner of distribution may effect all the good which is expected of them is one question, and the good intentions of the givers is another. Of the goodness of the intentions I have no doubt. But some of the sentiments delivered by the gentleman who presided for the day are worthy of special notice. I speak of Charles Baring Wall, Esq., M. P. for the borough of Guildford, in agricultural Surry, and the owner of a large landed property in agricultural Hampshire, a gentleman whose liberality is not that of sentiment alone.

In addressing the men and boys, and the women, who received the premiums at the Town Hall, he said, amongst other things :—

"The secretary had stated the pleasing fact that L.100 had been distributed that day ; but this was not mentioned because it was a large sum, nor as being adequate to the value of the labourers around him. They all knew their value as labourers. They all knew what they owed to them for giving them the sweat of their brow—the aid of their toil; and it would, he believed, gratify those who thus honourably fulfilled the duties of their station to know that they were sympathized and cooperated with by their employers."

And, in addressing the clergy, gentry, and farmers, after dinner, at the Grosvenor Hotel, he said :—

"That they did their duty fully, he did not pretend to say ; few did ; but still they were on the way, and he hoped each successive year would find them approximating more nearly to it. Since he knew the county, great improvements had taken place in it, and especially during the last seven years, through the instrumentality of that society. They were all liable to ride their favourite hobby over-much, and though he highly estimated the value of such an institution, he did not think that it could cure all the evils of our present social state. It was merely one of many agencies which must be employed, and in its own way had its use ; and it was gratifying to state, that it had not only the support of a majority of the landlords, but also of the tenantry of the district, and under their auspices it was doing much good. They might not be able to go at railway speed, but he hoped they were steady and sure. The more happy they made the people, the more they would promote their individual interests. They must give education to improve the mind ; and, at least, they ought to secure to the work-people good full bellies and well clad backs.—(Cheers.) This would give them a better return than any speculation whatever; it would join them all in bonds of union, rich and poor together, and soften down the asperities which were but too apt to grow out of the want of friendly intercourse between the different classes of society."

Mr Twynam, a tenant farmer, having given utterance to similar sentiments, a gentleman present, Mr Busigny, complained that much of what was done and said at these meetings was idle show. The labourers wanted better wages, better food, and better cottages; and, if the landlords were sincere in their friendship for the labourer they would all dine together on such an occasion as this, instead of at different inns, at different hours, on different kinds of fare.

Mr Wall, in reference to these remarks, spoke to this effect:—

"With respect to the cottages round Stockbridge, he did not personally know their condition—not thoroughly; but those on his own estate were very different from what they had been. In some districts much difficulty existed in improving the cottages, because they were held on lives, and the landowners had no power over them whatever. Still, even with such property, a change for the better was in progress. He did not like standing up to his own class, merely because he belonged to it, but he had on several occasions when these lifehold properties fell in, and he had an opportunity of "doing what he liked with his own," taken advantage of that circumstance to improve the cottages upon them. With respect to the introduction of the labourers into the room, he was sure there was among those present no more objection to sit with a smock-frock on each side than a frock-coat—the class to which he (Mr Wall) belonged. But he questioned whether there were not practical difficulties in the way. If all had been admitted the room would have been too full even for Mr Busingy, and as the labourers could not themselves have afforded it, he did not know whether Mr B. would have liked to pay for the wine, &c., which the smock-frocks liked as well as the frock-coats.—(Laughter.) He had considered the subject, and had been led to the conclusion that it was inadvisable. The workpeople had dined at a more convenient hour, and had got away in good time to their own homes. They enjoyed themselves more among their own class; they did not injure themselves by spending above their means, and it would not be for the comfort or convenience of either one or the other class to drive them forcibly together. At the same time he repeated there was no personal disinclination to dine with smock-frocks, and if Mr Busigny would get up another society for the improvement of cottages, and a dinner at the Three Cups, he (Mr Wall) would be happy, not to preside, but to take his seat at the lower end of the table, and contribute to his utmost to aid its objects."

I have given these quotations from Mr Wall's addresses for two purposes. First, because they suggest some remarks on a topic which has lately occupied some public attention. We have read of the Messrs Chambers of Edinburgh holding their annual soiree with their work-people, and enjoying—masters, men, and invited guests—a social evening on perfect equality. We have heard of the factory works of Oldham inviting their employers to a soiree; and, rising above mere social equality, they (the workmen) have filled the position of hosts to the masters. We have heard that the factory workers in the employment of the Messrs Bright of Rochdale, stated to be above 900 in number, were brought to Manchester in a special train the other day, as were also those of Messrs Whittaker of Ashton-under-Lyne, 1200 in number, to see the Free-Trade Bazaar, the day being given as a holiday, and the expenses of transit to and from Manchester and the admission to the Bazaar paid by the respective employers. Other reports of holidays and kind approaches to occasional equality of social life reach us from the regions of the factories. We, who live at a distance, have heard the wings of the press flapping over us, with poetry on them, mingled with the eloquent joy of Serjeant Talfourd at finding the hard-handed hard-working men of Manchester taking boyhood's play, and boyhood's name to the play, of the "Saturday half-holiday." The same press, on the same day, with the same wings; to wit, supplements, double supplements, and additional supplements to the double, brought us from London—London having inhaled it as if by a breath from Manchester—Jerrold's speech, with its simile, already illustrious, of the polar bear on the polar ice, the bear and the ice drifting into lighter and warmer latitudes; and the poor beast, used to darkness, howling and roaring, *as if heaven and earth were coming together*—fit type of the bears of human kind, who have loved darkness rather than light.

We have heard, too, of Leclair of Paris giving a hundred workmen, and upwards, a share in the profits of his business, on the principle and in the faith that he himself would have higher profit because they would become better workers and better men. All these things, indicating human progress, have come upon us from the cities and from the marts of trade within a few weeks.

But in those few weeks we have also heard from Dorsetshire that "an experiment" was made by George Bankes, Esq., M.P. and his agricultural friends, to dine labourers and landowners in the same room; and farther, we have heard that the experiment was successful. But again we have heard from other quarters that it was a shabby thing to put the labourers at a side table by themselves, and dismiss them as soon as they had eaten their dinner and given "three cheers for the gentlemen." Comparisons have been made between the sociality of the men and masters of Dorset and the sociality of the men and masters of Oldham in Lancashire.

Now I have never been inclined to admire the wisdom of Mr George Bankes—but I think in this dinner experiment he has not been fairly treated. To compare the working men of Oldham—who, many of them, in the experience of public meetings become public men, while in years they are little beyond boys; who all of them associate together through boyhood and manhood in the direction of societies, assemblies, and deliberative meetings—to compare them with the farm labourers, who have no experience in public association (unless it be the experience of disaster, when Dorsetshire labourers associated, and were dispersed by transportation,) to compare the factory workers—who, being skilled in all the arts of managing their masters by associative experience, and who at last, in friendship, treat their masters to their hospitality—with the secluded and excluded, the clodded and clayed, farming-men of Dorsetshire is unfair. But as you will see in my next letter, even landowners and land-labourers associate together, with a liberality and kindness on one side, and independence and enjoyment on the other, not surpassed anywhere else by any other people. I have, at least, seen one such assemblage; and it is because I have seen it that I have given the quotations in this letter from Mr Wall's addresses at Stockbridge.

If any gentleman can contend at an agricultural dinner that it is not desirable to mingle people together who do not desire to be mingled, he can best *afford* to do so. He asks to preserve the separate dinners, because he knows the parties on each side prepared to dine are not prepared to meet. But he holds a festival with his own labourers and poorer neighbours, because he and they are prepared to meet, and can enjoy the meeting.

MR WALL'S FESTIVAL AT NORMAN COURT.

This occurred on Friday, the 17th of September. I was at that time attending the poor law inquiry at the Andover workhouse. Andover is eleven or twelve miles from Norman Court, and ten miles from the village of Broughton. That village is four miles or thereabout from Norman Court. Hearing of the festival, I came across the country to see it. Not knowing anywhere else to go to, I took up my quarters at Broughton; and I wish I may never have worse; I should like to see all who can appreciate good accommodation as well quartered as I have been at the village inn there.

On the 16th, the day before the festival, the rain poured and the wind blew; cloud careered after cloud, and blast warred with blast. Still cooks cooked, carpenters hammered, tents were erected; and in the villages of Broughton on one side, and West Tytherley and West Dean on the other, preparations were going forward in boiling and roasting to supply the respective tents of the innkeepers in the park, only second in magnitude to the roasting and boiling at the squire's mansion in the park. But, large as they were, they were second to that; the cooking there was on a scale of great compass.

The reason why the innkeepers of the villages had tents in the park was, that more people were expected to come, and did come, than the mansion could hold; and because, on a former occasion, several thousands of strangers had been there more than provision had been made for, or were invited; and who, though admitted to the tables so long as anything remained on them, only displaced others who had been invited; all of them saying, if they had only been able to get something to buy to eat, the staying to see the sports and the grand fireworks at night would have been more agreeable.

This year Mr Wall issued tickets to all who had been invited to dine, amounting to about 1000, and better accommodation was therefore secured. The sports, consisting of a variety of healthful, pleasing, and harmless games, were open to every one who came, no matter of what rank, nor from whence.

The morning of the 17th dawned, and was fair and clear. For ten days and nights there had been rain and wind—sometimes more of the one than of the other, but always less or more of both. As already said, on the previous day was a storm. This morning was agreeably bright and fine. A few drops came on once or twice before the sun had risen high; but the sun himself, so pleasant upon the holiday-goers, seemed to say, as they said—

"What a shame! we ought to have no rain to-day." And then the rain said, "Well, then, I shall go somewhere else;" and it shrunk within its clouds, and they bundled themselves up, and mounted upon a high and dry wind, and rode away.

Having breakfasted at the Greyhound, or the Hare and Hound, or the Dogs—I am not sure which it is, but the traveller who likes a good breakfast, the freshest of watercresses, and eggs, and bread and butter, and coffee and cream, will not make any mistake, as it is "the house of the village." Having breakfasted, and read, while at breakfast, the printed rules of that day's vegetable, fruit, and flower-show, the competitors in which were all to be labourers living in cottages rented from Mr Wall, in Broughton, the two Tytherleys, (East and West,) for which show a liberal and comprehensive scale of premiums were awarded; having breakfasted, and also read at breakfast the catalogue of the Norman Court Lending Library, which library consists of 500 or more volumes, provided at Mr Wall's expense, the only qualifications to obtain which is a desire to read and a request to be allowed to borrow a book, the books consisting of the best periodical and serial works of the day, and of the standard works in religious, moral, and scientific biographies, poetry, instructive tales, and so forth; having also, when at breakfast, listened, as I have often done since, not only in Broughton, but in all the villages and districts around Norman Court, to the respectful, grateful, almost reverential remarks on Mr Wall, as a kind landlord and liberal helper of all who need a rich man's help—as an employer of many men, and a payer of good wages—as the protector, not only of the living, but of the dead—the restorer of gravestones of churchyards and of churches; having breakfasted, read, and listened to all these things, I, with some other friends, drove off in a "trap" for Norman Court.

Up Broughton Hill, westward, we toiled, one or two getting out, that the horse might have less toil; up Broughton Hill, a portion of the chalky ridge crossing the country, we went, and got to the top of it, and upon the old Roman road from Winchester to Salisbury, (Winton to Sarum,) locally called the "Devil's Walk," which road in part was altered and amended by the Socialists of Harmony Hall, who are now in difficulties with their property, difficulties which some venerable fathers and mothers of the villages say were to be expected to befall anybody who meddled with the "Devil's Walk;" having surmounted Broughton Hill, and left the wide expanse of woodless farm fields behind, turning only round to look down upon Broughton in its nest of trees for a minute, and upon the three Wallops, in their bourne farther north, and upon "Lennard's Grave," (the cross roads which, so named, tell their own tale,) between us and the villages of the Wallops, we looked westward and southward into a country all different from that east and north of us. A succession of woodlands, now in hollows and now on heights; now with open fields, and elsewhere with winding glades; now humble and copse-like, and again lofty and majestic, lay before us and below us, over a distance of six miles, bounded by another bold range of chalky hills, resembling that which we had just come over.

By turns we went down and again up; to the left and to the right, and on forward, turning again and again. Elderly men and women were standing aside to let us pass in the narrow woodland roads, or setting down to rest themselves with their baskets of vegetables which they were carrying to the show. Boys with clean "smocks" on, or new jackets, were pushing on as fast as they had breath to Norman Court, and shouting as we passed; old and young, male and female, rich and poor—most of the rich, who had horses at home, walking as well as the poor, lest there might be no stabling for all the horses expected there; all these peopled the roads; and each gave the other joy of the fine day, as they journied onward.

To linger long enough to tell how the ripening filberts hung upon the bushes which bordered us in clusters; how the glittering wet in the morning sun gave freshness to the autumn leaves; how the dark woods towered aloft, and the stealthy rays of the sun, as if it crept into a solemn cathedral silently and softly to worship; to linger long enough to describe all these would be to leave neither space nor time for what is coming.

We arrived near the front of the mansion, commanding a magnificent view southward over woods, and meadows, and fields; dells, eminences, openings, thickets, and through noble park trees, amid which the carriage roads led off and lost themselves. On one side of the mansion next us, extending over a dozen acres or so backwards, and now on our right hand, was a green smooth sward embosomed in lofty lines of trees, these lines being but the front-rank men of deep tickets. Into this we turned, and drove to the tent of Mr Lane, from Broughton, which stood fronting downward and towards us.

On our right hand, at entering under the trees, was the sign of the Lion, Mr Beauchamp, from West Dean, and half-way up, in front of the trees, was the Black Horse, Mr Fowkes, from West Tytherley. Varieties of other smaller tents, with confectionary and exhibitions of natural curiosities, and such like, were in the intermediate spaces. But the grand attraction were two tents of Mr Wall's, on the left hand side, near the centre; one was for the show of vegetables, fruits, and flowers; and the other was a kind of store, at which Mr Wall himself presided, furnished with a variety of fancy and useful articles, to be given as prizes to those who might win them at such games as archery, for which there were six targets, with bows and arrows in abundance; such games also as cricket, and nearly all kinds of ball-playing, puff and dart, quoits, hurdle-racing, leaping, and so on. There were generally such chances as twelve shots for a penny; the men attending to the targets, &c., receiving the pennies, and giving a ticket to the winners, who carried it to Mr Wall, and received prizes according to its amount. If it was a two shillings and sixpence or three shillings ticket, there would be a silk handkerchief, and a knife perhaps, or a hat, or a waistcoat. For the children there were swings and roundabouts; and ropes with seats on them were suspended between the venerable trees, that young people who wished to swing might swing there.

The vegetable and fruit show was exceedingly good, and would have done credit to many professional gardeners. It certainly did credit to Mr Wall's cottagers, of whom about 100 were competitors. The judges were Mr White, the gardener at Norman Court, and two other gentlemen, whose names I now forget. The beautiful fuschias, and other flowering plants from the cottage windows, shewed favourably for the domestic neatness and taste. So did the garden products tell for cottier industry. But, if all dwellers in humble houses had as good dwellings and gardens, with as good a squire, and as good a steward between them and the squire, as they have, there would be more comfort and more industry exercised to obtain it throughout England than there now is.

As visitors arrived, some in carriages, some in vans, and some in holiday waggons, others in gigs and trap-carts, from distances varying from one to ten miles, those who were known had tickets given them by Mr Sergeant, the land-steward, to the dinner. A yeoman cavalry band, in their uniform, mounted about and played music, which the woods re-echoed, or would have re-echoed, had there been less din of human voices and a lower breeze of wind. There were several policemen of the county constabulary on the ground, but, as it was observed at the time, every man was his own constable; no mischief was done.

The chief dinner was spread in the court-yard of the mansion twice, from 250 to 300 hundred dining each time. The great body of the people, however, dined in the tents on the green, having tickets which paid for their admission and their fare. Each party dining in the court passed into the mansion, and went through the splendid suite of rooms on the ground-floor by way of exit. On a former occasion, the house was left open to every person indiscriminately. They did no wilful damage, but there being many thousands of them going in and out for a whole day, they did damage to elegant furniture, whether intending it or not. On that occasion, a gentleman staying on a visit with Mr Wall had left his bedroom door open, not expecting that any of the strangers would penetrate there; also he left his money in sovereigns and his jewellery lying open on his table. The staring wonderers, who had never before been in such a house, went, hundred after hundred, into that room, as well as into others; but there was not there nor in the house a single act of theft committed. Yet these people had the full complement of poachers, petty thieves, and loose reputations among them; persons who were honest against their inclination, because they saw and felt they were trusted.

On the present occasion, Mr Wall sat down at one of the tables, but did not preside; the presidency and several other offices of honour devolved on some of the principal tenants and the farm-steward. The domestic servants, from the house-steward downward, waited on and served the visitors with alacrity and kindness; as much so, indeed, as if the kind spirit of their master was thoroughly infused into them.

On Mr Wall's health being given, he delivered a short address, *thanking the people for coming to see him and dine with him*, and hoping to see them again and again, and to see a closer bond of friendship established between persons of all ranks than there ever yet had been.

The sports upon the green went on. Every minute some prize was won at one or other of the games. The floor of the tent in which the vegetable show had been was boarded for dancing, with a platform for the band. Accordingly there was dancing. And, when night closed in, there were fireworks; and these were on a scale of grandeur rarely excelled, if ever excelled at all. Artists of first-rate ability were brought from London to conduct their exhibition. Fire balloons went off and away, and rockets went up and shot off, and showered down brilliancies that illumined the wondering country. While the multitudes gazed and admired, devices in fire of all shades and colours, and of many meanings, succeeded each other, rockets firing all the time, with a magnificence that would have made Vauxhall clap hands and shout. But there was little shouting here, and not a hand was clapped. The excessive wonder at such prodigies done in fire constrained to silence. And the silence of the human tongues was all the deeper, and the grandeur of the fire-works all the greater, that the black shadows of the trees started back, and struggled to be out of sight, each behind his own tree, as if affrighted; while the lofty branches shewed themselves in the red glare and in the blue, as if the giants of the forest stood with heads erect and hair on end.

A DAY AT TAMWORTH AND DRAYTON MANOR.

June 1844.

I SPENT a day lately in the neighbourhood of Drayton Manor, the seat of Sir Robert Peel, in Staffordshire. My visit related entirely to agriculture, as it did at Althorp Park, and had no reference to anything that might be seen and reported, and used for or against Sir Robert Peel as a member of the government or the head of a political party. I was one of those who hailed with pleasure the declaration which Sir Robert Peel made last year in favour of agricultural reformation; and while some people professed to think that a Prime Minister might have been more appropriately employed than in talking to farmers about "leases," and "hares and rabbits," and "bulls," I thought otherwise. Believing, as I did, that much required to be done for agriculture—and in the soil of England lies a vast amount of undeveloped wealth—that much could be done if the owners of land would condescend to become men of business, and assist in the proper management of their own estates. I was filled with great hopes when I read Sir Robert Peel's speech to his tenantry, not only because it indicated his views as a landlord, but that he, being Prime Minister, and the most eminent man of many landlords, was likely to become an example to those who will follow but will not lead—to those who will not shrink from any task, however difficult, if the task be fashionable.

But if I had gone to Drayton loaded with prejudice against its distinguished owner, I could not have retained such prejudices many hours. For instance, after walking to the farm-yard and looking at two bulls—one of them a splendid animal, and I believe the same which Sir Robert promised to buy for the use of the tenantry—I went through the Park, passed the village of Drayton Basset, and got into conversation with the people whom I found at work on the farms belonging to the manor, beyond the immediate influence of the manorial steward, and I found almost all of these people speak readily and favourably of Sir Robert Peel, without any leading questions being put to them.

To one man, who was hoeing potatoes in his garden, beyond a thick lofty hedge that skirted the way-side, I spoke thus, after getting admittance by the little gate in front of the cottage:—

"You require rain, do you not? Do your potatoes grow at all in such scorching weather as this?"

"They hardly grow. Some do not grow at all, and them as do, wont grow much more if rain do not come. This is hard weather for the country; the pastures are gone everywhere, and the cattle and sheep have to be put in the meadows to keep them from starving; and then the meadows wont give no hay; and the potatoes, if rain should come, will strike down, those of them that have come any length, and potatoes never do no good that strike into the ground a second growth; yet, please God we have rain, things may come round yet. Wheat looks well, but barley don't; and cabbages make little way as yet; onions hardly shew themselves."

"You have a good garden here; how much is there of it, half an acre?"

"There or thereabout. I never heard it exactly said; but Sir Robert asked me just as you do if there was half an acre. That was when he came to take possession, after old Sir Robert died; and I said I thought there would be half an acre taking it all into account; taking in that corner where the hives stand, and that where the faggots are built on and the pigstye."

"The cottage and garden belong, then, to Sir Robert Peel?"

"Yes, I rent it of Sir Robert. I would not have such a garden from a farmer; at least not at the price I have it of Sir Robert; and, perhaps, not at any price. You see I am old now; I am turned seventy-one."

"You certainly don't look that age; I should not have supposed you were sixty."

"Every one says that. I have been very hearty, thank God, all my life, and until these rheumatics came on me I had nothing to hurt me; but I am crushed with the rheumatics that I cannot stand upright. I cannot put on or off my waistcoat without assistance, and I cannot lift my hand above my shoulders. But it is all the rheumatism. I do not know what I could have done, had it not been for this garden and the cheap rent. Sir Robert is very good to the like of me. He does not disturb us. The farmers would like to have the hedges stubbed up and the gardens thrown into the cornfields; but Sir Robert will not let that be done as long as we old people live, and he is very good in getting every family in Drayton a rood of land at a low rent. He does not do it as some gentlemen I hear of—he does not make the labourer's rood the dearest piece of land on the estate—he makes it the cheapest. You would see it down there beside the church, he lets them have good land at the price of worst land, and pays the rates; they have no rates to pay."

"Have you lived long here?"

"I lived here in Lord Weymouth's time, and then in

Squire Fisher's time, and then I saw old Sir Robert Peel get the manor, and now I am under young Sir Robert. I have been more than fifty years here: but I am not a native of this parish, and they would have had me out of it only for Sir Robert, the present Sir Robert, I mean."

"Who would have had you out?"

"The principal men of the parish, the farmers and the born natives, and I will tell you how. You see, when young Sir Robert came and took possession of the estate, they had a parish meeting at Drayton Basset, and Sir Robert Peel was there, and it was proposed, because the rates were so high, that every working man that was living in the parish and was not born in it should be forced away. So after this had been said, and was urged on Sir Robert, he said, 'Gentlemen, there may be some justice in what you want me to do, if you have nobody belonging to this parish living in other parishes. But answer me that question first. Are all the natives of the parish of Drayton Basset living in it?' and they said no; there were many people living out of the parish who had been born in it. 'Well,' says Sir Robert to them, 'you must lay your account to have all them back again; because if one parish send all away but its own natives, another will do the same, and those natives must come to their own parish. Do you not see that in such a case you will have more people to provide for than you have now? Do you not see that all your natives who have gone to settle at Tamworth, even it may be in Birmingham, or the Potteries, or London, will all be sent back to you, besides your labourers who are working to farmers in other parishes in this neighbourhood? Before you ask me to assist you in expelling every one from this parish not born in it, you should tell me if you are ready to take all your own back.' But never a word more did they say about it. They had never looked at it in that way; they only thought if they got the like of me and my wife away, as we were growing old, that they would save their rates. But Sir Robert Peel made them open their eyes. He said every man that gets an honest living has a right to get his living where he can."

"I think Sir Robert spoke good sense, but I would have been surprised if he had spoken otherwise. I am surprised that your natives of the parish should have been so silly as to ask Sir Robert to do such a thing."

"It was well for me that Sir Robert spoke as he did, for what could I have done to be sent away to my own parish after being fifty years out of it? He said to them, 'What does it matter where a man goes to get his living if he gets it honestly?' and they had not a word to say after that. They had tried before to get all the parish of one mind to press on Sir Robert to help them, but he said, 'What does it matter where a man gets a living if he gets it honestly?' "

"Sir Robert spoke good sense when he said that; and I am glad to hear you and some other persons to whom I have spoken here speak so well of him as a considerate landlord."

"Aye, he said, 'What does it matter where a man gets his living if he gets it honestly?' and they had not another word to say."

"What is your name?"

"John Salt. I was seven years with one master, and all the rest of the time I have been here with another master. I never did no harm, so I don't care who knows my name. When I asked Sir Robert to let me have the house and the garden continued as it was in old Sir Robert's time, he said he did not know me, but if he found I was a man of good character he would not refuse me. I told him that I was not afraid of what any one could say of my character, and he asked them at the meeting at the church if I was a man of good character, and none of them had nothing to say against me. So he says, 'What does it matter where a man gets a living if he gets it honestly?' "

"But I think Sir Robert might have given you a better house; it seems as if it would tumble to the ground?"

"Stay now, stay, and I will tell you how that is. He said to me there was no objection to me continuing here, but there must be a new house built, and I said, I hope not, Sir Robert; the old house, if it is repaired, will do all my time and my wife's time; and he said, 'Are you really against having a new house built?' and I said, 'Please you, Sir Robert, we have been so many years in the old one, and brought up all our family in it, we would just like you to let it stand!' 'Well,' he said, 'I will send the mason to look at it, and if he says it can be repaired it shall be done!' So, you see, that is the reason there is not a better house, and I did not want it; because I saw that the time was coming when I would be too old to work; and, though I dare say Sir Robert would not have looked ill upon me on that account, I thought that a fine new house and so good a garden might be taken from me if so be I could not pay for it, by some of them that have power at Drayton, and given to one that could pay for it. If Sir Robert were always here it might be different; but it is not often we get a sight of him to make a complaint, if we have one to make."

"Do you make much honey? You have several hives, I see."

"Only one of them has bees. When the rheumatics was about to come on me, and keep me from working, the bees gave up, and went away we know not how."

"Do you mean that the bees left the hives because you were seized with the rheumatics?"

"No, they left before the rheumatics came on. It was the year before last, and we noticed they were doing no good, and my wife said to me something will happen to us that is not good, for the bees is doing nothing this year, and, as sure as you are there and I am here, the rheumatics came on me and put me from working, and I well never work more. The bees have left us altogether, save that one hive, and it is not doing much; it only does a little, to mean that I will be able, and nothing more, to do a little job, as you see, about the garden. I can only work for about an hour, and then I have to sit down and rest. I once thought this year that the hive would grow strong and come off, so as we would have two hives, and my wife said the rheumatics, if the bees did that, would perhaps abate, and let me do a light job in the summer months and earn something. But I said I doubted it would not mean more than we would get a load of faggots for firing from Sir Robert or the steward."

"Well, I hope the bees will not disappoint you even in that small expectation. How do you live at all? Have you any parish relief?"

"We have 2s. 6d. a piece, 5s. a-week for the two. I brought up a family and never asked a penny from the parish, and never got one, and was always against asking for it, and never did, so long as I could go to work. But I was obliged at last to go to the parish; if it was not for the garden and the cheap rent, we could not do at all, we must go into the workhouse, and God keep us from that. We would not like to leave this house and our garden, after being fifty years in it and bringing up our family in it."

"I think you may keep your mind at ease on that point. Sir Robert will not interfere with you."

"No, I know he wont; I understood from him that we would not be disturbed as long as we lived, and the old house, at the time when he prevented me from being sent out of the parish."

"Well, that was good of him; and yet it was only the bare duty of a rich man towards the poor; but it was more than some rich men think fit to do."

"Aye, he said, 'What does it matter where a man gets a living if he gets it honestly?'"

I heard Sir Robert Peel complained of in respect of the high rents of the farms, but I take leave to say boldly, that the Drayton estate is not higher rented than might be paid comfortably. I have no doubt but the tenants have difficulties, especially with such a poor population as that of Fazley and Tamworth to buy their produce; but upon such good land the Drayton rents, to men of enterprise and capital, would not be heavy. What they want is capital and security. I no not mean security against Sir Robert Peel, because if he had a good tenant, I am sure he would not seek to part with him; but the security of a lease is a first requisite to the obtainment of capital. Who will give a tenant-at-will a loan of money to lay out on land which will not return it in less than from eight to twelve years? Some of Sir Robert's tenants are very persevering men, so far as tearing at the land and the dungheap, and sweating with their coats off go. I saw one, and was told by a neighbour that there never was a convict worked as that farmer worked himself. But I do not call that enterprise. It is well for a farmer to attend to his farm, but it is not his own personal labour that will enrich its soil and enlarge its crops. I do not know if any of them have availed themselves of Sir Robert's permission of last year, to apply for leases; but I am sure that they can never get over the present complaint of rents being too high until they have leases. Better trade at Fazley and Tamworth would be of very great importance to them; for wages are not only very low there, but a larger proportion of the population is at the present time unemployed. Hence everything the farmer has to sell goes at disadvantage, unless it goes to Birmingham, seventeen miles distant.

At a subsequent period, November 1846, business led me to the town of Tamworth, and inclination took me from Tamworth to the vicinity of Drayton Manor. I found an extensive system of farm drainage in operation, the capital being furnished by Sir Robert Peel and charged at the rate of four per cent. so I was told, upon the occupying tenants. This arrangement cannot fail to be beneficial to the estate and to the occupiers. If tanks for the reception of liquid manures are provided, and other appurtenances of scientific farming, and charged to the tenants at the same rate, they will find that augmentation of rent in reality a gift of capital and profit, while the future value of the estate will rise in a ratio bearing no calculable proportion to four per cent. In short, the soil of England offers the best investment for money, which is expected to bring in a profit, if there be security, and there cannot be better security for a landlord than his own estate.

At Tamworth I visited the reading-room, library, and museum, instituted by Sir Robert Peel, and found about 2000 volumes, which had been well selected, and seemed to be well used. Those marked in the catalogue as presents from Sir Robert were chiefly works of instruction, and gave evidence of the inherent liberality and justice of the great politician; for several of them were written by authors who had been politically opposed to him.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER 1846.

Journeying into the country from Tamworth, I found the wages of farm labourers to be 12s. a-week, some only 10s. Sir Robert Peel pays 12s. and 14s.

Being desirous of seeing Drayton Manor, I returned to Fazley by the same way which I had travelled in the dusk with Jonathan. The sun was now shining in a sky of cloudless blue; which, reflected on the streams and waterfalls, and sheets of water which glimmered only in gaslight the night before, made everything gay and pleasing to the eye. The foliage of the woods, yellow, brown, red, and purple, seemed to linger against the law of nature, and suffer itself to be made more intensely yellow, and red, and purple, as if the law of nature had been applied with double force to get it off and it would not go. This foliage, dotted with the heavy green of the pines, and stretched in masses to be measured only by half-miles and miles, reflected the brilliant sun and the blue sky with a warmth of colour that glowed upon the eyes and entered the bodies at the eyes, in search of souls willing to be pleased, willing to be warmed and made joyous. You might have thought that the summer of the earth and the sun of the sky had parted as was their wont in November, but that he, as was not his wont, had returned and called her back for one other farewell, and that, from the chambers of her winter rest, she came forth to meet him, blushing red that he had called her only to embrace and part again.

With my face turned to the north I kept those beautiful woods on my left hand for the distance of a mile, but did not come to the end of them. On my right hand I passed Bonehill bleach-works, embowered in trees, with a lake in front—the bleaching and printing establishment originated by the elder Sir Robert Peel, now owned by one of the younger sons, and leased to Mr Buxton, a bleacher. Beneath my feet was a broad level roadway, with occasional cottages and cottage-gardens on its sides; overhead there were now and again beech trees, with the wind stealthily fingering, as it were, the leaves which the branches had retained so long, and, pulling them off quietly, dropping them one by one on the road. I came to a gate which was not barred, and which permitted my entrance by a waggon-track between two farm-fields. The field on the right had a crop of Swedish turnips of good quality on it, a woman cutting the tops and roots of some of them, and a man filling a cart with those she had topped and rooted while he was away with the last load. The field on the left had been recently sown with wheat; had pieces of faggot stuck up in different parts of it to keep poachers with nets from drawing it for pheasants; had in one corner, just over the hedge, a boy, in a smock-frock and rounded white hat, whose duty it was to keep rooks, pheasants, or any other natural enemies of seed-wheat out of the field. A girl, younger than himself, kept him company, and both were seated by a fire of tree-tops and tree-roots, which were easily found in the adjoining wood.

Going forward, my face being now west, I came suddenly upon a cock pheasant, and then another, and another, all of them proclaiming in their noisy flight my intrusion. I was not looking for them, but only wanted to see the farm-fields, if any, within the belt of woodland which I had been outside of for so long a distance. I saw the fields, and judged from them, as from the others, that more skill and good taste were devoted to the farming of that land, it being Sir Robert Peel's domestic farm, than is commonly exhibited in that part of Staffordshire. At half a mile's distance, on my left, standing south, or south-west from where I stood, was Drayton Manor-house, a mansion built within those fourteen years, and enlarged within the last three years. Its numerous chimneys and turrets, rising beyond detached pieces of young plantation, and seen between detached trees of venerable growth, the grassy pastures with cattle and sheep upon them intervening, looked as if the whole had been made for a picture as well a for a habitation.

Returning by the way I came, and entering by a road which Sir Robert Peel allows to be public, though it publishes to the traveller all the private places about the Manor, save perhaps the interior of the garden and of the mansion, I came up to a farm-yard near to which were some thatched ricks of corn and hay. The trimness of thatching and goodly shape of the ricks arrested my progress for a few minutes. Looking beyond them, I saw that all the buildings were disposed so as to look elegant as well as to be useful. I came to where two men were cutting trusses of hay from an old rick, not one of those already seen, and as a third person standing beside them seemed to be giving directions about that or other work, I addressed myself to him, thinking he was probably the farm bailiff. I was not mistaken. He answered my request to see the interior of the farm-yard by opening a gate and bidding me follow him. We paid our respects first to a very large sow too lazy to rise, and next to six or eight hogs of another breed twelve months old and very fat. As their troughs contained some of the meal and grains on which they were fed, and they did not deem it desirable to rise and eat more of it, there was no reason to expect that any invitation of ours would make them stir; so Mr Wilson went in amongst them and stirred them up that I might see their fat bodies, small legs, and short snouts. They rose very unwillingly, and turned their faces to me, which faces had little holes in them, in which little holes eyes, lying deep down among fat, were supposed to be. They sat grunting on their hind quarters with the fat little eye-holes turned up in my face. What they thought of me I cannot say. I thought they would have been better porkers and more profitable if they had not been so fat.

Mr Wilson, in answer to a question which I put, and which was suggested by his dialect, said I was mistaken, he was not a Scotchman; he was a native of Cumberland; and came to Sir Robert Peel four years ago from the estate of Sir James Graham. I asked him some questions about the farm-yard manures, and he shewed me how all the liquids were collected in a cistern, and conveyed to a place where a cart could be put in, and the liquid run into the cart to be conveyed into the fields; a plan which seemed to be a good one.

We next paid a visit to a very large bull, in a house by himself. He was rather thin of flesh, but otherwise a fine animal of his kind. He was very quiet, and took no notice of us. Leaving him, we looked in upon another bull; but Mr Wilson said it was necessary to keep the door well in hand, and only opened a little, for he was sulky and mischievous. He was a younger animal, but of a different breed from the other; was in higher condition, and looked as if he would make good his reputation for mischief.

Leaving this department of the farm-yard we came to a place where some implements stood, and my attention being fixed on a plough of a construction not commonly seen in Staffordshire, the bailiff said Sir Robert Peel had got all his ploughs of that kind now, and so had Sir James Graham. I told him that the same kind of plough had been in use at my native place from a period long before I was born; and that it was as like as could be, save in one or two minor details, that which I used to hold in the furrow, long before I had written, or even expected to write myself,

One who has Whistled at the Plough.

LETTERS FROM IRELAND

DURING THE

FAMINE OF 1847.

THE following letters were written while travelling through Ireland in the spring of the disastrous year 1847. They were published in the Manchester newspapers at the time, and are reprinted here with a view to being circulated where the newspapers were not read :—

No. I.

DUBLIN, *20th January*.

I devoted my first day in Dublin to inquiries at the relief committees—at that for the city of Dublin and that for the country generally. I was referred to the inspectors of the poor, who in the different parishes take the office upon them, each a week at a time, of visiting the dwellings of the numerous applicants for relief. I visited some of the poorest districts of the city, also the wharves where vessels were unloading cargoes of food, and the offices of some parties extensively connected with the railway works in the interior of Ireland.

I have also read several of the pamphlets relating to the present crisis of Ireland, of which the booksellers' shops in Dublin possess many.

One, entitled "The Case of Ireland Stated, by Robert Holmes, Esq." was advertised by bills in every street. It was selling at the price of two shillings, so, thinking two shillings might be worse disposed of than in getting "The case of Ireland stated," I parted with them. Robert Holmes, Esq. I was told, is a barrister of long-standing and an able man. He was the brother-in-law of the celebrated Robert Emmett. No man knew Ireland or loved Ireland better than he did. This made me the more desirous to have the case of Ireland stated by him. If I say that Nero, playing the fiddle while

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Rome burned, was similarly employed to Mr Holmes, my meaning will be understood; but even fiddle-playing might have some excuse if Nero neither cared nor professed to care for Rome. Mr Holmes professes to care for Ireland, and yet fiddles her sentimental tunes in her ears while she is famishing. He contrasts the generous manner in which Rome treated her conquered provinces with that in which England has treated her conquered countries, and particularly Ireland. For one single practical suggestion or symptom of a practical thought in the writer's mind, the pamphlet is read and read in vain. It is long, wordy, eloquent, and useless.

Not so a pamphlet entitled "Observations on the Evils resulting to Ireland from the Insecurity of Title and the existing Laws of Real Property, with some Suggestions towards a Remedy." There is no author's name to this; but I believe the author is Mr Pym. Here are a few brief passages, in which he states the case of Ireland:—

"*Landlord*—Title doubtful, or difficult to prove; so much so as to interfere with the sale of the property.

"*Tenant*—Has no lease, or a lease at so high a rent that, being always in arrear, he is always liable to be ejected.

"*Landlord*—Estate heavily mortgaged, or liable in a jointure or payment to the younger members of his family; so that his nominal income is barely sufficient to pay the annual demands, and he has consequently no capital to improve the property.

"*Tenant*—Bound for a rent that takes all he can spare beyond a mere subsistence, and consequently cannot improve his farm.

"*Landlord*—Estate being entailed, or closely bound by settlements, he has only a life interest in it, and is therefore disinclined to spend money on improvements which will not be immediately remunerative.

"*Tenant*—Having no certainty of possession, he will not, of course, give any labour or expend any money for which he does not expect an immediate return."

On a former visit to Ireland, I found those leading facts, as here stated, to be prevalent everywhere; and everywhere then and now the natural results shew themselves. Thus, says Mr Pym, "A country naturally fertile is left almost unimproved and only half cultivated; the fields are undrained; the rivers, left without care, overflow their banks and turn good land into marsh; straggling hedges and uncultivated spots deform the face of the country; the hay or corn, insufficiently secured, is exposed to the weather; and much land capable of culture is left to its natural wildness, or is so ill tilled that it is but little better than waste."

It may be as well to proceed to business at once. I am only entering upon Ireland at present; but I have been through the country before, and have studied its agricultural condition, and the causes which make that a bad condition. And the business to be done is to authorize the sale of the land by act of Parliament. A supply of food for the starving peasantry is a temporary necessity, and must be attended to immediately; indeed it is being performed to an extent never known in the history of nations. But this is only a temporary expedient. Remedies, permanent and comprehensive, must be applied to Ireland, and the first of the permanent remedies must be the simplification of the transfer of land. All land in Ireland must be made saleable. Capital will then flow in to improve it, not before. When the land is bought and sold on commercial principles it will in like manner be leased to tenants. It may be a daring thing to say that the law of entail must be abrogated, but no one step can be taken to save Ireland from the recurrence of those terrible visitations of famine which come so often upon her, or from the continuance of that squalid misery which is always upon her, until this is done. And now is the time to do it.

"This fertile but neglected land," says the pamphlet before me, "is occupied by an embarrassed gentry, striving to maintain the position in society to which their nominal income would entitle them, and by a pauper tenantry, multiplying to excess, outbidding one another in the ruinous contest for land, and at length resorting to lawless violence in order to retain its possession as their only means of subsistence. The peaceful and industrious annually retire by thousands from the scene of contest, to exert, in the forests of America, the intelligence and energy which, under more favourable circumstances, would have strengthened their country with a happy and independent peasantry."

The unembarrassed landlord of an entailed estate stands thus—"He is in reality not the owner; he cannot deal with it as an owner; he is merely a trustee for others; he has no interest in its future, though permanent, improvement, except so far as he may wish to benefit his successors; he can never reap the benefit himself; he cannot sell; he cannot dispose of a part, even though the alienation of a part might greatly enhance the value of the remainder; he holds it during his lifetime, as his predecessor has held it, unaltered, unimproved, to transmit it to his heir, clogged with the same restrictions, alike injurious to him and to his country."

So much for an unembarrassed landlord. Here is the landlord with an entailed estate and debts upon it:—"As is unfortunately too often the case, he has received the estate, encumbered under a settlement, with a jointure to the widow of the late possessor, and provision for daughters and younger sons. In what difficulties is he at once involved—this owner for life of a large tract of country, with a large rent roll, but, in fact, a small property! He cannot maintain his position in society without spending more than his income; debts accumulate; he mortgages his estate, and ensures his life for the security of the mortgagee. Of course he cannot afford to lay out anything in improvements; on the contrary, though, perhaps, naturally kind-hearted and just, his necessities force him to resort to every means of increasing his present rental. He looks for the utmost amount; he lets to the highest bidder, without regard to character or means of payment. If his tenants are without leases, he raises their rents. If leases fall in, he cannot afford to give the preference to the last occupier. Perhaps, with all his exertions, he is unable to pay the interest, or put off his creditors. Proceedings are commenced against him, and the estate passes, during his lifetime, under the care of the worst possible landlord, a receiver under the Court of Chancery."

There can be no doubt that if the entailed estates were sold, the portions of the younger sons would more commonly be a business education, with means to start in business, instead of some money to buy a spirited hunter, as now. The very name of a castle, with a brother in it, and a wide tract of country, with that brother's name upon it as landlord, is delusive, through all the lives of the younger members of the family, while the tenant of the castle is himself unfit for any good purpose. If his wide domain were sold to those who could make it perform its natural and national purposes, he would have money wherewith to purchase and cultivate and make profit on a smaller estate, or to enter upon other business, or give his sons a business education. Are he and all his race too proud to be men of business because they are entailed landlords? If they be, let them cease to be the chiefs of entailed beggars in any other way they can devise. They must do something. The fertile soil of Ireland and her millions of people are not to be perpetually blighted and famished, that heirs-entail may masquerade as landowners and play at living in castles.

I shall not pursue this topic farther at present. As to the immediate wants of the peasantry, these are urgent. I do not judge from the hordes of people whom I see begging in the streets and at all public places; these have always abounded in Ireland. But persons whom I have seen, whose vocation is not to write in newspapers—men of business, who have recently been in the west and south of Ireland, declare that no newspaper account of the distress is exaggerated. The people are famishing. It will be my business to give such details as I meet with as soon as I can. But, in the meanwhile, let no hand that can help be held back, under the impression that the distress has been exaggerated.

No. II.

DUBLIN, 23*d January* 1847.

One of the first things which attracts the eye of a stranger in Ireland, at least such a stranger as I am, and makes him halt in his steps and turn round and look, is the police whom he meets in every part of the island, on every road, in every village, even on the farm land, and on the seashore, and on the little islands which lie out in the sea. These policemen wear a dark green uniform and are armed ; this is what makes them remarkable, armed from the heel to the head. They have belts and pouches, ball cartridges in the pouches, short guns called carbines, and bayonets, and pistols, and swords. The only difference between them and the regular military is, that the military do not always carry guns and pistols primed and loaded, not always bayonets in their belts, not always swords sharpened. The Irish police never go on duty without some of these.

In the Phœnix Park at Dublin, a barrack of large size, with drill ground, is devoted to the training of these armed police, from which barrack they are drafted into the provinces, as soon as they are trained to prime, load, and fire, to fix bayonets and charge; to march, counter-march, and so forth ; these to be distributed and shaken out upon the land in half dozens or dozens.

The next thing that has struck me as remarkable in Ireland, previous to the present time, has been this—that rent was usually paid through the sheriff, his officers, the keepers put in possession of the pigs and potatoes, corn and cows, and the armed police who assisted the keepers to keep possession. The property distrained upon was sold by any one whom the landlord or his agent appointed ; it being legal for a mere labourer to act as auctioneer, if so ordered. The agent of the landlord was usually himself the buyer, at least virtually so. He got legal possession of the crops by means of this distraint and by the aid of the armed police, and he sent the corn, pigs, potatoes, or whatever the property might be, to a seaport town for shipment to England. Arrived in England, they were sold readily. The landlord got his rent by their sale in England, not by their sale under the hammer in Ireland ; and the people of England were pleased to find so much food coming from

Ireland, though often wondering why the Irish people should be so poorly fed at home, as report said they were, when they sent so much food to England. That food left Ireland by the process I have described. Some landlords and some districts of country might be exceptions ; but in the south and west of Ireland, and in most of the midland counties, that has long been the method of collecting rents, and of exporting provisions to England.

The stranger could not get so far through the country, nor be so long in it as to understand this system of distraint, without seeing that the people were ragged to a degree of wretchedness not seen in any other country ; that they were lodged with their pigs, the pigs not having a better lodging than a sty, and that the food of the people was potatoes, and only as many of them as the distraint system of getting rent left them. There being all the staff of sheriffs' officers, keepers, attorneys to sue out warrants, fees for warrants, attorneys to work on the other side to urge the tenant to replevin and resist, and so draw from the wretched man costs ; there being all these to pay in addition to the rent, while the rent was paid by selling the crops at prices over which the tenant had no control, it is no wonder that the Irish tenantry were always poor and starving, or only kept from starving by a miserable diet of potatoes, while those who saw the Irish corn, cattle, and pigs coming to England, thought the Irish should be well-fed to have so much to spare.

This was rendered all the worse by the next characteristic of Ireland, namely, that those tenants thus distrained upon were tenants in the third or fourth degree. The head landlord was not the receiver of the rents. Some leaseholder was under him, both of them perhaps being non-resident. A person of some capital, of much energy, and little conscience, took a townland or other such portion of an estate. He let that out again at a rent which none of the peasantry who became his tenants could pay, which he knew they could not pay, but which, in the intense competition for land to keep in bare life, they engaged to pay ; they not being able to get out of arrears at any time, could always be seized upon by him, and this has been his system—whenever they had anything. He was thus able at harvest or potato time, by the arrears due, to seize, sell, and send to England, or to certain stores to be ready for the English market, the corn and potatoes, before the producer of them eat too much. But this system of exacting engagements to pay rents which could not be paid, which never were expected to be paid, in order to have always the power of seizing the crops and selling them before the producers had time to eat them up stump and rump, was not confined to middlemen; it has been done by the head landlords, and by many of them. As much was left to the miserable tenantry, but no more, than would keep them in life. with strength enough to put another crop in the ground.

But this system went farther. The enmity of Protestant and Catholic led the first, he being usually the landlord, to allow the latter, the potato-eating tenant, to get in arrear, that he might be at any time evicted by means of the law when a better tenant offered for the land. The Protestant landlord, having all the law on his side—all the officials being Protestants, from the lord-lieutenant to the hangman—he was seldom particular about the moral justice of such cases. There were the armed police ever at hand to help the landlord, if the tenant did not yield possession, and betake himself to a ditch, to lie and die quietly. If he took vengeance into his own hand while in that ditch, or behind the hedge that skirted it and the high-way road, there was the hangman for him; that is, if they could catch him, and get the noose on his neck. But such a man was not easily caught in such a country, among such people. To be sure the pursuing law was not always particular about the right man; so as one or two or three were caught and hung up, the law, and the landlords, and the juries whom they employed were pretty well satisfied; pretty well satisfied, unless a fourth or a fifth should be caught and sworn against; then the law was not satisfied until these were hanged by the neck also. And when the right man, the actual criminal, fell into the law's hands at last, he too must go as the two or three, the four or five innocent men charged with his crime, and found guilty by means which could only be found in a country corrupted by faction as Ireland has been;—he must go at last as they went before him.

Such was Ireland up to the time when the mysterious famine came, and, with a warrant more potent than that of all the sheriffs and sheriffs' officers of Ireland, (and they are no feeble band,) seized the crops and kept possession, from each and from all, Protestant and Catholic.

Heaven's purpose in executing that awful warrant is not for me to scan or scribble at. It is only for me and others to believe that good will come of it, and to do our best to turn it to good account, for Ireland's sake.

Let us see what are its results, so far as yet visible. Not the least of them is this, that men who lived in enmity, who nourished political and religious hatred, and threw it on the wind to grow on every spot of the island where the wind blew, who blighted such commerce as they had, and scared from their shores such men of capital and commercial enterprise as ventured to settle among them to sow the seeds of profitable industry—the first element of national power; they are now meeting in common calamity, driven together by the common danger, and calling each other brethren and countrymen.

But where the end is to be I have no penetration to see. People are dying of want, and of diseases induced by want. Those alive are, day by day, becoming too feeble to work. They have just been able to do enough to break up half the roads in Ireland in the process of giving public work for public relief, and in that state, almost impassable—in many parts utterly so—the roads must be left. The feeble beings are not able to continue at them if it were desirable they should. It is not desirable. It is imperiously necessary that the fields should be prepared, and planted, and sown. The people have no seed. They have no interest in the land themselves; they never had. The most they ever obtained was a meagre subsistence; the rent was taken from them as I have described. The pay they now receive is not enough to get them food, at present prices, to keep up their working strength. Such as it is on the roads it would only be on the land; they see no difference. Those who can pay rent will not do it; those who have nothing to pay rent with cannot. The landlords, most of them only nominally landowners, are not receiving rent; and they are without funds and without credit. The estates are mortgaged to their full value. Never, in the known history of mankind, was there a country and its people so dislocated as Ireland is now; so inextricably ravelled, and its people in such imminent hazard of perishing utterly. Apart altogether from the claims which one human being has upon another for life, if that other can save his life, I urge the imminent distress of Ireland upon the attention of England on another ground, which is, that if the land is not sown and planted, the famine of next year will be immeasurably more disastrous than the famine of this year; and if the people are not fed to keep them from sinking down upon and under the earth, which they are now doing, the land cannot be cultivated.

No. III.

KILKENNY, *27th January.*

Coming from Dublin to Carlow, I had day-light only for the distance of thirty-five miles. Over that space, consisting of the county of Dublin and part of Kildare, I saw no land which seemed to have been corn and potato fields, but what was ploughed or undergoing he process of ploughing; while several fields which had been lying in grass were ploughed up ready for seed-sowing. Two-thirds of that country is lying in grass. It feeds cattle and sheep, and furnishes hay for Dublin. The farms are nearly all of an acreage, to be counted by the hundred, and not by units of acres as in other parts of Ireland. The surface of the country on both sides of the railway is nearly a dead level all the way. The meadows, even at this advanced period of winter, have a rough herbage on them. Some of them are partially flooded. The enclosures, fenced by ill-conditioned thorn hedges, seem to range in measurement between six and ten acres. Several elegant villas and mansions are seen, and a good many humble dwelling-places; but not so many of the latter as to give one the idea of a dense population. Were it not for the Wicklow hills, a few miles southward, running from east to west as we are running, the country might be likened to Staffordshire, as seen from the Birmingham and Manchester line of rails.

This Irish South Western, or Dublin and Cashel line, now opened as far as Carlow, fifty-six miles, is the smoothest line of rails I ever travelled on; the carriages are well fitted up, more roomy than on the English narrow gauge lines—the Irish railways being a medium gauge between the narrow and the broad, and going so steadily as to make the passenger think he is sitting in a parlour. The station building at Dublin promises to be almost regal in magnificence.

A railway contractor, whom I have seen, has contracts for three hundred miles of railway in Ireland; throughout the whole of which he has hands at work, at the rate of a hundred men per mile. This gaves 30,000 men employed by him alone on railways. I cannot yet give their wages, but shall endeavour to reach that important branch of information soon.

Of Carlow I have not much to write. It is a pleasant little town on the banks of the Bourne, which falls into the Barrow a little below the town. The latter river, uniting with the Noire from Kilkenny and the Suir from Tipperary, sweeps through a lovely and fertile country, passing Waterford in all the grandeur of a broad, deep, clear, mighty river, hastening to hide itself in the Atlantic Ocean, as if ashamed of having such a volume of water with so little work to do. Around Carlow the best cultivated farms in Ireland are to be seen—so some people say.

Awful havoc was made among the small tenantry a few years ago, in getting them cleared away to make large farms and to substitute a Protestant population for a Catholic one. Carlow town and county is a stronghold of the Protestants—the political Protestants. The land is a free fertile loam, which grows prodigious crops of onions. London is sometimes supplied with Carlow onions. Turnips are also produced in a considerable quantity, and cattle are fed and manure produced in the farm-yard. Wheat is grown as a leading crop, and the wheat is always of good quality.

After writing the foregoing, and staying a night in Carlow, I walked through and around the town. From Mr Spong, seed-merchant, I obtained a good deal of information, of which the following is the substance:—From 700 to 800 tons of bere are sown, or will be sown, within a circuit of twenty miles more than usual; more oats will be sown than usual. The farmers are not generally behind with their work. The small farmers are behind. There are more than a thousand people in and about Carlow town called quarter-acre men. They rented a quarter of an acre of land—some more, some less—for potatoes, and found manure for it. They are not now collecting manure. That article could not, in any former year at this season, be obtained for less than 3s. 6d. per cart load. Now every one of the quarter-acre men are trying to sell what manure they have, and it is offered at 1s. 3d. and 1s. per cart load. This is a sign that they do not think of planting potatoes again. They may be doing this because they have no seed potatoes, nor money to purchase them. There are more potatoes in the country around Carlow than is generally known. The mass of common people have none; they have either consumed all which the disease spared, or had them taken from them for rent, or sold them, (they rented the land from the large farmers, not from the landlords.) But the large farmers have all potatoes stored away. They keep them very quietly. Some have 100 barrels, some 200 barrels, and others 300 barrels. They are beginning to let them be known now, lest they should not be able to sell them at all.

Yesterday, 25th, there was quite a panic in Carlow with wheat and oats; wheat fell five shillings per quarter, and oats about the same; flour and meal did not fall, because the millers and dealers know the prospects of the markets better than the farmers. There are many mills about Carlow, all in full work, grinding meal and flour. It is supposed that the millers and dealers united to spread an alarm among the farmers, to induce them to bring their grain to market, which they were always holding back in hopes of higher prices. It poured in last week, and seldom has such a day of bustle been seen in Carlow as Saturday. Yesterday (Monday) the panic increased. Every farmer offered to sell, but the millers would not buy, in hopes of forcing them still further into the panic.

A great many men have been employed, and are now on public works. A soup-kitchen is open in the town, which supplies 1500 persons with soup daily. When the spring advances, work will be plentiful on the land. The small farmers who are not able to cultivate their holdings and get seed will sublet them. Subletting is now going on to a great extent. The country around this town is called the garden of Ireland; it well deserves the name. There are about 500 acres of onions and parsnips grown annually; the parsnips are sown with the onions. The disease did not affect the onions last year; but many of the growers got bad seed from Dublin, because they got it cheap there, and it did not grow. The parsnips were a splendid crop. They are now selling at L.6: 10s. per ton; and are bought up for the Dublin market to supply the place of potatoes. They did not formerly sell for more than L.2 per ton. The farmers generally in Carlow county have seldom been so prosperous as they are this year: that is, the farmers holding above ten acres, say from twenty acres upwards. They have only lost on their potatoes; they have gained enormously on everything else. Turnips are a good crop, and selling at a great price. Swedes at from 35s. to 40s. per ton, and other sorts at 30s. per ton. The owners of the land in this district are Colonel Bruen, Earl Fitzwilliam, Earl of Besborough, (the Lord-Lieutenant,) Lady Cavanagh, (for her son, a minor,) and Mr Horace Rochford. Colonel Bruen is a resident landlord, and has been very attentive to the poor. All the others have taken their share of the burthen liberally. Upon the whole, it is questionable if any other part of Ireland is so well-conditioned. The railway terminus has centred in this place the whole traffic of the south and west of Ireland with Dublin. The hotels were never so full before; shopkeepers were never more busy; mills are grinding night and day, and farmers never had better prices, with more corn to sell. The sufferers are the labouring population—the quarter-acre men, the small householders, *and the small farmers, whose holdings are under ten acres.*

I should like the prize-holders of the Chartist land-scheme to note those words printed in *italics*—they who never handled a spade, and who are supposed to be able to do such great things on two, three, and four acres of poorer land than this is around Carlow; who are to live on the best of English fare and pay so large a per-centage on the money advanced to them to purchase their land and stock it. Miserable delusion! A better soil, a more industrious people, and better managed farm-gardens are not to be found anywhere than around Carlow, and yet every family holding only a few acres is reduced to Indian meal and the soup-kitchen by the failure of their potatoes.

I must proceed to sketch my journey from Carlow to Kilkenny. It is half-past ten; the coach starts at eleven from

Carpenter's hotel, where I now am, after it comes down from the railway station where it has just gone to meet the train from Dublin. Other coaches and cars are to start from here, to Kilkenny, Clonmel, Waterford, Cork, and other places. Already the professional mendicants are assembling outside the door to besiege the coaches as they come. They arrive muffled up in tattered cloaks, greatcoats, and all manner of garments slung, hung, wrapped, twisted, and tied upon them. Fifteen or sixteen have arrived, and more are coming. Already they begin to unfold to the public eye their sores, which form their stock in trade, to do a little preliminary business with such as me. One woman begins to beg for Christ's sake. "Oh, it will be the lucky day to your honour if you give me a handsel." (Another)—"Give something to the poor, for God's sake." (Another)—"Long life to your honour; God bless your honour; you are a gentleman, any one may see." (All, but the last)—"Divide it amongst us, your honour; do, for the love of God, divide it; the devil a bit will that old man you gave it to divide with any of us: remember the poor women."

The coaches begin to arrive from the railway. The mob of beggars now rush to the windows and doors of the coaches and around the cars. When they see a lady and a gentleman together, they assume that she is his wife and may be in the family way. Before her eyes they open their hideous sores, and beg of the gentleman, for the love of God, to give them something. I get upon the box-seat of the Clonmel coach, which is to take me to Kilkenny. "Oh! now your honour has got the box-seat, you'll give us a handsel: do, for the love of God, give something to the poor. Give the poor creatures of women a handsel, and it will be the lucky day to you." (A sergeant of the 64th regiment gets upon the front seat.) "Sergeant, give a trifle to the poor, and the blessing of God be upon you. Do, sergeant, and you'll never want a copper to bless yourself." (Many voices)—"Do, sir, give something to the poor creatures." (Sergeant)—"I really have no coppers. I would give you something with pleasure if I had it." (Several women)—"Well, it's yourself that gives a civil answer any way." (A Waterford coach comes up and halts alongside of us.) "Oh, blessings on you, doctor, but we are glad to see you down again. Oh, doctor, good luck to you this blessed day." (To a lady inside.) "Give something for the poor baby; please your ladyship, look at its head how sore it is. God be with your ladyship." A gentleman, mounted on a fine hunter, with scarlet coat, and booted and spurred, living close to Carlow, returns from the hunt and rides through the crowd. A passenger asks some of the mendicants why they don't beg from him. "From him is it?" they reply, "sure we know him better; it would not be a ha'penny he would give the like of us."

The quantity of luggage to go with the coach I am on is unusually great. Men who have shouted to one another, "Paddy!" "Larry!" "Hardy!" "Billy!" "Barney!" and "Dan!" for the last ten minutes by the hotel clock, are lifting it up, laying it down, moving it back, moving it forward, building it up, pulling it down, building it up again, and they are not one whit nearer an end than when they began, for down it all tumbles, Paddy running one way, and Larry another way, and Dan and Billy a third way, to save themselves from being knocked on the head with rolling hat boxes and portmanteaus.

At last, after adding pieces of rope to straps that were not long enough, and knotting rope to rope, the new to the old, the old breaking and other knots being made of new to new, the tarpauling was got over the luggage, the driver got on the box, and off we rattled, overtaking and passing all the other coaches in succession. Hardy was guard and Larry was driver, and never did a better driver handle whip or reins than Larry. He had shewn himself but a poor hand at loading the coach; that was not his business; his business was on the box. Once on the box, Larry was a prince of coachmen.

We came down upon the river Barrow, and rattled along its left bank. Some of the land bore evidence of having been well cultivated; some of it looked the reverse. Ploughs were at work on every hand, and as much seemed to be doing as could be done for the ensuing crops of corn. Some fields of young wheat looked green and healthy. Larry still smacked his whip, and made the horses canter, and admonished us to mind our hats as we passed beneath the hanging branches of the roadside trees. Behind those trees, close on our right hand, a little below the level of the road, the Barrow, rolling broad, deep, and strong, still kept us company. The high frontiers of the Queen's county rose up a mile or two beyond the river, with their cultivated steeps subdivided into innumerable fields; the whole forming a picture which seemed to be set on its edge in the plain, and leaning back upon the walls of the horizon.

Now we ascended through a cutting which hid the plain from view, and again we descended, with the Barrow once more beside us, as broad, beautiful, and idle as before. At one of those points where we came suddenly upon it after being hid from it for a short time, between four and five miles from Carlow, the sight of the noble river sweeping for several miles before us through meadows and trees inspirited and inspired me to enthusiasm. But the way-side houses were beginning to look more miserable, the farms were smaller, much more numerous, and the people poorer. Close on the road-side, on our left hand, when ascending a gentle eminence, we passed a number of mean huts, all standing in pools of filth, the thatched roofs broken, the walls leaning in and bending out, and one or more faces looking over each of the low half-doors; the faces looking squalid, dirty, shrivelled, and famine-stricken. One face was an exception; it was that of a girl approaching womanhood. The under half of her door was open, and she stood in the doorway at full length, her unshod feet in the puddle of a filthy sink and dunghill, which was making itself level with the road outside and the floor of the house inside. She was not dirty in clothing. She had washed her face, for she could not be insensible to its beauty. Poet or painter never saw a face which would more readily strike a light in the onlooker's eyes at one glance than that one.

I shall not in this letter proceed to describe Kilkenny, its country, and its people: there is more distress here than at Carlow. The distress deepens as we go west. At Carlow the potatoes were English reds—they did not all fail. In the south and the west the potatoes were the lumpers; planted always because large and prolific. The disease is peculiarly a lumper disease—they have all failed.

No. IV.

Clonmel, County of Tipperary, 29th *January*.

This is a large busy town of about 16,000 inhabitants; the most fertile land in Ireland lying around it, save on one side, the south, where rises a high hill less fertile, and the river Suir rolling at the bottom of the hill, and partly through the town, driving many flour mills of great extent, and able, from its vast volume of water and velocity of current, to drive as many mills as would grind meal for all Saxon and Celtic mankind.

Clonmel being thus furnished with mills of great power, and the consumption of meal in Ireland being now great, far beyond its consumption at any former time, the Indian corn is conveyed here from Waterford and other seaports, to be reduced to meal. The redistribution of the meal to other districts causes a great traffic with carts upon the roads in every direction. The 34th regiment of infantry is located here with some artillery and the head quarters of the Scots Greys. The latter regiment is broken into detachments lying all over the county of Tipperary and in part of Waterford county, engaged in the harassing duty of guarding the transit of meal. The infantry are similarly engaged, and all of them are worn and wearied with heavy duty. The duty is all the worse that they are continually on their feet if infantry, on horseback if cavalry; and because they are not marching in the ordinary sense of the term—to shift quarters—they do not get marching money, nothing but their bare pay, which with dear prices is not much.

Ascertaining, on my arrival here from Kilkenny, on Wednesday, that military escorts would go out with carts loaded with meal on the following morning, one of them towards Dungarvan, I resolved to accompany them, and made arrangements accordingly.

In the morning, at half-past five o'clock, the low rumble of carts was heard on the streets. At six the sound continued, and so on occasionally until seven. Not knowing at what hour the carts would be loaded and ready to start, nor at what hour the military escort would turn out, I was ready long before daylight to start on the journey with them if they went so soon. The morning was dark and stormy, and the rain poured from the dark sky upon the darker earth.

As soon as daylight served, I went out, and going up the spacious and handsome main street of Clonmel reached the narrower streets which lead down to the river banks, to the bridges over the various divisions of the river, and to the islands which divide the river, and to the great, the gigantic flour, meal, and malt mills which stand upon the islands. That noble stream, the Suir, rolled and roared through the bridges and among the mills; while drivers of carts, millers, meal-dealers, and police, amid hundreds of carts that choked up the narrow thoroughfares, shouted, pulled, and swore at one another. The buyers of meal from Cahir, Tipperary town, and other remote places were there, to purchase for the expedition which will go out to their towns to-day and on Saturday morning, as the expeditions to Clogheen and Dungarvan were going this morning.

Small progress was made in loading, as the loaded carts could not get out from among the empty ones, until after disputes and struggles amounting to a kind of civil war. A party of sixteen men, and an officer of the 34th regiment of infantry, marched from the barracks on the east through the town westward, to a point where the loaded carts were to assemble. Then came two of the Scots Greys, as the advanced guard of the party of dragoons; then four of the greys; and, fifty yards behind, two of the same as rear guard. The sergeant who commanded this party rode on in front, and in himself made the ninth man. There were also some of the armed constabulary. In all, the escort for Dungarvan consisted of one officer, two sergeants, and twenty-five men; that for Clogheen was of a similar strength. I hired a car and attached myself to this expedition for Dungarvan; it was only going, however, to the Half-way House, about fourteen miles distant, on the top of the mountains.

When an hour beyond the appointed time for the whole party to start had elapsed, and the soldiers had been standing in the rain, and in the deep mud half-a-mile beyond the town on the Dungarvan road, until they were soaked, the infantry through their greatcoats, the cavalry through their cloaks, or nearly so, twenty-six carts out of the hundred, or thereabouts, which were to go to Dungarvan, had reached the place of rendezvous. The carts were each drawn by one horse; and each driver had been at liberty to take any number of hundred weights of meal, according as he judged of the strength of his horse, up to sixteen; none were allowed to take more. Most of them had 12 cwt. or 14 cwt. The payment for carriage to Dungarvan from Clonmel, the distance being about twenty-five English miles, and road bad, was 1s. per cwt. Most of the carts had come from places far distant from Clonmel. Any owner of a good horse can get employment for himself and horse in carrying meal. The poor horses, and the poor men who own them, have no chance, as none are sent out under the military escort but those supposed to be able to perform the work. When I saw the loaded carts assembled on the road, and was told how bad the road was, so bad that Mr Bianconi, the celebrated car proprietor, has ceased to run his public conveyances between Clonmel and Dungarvan, it seemed to me impossible that such small horses could go over the mountains with such loads. But I judged wrong of them; they went well, and went through places where larger horses that I have known would have stuck fast.

Five cars were obtained to carry the foot soldiers, the officer commanding, and the two armed constables. I had provided a conveyance for myself on the previous evening. It was, like the rest, an outside jaunting car. The seats hold each two persons when required; in which case the driver gets up in front. The drivers of the cars carrying the foot soldiers were all sitting aloft in front.

Few travellers stir out here at present without being armed. The pay-clerks of the public works are attacked and robbed frequently. Land-stewards and agents are never at any time particularly safe: commercial travellers and merchants, formerly safe, are now liable to be mistaken for officers and clerks of public works. Nor are they in their own character of men travelling through the country with property in their possession quite free from danger, now that highway robberies have begun. Were it not a very serious matter, it would be amusing to see the arming of travellers. And, as it is, the commercial travellers occasionally make merry with one another when they come into the commercial hotels from a journey on the road, pulling off their gloves as they enter, throwing the gloves into their hats; pulling off wrappers from their necks and throwing them down; taking a horse pistol with a spring dagger attached to it from the right side pocket of the top coat; another horse pistol with a dagger to it from the left side pocket; a pistol of lesser size with revolving barrels from the breast pocket of the top coat; then taking the top coat off and hanging it up, cautioning the waiters, and boots, and other persons present, not to touch one of those pistols, for all are loaded and have percussion caps on ready to go off. Then proceeding, the top coat being hung up, to pull a small pistol out of the right hand trousers' pocket; another small pistol from the left hand trousers' pocket; a third from the breast pocket of the coat, with ball cartridges from the same place, and percussion caps from the pockets of the waistcoat; all which being done, they may lock them up in bag or box until the morning, and proceed to sit down to tea and tell the news. Such is commercial travelling, at present, in Tipperary and the counties adjoining.

As I had no pistols, powder, bullets, nor percussion caps, I was seriously warned on the Wednesday evening not to go out on the morning with the expedition to Dungarvan without them, particularly as it was not my intention to return with the military escort to Clonmel. Accordingly, as arming seemed the order of the day, I armed myself, and did it as follows:—I took one of my carpet bags and emptied everything of luggage kind out; took it to a baker's shop and purchased several shillings' worth of loaves of bread, and to a general dealer's shop, and purchased a piece of cheese. I put them in the bag, put the bag on the car by my side, ready, if any hungry Tipperarian or dweller on the Waterford mountains should present a blunderbuss at me, to put my hand into the bag, pull out, present, and throw to him a bullet of bread; not fearing but this style of defence would be more effective than a defence by powder and lead. Besides, it had this other advantage, that if bad roads, or bad weather, or other mischance detained me in the mountains, or if no inns or provision shops could be met with on the road, I could begin and eat my ammunition; which, if that ammunition had been gunpowder and leaden bullets, I could not have done.

Thus prepared for the journey, I joined the procession, which, as already said, at starting consisted only of twenty-six loaded carts; but which increased to the number of sixty-one before we proceeded five or six miles. An advanced guard of two of the Scots Greys rode on fifty yards in front. I followed them in my car. Then came three cars, with the officer commanding, eight of the infantry, and one of the constabulary. Next were four of the Scots Greys. Then came the long line of single horsed carts loaded with bags of meal. Then followed the cars, with eight of the infantry and a constable; and, last of all, two of the Scots Greys, a corporal and a private, came up as rear-guard. The sergeant of the Greys in command of his party trotted and galloped from front to rear and from rear to front, urging the straggling carters forward, and halting those in front until the rear closed up to a manageable distance; for the line was often extended to a great length by some horse, which was too heavily loaded for its strength, stopping and keeping the rest back.

The line of horsemen, cars, and carts winded up the narrow valleys and on the hill sides, gaining a higher and higher altitude at every step, the hills rising still higher above the road as the road ascended, until we had the mountains on each side at the distance of only a few miles capped in snow, with sunshine on the snow and blue clouds girt upon them at their middle height. As we passed along, groups of squalid beings were seen at road corners, or running from the multitudinous houses, hovels, huts, or cabins dotted on the slopes and in the bottoms by the streamlet sides, to see the meal go past them under the protection of bullets, bayonets, and cavalry swords, on its way to feed people beyond the mountains hunger-stricken like themselves, but to whom they would not let it go if bullets, bayonets, and cavalry swords were not present. To look on all this from some prominent place it was extremely picturesque and striking on the perceptive senses. The beautiful grey horses of the dragoons—the men with their large scarlet cloaks flowing from their shoulders to their knees, and covering the backs of the horses, and the horses with their long white tails waving beneath the scarlet cloaks—the long swords dangling from the waistbelt to the men's feet—the feet booted and formidably armed with spurs, one touch of which would have made the gallant greys leap from the ground to the roofs of the ordinary wayside houses—gave a liveliness to the picture which it would not have possessed had it been merely a military line of march. The liveliness of the scene was increased by the cart-drivers, who holloed and whooped to their horses to get them up the steep roads, and ran, half a dozen of them at a time, to push behind the cart of some horse that stopped.

But how miserable was the scene when looked upon otherwise than as a picture; when dwelt upon in thought. Because the land was mountainous and poor, the best of it of indifferent quality, it was thickly peopled. The landowners of Ireland have generally succeeded in clearing their good land of its dense population. In Tipperary there are exceptions; the soil is of the richest quality, and the population is dense; but even in Tipperary some large rich tracts of land are seen lying in grass, as pasture farms, from which the cultivating people have been driven away. Driven from the good land they find refuge upon the bad, such as I saw yesterday amid the Waterford mountains. I found none of it rented even in that wild region for less than 20s. per acre; it was generally 30s. 35s. and 40s. per acre. The owners were various, the Earl of Donoughmore, Colonel Green, the Marquis of Ormonde, and some others whose names I did not take note of. But all of them have middlemen, who become security to them for a moderate rent, and then exact and extract whatever beyond a moderate rent they can obtain from the cultivators of the land. The constabulary stations, with armed men in them, all along the road, to aid in the exaction of the rack-rents, and the meagre efforts made by the peasant farmers on the undrained land—all of it easily drained, but sour with rushes and pools of water, the best of the deep soil buried in foul bogs, the worst of the shallow soil being the portions scratched at under the name of cultivation by the rent-eaten tenantry—those things shew what the natural result is of the disorderly customs of Irish landlords. It was to save the cart-loads of meal from being plundered by those starving tenant farmers of those and other Irish landlords with high sounding titles and long family traditions that the military were employed. And that meal, thus guarded, was going over the mountains to save from death the equally wretched peasantry of the princely English Duke of Devonshire around Dungarvan.

We reached the half-way house, which stands in a gullet on the top of the mountains, about three o'clock. A military escort was to have been there from Dungarvan to take the charge from the Clonmel party, but it did not come. One division of the carts was to leave Dungarvan road at the half-way house, and go by a cross sectional road to Cappoquin, a poor densely populated place in the mountains of Waterford. An escort of armed constabulary was waiting for this division, and took it in charge. The orders of the officer commanding from Clonmel were, to conduct the carts to the half-way house, and no further; so he left them there, and returned with his party. I came back with them. We had our road all down hill now; the Scots Greys trotted out at a slapping pace, the Irish car drivers whipped and holloed to their horses, and came home in lively style. A wheel came off one of the cars, and the soldiers on it were rolled out upon the road, which afforded all the other drivers, and all the dwellers by the wayside, who saw them, much merriment. Another failed to come on from the feebleness of the horse, and was likely to detain the whole, as the rear-guard of the Greys could not pass and leave any of the party behind. I was asked if I had any objection to take the soldiers on my car, and, having none, we soon scoured down the hills to the valley of the Suir, and so into Clonmel.

While I write this at a window looking into the street, another party of the Grey's has passed with drawn swords at the "Carry," going to escort carts to Tipperary. To-morrow a party sets out for Cahir, which is a town situated ten Irish miles (eleven Irish are fourteen English miles) up the banks of this beautiful river Suir.

No. V.

KILKENNY AND CLONMEL, *Feb.* 1, 1847.

Kilkenny is situated on the river Noire, seventy-two miles south-west of Dublin. To the stranger, its most remarkable features are—First, The rolling river overhung by rocky eminences, with walks below the rocks and above, and narrow meadows fertile and green, and gardens and garden-fields mingling with the river, the rocks, and the suburban buildings. Second, The magnificent castle, family residence of the Marquis of Ormonde, rising above the steep rock, the rock standing on the river's brink, in all the grandeur of turrets, postern gateways, and feudal strength. Third, The hordes of professional beggars, who rush upon the stranger coming into or going out of the town, begging for God's sake, and promising to divide the money the stranger may give, quarrelling with, and swearing foully at, one another when the money is given.

Kilkenny, with its suburbs, contains 23,625 inhabitants. It is a city of history, a city of many legends, a city of poetry, and a city of trade, the poetry and trade being much the same, of small value. It has "water without mud, fire without smoke, and its streets are paved with marble;" so says fame, and fame in this case says truly. The black marble spotted with white which we see forming brilliant chimney pieces, polished and shining, is quarried near this town, and the paving stones of the streets come out of the same quarries. The marble pavement, however, is more muddy than poetical.

Looking across some garden-fields from the east upon this little city, with its shining slated roofs, upon which are no smoking chimneys, one might suppose it to be dead; or, that it has been smitten by the angel whose mysterious steps are now upon all Ireland, and that it is holding its breath, awaiting, suspensive and motionless, the next movement of the finger of God.

In calling for leave to govern themselves by their own parliament in Dublin, the inhabitants of Kilkenny are more nearly unanimous than are the inhabitants of any other city. The chief difference is now on the questions of physical or moral force. Headed by an alderman of the corporation, the men who have been most conspicuous at local repeal meetings are siding with the physical forcists of the *Nation* party in Dublin, against Mr O'Connell and his son John, the member for Kilkenny. I call them physical forcists because they are so called in Ireland; the more appropriate term is sentimentalists. They are men who, alike void of practical ideas in their writings and of practical doings in the daily business of life, think nationality consists in the mad metre of verses and in flowery and declamatory writing and speaking. What the Irish parliament would do for Ireland is an unsolved problem. But the sentimental corporation of Kilkenny need not wait for a parliament to assemble in College Green, Dublin, for leave to carry out such local improvements as are required in the town. They do not need, for example, to ask the "Saxon" for liberty to put numbers to the houses and shops of Kilkenny, to render possible the delivery of letters to the persons to whom they should be delivered; to render less common the perusal, detention, and loss of letters, by their falling into the hands successively of a number of persons of the same name, who have no business to have them in their hands. All they require for effecting this, and many other necessary improvements, is merely a little common sense. Self government does not consist entirely in having the power of enacting statutes or of making parliamentary speeches.

The trade of Kilkenny chiefly consists in providing for the wants of a great garrison of soldiers, who, in their turn, are chiefly engaged, conjointly with the armed constabulary, in keeping the inhabitants of Kilkenny in a state of subjection, and in collecting rents and levying distresses for rents in the neighbourhood. Some manufactories of woollen cloth exist; tanneries, breweries, and foundries, have also an existence.

Corn-dealers and millers buy corn and make flour, and send corn and flour down to Waterford for shipment. Traders and dealers of other varieties may be found, but the operations of all are feeble. Religious houses, colleges, chapels, churches, Catholic priests, clergy in general, lawyers, constabulary, soldiery, and street beggary, comprise the leading interests, and give the city its distinctive features. A canal to connect Kilkenny with Waterford was begun many years ago, but was abandoned, after the money raised for it in the first moment of national enthusiasm was spent. It has remained a long, unsightly, stagnant trench ever since. Its banks were planted with rows of trees, which are now large and ornamental, with walks underneath, where the inhabitants of Kilkenny wander and loiter, the poets to make verses, the lovers to make love, the politicians to make prophecies of what Kilkenny would be if there was a parliament in Dublin. Yet with all this making, the canal has remained half made for more than fifty years. The Noire, with a water-power for machinery equal to one hundred thousand horses, has run poetically past all the while, broad, beautiful, and useless.

Most readers of newspapers have heard of Lord Devon's commission, a commission, by royal warrant, to take evidence and report on the laws and customs of landlord and tenant in Ireland. It is not known publicly how that commission of inquiry originated. Circumstances have heretofore prevented me from speaking publicly or writing of the matter. I do not conceive that those circumstances any longer exist, while there is a reason why the origin of the inquiry should be referred to, as I am writing of the locality, and may again write of the landlords, tenant-farmers, land-agents, land-lawyers, sheriffs' officers, sheriffs' men, constabulary, murderers, and hangmen, whose disorderly conduct towards one another, gave rise to that commission of inquiry.

It originated at Bennet's Bridge, five miles from Kilkenny. I was there in the summer of 1843, and saw such atrocious outrages committed by a landlord on his tenantry—a lease-holding tenantry—a landlord who, being a political Protestant, had the law, the law officials, the constabulary, with their bullets and bayonets, and the hangman with his rope, on his side. I saw such atrocities committed by this landlord, that I was constrained to write of him. I wrote an account of his atrocities to a morning paper in London, the conductors of which, with a prudence which was quite excusable, deemed the publication of them highly dangerous,in respect of the libel law which then existed ; but my report was privately printed. The proprietor of the newspaper, willing to do what service he could for the persecuted tenantry whose sufferings I had reported, laid a copy of the report before Sir James Graham, who, in his turn, was shocked with the horrible persecution carried on in the name of the law at Bennet's Bridge, and took my report at once to Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert Peel, with his characteristic promptitude in all such cases, caused a government agent to proceed at once to Bennet's Bridge and ascertain if my report was true. I was still in Kilkenny when the agent came. He confirmed the truth of what I had written. Upon which Sir Robert Peel immediately caused the commission, with Lord Devon at its head, to issue and inquire into the whole question of landlord and tenant in Ireland.

I subsequently printed, at an expense of L.50 to myself, (part of which, by the way, was to have been repaid to me by certain parties who have never done so,) the Bennet's Bridge cases of law-breaking by the landlord, called it " A Cry from Ireland," and sent a copy to every member and peer of parliament. Lord John Russell on one occasion referred to it as too frightful for quotation in the house, as he could hardly believe the circumstances there related to be true. Sir Robert Peel, in the same debate, said that he had read that pamphlet, that its statements were horrible, but he feared too true. The *Dublin Review* commented on it, and the reviewer said that the facts were within his own knowledge. All the copies of the pamphlet have been distributed; but some, probably many, of the readers of this paper have access to read, or will remember to have read, the substance of the matter now referred to in the first volume of the *League* newspaper, under the head of " Ireland as she is in 1843." Those matters are remarkable, not so much for the atrocities of a bad landlord as for the fact that the atrocities were done with the assistance of lawyers, armed constabulary, and the forms of law, in defiance of the law itself and the decisions of the judges at the Kilkenny assizes and quarter sessions, chiefly because the landlord was an adherent of the dominant Irish faction.

It is worthy of remark that he was an Irish landlord, with a family lineage reaching back into the traditions of the Irish kings, and that he was a resident landlord. He is not resident now. The estate is in Chancery, and a receiver of the Court of Chancery collects the rents.

That receiver is Mr Mannix, a barrister, a landowner of considerable extent in the county of Cork, and largely connected with land as a receiver under Chancery. I saw him the other day, and derived much pleasure and instruction from his practical conversation. He is a thoroughly practical man. In the first place, he expressed his belief that the Bennet's Bridge tenantry were a worthy and industrious set of men (those men who had been harassed until they were known by the disorder and crimes of their neighbourhood as devils in human form, and as black sheep. Does any reader remember the *black sheep* celebrated in 1843?) To illustrate the working of the Court of Chancery with property under its control, he stated that the house of one of the tenants at Bennet's Bridge requires, at the present time, to have repairs done which will cost L.3. To obtain leave to expend this sum of L.3 on repairs, application must be made to the Court of Chancery through an attorney and Chancery barrister in Dublin, which will cost L.5. A pamphlet which I recently quoted, "Observations on the Tenures of Land in Ireland," speaks of estates going through gradations of indebtedness until they fall into the hands of "the worst possible landlord, a receiver under the Court of Chancery." This must not be understood as applicable to the receiver as an individual. He is bound by the court, and can do nothing but receive the money and pay it into court.

Mr Mannix is not politically associated with the whigs or liberals; but he gave his unqualified approbation to Lord John Russell's measures, as proposed on the 25th of January, particularly his proposed simplification of the sale and titles of land. We happened to meet at Kilkenny, and again at Clonmel, and were in the same hotel reading the newspapers together when the report of Lord John Russell's speech reached Clonmel. To sell an estate of land at present, if encumbered with debt, in which case only estates require to be sold, Mr Mannix told me that one-half of the purchase money would be swallowed up in proving and conveying the title to it, unless it should happen to be an estate of very great extent. But estates of great extent are usually entailed and not saleable. The only way to avoid giving the half of the purchase money to the lawyers is to purchase from the different parties, often fifty or sixty in number, their opposition to the sale, though that opposition may be only the exercise of a fictitious right. To do this is often more expensive than going to the Court of Chancery to obtain an order for the sale in defiance of those fictitious rights.

Let me illustrate the operation of these absurd customs and laws of landed property in Ireland, by a supposed case clearly intelligible to Lancashire.

Cotton is the raw material from which we manufacture clothing, as land is the raw material out of which we manufacture food. If a bale of cotton were subjected to the same laws as a parcel of land in Ireland, lawyers would go to work to make out for the manufacturer, who intended to purchase it, a title;

that title must set forth its whole history; the history of its transit from the plantation to Mobile; of the person to whom it was sold there, and the custody in which it was kept; of its shipment, and the custody of the persons in whom it was vested at sea; of the interests of all the owners, if more than one, of the ship; the same of the insurance office; of the entrance of the ship into the docks; of the interests of all the persons to whom the docks containing this bale of cotton belong; of the landing of the bale, and of the proprietorship of the lurry which carried it to the warehouse; of the proprietorship of the warehouse which contained it; of the merchant and his family lineage and history who imported it or to whom it is consigned; of the family lineage of the merchant who has bought it from that importer, and who now proposes to sell it to the manufacturer; of the family lineage of the manufacturer who proposes to buy it; and of every other incident of its history for at least sixty years, supposing it to have been more than sixty years in existence. All this must be set forth on parchment in dreary redundance of phraseology by lawyers, and the consent of all persons who have had, or have been supposed to have, any interest in it for sixty years must be obtained and set forth separately in legal deeds before the bale can be sold once, and at each time that it is to be sold, or any part of it. And if any one of those parties who formerly possessed it, or had an interest in it, at the plantation, on the canal to Mobile, at Mobile, in the ship, in the docks at Liverpool, or in the warehouses, refuses to give consent to the sale of this bale of cotton after it is in Lancashire, their opposition must either be purchased up, or a bill must be filed in Chancery, setting forth all the history of the cotton, with affidavits to every particular, with fees to lawyers of prodigious amount, and subject to delay not less than six months, probably much longer. After all that expense and delay, the cotton bale might be sold and transferred to the new purchaser, who might then, not sooner, proceed with his own head and his people's hands to make it into cotton for human comfort or adornment.

We know that none of those things require to be done. The bale of cotton is the property of a merchant at mid-day. Before night it is not only conveyed to a manufacturer as his property, but is conveyed, if need be, thirty miles to his mill, and may be all made into cloth to-morrow.

Why should not land be as easily sold and purchased as a bale of cotton? There is more danger of fraud or wrongdoing in transferring cotton briefly and cheaply than land. Cotton soon changes its shape and location. Land always remains in the same place, to prove its own identity and to be witness to any fraud that may arise in selling and transferring it to a new purchaser. No other commodity under heaven might be so safely sold, the money paid for it, and a receipt given in twenty minutes of time, as a piece of land.

Since I wrote these remarks, I have seen the speeches of the liberal candidates for the representation of Manchester, delivered in the Free-Trade Hall on the 28th ult. I rejoice that my humble pen is writing in harmony with the sentiments, on the sale and transfer of land, so eloquently uttered by them.

Leaving Kilkenny, and taking the route to Tipperary, I found many people working on the roads for the public pay of tenpence per day. The roads are sadly cut up and disordered by the expenditure of that public money.

The soil continues to derive its character from the limestone on which it rests for many miles. The farms are chiefly from twenty to sixty acres for the first eight miles out of Kilkenny. The worst of the land is under cultivation, the best lies wet, rushy, and boggy, and neglected because it is wet. Though drainage is easy in most places, it is rarely attempted. At the distance of twelve or fourteen miles from Kilkenny, the land presented such a shocking aspect of foulness and disorder, the top water and springs of one field running into and over the field of another farmer below; and all the surface and spring water of that field, natural to itself, and acquired from above, running upon another still lower, until many hundreds of acres of the best land, that which lies lowest, were abandoned, the miserable tenantry preferring to give the high rent of thirty and forty shillings per acre for the thin, high, and dry soils, verging on the moorland, rather than have the rich soils below at any price; such, I say, was the shocking aspect of the foulness and disorder of that property, that I halted to inquire its landlord's name and its history, feeling assured that it must belong to some absentee, or be under the keepership of Chancery. It was neither; it was part of the estate of the Marquis of Ormonde.

I came next upon ground belonging to Sir Whelan Cuffe. Much of it was in a similar condition, though in one part I saw an attempt making at drainage. Any landlord expending his own money has a right to follow his own plans; but as public money is to be advanced for the improvement of Irish land, I protest against that money being sunk in such drains as those of Sir Whelan Cuffe. They are cut out on the pasture land less than eighteen inches deep, about half that width, the sods laid up to dry, and again put into the place from which they came. And this is done though there are stones close at hand—a mountain of stones more than sufficient to pave the whole surface of Ireland. The public money must be spent on works of substantial improvement, from which there will be some probability of it being paid back.

Gradually ascending the side of a rocky mountain, I passed a huge stone lying on the road-side, and was told that it marked the boundary of the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary. Going down the south side of the mountain, the road was steep for several miles, with an impetuous stream rushing out of the mountain and keeping it company. The houses were numerous, the land attached to them small in measure, and seemingly poor in quality; but I was told it was kindly land, and yielded well to a moderate amount of labour. Farther down, in approaching the great plain watered by the river Suir, the land had all the appearance of the most generous fertility. It was divided into small enclosures, by earthen dykes, occupying much space. The owner was the Earl of Clonmel.

Reaching the vicinity of the river, and proceeding westward, on a road not surpassed for breadth and hardness in the kingdom, and amid scenery and fertile land hardly equalled in the kingdom, I passed, at two and a half miles from Clonmel, the handsome lodge-gate of Captain Bernal Osborne, M.P. Many alterations have been effected by that gentleman on that estate (its name is Newtown Abbey) within the last three years, since he married the amiable young lady whose inheritance it was. Much work has been created for labourers, and a superior class of dwelling-houses built; also a national school, near the lodge-gate, ample and elegant.

But, going forward, I found everything changed from what I had yet seen in Ireland. Large flour-mills, worked by the powerful river and its tributaries; ample farm-fields with young wheat upon them, rich in promise for next harvest; green clover, as if the month had been May; and villas beautiful and numerous facing Tipperary on the Waterford side of the river, and shewing that Clonmel had wealthy inhabitants. Its evidences of trade when I arrived in it proved that the villas were not merely outside show. The flour-mills and stores were of a magnitude to amaze me, and all the more so, perhaps, that I had never heard of them before. They belong, I believe, every one of them, to members of the Society of Friends. Indeed, with the exception of Mr Bianconi, once an Italian boy, now and for a long time an extensive car proprietor, working about 1600 horses, the Friends have made the trade of Clonmel, and that within the lifetime of the present generation. And it is but bare justice to them to say, that while their great establishments are giving work and wages to many people who would have been otherwise unemployed, and are grinding and sending out the meal of the Indian corn upon the markets of Ireland, which but for such mills as theirs could not have been supplied fast enough to the people in this emergency, their broad benevolence is the chief support of many thousands of people bereft of food, and who are flocking to Clonmel, or, who being there, are flocking to them for subsistence.

A glorious mission of peaceful industry, moral example, and general benevolence, has their settlement in Tipperary fulfilled! Even the native inhabitants, inspired to enterprise and perseverance in business by the example of these industrious Friends, once strangers, are more enterprising and flourishing in Clonmel than in other towns of Ireland.

No. VI.

DUNGARVAN, COUNTY OF WATERFORD.

Coming over the hills, the other day, to this place, I was accosted by a man who carried a gun in his hand, and asked if I was Captain Somebody, whom he named, of the constabulary. What he would have said if I had been the captain I do not know. He proceeded to tell me that he was a farmer and a tailor; that he had twelve boys (men) at work for him; that he contracted to make greatcoats for the constabulary, and paid the boys 7s. 6d. per week; that he had as many potatoes as would plant three acres of ground; that he had three hundred barrels of oats, sixty barrels being thrashed and lying in the barn; that the barn had been twice attacked in the night; and that he had been to Clonmel to buy a gun and a pistol, and percussion caps, for himself and the boys to defend the oats and the seed potatoes.

On mentioning what this man told me to some gentlemen who are neither to be despised for their want of sagacity nor suspected of the want of liberality, they said that the man might be telling the truth, but it was just possible that he had been buying arms, like many others, and contrived an excuse for being seen with them in his possession on the highway. For myself, I saw no reason to doubt the man's story; most of the farmers have corn in their possession, and all who have it feel uneasy about it. They are purchasing arms and amunition to defend it, and are doing this the more anxiously and generally that they see the common people, the very poorest, procuring arms everywhere.

This is a most unhappy state of affairs. My attention was called to it as soon as I landed in Dublin, and frequently since. The first tradesman's shop I entered in Dublin was that of an inspector of a relief committee of St Michael's parish. He told me of the deplorable poverty of the people. But while I stood in his shop, a countryman in a frieze coat was looking at some samples of gunpowder, and selected the sample at 2s. 6d. per lb. of which he took and paid for a pound weight. I thought nothing of this at the time, and ever since have believed the accounts in newspapers and public rumour to be much exaggerated. I am exceedingly sorry to say, and feel constrained to write it, that as regards the county of Tipperary, Waterford, and Kilkenny, report has not exaggerated the amount of business doing in arms and gunpowder, nor has report come up to anything like the truth. Nor is it the farmers and provision dealers who have property to defend who are arming themselves; the people who are working on the public works for five shillings a-week are pinching their bellies of food, clubbing money together, and buying arms.

In Clonmel, with the exception of the flour and meal mills, no other shops are doing business at present with spirit, except the dealers in guns and pistols. I was staying there eight days in the Commercial Hotel. The commercial travellers came in day after day complaining that nothing was doing; no money could be got and no orders, all except those travelling for Birmingham gunmakers. One of these came to Clonmel on Tuesday last after mid-day, and he told the other commercial men and me, in the public room in the evening, that he obtained the offer of more orders that afternoon than he had obtained at other times in a month. He said his terms were always six months' credit; but the Clonmel tradesmen had been offering him ready cash if he would book and execute their orders at once; such is the excessive demand for arms. I find it the same in Dungarvan and throughout the county of Waterford; and the same at the poorer town of Carrick-on-Suir. I write on this subject with pain; but I feel that I would not do my duty if I did not call attention to these astounding facts.

The following auctioneer's bill, bearing the royal arms on the top, and printed so as to have an official appearance, belongs to a person who holds sales by auction and sells large quantities of arms of all kinds, to purchasers of all degrees, but chiefly to the very poorest looking of the road-working people:—"Whereas, many evil-disposed persons avail themselves of the present scarcity of food, as a pretext to commit acts of violence against property, and otherwise disturbing the peace of the country, his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant is pleased to grant to all her Majesty's subjects, without distinction, the power to have and to keep any description of firearms for the protection of the public peace and likewise their own homes and property, without any restriction, except an invoice or certificate of the person from whom the arms are purchased. T. M. is privileged by his Excellency, and fully empowered by the honourable Board of Excise, to offer for sale by auction to the peaceable inhabitants of this town, five hundred double and single barrelled guns of various sorts, and one thousand pairs of pistols, warranted all double power proof; five hundred thousand best percussion caps, a large quantity of powder flasks, shot bags, and belts, wash rods, turnscrews, nipple wrenchers, &c. &c. Sale to commence on Saturday, 30th January; for a short time only. T. M. licensed auctioneer, Castle-street, Dublin. N.B.—The auctioneer's invoice is all the license required by the purchaser for keeping arms. Auction each day at twelve o'clock."

The words *Castle* and *Dublin* are printed conspicuously, with the *street* between very small; and thus the bill has attracted much attention. But that, and the royal arms on it, and the *whereas* are only the trick of a smart anctioneer. I notice the thing as illustrative of this disordered country.

Since writing the foregoing, the commercial traveller, Mr T——, has informed me that the statement which recently appeared in the newspapers, as to a government agent being sent to Birmingham to ascertain how many guns had been sent to Ireland since the expiry of the Arms Act, last year, was not correct as regarded the number of 2000, which he was said to have reported as the whole number sent to Ireland. Mr T—— represents only one house, and there are many Birmingham houses represented in Ireland. His house alone had, up to that time, sent more than 2000 guns to Ireland, from the time of the Arms Act expiring. He estimates 800 guns and pistols as having been supplied to Clonmel alone previous to his visit on Tuesday last. He was kind enough to shew me his order-book, and he has taken orders for half as many more. Besides which, there was another Birmingham traveller in Clonmel only a fortnight ago, who took very large orders; but the firm for which that traveller took the orders has intimated to the tradesmen who gave them that they cannot fulfil the orders but for cash payments, the truth being, that the excessive demand for fire-arms, and the disordered state of the country, have alarmed the firm in question and made them hesitate to give credit. And this alarm on their part arises from the fact that they do little in the fowling-piece trade; they are in the musket, fusil, and carbine trade.

In reply to the question, if Clonmel was to be looked upon as a wholesale depot supplying other towns, Mr T—— stated that he and other travellers visited all the other towns near it, and received orders for arms there in the same proportion to the general trade done in those towns. I asked him if fowling-pieces were the kind of guns in most request. He said the trade opened after the expiry of the Arms Act last year with fowling-pieces chiefly and pocket pistols, but now the trade was in military pistols, soldiers' muskets, and bayonets, fusils with bayonets, house guns with bayonets, and fowling-pieces. The fusil is a shorter musket than that of common infantry regiments; the sergeants of the infantry carry fusils, and some entire regiments carry them, from which they are called fusileers. The fusil (pronounced fusee) is a size between the carbine of the heavy dragoons and the full-sized musket. The house gun, Mr T—— informed me, is a short fowling-piece, with a bayonet to fix on it; it is sold cheap, and is in great request.

The retail prices in Ireland are various. A countryman came into a shop one day when I was present, and asked to see the fowling-pieces exposed in the window. The shopkeeper handed one of them to him, and said the price was twenty-one shillings. The man said the price was too much, and wanted it cheaper. The shopkeeper put the gun in the window again, saying he could not take less for it, and could not waste time, as he was busy. The man then asked to have the gun handed back, upon which he laid down twenty-one shillings and walked away with it. Mr T—— told me that his firm had supplied that piece, and all of its kind in that shop, at ten shillings and sixpence each. It is said that those pieces are resold singly in the inland villages at thirty and forty shillings each.

I shall not speculate on the purposes which the buyers of these arms have in view. My deliberate opinion is, that the people, as a body, have no fixed purpose in view. A kind of mania has sprung up among them to furnish themselves with arms without their knowing why or wherefore. Distressing as the potato failure and the consequent high prices of food are, that very distress has caused more money to circulate in Ireland, and to circulate among the poorest of the people, than they were ever accustomed to before. When they had potatoes to eat, they handled very little money.

This town of Dungarvon belongs chiefly to the Duke of Devonshire. It is represented in Parliament by Mr Shiel, who sits by favour of the Duke. Some new streets and a square have been built by his Grace, and the town, as a town, has been beautified and improved at his instance. As to his farm-land, I see little in its management to commend; and I probably know too little of it to be justified in condemning it, farther than this, that it partakes of all the evils peculiar to Irish landed estates.

The Marquis of Waterford has an estate in this neighbourhood, which he proposes, so says report, to sell. The rental is about L.2000 per annum. The lawyers will get about L.5000, and his Lordship, probably, L.35,000, if he sells it. The purchaser, if a business man, with an additional L.20,000, may make a good property of it. If Lord Waterford devotes his L.35,000 to the improvement of some portion of his other property, he, too, will be a great gainer.

To shew what can be done with land in Ireland, I may refer to a tenant of Lady Osborne, about three miles from Clonmel. I was in the coach-building establishment of Mr Jones, a thorough practical man, when this tenant came in to receive cash for oats which he had sold to that gentleman. He willingly gave me, at the request of Mr Jones, an account of his agricultural operations. The following are the chief points of interest:—He occupies thirty acres and pays L.60 of rent annually. He paid L.100 within the last twelve months for manure, in addition to all the manure made by his own cows, pigs, and horses. He lost his potatoes as others did, but he thanks God that he has had enough of produce left to pay his rent, to get a fair return for his manure, pay all his debts, and have something over ! ! !

He was advised by Mr Jones and another gentleman present, as his land was in such good condition this year, to prepare some of it for Swedish turnips. He said he would sow turnips if he saw his neighbours doing so; not that he needed an example from them, but that, if he sowed turnips and they did not, all his would be stolen from him by the hungry people.

The refusal to pay rents by many of the tenantry who can afford to do so; the entire dependence of the mass of the people on the English treasury—in other words, on English industry, for food; the exertions which all parties possessed of landed property are making to oppose Lord John Russell's measure for throwing the burthen of Irish pauperism partly on them as well as on England; the embarrassed condition of the Irish landlords; the impossibility of reaching them unless by sale of their estates; the impossibility of effecting such sales but by a measure far more comprehensive than that of Lord John Russell; all those things, and others related in this letter, conspire to make the present condition of Ireland matchless in its necessities, matchless in its perils.

P.S.—Since posting the foregoing statement as to the trade in fire-arms, and the quantity sold by one Birmingham firm in Ireland, I find that the sales of that firm are a mere fraction compared with the sales by others—one other is alone receiving orders, through *one* of its travellers, at the rate of L.2000 per week for guns and pistols, chiefly guns. This is equivalent to 4000 guns per week. The orders are only executed in part to each customer from the impossibility of getting the articles supplied. The articles are fowling-pieces, and muskets with bayonets. The muskets with bayonets amount to about one-fourth of the number of fowling-pieces The prices, wholesale, are from eight shillings and sixpence to seventeen shillings for musket and bayonet. These are sold, retail, at prices varying from L.1 to L.1 : 10s. The shopkeepers easily obtain those profits, as the demand upon them is greater than can be supplied. The gentleman engaged in this gigantic gun trade gives me his opinion as follows:—That the operation of the law previous to the expiry of the Arms Act last year drained the country of fire-arms even of the most innocent kind. There was thus a vacuum, as it were, for the supply to rush into as soon as the law permitted; that the Irish people do everything in masses, being peculiarly disposed to operate together, as under a mania; that the farmers feel themselves and their little stores of corn insecure in this season of dearth, and some of them arm themselves for defence, seeing which, all rush to do the same thing. The difficulty in judging of the matter aright is, however, that the farmers are liable to be visited by bands of men, who take the arms from them, and who have no stores of corn to defend with them.

No. VII.

LIMERICK, *9th February.*

I had intended to write a letter, instead of this, from the county of Clare or Galway; but the snow-storm which enwraps the country and fills the atmosphere with smothering drift prevents me from getting further west for the present. And the state of the roads is already such as to render it doubtful if even this letter will reach Manchester in time for next Saturday's paper.

But there is no want of matter to write about here. Long before I reached this city I had matter enough, of the deepest interest, for a volume, instead of a column or two in a newspaper. The difficulty with me is to select the topics of most pressing interest, and postpone or leave untold what cannot be now published. To begin and continue to tell of all the ghastly faces, hollow and shrunken, which I have seen, with death looking out of the eyes, might horrify and appal the reader, but would not, I fear, instruct him ; the masses of population amongst whom I have travelled through Tipperary and part of this county, sinking from health to sickness, from life to death—not yet dead, but more terrible to look upon and think upon than if they were dead ; living, but with death and his attendants in possession of the human tenement, and keeping possession until the indwelling spirit of the clay is ejected, thrown out, out at the windows where it is already seen struggling to stay within, and glaring horribly upon the passer by ; those masses of population would afford, in description, scope enough to fill all this paper, from title to printer's name. But the means of relieving them from present suffering and impending death are the topics which I shall rather choose.

On the subject of subscriptions to relief committees, a very few sentences shall at present suffice. Government doubles the subscriptions of private individuals, so that by a subscriber giving L.50, the relief committee gets L.100. The munificent contributions from England, and the government duplication of them, (the government being in that case only the dispensers of taxes paid chiefly by Englishmen who work, who take off their coats to work, and sweat with their coats off,) these contributions are in many places the only dependence of the people for subsistence. In no place can I see, or ascertain by inquiry, that the nobility or landowning gentry are contributing, save in the most paltry sums; most of them giving nothing at all. A landlord who has nominally an income of L.20,000 per annum, but who, it is believed, has positively L.10,000, puts his name down, in the county of Cork, for L.5. Another in Tipperary county, who either is rich or lives as if he were rich, puts his name down for L.4. The town of Bridgewater in England alone has contributed for Irish relief above L.1100 in the course of a few weeks. Its population is about 10,000. The population of Clonmel in Ireland is about 16,000. Its contributions to the relief fund are about

L.1000, being by far the most liberal of any town in Ireland according to the population. But with the single exception of Mr Bianconi, the rich car proprietor, who gives L.25, the "Saxons" resident there, or the "Celts" favourable to Saxon alliance, are the liberal contributors. The only titled or landed subscriber is the Earl of Clonmel, who gives L.20. The millers, most of them, give L.100 or L.50 each, their daughters and sisters giving sums of L.20 and L.50, in addition to an endless stream of private beneficence From a few shillings up to L.5, but seldom more than 10s. is the range of the subscriptions of the shopkeepers, gentry, and anti-Saxon aldermen and town-councillors (Mr Bianconi excepted) of Clonmel. And they have been making speeches, writing, and printing, and publishing all manner of anti-Saxonism, at least twice a-week, up to last Saturday.

But, to pass to more comprehensive and permanent measures of Irish relief, let me glance at the proposition to give sixteen millions sterling out of the imperial exchequer to make Irish railways. In the report of the debate on Lord George Bentinck's motion there is the following:—

"Captain Osborne thanked the noble member for Lynn, Lord George Bentinck, for the able and energetic manner in which he had taken up the cause of Ireland. He looked upon the noble Lord as the only party leader of that house who had brought forward a really great plan for the redemption of Ireland, (the proposal to advance sixteen millions sterling to make railways.) He could assure the government that the people of Ireland looked for some comprehensive plan for the amelioration of their condition."

The people of Ireland and the landlords of Ireland must not be mistaken the one class for the other. Both may be poor, and need relief; but the means by which they became poor are very different. Mr Roebuck might speak more softly in the hearing of the Irish landlords in parliament; but, in whatever tone he might speak of their disposition to job for their own exclusive benefit with public money, he could only offend them. So must any one else who speaks or writes of their jobbing dispositions and practices. Yet, is truth to be withheld, and sixteen millions sterling laid hold of, in addition to the ten or eleven millions spent, and to be spent by the government in Ireland for Irish relief, merely because a class of men, far more remarkable for their corruption than for their impeccability, splutter and explode in the face of every one who estimates them according to their past doings? I protest against the inference that the Irish people are insulted, or should feel insulted, because those very men who have beggared the Irish people and the Irish land cannot suffer to hear themselves spoken of. I would rather refrain from speaking of them; but how can the ills of Ireland be explained and redressed if the owners of her land are not to be named! How are they to be named without blame, and trusted with vast sums of public money without suspicion, when we see some of the most practical and least poverty stricken of them in this very season of famine, distress, and disorder, opposing the public benefit, and deferring the employment and payment of labourers to promote their own private ends—those very men standing up in parliament, demanding in the name of the people sixteen millions to help to make railways, while their own greediness mars the making of railways for which the money is already provided?

The line from Limerick to Waterford would have been employing several thousands of men at this moment, if the capital had been all subscribed. The government, seeing this, came forward to make up the deficiency of capital for the earth works, three weeks or a month ago. No man in England or Ireland knows that fact more clearly than Mr Osborne. No man with the breath of life in him knows better than Mr Osborne why this railway is not now going on, and why time and money are now being wasted in new surveys, while thousands of unemployed men, along the course of the line, are dependent on charity, and on government advances to relief committees, for subsistence. The public do not know the causes of that delay; I shall tell them one, at least, of the causes.

The line, as formerly surveyed and adopted, passed near the park walls of an important landowner in Tipperary; but it did not go through more than a few acres of his estate. The line by that course went in a straight direction, and through level meadows. The important landowner, either to get it to go through some miles of his property for the sake of the money to be paid for leave to do so, or because he thinks that a railway and the trains upon it shooting along the valley, (miserably bad taste if he thinks so!) in sight of his fine new park, would deteriorate the beauty of the scenery of the Suir river and the Waterford hills beyond—to please himself, in one or the other of these respects, or to effect some purpose equally unworthy, is endeavouring to turn the railway out of the straight line in the plain by the river side, to go round some miles of country, chiefly on his estate, in form of a crescent, part of that course being in deep cuttings. The additional expenses, by taking that erratic course instead of the even one, will be L.10,000 for construction, besides the great expense now incurred for new surveys, and the great loss to the public from delay.

But his deviation of the line has a more serious disadvantage. The largest flour mills in Ireland, save perhaps one establishment, were to be served by the straight line. A station was to be made close to the mills. The owner of the mills, having beautiful private grounds sloping towards the river, was willing to have them encroached upon by the railway for the advantage of the station for business. That miller is rich enough to live without business; afluent enough to live, if he chose, in higher style than any landowner in the country; liberal enough to live, as he does, genteelly and beneficently; yet he looks to the advantage of his business, which is the public advantage, and would allow the railway to cut up his pleasure grounds rather than it should not bring wheat to the mill and carry away its flour. Moreover, the station at that point would be a passenger station, and would induce many people to leave Clonmel and return again for pleasure, while by the deviation there will be no point of attraction whatever.

The important landlord, to serve his private purposes, takes, or tries to take, the railway accommodation from the public, and the large mills of the greatest employer of men and money in the neighbourhood, offering no public advantage in return. His influence with the government, conjointly with other landowners of influence, has procured for the railway an advance of public money. Which advance being so obtained gives him great power over the directors of the company. That power seems destined to change the course of the railway. That change in the course of the railway is augmenting the expense and causing delay. That delay is disappointing thousands of men ready to work, and who are starving for want of work. That important landlord is Mr Bernal Osborne!

In the present emergency, one would not be greatly surprised if the Irish landlords, to facilitate railway construction, enlarge employment, distribute wages, and relieve in some degree the charitable from the burthen of supporting the unemployed—one would not be greatly surprised if they offered the land required for the new railways at a moderate and reasonable price. Not a foot of it will they yield at a reasonable price. Take the following case; it is only a sample case:—

A landlord, whose estate lies in the way of the Kilkenny and Waterford Junction Railway, whose father granted leases to the tenantry, disputed the validity of those leases a few years ago, and succeeded in abrogating them. By doing so, he caused much litigation, much ill-feeling, some crimes, and great notoriety to himself, his estate, and his tenantry. He broke the leases granted by his father, that he might re-let the farms at higher rents, and refused to grant new leases, that he might be able at any time to augment the rent or eject the tenants. He did not understand that his estate *might* be improved in value by a leaseholding tenantry; that it could not possibly be improved by tenants-at-will, and those tenants holding at *his* will. Neither did he know that leases might at some time, not then far distant, give such of his property as might be required for public purposes a higher value than if the property was held by tenants-at-will. He did not know that railway engineers would lay their surveying eyes on his land; but they did. They could not go round about his land, they had to go through it. He then knew that he would get payment from the railway company for the land required by them, but he wanted more than payment. He tried to get more than payment; and after tasking his ingenuity—some people have said cupidity—to the uttermost, he fell upon the following plan:—He granted leases to those tenants whose farms were to be touched by the railroad, that they might thereby claim and receive compensation from the company. He granted the leases on condition that the compensation paid to the tenants was to be handed over to him. The railway company refused to pay compensation to tenants holding under such newly-made and evil-designed leases. Having failed in this attempt to exact money, he has given notice to the tenants that the leases are not valid, and must be withdrawn. He has caused the tenants to go to law at their own expense—at least he has entered into litigation in their name, leaving them liable for expense, and litigation is still going on, while the works of the railway are at a stand in that locality, because the company cannot get possession of the land until the litigation is ended. The people of the locality, who would be employed on the railway works, are unemployed—are on the point of starvation, and saved only from starvation by the charitable subscriptions from England and the money from government. The subscriptions of the local gentry in that neighbourhood amount to—simply nothing, not one penny.

If this landlord is not named, let no one think that he has not a name. He has one that is known in his county and beyond it. If need be, it shall be told. In the meantime, there he is, an Irish owner of Irish land; ready, not a doubt of it, to cry aloud to the imperial government to give Ireland sixteen millions "to make railways to feed the poor, starving, unemployed people."

But railways will do so much good to Ireland that it would be well to facilitate their construction in every practicable way. At present the land requires all the manual labour, to prepare its crops for next harvest, which Ireland can give, if those crops are to sustain the Irish people; and it requires more horse labour than all the work-horses in Ireland can give. Every farmer who has horses able to draw a load of corn or of meal is now in receipt of such pay for his horse labour as draws him and his carts and horses from the farm. The food of Ireland is coming to her shores as hard corn. That corn has to be carted great distances to mills to be ground to meal. The meal has to be carted to greater distances for distribution. In order to have the escort of military guards, the carts, and horses, and men, a man to each, are restricted in their locomotion. At the distance of twenty, or thirty, or forty miles from home they are obliged to remain inactive a day, or two days at a time, awaiting the meal, for which there is such competition that they would not be loaded if they did not wait. While, once more, with the harassed, wearied, worn-out soldiery, not numerous enough, great as their numerical strength is in Ireland, to furnish guards so frequently as the carts are loaded and ready to move; with this disadvantage they must again delay.

I cannot form an estimate of the number of men and horses employed thus throughout Ireland, and to be employed thus until the end of that time when Ireland is to be publicly fed as now. But an opinion of the mischief that is to befall the land and its culture and crops may be formed from the fact that every agricultural work-horse which I have seen, and which is able to work, each with its master, or master's son, or master's hired man, is employed in transporting corn and meal at one halfpenny per cwt. per mile; a payment liberal enough to make Irish farmers forsake ploughing to get ready cash for carting.

To produce food from oats, and barley, and rye, instead of potatoes, three acres of land will require to be sown instead of one acre of potatoes. Neither wheat nor turnips can be sown in any available quantity this year, from the deplorable misculture of the soil. Its wetness, foulness, and poverty, though much of it is naturally fertile, unfits it at present for wheat and turnips.

The land cannot be prepared in time nor at all, save in some limited and favoured districts, to sow grain. The horses are otherwise employed. The peasantry have neither numerical strength nor physical strength to prepare the land with the spade in the requisite time; no, not an eighth part of it, to produce corn enough to supply the place of the potatoes, though every man able to handle a spade began to delve to-morrow and delved until the month of June.

Wherefore, I, after observing closely, thinking anxiously, and making many calculations, declare my opinion to be, that if the sixteen millions sterling were now lying loose and without other uses, it would be the most mischievous thing for Ireland which could be devised, to embark in extensive railway works with that money, while so vast a proportion of the land is untilled, with the horse labour employed otherwise than in tillage, and while the whole manual strength of the country is but fractional to the strength required to put crops in the ground.

No. VIII.

ENNIS, COUNTY OF CLARE, 12*th February.*

Looking from this western county town, through the medium of note-books and recollections, upon all the counties journied over from the east and the south, the soil not lessening in fertility, the face of the country not declining in beauty, but the distress deepening, human life sinking to the west, (may it indicate the dawning of a brighter morrow !) and looking around me here on hungry Clare, a question arises as to the cause of Clare, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, and other grass-growing counties being so generally devoted to pasturage, giving no employment to the people. With that question before us, it may be interesting to take a general review of Irish agriculture ; and it is as fit to take that review from this point as from anywhere else. Space need not be now occupied with lengthened descriptions of the people's sufferings. All that can be said of the peasantry of the west is comprised in the words, hovels, hunger, rags, rheumatics, weakness, sickness, death. All that can be said of the gentry of the west is comprised in the words, castles, pride, idleness, improvidence, poverty, debt. There is hardly a middle condition or a middle class.

Until a period of time not yet reaching a hundred years, the surface of Ireland was almost exclusively devoted to pasturage. If the potato plant goes out of cultivation followed by famine, it came into cultivation preceded by famine. It was long after the introduction of the potato by Sir Walter Raleigh—it was not until three generations after his death—that this plant was cultivated for food. From Raleigh's time it had been preserved in the family garden and eaten at the family table of Sir Richard Blackwell, his grandfather having received some tubers from Raleigh. Blackwell, seeing the excessive privations to which the people were exposed by periodical recurrences of famine, urged the cultivation of the potato plant as a relief from famine.

In 1727 an unsuccessful attempt was made to introduce an act of parliament to compel landholders to till five acres out of every hundred, exclusive of mountain and bog, and to release tenants to the same extent from the penal covenants in their leases against tillage. In 1762 an act passed to grant bounties on corn brought by land to Dublin, which was not withdrawn until 1780. In 1764 the sum of L.5483 was paid as a bounty for this purpose. The sums increased annually until 1780, when the bounty for that year amounted to L.77,800. The counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Meath, Queen's, and Tipperary, received the largest share of the bounties.

There are about one and twenty millions of acres in Ireland, of which one third is not touched by spade or plough or the hand of man. Much of that third part is capable of being profitably cultivated. But a far larger proportion of the other two thirds is capable of being doubled, trebled, or quadrupled in productiveness by the presence of money, labour, wages, and skilful direction, and the absence of entails, leases on lives, tenancies-at-will, and all the other evils which the Irish landlord is heir to. It is almost a universal custom throughout Ireland for the landlord to let the bare farm to a tenant to erect dwelling-places for himself and his beasts, at his own expense, according to his ability and taste. The ability being low, the taste is kept at the same level. It is also common, though not universal, for the landlords to get rid of a tenant by pulling down the house. There being always a keen competition for land, a farm can be readily relet to another tenant, on condition of that other tenant rebuilding the house. The landlord having no expense to incur, is not particular about pulling down a house, or a dozen or a score of them. In all parts of the south and west of Ireland the wrecks of human habitations are seen, the roofs having been taken off to get the tenants out. A low state of morals is a consequence of wretched dwelling-places; wretched dwelling-places are the natural result of the tenant being the builder at his own expense for the landowner to be the sole proprietor of the building. Leases used to be granted for 999 years upon the payment of a sum of money. In such a case the leaseholder is the real owner, but he cannot sell. He can only sub-let. The sub-tenant under him divides the property among a lower class of tenants. The law is such, that if the second tenant fails to pay his rent to the first tenant, though the third one, who is the occupier and cultivator, may have paid the rent to the second, the third can be seized upon for the default of the second, and all his stock swept away.

If there be tenants of the first, second, and third degrees, with a head landlord over all, that head landlord recovers his rent from any one of the three. This system gives the landlords a better chance—at least they think so—of getting rent, than if they had only one tenant for the one farm. Therefore they encourage this pernicious system of sub-letting.

Another kind of lease not now granted, but still existing and to exist, is that of a lease on lives, renewable for ever by payment of a fine on the death of the lives named in the lease.

The more common leases now are for sixty-one, thirty-one, and twenty-one years, with one or more lives added thereto. The lives are commonly those of neutral persons not in any way connected with the property. If the lives expire before the term of years, the lease expires with the years, if no other lives are added to it. If the years expire first, the lease does not end until the persons named in it die. The hazard and uncertainty of this system cannot be otherwise than detrimental to agriculture; at all events, a good capital, enterprise, and industry, must be unsettled, checked, and weakened, by this system of uncertainty. Speaking of it to Mr Mannix, the Chancery receiver, whose experience so well entitles him to give an opinion on this subject, I was told that unless some uncertainty existed as to the termination of the lease, the tenants would ruin the land. When the expiry of a term of years approach, they would cease to fertilize the soil, and lay the buildings, gates, and fences in ruins. It is, therefore, requisite, he said, to name lives, so that, their termination not being foreseen, the occupation of a tenant may end before he can do injury to the farm.

With all respect to the experienced Chancery receiver, I deny the expediency or necessity of this system. Tenants have ill-used their farms, but they were ill-used tenants before they did so. The most distinctive characteristic of an Irish farmer is his want of faith, his ever wakeful suspicion in his landlord and in the agents of his landlord. The most trustful and faithful of human beings is the Irishman when he is himself trusted, and has been convinced that he is trusted. This is no idle sentiment; it is capable of proof. Nor can I pass without denial the assertion that the Irish peasant is from choice the enemy of industry and the security of property and of human life. Look at the Quakers of Clonmel and of other towns in Tipperary who have large capitals invested in business, who employ Irishmen and pay them without reference to their religion or politics; who avoid all strife and contention, and do justice to all with whom they have intercourse; which of those Quakers is afraid of the peasantry of Tipperary who know him? Not one of them. And more orderly and industrious working men do not exist than those whom the Friends employ.

I cannot permit the Tipperarians and the Irish peasantry generally to be libelled as a naturally turbulent and assassin race, not even by the men of the *Nation*, whose pens are dipped in ink from week to week to excite the peasantry to dip their hands in blood. I purchased a volume of songs and poems at Limerick, reprinted from the *Nation* newspaper, and called the "Spirit of the Nation." If it had been called the "Spirit of the Butchers' Shop" or the "Spirit of the Shambles" it would have been more appropriately named. From beginning to end it presents the mind with no other idea than that of butchers whetting their knives to cut throats. There is no other sentiment in it. Even as to poetry, for which, according to the preface, the book has been praised by political opponents, I see but very little. The rhymes are harmonious and flow smoothly, but any versifier of talent might disembowel the dictionary and string its words together in such lines, just as easily as a butcher separates, lays together, and dresses raw tripe.

Ireland, rich in natural treasures under the earth and above the earth, richer in rivers to move machinery and to float ships than any other portion of the globe of the same length and breadth, and with an abundant population needing to work, seeking to work, and willing to work, only requires peace, and men of peace, with money and skill in their hands and in their heads. With these Ireland may have, *will have*, manufactures, commerce, wealth, wages, inward order, outward power, and landed estates productive and valuable. Since I wrote my last letter, dated at Limerick, I have stood upon the shores of the Shannon, have sailed upon, steamed upon, mused upon, and wondered at, this river's mighty breadth and length and strength. Two hundred and thirty-five miles long, with a volume of running water equal to the three largest rivers of England, the Thames, Trent, and Severn united; swelling into lakes, four, five, and six miles wide, and from twenty to thirty miles long, as if the Shannon spread himself out to invite the world to launch its ships upon him; again gathering himself together to shew his strength, as if bidding the world build mills upon his shores—mills, if the world likes, to grind all the corn and spin all the yarn of the earth. Standing upon, musing upon, and wondering at, the waters of this river, the awe inspired by its measureless power, and the contemplation of what the Almighty Maker made it for, is only surpassed by the deeper awe arising from the havoc, disorder, famine, and crime, made by men who waste the fertile land upon its shores, as well as its godlike gift of motive power—waste, in the face of frowning Heaven, one of the noblest treasures of nature which God ever gave to man.

See a nobleman, owner of a vast territory on one side of it, an amiable man he is, getting his rents collected, extracted, and remitted to him once a month to London, because he cannot live two months without them ! His income nominally L.20,000 a-year ; his acres three times twenty thousand ; his wretched tenantry in misery at all times, dying of famine now ; he not able to contribute a sack of meal to their relief ; government sending meal to their relief. This nobleman, naturally, I believe, one of the best meaning of men, but born to entailed land and entailed beggary, with the misfortune of being a Lord with dignity and debt upon his head heavier than mill-stones, is no doubt anxious to serve his native country if he can. He has only one way of doing so, and only one way of serving himself ; the same measure will serve both. Let him promote the abolition of the entail upon his heritage ; let him sell a third part or a half of his acres to purchasers who have money to buy and knowledge and a will to make the money so invested profitable ; and let him apply the money he receives to the emancipation of himself, the fertilizing of his estate, the well-being of his tenants, and the profitable employment of some of the people unemployed now. When this is done, that accumulation of poor houses called a town—his own town, with his gaunt castle, both famishing on the Shannon, with the Shannon going idly by—may become a great town, though not exclusively his Lordship's own, and fulfil its share of that work which the mighty Shannon is destined to perform.

No. IX.

Lough Derg, County of Galway, *Feb.* 16.

The county of Galway is one of the most western shires of Ireland, with the Atlantic Ocean running into its deep bays ; its high headlands stretching far into the ocean, and its many islands amphibiously existing beyond the headlands and within the bays, as marks which tell of ocean and of time, their unresting progress, their transforming agencies. The county contains 422,923 inhabitants, and 1,566,354 acres of surface, of which 90,030 are covered with lakes and rivers, 1801 with towns, 23,718 with plantations, 742,805 bear crops of grass or corn by the aid of man's hand, and 708,000 are left wild. Such is the information derived from statistical documents: but to my eye it is doubtful in many places whether large portions of the 742,805 acres called "arable" in statistics are not wilder than parts of the 708,000 acres called "uncultivated."

Galway county contains every variety of soil, scene, and industrial resource. The only thing on its surface without variety is the human being. All its people are alike, from peer to peasant, helpless and crying for help.

Cultivation has been discouraged by the landowners, save where the land is so numerously peopled that the population could not be driven away. It is seldom that the thickly populated soil is the most fertile; the most fertile soils have been discultured for cattle-breeding and hunting. The Galway gentlemen and noblemen are noted for their hunting and duelling, from which we may infer that they possess *physical* courage. It would be well if they had *moral* courage enough to make them look their present calamities in the face like men. On grass farms about one man and a boy are employed to 200 acres, their wages being eightpence per day for the men, or fourpence per day with diet: the diet was potatoes and salt, when the potatoes existed. Any attempt to make such landowners support the poor of their parishes or baronies will be resisted to the uttermost.

I am writing in a town which, for the present, I do not name for various reasons, chief of which is that I would hardly get at the truth from one party or another if it were known here that I am seeking information for public purposes. Near this place government has expended a large sum of money in the improvement of the Shannon and in building a bridge within the last six years. It is a real improvement. But, unfortunately, all such works done by government seem to make the people think that government should do everything. I speak here of the upper people, not alone of the poor. There has been frosty and snowy weather for ten days. Turf fuel is cut on the bogs, dried and piled up. It is brought into this large village by the people of the bogs, in donkey carts, and sold, a small cart load for a sixpence. The money is expended on meal, which is taken out to the bogs, the men and asses famishing, and the men telling the stranger how they starve; but as soon as they get out and have filled their bellies, they will not stir to bring another load of turf into the town until their stomachs can bear the hunger no longer; then, not sooner, they bring in a load of turf to get more meal. I asked some persons of consequence here why they or some one did not purchase a large store of turf in good weather, and retail it to the poor in bad weather, when, as is the case now, it cannot be procured from the bogs, and people must go without fires, entirely, or almost. They heard me with a kind of surprise approaching to horror, to think that I should recommend the fuel of the "poor creatures to be purchased up and sold at a profit!"

The higher classes of people have such a contempt for trade, that they would eat the family estates to the bare rocks rather than earn a living, unless it be in the army or as a priest, parson, or doctor. The poor people imitate them, and will not trade unless compelled. When compelled to try mercantile life in a small way, they have no capital to begin with, and consequently have no profits, or very small ones. If they get a good return on some adventure, they enjoy themselves, and do not think of enlarging their trade.

The expenditure of L.30,000 of government money in this vicinity during three or four years created much stir, and put profit in the way of all of them. They obtained a bridge, a harbour, wharves, and navigable water. But the gentry think it degrading to them to make an attempt to trade on the river. The poor people cannot. Common report has always said that the peasantry of Connaught are without capacity to conduct business. I do not believe it. They have nobody to lead them in the right way to get means; such means as they do procure are taken from them and eaten up by the idle gentry. The contractor for the Shannon improvements found the peasantry of Galway not only become good workmen, but good overseers, when taught and trusted. It is not so much the nature of the gentry to be greedy and unjust as it is their necessity. If government be expending money, all the cormorant-sloths of younger sons and younger brothers of the entailed landlords stretch out their hands to get it, and do get it; the peasantry doing the work. If a peasant saves some money in those cases, the squire and the young cormorants eat that peasant up. The Shannon Steam Navigation Company are beginning to create trade, and it will increase.

Capitalists have the ill fortune to be misconceived and misrepresented in more countries than Ireland; but here there is a peculiar inclination to misunderstand the man who possesses money and accumulates a stock in trade with it. I passed a mill the other day, and it was standing. I asked why. The answer was, that the miller was too poor to go to market to buy corn to grind, "and sure none of them as have corn will trust the poor man." This was only one of many country mills which I have found at a stand for want of corn, though meal is in such demand that it cannot be ground fast enough. At those places I saw what kind of business was done where the miller was innocent of the crime of having capital to carry on his business. In other places where there is capital, and journeymen millers are *not* obliged to go to beg at a soup kitchen, but where wages are paid, many men employed, and the country supplied with meal, the ignorant-genteel are denouncing the owners of such mills as forestallers, regraters, and so forth, because they have stores of corn laid up to keep their mills going and the country eating.

I cannot let this letter go to England without an account of the Shannon river and its great lakes, on the shores of one of which I now write. The trade of the Shannon is small, the capacity of the river for trade is boundless.

At the city of Limerick, seventy-seven miles from the Atlantic Ocean, ships of 300 and 400 tons load and unload. At five miles below Limerick, seventy-two miles from the ocean, ships of 800 tons load and unload. The running water is, above Limerick, about 600 feet wide, and at the shallowest and most impetuous currents of that width between three and four feet deep; when not running impetuously, the usual depth is from 30 to 40 feet. Close to Limerick, it falls 9 ft. 6 in. Between that place and Castle Connell, five miles above Limerick, is falls 66 ft. 11 in.; and between Castle Connell and Killaloe it falls 20 ft. 8 in. Altogether, in fifteen miles above Limerick and adjoining the navigation from the Atlantic Ocean, this great river falls 97 ft. 1 in. The water-power, for mechanical purposes, which could be used in that space of fifteen miles, can only be expressed and comprehended by the term illimitable. The space for manufactories, public-edifices, water-courses, streets, and thoroughfares, is far beyond what could be occupied by any conceivable extension of trade; while on gentle eminences and hills, rising above the river and the plain, there are sites for an extent of city, which might arise out of manufactures and commerce, though that city exceeded twice in size the greatest metropolis of the world—London.

The navigation from Limerick to Killaloe, owing to the rapids and falls of the river, is partly by canal and locks. Including stoppages in the locks, the swift passage-boats, drawn by three horses each, the horses being changed every four miles, do the distance in about two hours.

At Killaloe, which is ninety-two miles from the sea, the steam navigation of the upper Shannon begins and proceeds upwards.

Iron steam vessels were brought in sections from Liverpool and put together and launched here for the navigation of the upper Shannon. That which I took a passage with, the *Lady Lansdowne*, was 90 horse power. Her fuel was turf, and her engines required for six hours' work 65 boxes of turf, each box containing 20 cubic feet, each 20 feet of the value of sixpence. The fuel for 90 horse power for six hours thus costs L.1 : 12 : 6. It would be an inconvenient kind of fuel for long voyages or for vessels of heavy loading. The steamers on the upper Shannon convey loads commonly by acting as tugs to heavy barges. The conveyance of passengers between the canal at Killaloe and the canal at Shannon harbour, a distance of thirty-seven miles, is also a chief branch of their trade. The vessels are commodious, well fitted up, and the best cabin fares are only 5s. 10d. for the whole distance of fifty-two miles from Limerick.

Between Killaloe and Portumna, a distance of twenty-three miles, the Shannon is a lake, known as Lough Derg. Deep and broad, with islands, headlands, creeks, and tributary rivers, the lake extending back into the rivers, farther than can be seen from the ship's deck, Lough Derg is delightful to look upon and to be upon. Its beauty and serenity, with the shores of Munster on one side and of Connaught on the other, make one feel as if heaven had descended in the olden time to separate men who loved strife and made their country poor by their strife, and held out to them the beneficence of nature to make themselves rich, and still stood, still holding out the gift which they, in the strife of creeds and factiousness of politics, still neglected. The existence of steam packets on the lake may seem to disprove the inference here drawn, that the dwellers on the shore neglect the resources of the Shannon river. Those steamers do not derive much of their trade from the shores of Lough Derg. Tourists in search of health and pleasure from distant places; passengers travelling between Dublin and Limerick by the Grand Canal, which joins the Shannon, seventy-nine miles from Dublin; military stores and troops; corn and provisions between market towns; and, at present, food to relieve the famine; these constitute the chief business of the steamers on the Shannon. But they will, in time, create trade for themselves. It is not yet two years since the large boats were launched on the upper Shannon. As yet they cannot ascend higher than Shannon harbour, thirty-seven miles from Killaloe, fifty-two miles from Limerick, one hundred and twenty-nine miles from the sea. When the improvements of the river now in progress, and soon to be completed, permit, they will go up to Athlone, which is twenty miles farther.

Ultimately steam vessels will go to Lough Allen, two hundred and thirty-four miles from the sea, one hundred and fifty-seven miles above Limerick, and one hundred and forty-two miles of direct steaming from Killaloe. At present a smaller class of steamers go twice a-week over the twenty miles between Shannon harbour and Athlone.

Proceeding up the river from Athlone to Lanesborough, the distance is twenty-one miles, most of it a lake called Lough Ree, wider, more diversified, and said to be finer in scenery than Lough Derg. At Lanesborough the water is 15 feet 10 inches above Killaloe. From Lanesborough to the junction of the Arigna river, fifty-two miles, the difference of water level is 34 feet. From the Arigna river to the head of Lough Allen the distance is ten miles more. The Shannon, above Lough Allen, has no distinct character. Several small rivers flow into that lake from Leitrim county, and one from the mountains of Cavan, smaller than the rest: this last is called the Shannon. It wells up in a deep basin 50 feet wide.

From the head of Lough Allen to the sea, the course of the Shannon is 234½ miles; the fall of the water is 146 feet 11 inches, 97 feet of those falls being within fifteen miles of Limerick; 76 feet 5 inches within five miles of Limerick and of the ocean ships, as if nature had been specially regardful to make this the most generally useful of rivers. It waters the boundaries or parts of them, or collects the water tribute of twelve counties—Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, Longford Westmeath, King's, Tipperary, Galway, Clare, Limerick, and Kerry. If all the sinuosities and creeks be reckoned on both sides, and such of its islands as are situated in powerful currents, or which possess natural harbours, the entire water frontage of the Shannon, available for business, exceeds 2500 miles. If the tributaries, many of them navigable, be reckoned in the same way, those of them traceable on common maps give an additional water frontage of 6100 miles. If every streamlet of any size, such as are anxiously sought for and made use of by the manufacturers of Lancashire, be reckoned, there will be probably not less than 6100 miles more; in all 14,700 miles of inland water-side extent, communicating with the Shannon, and through it with the Atlantic Ocean, at the most western and most favourable point of the United Kingdom.

The Arigna, falling into the Shannon at Lough Allen, runs through a region of iron ore, *said to be* of boundless extent. Coals are *said to be* found there also. Turf fuel is found abundantly everywhere. I cannot hazard an opinion as to its applicability to steam machinery on a large scale. If water power were used it might serve for heating purposes well enough. I can only speak of the vastness of its quantity. It is hardly possible to conceive a time when the turf of Ireland would be all burned, or any amount of consumption which would burn it. Calculations of its extent and duration, and its reproduction. (for turf bogs grow,) have been made by Professor Kane and others.

Since the remark was written in the foregoing on the beauty of Lough Derg, twenty-five miles long and from four to twelve miles broad, lying in heavenly peacefulness, as if it had come upon earth in the olden time to keep King O'Brien of Munster and King O'Connor of Connaught from fighting, and still lay there to separate Munster and Connaught when inclined for war, and to unite them when inclined to hold commerce; since those remarks were written, Lough Derg has been up, as if all the unrested spirits of all the O'Briens and O'Connors of Munster and Connaught had come upon him; the large steamers have been tossed as if they had been in the Irish Channel or on the Atlantic, and tossed, perhaps, more dangerously that they had less sea-room. Yesterday the gale from the west was so severe, and the waves of Lough Derg so mad, that the steamers did not face the fresh water billows, though manned and piloted by salt water sailors.

It may be a question if this lake has more heavenliness in its serene face when lying at peace with its feathery birds and green islands on its breast, or when, to vindicate the benevolence of nature, it rises to receive the whirlwind, charging it to take and disappear with the impurities of stagnation, that man and plant may each have a healthier life.

No. X.

BANAGHER, 19*th February*.

In this letter I shall introduce some statistics of the potato culture and failure, as derived from official sources not hitherto available to general readers.

Estimating the loss of the potatoes by money, it is officially set down at 2½d. per stone of 14lb. The gross value of the crop at that price is L.13,618,392: 4s. Admitting the failure to extend to five-sixths of the whole produce, the money loss at 2½d. per stone is L.13,289,932: 18: 4. But this is not a fair estimate of the loss. It is only a fictitious money value. The price of potatoes is now 1s. 2d. and 1s. 4d. per stone; this is six times the assumed price. But even this is not the price to make the calculation on. I think a truer *guess* at the amount of potato loss will be that which estimates the value of the food required to supply the place of the potatoes. Let us try.

1. 884,989 children above one year old and under five require ½lb. of meal per day each for ten months; this is 60,052 tons.

2. 2,057,156 persons aged from five to fifteen, 1lb. of meal per day each for ten months, 279,185 tons.

3. 4,517,760 persons aged from fifteen to sixty, 1 5-7lb. of meal per day each for ten months, 1,051,070 tons.

4. 353,795 persons aged above sixty, 1lb. of meal each per day for ten months, 48,015 tons. No allowance is made for 361,424 babies under one year. Total of persons above one year 7,813,700. Total population 8,175,124. Total tonnage of meal for ten months 1,438,324. At 1d. per lb. in the official calculations, the expense of this is shewn to be L.13,424,357. But the real price of meal is from 2¼d. to 2½d. per lb. retailed in country districts. Allowing for the quantities bought at wholesale prices and issued without profit by relief committees, workhouses, and similar dealers in meal, the price has been for a considerable time, is now, and seems likely to continue to be, not less than 2d. per lb. This gives £26,848,714 as the money value of the potato loss.

My only doubt as to the correctness of this estimate is whether the people consume those quantities of meal here reckoned upon, taking them in the aggregate. That they do not all consume so much when we take them in detail is too true; they cannot get it. A family of five persons subsisting on the meal purchased by the wages of 10d. per day paid to one of them can only obtain about 26lb. for seven days. There is a large number of people who are not receiving relief, who do not seek it, and yet go short of a sufficiency of food. Many are not getting relief who seek it, and are starving, some dying. I shall relate in a subsequent part of this letter a case of death which occurred here.

The reason for calculating the duration of the potatoes as food for ten months in a year, is to strike off the sixth part of the year as a balance to the sixth of the food of Ireland which is supposed not to be potatoes. Everybody has used them less or more; and five-sixths of the food of Ireland is supposed to have been potatoes. The allowance for each person, in making the calculation and comparison with the Indian meal, is 2lb. of potatoes per day for children under five years of age; 6lb. per day for young persons between five and fifteen; 10lb. per day for adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty; and 2lb. per day for aged persons above sixty.

In the province of Ulster, consisting of the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Monaghan, and Tyrone, and containing the following acreage of soil:—3,407,539 acres arable; 1,764,370 acres uncultivated; 79,783 acres of plantation; 8790 of towns; and 214,956 acres of water; there were planted in 1846, with potatoes, 352,665 acres. The population of Ulster is 2,386,373; of whom 1,763,325 are reckoned dependent on potatoes. This gives six persons to each acre of potatoes planted.

In the province of Munster, consisting of the counties of Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford, containing 3,874,613 acres arable; 1,893,477 acres uncultivated; 130,415 acres of plantation; 14,693 acres of towns; and 151,381 acres of water, there were planted 460,630 acres with potatoes in 1846. The population of Munster is 2,303,150, of whom only 93,011 are equivalent to the proportion of food which was not potatoes. This gives 2,210,139 as dependent on potatoes; and an acre planted for each five persons.

In Connaught, consisting of the counties of Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo, containing 2,220,960 acres arable; 1,906,002 acres nncultivated; 48,340 acres of plantations; 3877 acres of towns; and 212,864 acres of water. There were in 1846 planted with potatoes 206,292 acres. The population of Connaught is 1,418,859, of whom 1,031,460 is the number entirely dependent on potatoes, or answering for that equivalent. This is six persons to each acre of potatoes.

In the province of Leinster, consisting of the counties of Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, King's, Longford, Louth, Meath, Queen's, Westmeath, Wexford, and Wicklow, containing 3,961,188 acres arable; 731,886 uncultivated; 115,944 of plantations; 15,569 acres of towns; 51,624 acres of water. There were planted 217,854 acres of potatoes in 1846. The population is 1,973,731, amongst whom the consumption of potatoes is equivalent to 1,089,270 depending on them entirely. This gives nine persons to each acre of potatoes planted.

I have related those details rather to shew the general characteristics of the surface of Ireland than for any value in them as relates to the potato question. The word *arable* is a misnomer. That word, as usually understood in England and Scotland, means land which is under tillage, or only laid down in grass in the tillage rotation. In the statistics of Ireland, it is applied, seemingly, to all land which is not lying waste. Thus the grazing regions of Roscommon, Galway, Meath, &c. though lying continually in grass, and not employing over one man to two hundred acres, are called *arable*.

A much greater breadth of land must come into cultivation now to supply the same amount of human subsistence as the total of 1,237,441 acres of potatoes did. The cultivation is so generally defective, and soils so variable, that no attempt can be safely made to say how much land will require to be sown with oats to produce food in the place of potatoes. Some have said three acres of oats instead of one of potatoes. If the manure be applied to the oat crop or to some grain crop which would have been applied to the potatoes this will turn out an error of calculation. Three acres of grain should be more than equal to one acre of potatoes, unless the grain culture be very bad. Yet six acres of oats may be of less value than one acre of good potatoes.

The Irish agriculturists must grow root crops to feed cattle and produce manure. To effect this no plan will equal that of compelling them, by loans of money secured on the land, to employ a given number of men per hundred acres.

At the place where I write, a father, mother, and two children came, a short while ago, into the street at night, and lay down on the pavement; they came from a neighbouring town, they said, because they could get no food there. About eight o'clock the woman went to the door of a house adjoining, and begged a piece of turf to make a fire in the street, for her husband was dying. It happened to be the house, the temporary lodgings, of a naval officer of her Majesty's service. and it need hardly be said that the request was at once complied with, and more than turf given. About ten o'clock the poor woman came to the door again, begging for a piece of more turf, for that her husband was dead, and they were lying beside the cold body. The officer went out, and found this to be the case. He proceeded to the constabulary station, but the constables would do nothing with the dead body, nor the survivors who lay beside it, till the morning. He proceeded elsewhere, and procured some straw for them and made a bed, and got stakes and put shelter over their heads with the straw for the night, and made and administered a warm meal for them. In the morning he was astir in time to relieve them, and going out met some of the constables, the principal one of whom talked loud and angrily to the woman for having her husband dead on that side of the street; "Just," said the honest English sailor to me in relating the case, "as if there should be etiquette observed in dying of hunger." He added, "The most heartless and unfeeling people towards one another, whom I ever saw or heard of, are ——." I leave it blank, as I am willing to believe that the overwhelming amount of the distress rather than the people's natural feelings, makes them callous and hard-hearted.

No. XI.

ROSCOMMON, *24th February.*

" Yesterday, William Smith, Esq., sub-sheriff, with Captain Granville and detachments of the 55th Infantry and 8th Hussars, and a strong party of police, (the armed constabulary,) under head constable O'Malley, proceeded to Ballinacarriga to take possession of land from James Hanley and six others for non-payment of rent. This property belonged to the Rev. Charles Dawson, who was murdered on those lands in the year 1835. There were great crowds assembled, but no breach of the peace was attempted."—*Limerick Chronicle,* 17*th February.*

No breach of the peace attempted ! Is the stewardship of seven small farms by a squadron of dragoons, a company of infantry, each man of the company with sixty rounds of ball cartridge in his pouch, and a large detachment of the most completely armed corps in Ireland, the Irish police, no breach of the peace? Perhaps not. Perhaps it is no breach of the peace nor of public decency to eject tenants from Irish land now, and only now, because the munificent charities and liberally-allowed taxes of England are contributed to save such ejected tenantry from starvation. At other times Irish landlords have felt a fear of their land-owning neighbours, and have dreaded to execute ejectments to augment the burthen of the poor-rates; at other times they have had the dread before them of turning the tenantry out to starve. They have no such fear now. Benevolent men from England, with a pilgrim's staff in one hand and cash to relieve the distressed in the other; relief committees to disburse English subscriptions; and, lastly, Sir John Burgoyne, with the English treasury purse in his hand, and all the commissariat stores under his control, to make soup and ladle it out in every village; these come all between the Irish landlords and the death of their evicted tenantry. The present is a favourable time for evictions; the English taxes keep the evicted from falling on the Irish poor-rates and from dying, as such tenants did in other years, in Irish stone quarries and Irish ditches.

In this case we have the great drama of Ireland compressed into one short act—an act so short, that it may be called a piece of bye play, done while the great players occupy public attention with their Irish business in front of the stage in London. We have a " reverend" and turbulent parson quarrelling, strong in law, strong in political churchism, with his vexed tenantry of another creed. We have him murdered. We have as much public money expended in avenging, or in seeking to avenge his murder, as would have purchased the freehold of all his land; at all events, as much as would have built those tenants decent houses to live in, and as would have put their farms in such workable, though humble order, as would justify the exaction of rent. We have another landlord still quarrelling with them, doing everything to exasperate, nothing to conciliate—everything to oppose, nothing to assist; and calling to his help the military power of cavalry, infantry, and constabulary, and the civil powers of the sheriff's office. We have England paying out of English taxes all those armed men, and providing them with bullets, bayonets, swords, guns, and gunpowder, to unhouse and turn to the frosts of February those tenants and their families. We have English private charity and the English public treasury providing food for those unhoused families. And while this is being done, we have the "patriotic" knaves of Limerick, Clare, and Galway—this landlord of Ballinacarriga and the rest—calling for more money from England, and calling the English ill names because they do not give sixteen millions at once.

Roscommon is an inland county of the province of Connaught in the west, exceedingly fertile, but little of it cultivated. The population is numerous. Mr James Clapperton, steward of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society, a farmer's son, from Tweedside, in Scotland, thus spoke of Roscommon, when examined before Lord Devon's commission. "The produce is capable of being improved very much."

"Do you think the produce could be increased one-half by improved cultivation?"

"Yes; the want of manure is certainly general."

"What is the comparison between the land here and the land you are acquainted with in Scotland; is it better or worse than the land in Berwickshire?"

"There is a wider range of soils here than in Berwickshire, and it is not so even."

"Is it better or worse upon the whole?"

"In its natural state it is as good as we have in Berwickshire!"

"What is the rent here compared to the rent in Berwickshire?"

"It is not one-third of what some are there."

"What would the lands you have described, as let for 21s. be let for?"

"They would be considered cheap at L.4 per acre. The land that lets at L.1 here would give L.3 an acre in the county of Antrim and the North of Ireland."

That is in the locality of commerce and of the linen manufactures. Mr Clapperton has already enabled some of the tenants of Lord Clancarty to double, triple, and quadruple their produce, by introducing among them a superior style of cultivation. Unfortunately, however, Lord Clancarty looks to improved agriculture as a means of church proselytism. He mingles the produce of the farm-yard and the Thirty-nine Articles together, the stall feeding of cattle and attendance at the Protestant church, the instructions on thorough drainage and the instructions in the church catechism. A new dwelling-house, or barn, or stable, or road is equivalent on his estate to a new religion. The use of a bull of improved breed is associated with a renunciation of the bulls of Rome. No man on earth save an Irish landlord could be found to mingle such things together. Lord Clancarty does so; and yet with these drawbacks he is, agriculturally speaking, the best landlord in Roscommon.

Mr Clapperton, speaking of the district of Ballinasloe, says, "The upland is of medium quality; light loams and gravelly soils approximating loam are the most prevalent. Very few siliceous or sandy soils. Soils under the strict character or denomination of clay are seldom to be seen in this part of the country. Rich, deep, heavy loams, high in the scale of fertility, are to be seen in almost every locality."

I find those deep rich loams prevail more in those districts of the county remote from Ballinasloe. The entire acreage of Roscommon is 607,691, of which no less than 440,522 are returned as arable, and only 130,299 are uncultivated, the remainder being under water, under plantations, and under towns. Nearly all the uncultivated is capable of culture at a profit, the country being gently undulating, with few hills. The larger part of that which is called arable is lying in grass.

Where I now write, the people are literally crawling to their graves, their eyes starting in their heads with stomach torture. But it was only this time two years that these people, in their struggles to produce food for themselves, took spades and dug up grass pastures, pleading to be allowed to pay L.7 and L.8 per acre for the potato crop, besides furnishing the labour and the seed potatoes; and they were fired upon, some of them wounded, and some shot dead by the military and constabulary, because they insisted on having conacre for potatoes or oats. The land, when obtained in small portions for one season only, is called conacre. Four-fifths of all the inhabitants of this county get their bare subsistence from the land by hiring it in conacre from other tenants. They cannot pay the enormous rentals of L.7, L.8, L.9, and L.10 per acre. But they engage to pay them in labour. They work for 6d. and 8d. a-day, and their wages are allowed in rent; what they cannot pay thus they pay by the seizure of the crop and its sale under distraint.

In some districts the landlords have refused to grant conacre. The refusal is equivalent to the sentence of death on the population. The farmers can get more people to work for them than they employ, on condition of being paid in conacre; hence those not holding conacre cannot live. Hence they have taken spades and insisted on being allowed to dig and pay L.8 an acre to save their lives. But those very landlords and middleman tenantry who are now calling on the English government and the English taxpayers to save these people's lives, to furnish them with money for rent, called out the military and shot them two years since with the spades in their hands. Those very landlords who now raise so piteous a howl for English help, doomed the peasantry of Roscommon to death by starvation by refusing them labour and wages, or conacre instead of wages. And this they did with the finest soil of the British dominions going out of cultivation. It caused them less trouble to lay it down in grass to breed cattle to send to England than to attend to its culture. Yet Mr Clapperton avers that the land let at L.1 : 1s. per acre in Roscommon to the head tenants would be cheap in Berwickshire at L.4 per acre. I know Berwickshire well, and I can support Mr Clapperton in that opinion.

But we shall now look at the causes of Roscommon poverty as discoverable in the evidence of the persons examined by Lord Devon's commission in 1844. In the first place we shall see that the Irish landlord is only a rent-eater, and his agent a rent-extractor, neither of them adding to the resources of the farm—not even by making roads or erecting buildings.

John Donellan, parish of Carn, county of Roscommon, deposed that he held fifty acres; that the head landlord was never seen on the estate; that there was an agent who was never seen on the estate but to collect rents; that his name is Thomas Berry, a lawyer living in Dublin; that he, Donellan, had spent upwards of L.100 in building a house; was now served with notice to quit, and could not get a halfpenny for what he expended, though a former agent, the present agent's father, had promised to allow half the expenses.

Mr Berry has notice sent to him by the commissioners of this statement, and gives the following curious explanation:— "Those farms were taken by the father of this complainant (three in number, 170 acres) at the beginning of 1823, not for any term. The rent of two of them was 22s. and 24s. 8d. per acre. It was not considered that the landlord should be under the obligation to assist a tenant holding so much land, and who merely built a house sufficient for his own accommodation. The house in question is a very ill-built one; the walls are bulged out; there is no foundation in the ground; the roof was never more than thatched, and the interior, whenever I visited it, was dirty and dark, the upper story of the house being a filthy roof for storing the feathers of the fowl."

This may be a reason for doubting that the house cost L.100; it is not a reason for absolving a landlord from the duty of erecting substantial and permanent buildings on his farms. "Donellan," says this excellent land-agent, "merely built a house for his own accommodation." That is, finding it inconvenient to live with the bare farm below his feet and the bare sky above his head, he made himself a place to live in, and as it was merely for his own accommodation, though it probably was to enable him to occupy the farm and to pay rent for it, the landlord it seems had no interest in the house!

Donellan continued—"The farm was taken under the promise of a lease. The time will expire next May. It was often called for and the lease-money paid; but we cannot get a lease. I always heard my mother say the money was paid to the father of the present agent, and all the tenants did the same."

Mr Berry says—"I mentioned about this period (1838) the claim to my father, who had been the person who let the ground before I succeeded, and asked him whether any negociations or agreement had been made between him and any of the tenants for leases. He told me that there had been a treaty in the year 1824, and that some of the tenants were to get leases for seven years, but, in fact, no leases were ever executed or made; *and I also believe that some money was paid*—some small amount of money, not for the entire price of the leases, but merely as an instalment for getting them."

Donellan continues—"Three years ago I held forty-three acres more, at the time of the poor-law valuation, and I found out by the valuator I had not within three acres and a half of what the landlord was charging me. These forty-three acres were a different take, though a part of the same property. Sixty-five sheep died one season rotten, and I was not able to hold the land, and he would not let me back upon the land."

Mr Berry says of this—"There was little hope that the accruing year's rent of one of the farms would be paid, and which afterwards turned out to be the case. It was then intimated to me that Donellan would set up this *alleged promise* of a lease as a defence," (against ejectment.) "He (his father) told me *that there had been a treaty for leases; and I also believe some money was paid,*" (for the leases.) "The complainant states further that three years ago he found out by the poor-law valuation that he had not within three and a half acres of what was charged. I inquired into the matter, and found such to be the case. It would have only been fair in the complainant, when he stated that he had been charged for three and a half acres more than he held, to have mentioned, and not have suppressed, the fact that they were allowed for all the money that they had so paid by mistake."

Yes; but it would have also been fair for Mr Berry to have acknowledged, and not have suppressed, the fact that this allowance was only deducted from the arrears which were not paid, nor expected to be paid. In point of fact, Donellan had paid for three acres and a half which he did not occupy whenever he paid any rent. He was all the poorer in consequence. When he was too poor to pay rent and was ejected for its non-payment, it was no advantage to him to have a certain number of figures changed from the debtor to the creditor side of the agent's books. This part of Donellan's case illustrates the nature of Irish land agencies. The following carries the illustration farther:—

Commissioners—"Have you had receipts when you have paid the rent?" Donellan—"We used to have receipts; but we have got none for the last three years, or anybody else." (Meaning anybody else on that estate.)

To which Mr Berry replies in his evidence—"I have not given receipts these three years back, because I have given a great deal of work to do to the tenants. At the time of paying the rent there are so many small accounts to settle, that, not to keep those who were in attendance too late at night, I have endeavoured to dispatch the persons paying rent as quickly as possible, and I have not given receipts on that account."

Commissioners, to Donellan—"Does Mr Berry hold many agencies in the country?" "I do not know that; he holds about 600 acres," (on that estate.) "He only comes once a-year for the last four or five years; he got some of the ground into his own possession, he got some houses built, and he used to come then often."—Land in his own possession, houses built on it; work done by the tenants; many small accounts to settle; tenants having to go home and not wishing to detain them late, no receipts given!

Mr Edward Byrne, a farmer—"I think the condition of the large farmers is rather improving; the small tenantry are getting worse. There is no labour to be had in the country except what they are given by their masters. Wages run about 8d. a-day during the summer months. In winter the rate of wages is less. The conacre prevails a good deal. The rent varies from L.5 to L.6, L.7, L.8, and even to L.10; only in a few instances L.10 where a man has improved by highly manuring some small spot. The rent of conacre is recovered by civil process, and by sale of crop when unpaid within the period agreed upon."

Mr Walter Burke has 1000 acres, all in grass save 100 acres. He is a landowner and a farmer. His 100 acres are let out in conacre. He considers the legislature should interfere "to remove them, from the crowded manner they are living on the lands, for two reasons—first, they are in a very abject state themselves, and there is a great injustice done to the landlord. I should recommend that there be some summary mode of expelling those persons from the land without going to the extreme expense incurred by the present law. There is a class of landlords whose only means of subsistence for themselves and their families is the income arising from the possession of bills obtained from the tenants, which is attended with a good deal of expense."

That is, to the "poor landlords," as Mr Burke would feelingly call them. But the expense is infinitely greater and is ruinous to the poor tenantry. The landlords compel them to join together in giving these bills in payment of rent, the tenants becoming thus jointly and severally liable for one another. The landlord gets the bills cashed at the bank, and the tenants are then the creditors of the banks; they pay for the landlords' accommodation eight, ten, twelve, and as high as sixteen per cent. Some of those landlords are in parliament, and, as a matter of course, are loud in their demands for money from England to relieve the poor Irish. I shall quote from the evidence of their tenantry when, in my progress through the country, I reach their estates.

Mr Burke continues—"I should recommend a summary mode of expelling tenants, after letting them run into a certain arrear; it should not be before a year's rent is due."

Commissioners—"What would you do with those people when expelled?"—"*I do not know.* The government is well acquainted with the mode of treating them."

If Mr Burke does not know what to do with "those people" of Roscommon, the real strength of any country, the human arms, and hands, and feet, and heads, and hearts, I know what

I would do with Mr Burke and his 1000 acres of land, 900 of which is pasture, the people upon which and around which are at this moment crying for food and dying for the want of it, while Mr Burke is crying to England for money, and calling England ill names because money does not come to him in millions of greater number. I would compel him to maintain his proportion of the Roscommon people, or consent to sell the 1000 acres, or such portion of them as are his own; and I would make a law to render the sale of Mr Burke's acres as easy as the sale of a bushel of corn. That is what I would do with Mr Burke, and with all the land and all the Burkes of Ireland. It would be for their own good to have this done to them, if they would only think so. But, think so or not, they must consent to it before long. Roscommon must be ploughed.

No. XII.

STOKESTOWN, *26th February.*

My last letter, though written from Roscommon, began with a notice of the eviction of tenantry in the county of Limerick in the previous week, and complained that landlords should choose the present time to clear their land of people, only to take advantage of the public provision for those people. This letter must also begin with a reference to Limerick county, though it chiefly refers to Roscommon.

Mr William Monsell of Tervoe, a place in the vicinity of Limerick city, has written a letter to the *Times*, which has been reprinted in Ireland, and is attracting much notice. He professes to advocate an effective poor-law for his country; but deprecates the proposed enactment of Lord John Russell, because its scope of taxation is too wide. Mr Monsell says that the landlord who does his duty to the people should be exempted from paying the same amount of poor-rates as those landlords who do not do their duty. Wherefore he pleads that the taxation for the relief of the poor should not be regulated by electoral districts, as the government proposes, but by some smaller and fairer division. Lord Stanley has made the same objection to the bill, and Lord Lansdowne has promised to give attention to Lord Stanley's objection. Nothing at first sight seems to be more equitable than the proposition of having limited districts for poor-law taxation, so that owners of property may be taxed for the poor according to their merits in giving employment to the poor. Mr Monsell's letter is overflowing with sentiments of humanity for the poor, and so it has got a place in the *Times*.

But, practically, his plan would be extremely unfair to ratepayers and to the poor. Practically he is not himself entitled to much consideration on the subject. Whatever the tenants may do to employ the people out of their income, he at least draws his rents and employs none—none at present. I have this fact on the authority of a poor-law commissioner, who is prepared to prove it if it is denied. His plan of taxing estates separately, in "units," or in very limited districts, to adapt the rates to the pauperism of the estates, would allow him and his land, and the large estates of some of his relatives in the county of Limerick, to escape taxation for the paupers, many of them probably living in Limerick city, who were cleared as cumberers of the ground from his estates.

If the bill has not yet passed, and the alterations are not yet made, let this new move of the Irish landowners be narrowly watched. It has one purpose, and one only, to relieve the owners of estates which have been cleared by the eviction of tenantry from paying rates to support the evicted, now that they are paupers crowded into villages and towns.

Returning to the subject of conacre, I may remark that it has been virtually the currency or substitute for money of the millions of the Irish peasantry. The metal currency and paper currency of commercial countries has been little known in the agricultural provinces of Munster and Connaught. There the people have had an earthen currency—conacre was the standard of value. The employer and employed with their pieces of earth transferred the earth to one another thus:—There being no money to represent the value of the acre of earth, the employer in the month of March called it his labourer's acre, and the labourer accepted it, and at once owned himself to be in debt for it to the amount of L.8, though he knew he would receive no value from it for six months. He began at once to pay his debt at the rate of 8d. per day. The L.8 per acre and 8d. per day were fictions. There were no such sums of money, nor any money. The labourer had in reality acknowledged himself to owe two hundred and forty days' work in March. He began to work, but he was working down a debt; he felt the debt daily. But it did not become less by the hardness of his work. It only became less by the number of days he "put in," the easier he could "put in" a day the less did his conacre seem to cost. He knew that L.8 was an exorbitant rent. It was eight times the rent of the farmer, and twelve times the amount of the valuation of the farm land for taxes and poor rates. Conacre being his pay, and to him the standard of value, he tried to assimilate his labour to the value of conacre.

In so doing he acted according to the law of man's nature, to give no more for value received than he could help. In that commerce where money is the standard of value and medium of exchange, the exchangers of commodities put a value on every fraction of the commodity—fraction of money, fraction of work performed, and fraction of time. They become industrious, economical, and enriched, by giving as little as they can give for value received. But the Irish peasant, actuated by the same law of nature, becomes indolent, wasteful, and is not enriched by giving as little as he possibly can give for value received. He gives 240 days' work for the conacre. To work well would be no enrichment of himself; to do as little as he can do, only the fourth part of a day's work in a day, leads him to believe that he is getting his conacre at the rate of L.2 per acre instead of L.8.

And yet there are sensible people who gravely moralize on the indolence of the Irish peasant, and discover that he does not work well because he is a Celt. A Saxon is as ready as any man alive to do as the Celt does if so dealt with. The Celts work otherwise when they are otherwise paid.

This conacre system, which gives the peasant and his family their twelve months meagre food in a piece, renders shopkeeping impossible, for they have no money to go to provision shops with. Hence, in such an emergency as the present, when a new kind of food has to be provided and sold in secluded districts, and there are no shopkeepers or trading classes to buy and sell it, the fault is not that of the peasantry, but the system under which they have been reduced to live which dispensed with shops.

"But it is only the Celtic people, as we see them in Ireland, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland, that consent to live thus," it will be urged. In return I point to the eastern division of Somersetshire, in England, where there is a Saxon population, with all the Saxon features of face, and body, and mind, and where, in the grazing districts of that eastern division, the conacre system of Ireland prevails with precisely the same results as in Roscommon. At Castle Carey, in Somerset, the farmers are bound not to plough more than a limited portion of their farms, the remainder to be kept in old grass, as in Roscommon. There is a superabundant population in that part of Somersetshire. The soil is fertile and peculiarly productive of potatoes. The land has been hired for many years at L.9 and L.10 per acre from the farmers for the six months of the potato season, the hirers finding manure, as in Ireland, selling the potatoes to help to pay the rent, working to the farmers to help to pay the rent, and eating potatoes, before the disease destroyed them, three times a day. The disease destroyed almost every potato in Castle Carey district in 1845, and the poor people who had hired the conacres there were in the same state when I visited them in the winter of that year, and are the same now, as I see the hirers of conacre in Roscommon. The greater liberality of the English poor-law, and the partial existence of employment in manufactures near Castle Carey, made the only difference.

It is the want of manufactures and commerce that reduces the peasantry, whether in Ireland or in England, to the conacre system. An exclusive dependence on agriculture always leaves its dependents to be pursued and overtaken by famine. It induces social disorder ; and social disorder leads the owners of land to be always calling for " more power." The social disorder of the ill-fed people and the " more power" of those who ill-feed them scare away commerce and manufactures. In the evidence taken by Lord Devon's commission, I do not find so much as one man who goes beyond a desire for more agricultural employment or for more power. The prevailing desire amongst the upper tenantry and the landlords is to have more power to eject or otherwise dispose of the people. This, together with the complaints of the tenantry that they are not protected from the landlords, is the staple of the great blue books of the commission. Here are a few more specimens of the evidence. The conacre spoken of is that hired by those who are not so fortunate as to be employed to pay the rent by work.

Mr Devenido of Mount Pleasant, between the towns of Stokestown and Roscommon—" Conacre prevails to a great extent. The rent is from five to seven guineas. Payment is enforced by seizing the crop and selling it by auction. There have been many outrages in my district: the cause was the price of conacre. The people thought it too high. It has been reduced L.1 in consequence."

Mr Samuel Brown of Knockcroghery—"The labourers now, (July, 1845,) speaking of the country generally, are not improving. *They are in the same state of destitution they have always been in.*"

Mr Christopher Harrison, farmer, Cloonowrish—" I paid L.83 to the out-going tenant. I improved the house and also the land. I laid out about L.45 in the course of a fortnight. When my landord found I had expended that sum, I received notice of ejectment." (This tenant's case rather illustrates the confusion arising from excessive competition for land in Roscommon than the rapacity of a landlord. Mr Harrison took the farm from another tenant and went into possession without consulting the landlord.")

Mr Godfrey Hogg—"I farm about 900 acres, grazing land and in tillage. It is very hard, if a man has expended his money upon a farm, upon the notion that he was to continue, that he is to walk out and leave his family beggars. We held 100 acres, and went on draining and erecting buildings and improving the farm; we went on upon the faith of getting the land at a fair value, and, instead of that, we were charged an increased rent from fifty to eighty per cent. and, in fact, the tenants on the property who had not improved, got the very same quality of land at 10s. an acre which we were charged L.1 : 7 : 6 an acre for, the increased value having been obtained by our industry, and having drained the farm, the other part of the ground they got for L.1 : 5s. and we were charged L.1 : 10s. The neighbourhood in which I reside is very populous. The people are in the greatest state of misery, (22 July 1844,) and I think it is owing to absenteeism. The population varies from 22,000 to 23,000, and there is not a resident gentleman in the entire neighbourhood if I except the clergymen of different denominations. The state of the people is the most miserable you can conceive. There are a great many proprietors, and none of them ever come near the neighbourhood. They send their agents, and they come at stated periods and go away. They have no resident agents. If they must reside elsewhere there should be a resident agent, or a person who could go and see the state of the tenantry, and the improved state of the tillage that is spreading over the country, (in other parts.) *There is not a bit of the green crop system introduced into our country yet.*"

The Right Hon. Lord Crofton—"Tillage farms are very small, under ten acres generally; I might almost say under five. The succession of crops is potatoes and oats, and potatoes and oats; I believe four or five crops of oats and then potatoes. If tenants have confidence in the landlord, they have no objection to hold at will; indeed they generally prefer it. If they have not any confidence in the landlord, they will not lay out money. I have assisted tenants to build houses, but it is not general in the county."

Mr Kelly preferred to have tenants-at-will, for this reason:—"The man who has a fixed tenure considers that he cannot be put out. He immediately mismanages his farm; he sublets and subdivides, and so the whole thing is destroyed. A man who has it only at will, knows that, if he conducts himself as he ought to do, his tenancy-at-will is as good as a lease, and he will use his best exertions to have his land in the most profitable and beneficial order."

There must be an overwhelming amount of disorder in a district of which a gentleman, otherwise so rational and intelligent as Mr Kelly, can say this. He proceeds:—

"There is no property held under the courts in my immediate district; but there is a district a short distance from me held under the courts, (the courts of law.) I have occasion to see a good deal of it from the people who occupy it coming before me at the petty sessions, and I can state that it is a very miserable system. That district is not under the courts in consequence of a minority or lunacy; it is in consequence of debt. There are fourteen or fifteen properties altogether; they are under mortgage, and there are receivers."

"What are the cases which bring the tenantry before you at sessions?"

"The receiver is merely receiver; he has no personal interest in the condition of the tenantry; he merely comes down to get his money, and away he goes. The people have disputes about the mearings, or bogs; they have nobody to go to settle it for them, and they fight it out with the slane, an instrument they cut turf with, and then they come before the magistrates with their heads broken."

"Has there been any money laid out in the improvement of that property recently?"

"No; nor do I suppose there has been for centuries."

Such is a specimen of the best county in Ireland, judged by its richness of soil. It only wants labour, human strength, to make it profitable to everybody. It has people willing and eager to work, so eager to work and cultivate the land which the landlords will not allow to be cultivated, that they were shot dead by the military and police two years ago in the fields with spades in their hands, at the request and by the orders of magisterial landlords. They had no choice but to dig up the fields and plant potatoes or die. They offered most extravagant rents for liberty to dig the ground and plant potatoes, but they were refused. They insisted, and they were stuck with bayonets, and had their blood spilt upon the polluted land of the land-cursers of Roscommon.

That was in the spring of 1845. To be denied conacre was to be denied leave to live; to have it at L.8 and L.10 per acre, where thousands of such hirers had no labour, and no money by which to pay for it, was but a slow death. To dig for life with a spade, was to ensure military execution. To whatever side the people turned they turned to death. The owners of the land would neither employ them nor allow them to be employed. Land that would profitably employ all its population is discultured and lying in wasteful pasture lands. The people are going about, those who can go about, with hollow cheeks and glazed eyes, as if they had risen out of their coffins to stare upon one another. A woman told me yesterday she was starving, but it was not for herself she begged for food; she prayed to Heaven to let her die and give her rest, "But, oh!" said she, "if you would take pity on my poor child, for it is dying, and it does not die." May Heaven have mercy on such a mother and such a child! They were literally skin and bone, with very little life in either of them, and no food. And they were but fractions of a population wandering to and fro on a fertile land which they are not allowed to cultivate.

Nor will the landlords who prevent them from cultivating the land pay poor-rates to provide for them. The poor-law commissioner, already alluded to in this letter, has shewn me an arrear of L.800 odds of rates in one union. Among the defaulters are one lord, one member of parliament, three baronets, and some scores of squires and squireens; all inhabitants of "castles;" all crying to England for help; all dooming their land and their people to desolation and death, by their own suicidal greediness, pride, and ignorance.

No. XIII.

LONGFORD, *March* 2.

The county of Longford is nearly in the centre of Ireland, lying east of the Shannon, and watered by that river on its west side. Its population in 1841 was 108,117 in the rural, and 7374 in the town district; total 115,941. Its surface acres are 364 under towns; 4610 under plantations; 13,675 under water; 58,973 uncultivated; and 191,823 arable. But of the arable, so called in surveys, more than one-half is uncultivated, and, with small exceptions, none of it, though generally rich and fertile, is well cultivated. Mr James Kelly, scientific agriculturist examined before Lord Devon's commission in 1844, said—"I think the county of Longford would give double the quantity of corn it now does if it was cultivated as it ought to be." Mr Kelly might have gone much farther than to double the quantity of corn; he might have added to that double the quantity of cattle-food.

The soil rests chiefly on limestone and clay-slate. It has some bogs, some level meadows, and many gentle undulations. It has 10,778 farms of more than one acre each, on which were in 1841, 5840 horses and mules, 23,278 horned-cattle, 13,465 sheep, 18,711 pigs, 157,719 head of poultry, and 1360 asses, all being of the estimated value of L.231,530. The majority of the people live by hiring conacre for the season at L.7 and L.8. This county contains the large village of Edgeworthstown, the family property of Miss Edgeworth—the "Maria Edgeworth" of literature and fame. It contains the Dublin College estates, held by the Lefroys, noted middlemen and political partisans. It contains the estates of the Earl of Longford and his residence, and part of the estates of Lord Lorton, and the residence of some connections of his family. It contains the family places of more than one gentleman named White, one of them a member of Parliament. It contains also the vacant ground where once stood the village of Ballinamuck, the place where the French invaders under General Humbert, the last foreign foe that set foot within the united kingdom, surrendered in 1798 to General Lake. But Ballinamuck will be known in history for a more terrible invasion than that of the French. The religious crusade under the intolerant and turbulent Lord Lorton, by which it perished from the face of the earth, will give it and him a melancholy memorial in history. The following extracts from evidence taken on oath by the Devon commissioners in 1844 will inform the reader how Ballinamuck perished, and at the same time how the peace of Ireland, at least of the county of Longford, has been disturbed; how the security which manufactures and commerce require to nourish their growth is scared away by crimes; how crimes have been engendered; and how the general good of the county has been sacrificed to political churchism, intolerant fanaticism, and personal vengeance.

The Rev. George Crawford, LL.D. Protestant rector of Clongish, in Longford, vicar-general of Ardagh, land-agent to several landowners and formerly agent for nearly all the land in the county, deposed on oath thus:—

"I may fairly say that political and religious considerations would operate in the selection or removal of tenants. I think landlords are disposed to have Protestants if they could. I had the management of Mr M'Conkey's property, and when leases fell out he transferred Protestants to them."

The same witness states that the clearances at Ballinamuck began thus—"There were two or three contested elections, and the tenants voted in opposition to their landlord, and with the priest. The landlord, when he had an opportunity, removed them." (To "remove" is to eject, to deny the means of life, to doom to starvation.)

Rev. Edward M'Gaven—"Many clearances have been made all over the country, the purpose is to make the farms large enough to constitute votes. Generally speaking the persons evicted have not been compensated; in some cases 30s. or L.2 was given. Upwards of forty or fifty families have been turned out in the parish of Cashel. That was in 1832 and 1833; there was a change of proprietor. The late Lord Newcomen's estate came into the hands of Lady Ross. Political excitement went very high in this county at that time, and they were turned out, and the farms made so as to make freeholds." (Freehold is the general term in Ireland for a tenant's franchise.) "Many of the people went to America, and many of them live in huts as they can."

"Do you think that religious or political motives have any operation on the removal of tenants?" "Yes; I think it was both religious and political motives that caused the removal of the generality of them."

Rev. Martin O'Beirne—"In Ballinamuck and Clunglish there has been an eviction of a great number of tenants on what has been considered political grounds alone. In Ballinamuck the entire houses were levelled. In Drumore, in the parish of Clunglish, there was an ejectment of nearly all the tenants in the year 1834. I was very intimately acquainted with the entire of those tenants. They were persons of uncommonly peaceable good habits, very industrious, and solvent punctual tenants. It was college land. A new proprietor (a middleman) succeeded to the land and to the houses, and the tenants were all removed except Patrick Lynn; he died before they got him out. Baron Lefroy became the lessee of the property in that year. He purchased the lease, and took legal proceedings and removed the families."

"Under what circumstances did he remove them!" "On the ground, as it was understood by the people themselves, that they were Roman Catholics, and that, in the event of their becoming lessees under him, they might vote against him. He removed the entire of them, and gave the land entirely to Protestants. Only one of the Protestants was on the land before; he was a poor cottier, living on the edge of the bog. The tenants that were removed applied to Baron Lefroy for compensation. One of them, Patrick Mullinhiff, got me to write a memorial for him, and in the memorial I stated that he could produce receipts for rent paid punctually for sixty years. The families on the townland who were not removed were Protestants. Every Catholic family was removed, save one; and the impression was that they, James and Matthew Lee, were continued, while others were removed, through the influence of some of their relatives, who were Protestants—the grandmother being a Protestant. One of the tenants, Edward Mullinhiff, got L.11 : 10s. of compensation. He did not consider it at all adequate. A Mrs Hagan got L.5. I do not find any other person who got compensation. It is stated that they owed no rent. Some of the tenants have emigrated to America, others died, and others are living in hovels in destitution."

That was in 1844. Mr Lefroy, not the baron, but his relative, the present member for Longford county, is one of those gentlemen who are beseeching the English tax-payers to give money and food to him and those whom his relative the judge has driven to destitution.

The Reverend Bernard Moran—"I am parish priest of Ballinamuck. In 1839, thirty-nine families, one hundred and seventeen souls, were turned out in one day. It was considered it was for their religious principles that they were turned out, and the reason why I say that is, that Protestants were put in their place."

"Just state what you know of the circumstances of the eviction of these tenants. What took place after the first eviction?"

"The land was first held by Catholics, and Lord Lorton put them out and replaced them with Protestants. Then outrages occurred from time to time, and Lord Lorton gave notice that if any outrages occurred he would turn them all off his property. There were five murders took place; they were all Protestants. They were parties who had been placed in the situations of the previous tenants."

"What became of the tenants who were removed from the estate of Ballinamuck?" "Some died through want. Some went to America. Some are going backwards and forwards in the country. I know the case of one who died in want."

Rev. James Smith, parish priest of Street, in Longford—"There has been a removal of small tenantry in that parish to a very considerable extent. I could not exactly say what object the proprietor had. The whole of the people have been turned out, and the land given to one. The greater part of the people on a farm of about 400 acres, more than twenty persons, with their families, have been turned clear off it, and all given to one tenant. The tenants owed no arrears. The impression in the country at the time of the people being turned out was, that it was because they were of a different religion to the landlord. It was given to a gentleman who lived near; and he stated that it was for the purpose of grazing the land. The religion of the gentleman who got it is Protestant, and they were Catholics who were turned out. Some of the people went to America, some went to the neighbouring estates, and some went into the town."

Where they are now if not dead; where they are now on the point of death if alive; where they have now a moral claim, to say the least of it, on the land of Street parish for subsistence; but upon which they will have no legal claim if the confederated Irish landowners and Irish middlemen who assemble in Parliament Street, London, can prevent them and prevent them, those landlords and middlemen will, if the English, in their sense of justice and feelings of mercy for the Irish people, do not compel them to make Irish property responsible for Irish pauperism. That qualification of the proposed poor-law which would limit the area of taxation to small districts will be understood in the case of those Longford estates. The paupers to be relieved are the people removed from the land and housed in towns or on distant bogs. The owners of the estates plead that they should only, if taxed at all for the relief of the poor, be rated for the pauperism existing *on* their estates. But let us return to the Protestant rector of Clongish, the Rev. George Crawford, LL.D. vicar-general of Ardagh, and general land-agent. He says:—

"Almost all the property of the county was under my guidance at one time. I was agent to Lord Granard. That property is now under the courts. I have lived fifty years in Longford."

"Has there been any extensive clearance of farms in this district?" "Yes, at Ballinamuck, in my parish."

"Inform the commissioners under what circumstances the removal of the tenants took place." "There were two or three contested elections, and the tenants voted in opposition to their landlord, and with the priest. The landlord did not countenance it, and, when he had an opportunity, removed them. It was on the property of Lord Lorton, in my parish; it was the small village of Ballinamuck; it was entirely depopulated. But they were chargeable with, or supposed to be guilty of, a great many offences. I cannot exactly say if the first were removed on political grounds. The great clearance of Ballinamuck, which took place afterwards, was not for political reasons, but for the bad character of the people entirely. On the first outrage I told them, 'You are doing what is exceedingly wrong; your landlord will visit this on you;' and he echoed my sentiments, and told them so beforehand. Lord Lorton declared publicly his intention. There were four or five families in the rural district; and at Ballinamuck the whole was swept away. Lord Lorton warned the tenants in the court-house at Longford."

Mr Courtenay, having been informed by the commissioners what the Protestant rector and several Catholic priests had deposed to upon oath, came out upon behalf of Lord Lorton, thus:—

"At this time, 1835, I took in upon some of the land which had become vacant" (the land of persons whom he had turned out of it) "a very superior man of the name of Brock, with a view to assist and improve the occupiers in the cultivation of their ground, and as an example to the surrounding country. He was a native of the north. He had been recommended to me by several gentlemen of judgment and very great respectability. I put him in possession of a farm near the village of Ballinamuck early in the month of May 1835. My intention was that he should cultivate flax, and that the people in that district should do so, ultimately have looms, and establish the linen trade there, the place being well suited for that purpose. On the 24th of May, in the same year, he was murdered on his own farm about six o'clock in the evening. Every exertion was used to bring the perpetrators to conviction, but without effect. Rewards were offered amounting to L.1500. Lord Lorton came over himself to Longford, and every possible exertion was used, but without effect."

"Was there any conviction afterwards for that murder?"

"No; there was not. Upon this state of things being reported to Lord Lorton, he said—'As soon as the lease of this village (which was then held by a middleman) should fall in he would clear the town, and have every house thrown down.'"

The sum of £1500 was a large one to offer *and to be refused* for a man's neck. Suppose the exertions to get some one hanged for murdering Brock had been used to prevent other murders, not by the fear of the gallows, but by the love of Lord Lorton, what might the result have been? Suppose that no tenants had been turned out and doomed to death (for to deny an Irish peasant land, is to deny him leave to live) for voting against the party of Lord Lorton at a contested election. And suppose in bringing a man from the north to teach the people the flax culture and to introduce the linen trade, his Lordship had chosen a Catholic, to avoid the risk of disputes upon topics of faith and church politics, which can be very well spared from the culture of flax and the weaving of linen; and suppose that, further to facilitate the flax culture, he had not given such a stranger a farm from which a number of families had been dispossessed for voting for the Catholic candidate,—might not the result have been favourable to every one; to the landlord, the land, and the people upon the land; to the trade of Longford county, and to its agriculture? Had Lord Lorton even been warned by one murder, might not many lives subsequently lost have been saved—the lives sacrificed by other murderers and by him? But he proceeded. Another Protestant was found and put in Brock's farm, and he was waylaid and beaten until permanently disabled. For this, seven men were tried and transported. How many thousands of pounds has it cost Ireland and England to prosecute, maintain in prison, send over the sea, and provide for at the antipodes, the perpetrators of this one crime?

Then followed the murder of Moorhead, another Protestant tenant, placed where Catholics had been driven out. Next followed the slaughter of Arthur Cathcart; blood enough, one would think, to satisfy even the slaughter-house poets of the *Nation* newspaper. Cathcart was Lord Lorton's bailiff, and had been employed in the mad fanaticism of his master in driving the people mad. They murdered him. But this lord of Ballinamuck, who still deemed it his province to dictate what kind of church the people should believe in, and to impose on them the alternative of his church or death by starvation, would not yet be warned. William Morrison succeeded Cathcart as bailiff to do the same kind of duty, and was also murdered. Cattle were houghed and otherwise injured, and property of every kind was destroyed. At last the climax of all that course of blood and crime and vengeance was arrived at by the destruction of Ballinamuck and the doom of its people to famine and slow death.

Two emperors and a king blot the city of Cracow from the map of Europe, not physically, only politically, and all England and most of the world cry to them shame!

A lord puts his foot on an Irish village, tramples it not only out of the map, but levels it to the level of the bogs, and disperses its people to the four winds of heaven—to live on the wind if they can, to die in the wind if they must; and this Irish lord moves through the streets of London, and sits in the very house of parliament where the extinction of Cracow is reprobated, and does not sink upon the floor of the house with the shame of Ballinamuck: on the contrary, he has the courage to ask the English givers of charity and the English payers of taxes to give money to help those very people to live whom he has made beggars. Even Sodom and Gomorrah would have been saved if there had been ten innocent persons found there. (Genesis, xviii. 32.) Ballinamuck was destroyed because a jury would not decide that one of its inhabitants was guilty. The plain of Gomorrah, travellers say, is now the basin of the Dead Sea, upon whose shores no fruitful or useful thing grows: the place where Ballinamuck once stood, says the traveller whose hand pens this letter, is now the site of a police barrack, filled with armed men, and no other living thing but the armed men, is seen there, and they are kept there at the expense of the English tax-payers.

Mr Courtenay, in the blue books of the Devon commission, is reported to have said—"The town has not been rebuilt. The place was improved and much more peaceable after the throwing down of Ballinamuck."—*Appendix B. page* 73. Who will doubt that the place is more peaceable?

A few words of application to conclude with. Agriculture can never be well conducted when made subservient to such purposes as have been here related. But agriculture, however well conducted, can never prosper, and make a dense population prosperous, without manufactures and commerce to employ a majority of the people, and enable them to purchase the products of the agriculturists, enabling the latter in their turn to pay wages to their labourers. Manufactures and commerce can never take root and flourish, nor co-exist with lawlessness, bloodshed, and insecurity to life and property. And lawlessness, bloodshed, and insecurity to life and property must continue to result from the bad practices of the landlords who follow and imitate such a mischievous bigot as Lord Lorton, of whom, unfortunately, the county of Longford has too many.

No. XIV.

March 5.

Mr John O'Connell, M.P. for Kilkenny, has written a letter from London to the Repeal Association, which is reprinted in most of the Irish newspapers. It may possibly attract no attention in England, nor may this notice of it attract attention in Ireland; but the subject is profoundly important; and, as the member for Kilkenny has the temerity to provoke a discussion on such a subject—that of the generosity of the English public to the Irish people in this present season of distress—I shall not shrink from telling him, respectfully yet firmly, that his letter to the Repeal Association now circulated throughout Ireland is a most unfounded and unworthy libel upon the English people. And more, that of all the gentry in Ireland, the repeal members of parliament, so far as I have yet seen their estates and the starving people on their estates, (and I have already visited a considerable number of them,) are the gentry least entitled to accuse the English public of apathy or hardheartedness.

Mr John O'Connell, referring to an address delivered by him on the previous evening in the House of Commons, says his letter—"I also drew attention to a monstrous sentiment prevailing in some quarters here, that it is in the natural order of things for a population to be suffered to diminish down to the diminished supply of food in a country afflicted with scarcity. I implored of the government and the house not to let this cruel sentiment have influence upon them in dealing with the question of relief to Ireland, and expressed my fears, from what I had seen, that inadequate and insufficient as are the measures proposed by the government, yet, in so far as those measures involve the expenditure of money, the government are absolutely in advance of English opinion."

I can prove to Mr John O'Connell, and to all whom it may concern, by reference to Irish estates one by one, to farms upon those estates one by one, and by reference to the charity given or *wages paid for actual labour now performed*, giving the names of the proprietors and middlemen one by one, whose reputation is involved in the question, that, whatever the stage of liberality may be now arrived at by the government, public opinion and public generosity in England are far in advance of public opinion and public generosity in Ireland.

Some Irish gentlemen may be too poor to have much to give away in the present emergency; but the poorest of them might give something. The greatness of the necessity seems to be, for them, an excuse for doing nothing at all—literally nothing at all. Moreover, they might pay wages sufficient to keep their work-people out of the public soup-kitchens, and in a condition able to work. I shall here relate a case I witnessed the other day; I might relate twenty such seen within a week.

Seven men were in a field which measured three acres, and which had just been sown with oats. They were employed in breaking the clods of earth, in clearing the furrows for letting off top water, and in otherwise finishing the sowing of the oats. It was about four in the afternoon when I saw them. They appeared to me to work very indifferently; the whole seven were doing less than one man's work. I watched them for some time, while they did not see me, consequently they could not be enacting a part before a stranger. I was soon convinced that the men were, some of them, leaning on their implements of work, and others staggering among the clods, from sheer weakness and hunger. I concluded this to be the case from the frequency of such sighs. One of the men, after I had watched them some time, crawled through a gap in the hedge, came out upon the road on his hands and knees, and then tried to rise, and got up bit by bit as a feeble old man might be supposed to do. He succeeded in getting upon his feet at last, and moved slowly away, with tottering steps, towards the village, in a miserable hovel of which was his home.

I thought I would speak to the feeble old man, and followed and came up with him. He was not an old man. He was under forty years of age; was tall and sinewy, and had all the appearances of what would have been a strong man if there had been flesh on his body. But he was bowed down, his cheeks were sunken, and his skin sallow-coloured, as if death were already within him. His eyes glared upon me fearfully; and his skinny skeleton hands clutched the handle of the shovel upon which he supported himself while he stood to speak to me, as it were the last grasp of life.

"It is the hunger, your honour; nothing but the hunger," he said in a feeble voice: "I stayed at the work till I could stay no longer. I am fainting now with the hunger. I must go home to lie down. There is six children and my wife and myself. We had nothing all yesterday, (which was Sunday,) and this morning we had only a handful of yellow meal among us all, made into stirabout, before I came out to work—nothing more and nothing since. Sure this hunger will be the death of all of us. God have mercy upon me and my poor family."

I saw the poor man at home and his poor family, and truly might he say, "God have mercy!" They were skeletons all of them, with skin on the bones and life within the skin. A mother skeleton and baby skeleton; a tall boy skeleton, who had no work to do; who could now do nothing but eat, and had nothing to eat Four female children skeletons, and the tall father skeleton, not able to work to get food for them. and not able to get enough of food when he did work foi them. Their only food was what his wages of 10d. per day would procure of "yellow meal"—the meal of the Indian corn. The price of that was 3s. per stone of 16 lb. This gave for the eight persons 26 lb. 10 oz. of meal for seven days; being about seven ounces and a half per day for each person. No self-control could make such persons distribute such a starvation measure of food over seven days equally. Their natural cravings made them eat it up at once, or in one, or two, or three days at most, leaving the other days blank, making the pangs of hunger still worse.

But in this calculation I am supposing all the wages to go for meal. I believe none of it was expended on anything else, not even salt, save fuel: fuel in this village must all be purchased by such people; they are not allowed to go to the bogs to cut it for themselves. Nor is this the season to go to the bogs, if they were allowed. The fuel required to keep the household fire merely burning, hardly sufficient to give warmth to eight persons sitting around it, to say nothing of half-naked persons, would cost at least sixpence per day. Wherefore, no fuel was used by this family, nor by other working families, but what was required to boil the meal into stirabout.

Now this was one of the best paid men on the estate; all have not such large families as him, but all have as low wages; all have to pay the same price for food and fuel; all have to pay house rent. And this estate is the property, and those are the work-people—not employed for charity, but employed to do the necessary work on the *home farm*—of an Irish squire who keeps several hunting horses, has a number of dogs always about his yard and following the family carriage; in short, has all the show of horses, dogs, carriages, and liveried servants, common to the Irish gentry, which they keep whether they can afford them or not; and he is a repealer, and altogether a mighty fine patriot.

It would seem invidious, and would be very unpleasant, to pick those gentlemen out by name; but if Mr John O'Connell, Mr Smith O'Brien, and the others, of Old and Young Ireland, continue to misrepresent in their letters to Ireland the generous exertions of the English government and the English public in behalf of the Irish people, I shall name them, and name them in connection with conduct which should cover them with shame.

Cattle are dear and corn is dear. The incomes arising from cattle and corn are better this year, in many districts, than usual. In some counties rents have not been well paid; in others rents were never so readily paid, nor the tenants so able to pay them, as this year. Yet even there, the apathy of the gentry is the same. This very squire, whose working-men are starving as I have related, rails in public against the government; against political economy; and in the hearing of hundreds of people, the other day, of whom I was one, declared that Lord John Russell was answerable for all the deaths that were taking place in Ireland, for that he could make food cheaper if he chose.

As to Mr John O'Connell's assertion of "A monstrous sentiment prevailing in some quarters here, (in London,) that it is in the natural order of things for a population to be suffered to diminish down to the supply of food in a country afflicted with scarcity," it is neither more nor less than a monstrous mis-statement on his part of one of the simplest principles of the most philanthropic of mankind—the political economist.

It is *not* said by them to be "in the natural order of things for a population to be *suffered* to diminish down to the supply of food in a country afflicted with scarcity." It is said by them to be "in the natural order of things for a population, to *suffer from* a diminution of food, and to sink in wretchedness and suffering in proportion to the increase in their numbers and the decrease in the supply of their food; ultimately, if the diminution of food becomes excessive and of long duration, to die and diminish with it." It is in the natural order of things for human beings to die if they do not obtain sustenance for their bodies, just as it is in the natural order of things for agriculture to languish and fail to produce food for a great population when idle, dissolute, and improvident proprietary classes exact, and compulsorily extract, from the cultivators all their capital, the improving cultivator only being a mark for the landlord's cupidity. It is in the natural order of things for the tenant farmers of Ireland to be oppressed and degraded and made bad farmers when their political uses are deemed of higher importance by the landlords than their agricultural uses. It is in the natural order of things for the oppressed tenantry to listen to those who are continually telling them of their oppression, and promising them a blissful change by some one mighty action which cannot be performed, and which would be as worthless if performed as another moon would be in the sky to give them moonshine of their own. It is in the natural order of things, at least Irish things, for the people to be deluded.

It would be in the natural order of things for an Irish parliament of Irish landlords to legislate for themselves and against their tenantry and the great body of the people. Cruel as the political Protestant landlords have been in persecuting the Catholic tenantry for their religion and their adherence to repeal politics, they are exceeded in cruelty by landlords of the repeal party—the very vultures of a heartless, ignorant, haughty, and selfish class of men.

It is in the natural order of things for agriculture to be profitless without a manufacturing and trading population to purchase and consume the agricultural produce. It is in the natural order of things for an exclusively agricultural population to be always liable to famine; for it is in the natural order of things for such a population to overstock the land with itself, having no other outlet for the younger branches of families, until they become so numerous and so poor that they cannot afford to cultivate the land: they eat up their seed, their stock, their implements, and consume their own strength.

And so saying, I leave all the rest of Mr John O'Connell's assertion to its own refutation, namely, that "a monstrous sentiment prevails in London, that it is the natural order of things for a population to be suffered to diminish down," &c. It must have required a good deal of courage, to say the least of it, for any Irishman to have written that of the English people in reference to their present treatment of the Irish.

Here is a passage from another gentleman, who is frequently in print on this side of the channel, John S. Dwyer, Esq. of Castleconnell, near Limerick. The letter is one of a series addressed to Lord John Russell. His Lordship is better employed in the service of Ireland than to be reading such letters. Yet this, as an Irish landlord's letter, is a curiosity worth reading. Castleconnell, where it is written, is the locality of the great rapids of the Shannon, powerful for manufactures to an illimitable extent, and upon which there is only one mill, and that for grinding corn.

"Your Lordship is aware that the party of whose name and traditions you are the representative and leader has very slight claims on the confidence of either the agricultural classes of Great Britain or of the Irish as a nation—a party who, when in power, legislated solely for the advantage of capitalists, systematically sacrificing the interests of society to the aggrandisement of money-dealers, merchants, and manufacturers."

Mr Dwyer, like every other Irish gentleman, tells the government and everybody else that they know nothing about Ireland. "Oh! sure you know nothing about Ireland." "What Englishman knows anything about Ireland!"

Now, I have very serious doubts if the Irish gentry do not know less of Ireland, their mother country—the mother whom they have reduced to beggary and shame—than most Englishmen do who have transacted business in Ireland. At all events they know nothing of England, and I hold that it is essentially necessary that to do their own country good they should know something of England.

For instance, Mr Dwyer thinks that the complicated tenures of Irish land are the sole reason for the defective state of Irish agriculture, and he compares those complicated tenures with the "simple" tenures of England, under which he says she has flourished. Now, in England, the legal harness under which land is held is identically the same as in Ireland. Leases for ever, renewable on fines—copyholds—leases on lives—joint ownerships—tenancies-at-will—and every other obstacle which can mar good agriculture, exist in England. Moreover, the burthens of county-rates and poor-rates are, and have long been, heavier on English land than on Irish land. Hitherto the Irish landlord has laid all the burthens of the soil on the tenant. Even the poor-rate, which he is supposed to pay one-half of, he makes the tenant pay the whole of, deducting his own half afterwards from that half-year's rent which relates to the half-year when the rate was made, the tenant being thus obliged for the landlord's convenience to pay part of his rent before it is due. So far as English agriculture is more prosperous than that of Ireland, it is so in defiance of the complicated tenures.

It is the readier and higher-priced markets in England that make agriculture more profitable there; and those readier and higher-priced markets are created by the manufacturing and trading classes. Even the rents of the Irish landlords are chiefly obtained from the manufacturing and trading classes of England, who eat and pay for Irish produce. If the Irish landlords would keep that produce at home, and would still have their rents, they must create manufactures, and commence at home; and such gentlemen as Mr John S. Dwyer must cease to think, and write, and act nonsense.

If he knew more of England than he does, he would know that legislation in *favour* of English manufactures is repudiated. It never did good; it always did mischief. Manufactures thrive by being left alone, untouched by legislation.

If he knew anything of England, he would know that she is not jealous, as he asserts she is, of Irish prosperity. The more that Ireland could manufacture, the richer would her population be, and the better customers would England and Ireland be to one another. Lancashire and Yorkshire lie near each other; they are not enemies, yet they are competitors; the prosperity of the one is the life of the other. Ireland and England would be related in a similar manner, if more nearly on an equality of prosperty. It is the interest of England to raise Ireland to her own level; they are the enemies of Ireland who prevent it; those enemies are within herself.

No. XV.

Athlone, *10th March.*

Athlone is a town containing 6393 inhabitants, standing on both sides of the Shannon, partly in Roscommon, partly in Westmeath. It is in the centre of Ireland, and is the head of a military district. Its military works of defence on the Roscommon side cover fifteen acres of ground. It is garrisoned by 1500 soldiers, horse, foot, and artillery; contains 15,000 stand of arms; two magazines of ammunition and ordnance stores; besides a large number of armed constabulary.

My letters from Roscommon and Longford gave some account of those landlords who find employment for that great military force, the Lord Lortons, the Lefroys, and such like; and the people upon whom the great force is employed, the conacre peasantry, who battle for bare life, and for leave to hire and to delve the ground at L.8 per acre.

Mr Richard Winter Reynell gives an account of himself and his land, which also shadows forth the uses of the great military force at Athlone. He says—

"I am a tenant farmer. I occupy between 3000 and 4000 acres of land. About 150 or 170 acres are in tillage; the rest is in grazing. The rent averages about L.1 : 11s. per acre. I give an acre and a half to one bullock for fattening, but in addition to that the same land keeps sheep in winter. Half of my farms are for fattening and half for sheep and grazing, (breeding.) Those who cultivate their land in small farms take four or five or six crops of oats from the land successively until it is exhausted; I have known them to do that. In some parts they are now beginning to sow grass seeds since the agricultural society was set up. One of the farms which I hold of 200 acres was in five or six farms before I got it. I do not see a great deal of improvement in the large tenantry. I donot see much improvement in the small tenantry, the labourers are not improving at all. A great number of labourers in my neighbourhood are huddled together in little villages. When there has been an old lease in existence they have got in as sub-tenants in that sort of way. I know a great many in one place, and that is the way they hold. Those under me have a house and an acre of land for 30s." (Of course the people build their houses, or huts, or hovels themselves.)

"Conacre does not prevail so much now; the landlords generally are setting their faces against it, and are advising their tenants to drop it. At particular seasons the poor people are very badly off; there is not constant labour to keep all at work; the usual rate of wages is eightpence and tenpence per day without diet of any kind."

This is the most extensive farmer in Westmeath; but his system is a specimen of the large farms into which the small ones have been gradually merging. Deducting his 170 acres of tillage, he has full 3500 acres of grass, the latter employing, at an average of 8d. per day, thirty-five persons, men and boys. This is somewhat above the actual numbers, and 8d per day is above the actual average. But to make allowance for something additional paid at present in consequence of high prices, the average wages of men and boys may be called 8d. and they may be rated at thirty-five, or one per hundred acres.

The yearly wages of each, "without diet of any kind," (those are Mr Reynell's own words,) are L.10 : 8s.; total wages to the population of 3500 acres, L.364; rent of 3500 acres, L.5425; total population of Westmeath, 141,300; total acres of Westmeath, 453,468; number of acres arable, or capable of cultivation, 365,218; number of agricultural population, 131,316. The rent of 3500 acres is very nearly fifteen times the amount of wages paid for the labour which produces the rent.

The cattle fed on that land are chiefly sold to the beef-eating English, who pay for their beef and work for the money which they pay. The money which they pay for the beef makes up the rent of L.5425. The land was cleared of human beings to make pastures for the cattle. The human beings were starving in 1844 when Mr Reynell gave his evidence; they are better cared for now, in the year of famine, 1847, than in the year of plenty, 1844, because many of them had neither wages nor conacre in that year, there having been no labour for the greater part of them, and the landlords "setting their faces against conacre," as Mr Reynell states; while this year the English tax-payers are providing the destitute peasantry with yellow meal. The question is, therefore, between the taxpayers, who pay L.5425 for beef, and also pay for yellow meal for the surplus population of 3500 acres in Westmeath, while the landlord, who pockets the L.5425, does not pay for yellow meal to the people driven from his 3500 acres of pasture.

I think the English tax-payers will understand that question sufficiently well to know what to do. And when they call to mind that they have also to provide guns, gunpowder, bullets, bayonets, swords, lances, cannon, cannon-balls, bombshells, and rockets, and from 1500 to 2000 armed men, and 400 accoutred horses in Athlone, to keep the people in compulsory idleness and the land in comparative barrenness, they will have little difficulty in forming a judgment as to what they should do in respect of making it compulsory on the owners of the 3500 acres of grass lands to employ his proportion of the population, or pay poor rates for their sustenance; the more readily may they come to a decision when they know that it would be for the benefit even of that landlord to have the land cultivated and the people employed.

Another purpose for which the great garrison of Athlone is required, is to protect such destructives of property and human life as the destroyers of Ballinamuck, described in a previous letter, and not yet forgotten by the readers of this letter, I hope. As the interests of agriculture are held to be secondary to the interests of political Protestantism, the profitable employment of the Irish people and the reformation of Irish agriculture become fearfully difficult, though perhaps not wholly hopeless. Not only is all confidence destroyed between the Protestant landlord and Catholic tenant by such persecution as that of Ballinamuck, related in a former letter, and that which will be related in this letter, making the Catholic tenant a poor cultivator and a poor man, but there is more than a natural consequence of that destroyed confidence; there is a positive design to prevent the Catholic tenant from being a skilful, scientific, or improved farmer. Listen to William Fetherston, Esq., a landed proprietor and farmer deposing on oath at Mullingar, on the 19th of July 1844 :—

"Are there any agricultural schools or superintendents in the district?"—"There is an agriculturist employed by the Farming Society; and there is an agricultural school at Farra, about five miles from here, on the Longford road, under the Incorporated Society."

"Do you know the regulations under which it is carried on?"—"No, I do not know anything very particularly, except that they have got a very clever person to instruct them in agriculture, and likewise a schoolmaster. I know the Farra school *is exclusively confined to Protestants.*"

"Is that because none but Protestants go there; or is there anything in the regulations on that subject?"—"*It is in the regulations.* There is no agricultural superintendent but the agriculturist. He is a Scotchman, employed by the landlords composing the Agricultural Society."

So Catholic tenants are turned out of small farms, and small farms are turned into large ones, and given to political Protestants who vote right; and when the public voice proclaims the illiberal act to be persecution, or something very like it, the best excuse that can be offered, that ever has been offered, is, that the Protestants, being men from the north, are the best farmers. Yet here is Catholicism studiously made a disqualification for learning the science of manuring, green-cropping, subsoiling, and draining. The Catholics, forming the great majority of the population, are denied land, denied the information how to make it profitable if they have land; are denied conacre if they have not farm land; are denied work if they have not conacre; are denied poor-law relief if they have not work; and, having no work, have only the choice of facing death by slow degrees with no food in their stomachs, or death by quick degrees with bayonets and bullets, from Athlone, in their stomachs. They were shot dead when digging up land to plant pototoes in 1845.

That the Protestantism sought for and introduced is not mere religion, may be ascertained from the following evidence, taken at Longford, in addition to what was quoted from Longford witnesses in a former letter. Mere bigot Protestantism would have been no good excuse; but this has not even the comparative innocence of religious fanaticism; it is the undisguised use of Protestantism for political purposes, for obtaining promotion in the church, for obtaining a seat on the bench as a judge, and seats in Parliament:—

Mr Keon—" I had, under the Earl of Granard, some leasehold property on a town-land called Drumlish, near Longford, and a farm belonging to Lord Belmore, a mile and a half from the town. I have not known one instance of a tenant on leaving a farm getting compensation for improvements he has made. A poor cottier might get 30s. or 40s. to give peaceable possession. Under the impression that I would be permitted to hold Knocknixtin, I expended L.300 in the course of six years. I improved it very materially. There was an objection to my holding it longer in consequence of my not voting for Mr Lefroy at the election in this town. At the election of 1835 I refused to vote for him. The agent applied to me to give up the place. I went to lay a statement before Lord Belmore, but was taken ill three weeks, and did not reach him. My wife, finding I was detained ill from home, came, and I sent her. Lord Belmore received her very courteously at first, and said he would see the agent. She called again, and the reply to her was, that I could not expect any favour from those that I would not favour with my vote. She replied that I also held under Lord Forbes, and that I voted for his interest, and not for Mr Lefroy." (He could not vote for the interests of both landlords, as they were of opposite parties.) "He said, 'He cannot expect anything from me, when he goes against me.'"

Mr David Moffat—"I held a farm under Mr Francis Synge. I was also sub-agent under Mr Lefroy. I was removed after the election in 1841. I disobliged Mr Lefroy, the agent," (relative of the M.P. and of the judge.) "I wished to remain neuter and not vote, in consequence of having possession of a mill I had built myself. I owed Mr Lefroy money, and he owed me money; in striking a balance I owed him L.40. He served me with a *latitat*, and brought an execution against me, and sold eighty or ninety pounds worth of property for L.19 : 10s. The whole of the tenants will prove that. I do not owe a shilling now. I expended L.150 on that farm; and I built that mill in 1840. It is getting no compensation for that that I complain."

Mr Edward Rooney, clerk to the Board of Guardians at Longford, mentioned, amongst other things, that Lord Lorton's agent, Mr Courtenay, issued the regular notices for the tenants to meet him on the 26th day of October to pay the half year's rent due in the previous March; and that when they came, in obedience to that notice, he refused to receive that half year's rent from some of them unless they also paid the half year's rent just then due. According to Mr Courtenay's own statement to the commissioners, he did this with those who did not vote for Mr Lefroy, because they had "voted in opposition to the wishes of the landlord." Referring to one of those cases, that of Thomas Farrell, a tenant of Lord Lorton, Mr Courtenay was thus questioned, and thus he answered, (Devon Blue Books, Part II., Appendix B, page 72):—

"What was the cause of the proceeding in that particular case?"—"My reason for demanding the year's rent from him in October (due on the 29th of September) was in consequence of his having voted in opposition to the wish of his landlord, and having volunteered in making statements and affidavits at the election and afterwards."

Such is the complete impunity with which the Irish political Protestant land-agents have been accustomed to act in such cases, that they do not seem to have any sense of fear or of shame. Why should they be afraid? They have had all power and law, and all persons of power and law, from the Lord-primate of all Ireland and the Lord-lieutenant of Ireland, on their side, down to the hangman.

But though Mr Courtenay admits without shame that, after having issued a notice in October for the tenants of Lord Lorton to come and pay the half year's rent due in March, he demanded, in addition to that, without notice, the half year's rent due on the 29th September, and did so because they had voted in opposition to the landlord's wishes: he does not tell all the facts. As they had intimation that they were only to be required to pay as usual half a year's rent, he did not expect them to come prepared with a whole year's rent. They were not so prepared. Whereupon he proceeded, they being leaseholders, to execute a process of ejectment against them because they owed a year's rent. A process of ejectment cannot be taken against a leaseholder until at least one year's rent is due, and has been called for and not been paid. The people offered to pay the half year's rent which he had by a printed notice summoned them together to pay; but he would not take that. He not only sought to punish them for having voted in opposition to the will of their landlord, but he wanted to have on their farms pliable voters for future occasions. So he used the pretence of only calling for half a year's rent, while he demanded suddenly a whole year's rent to get them ejected, and it seems he succeeded.

It may be alleged in behalf of those landlords, that the Catholic tenants are bad agriculturists. It would be wonderful if they were otherwise. But some of them are distinguished even as good agriculturists, and yet they are sacrificed to politics and state churchism like the rest. Here is one of Lord Longford's tenants. The account which he here gives of himself, I have ascertained from other sources to be quite true and within the truth:—

James Kelly—"I held a farm of 29 English acres 22 perches at Ballymacurgan, a mile from Longford town, on the estate of Lord Longford. I was born and reared there, and my forefathers before me. I was dispossessed on the 2d of June 1840."

"For what reason do you suppose you were ejected?"—"The agent told me it was on account of my voting contrary to my landlord's wishes. That was Mr Kincaid of Dublin. I told him my conscience did not allow me to vote differently after I was sworn. I would wish to stay out of the way and not come forward to vote at all; but the country people threatened any one that would do so."

"You are quite sure that Mr Kincaid told you that it was in consequence of voting that way?"—"Yes; he told me he wanted no compliment from me, but to stand to him at the elections. 'It is not what you have, but you shall not want anything; we have nothing against you; but we should be sorry your lease should be the first that dropped, (as I was an improving tenant,) that it should come to my turn first.'"

"Did you offer to take the same land and pay the rent year by year?"—"I offered him another year's rent if they would not put me out. I said I should not wish for L.500 to be put out of the birth-place of my forefathers; and I had made so many improvements, and squared the land. I offered to take it without a lease. I would rather have it without a lease, because I should not be a freeholder then, and not be in danger of being killed. I made new ditches and squared every field, and planted them so that a bird could not get through them; and there was never a year but I had a bed of quick planted; and was up before daylight. I made buildings; it was not long since I rebuilt some of the offices. I got no compensation. I asked for it; and stopped after the ejectment and did no work. Then the driver told me to go on with my work, and still I expected not to be dispossessed. Everybody told me that they would not turn out such a tenant, who was always making improvements. I hurried and got my crops in, and was just finishing the last ridge when I was dispossessed."

After reading this, one turns with some eagerness to that remarkable "Appendix B," in the Blue Books, to which all aggrieved land-agents and landlords have been admitted to contradict the tenant witnesses, or explain inexplicable things relating to themselves. Mr Kincaid replies to James Kelly thus:—

"Although he states in general terms that he was told by the agent that it was on account of his voting contrary to his landlord's wishes he was turned out, yet on being pressed to say positively whether he was sure the agent said so, he gives a confused statement of conversations at elections and at other times, but no distinct answer to the question."

So it must not be true, Mr Kincaid, that you dispose of good tenants because they oppose Lord Longford at the elections? It must not be true that you turned out Mr Kelly for that offence, else why have all this fencing with the fact? Let us see how you get out of it:—

"I do not recollect distinctly what I may have said to him or to any of the tenants in the excitement of a contested election. There were a considerable number of voters on Lord Longford's estate, and I used my best exertions to bring them to the poll and to induce them to vote for the condidates that his Lordship wished to be supported, and on all the occasions referred to by Kelly, he not only voted in opposition to his landlord's wishes, but he did so in a tone and spirit of defiance and triumph which was by no means calculated to gain his landlord's countenance. If other causes were wanted for taking the farm from Kelly, they would not have been difficult to find."

But of course they were not required to be found, his hostile votes being sufficient.

Such is the wretched vassalage of the agriculturists of Longford, where the people are now gazing with vacant eyes at the bare earth and at the bare sky, with empty stomachs, and nothing in their mouths but prayers to God to relieve them from misery by a speedy death. And some of them are receiving relief in death. Such is the deplorable waste of the agricultural resources of Longford, Westmeath, and Roscommon, counties of great fertility, sufficient to employ all their population. Such are the means by which insecurity to life and property, and crimes against both, are engendered ; such are some of the means through which the bad fame of crime deters capital, commerce, and manufactures from taking root in Ireland.

No. XVI.

MAYO, *March* 10.

What muse, what inspiration shall I invoke in writing of Mayo? I question if even fable has yet imagined a muse, or patron saint, or pen-and-ink spirit, able to gather into a writer's brain all the matter of Mayo from which ideas may be drawn out at the writer's finger ends. It is at once the most magnificent and most mean of Irish shires. Its mountains and islands rise out of lakes and bays to the sublimation of altitude ; the wall-like rocks, founded deeper in the ocean than fathom line can reach, rise a thousand feet in upright majesty, with mountains one thousand and three hundred feet enthroned above them. In caves beneath those mountains, and in passages open from the top, and so deep that the spiritual daylight hardly finds its way down, the tides of the ocean, as if lost and imprisoned, roll and roar in their prisons, and ceaselessly work at, gnaw at, and knock upon the rocks until they waste them away, and again make passages to the open sea.

How narrow seems that blue ocean from hence to the western horizon, where the great ships of America and of England are as small as birds—like small birds on the edges of their nest, their nest the setting sun; it is but a narrow border of blue. But, heavens, what a depth to look down into that sea, a thousand feet below us! And to be able to leap into it! "You cannot gaze a minute without an awful wish to plunge within it." Look at this pointed rock, a long narrow stone abutting out and over the gulf, where the tides hold tumult so far down that you can hardly see them ; a creature of flesh and blood, body and soul, with hands and feet, creeping out on the narrow rock on penitent knees, to bend his head over the rock, round it, and kiss its farthest point for grace and forgiveness! Well done, sinner of the strong nerve! you have done it; you may return and sin again. Your brother and sister, with less iron in them, or less *ether*, with less sin mayhap, are giddy—going—gone—down—are down. The ocean has more wreck, eternity has more spirits, and the priest more pence.

There is a mixture of the savage and the sublime in this legend, which gives a fearful interest to more rocks than one on the west coast of Mayo.

But there is a fall which is no legend that we must submit to ; a plunge which we must make from the mountains of Mayo, with all their grandeur of ocean, of islands, deep bays, high headlands, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, fertile meadows, and greenness which knows no withering; we must plunge from the grand and the beautiful in the inanimate works of nature—to the most degraded and farthest lost of her works —the men made after God's own image.

There they are ; all that remains of them in Mayo, living where the worms live, in holes of the earth ; crawling as the worms crawl ; but dying of sheer hunger and helplessness in their clay holes, where even a worm would do something to preserve its own life and provide its hole with health. They move not hand nor foot for that purpose.

Mayo is irregular in shape. Its greatest breadth, from south to north, is 58 miles, greatest length from east to west 72 miles. It is bounded on the west and north by the Atlantic Ocean, on part of the west by Galway, and on the east by Sligo and Roscommon. It comprises an area of 2131 square miles, or 1,333,882 acres; of those acres 56,976 are under water, 848 under towns, 8360 under plantations, 800,111 are uncultivated, and 497,587 are arable. Few of the farms are above fifteen acres ; a hundred acres are a very large farm ; and the greater part of the land is held in rundale or common, and in joint tenancies. The "rundale" is for all the holders of land in a village or township to have spots allotted to them here and there over several miles; a few perches of good soil in one place, a few acres of poor soil in another place, an acre of meadow in the plain, two acres of pasturage on the hill, half an acre of potatoes separating some neighbour's oats and barley, two miles on the west of the village, and two or three half acres of oats and barley separated by the potatoes, or meadows, or bogs of the neighbour's two miles east of the village. This is rundale; and the general result of rundale is for the several patches of ground to have no fences ; for three quarters of a man's time to be consumed in travelling over miles of country, talking as he goes, to dozens of his neighbours, while visiting his farm of six, or eight, or ten acres. Another result is for the pigs and cattle of one farmer to run among the crops of another, and for the whole of the people to have disputes about their marches and rights of way, and to settle their disputes by fighting them out, and renewing the disputes and the same mode of settlement from day to day, from week to week, and occasionally throughout the year; and the next year again, and the next. The disputes never ending, and never to be ended until rundale is ended.

Joint tenancies exist in some parts where there is no rundale. A number of persons join together and take a farm; and all are jointly or severally liable for the rent. One more provident pays his share of the rent, but is distrained upon by the landlord for the default of a co-partner who has not paid his share. A battle ensues, and the neighbours side with the respective combatants and make the battle and the broken heads general. When joint tenancies and rundale exist together, which is often the case, the quarrels are more frequent and the disputes more hopelessly inextricable.

The subsoil in the low districts is limestone and red sandstone, all forming a fertile soil. In other parts the subsoils are granite, quartz, and mica slate. Iron ore is abundant; and excellent slate quarries. Also many other industrial riches above and below the surface earth.

The population in 1841 numbered 388,887, of whom 19,749 lived in towns, all the rest in the rural districts, in hovels of the meanest kind which human beings have ever been known to live in. The employments are entirely agricultural and fishing, grazing predominating greatly over tillage.

There was in 1841 a stock of 23,216 horses and mules in the county, 81,457 horned cattle, 142,193 sheep, 52,286 pigs, 338,268 head of poultry, and 11,007 asses, all being of the estimated value of L.956,432.

The principal towns are Castlebar, the head-quarters of the military, the place of the assizes, of the county prison, and the hangman; Westport, a place of some commerce and occupying a situation between the mountains which overlook it and the sea, seldom matched for its scenic beauty even on the beautiful sea-coasts of Ireland: Ballina, Ballinrobe, Bellmullet, and Swineford. The latter place derives its name from a great market for swine held there in the times of old.

The principal nobles and gentles who live there or elsewhere, on rent gathered in Mayo, (and it must be confessed that rent is not easily gathered there,) are ten or eleven Blakes, half as many Brownes, as many Bourkes, a few more O'Malleys than Bourkes, some Knoxes, Palmers, Lynches, Kirwans, and a few Lords, of whom are Lords Clanmorris, Lord Oranmore, Lord Arran, Lord Sligo, Lord French, Lord Cloncurry, Lord Lucan, and Lord Dillon, most of them, if not all, making a determined stand against paying poor-rates:

one of them, somewhat noted about London for driving a fancy four-horse "drag," refusing to pay the tolls, and thrashing a gate-keeper who insisted on having the toll.

It is also somewhat remarkable, the county of Mayo being so poor and always so poorly fed, that, during the summer of 1846, at least one of the gentlemen who scrapes rent enough together in Mayo to live elsewhere, should have been in a condition of cash to purchase a bushel of flour in London, drive with it in a carriage to Hammersmith Bridge, and, watching the moment when one of the Richmond steamers passed under the bridge with a company of London citizens holding holiday, empty the flour over the bridge on top of the holiday Londoners, and drive off at the gallop. If the spirit that prompted the mischief was not remarkable for a Mayo gentleman, the choice of the article for mischief, a bushel of flour, of which London is sending so many sacks to preserve Mayo in life, was at least worthy of note.

The number of officers in the army furnished by those West of Ireland families, and of old majors and colonels retired, and of younger sons waiting for appointments to regiments, is surprising. But those people must do something. As yet they are too proud and ignorant and poor to go into trade. They therefore seek the army, and wait in idleness until the political influence of their families is felt at the Horse Guards, and they get commissions.

The time will come when the landed gentry of Mayo will not be poor and proud of their barbarous lineage, and ignorant of true honour, the honour of industry, of making themselves honourably rich, and the general inhabitants of Mayo industrious and happy. The ironstone shall yet be iron under hammers made in Mayo; the rivers and lakes shall work and help the human hands to work; the bays and harbours shall have ships in them, many in number, weighty in burthen, rich in value. The men and women shall rise out of the earth-holes in which they now huddle together like lean worms in a place of rottenness. They shall rise and build dwellings, and cultivate the ground, and produce food to be sold to a manufacturing and commercial population; and they shall pay good rents then without difficulty.

Is this too much to prophecy? too much to hope for in Mayo? To believe that this is too much to come to pass in a county so stored with untold wealth, so advantageously situated on the front of Western Europe, is to believe that the idle landowners are to breed young military men and succeed each other in generations of worthlessness for ever.

No; the whole human race has a higher destiny than that.

The Rev. Bernard Durcan of Killeaden, at Swineford, on the 24th of July 1844, deposed, before the Devon commission, that—

"The general rate of wages through that district was sixpence per day, without diet. The best proof of that is, that the contractors on the public roads can get any number they choose, and that in the hurried season. The people came two or three miles to work at those wages. That is what makes it necessary for the people to go to England to the harvest. Rents are 50 and 60 per cent. higher than the poor-law valuation of land; in some cases cent. per cent. higher. The county-cess, which falls all on the poor tenants, to be paid in the summer, may be fairly estimated at eight shillings per acre; to meet that demand the people have to sell the potatoes they should be eating. In some districts of this parish, I believe nine-tenths of the adult male population go to England to the harvest every year. There is scarcely a house which there are not some gone from, the young men particularly. Besides the fatigue and hardship they undergo, their own tillage is necessarily neglected. If they could get employment, and even moderate remuneration for their labour at home, they would, of course, prefer it. It is dire necessity that makes them go. There are very few labourers under that name. They generally hold land. Mr Ormsby has some of his land set to labourers, and they are obliged to work when called upon at any period of the year at sixpence a-day without diet. If one refuses to come when called on at the most pressing time for his own business he is fined one shilling and his crop is distrained to make him pay the fine of one shilling. It gives the landlord an opportunity of exercising a good deal of tyranny, if so disposed."

Mr Ormsby, being informed by the commission what the Reverend Mr Durcan had said about him and his labourers, sought leave, like all other aggrieved landlords, to explain. Here is his explanation, every word:—

"There is no distinction between tenants and labourers on my property. All my tenants are obliged to work, if required, a certain number of days in the year, varying according to the distance they live from me; those in the immediate neighbourhood having to attend oftener than those more remote. I do not give them lower wages than the usual remuneration of the country.

"I had to insist upon a fine in order to ensure regularity in their attendance when called upon, otherwise, I should be altogether dependent on the caprice of labourers.

"In answer to the implied charge of hardship and tyranny, it is enough to state that I frequently have not work for all who are ready and anxious to receive it, and dissatisfaction has often been expressed at not receiving more employment.

"Notwithstanding the reverend gentleman's insinuations, I flatter myself that so far from looking on my work as a grievance, all my tenants are sensible of the benefit they have derived from the employment I have given them."

I shall not at present proceed farther with this account of the population of Mayo. They are by far the most wretched, and, in the present season of famine, most generally destitute of any people whom I have yet seen in Ireland. At the same time the government provision is everywhere presented to them now. But they are sunk below the power of working, and nothing, or almost nothing, is being done, save on a few select farms, to provide crops for next harvest. In this remark I speak of Mayo only. The central counties from which I have recently been writing are getting well forward with the sowing of oats. They will have more acres under corn than usual in those counties, though nothing like as much as will supply the place of the potatoes. Here there seems to be a dismal blank.

No. XVII.

CASTLEBAR, MAYO, *March* 15.

This is the county town of Mayo. It contains 5137 inhabitants; and its parish contains 10,464. The greater part of the former are very poor; the latter are in a state of destitution which defies tongue to tell or pen to write; the greater part of them are occupiers of land, and are allowing the land to lie untilled and unsown, though the weather is favourable for sowing in every respect.

The town contains the assize court-houses; the county prison, the military and constabulary barracks; an infirmary; a workhouse; a parish church, with a lofty tower; a Catholic chapel; a Wesleyan meeting-house; two schools; and a gallows. It contains two newspapers also, one of them established and managed by the Honourable Frederick Cavendish. This is the *Castlebar Telegraph and Connaught Ranger*, the other is the *Mayo Constitution.*

The town consists chiefly of a street nearly a mile long, with a spacious green; trees around the green; and some houses behind the trees. Hills rise beyond the last of the town-houses; the lake of Castlebar lies at the bottom of the hills; and the river of the same name comes out of the lake, and runs as if it had turned its back upon the ocean—for Westport and the Atlantic are only a few miles from the lake, and this river flows inland. It reaches Lough Conn, a lake twelve miles long, and then finds its way out to Killala Bay, where the French landed in 1798, and from whence they marched thirty miles, and took possession of the town of Castlebar. The hills which overlook the town, the river, and the lake, would appear to be great hills were no greater ones seen behind them. But behind them, on the north-west, towards Lough Conn, there rises the grey head of the giant Nephin, 2646 feet high. To stand on the other hills and look up to Nephin, we feel almost as if we stood on the roof of Ireland and looked up at the dome. On the other side of the town is the Reek, bulwark of Joyce's county and Connemara. And Reek again leans back upon that appalling giantess called the Devil's Mother, 2131 feet above the deep waters of Lough Nafooey, near whose solitary waters few wanderers approach without awe. On the shores of Nafooey some outlaws are said to live in ordinary years, but the present season of famine is bringing even them from their solitudes; and that forlorn lake is companionless, save when a vagrant stranger, like me, finds his way to it with a guide; but such stranger going there only to see in it the likeness of that black giantess of mountains, to whom the wanderers, and ultimately the geographers, have given the name already written—for it is her looking-glass—he soon turns away and seeks the haunts of human life and the places of earthly loveliness.

There are many lovely places in Mayo. Close to Castlebar itself, in it indeed, there is the Lawn, the residence and demesne of the Earl of Lucan. The Lawn is pretty. But somehow the question of poor-rates gets into one's head when looking at it and thinking on Lord Lucan. His Lordship has become a defaulter in his poor-rates, and his tenantry follow his example. The other landlords do the same. The most forcible of their reasons for not paying the rates is that L.60,000 have been spent in Mayo in building workhouses, and that they are called upon to pay that expense for building. It seems, however, that when the L.60,000 were unspent, and seen only in perspective, those same owners of the soil of Mayo used all their political influence to get large sums laid out on building. They seem to have all agreed, then, that the larger the sum which each workhouse would cost, the better would the cost be to Mayo. They only disagreed as to the estates which should be favoured with a workhouse. Those who had the greatest political influence obtained the privilege of having the site of a union house, stones to build it, lime for mortar, and sand to mix with the lime, all purchased from them. Government advanced the money, and they had a scramble for it. The tenants were employed in drawing the stones to the site, which had been paid for in ready cash to the lucky landlord of the political power; other tenants quarried stones, dug out sand, burned lime, served the masons who built, and some of them were masons. All paid their rents to the happy landlords of the political influence at that time, and also all arrears. And why? The money in payment of the work went through the hands of the rent collectors.

We would naturally suppose that the workhouses would have been built in the most central parts of the different unions, or near to the most central towns or villages. But that natural arrangement would not have accorded with the influence of the landowners, who required that the money should be spent on their land. Listen to Mr Cavendish:—

"We have a poor house here, (at Castlebar;) another within eight miles; another within fourteen miles; another within eighteen miles; another within fourteen miles, (those being the five for the whole of Mayo,) all within that small district; when in remote districts there are no poor-houses within forty miles; and the reason of them being built where they have been was at the instigation of the landlords, in order to enable them to sell the poorer part of their land to the commissioners; and next that they may have good substantial buildings on their lands hereafter in case of the poor-law not being carried out."

To refuse payment of rates; to combine landlords' agents and tenants as boards of guardians, not to collect the rates, and so, not to use the poor-houses for the poor, is certainly the most direct course to take to get hold of the "good substantial buildings" for some other purpose. Mr Cavendish says:—

"No rates have been collected except by the aid of the police; many sums which have been lately collected have been by the presence of the police; and now there is a charge brought against the union for the two first instalments of L.12,000 for building the workhouse, amounting to nearly L.800. *It would be a great boon if the government would relinquish that enormous sum.* And if they were to do that it would give to the people an inducement to withdraw their opposition to the poor-rates altogether. In this county there are five poor-houses, and the expense of the mere building of those five poor-houses was upwards of L.60,000, not any portion of which has been collected; and as they find it in every union, particularly Westport, Ballinrobe, and here' very hard to collect the rate for the maintenance of the poor, they will find it very difficult indeed to collect L.60,000.'

The first effort was to get the money advanced by government; the second to get it spent where the strongest landlord could get most of it; the next is to get "government to relinquish the enormous sum;" failing which thoy will neither pay nor collect rates. The Earl of Lucan heads the combination.

At first rates were collected in the "presence of the police," but a magistrate's warrant was requisite to obtain the presence of the police. The head magistrate at Castlebar and chairman of the board of guardians is the Earl of Lucan; the principal acting magistrate, and treasurer to the board of guardians, is Mr Ormsby, his steward. They do not now issue warrants to the police to go out with their carbines, bayonets, and pouches of ball-cartridges, to give their presence to the rate-collectors, because the house is built; the L.12,000 which it cost are spent; and the half of the rates falls ultimately on themselves, though wholly paid by the tenants in the first instance. To ease the landlords in every possible way, the rates were made, by parliament, payable by the tenant. The tenant being thus called upon to pay the landlord's rate, which was to be deducted from his rent, was called upon to pay a part of his rent before it was due as rent. If proceedings were taken to recover the rates, the expenses fell thus upon the tenants. If the tenants did not pay their rents regularly, but paid part on account from time to time, (and that is paid commonly by bills discounted at the banks, the landlord endorsing the bills; the tenants paying the enormous discount; again borrowing money at a loan society, in which the agents are usually the lenders, or from private usurers at 30, 40, and 50 per cent. to meet the bills when due at the bank; the loans being paid by instalments which are in reality doubled in amount;) if the tenants did not pay their rent in full, but allowed arrears to accumulate, they did not get permission to pay in as part of the rent the receipt for the landlord's half of the poor-rate until they were paying the rent of that half year in which the rate was made. Thus, if a tenant was in an arrear of twelve months' rent, and he paid the landlord's rate in presence of the police in April 1844, which was the period of the police being used for that duty, his rent for that half year would be due on the 29th of September following, and he would not pay it until after the harvest of 1845, at which time and not sooner he would be privileged to pay in the receipt received for the landlord's rates in the spring of 1844. It is not common for tenants-at-will to be allowed to run so far into arrear with their rent, as they can be ejected at any time by six months' notice, whether they owe rent or not. But in Mayo a large number of the tenants are leaseholders, who cannot be ejected unless they owe at least twelve months' rent. They are, therefore, allowed on most estates to fall into arrears to that extent, so that a process of ejectment may at any time be brought against them. When a contested election occurs, they get intimation that they must vote for a certain candidate, else a process of ejectment will issue against them. Most of them vote accordingly. To get those tenants on the register is the only inducement to give them leases; to have power over their votes is the purpose of designedly allowing them to fall into twelve months' default of rent. The votes obtained, such things as workhouses, at a cost of L.12,000 each, in select localities, to "enable them to sell the poorer part of their land to the commissioners," are obtained also. And the tenants are at first called upon for the rates in the "presence of the police," and the rates are obtained. But twelve, eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty months go by, and the receipts for rates paid in 1844 by the tenants begin to come into the hands of agents as rent, which suggests to the said agents and landlords that they should join the tenants in an opposition to poor-rates. So the workhouse built at Castlebar, on Lord Lucan's land, at an expense of L.12,000, to contain 700 persons, had within it in 1845 134 persons—the largest number it ever contained. It has had fewer since, and has about that number now. The population of the Castlebar union is 61,063 persons.

In the rating of the land, the owners have also taken care of themselves and shifted the weight of the burthen on the occupiers. A demesne, measuring hundreds or thousands of acres, kept as a deer-park, sheep-walk, hunting-field, or forest-chase, for the pleasure of the landlord, though it may be naturally as fertile and valuable land as the farm valued for poor-rate at twenty-five shillings per acre, will be most probably valued for that rate at five shillings per acre.

The only burthens which the Irish landowners have permitted themselves to bear, with the exception of the half poor-rate on farms, and the low rate on grass lands, is the tithe rent-charge, and this is only nominally their burthen; they have invariably added it to the rent of the tenants. The poor of the peasantry entitled to relief must wait until the rates can be collected from the farmers. The parsons, most of them being of the landlord class, were saved the delay of waiting until a tithe-rate or rent-charge was collected from the farmers. The landlords undertook to pay that and charge it on the tenants.

The county cess was exclusively charged and levied on the tenants or occupiers. Of course when a landlord occupied his own land he had to pay the cess. In many parts of Mayo it amounted, in ordinary years, to a fifth part of the rent. Half of the expenses of the 9000 armed constabulary in Ireland is paid from this cess; the general taxes of the kingdom paying the other half. The grand juries of counties, a body altogether irresponsible to the cess-payers, have had the distribution of this money. In the case of outrages on property they award compensation to the sufferer, usually at the full amount and above it of his loss, and the award is levied on the whole of the occupiers of the barony in which the offence occurred, or in some lesser district determinable by the grand jury. The effect of such awards by the grand jurors, they being frequently in the proportion of six Protestants to one Catholic, and all landlords, has been to make the knaves who have foresworn Catholicism and taken up (I need hardly say in pretence only) Protestantism for the sake of getting a farm, or some official situation and official salary, of which knaves so situated there are many everywhere and a rather large number in Mayo—the result has been that those persons are ever and anon having an old horse pushed into a limekiln, a pig drowned in the river, a haystack set fire to, and sometimes a mud cabin with its roof of rushes set on fire. They go before the grand jury and swear that they believe the outrage to have been malicious, owing to their having been converted to Protestantism. The grand jurors believe with them, and award them sums of money, which are levied on the district where the mischief was done, in "presence of the police."

That there may have been such offences done by an enemy is likely; but that the greater part are done by persons who destroy their own property to get more for it than it is worth, and who get awards in cases that no insurance office in the kingdom would pay policies in, is just as sure as it is that the five workhouses of Mayo cost L.60,000. A grand jury which memorialized the government the other day on the injustice of levying poor-rates on large districts, because in large districts the employer who employed many hands would be rated the same as him who employed few hands, (the real object, however, being to save the landlord who had cleared the population from his estate into the towns from being rated for their pauperism in the towns;) this grand jury at that same assize awarded a landlord L.3000 and odds for loss sustained by him through a fire, alleged to have been malicious, the perpetrators not being known; and when it was proposed by one of the jurors to levy that sum on the barony in which the fire occurred, it was successfully objected to, and the levy was ordered to be made on a wider district, because, if made on the barony, the greater part of it would have fallen on the noble lord himself, he being principal owner and occupier in the barony.

Another purpose of the public cess has been to make roads, build bridges, and perform other public works. Under colour of performing such works, private residences have been ornamented, public roads diverted for private convenience, bridges built for private use, and the public wants neglected. No fault was found by the grand jurors with anything designed by the county and district surveyors; and as the surveyors obtain their situations from the jurors, and not from the cess-payers, they always tried to make public works suit the private wants of the gentlemen jurors. These last, paying no cess themselves, laid the cess on the occupiers with a heavy hand, collected it in "presence of the police," and always answered to every remonstrance of the cess-payers, that public roads, bridges, angles cut off, hills levelled, and hollows filled up, were the best possible things which could be done in the county with the public money.

But the act of the 10th of Victoria passed at the close of the session of 1846, to facilitate the employment of the peasantry, and it passed in a haste, when half the lords and gentlemen had gone to grouse-shooting. To their astonishment they discovered that this act, which passed in such haste when their backs were turned, contained, not only a clause giving the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland power to summon grand jurors together in distressed districts and compel them to provide work for the unemployed, but a clause which laid one-half of the cess to be collected for that purpose on themselves. Upon which they at once discovered that roads were useless works, bridges were useless, hollows filled up were useless, and hills cut down were useless. All public money expended in making or improving roads, if it was cess to be collected in the baronies, was declared to be a waste of money. They excepted from this declaration of waste the proposition to spend sixteen millions of imperial taxes on railroads. And when Lord John Russell told them that half of the cess would be defrayed by the imperial exchequer, (at the expense of the working men and women of England and Scotland chiefly,) and that the charge of the other half would be divided between them and their tenants, they were still unreconciled to bear that fourth part of the cess; and they still declaim on the utter uselessness of all public works to which they shall in any way be called on to contribute.

When we bring to mind that Ireland does not pay the assessed taxes, nor several of the excise duties, (that on soap, for instance,) nor income and property tax; that the Irish landlords were never until now taxed for public roads, and that they now unite into an "Irish party" to harass the government and impose upon the English public new burthens for the performance of duties which they neglect, it will be seen that as a class Irish landowners stand at the very bottom of the scale of honest and honourable men.

And yet all that is said of those of them who own the land and the political power of Mayo in this letter, becomes purity itself compared with the deeds done, as shall be related in my next letter, in respect of tolls and customs in Mayo. It is not enough for them to exempt themselves for many years from payment of the public cess, and expend that cess in many cases for private benefit; but L.30,000 per annum collected in Mayo in tolls and customs, to do the work which the cess is applied to, has been divided, and is now divided, among a few influential families as private income.

No. XVIII.

Castlebar, Mayo.

There is, it appears, not less than L.30,000 per annum collected in the county of Mayo for tolls and customs. Those tolls and customs are chiefly collected under patents granted to certain of the landlords; the original purpose of the patents being to secure the landlords from loss in making roads, maintaining streets in repair, and such like public services. In process of time those works were provided for by acts of parliament, and a public cess for their execution was collected from all occupiers of land. In Castlebar district the cess has usually amounted to about one-fifth of the rental. That cess has been expended by the grand jurors in making and repairing the roads, in paving the streets of Castlebar town; in doing all the things, in short, which the patents for tolls and customs intended the money collected under them to do.

Those tolls and customs are farmed out to various grades of collectors. The head landlord receives a rent for himself from some friend to whom he leases the power of exacting the dues. That friend, commonly a relation of the landlord, or political servant who is thus rewarded, sets the privilege of collecting the dues to a third party, at a sum very considerably higher than what he himself pays. This third party may collect the dues; in some cases he does, but not always. Even he is occasionally one of the family who has a deputy farmer of tolls under him. The first under the landlord may be a brother whom primogeniture and entails have made a poor brother. The second may be a cousin, younger brother of some other entailed landlord of lesser degree, in whose family no patent for collecting tolls and market-dues is vested. Next comes the man who contracts to pay a large sum, and who pays men of vigour and energy their daily wages to collect the dues and fight for them, or offer to fight, as necessity may require.

Sometimes a person is found who buys hay and corn and butter and pigs in the town of Castlebar, and who refuses to pay those dues to Lord Lucan's deputies. If he is strong in purse and independent in position, he may go to law and get a decision from the judges of the land, that the lords of the land and the deputies under them have no right to levy those tolls and dues. In such a case they will allow that person to buy and sell in the streets, and pass along the road without toll in future; but they will catch all the rest who are not rich enough to go to law; and especially the tenant farmers, who must not make enemies of landlords and agents, nor of the relatives of landlords, lest they lose their farms. Listen to Mr Cavendish of Castlebar:—

"I took the matter up myself. I purchased articles in the market, oats and potatoes, and refused to pay the toll. They seized my goods. I replevined and made them pay all the costs in an action at law; but the people are not rich enough to do that. They charged 3d. per cwt. for oats, or 9d. per sack of three cwt. I refused to pay that, but offered them 1d. per draught. They seized. I tried the question with them, and beat them."

"Was the toll so set aside continued afterwards?"—"Yes, it was continued afterwards against those who had no power to resist it. If I buy a load of hay in the country, and direct it to be drawn to my stables, the custom is charged, (though I never pay it,) though it is never weighed, or any account taken of it, but only passing through the street; but the country people pay it. The toll was originally imposed to build a market-house, build bridges, and repair the streets. *The market-house has never been built*, and the bridges are built and the streets repaired by presentment of the grand jury from the public cess; but the public highway is converted into a profit by the landlord. The landlord gets L.75 for the toll of the street, and the man under him sets it again, and he gets a profit. Not one shilling is laid out in the way directed by the patent. The toll is an entire profit levied on the public, and put into the pockets of the landlord, his under bailiffs, and tenants."

The customs, however, would seem to furnish rather a worse case than the tolls. The market is held in the main street of Castlebar. It is paid for by those who bring their goods. All the neighbouring farmers and their wives bring something to be sold; eggs, butter, poultry, and such like. There is no covered place nor place of shelter. If goods are laid on a table in the street, twopence is charged; if an awning or any covering be erected over that table to keep the goods dry in a wet day, or to keep the sun off them in a hot day—(butter may be the article requiring protection—what a word that *protection* is!—to protect the Irish butter interest, free trade has been forbidden to touch butter)—if any article requires the protection of a covering when so exposed for sale, each person is charged double.

In the neighbouring town of Westport, where the Marquis of Sligo is lord of the land, of the town, and of all the power, the tolls and customs exacted under his patent are transferred to a religious society for the conversion of those who do not believe in the creed of that society. The operation to convert begins by exacting money for each horse's load, ass's load, and basketful of farm produce carried into the town and sold in the market-place; and, instead of making and mending roads, and keeping the market-house in repair, the operation converts this money to other uses. This is the beginning of the conversion, and it is the end. The middle portion of the operation consists of quarrels, falsehoods, cursings, revilings, jealousies, heart-burnings, hatreds, broken heads, and sometimes deeper crimes, to obtain the payment of, and to avoid the payment of, those unrighteous imposts.

Speaking of Mayo generally, Mr Cavendish says—

"Almost every year a state of starvation prevails among the poor in this county. It is not for want of provisions, but for the want of money to purchase them, there being little or no employment."

There being no employment which affords wages, the next result is thus stated:—

"The great ruin of this country is the subdivision of lands in small proportions. Whenever a son or daughter is married, the father gives to each a portion; and as the families here are in general very large, he divides his holding into very small portions. The landlords find that they can collect their rents better by the lands being sub-divided. If they make a setting to one man he may not be able to pay his rent; but if the setting be made to several he may get a little from each. But the grand failure is in the want of confidence between the tenant and landlord; they are jealous of each other. The landlords do not grant leases in consequence of political feelings; if they grant leases the tenants do not always vote according to their landlord's wishes, and the landlords are, therefore, against granting leases."

This refusal to give leases is not universal however. To control the tenant in his votes, and yet get him on the register to vote, which he cannot do unless he holds his land on lease, the expedient of keeping the lease in the landlord's or agent's possession is resorted to. In the county of Longford several cases were mentioned to me of agents having been paid what was called the "lease money," years ago, for the leases, and that they still held them in their own possession. Some such cases were also sworn to before Lord Devon's commission, in some of which the agents gave up the leases in their possession to the rightful owners—the tenants—and excused themselves for having retained them for years by the plea of an *oversight*, though the tenants said that they had called for them nearly every time they went to Longford, which was once a week or once a fortnight.

Those agents being lawyers as well as rent collectors, I was at first inclined to think that the leases were retained in their hands because all the fees for drawing them might not be paid, or that they held them as collateral securities for bills discounted at the banks, or held them to have an advantage as to rent over the tenants at some future time. In some of those cases in Longford and the adjoining midland counties of Ireland, I found, however, on further inquiry, that the agents, being lawyers, they offered the tenants leases, and took the "lease-money" from the tenants, though they knew that the landlords, their superiors, would not execute the documents nor grant leases. They, it seems, took the "lease-money" for its own sake, and kept it and did no more, the tenants reposing under the security of parchment and stamps as they thought, but awaking at times to be thrust out upon the bare highway as tenants-at-will; calling for teh leases at last to protect them from ejectment, and being coolly told that they had never been executed; seeking to recover the money which had been paid as fees or "lease-money" years before for the execution of the documents, and being told that lawyers never do such preposterous things as return fees; and finding, when they proceeded to law with a man of unreturnable fees, having got some legal hawk to assist in pecking at that legal hawk's eyes, that the statute of limitations intervened, and that they got nothing, while the last penny or potato which they had in their hands when ejected for want of a lease was taken from them, and gobbled up by that second man of law, who knew all along that they could effect no good against the first man of law.

As I found it in Longford and the midland counties, so is it in the western county of Mayo. But here it seems the control of the tenant for political uses suggests the propriety of giving him his land on a lease, and keeping that document out of his own hands. A landlord looking to the improvement of agriculture, the social advancement of the tenantry, and the better employment of the labouring population, sets his farms to his tenants on lease to give them security, to make them feel that they may invest money and manure in the soil and have no fear. The Mayo landlords, it seems, or some of them, give leases to the tenants for the undisguised purpose of making them feel insecure, and in that feeling of insecurity become willing to vote as the landlords desire. To get workhouses built through political influence at L.12,000 each, in the most inconvenient places, as my last letter shewed, and then refuse to pay rates or get them collected; to use the political influence to get commissions and promotions in the army—every body in Mayo, not a policeman, a peasant farmer, or priest, or parson, is a colonel, or major, or captain. Leases are granted to make voters; but they are held in landlordly possession and not by the tenants, lest the tenants do not vote for the landlord's candidate.

James Conry, Esq. master extraordinary in Chancery, and commissioner for taking affidavits at Castlebar, gave the following evidence before the Devon commission, on the 31st July 1844, on oath:—

" In cases where leases are executed they are more frequently withheld by the agent or landlord. The landlord executes the lease for electioneering purposes, and it is held in the possession of the landlord, and on the property of Lord Lucan; that is the fact; the leases are all in the office of Lord Lucan. There were a great quantity made in the year 1826; they are all retained in the office.

" What advantages can he derived from that?"—" If the tenant displeases the landlord in any way he can turn him out, and he has no title."

" Would it not be in his power by a simple process of law to enforce the production of the lease?"—" It would be difficult for a man without means to do that."

It would be difficult for a man without means to go to law with his landlord, and dangerous, whether to make him produce the lease held for a political use or to make him cease to exact tolls, customs, and market dues in Castlebar for family emolument. Mr Ormsby, the steward of Lord Lucan, denies this, and everything else sworn to by every other witness who says anything unfavourable to his Lordship; but the denials and the temper in which they are made only prove the general accuracy of the other witnesses, and make Lord Lucan look a worse landlord than he was before his intemperate steward rushed to his rescue.

Mr Conry also says that the farms are put up to a kind of auction, and there being *no employment of any kind for the people but on the land*, they bid against one another in the desperate hope of getting the land at any price. But it should rather be said that they *write* against one another.

"Generally, written proposals are sent in to the landlord, and those are held to be equivalent to an agreement, (when there is no lease;) for those document are preserved by the landlord, and the tenant has nothing."

Mr Conry also states that on estates where a number of tenants hold a farm in common, each being liable for the rent of the whole, and the whole for the default of one, instead of proceeding against them by distraint when some one of them falls into an arrear of rent extending to twelve months, which distraint would cost from L.2 to L.3, "processes of ejectment are brought down from Dublin and served upon the parties, and a vast bill of costs run up." The costs are as much as L.20 in those cases. And those processes of ejectment are brought, though it is not always desired to get the tenants ejected. The agents are lawyers, or associated with lawyers, and they do this to obtain costs for their own emolument.

This explains why the enormous number of ejectment processes in the county of Mayo, recently spoken of in the House of Lords, were issued; and why Lord Lucan and others say in that house that processes of ejectment do not signify that the tenants were ejected.

No. XIX.

LIMERICK, *March* 22.

Though a previous letter was dated here, I have not yet described Limerick city and county. Even now the city must be omitted, but the county has pressing claims to notice.

Its greatest length from east to west is fifty-four miles; its greatest breadth from north to south is thirty-five miles. It is chiefly a plain lying south-east of the Shannon, gently undulating. The soil is fertile beyond anything that can be expressed in common agricultural language. With good roads in some parts, and the best of hard stone to make good roads everywhere; with intersecting streams that drive mills and make meal and flour; with other rivers navigable from the Shannon inland, with the Shannon, broad and deep, all along the western boundary, rolling to the Atlantic, with water more than sufficient to float all the ships of the world at once; with the city of Limerick situated on that river, containing docks and harbourage, and affording a first-class market for agricultural produce; with all those advantages, Limerick county is still a poor one, if we may judge it by the employment it gives to the population and the wages paid by its agriculturists to their work people, ninepence and tenpence per day in ordinary years; one shilling per day in this extraordinary year of high prices received for their corn and cattle; still a poor county, if judged by the enormous proportion of its people unemployed by its own resources; still poor, if judged by the common evidences of poverty and disorder, an overwhelming military force in the principal town, barracks for soldiers in the smaller towns, stations, seventy in number, for the armed constabulary in the villages; still poor, if judged by the crimes committed in the struggle to sustain human life on the smallest amount of food now, and on the worst quality of food always before now, which human beings ever subsisted on; but a rich country if judged by the amount of rent paid to its landowners, and by their grandeur of castles, parks, mansions, equipages, ancient family lineage, and new dignities outshining family lineage.

There is Sir Lucius O'Brien, and William Smith O'Brien, M.P. for the county, and other O'Briens, all descendants of the kings of Munster. There are several O'Gradys; and there is "*the* O'Grady" of Killyballyowen. There is John Fitzgerold Fitzgerold, "the Knight of Glin" Castle, Glin on the banks of the Shannon, very ancient; and next door to him, at Mount Trenchard, there is Lord Mounteagle, almost bran new. There is the Earl of Devon, owner, but, I regret to say, only as yet nominal owner, of a large tract of the very richest land near Newcastle. There is William Monsell, Esq. of Tervoe, who writes so fervidly in favour of a poor-law which shall authorize rates to be levied on each estate separately, according to the pauperism on that estate. And there is the Earl of Dunraven, his father-in-law, whose great estates are, like his own, so well cleared of population and paupers. There is the Earl of Clare, Lord Guillamore, Lord Clarina, Lord Cloncurry, Earl of Kingston, Lord Muskerry, and about a hundred other proprietors, resident and non-resident, for whose names and titles space is not allowable in these columns. One of them, Squire Westropp, may be named, however, as it was from a part of his estate that the sub-sheriff, constabulary, 55th infantry, and 8th hussars were employed about a month ago in ejecting tenants for the non-payment of rent.

And this fact recalls to my mind that the English Earl of S——— owns an estate in this county from which some years ago, before English newspapers took much note of Irish affairs, and before Irish papers dared to publish and comment on the acts of landlordism, 1500 persons were turned out homeless, landless, penniless, and potatoless, at the point of the bayonet, in one day. Mr Doolan of Fairy Hill, Portumna, county of Galway, formerly commandant of the police in Limerick county, told me a few days ago that he had the command on that occasion, and that he saw many of those people lingering on the roads and dying of want months after. Some of them are still paupers in the towns and villages.

Mr Doolan also stated, and authorized the use of his name in connection with it, that while in that command he was employed in obtaining evidence in cases of murder, and in paying the witnesses to go to America after they had given evidence. One case of murder was as follows:—A farmer was distrained upon for rent, and his potatoes, stored in a pit in the haggard, were under distraint watched by two keepers. The farmer's family had no other food but those potatoes. The keepers would not allow them to have any potatoes, the orders being against it. In desperation the family at last rose upon the two keepers and murdered them. They were tried and hanged, but not all at once. The father was hanged first; next two sons; next their mother was hanged; and at last one of the daughters. The whole expense of the trials and the rewards to witnesses was L.10,000, for which Mr Doolan holds vouchers, and to the correctness of which he says he is ready to make oath. He says that his undoubting opinion is, that had the most ordinary feelings of humanity, simple fair play, been observed towards those people, no murder would have been committed. The two lives of the keepers would have been saved, and the five lives of father, mother, daughter, and two sons, would not have been given to vengeance and the gallows. And there would have been saved L.10,000, expended on a special commission, on different trials, on prosecuting, counsel, witnesses, and hangmen; besides the saving to England in not being called upon to augment the garrisons of Limerick and the other towns with additional cavalry, infantry, and artillery.

But the most extraordinary part of this drama of cruelty, vengeance, and judicial butchery, is probably this, that the owner of the property on which the distraint for rent was made and the murder committed, lived at the time in Yorkshire, lives there still, draws, it is believed, about L.60,000 per annum out of his Irish estates, chiefly in the county of Limerick; has not been in Ireland once during the present century, though an Irishman born; and averred to Mr Doolan, on the latter paying him a visit a few years ago, that he had never, before Mr Doolan told him, heard of the distraint, the murders, the trials, and the executions; that he left everything to his agents, and that it was their business, not his, to know those things.

Mr Doolan was concerned, as commandant of the police, in another murder prosecution, for which there was a special commission which cost, with the outfit of the witnesses to Canada, L.30,000—*Thirty thousand pounds* of national taxes, besides extra military expenses, for one murder; that murder occasioned by the inhuman conduct of an Irish landlord with the law of landlordism at his command.

Lord Devon's commission of 1844 did not receive evidence on any cases of agrarian outrage beyond a very recent period; nor did it take note of such cases save when they came out incidentally. Mr Doolan states that such cases as the ejectment of 1500 persons by the Earl of S———, which led to awful misery and crime, and enormous military expenses, could not occur now. The Earl of Lucan in the House of Lords, two weeks ago, doubted the truth of a statement made by Lord Brougham, that 400 ejectments had been effected in the barony of Tyrawley, county of Mayo "because," said Lord Lucan, "there is now so much noise made about those things in the newspapers, I do not think so many ejectments could have taken place without us hearing more about them." The fear of the newspapers is the reason given by Mr Doolan for such things being impossible or unlikely now.

My last letter from Mayo allowed some light to fall upon the ejectment cases in that county. To get rent for the landlords and to get the largest amount of cost for the agents are the causes of ejectments being brought against the small tenantry. They are brought in hundreds, though not intended to be carried into execution.

As to the impossibility of such a case as Lord S———'s ejection of 1500 persons being repeated now, because of the newspapers, I shall here relate a case not yet three years old, which the newspapers have allowed to pass with less notice than enough. It occurred in Suffolk, on Lord S———'s estate there, and exposes the injustice and evil working of the feudal privileges of land and landlords being permitted to exist in this commercial age of England.

Anne Manning, of Wangford, in Suffolk, was tried at Ipswich for setting her cottage on fire, and found guilty, and sentenced only to eighteen months imprisonment because of peculiar circumstances in the case. I was present at the trial, and, from what I heard then, I made inquiries, and ascertained these appalling facts:—

That it was customary for the Suffolk labourers to steal pheasants' eggs from one gamekeeper and sell them to another gamekeeper who was anxious to breed up a large head of game for his master. All of the labourers were habitually low paid in Suffolk, through their superabundance of numbers, as they are in Limerick, and through the waste of the corn crops by game and bad farming. Therefore, with low wages and inadequate employment, it became a trade eagerly pursued by the farm labourers, that of robbing the pheasants' nests and selling the eggs to the gamekeepers, probably to those from whom they had been stolen. One of Lord S———'s gamekeepers had lost so many eggs that he was afraid to face his Lordship. His Lordship was over here seeing his Irish estates, and sent notice to Suffolk what day he would return from Ireland. The gamekeeper dreaded that day the more the nearer that it came, and at last, in desperation, shot himself. The evidence on the coroner's jury found a cause for the suicide in the depression of spirits, arising from the loss of pheasants' eggs, and a consequent diminished number of birds. Another gamekeeper imitated the first, and also shot himself. One of the men who had stolen those eggs, the husband of Anne Manning, was committed to jail for three months, by the magistrates, for the offence. During his imprisonment, his wife, with a family of very young children, was left to her own resources at out-field labour for her own and their support, the wages for women at field labour being only 8d. per day. Her cottage rent, which had been paid weekly before her husband was catched stealing the pheasants' eggs, fell into arrear. The landlord of the cottage distrained upon the furniture for the rent, and upon a certain day the poor furniture was to be sold. The wretched woman became desperate, and said the furniture should not be sold. To prevent it, she set fire to the house. This was in June 1844, when incendiary fires were unhappily so common in Suffolk, when the madman Lancaster, convicted of some of those fires, urged others to kindle them, and excused himself for kindling them, because *it was for the good of the farmers and the landlords to burn the corn and make it scarce and dear!* And it was at the assizes at the end of July that Anne Manning was tried for the burning of her cottage, her husband in prison for the eggs, her little children in the workhouse. The late Mr Justice Williams was the judge; and it was reported through the courts and Ipswich at the time, that he declared himself unable, as a man, to pass sentence on that woman, as a judge. At all events he did not pass sentence on her. She was taken into the adjoining court, and Mr Baron Alderson sitting there, adjudged her to eighteen months imprisonment, a light punishment for arson; and even he was overcome with emotion as he did it.

But to quit Suffolk and its poor farm labourers, and return to Limerick with its poorer, where Lord S———'s estate, depopulated of L.1500 persons in one day, is situated. I find in the Devon Blue Book, Part II. page 595, that a Mr Michael Byrne, in complaining of the county-cess being entirely paid by occupiers who have no control over its expenditure, says—

"The landlords will not pay one single shilling of the charges for repairing roads and bridges, and for the police and gaols and dispensaries. In the case of a new road, as in the case of Lord Stradbroke, made by the occupiers in the barony which it passed through, Lord Stradbroke did not pay one shilling, though it improved his estate 50 per cent.; they made roads through the mountains which improved the value tenfold—it fell upon the people totally unconnected with his estate; that I think very unjust. I must pay for all the improvements on Lord Portarlington's estate, though he does not pay one shilling. In the last session there were fourteen of the great people (voting away the money as grand jurors) that did not pay one shilling tax of the kind. They are benefitted, but they do not pay the tax."

"Do you consider that the tenants do not take into consideration the amount of the county-cess at the time they are proposing for land?"

"It is very little calculated. *They are so anxious to get into a farm, they make no calculation. They are anxious to get anywhere, whatever farm they can, and then struggle away.*"

In those *italic* lines is written the agricultural and whole social history of Ireland. They were uttered before the commissioners on the 15th of August 1844. Immediately following which Lord S———, who was in Ireland at the time, (in fact, it was this very visit in 1844, the return from which the gamekeepers in Suffolk so dreaded, the eggs being lost, that they shot themselves;) Lord S———, in a very angry tone, denied that the county-cess was spent in making the road through his mountain property as alleged by Mr Byrne. His Lordship says, Appendix B, page 53—

"Some ten years since, L.50,000 were granted by parliament for improving roads and opening lines in districts requiring them."

He then proceeds to say that he expected a part of this money, but did not get any of it to make roads through his mountain property, though he went to the expense of having surveys made to plan where those roads should be. His Lordship adds that, for "such persons as Mr Michael Byrne" to be bringing the names of landlords before the public who went to the expense of private surveys for private roads, expecting to get public money to make them, and who did not get the public money, is a very hard case.

It is clear that Lord S——— did not make the roads on his Limerick estate, he says so himself; and as they are made, I am inclined to believe Mr Michael Byrne's account of the source of the expense. The view from those very roads of the great plain of Limerick is thus described in the "Hand Book for Travellers in Ireland," published in 1844, by the Messrs Curry of Dublin:—

"In ascending by the *new* road which winds along the slopes of the hills, the eye ranges over one of the most extensive fertile plains in the kingdom, and in this fertile but wretchedly cultivated district, except the larger towns and demesnes there are few objects on which the eye can with pleasure repose. The numerous low clay-huts, exactly the colour of the soil, afford no relief, and the widely scattered seats appear as mere specks on the surface of the immense space. In the autumnal months, however, when the various corn crops are ripening, this bald, though, from its extent, sublime scene is enriched by the golden colours of the waving grain."

I quote this passage because I have not seen Limerick plain in harvest; and also to shew that other writers than myself call it "fertile, and wretchedly cultivated." This great plain of Limerick has had for many a year all the advantages enumerated at the beginning of this letter. It has landlords resident and non-resident, Saxon and Celtic, all of whom, or any one of whom, might have done whatever they chose—some of them have even manured the soil with human blood, all have done what alone landowners can do, thinned out the population; but still the fertile plain is wretchedly cultivated.

No. XX.

RATHKEALE.

This is a town seventeen miles from Limerick, on the road to Killarney, containing 4201 inhabitants. It is a mile long, beginning on the top of a gentle eminence descending on the slope to the river Deel, which is navigable to the Shannon, and ascending the rising ground on the other side. It has a church, a Catholic chapel, some schools, a prison, a court-house, a barrack for soldiers, a barrack for police, a post-office, an hotel, some flour mills, a number of small shops, a fever hospital, and fever enough to fill the hospital until it runs over and drops out—drops out its dead into the grave-yards and fills them. It is a very ancient town, with old castles about it, and old legends, and has probably had fever from the earliest times until now, as it is only now that its street is getting a drain to carry the filth from places where filth never could escape from before, and where it lies, and runs and oozes out, to lie most odiously and pestilentially even now. This drain is being cut over the brow of the eminence through a hard rock, and formed wholly to the river at an expense of the Board of Works; in other words, at the expense of the general taxes.

The land around this town for several miles is a free fertile loam, easily cultivated, capable of bearing any kind of farm crop, affording rents varying from L.2 to L.3 per Irish acre, and well cleared of those obstructions called men and women, which are more formidable to the Irish landowner than the forest trees of the American backwoods are to the Irish emigrant. Yet the men and women are still so plentiful that the farmers can obtain the best of the men as ploughmen for L.4 per annum and their diet in the farm house. Married men who live in their own houses receive 6d. per day and their diet of two meals per day. The best ploughing, ploughs, horses, and smartest workmen whom I have yet seen in Ireland are now ploughing in the fields between Limerick and Rathkeale, and to the distance of two miles beyond Rathkeale on the opposite side. Going over those two miles we reach a country lying chiefly in grass, and employing at the rate of four persons (at 8d. per day for boys and 1s. for men) to each L.400 of rent! The estate of Cahermoyle, belonging to William Smith O'Brien, Esq., M.P. for the county of Limerick, is one of the first met with in this direction, lying almost in grass, entirely depopulated, and employing the population, which are crowded into the villages and towns adjacent, at that rate and that only. The Earl of Devon's estate is another in grass; but only some of its farms are discultured. The whole of Mr O'Brien's are uncultivated. They are chiefly large, well stocked with cattle, which, when fattened, find their way to Cork and to England. The population of Cahermoyle and the other estates are on the public works at 1s. 4d. per day; those employed by Mr O'Brien in the demesne of Cahermoyle are paid only 1s. per day, without diet, or any part of it. But as I shall devote a letter to a full description of this and the adjoining estates, giving the rents, taxes, wages, food, produce, and the prices of the produce sold, I shall not go farther into those statistics at present, but return to describe that country of matchless fertility lying between Limerick and Rathkeale. I cannot, however, return from Cahermoyle, which is about five miles from Rathkeale, without saying that, on the borders of Mr O'Brien's property the most deplorable dwellings and the most appalling misery which I have seen in Ireland is to be seen now; not on the Cahermoyle estate, for this reason, that no population, not even to cultivate it, is allowed to get a footing there.

Leaving Limerick by the road which goes south-west, taking us, if we go far enough, to the lakes of Killarney, in the county of Kerry, and from thence to Derrynane Abbey, and other remarkable places on the sea coast, we go out by a street which in amplitude and elegance may be classed with the best streets of any town or city in the United Kingdom. And leaving that street behind, and with it Limerick, and losing sight of the Shannon, and feeling as if there was room for heart-sickness because the Shannon is out of sight—so beautiful upon the visual senses, so suggestive with its broad waters, deep and clear, of contemplation deep though not clear, of what such a river was made for, if not to be made to do more for mankind than it has yet done, and of what it may and must do for the mankind on its shores before many years are over; losing sight of the Shannon and leaving Limerick, we have several miles of road of such a breadth, hardness, and smoothness, as to be unsurpassed anywhere; though not always so ample in breadth, it continues good throughout the county. The limestone rock, which abounds everywhere, affords road metal of the best kind, cheaply and abundantly. That same limestone rock bears upon its surface a fertile soil, laid out in larger farms than we see in other parts of Ireland, and seemingly better cultivated. It also affords good building stones for the cottage dwellings of the county, and these dwellings we see in many parts standing with substantial walls and without roofs, the roofs having been taken off to get the indwellers out, as if they had grown too large within to be got out at the doors. They had, in fact, only held too tenaciously, somewhat as the limpet does on the sea-rock, which suffers its shell to be broken and itself exposed to death rather than quit its hold; the instinct of self-preservation being the same in the shell-fish of the sea-rock and in the tenant-farmer of Ireland, neither knowing how to live if they quit their hold.

Those roofless houses are more numerous as we approach Rathkeale, where the landlords have been making clearances more recently. The landlords who cleared the population from their estates ten, fifteen, and twenty years ago, have now large farms, with Scotch ploughs drawn by two horses each, held by Irish ploughmen who have been taught by Scotch ploughmen, and all signs of human wreck have been cleared away with the people who were wrecked.

That better cultivation prevails, with better rents paid to the landlords, and more produce sent to market on those farms that have been cleared, is undeniable; and the fact is not to be lost sight of, that the more produce that can be raised upon any estate with the least of it consumed on that estate, even if it be for the benefit of the landowner in the first instance, is for the national good ultimately. But this is not so if the consumers beyond the estate, who should eat and pay for that produce, are not profitably employed at work which enables them to pay for it. The Irish landlord sees his English brother Lord, or if he be an Englishman with an Irish estate, he sees his Irish estate encumbered with a dense population which eats the heart out of the soil, and he forthwith sets to work to clear the Irish estate, expecting to make it resemble that of England. He does not seem to know that the English land is "cleared"—(I use the offensive word in reference to England, because it is the universal term, and appropriately so in Ireland)—by the manufactures and commerce of the country drawing the rural population to a more profitable from a less profitable employment. The English landowner is kept free of a population that would eat the heart out of the soil, and starve when too poor to cultivate it, not by any good act or design of his own, but in despite of all his class prejudices and class legislation. He has despised the trading and manufacturing people of his country, to whom alone he is indebted for not having his land over-run and over-eaten and swallowed up by a dense rural population like his Irish brother, and he has legislated against those people. The Irish landlord, or he himself on his Irish estate, following in the same course of destructive and anti-national ignorance, despises the manufacturers and traders, clears away the rural population by a force applied by himself behind, without regard to there being a place in the world for those people to go to, and not as in England by a force applied by others before them to draw them out and provide profitable employment for them. The Irish landlord also legislates for his class against manufactures and commerce. And yet these people who have been cleared by him from his estate, and who have found an outlet, and food, and life, beyond Ireland, have chiefly found the outlet through the commerce and manufactures of England, while nearly all the rent paid into his pocket, and carried away in his pocket, to be spent in whatever part of the world his own convenience finds a pleasant place, as a predatory bird carries its prey in its talons or its beak and flies aloft, or flies afar, to enjoy it at leisure, has come into his hands through the market provided for his farm produce by the people of England, who work and make wealth, but not upon the English land.

Such are the very different means by which landed estates are cleared in England and in Ireland. Irish agriculture is more profitable where the dense population is thinned out, the cleared soil being at the same time a fertile soil. But where is the right, legal or moral, human or divine, to clear away the inhabitants without making industrial provision for them elsewhere and elsewise than in agriculture? The right is not to be found even in the expediency which political economy would suggest, of providing a larger quantity of national food at a cheaper cost, because the national loss of having so many millions of the population dependent on charity and national taxes, and exposed to famine, and ever on the verge of social disorder, with a vast army of military and police ever required to check the disorder, is nationally a loss far exceeding the benefits derived from the larger quantity of national food produced at a cheaper cost.

But even the augmentation of produce for the markets does not always follow a thinning out of the population. In the first twenty miles of country seen from the public road south-west of Limerick the marketable farm produce has been augmented. The soil is so fertile and so easily worked, that it could not fail to give more corn to the market, the population on the soil being reduced, if ploughed and sown even in the most simple way. But to speak justly of the cultivators in that district, they seem to have advanced in agricultural progress far before the rest of Ireland, except, perhaps, a part of the county of Carlow. They are approaching the present agricultural condition of some parts of Suffolk and Norfolk, or that of the Lothians in Scotland twenty years ago. But this approach is only in the style of culture, crops, and rent; the wages of the ploughmen are not more than half, on some farms little above one-third, of the wages of ploughmen in Norfolk or the Lothians. The Limerick men are not able to work well from sheer emptyness of stomach, consequently their work becomes dear labour. The farmers and landlords who employ them are despisers of political economy, because political economists have denied the liability of the English tax-payers to support Irish paupers. Political economy while it proclaims the wrong of state provision superseding private exertion, and asserts the rightfulness of wages being regulated by the supply of workmen and the demand of labour, never teaches that a private employer of labour should give his workmen barely half enough of food, which results in his getting less than half enough of work. Political economy teaches a doctrine directly opposed to this. It teaches that the labour is cheapest which is best—that an article may be dear though it be low priced. It would teach the Limerick farmers and landlords that, though they can get labour done for 8d. per day, the supply of men being so much over the demand for them, and though they are under no *legal* obligation to pay more, it would be for their own profit to pay more and keep the workmen in a condition to work efficiently.

Political economy is in itself the very essence of humanity, benevolence, and justice. It is its conflict with selfishness, error, ignorance, and injustice that makes it appear otherwise to some eyes at some times.

Having left Limerick city behind us three miles, we pass Patrick's Well, a village named after St Patrick. Near it is Attyflin, seat of Squire Westropp; Greenmount, seat of Squire Green; and other parks or demesnes or pleasure grounds, with landlordly residents in them, named Fort Etna, Richmond, Jockey Hall, Kilpeacon, Maryville, and Faha.

On the seventeen miles from Limerick to Rathkeale we pass close to or near the residence of Sir David Roche, M.P., the ruins of Dunaman Castle and the round tower of Dysart, Carass Court, seat of Squire Browning, and Croom Castle, once a stronghold of the Fitzgeralds, and often besieged by their mortal enemies and near neighbours the O'Donovans. The war-cry of Crom-a-boo (Fitzgerald to Victory) which is still the motto of the Fitzgerald race, though that wild race is now headed by the tame Duke of Leinster, was derived from this castle and its battle-grounds around it. The Rev. Thomas Croker has repaired a part of this warlike ruin, and lives in it. Near it is Croom House, with Squire Lyon within. Not far from that is Islanmore, the nestling place of Squire Maxwell; and two miles from that is Cherry Grove, the seat of Squire Harding. Islanmore and Cherry Grove! there is poetry and prettiness in the very names; though the prettiness is not confined to the names.

But all of them recede to nothing in comparison with Adare Castle, its old Abbeys, and Monastery, and village on the river Mague, about ten miles from Limerick, the seat and demesne of the Earl of Dunraven. Here we have broad meadows, and green uplands, and noble forest oaks, miles of them; and open glades and wooded thickets; the wandering river loitering in the woods before taking its course of six miles to the Shannon with the traffic of Adare through lands called the Golden Valley, but richer with yellow butter at all times and yellow corn in its season than if it were paved with gold; three abbeys of ancient times on the green banks of the loitering river, the shadows of their venerable towers upon the water; lofty trees around the towers, with colonies of rooks in the lofty trees, and ivy on the old grey walls, with birds innumerable in the ivy; one abbey restored from ruin and made a parish church; another restored by the same good taste and liberal hand, Lord Dunraven's good taste and liberal hand, and given to the Catholics as a chapel, to whom all the three belonged once; the third standing between the two, being converted into a mausoleum for the reception of Lord Dunraven's body when he dies. May he yet, as a living man, enjoy for many a year the repose of beautiful Adare, to which, as far as the reconcilement of adverse creeds can go, he has done so much—alas! that it should be so seldom done in Ireland! to give tranquillity.

No. XXI.

ARDAGH, LIMERICK.

This is a village of poor houses, forming two long rows, on a gentle slope from west to east, surrounded by a deep calcareous loam on limestone subsoil, some of it in tillage, most of it in pasture. Nearly all the houses are hovels, whose ill-built walls of stone and mortar, though stone and mortar are natural products of the district in measureless abundance, are falling or have fallen, and have been patched up again in every style of wall-building save the styles of elegance and strength. The houses not built of stone and mortar are made of clay, not so high in the walls as the others, and more crooked. The roofs of most of them are thatched, or have been thatched. From the absence of tillage in the district, straw to repair the roofs is not obtainable, and the inhabitants are all too poor to purchase slates. The landowners have no immediate personal interest in repairing those dwellings, or in building new ones, consequently they do not repair or build. On the contrary, they prevent, whenever they can, the erection of new houses. The overgrowing population must erect dwelling-places where the landlords cannot prevent them, which is in some narrow siding or nook of a public road, with no garden, yard, or haggard behind, or on some small patch of ground which belongs to a person who makes more profit by letting it be covered with clay-huts than he could obtain from it if covered with corn crops; or upon land held by lease from some head landlord, who, though he tries, cannot prevent the erection of new places of human abode.

In the last case the new places are usually seen behind the rows of old ones, when you can get through the old ones or round the end of the row to look behind. With low crooked clay walls, those huts of the married children of the parents who live in front, look as if they were stricken with age, and were decrepit and feeble, and not able to stand up; or, which is a fact as well as a similitude, they are crouching down behind for fear of being seen by the landlord or his agent. They are narrow and low for this reason; and as they are at first built to accommodate a youthful pair, newly-wedded, who are content to be in a small space, and who have not the means of adding many more feet of clay to the walls, the inducement to keep to a mere hut operates on every side. In due time, and frequently sooner, children accumulate, and grow in size and number, and they in their turn build huts behind, and have children, while still the old people, or the youngest sons and daughters of the old people, live in front. All have pigs and asses in the huts with them in ordinary times. They have not all pigs now, for the food of the pigs is no more; but all have dunghills and pools of stagnation in the narrow places between and at the end of the huts, and not unfrequently within them. That there should be fever and other diseases originating in filth, dampness, and foul air, is only a natural consequence at the best of times. That there should be an aggravation of those diseases and death with them now, when to filth, dampness, and foul air is added famine, is not to be received as a wonder, but as a natural result. The wonder is, if wonder there be, that gentlemen of wealth, humanity, and patriotism, possessing broad lands, and so much fresh air that they know not what to do with that great share of earth and heaven which has fallen to their lot, should deny their neighbours and fellow-creatures room to live and work.

The nearest and most remarkable landlord to this village of Ardagh is Mr William Smith O'Brien, M.P., Cahermoyle; his residence is about half a mile distant. The Cahermoyle estate is almost wholly laid down in large grazing farms, on none of which are the overgrowing population of the district allowed to build houses; they have only the choice of going, and they must go, to Ardagh, and obtain leave to erect a hovel, in rear of the other hovels there, at an enormous rent, paid to the inhabitant of the hovel who permits the new comer to come; or they locate themselves in some nook of a field, or siding of a road, without a foot of ground, save what the clay-hut stands on. Mr Smith O'Brien permits none to settle on his estate in that manner, nor in any way else.

Part of his property is in the Newcastle poor-law union, and part of it in Rathkeale union. The portions of it in Newcastle union are rated for the poor at ninepence in the pound, there being two half-yearly rates of fourpence halfpenny each. His farms, which are in the Rathkeale union, are rated at tenpence in the pound per annum, only one rate for the year having been made there; while Rathkeale district, being more densely peopled, is rated at 2s. 6d. in the pound. Thus, the poorer district of Rathkeale pays three times more money for the relief of the poor than the rich grazing farms of Cahermoyle.

The entire population of Ardagh, and of the farms of Cahermoyle, and every other landed property, is employed on the public works, save five men who are draining within the demesne of Cahermoyle, and men and boys at the rate of about one full grown man and two half grown lads to 350 acres of ground. Those men and boys have only been kept on the farms and prevented from going to the public works by being hired for the year. The wages on the public works have been 1s. 4d. per day. They were not paid by piece-work, but at 1s. 4d. per day overhead, married and single, weak and strong, all alike. The farmers have not given higher wages than 10d. per day, that being 2d. more than the wages given previous to this year. The men hired by them are paid, the highest, L.1 per quarter, or L.4 per annum, with diet, in the farm-houses. But a man receiving L.1 per quarter is a first-rate ploughman or herdsman; the more common rate for hired men is 15s. per quarter, L.3 per annum and diet. The boys receive from 5s. per quarter up to 10s. according to their strength. The ploughman of Mr Barry, a tenant farmer, told me that Mr Barry's service was considered the best in Ardagh parish; it was a most excellent house for diet; they had meat twice a week. None of the other farmers thereabout gave their men meat at all, save perhaps once in six months. Mr Barry, he said, had a brother who had carried on business in England, in Ipswich, had recently died there, but had made a small fortune before his death. In visiting him at Ipswich, the Irish farmer had seen the Suffolk ploughmen getting bacon to eat, and as they performed at least double the work that the Irish farming men did on their potatoes and milk, he very wisely thought his men would work better if they had better diet. So he gave them pork or bacon; and this is the "meat" which the grateful ploughman who told me of the circumstance eats twice a-week.

If two lads at 5s. and 10s. per annum respectively, and one married man at 6d. per day and two meals of potatoes and milk on each working day, are constantly employed on a farm of 200 acres statute measure, with a few extra hands at the time of planting potatoes in March; at the time of hay-making, in July; at harvest, say three weeks in September; and at potato-digging, say a fortnight in October, the wages of the extra hands at those times being 1s. and 1s. 4d. per day with diet; that farmer of 200 acres giving such an amount of employment is considered to be, and comparatively is, a liberal employer. But it is rare to find such an employer. The great overplus of population not so provided for hire conacre for potatoes, or shift in some other more miserable way than on conacre.

Mr Smith O'Brien employed some men in the winter of 1845, as a relief for the potato failure of that year, in making a road through the demesne of Cahermoyle; he paid them 10d. per day. The men whom he now employs in draining the demesne are paid 1s. per day, which is 4d. less than the pay on the new roads, which are being made in various directions on and around his property by the Board of Works. As the farming men only remain on the farms who are hired by the year and dieted in the farmers' houses, and they do not all remain, the 1s. 4d. per day of the Board of Works being a temptation too strong for them to resist, and as the expense of providing them with meal at 3s. per stone in the absence of potatoes is an inducement to their masters to let them go to the public works, in some cases to release them from their hiring to allow them to go, so the 1s. per day, the highest wages paid by Mr Smith O'Brien, only procures him men who have houses or conacre from him, and are bound to work for him.

With meal of Indian corn or of oats at 3s. per stone, labourers under the Board of Works on the roads around Cahermoyle are only able to procure 42 lb. 5 oz. of meal per week; which, divided among a family of five, or six, or seven persons, of which families there are many in small unhealthy huts in Ardagh and on the adjoining farms, gives an allowance less than can possibly sustain them in health, even had they wholesome dwelling-places to live in. But Mr Smith O'Brien has men working for him who live in such huts, with such families, and in greater hunger, for they have less food by one-fourth.

I was told that of five men employed in the domesne of Cahermoyle, four of them might be reckoned as employed there in charity. If they be so employed, the charity or relief is one-fourth less than that paid by government in the locality. But I demur to their employment being called charity or relief. They were performing work most necessary to be done —draining; work which, if done to the extent required on the Cahermoyle estate, should employ 200 men six months of the year for five years; an estate which, if cultivated as it should be to yield the greatest amount of produce for the food markets and of profit to the owner, should employ as many men per 100 acres as Mr Morton's Whitefield farm in Gloucestershire. The geology of Cahermoyle and Whitefield is the same. The present state of Cahermoyle is similar to the previous state of Whitefield. Weeds, rushes, inferior grasses, inferior cattle; utter waste of manure from the cattle; corn growing portions of the farms over-cropped and exhausted; potatoes planted for the one or two workmen on each farm to live upon as the chief part of their wages; these are the characteristics of the estate of Cahermoyle. These were the characteristics of Whitefield farm up to 1840, when Mr Morton entered upon it. The likeness of the two places extends farther. Cahermoyle, besides being on the same geological stratum as Whitefield, is seven miles from the Shannon. Whitefield is about seven miles from the Severn. Cahermoyle is twenty miles from the city of Limerick; Whitefield is nearly the same from the city of Bristol.

But here the likeness ends. Whitefield contains 240 acres; Cahermoyle upwards of 1000. The best land of the latter is superior to any of the land of the former, and constitutes more than a half of the whole; the best land, the alluvium, of Whitefield, is but a few acres; of Cahermoyle it is 400.

The expenditure for drainage, buildings, and useful roads on Whitefield was L.7827. The expenditure on drainage on the farm land of Cahermoyle is nothing; that on the useful roads for improving the value of the land is nothing by landlord or tenants; the Board of Works, with the public money, is improving the farm roads.

Besides the sum of L.7828 expended on permanent improvements on Whitefield farm by the landlord, the Earl of Ducie, Mr Morton, the tenant, has stock and working capital on it to the amount of L.4500. The rent, before he took the farm in 1840, and before the capital was expended on it, was L.200 per annum; tithe L.33; poor rate L.28; and road rate L.4. The rent is now augmented to the amount of five per cent. upon L.7828. The farmer calculates upon ten per cent. on his working capital of L.4500; on L.200 per annum, as remuneration for his personal services on the farm; on wages for ten men at twelve shillings a-week each, and on all the payments to keep implements and roads in repair. What he obtains over all those returns is profit. And he has had profit after all those returns.

I apprehend that such a man as Mr Morton is the true benefactor of his country, and that if Mr Smith O'Brien would turn his attention to his own property to enrich himself by producing human food from that land so naturally rich, now lying waste, he would be a patriot.

Since writing the foregoing, I have been on another farm of Mr O'Brien's where the natural quality of the soil far exceeds that of Gloucestershire. Mr Sheehy, one of his tenants, holding about 150 acres, at 24s. per acre, has only one lad in his employment, and not another person, not even of his own family, employed in cultivation. The land is just sloping enough to be of easy drainage; a stream of water runs through it fit for irrigation or machinery; the Board of Works has just made a road through the farm; a fine rich loamy soil all in grass and rushes covers the whole surface; the limestone rock is everywhere on the farm within two, three, four, or six feet of the surface; a kind of coal, excellent for burning lime, is found in the mountains within one hour's walk, and roads were made to it by government grants of money several years ago, and more roads are being made to it by government now; but no attempt is made, has been made, or seems likely to be made by Mr O'Brien to manufacture lime or bring lime to his farm land. The farm-buildings are clay huts, the roofs fallen or falling in; the fences are crooked mounds of earth with crooked ditches beside them; all manure from cattle runs waste into the ditches; the cattle lie in continual wetness, and are overtaken by periodical epidemics; but when fattened, (as fattened they are despite all the wreck and waste of the land, the soil is so rich,) they go to the contractors for the navy in Cork and to England to be sold.

Such is Mr Sheehy's farm, with only one lad, at 10s. per quarter of wages and his diet, employed on it; the other man, who has a family, and who used to be on the farm at 5d. per day and his diet, is now on the public works at 1s. 4d. per day.

On Mrs Nolan's farm, near Cahermoyle, rich grazing land, about 100 acres, one lad only is employed. Her second workman has also left and gone on the public works. She has a field unsown, and she has been waiting to see if the government would give her seed to sow. This farm, I believe, belongs to a Mr Studdert. But it is difficult to know who the landlords are. Smith O'Brien and several other gentlemen hold land as middlemen, at a very low rent, in this neighbourhood, under Dublin College.

Mr Patrick Power has a farm of about 240 acres. Some of the fields, I see, have been in tillage, and are laid down to rest to recover from their exhaustion. They lie thus without grass or crop of any kind, but weeds that rise spontaneously for five or six years. Meanwhile, all his cattle manure runs to waste; the cattle lie without straw or bedding to make manure; the roofs are falling in above them; epidemic diseases periodically destroy them; two women only are hired in summer to make the butter; only one lad at 10s. per quarter is on the farm at present. The herdsman, Walsh, is on the public roads, at 1s. 4d. per day, with Mr Power's consent, and Walsh's mother, a widow, is doing the herdsman's work in payment of 30s. of house rent. I went with her to her house. It is three paces square inside; was erected by her late husband; the roof is propped up by poles standing in the middle of the floor. I had to crouch nearly two fold to get in at the door; the floor is a puddle hole; the roof is broken in; the daylight is seen through it every day; the rain comes through when there is a shower.

Three similar hovels, and no other houses are on this farm. They had all a few perches of haggard or garden, but since the failure of the potatoes in 1845 and 1846, the rent of 30s. each was not paid, and the haggards have been taken from them. James Muksey and Donovan, two of the cottier tenants of the hovels, are on the public works at 1s. 4d. per day. The highest wages they ever earned before was 8d. per day. Mathew Daly and his wife, another of the cottier tenants, are both sick of fever in their wretched hut, without fire, without food, without air or light, but what comes through the roof, which is nearly touching their fevered heads. Their wretched bed is on the wet puddle of the floor.

This farm, with those wretched people, belongs to Captain Bateson, M.P. who voted the other day against the out-door relief clause of the New Poor Law. It adjoins Cahermoyle.

The farm is valued for poor-rates at L.1 : 1s. per acre; the rate is 10d. in the 20s. per annum.

Cahermoyle demesne, consisting of 150 acres, is valued at L.185 for rates, and rented by Mr Massey for about L.2 per acre for grazing. Wages paid upon that about L.2 per annum and diet for one person.

Mr O'Brien's house and garden, and 14 acres of plantation, are valued for poor-rate at L.70; the rate 10d. in the pound.

Mr Condin's farm, belonging Mr O'Brien, of 55 acres, is rated at L.66. This, and a quantity of other land not on Mr O'Brien's estate, employs at present one youth at 10s. per quarter and diet.

Mr Magner's farm of 150 acres, rated at L.190, is connected with other land not Mr O'Brien's. It has two persons employed.

The men usually employed on all of those farms at this season of the year are on the public works. The farmers say that none of the men are worth their "keep" at present, "keep is so dear."

Mr Robert O'Brien, brother to the member for Limerick, gave evidence before the Devon Commission. The reader will understand the force of it after reading the state of those grazing farms, and I have given a picture of them considerably within the truth. Mr Robert O'Brien is agent for his brother, Sir Lucius O'Brien, in Clare; for his brother, William Smith O'Brien, Esq. M.P. of Cahermoyle; for their mother, Lady O'Brien; and for himself and other proprietors in Limerick and Clare. He states, Devon Blue Book, Part II. page 810:—

"If a pasture farm is converted into tillage, it may be taken as a sign that the tenant is going down in the world."

The tillage farms, it seems, are carried on without capital; the grazing farms must have *some* capital. Whitefield farm barely afforded a living to its tenant and L.200 of rent to its landlord when the working capital was only L.3 : 2 : 7 per acre, and the wages of labour, part of it for a thrasher, was only L.75 per annum. Now, exclusive of all wages for draining, building, and road-making, the sum of L.312 per annum is paid in wages, though there is machinery for thrashing, for regular weekly hands, and the working capital is L.19 per acre.

Mr Morton is a political economist, and as such pays 12s. per week to his men, though the current wages of the district are 8s. and 9s. He gets *better men* and *cheaper labour* by paying 12s. This is political economy.

Mr Smith O'Brien is not a political economist. No portion of his estate measuring 240 acres (the size of Whitefield) pays more than L.20 per annum; and the capital per acre is under L.3. Instead of trying to get better men, or to *make better men*, in order to have *cheaper labour*, by paying higher wages than the wages of the neighbourhood, as a sound economist would do, he pays one-fourth less than the government pays.

Mr Morton was an advocate for the repeal of the corn-laws, to enable him to carry on his farming with more economy and profit. Mr Smith O'Brien used all the power he possessed to preserve the corn-laws.

It was one of the commonest arguments used on his side of the question that land would go out of cultivation and become pastures if protection was taken away. In Limerick, and on his own estate, it is deemed a sign of a "farmer going down in the world" when he brings his farm into tillage.

Mr O'Brien demands a repeal of the union, in order that Ireland may keep her produce and her wealth at home. He and his tenants send their cattle to England for sale ; and they keep none of their produce at home for the people to consume, nor allow the people to obtain the means of consuming it.

Yet I was told, in the vicinity of Cahermoyle, that if all landlords were like Mr Smith O'Brien, Ireland would have no famine. Ireland would have no complaints; "Sure everything would be kept at home. Sure it is more of Smith O'Brien's sort that would do Ireland good."

In short Mr Smith O'Brien is expected to be able to bring "the repeal" to them, but what the repeal is or will be they cannot tell.

Postscript, March 29.

The Board of Works is now reducing the number of men and the wages, in accordance with the last Treasury order. In all parts the wages are to be less on relief works than the current wages paid in the neighbourhood, to induce men to leave the relief works, and seek employment on the farms. The "patriots" (Heaven save Ireland from such patriots !) exclaim against this cruelty of the imperial government, and they tell the people how differently an Irish parliament would have acted. It does not seem to occur to them that if they had raised the standard of wages in the neighbourhood, or if they raised them now, the relief wages would follow.

No. XXII.

NEWCASTLE, COUNTY OF LIMERICK.

This place contains about 3000 inhabitants in its streets, and probably 1000 more closely adjacent in clay huts; the huts standing in crooked rows, and huddled in some parts hut behind hut three deep, with only a narrow passage, filled with filth between them. Behind those huts are fields of grass, as fresh in March and as green as many English fields are in May.

Approaching the town from the direction of Limerick on the east, and from Cahermoyle and Ardagh on the north, the buildings look new, some of them handsome. The rows of huts have been cleared away; the small farms have been made into larger ones; the narrow lanes of the town have been widened into spacious thoroughfares; and a beautiful rivulet comes through the town, falling over ledges of limestone rock, fall succeeding fall, for the space of half a mile; while for a whole mile it is shaded by trees, the trees having the castle among them, and some smaller places of genteel residence.

This stream is beautiful to look upon. But it is large enough to make one feel pained that it is not something more than beautiful. It has no mill upon it to grind meal; all meal must be ground at a distance of ten or twelve miles from hence. Its water falls from ledge to ledge, gathering into broad deep pools, whirling and playing below the shadows of the trees, and starting away again, as if calling for those who look idly on to come and catch it; and again it falls; but the people only look at it; they do not respond to its invitation and go to catch it. This little river, called the Arra, goes on to the Deel, which is a river of magnitude, a mile and a half below Newcastle, and with the Deel it reaches the Shannon by a course of about twenty miles.

Newcastle had once a linen trade of small extent, and it still keeps a few looms going in coarse woollens. It had a bleachfield also for linen woven here and elsewhere, but that has disappeared. Its disappearance is spoken of bitterly. "England took the linen trade from us, as she took everything else. She takes our corn and cattle, and she has our linen trade." Thus did I hear consequential persons in Newcastle speak. "Belfast and the counties in the north of Ireland have your linen trade," I answered; "they would take that river Arra from you also if they could convey it there; and depend on it, that if Belfast had those waterfalls which you have, she would make more linen than she does. As to England taking your corn and cattle, there is William Smith O'Brien, your popular member, and, next to Lord Devon, your principal landlord; *he sends* the cattle to England. As to corn, the same thing may be said; it is sold for rent. You have not even thought it worth while to erect a mill to grind corn, though possessing all that water-power to drive the mill. So far from the English people desiring to take your corn from you and leave you to starve, they sought to buy corn in other countries of the world to supply themselves, and struggled hard for many years for leave to do so, but Mr Smith O'Brien did all he could to prevent them, lest they might get enough elsewhere without taking it from you."

"By gar! his honour is spaking like a gentleman. There is truth in that same about Smith O'Brien and the corn bill."

"And do not you see, that with all his complaints about the government starving the people in these hard times, that he has been paying working men one-fourth less than the government has been paying them? Do not you see that his farms of 150 acres do not each give employment to more than one slip of a boy, at 10s. per quarter and diet—yellow meal now, potatoes and milk when there were potatoes—while the rent from the same land is nearly L.200?"

"By gar! that is the truth, every word of it; and never a word of a lie."

"Well, the English merchants, despite of Smith O'Brien and the monopolist landlords of both countries, obtained leave to look abroad for corn, and if they had had leave to try abroad for it much sooner, they would have been able to bring much more of it to England, and to Ireland too, than they have done. But, as it is, they are fetching corn from all the world to Ireland, and Smith O'Brien and his rich tenants are sending their cattle to be sold and eaten in England. Cattle are the only products of his land."

"And butter and pigs, and a few acres of potatoes afore the disease took them."

"Very well, butter and pigs; they and the cattle go to England, not by the English forcing them from Smith O'Brien, but by his own free will. He does not allow you to get houses on his land, nor to get the land, nor to work upon it for wages, nor to eat its produce; and yet you say that if all the landlords and members of parliament were like him, you would soon be right enough; that Ireland would soon have her own. Do you mean her own landlords? for, if you do, the Earl of Devon, as an Englishman, who allows the small tenantry to have houses and holdings on his estate, will at least bear comparison with Smith O'Brien, who does not. His Lordship inherited the estate overwhelmed in debt, as you all know. The stewards upon it, of whom some of you have had reason to complain, were the stewards of the trustees. Since his Lordship got the property into his own hands, he has erected a tile manufactory to make drain tiles, and has begun to drain and improve the land by employing labour on it. He has gone but a small way compared with what should be done; but he has, at all events, done more than Smith O'Brien. Now the greater the number of landlords you have in your country who, with their servants, horses, and dogs, consume food and produce none, the poorer do they make your country."

"But it is the parliament, your honour; the Irish parliament we are looking for to do us good."

"If you are promised great and good things from the Irish parliament by those who bid you look for it and in whom you put your faith and trust as leaders, it is natural that you should expect the Irish parliament to be indispensable to your well-being. But, in the first place, your parliament, if you had it, would be entirely composed of landlords and lawyers, neither of whom have as yet done you any good service, but much mischief. The imperial parliament was until recently comprised of the same materials. The English commercial classes have, after long struggles, succeeded in changing the current of imperial legislation, a change vastly more important than changing the seat of parliament from one city to another. The representation in parliament of trade, intelligence, and toleration is now beginning to have the ascendancy in England. Feudalism and territorial representation is on the decline. It will decline more and more in England every year; but you would restore it in Ireland by an Irish parliament of landlords and law-jobbers. You have no middle class to control them. It is to the new current of legislation from the commercial classes of England that you must look for real substantial benefits to Ireland."

"Sure the English manufacturers are jealous of Ireland; they would not let her wave one yard of cloth or make a shoe for her own foot, if they could prevent her."

"Not true, my friends; it is the converse of true. The old suicidal system of protection by which the feudal representatives legislated proceeded to bolster up the trade of one place at the expense of another. Lord George Bentinck for England, and Mr Smith O'Brien for Ireland, are the representatives of that barbarous system of legislation now. And you confess that if you had an Irish parliament you would protect yourselves from the manufacturers of England. By so protecting yourselves you could only make yourselves poorer.

England is all the poorer for her barbarous legislation, having once attempted to protect her manufactures against those of Ireland. Such a system is one of mutual robbery in the first instance, and mutual suicide at last. If every man and woman in Ireland wore a fresh change of Irish linen every day; if they had as many new garments in a year as they have holes in the old ones; if they made leather and boots and shoes to walk, and iron and railways to ride, and manufactured as largely for themselves in Ireland as the people of Lancashire and Yorkshire do, England would transact business with Ireland to an extent immeasurably greater than she can now do when Ireland is poor. English ships from India and America, instead of putting into Kinsale or the Cove of Cork in passing, for water only, or for shelter, would put in to deliver cargoes of sugar, tea, silks, and other things, rich and rare, rich over all the world, rare in Ireland, and they would reload with Irish manufactured goods."

"But what if Ireland had ships of her own?"

"All the better; the more ships the more trade; ships create trade. Ships are to commerce what ploughs are to agriculture; if you had Irish ships ploughing the ocean, and Irish ploughs ploughing Smith O'Brien's land, both Ireland and England, and you and Smith O'Brien, would be in better circumstances than you have yet been in. As to jealousy, you might as well suppose that England and Scotland would be jealous. As to ships, you might as well think that if Glasgow had none, and no trade, that Liverpool would have more ships and more trade. But Liverpool would suffer greatly if Glasgow ceased to have ships and trade. In like manner, Liverpool would be greatly benefitted if Ireland was covered with manufactures, and had her shores swarming with ships. That narrow policy of protection is now powerless; its office was never anything but mischief; the English trading classes have overthrown it in defiance of such territorial legislators as Mr Smith O'Brien. England repudiates the assertion of the Irish repeal politicians, that she was ever benefitted by the barbarous legislation which sought to protect her manufactures against Ireland. She and Ireland were mutually injured. England asks Ireland to protect herself against such bad legislators as the feudal owner of Cahermoyle. The condition of his own estate should be a warning to people who would trust him with the remodelling of a nation."

Such is the substance of a conversation held in Newcastle, in the county of Limerick; other topics were included, for which I have not space here. I have only space to say, that the estate of the Earl of Devon here is part of the great herritorial possessions once belonging to the Irish Earl of Desmond. For an Irishman, as such, to lament that an English Earl should have been substituted for an Irish Earl, is natural enough. It was a wrong policy of that faction in England which has always held the government—the landed faction—to do so; but now that the deed has been effected for some centuries, and it is seen that the ancient race of landlords do no more for their land than the new race, it becomes the Irish people to look to something else for redemption than to landlordism.

No. XXIII.

NEWCASTLE, COUNTY OF LIMERICK.

I have written a letter from this place already; but as the subject of this one is somewhat diversified, I send it too. I got a man named Michael Hearn to go with me one day on a pedestrian ramble among the farmers and poor cottiers, over the plain and up the mountain, and I shall here relate what we saw. First, however, of Michael Hearn, as he was a type of a very large class.

He rented about twelve statute acres under a Major Campbell of Scotland, whose property here lies intermingled with the Earl of Devon's and Mr Smith O'Brien's. He had been all the winter working on the public works; but was discharged when the New Relief Act came into operation on the 20th of March, he being a farmer. He had sown two and a half acres of his land with oats, and, having no more seed, had sublet the remainder of the ground for the season. He had a wife and eight children. She and seven of the children were in the workhouse and the fever hospital. His eldest daughter, aged seventeen, remained with him on the farm, but also lay ill of fever and dysentery. He said he had two sisters in London, and did not know what to do unless he put the bed and bedding in pawn, locked up the house, and took his daughter with him, when she recovered, to her aunt's in London, and put over the summer that way, at such work as he could get in England, leaving his family in the workhouse until he returned, and his farm, a rich fertile loam on limestone subsoil, to the care of the person who had the crops for the present year.

He shewed me, as we passed along, a field where evictions took place twenty-two years ago, in reference to which the threatening letters signed "Captain Rock" were first issued.

Then he told of a murder that followed; and shewed me where five persons were all hanged in a row at once for that murder.

We next called upon, and were accompanied by, Cornelius O'Donnell, over his little farm of about fifteen statute acres. He is a tenant under Lord Devon, and has his farm in much better order than those of his neighbours, large or small. He drained it with sod drains three feet deep, some of it twenty years ago, some of it recently. The sod drains of twenty years ago were running as freely as new tile or stone drains, which I was surprised to see, but I doubt of all sod drains lasting so long.

One of the new roads of the Board of Works had gone through his farm; it was left unfinished, and he seemed much aggrieved at not having proper fences put up where his pasture field was divided by the new road.

We next proceeded over Cloghdeen farm, of ninety-four Irish acres, which are about equal to 153 statute acres. One of the new roads runs partly through this farm, and continues on one side of it for about half a mile, the farm being long and narrow. The land is almost wholly in pasture, very wet, and full of rushes. It is gently sloping, and could be easily drained in every part. A stream runs through the centre of it, laying bare the limestone rock at the general depth of six or eight feet. On this stream there was once a mill, alleged by Michael Hearn to be 900 years old, and erected by the Danes. It had been laid in ruins and covered up. Part of the water-wheel was dug out of the ruins not long ago. It is of hard oak, and is preserved as a curiosity. The stream does nothing now but wimple over its blue stones, wash the ancles of the barefooted maidens while they wade in it after their cows, and carry away the farm-yard manure. The farm belongs to Mr Smith O'Brien, and does not give employment to any person but the farmer, a "slip of a boy," and a female who makes butter. The soil is a calcareous loam of the best quality, but everywhere undrained and overrun with foul vegetation.

At the west end of it, by the side of the rivulet, is a circular mound of earth said to be the remains of a Danish fort. The Danish water-wheel was found about a mile from this fort, and many human bones, supposed to be the remains of Danish soldiers, have been found.

Cloghdeen farm remains undelved and untouched by spade or shovel; not so this fort. It had the reputation of holding crocks of gold somewhere in its earth works, and many a spade and pick have been at work digging for the gold. Near a tree on the east side, Michael Hearn pointed to a place where the people went in great numbers to dig two or three years ago, in consequence of "a boy, named Hugh Ward, draming he seen the gold there. He lived in Newcastle then, he is now gone to London. Sure the drame was true and had to do with it, for the people got the tokens, when they dug wid their spades, that the boy seen in his drame. It was a horse shoe and four nails he seen. By gar! they dug, and sure enough there wor the shoe and the four nails; the tokens wor found anyway; but they dug down and down, and all back here, but they did not get the gold. Ah, sure it was God's will, praise be to his name, they wor not to get it."

The reverence with which these poor flesh-worn peasants speak of sacred things is very remarkable. Michael's hand was instantly at his old hat, and the hat lifted as he spoke the last sentence. Sometimes I talk with a dozen or a score of poor creatures in some wretched cabin, where, seeing me enter, they soon gather together to ask questions. No question is more frequently put to me than this, "Now, your honour, is the potato gone entirely do you think? Will it ever come back to us to grow as it done before?" To which I usually say, "I have no fear but we shall have sound potatoes again; every law of nature or ordinance of God known to us justifies that expectation." The moment they hear me speak the sacred name every hand is lifted to the old hats, and when the sentence is concluded, they say in a low, solemn tone, "Glory to his name!"

Leaving the Danish fort on Smith O'Brien's estate (the people pronounce this name as if written *O'Breyne*) we proceeded through other farms, all in a state of nature and waste. The only sign of a landowning hand upon the property for any good purpose was a school-house conspicuous from its situation and white-washed walls, built by Lady O'Brien, the mother of the member for Limerick county.

A cross section of hills was half a mile before us, running from south to north, our faces being to the west. In a wooded ravine or recess in the hills was a white house of genteel appearance occupied by a Mr Lake, who holds a number of good sized farms on leases for ever, from a family of Maunsels who again hold them under some other chief. The farms are sublet by Mr Lake, and hardly one furrow had been at that time turned up. The tenants of ninety acres had been working on the relief works up to the 20th of March.

Having expressed much interest on the subject of digging in the earth for gold, I was shewn, at a distance, a place in the wood on the face of the hill fronting us, near Mr Lake's house, where people had dug for gold. The last time any one had tried it, he said, an awful noise was heard in the wood, like a bull roaring, and the wind rushed and made a noise in the trees different from any noise ever made by the wind before that anybody had heard. They left off digging and came away, and the noises ceased.

At another place to which he pointed there was a round spot on which snow never lay in winter, and which never had dew on it when dew was on the grass around ; the people went there to dig for gold, but the fumes of sulphur came up out of the ground and they took warning in time and left off.

There is a stratum of coal found in that hilly ridge, containing a great deal of sulphur. Probably the gas escapes from it through the earth at this spot, where snow melts and dew never lies.

But there was still another place where they had gone to dig for gold. Here is Michael's account of it.

" A man in the north of Ireland had a drame that he had seen the gold at this place, (Ballygule,) just nine miles beyont there. He came all the way from the north of Ireland in a carriage, and at once knew the place when he seen it, from the drame he had. He offered to find the gold if the man the land belonged to would let him have whatever share he chose to take of it. The man the land belonged to in his turn would not let the man from the north of Ireland have any share more than just what he would think fit to give him ; and, by gar ! without ever pointing out the place where the gold was hid, the man from the north of Ireland, when he seen the other so hard with him, put his two feet in his carriage and drove away, and has never been seen again at Ballygule, and nobody knows who he wor."

I told Michael and some of his neighbours that I knew better than any of them seemed to do how to find gold by digging for it ; which, with my persevering inquiries as to the localities of iron and coal, and the boundaries of estates, led them to understand me literally. In the sequel I found the supposed profession of that knowledge of gold finding in the soil, by digging for it, troublesome. " The man who owned the land at Ballygule," and who would not make a fair bargain with " the man from the north of Ireland," came all the way to Newcastle to know if I really was a gold finder. Michael Hearn and his neighbours had spread the report so industriously, that several came every day during my stay at the Courtenay Arms. Smith O'Brien's tenant, Mr Sheehy, who occupies the farm containing the Danish fort, so foul and wet though fertile soil, had seen me writing down the particulars told about the fort, and " Hugh Ward's drame, and the horse shoe and the four nails ;" and he also came to me at Newcastle, "to know did I think I could find the gold." He was followed by others ; and I thought it time to tell all of them that it was in draining, trenching, delving, squaring, manuring, and cropping such land as Mr Sheehy's farm that the gold would be found.

From an elevation approaching to the most learned dignity, I instantly fell to the level of the commonest of themselves. Any of them knew that, they said ; but how could a poor farmer do all that I said should be done to the land.

I replied that Mr Sheehy was not a poor man, he had a large farm and had the reputation of being rich. He very promptly told me that though he had a few cows more than his neighbours, he was only a yearly tenant. I could not expect him to sell his cows to get money to pay for digging and draining the land, when he might be turned out of the farm as soon as it was drained.

" Mr Smith O'Brien will not do that," said I, "will he?" "I do not say he would," replied Mr Sheehy ; "but it is the common thing for landlords to put out a man from his land, or put up his rent, whenever he sees him doing the land or himself any good. It is the rent the landlords look for entirely, and nothing else."

There was no argumentative reply to that position. " And so," I responded, " your landlords not only prevent you from digging for gold, and from finding it in the only hiding places in which it can be found, but, in addition to this, they kill your goose that lays the golden eggs—rob the farm yards of the farm stock, turning the farmer out a pauper on the roads, they knowing that, from the excessive competition for land, they can immediately get another tenant with another goose to be killed for its golden eggs !" To which some of them responded, " Be dad ! that same is the truth his honour is telling yez."

Going up the hill, another place was pointed out by Michael Hearn, where gold has been dug for, " And the crocks that held it wor found ; there were three of them ; but all full of worms. The gold had been excommunicated, and it was turned to worms."

Crossing an upland stubble field, I found the son of the tenant of ninety acres, already alluded to, at the plough. He had been at the public works up to the previous week, and was only now beginning to plough the oat stubble, which had carried two crops without manure, to sow oats again. The liquid manure of the cows and yards on this farm, and most of the solid washed by the rain, was running to the streams and rivers. The young man left the plough and the horses standing in the middle of the field, and went up the hill-side with me, where the Board of Works had been making a road in the slaty rock winding up to the turf bogs four or five miles. His purpose in going with me seemed to be to shew how deceptive the slatey rocks were which they had been cutting down at so much a yard, there being hard places where they had not been able to make half as good wages by the yard as the men working by the day.

His father held the land under a tenant who held from a Mr Massey. The lease was thirty-one years and some lives. All the years had expired and all the lives save one. That life was now old. He said if that life was out he would get a new lease, and he hoped a new under-landlord. His father would offer double the rent he now paid, which was about 12s. per statute acre, on condition of getting the land drained. But at present neither the tenant under Mr Massey nor Mr Massey would do anything "until that old life was out."

Higher on the hill sides we found smaller holdings and a more numerous population. The measure of land there was a "cow's grass." The extent of land called a cow's grass differed according to quality. Its rent was L.3 : 10s. A man named Thomas Killaheel, and two children, boy and girl, were digging oat stubble. He held two cows' grass under Mr Lake. He had only two pecks of oats for seed. This man was tall; his children were tall for their age; all three looked like spectres with spades in their hands. I have seen other such sights, but none worse. Their purpose was to dig for life, but they looked as if breaking ground for their own burial, and as if a very shallow grave would serve them, they were so thin. The poor man shook his head when I spoke about his getting seed from his landlord. "There were too many landlords above his little piece of ground," he said, "all trying to get something out of it; none of them would *give;* they would only *take.*"

We left him and went to the top of the hilly range to see the turf bogs, and have a view from thence of the great plain of Limerick, and the distant waters of the broad Shannon, lying on the green plain, in colour and shape as if all womankind had been washing and had chosen the plains of Limerick, Clare, and Kerry, to spread down their linen to dry.

I looked behind me, and there stood the phantom farmer, Thomas Killaheel, who had followed us up. He said nothing, but looked—oh! such looks, and thin jaws!

We went on through intricate passes in the bogs; and my attention was directed by Hearn to the district of iron and coals, the latter within a mile of us, the iron supposed to be everywhere through fifty miles of hilly country. I turned round to take the measure of those mountains of treasure with my eyes, and there again stood the lean hungry man. He caught at my words when I said a mountain of iron was worth more than a mountain of gold, and said, "Sure the gold will buy more bread than the iron would?" "But," said I, "the iron would make better spades and ploughs to till the ground and make corn grow, and corn must grow and bread be made from it, before it can be purchased with gold."

The lean man looked as if his spirit, starved in his own thin flesh, would leave him and take up its abode with me. I even felt it going through me as if looking into the innermost pores of my body for food to eat and for seed oats. It moved through the veins with the blood, and finding no seed oats there, nor food, searched through every pocket to the bottom, and returned again and searched the flesh and blood to the very heart; the poor man all the while gazing on me as if to see what the lean spirit might find; and it searched the more keenly that he spoke not a word.

On our return, half way down the hill side to his field, his two spectre children still stood leaning on their spades, which spades being long and narrow—only four inches broad, with handles six feet long—looked like spades made for spectres to dig with. His piece of land *is* sown.

We went into one of the numerous clay huts on the hill side to rest after a very long walk. An old woman was spinning flax. She was aged about fourscore, and could only speak Irish; yet by the aid of Michael, my interpreter, we held a discourse which she seemed well pleased with, so far as I could tell her what she desired to know about the Queen and London. She had two grand-daughters with her, young women, one of them a beauty, both barefooted and very meanly dressed, poor things.

But in respect of beauty in a clay hut, I saw it in another house where Michael took me to get a drink of milk. One of the finest looking women of the English aristocracy is a duchess whose portrait has appeared often in the fashionable annuals. In this clay hut, with a baby four weeks old at her breast, on a stone at the turf fire, sat a young woman, wife and mother, a fac-simile in features and shape of head of that duchess, but younger by sixteen or eighteen years. She was considered to be comfortably married, as her husband and his people had some substance. The milk which I got bore evidence that they had a cow, as did the cow's stall on that side of the floor, two yards behind the beautiful young mother. A horse, which stood on the opposite side, with his hind feet two yards and a half from the hearth-stone, and his head haltered to the wall at the window, was another symptom that they were not the poorest of people. There would have been a pig had there been potatoes. An elderly woman, Michael's sister and the husband's mother, said, speaking of the baby, "He has come to us in hard times; but may the times be better before he knows them, an it plase God." To which Michael lifted his hat reverently and said, "Glory to his name." And the beautiful young mother, sitting on the stone among the ashes, turned her lustrous eyes to the low black roof of the hut, and said, "Glory be to his name," and then kissed her baby. Her mother-in-law followed both by the word "Amen!"

No. XXIV.

CASTLE ISLAND, COUNTY KERRY.

This is a small town which we reach, and feel glad to rest at, after traversing the mountain district which unites the counties of Kerry and Limerick.

Kerry contains within it the lakes of Killarney and the mountains which raise their heads to the clouds, to the ceiling of a roof almost too low for them to throw their shadows down into the lakes. I saw one of those mountains a short while ago with his head through a cloud which seemed only an old hat to him. Carran-tual is the name of that mountain. He is 3414 feet high. On the ocean coast other mountains rise hardly inferior in height. Glens and valleys lie between them, and in some parts the Atlantic Ocean has washed away, or, in that everlasting hunger which knows no filling, has eaten away the glens and valleys for many miles inland, and made seas where once there was land, leaving the higher and harder mountain ranges for other times.

Kerry, with its western front to the Atlantic, is bounded on the south by Cork county, on the east by Limerick and Cork, and on the north by the ever-glorious Shannon. From east to west the length is fifty-eight miles, and from south to north the breadth is fifty-four miles. The surface contains 1,186,126 acres, of which 414,614 are arable; 726,775 uncultivated; 11,169 in plantations; 807 in towns, and 32,761 under water.

The subsoil is slate and red sandstone in the higher, and limestone in the lower districts. Copper and lead are found in several places; iron ore abounds in most parts of the county.

In 1841 the county contained 18,332 horses, 103,366 horned cattle, 93,703 sheep, 52,914 pigs, 314,567 head of poultry, and 3304 asses; all estimated at L.1,004,419.

The population in 1841 was, rural, 269,406; town, 24,474; total, 293,880. The occupations are, dairy farming, tillage, and fishing; the chief crops, previous to the potato failure, were potatoes and oats. Green crops have in a few, very few instances, been grown; but the universal practice is to let all manure run to the rivers and the sea. The chief towns in Kerry are Tralee, Caherciveen, Dingle, Kenmore, Killarney, and Listowel. Some of these are only large, ill-shapen villages, which have outgrown their best houses as their individual inhabitants outgrow or outlive their clothes, and fall into a state of rags. This village of Castle Island became so worn out a few years ago, that its proprietor was at last ashamed of it, and gave it some new houses.

That proprietor is one of the Herbert family, sprung from the Herbert of Queen Elizabeth's time, who obtained this village, castle, and country, and most of the district about Killarney, including Muckross Abbey. One of the Herberts of the present day was foreman of the Kerry grand jury two or three weeks ago, and introduced and carried the same resolutions to address parliament on the present crisis of the country which originated with the Limerick grand jury. The last of the resolutions stated that the parliament being more immediately connected with England, English interests flourished under its fostering care, while Irish interests were neglected.

Now, if there is one error of Irish opinion more palpable and unjustifiable by any act or ground than another, it is the error of supposing that English agriculture flourishes by something which the parliament does for it. Mr Herbert has copied the English form of leases to his tenantry with the covenants set forth in Woodfall's book; those covenants have not one redeeming element of common sense in them. They are adopted or imitated in Galway and Roscommon by Lord Clancarty, the most practical landlord in Ireland; and yet his leases, as do those of Lord Palmerston in the county of Sligo, read like a sarcastic chapter from *Punch*, the only thing about them to make you feel that they are not from *Punch* is their great length and absolute want of meaning. The law-jargon of those leases is hopelessly unintelligible.

Such are they which Mr Herbert's land-agent calls, in his evidence before the Devon Commission, "the simple leases of England." They have adopted at Castle Island and Killarney those "simple" leases of England for a number of years; yet still their agriculture languishes and rents are not well paid; while in England, *they say*, agriculture flourishes and rents are well paid. This, they think, must be because the

English farms are nearer to parliament, and parliament must, by that proximity, do something good to them, which, from its distance, it cannot come to Kerry to do.

The fact is, that in so far as the English agriculture exceeds that of Kerry, it is in defiance of those most stupid and pernicious covenants in the leases, or in the yearly agreements. The agent of Mr Herbert of Kerry was questioned pointedly about the covenant requiring the tenants to preserve the game, and he said no ill effect had arisen from that covenant; that it was not peculiar to Mr Herbert, but was copied from the English leases, where agriculture flourishes.

Now, it so happens that England has a Mr Herbert for a landlord; he too is an Irish landlord. He will be England's next Earl of Pembroke, if he lives till the present Earl dies. He is a member of parliament at present; an agricultural member, the representative of Wiltshire, recently a member of the cabinet, a gentleman of more than ordinary talent, and able and willing, one may suppose, to do those good offices to the English tenantry which the Kerry grand jury and the Kerry Mr Herbert in particular, supposes parliament to do. Here is, however, what Mr Sidney Herbert of England really does for Wiltshire agriculture. I know every tenant and acre of ground in the district of his residence at Wilton, and happen to have with me some letters written by and on behalf of the Wilton tenantry. This is an extract:—

"Mr John Williams of Ugford had the damage done to his crops in 1844 by Mr Herbert's game valued by three professional valuators, and they set the damage down at L.70. This occurred on 140 acres of ground. Mr Herbert's agent offered L.30 for the damage, which was at first refused, but ultimately accepted. In 1845, the damage to barley by the birds, and to the turnips and clover by the hares, was valued at L.100; Mr Herbert paid no compensation."

It would be out of place to give such extracts at length here. But to any person thoroughly acquainted with English agriculture it is notorious that the farmers are debarred from adventuring in good cultivation by the absurd covenants in their leases, or in their yearly agreements. To any one thoroughly acquainted with the sources of English industry and wealth, it is a fact, clear as the lakes of Killarney, that all industry has thriven best which has been least interfered with by parliament. Agriculture lingers behind every other industrial science in England, and in many counties it has advanced not one step since the day's of Elizabeth, who sent the Herberts to Kerry. It is only more profitable than Kerry with heavier taxes on the cultivators and their landlords than Kerry bears, because two-thirds of the population of England give value by their industry to something else than agriculture, and obtain thereby the means of buying the farm produce from and remunerating the agriculturists. It is not by parliament or by the fostering care of their landlords, but in opposition to the cumbrous enactments, erroneous policy, and frivolous pleasures of the parliament and the landlords that the tenant-farmers of England pay the national taxes, heavy poor-rates, and heavy rents. The iron ore of England, and the copper and the lead, do not lie in the earth to be sung about only by poets, or at most talked of by politicians not less dreamy than the poets, as in the mountains of Kerry.

One of the landlords of this county is Pierce Mahony, Esq. the Dublin solicitor engaged for the defendants in the great state trials of 1843 and 1844. Being aware that Mr Mahony was professionally engaged to bring before the Devon Commission evidence of the comparative superiority of Scottish agriculture over that of Ireland, together with the cause of that superiority, I have looked into his statements with some attention. The chief cause which he finds for the prosperity of Scottish agriculture, as might have been expected, is "the expenditure in Scotland of public money." The Caledonian Canal and the Highland roads and bridges are his instances. Now the agriculture of Scotland would have just been what it is if all the money expended on the Caledonian Canal had been sunk in the sea. The same cannot be said of *all* the Highland roads and bridges, but of very nearly all. The agriculture of Scotland is not within the range or influence of those communications. The best cultivated shires of Scotland never had a shilling of public money even lent to them, far less granted as a gift. The commissioners of supply, equivalent to the Irish grand jurors, so far as roads are concerned, borrowed money to make the roads, but they borrowed from banks or from private capitalists. The security given was the tolls and their own estates, at least to the extent of one third of their life interests in the estates. The Scottish landowners in making roads rendered *themselves* liable for money expended. The Irish grand jurors expended the money of the cess-payers in making roads, but not their own money, nor in any case are they liable in person or property for the road debts.

But even in grants of public money for roads the few grants made to Ireland far exceed what has ever been granted to Scotland, including all the folly of the Caledonian Canal and the roads made for the exclusive use of a few Highland estates; and this is allowing for the larger extent of Ireland.

As to the mere expenditure of the money in the country, which seems to be the aim and end of the Irish gentlemen, it may be doubted if it does any good at all compared with the mischief is does, if expended in only enabling a part of the population to consume the necessaries of human life without enabling them at the same time to produce them. It is profitable industry which pays taxes and rent; if taxes and rent be used to enable a number of people to consume much without producing anything, the national effect is loss, though the local effect, where the taxes and rent are spent, may be gain.

The expenditure of public money in Scotland was confined to a limited locality; and even there the greater part of it was, is, and ever will be unproductive.

Kerry has had all its roads and bridges made by grants and government loans. They have been and are now under the control of the Board of Works. Kerry alone has had more free grants of public money spent on *useful roads* than the whole of Scotland has. But Kerry has not made a good use of them. No lead, copper, nor iron ore is opened to the reach of industry by the Highland roads and bridges of Scotland; little else than grouse and red deer for the sportsman. Had the iron ore of Kerry been in Argyle or Inverness, it would have made its own roads by this time.

Here is a striking passage in Mr Mahony's statement to the commissioners; let the reader carry forward in his mind the lines in *italics*:—

"I may mention to the commissioners one fact *which has lately come to my knowledge, which demonstrates neglect and a want of due investigation into the wants of Ireland.* An application under the Drainage Act has been made for the drainage of a river called the Woodford River, which runs into Lough Erne from the county of Leitrim; and on its survey for drainage it has been ascertained by Mr Mulvaney, an engineer for the Board of Works, that if, in addition to the sum which the proprietors are willing to give for the drainage (willing to borrow under the Drainage Act he should have said) L.40,000 be added, it may be also made a useful navigation; and that if eight miles of canal are added to it, the Shannon can be united by it to Lough Erne, so as to make a complete inland navigation between Limerick, Dublin, Waterford, Clonmel, Newry, and Belfast.

"The commissioners will be surprised as I have been, if they examine a map of Ireland, and note the important effects of such an improvement as I now suggest; *and yet, instead of that resulting from a judicious inquiry into the wants of Ireland* through the Board of Works or the Ordnance survey, *it has come to my knowledge by mere accident.*"

Mr Mahony began the statement of which this is nearly the conclusion, by saying :—

"I am a solicitor in Dublin, and have been in most extensive practice in the management of trust and other estates of great value, for thirty years. I am also a landed proprietor in the counties of Kerry, Cork, Limerick, Wicklow, &c.

Whatever Mr Mahony may think, the Englishmen and Scotchmen who are in the habit of exploring, not only the whole surface of England and Scotland, and going down into the depths of the earth and through the waters under the earth at their own expense, to look for the raw materials of industry, will think it remarkable that Leitrim, where the richest and most abundant of the mineral treasures of Ireland lie, should be so easily reached by navigation, and that fact only become known to Mr Mahony after thirty years' practice in the management of all kinds of Irish property, and at last only "by accident."

But if the smile which one feels on the face were a smile of mirth and not pity, were there a joke in so grave and lamentable a matter, the best part of that joke would be that Ireland has been surveyed over and over again, its mountains measured, its lakes sounded, its strata pierced, its minerals analyzed, its fertility estimated, its very poultry counted ; every conceivable thing which engineer and statist can do to tell what Ireland's resources are has been done, and by government ; and more was being done by government in that very survey for drainage, which became an accident to Mr Pierce Mahony, and which was the result of a deliberate loan of one million sterling by government, for the drainage of Irish estates on river banks ; all this while that gentleman is complaining of it being an instance of the neglect of the government towards Ireland's wants and conveniences. Ireland has vast capabilities for industrial wealth ; but she has Pierce Mahonys who live on the industrial capabilities and eat them in the bud. Every germ of industry that shews itself in Ireland is eaten up by landlords and lawyers. Even the Arigna mines, in Leitrim, the only iron mines yet worked in that county, which swells with mineral wealth, with iron and with coals, have been stopped by lawyers and disputatious landlords. An English company with capital to work the iron and the coal were there, and found both plentiful—the iron ore equal in quality to the ore of Sweden. But for eight years, during which England has been calling for more iron to make railways and engines to run on the railways, and has been sending her voice to the bottom of her mines for her miners to send up the iron faster ;

while Ireland, too, has been calling to England to make railways for her; all those eight years that iron of Leitrim has been lying dead, a prey to rust and law; and neither that company of English capitalists nor any other dares, for the law, to touch the iron of Leitrim. When five and a half of those eight years were past, the "patriotic" Pierce Mahony heard, "by accident," that Leitrim may be connected with other towns by navigation. Two years and a half more have passed, and still the law and the rust eat the iron of Leitrim; and no patriot steps forth to brush either or both away. And in Kerry, though the iron ore may not be eaten by law, for it has not yet been brought to daylight for law to see it and get at it, the agriculture which is in the daylight is almost entirely the prey of lawyers and law; what they leave the potato disease has taken. And now famine is on all Kerry, not only for this year, but for years to come. Little progress, so little that it can hardly be named, is making towards seed sowing. Mr Mahony's estates are no exception. The workpeople have been all the spring on the public works, the best of the tenants saying they cannot afford to employ them; and now those who are not on the public works are on the soup kitchens or on the public allowance of a pound and a-half of bread per day; the land lying untilled, and the landlord doing as much to it as the man of the moon.

No. XXV.

O'Brien's Bridge, County Clare, *April* 12, 1847.

The letters from the county of Limerick, in which the uncultivated estates of Mr Smith O'Brien and his neighbours are described, require that I should now say something of capital required for cultivation. I am now thirty-five miles from Smith O'Brien's property; but this little town, and its long bridge, were built by one of his ancestors, a king of Munster; and at the distance of four or five miles from here, by a road which I have just travelled over, lives his brother, Mr Robert O'Brien, whose experience as a land-agent is large, and whose evidence before the commissioners inquiring into the "Law and practice of the occupation of land in Ireland" is comprehensive and practical. I may therefore pause at this place on my journey to the north, and take pen in hand once more to write of the land of the O'Briens.

On capital, Mr Robert O'Brien says:—

"There appears to be a great deal of unnecessary outcry on the subject of capital, as there exists sufficient in the country for its agricultural purposes, if it was applied with skill, and it would then become reproductive, instead of lying nearly idle in the funds and banks. A great deal of money belonging to the agricultural classes in this country is lying in bankers' hands, bearing a very low interest, which, if applied on the almost neglected land of the same farmers, would yield large returns; nor can any difference be discovered in the conduct of such persons, arising from their having leases or no leases."

Because the leases are encumbered with law, and so full of reservations for the proprietors, and of penalties on the tenants, that they cannot cultivate wisely and well. Let them move spade or plough, let them move hands or feet, for the reclamation of their land from waste, the law is at them. To go into the strata of limestone rock under their farms, and quarry it to make lime of it in a kiln to lay on their farms, they might as well go into a den of animals with tusks which eat men alive, or into the limekiln itself, the lawyers are instantly or ultimately at them, and consume them with law.

I stand now on the north side of the Shannon, where it is approaching the falls of Castle Connell, and opposite to me is the farm of Mr James M'Nab, a Scotchman. The years are yet few in number, only about fifteen, when all that farm had from twelve to twenty feet of bog moss on it. The grass, corn, and root crops which now grow on those farm fields, enlarging the supply of human food, grow where the moss has been removed. The moss has been removed on a scale of greatness and precision of system which only an enterprising man of capital could undertake. The bog which only fed a few wild ducks and snipes was manufactured into fuel for the supply of Limerick city, giving the comfort of household fires to more people at a cheaper rate than they ever had such comfort before. Wages were paid to several hundreds of people, not employed before, in cutting the moss, and at a rate above the usual wages of the county. I see sixty people at work on the farm now at 8s. per week, while ordinary farmers and gentlemen employers pay only 5s. and 6s. per week. Canals are cut, and boats enter from the Shannon, go through the farm where the land is reclaimed, to those parts where it is in process of reclamation, and are loaded with the dry fuel to go to Limerick. Some of the workmen said to me to-day, as I passed them near the road, "God bless Mr M'Nab and all his sort! he makes farm land where a snipe could not live, and pays such wages as never were paid here before. Pray God, Sir Richard gets the worst of the law, and does not succeed in turning Mr M'Nab out."

This Sir Richard is the owner of vast possessions, measured only by miles, which only feed snipes. He employs himself in feeding horses and dogs, and in hunting foxes. His whole employment is amusement. He has a residence near Mallow, in Cork, and another at Castleconnell, in Limerick. Horses and dogs to hunt and eat corn and meal; idle servants to eat bread and meat; a river, like a sea broken out of bounds, rolling and roaring through his demesne, with water-power equal to the mill-wheels of a world —is also kept idle: those are the signs of what Sir Richard de Burgho does or is likely to do, with the exception that he is at law with Mr James M'Nab, endeavouring to eject him from the farm on some informality in the lease. A similar lease under which Mr Watson, another tenant, held, has been abrogated, owing to the legal technicalities not being complied with, and it is generally feared that Mr M'Nab's lease will be broken in the same way.

Had he taken the bog on lease, and kept it to breed snipes and frogs, miasmatic fevers and famine, he might have held it without his lease being questioned. But to have cattle and corn, and healthy farm fields, and to have much to sell to a population who require much, and the profit going into his pocket, strikes the mind of the De Burgho, chief of an ancient race, as an injustice to him, and he must try to get a share to help him to maintain his dignity, his hounds, horses, and idle servants. The lawyers tell him how to get, not only a share, but the whole; and so he goes to law.

The more honest, and I shall venture to say the more honourable and dignified way of getting possession of such farm fields as those brought from beneath the barren moss by James M'Nab, to beautify a country and feed its people, is for Sir Richard de Burgho to go to work and clear a bog for himself. He has many more to begin upon. Hundreds of people in Castleconnell and O'Brien's Bridge are without work and food; the corn, and meal, and bread, and meat which he feeds idle horses, dogs, and servants upon, would afford them wages and food to begin work upon.

At all events, his success in taking Mr Watson's property from him, and his attempt to take that of Mr M'Nab, though both held on lease, will not encourage other men of capital and enterprise to try to create fertility and fulness out of barrenness and famine. And, if he succeeds, one other warning will be given to agriculturists to put their money in the bank, even at a low per centage, rather than risk it in the cultivation of land, as Mr Robert O'Brien says they do.

This gentleman proceeds to say—

"The tillage is carried on with a very small amount of capital by the 'free crop' system. And if they do purchase manure, they consume the crop in such a way as to yield little return to the capital, and, by their crops, take out of the land rather more than they put into it. Hence the frequent failures in the overworked soil."

The term "free crop" is thus explained:—

"The labourer, not having land of his own, gathers, during the year, heaps of manure, and in spring applies to the farmers who have land and not manure, who suffer him to put the manure on the land and cultivate a crop of potatoes; and, according to the quality of the land, sometimes a sum of money is paid, varying from 4s. to L.1 per quarter of an Irish acre, in addition to the manure, by the labourer."

It is always on very poor land where this "free crop" of the labourer is permitted. Much of his own time and all the time of his family is employed in collecting this manure on the roads, while, strange to say, the very farmer on whose farm it is to be applied—on land exhausted by three, four, or five crops without manure—is allowing the streamlets and rivers to carry away the natural riches of his cow sheds, stables, and farm yard. This waste of manure is universal; but the free crop system is not universal.

Having explained the meaning of that term, Mr O'Brien proceeds to say that no attempt to establish agricultural societies has succeeded, because the only parties having an interest in tillage or a desire to see it extended, are the poorest of the farmers, not able to support agricultural societies; and—

"The gentry generally hold rich lands, which are kept for pasture, and do not as a class feel so direct a sympathy with those who occupy the waste and poor lands. A farmer, with little or no capital, through the medium of conacre and free crops, can sufficiently manage to hold a tillage farm; but he must have capital to hold it as a pasture farm. The consequence of such tillage tends to the impoverishment of the land, and it is for this reason that so many landlords have inserted covenants in their leases against breaking pasture land."

Mr Smith O'Brien is one of those who do so, while he amuses himself with crying for a repeal of the union, as if *it* would repeal the covenants between him and his tenants. If he would do his part as a landlord towards providing that food for Ireland which he blames the government for not providing, he will repeal those covenants, and set himself to teach his tenants how to make their farms productive of food; he will build habitable houses for them and for the cattle, and contrive to drain the meadow springs into the rivulets, instead of allowing the rivulets to take the farm-yard manure.

Mr Robert O'Brien continues—

"Generally, it may be established as a rule, that it is only the poor lands which have been cottiered, (tilled by a cottier tenantry;) for, while the population is very large and poor on the hilly lands, you may find but a comparatively small population on the rich lands."

This has arisen from the clearance system. Under the old forty shilling freeholds, previous to 1829, the people, if cleared from the rich lands on the levels, were sent to the mountains to farm there, for the sake of their votes. Many of the hills were occupied by those people rent free, for the sake of their votes; but when they were disfranchised they were called upon to pay rent, and ejected wherever the land was worth taking possession of, if they did not pay rent. If thus cleared away there, they swelled the measure of pauperism in the towns; if left there, they became the parents of pauper families on the hills. All that the landlords of the levels did or cared for was to keep them either on the hills or in the towns, or to get them off to England or America, or anywhere, so as they did not come down to take the grass from the horned cattle which were feeding to go to England for rent.

Mr O'Brien proceeds thus, in corroboration of similar statements made by me in previous letters, before I knew that I had such a valuable witness—

"The consolidation of farms is generally that of a number of small farms in tillage, giving subsistence and labour to whole families, into large pasture farms *not requiring any labour;* for a single herdsman, who receives no money wages, will be able to do all the labour required on a large farm, which, if kept in tillage, would employ a great many hands."

Yet on the farms of Cahermoyle, belonging to Mr Smith O'Brien, and on others near them, even the herdsmen have been all the winter and spring on the relief lists of the Board of Works, the farmers, to save the herdsman's diet in the farm-houses, consenting to let some sister, or aunt, or mother, do the herding, that the herdsman might go and earn one shilling and fourpence per day on the relief works, an amount of wages never paid, never heard of, never dreamt of in that part of the country before—wages which even Mr Smith O'Brien, while railing at the government for not paying enough, would not come within fourpence of to his labourers in Cahermoyle demesne.

Relative to the increase of pauper gentry, Mr Robert O'Brien says—

"The great value of land during the war induced many who were of a respectable farming class to sublet their lands, and set up to be gentlemen; and one frequently meets with people who say their father had L.100, L.200, &c. a-year out of such and such lands."

This is another testimony against war, and against any policy of government, peaceful or warlike, which shall force consumption faster than production. Armies are paid out of taxes upon industry, and hundreds of thousands of working men and women are drawn from employment nationally profitable to supply the armies with food and clothing which is nationally unprofitable. It is another testimony against forcing money into circulation in greater amount than the industry of the nation requires to keep it in motion. A large supply of money let loose, or forced into circulation, does not necessarily give an impulse to industry and to the production of real national wealth. Its good or evil effects depend on the currents it gets into—whether it sets people to consume without producing something that is useful to others, or sets them to produce more than they consume. In the time of the war it not only excited a vast consumption, but from the universal ignorance of industrial economy which then prevailed—and which, though not universal, still prevails—the occupiers of land, when the flood-tide of an over-high circulation made eddies at their doors, ceased to work, and ceased to direct the money which flowed to their doors to the farm-fields to pay for more labour, to produce more corn; they took the money and retired with it to eat corn without working; they set themselves up as consumers, ceased to be producers, withdrew the national capital from production, and turned the current into a wrong channel.

The Irish members of Parliament, in crying for money to be poured into Ireland, and also in seeking to have a larger number of idle consumers compelled to reside in the country—the absentee landlords, horses, hounds, and non-producing servants—do not seem to know that more consumption without more production will only make the country poorer. Mr Smith O'Brien, who proposed a few weeks ago to enforce the residence of landowners, under a penalty of a tax of ten per cent. on their incomes, is himself an instance of a landlord who takes rent, buys food, clothes, and personal service with the rent, and adds no value to his land or to anything on the land.

Even those who get together a few thousand pounds by trade in Limerick, or in other Irish towns, with the exception probably of Belfast, set up as gentry. A tradesman with L.10,000 in the bank, thinks it time to retire from business, and hunt, and keep a carriage and servants. The English manufacturers and merchants do not withdraw from business, to keep a retinue of servants and animals to consume food and clothing, and produce nothing, as soon as they have the means of retiring to be gentry out of business. They add the profits of one year to the capital of the year before, and do more business, create a greater amount of the necessaries and comforts of human requirements, and enable a greater number of human creatures to obtain them.

No. XXVI.

On the Value of Small Farms.

Small farms are a favourite theme with certain parties in England. To relieve the competition for labour they would introduce a competition for land. Let us glance at the results of competition for land in Ireland, and the evidence shewing how many acres are required in different counties to maintain a small farmer and his family.

Antrim:—Mr John O'Hara, a farmer who follows an improved style of agriculture, was asked :—" *Can you state the smallest quantity of land upon which, in your opinion, a farmer could support himself without extraneous assistance, such as manufactures or anything else?*"

" *I would not say less than ten or twelve acres, (Irish, equivalent to sixteen or nineteen English,) from the mode of farming which is at present practised.*"

He gives the details of the cultivation of 8 acres, 15 perches, 26¼ yards English measure, under a rotation of crops, and shews, at the end of the statement, " Balance for the labourer and his family, L.14 : 8s."

I do not find any other witness in Antrim giving evidence on the same subject.

Armagh.—Mr Blacker, land-agent :—" It is considered in England that twelve acres are fully sufficient for the support of a family, but in Sussex five acres have been found sufficient. According to the ordinary method of culture it would require a great deal more, but in the case alluded to in Sussex the improved method of culture is carried into effect; the house-feeding and tanks have produced their effects.

Carlow.—No evidence on this subject.

Cavan.—None.

Clare.—Rev. Mr Corbett, parish priest:—"Six or seven acres (nine and a half to eleven English) are sufficient to support a family on an improved system of agriculture."

Mr Gibson, farmer:—"The smallest farm upon which a family can support themselves is from thirteen to sixteen English acres of medium land."

Mr Keane, land-agent:—"From seven to ten English acres are sufficient to support a family."

It is necessary to observe, however, that the support of a family is reckoned from the standard of diet common to Ireland. In the succeeding quotations I have rendered the Irish acres into English to avoid the repetition of both measures.

Cork.—Mr Barry, farmer:—"The smallest farm sufficient to support a farmer and family is thirty-two acres."

Mr Biggs, farmer and land proprietor:—"Less than thirty-two acres of average land is insufficient to support a family."

Mr Burke, land proprietor:—"Less than thirteen or sixteen acres is not sufficient to maintain a farmer and family."

Mr De la Cour, land-agent:—"Thirty-two acres are capable of supporting a family."

Mr Hunt, land-agent:—"Farms of from thirty-two to forty-eight acres requisite to support families."

Donegal.—No direct evidence is tendered on this subject in Donegal. But on the estate of Lord George Hill, at Gweedore, which has attracted much public notice, the farms vary in size from four and three-quarter acres to sixteen. By a new system of culture those farms were supposed to be performing a great social revolution among the rural population. Lord George Hill published "Facts from Gweedore;" and the persons engaged in the effort of dividing all the land of Great Britain into farms of two, three, and four acres, republished the "facts" to strengthen them in their efforts in Worcestershire and Hertfordshire. But it is also a fact that the tenants of Gweedore are without food, and would have died on their farms but for the corn which commerce has brought from foreign shores to supply them, and but for the funds which the commercial strength of England has supplied to buy that corn.

Down.—Mr Sharman Crawford, land proprietor and M.P.:—"I think that the portion of land which a *labouring man* should have would in some degree depend on *the extent of employment which he could get;* if he has constant employment by hired labour, or anything approaching to it, he would require less land. If he is to be dependent for his subsistence on the land he holds he would require more. But I am of opinion that a man wholly dependent on the land he holds for support, could support himself and his family comfortably having six statute acres of land, and be capable of paying a fair rent, provided he applied it in the best manner to the production of food."

Mr Crawford goes on to say that two acres may be made to grow the food for a family, if that family has employment elsewhere than on those two acres to earn wages. There need be no question about that; the question arises upon the getting of the wages. If it were possible for all the working men of Lancashire to have two acres and their workshop wages, the small farm system would be an excellent thing. But they cannot live upon two acres in Worcestershire and work in the workshops of Lancashire.

Dublin.—No evidence. Nor would it be applicable if there was. The county of Dublin is small, and the produce of the miniature farms is sold in the city, and shipped to England to people engaged in trade. According to Mr O'Connor's book on Small Farms, the intention is to divide Great Britain, for the direct purpose of destroying the manufacturing system. Yet he calculates all the prices to be received for farm produce sold and consumed off the farm to be the same as the prices of 1843, the year when the book was written.

Fermanagh.—Mr Mair and Mr Mylne:—"We are both agriculturists, brought from Scotland by Lord Erne, to instruct the farmers in improved cultivation. House feeding has been much introduced since we came here among the small farmers. They are feeling the benefit of the improved system very much. (Mr Mylne)—Ten acres is small enough for any farmer. (Mr Mair)—I think if he has nobody but himself, five is enough for him to work by the spade. It will take two men to labour ten acres by the spade."

"You think a man could maintain himself on five acres?"—"Yes; if they have large families they could go out to service."

But if each family in the kingdom had five acres, and there were no manufactures and commerce, existing exclusively as such, where would be the service to go to? And when there was no service to go to, nor commercial cities, nor manufacturing districts, where would be the farms of five acres? They would be divided among the children as they grew up, as the case is now in Ireland and France, and reduced to perches and farm ridges measured only by the yard. If not so divided, the children would have to go to try their hands at trade again; make an effort to establish manufactures and commerce again. Would it not be as well to let them remain, and let every working man endeavour to raise himself, and help to raise those around him, above his present social level, by the acquisition of property which he can hold, and still retain his employment in the places of manufactures and commerce?

Galway.—Reverend Mr Griffin, parish priest:—"Farms of four and three quarters acres of good land, near the sea, for manure, are sufficient to maintain a family, if employed in the fisheries."

Kerry.—Mr Holme, land-agent:—"Farms of fourteen and sixteen acres are sufficient, if cultivated by spade, to support and supply labour to a family."

Kildare.—Mr Wilson, farmer and agent:—"Competition for small farms very great."

Kilkenny.—Mr Reade, land proprietor:—"The size of farms is becoming smaller from the increase of population. Less than sixteen acres not sufficient to support a farmer."

King's County.—Mr Lacy, farmer:—"A farm of sixteen acres is the least which can support a family."

Mr J. H. Walsh, land proprietor, of King's County, and intimately connected with the parish of Drum, in Roscommon, presented a statement carefully drawn up, setting forth the number of acres occupied by three classes of occupants, their rents and social condition. The most important portions are here quoted; but it must not be forgotten that the dietary of the farmers and families refers to 1844 and years of ordinary prosperity, when dependent on their acres of land, and not, as in 1847, when the commerce of England is feeding them from foreign shores.

"Total small farms, 838. Of these there are, first class, 146; in second class, 484; in third class, 208. The average acres of the holdings is ten English acres; rent, L.6 : 15 : 8 each farm. (The precise measure of each seems to be omitted.)

"Diet—Class I.—Potatoes and milk in abundance; oatmeal, butter, and eggs, four months; meat six or eight times in the years.

"Class II.—Potatoes; milk half the year; butter, eggs, and meal occasionally; meat twice a-year.

"Class III.—Potatoes insufficient; milk, none; eggs and meal rarely; meal perhaps twice a-year."

Leitrim.—Reverend Mr Evers, parish priest:—"The average size of farms is six or eight acres; many from two to four acres. It requires a farm to contain from eight to twelve acres to support a family."

Limerick.—Mr Roche, farmer:—"A farm of sixteen acres sufficient to support a family comfortably."

Mr Monsell, land proprietor, states that there is no class of labourers in Limerick county who depend entirely on money wages. He pays some of his labourers by giving them land, they paying the rent in labour; and to others he gives conacre, potato ground for one crop only. He says he endeavours to regulate the wages in some degree according to the size of the families, by giving one shilling in summer and tenpence in winter; "no other person in the county," he says, "giving more than eightpence."

In the letter dated from Rathkeale, which gave an account of the county as seen from the road between Limerick and that place, the agriculture was probably made to appear better than it really is. I mentioned the village of Patrick's Well. Mr Monsell, speaking of his attendance at the petty sessions as a magistrate at that place, says, on the 26th of Aug. 1844—

"It is decidedly desirable to have my labourers holding their ground immediately from myself. There was a curious instance occurred at the petty sessions at Patrick's Well on Friday last; there was a man who appeared before us, and it came out in the course of his examination that he paid *thirty days' work for four perches of ground, and he built a house upon the ground himself.* The person he held from held eight acres and a-half, and he paid L.3 : 8 : 5 per acre, the outside value of the land being about L.2 the acre. He held it from a middleman, and that middleman from another, and he held it again from the head landlord; and I should say such cases are not rare."

Here we have the competition for land producing five gradations of tenant misery, the lowest tenant paying for four perches of land, the work of thirty days, and building his hovel besides. Yet with those appalling facts known to him, Mr Feargus O'Connor, himself an Irish middleman once, and deriving whatever knowledge he has of agriculture from his experience as a middleman who lived on the rents of a wretched under tenancy, attempts to introduce this pernicious competition for land in England, by parcelling the English soil into two acre, three acre, and four acre farms to begin with. At least he attempts to make the working-men of England believe that they would be independent of the wages of labour and the competition in wages if they had the land.

Mr Monsell proceeds:—

"Subletting and dividing of farms still continues; chiefly in the way of people endeavouring to divide even very small farms for the sake of allocating portions to their children."

Would not all England, if divided, as propounded by Mr Feargus O'Connor, into small farms of four acres, have to be divided again to allocate portions to chartist children? Listen to the questions and answers which expose the poverty of those parts of Ireland where the population in desperation are still able to get some of the land to divide:—

"What, in your opinion, is the general effect of the system?" —"The general effect is to produce wretchedness and misery beyond description. The condition of the labourers who do not receive constant employment is very miserable indeed. I have had occasion to make a list of the persons in my parish, in which there is a good deal of employment given to the poor, and they are a good deal looked after, and I find the people are in general in a very destitute state. Out of 600 or 700, there are 158 in a state of very great destitution; they are in a state of great poverty, because they are only partly employed."

Yet those people have, on an average, more than the breadth of land to each family that is to be allotted to the chartist prizeholders in England; and it is better land than that at O'Connorville, or any other in the county of Hertford. It may be alleged that the rent in Ireland eats up the produce and the profit, and that the chartist prizeholders would be differently circumstanced, having no rent to pay. But their liabilities are equal to a heavy rent at the very outset; while the absence of rent does not save the occupiers from destitution when the land is minutely subdivided. Mr Monsell continues:

"There is one spot in the parish where the proprietor allowed people to settle and charged them no rent, and the state of absolute destitution in which those people are it is impossible to describe." (This was in 1844.)

"Are those people, generally speaking, willing to work if they can get it?"—"Yes, perfectly willing."

One source of the delusion under which working men in England have been induced to become shareholders in Feargus O'Connor's land company is the fictitious quantity of produce alleged by him to be derivable from the land.

But I shall not at present pursue the subject further. The English working population have neither been so well cared for, nor have they cared so well for themselves, as should have been and as will be; but it is not by a system of general pauperism upon minute portions of land that they are to make a change for the better—they must go forward, not turn back.

No. XXVII.

Journey from Banagher to Birr, King's County.

I found myself a few days ago seated on one of Bianconi's cars with a clergyman of the Established Church. Our conversation turned upon topics of common interest, which I have not before written of in this series of letters. It is therefore repeated here.

Whistler—Why is this arch broken down half the width of the road? It seems dangerous to drive here, even in daylight; it must be worse at night; why is the arch broken?

Clergyman—It was broken by the people, in the night time, three months ago, under the impression, silly creatures, that they would prevent the transport of meal from Birr to the Shannon. The mills at Birr grind meal, and it is taken by this road to Shannon harbour, and from thence by canal to Dublin. The poor ignorant people saw it going, and fearing that none would be left in King's county, they attempted to break down the bridges—this and another between Banagher and Birr. They found the masonry too hard for them to make fast progress, and the police were brought upon them before they got more mischief done than you see. The peasantry here are very ignorant.

Whistler—I am glad to have at last met an Irish gentleman who does not justify such an interference with the free buying, selling, and carrying of corn and flour.

Clergyman—What! am I to understand by your saying so, that you have met any person, holding a respectable position in society, who has justified such an interference with the conveyance of corn and flour?

Whistler—The county newspaper, the county gentlemen, magistrates, priests, and all the clergy whom I have hitherto met in conversation, until I met you, not only have justified such an interference, they have advocated it, and condemned the government in angry words because such violence to the free buying, selling, and transport of food has not been general throughout Ireland. The last time I was in a clergyman's society he said that Lord John Russell was answerable for all the deaths arising from famine in Ireland. He said the government should have interfered to bring down the prices of corn and meal, and to take the trade out of the hands of the merchants.

Clergyman—And so do I say. Indeed I am as forward as any one you will find to say that government is answerable for the starvation of the people. But there is no analogy between that and the poor ignorant people breaking down the bridge to interrupt the traffic of the road, is there?

Whistler—There is. The analogy would be perfect, the ignorance, error, and mischief the same in both cases, were it not that the education and ability to reflect calmly of gentlemen like yourself makes your case worse than that of the ignorant peasantry. You would have government to do violence to the usual channels of commerce, which are as indispensable to the procurance of food and its minute distribution over the kingdom, as those roads and bridges are over the King's county.

Clergyman—Well now, really, upon my word you surprise me—quite surprise me; do you compare and class together a crime of an ignorant and excited mob of people with an act which would have been the glory of an enlightened ministry, if we had been blest with one?

Whistler—But I deny that the ministry which would have undertaken the task of buying corn and grinding and distributing meal to the whole Irish nation would have been a blessing, on the contrary, it would have been a curse to Ireland and to England. The merchants are now bringing corn in such quantities that the prices are falling every day, and will fall. Had the Queen's ministers gone into the corn markets of the world, instead of the merchants, they could not have bought such quantities of corn but at an enormous price, if at all. They must have paid the merchants to buy the corn, and have competed for the freightage of ships. As it is, the merchants buy the corn without being paid by government to do so, and they get ships to carry it without government competing with them and raising the price of freights. And had government not gone into the markets of the world, but passed a law or decree that corn, when brought here by the merchants, should be sold at a certain low price—the merchants, supposing this law to have been applied to them in the autumn of last year, would not have been now pouring in the hundreds of heavily laden corn ships every week into all the ports of the kingdom. We should now have corn high in price, with absolute famine for the whole kingdom, which even mercantile enterprise could not subdue. As it is, we have now a fair prospect of corn at a moderate price.

The clergyman remains silent for several minutes. We meet and pass a jaunting car, on which is seated Mr Jones, the engineer of the Board of Works, and another gentleman, and he asks our driver who the other gentleman with Mr Jones is. The driver supposes him to be one of the assistant engineers. We go a quarter of a mile further, and pass some men and women breaking stones for the roads, and an overseer and a check-clerk measuring some of the stone heaps to settle the payment. We go a little farther, and meet a pay-clerk of the Board of Works on a car, with a guard of police over him and the money he carries. At last my reverend companion speaks.

Look there ! see what mismanagement, to have all those officials under the Board of Works, drawing the money in salaries which the poor people should receive as relief. The last published return of persons employed and of cash paid by the Board of Works—the return for the week ending on the 20th of March, gives—here it is; I have it in my pocket-book—gives a total of 685,932 persons, of whom 664,432 were on the roads, and 20,490 employed on drainage. The cost of the whole was L.228,940, of which sum the superintendence costs not less than L.22,454. Is it not monstrous that so many persons at such salaries should be employed in the superintendence of those works, and yet with their great absorption of the public money acting most inefficiently, and not giving satisfaction to any one?

Whistler.—And not giving satisfaction though well paid. Even good pay does not seem powerful enough to obtain a thoroughly practical staff of working public officers. Time and practice are required before 12,000 men can fully understand their several duties and perform them efficiently. But if 12,000 officers are required for these relief works, which are chiefly in digging earth and breaking stones, and are not able, numerous though they be, to keep the people honest in the handling of shovelfuls of earth and barrowfuls of stones, nor quite able to keep all of themselves honest, how many officers do you think would have been required to buy corn over all the world, ship it at foreign ports, land it in Irish ports, hire storehouses for it, send it to the mills to be ground, pay for conveyance and for grinding, sell the meal wholesale at the mills and stores, and retail in every parish and village in Ireland; keeping accounts in ledgers, for the satisfaction of parliament, of every pound weight and half pound of meal sold? Has it been a subject of calculation with you, to try to reach, even at a guess, the number of officials who would have been required to carry on a system of government corn and provision dealing, and book-keeping of that magnitude? They would have to be reckoned, not by thousands, as the engineers and overseers on the relief works are, but by hundreds of thousands. All the clerks, book-keepers, and mercantile servants in the United Kingdom would have been called from private employment, and would have been still too few in number. A supervision to secure honesty would have been utterly impossible. Peculation and fraud would have been universal. Merchants would have ceased to engage in the corn trade, and government would have been obliged to engage the merchants as public servants. Supplies of corn would not and could not have poured into the country as they are now pouring in. We should have had one vast mass of famine, fraud, robbery, and ruin.

The Clergyman is again silent. The Whistler, as the car jolts and jingles along, and some more wretched looking people are passed breaking stones on the roadside, pulls from his pocket a small volume and reads. The Clergyman sees the title of it on the back of the boards, and says—

I see you have got the "Black Prophet," Carleton's "Tale of the Irish Famine." What do you think of Darby Skinadre, the meal-dealer, in that book?

Whistler—He is represented as ill-looking, as a hypocrite, a usurer, a miser, a cheat, and a coward. None of those qualities are amiable; when all are combined they certainly make up a most odious man.

Clergyman—Yet a man sketched from reality. He is only a fair specimen of a griping crew of usurers and misers who horde up meal and sell it in times of distress in Ireland.

Whistler—Do no honest men horde up meal and sell it? The exalted virtue of doing so seems worthy of an honest man!

Clergyman—What! horde up the meal and sell it at an extravagant usurious price! It is hardly like the work of an honest man.

Whistler—As Mr Carleton makes Darby Skinadre the only meal-dealer of his district, and makes all the people obliged to resort to him for meal, what would have become of those people if Darby Skinadre had not had meal to sell to them? Would they not have perished utterly? Instead of being a cruel hard-hearted man, he was a benefactor whom they should have blessed and prayed for.

Clergyman—But the extortion of the man is the point in his character reprobated.

Whistler—Then they should have prayed for more meal-dealers, or have endeavoured to make more meal-dealers, and prices would have been kept down by competition.

Clergyman—They would more probably have been kept up by combination.

Whistler—When there is less food than enough, the prices go up, and no combination can keep them down. When there is more food than enough, no combination can keep them up, nor get them up. But the real question is this:—As a sense of self-preservation—an affection for children, for wife, parents, home, country—as neither duty to neighbours nor duty to God would teach the inhabitants of Darby Skinadre's country to provide meal for themselves, not for an unforeseen famine, but for a frequent occurrence of want regular almost as the return of the summer months, (so we are informed in Mr Carleton's tale, and so also in the great blue books of the Devon Commission,) other human motives operated to provide meal for them—a desire to adventure in speculation and to realize a high profit. When there was less famine, Darby would get less profit; when there was no famine he would get no profit. We may infer that in some years he would have a dead loss, as the farmers who bought from him in time of famine, and who found enough on their own farms in time of plenty, would not in the latter case resort to his shop. To induce him to adventure in the trade of meal at all he must have looked for profit, and have got one year of gain to pay the losses of years without gain. Mr Carleton is a forcible writer. In proportion to his literary power is the force of the satire he has written on his humble countrymen, unwittingly, while intending only to satirize the most useful class of men which can exist in the time of famine—men with meal to sell. Had Captain Bligh, with his boat's crew, when deserted by the mutineers of the *Bounty*, not apportioned the small store to the breadth of the ocean before them, he would not have saved that crew. But he had eleven days' allowance to spare when he reached the haven he had sailed for. Had not Darby Skinadre stored up meal, Mave Sullivan could not have been generous, nor could she have lived to be married. Darby is made to look odious in personal appearance because he sells meal in a time of famine. A Galway fox-hunter, according to that style of literary cant—a cant not peculiar to Mr Carleton, but to all our popular novelists—would have been a fine-looking, gallant fellow, generous and worthy of every man's esteem and every lady's love, though he kept half a county in a state of agricultural disorder and waste. A legend of the goose that was killed for the golden eggs is the kind of story which should be written to illustrate an Irish famine. No subject ever probed by novelist's pen abounds with better materials for dramatic situations, pathetic narrative, natural description, and sound, healthy sentiment.

Clergyman—Perhaps you will write it?

Whistler—It does not follow that I can, because I say it might be written, yet it is possible that I may try. The corn field and the flowery meadow, the busy workshop and the manufacturing town; the struggle of the sound sentiment with the false; the rise and fall of the men who are apostles of the one or victims of the other; territorial feudalism clinging to the skirts of advancing commerce to hold it back, that it may still be governed by it; the principle of progress struggling for existence and space to advance among the millions of working men, some of whom clear a way for it and help it on, others of whom fell it on the head with sledge hammers. The actors in this mighty drama are of every social degree: Squires, whose office is to halloo the hounds and keep human progress under foot; merchants, whose office it is to gird the earth with brotherhood; manufacturers, whose destiny it is to rise in power and position above the lords of territory; lords of territory who open their eyes and discover that they have been in error, and who join with the rest of mankind, and march on gloriously in the front ranks of progress; lords of territory who will not open their eyes and see that the great tide of time is leaving them; wives, children, hope, love, joy, sorrow, famine, pestilence, self-devotion, fire-sides, with happy children around them; summer corn, green and growing; harvests ripe and plentiful, and human hopes ripening like the corn—those are some of the materials which would readily rise to carry out and diffuse upon society the healthy doctrines of industrial economy. If I do not attempt the task it will rather be that I mistrust my power to do it justice than the possibility of making the subject popular. If I do attempt it, I shall do so in the belief that I am performing for society a service.

No. XXVIII.

COLLOONEY, COUNTY OF SLIGO.

The county of Sligo is in most respects similar to Mayo already written of in these letters, by which it is bounded on the west. It has on the south, part of Mayo and Roscommon; on the east Leitrim—the Lancashire of two hundred years ago; and on the west the Atlantic Ocean, which might carry Sligo over all the world, but which only carries it to the river Clyde in Scotland, to sell its butter, eggs, and oatmeal. The people of Glasgow who work in iron, coal, cotton, and other articles of national manufacture, consume and pay for the oats, oatmeal, and butter of Sligo and Mayo. I shall devote the next letter, or part of it, to thoughts on industrial economy suggested by this fact—that the inhabitants of Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire in Scotland, counties not more fertile than Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim, not better stored with minerals, and less favourably situated for ocean transit, should be the chief wealth givers to Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim, by paying for their agricultural produce. This letter shall take a general view of the county of Sligo.

It is forty-one miles long from east to west, and thirty-eight miles broad from north to south, measured from its extremities. The town of Sligo is 131 miles north-west of Dublin. Its extent in acres is 461,753, of which 290,696 are set down as arable, 151,723 uncultivated, 6134 in plantations, 460 in towns, and 12,740 under water. The soil is variable, some of it on mountains, much of it level; some of it a light sandy loam which the wind makes sport of; other parts, and they are extensive, a deep loam of generous fertility. Bogs are interspersed. Limestone is the subsoil on the levels. It has several lakes and short rivers, but the rivers are strong though short, and they are not all idle as some of the great rivers are in other counties. They drive water-wheels and grind meal, and perform other offices to help men to work. The falls on those streams unite the qualities of utility and beauty.

The population in 1841 was 180,886; their occupations are agricultural; oats, potatoes, and butter being the chief products. There is also some wheat grown, and the soil is suited to grow much more; but the climate is probably too moist for wheat; the moisture, however, would be favourable to green crops and stall-feeding, by which system only can manure be got and applied profitably to agriculture. But Sligo has no farm-buildings suitable for such a system, and few landlords if any willing or able to undertake their erection.

The county contained, in 1841, 7969 horses, 45,839 horned cattle, 32,708 sheep, 12,805 pigs, 164,372 head of poultry, and 3846 asses, all being of the estimated value of L.424,146.

The town of Ballina being mostly in Mayo, though partly in Sligo, the latter county has no town containing more than 2000 inhabitants, save that which gives the shire its name. The population of Sligo town is 12,272; they are a busy, industrious people, and by their industry disprove, so far as they are concerned, that general but doubtful assertion, that a Celtic population is not constitutionally fitted for commerce and industrial enterprise.

We once used to hear that it was the Catholic religion which disqualified the Irish for industrial enterprise. The people of Belgium, who are all Catholics, and at the same time marching in the front ranks of industry and civilisation, disprove that assertion ; and we seldom hear of it now. But we hear now of the inferiority of the Celtic race to the Saxon. The leaders in Irish politics are, in some measure, to blame for provoking this odious comparison, at least for keeping it in activity. I, as a Saxon, do not believe in the natural incapacity of the Celts for becoming a commercial people. We have Saxons in England as inapt for commerce, and seemingly as ill able to search for and understand the true sources of all wealth, as any Connaught peasant ; I allude to the mis-educated landed aristocracy. Suppose we look to the Celt, and see him affectionate to excess ; full of love for the land of his birth ; trustful in leaders who appeal to his generous confidence ; faithful to the chieftains of the land ; reverential of traditional authority ; a natural-born Conservative ; all of which qualities are in themselves positive virtues ; may we not see that his faithfulness to territorial chieftainship, his belief with the mis-educated chieftains of territory that the land is the source of all wealth, has retained him on the land, and made him its serf and its pauper ?

To those qualities of constitution we may add his hardihood in bearing fatigue and hunger ; we may even add his contentedness with misery, which is a virtue of high quality degenerated into a vice, taken advantage of and abused by the objects of his social veneration, the landed chiefs of society. None of those qualities singly, nor all put together, afford a reason for believing the Celt disqualified by nature for commercial enterprise. But they afford a reason for his adherence to the land, and for his trustfulness in the landed chieftains, while *their* prejudices and contempt for the commercial spirit and industrial adventurers of their country is a sufficient reason why the Celt living on their land, clothed with tradition, bound with it, should not readily forsake them and seek subsistence elsewhere. It is at this point that the virtue of endurance and willing fellowship with misery ceases to be a virtue.

The Saxon has, in some countries, but only in some, emancipated himself from this bondage to acres of land and the owners of acres ; and his race when once emancipated and free to taste the sweets of personal wealth, the excitement of commercial enterprise goes fast forward. The Saxons of America never knew the bondage ; had it not been broken in England, their forefathers would never have peopled America. But the time is still recent when the English people lived in social wretchedness as deep as that of the Irish now, with nothing but landlords above them, nothing but land below them, and very little but famine and pestilence on each side. And the time is still more recent when the Scotch were in that condition.

The Saxon race, as represented by the English and lowland Scotch, would seem to have more aptitude for self-emancipation than the Celtic race as represented in Ireland; or rather, more impatience under servitude, out of which arises the aptitude for commercial enterprise, which, practised through many generations, becomes the Saxon inheritance, and would become the inheritance of any race if that race were fairly set in motion.

This view of the subject might be followed up by many proofs from the Irish in America, and from instances becoming more and more common in Ireland itself. Sligo, with a Celtic population, is one of the instances. But that town also affords a proof of the suicidal policy of landlordism. The grand jurors of the county, instead of rejoicing to see a rising town of commerce, to make a market for their farm produce; instead of helping that town to grow and become strong with a healthy trade, they see in it only a strength upon which they may lay a burthen. The expense of making county roads, of maintaining the county police, which are almost exclusively made and maintained for the benefit of the landed interests, has been laid upon the town, while, for the thoroughfares of the town itself, the county cess is withheld.

The county of Sligo affords an instance of the feebleness of the "agricultural mind," even when turned in a right direction, which is worth relating; the more so as it is one of those cases sometimes referred to, to shew the impossibility of improving the Celtic population:—

The Rev. Lewis Porter, rector of Drumard, went before the Land Commissioners in 1844, on behalf of Edward Joshua Cooper, Esq., of Marknee Castle in Sligo, owner of large estates, and at that time a member of parliament. He laid four documents before the commissioners, one of which was a letter from Mr Cooper, written in 1841, stating that he would establish an industrial school on the estate, with workshops to clothe the people, and give them furniture and a model farm, to teach them agriculture. The second was a set of formal resolutions passed by certain gentlemen who called a meeting to thank Mr Cooper for his intentions; the third was a letter written in very extravagant terms of praise, also thanking Mr Cooper for his intentions; and the fourth was a set of rules for the school and workshops. Four apprentices were to be taken and made tailors, four shoemakers, four smiths, and four carpenters. They were to be taught trades at Mr

Cooper's expense. So his letter stated; but it also stated that they were to be lodged, and dieted, and provided "with decent clothing" by their parents. They were to be bound to Mr Cooper for five years, but to be discharged sooner if found to be competent workmen. The agricultural pupils were also to be apprenticed five years. Only two pupils applied for admission to the school of agriculture, one of whom is somewhere in Clare, the rector says, and the other in Scotland, where he went to work as a labourer, having got a small sum of money to carry him there. The farm and school did not pay their expenses, and were given up in two years and a half from the date of commencement. There were plenty of applications to the trades to be apprenticed; one shop had its full complement of four, the second had three, the third had three, and the fourth had two. But the tailors' shop was set on fire, and none of the shops were "encouraged by the people and the gentry, and the tenants," says the rector, as was expected. The people, it seems, who had tailors and shoemakers elsewhere did not all leave those tailors and shoemakers and go to Mr Cooper's workshops and buy clothes and shoes. The scheme did not pay, and was abandoned, as the agricultural school was, in two years and a half. There was no religious nor political opposition to it, only the people would not buy the goods made in the shops in sufficient quantity to make the scheme pay. Mr Cooper, disgusted with their ingratitude, disheartened, and his patience worn out, chose rather to lose L.1000, which the whole buildings, tools, fixtures, and masters had cost him, than go on longer and lose more. So, returning to Brighton, from whence his first letter was dated, to tell them how ungrateful and impracticable the Celtic Irish are, he sent the rector of the parish also to tell the Devon Commissioners that it was of no use to try to elevate the Irish. He, Mr Cooper, had tried shoemaking, tailoring, carpentering, and smith work in general, for two years and a half, and though his apprentices were bound for five years, he had to give up business in disgust, because they had not learned their trades in half the time, and because the people did not buy the things they made fast enough to make the scheme a paying one. The rector also speaks of the people's insensibility to this "charity" of their landlord, who thus laid out L.1000 for their benefit, which they did not repay by their purchases.

A tradesman on his own account would have had to endure a longer trial than Mr Cooper did, and keep his apprentices to the end of their time. Perhaps the last half of the five years would have found the apprentices more expert and their work more saleable. But if not, what right had Mr Cooper to expect that he would get all the trade from other tailors and shoemakers to his shops, for work sold at full price and done by apprentices, "lodged and dieted, and provided with decent clothes by their parents?"

And the failure of this scheme, prematurely closed through the landlord's ill-humour, is adduced as an instance of the opposition of the Celtic population to improvement! It would be interesting to hear the rector tell what he thinks would have been the conduct of the Saxons under such circumstances.

I have alluded to the religion of the Irish people, and said that the Belgians are Catholics and hold a front-rank place in the progress of civilisation; yet it is true that the adherence of the Irish to the Catholic faith has been a barrier to their advancement in agriculture and the industrial sciences; not, however, in the manner alleged by those who use this argument against Catholicism; but by the opposite party debarring the Catholic from the rights and privileges of free citizens by the penal laws.

The penal laws directed by political Protestants against the Irish Catholics were various, one of them forbade that any Roman Catholic should *purchase* land under any circumstances; or hold land upon any lease, not even to build a house upon it, for more than thirty-one years. But the Catholic could not even hold the land, on which he might build, for thirty-one years; his lease was void if the land produced him more profit than one-third of the rent paid by him under the lease. He was not likely to build good houses on such land, nor to exercise much skill and industry in its cultivation; for if the crops were of more value than one-third of the rent above the rent contracted for in the lease, the lease in like manner became waste paper.

The Catholic people were pressed into the deepest degradation by these laws, and became occupiers only. The head landlords were in most cases political servants, not the most exalted in character, of the English sovereigns. They obtained the Irish estates as rewards, and sent men of desperate fortunes, not disqualified by law, to hold the estates as leaseholders, which leaseholders became middlemen, by parcelling out the land among the Catholics who were disqualified to hold it on lease. Hence arose the pernicious system of middlemen, not entirely overcome yet, though gradually on the decline. Hence arose the custom of the landlord and the middleman taking everything from the occupiers of the land, and giving nothing, no house to live in, barn, stable, shed, road, ditch, gate, or bridge. Hence arose the custom of having all houses, barns, stables, sheds, roads, ditches, gates, and bridges of the worst kind, the occupiers being called upon to make them and pay for them, and being afraid to make the land look as if it were valuable, a custom still existing save in respect of roads and bridges, which the landed gentry have had constructed under their own direction, as grand jurors of counties, the occupiers still being called upon to pay for them.

The widest divergencies of governments from the principles of political economy have always given birth to the most widely spread human ills, and have incurred the heaviest retribution. Wars and religious persecutions are the widest divergencies from political economy. The Catholics persecuted the Protestants, and the Protestants persecuted the Catholics ; terrible has been the retribution to both. The State Protestants in Ireland, and the landed proprietors as a class, have been the most recently engaged in persecution, and they seem, as a class, to be marked out by the economic laws of nature for ultimate and immediate punishment.

There is no mystery in the operation of those laws of cause and effect called political economy. Nor is there hardship or cruelty in them. To fall from the branch of a tree too weak to bear our weight, and be bruised with the fall, is a hardship ; but it originated in our hardihood, or blindness, and not in the force of gravity—the immutable law of nature—which brought us to the ground.

It does not follow, however, that everything is correct which writers have chosen to call political economy, the doctrine of Malthus about population, and some other of his doctrines, are diametrically opposed to political economy, though he is called one of its writers.

The granting of leases to make forty shilling freeholds for political purposes ; their subsequent abolition for political purposes in 1829—they being abolished to qualify Catholic emancipation—and the granting and withholding of the L.10 leases, since these, according to the political views of the landlords, are all economic errors returning upon the landowners of Ireland with retribution, bringing them diminished rents on one side, and new bills for poor rates on the other.

In Sligo, the tenants are placed, displaced, and replaced, under political considerations as elsewhere. In Sligo, a large proportion of the land is in the hands of lawyers as elsewhere. Not far from the town there is an estate now belonging to a lawyer, who was engaged upon it professionally, and whose costs in law business relating to it were so great, that, on the property being offered for sale, nobody would have it with the attorney's costs on it. The attorney bode for it, and got it himself in payment of his costs. His first step was to make political capital of the land. He ejected the old tenants. Some of them put up rushes and sods in the ditches by the sides of the roads and slept under them, and he brought actions at law against them for so doing, under the name of regaining forcible possession.

No. XXIX.

SLIGO.

However defective the agriculture of the west of Ireland may be now, it has, so the general testimony says, been worse. The erections of mills at Sligo, Westport, Galway, Belmullet, and other sea-coast places, to grind the oats into meal, and the settlement there of merchants to buy the oats and meal, has had the effect of gradually bringing oats to the markets in greater bulk, and in bringing land into cultivation within reach of the markets to supply the oats.

It is worthy of notice that Glasgow, Liverpool, and London are the chief places where the farm produce of Sligo and Mayo is shipped to, finally sold at, and consumed. More of it goes to Glasgow than to any of the other ports of the united kingdom. The great population, whose industrious hands in the shires of Lanark and Renfrew, in and around Glasgow, give value to the coals and iron natural to those shires and to the cotton imported there, not only pay for and eat the farm produce of Lanark and Renfrew, and other shires in the west of Scotland, they buy fat bullocks, and eat beef from Stirling and Perth, northward, and from the south-eastern counties of Haddington, Berwick, and Roxburgh; while they at the same time put their hands in their pockets and pull out money and pay for the oats, oatmeal, butter, and pork of the west of Ireland.

Lancashire, in like manner, but to a greater extent, pays for and consumes the farm produce of the east and south of Ireland, of the adjoining counties of England and Wales, and a considerable proportion of the bullocks and fat wethers, and the wheat of the English counties east and north of Manchester. The prices paid for such produce go to pay agricultural wages and agricultural rents. The nearer the position of the one to the other, or the freer the communication between the factory shires which eat and pay for their eating, and the farm-yard shires which produce food to eat and receive the payment for it, the higher are the agricultural wages and the agricultural rents.

"A truism," you may exclaim in Manchester; "we know all this: tell us something new." Were this paper only to be read in Manchester, or within fifty miles of it, what has just been said, and what is about to be said, would probably be omitted. But there are still a great many people who do not understand the true sources of agricultural wages and rents, and possibly some of them may read this. I write for them.

Let us suppose that some of them are Galway fox-hunters. I have been several times with the Galway hounds and hunters within those few weeks bygone, and I can answer for it, that finer horses, bolder horsemen, more awful leaps, better hounds, and more cunning foxes are seldom to be seen, perhaps never to be seen; let us therefore suppose that this letter is addressed to a Galway fox-hunter, or the men of the stable and the kennel who adore the fox-hunter because he hunts in Galway and does not live in England; or the men of the Galway hovels and farm-yards, who look upon the men of the stables and kennels who serve and adore the fox-hunters, and upon the fox-hunters, as the true patrons of Galway agriculture. Those last say that, if every owner of land in Galway, Mayo, and Sligo would stay at home and keep horses and hounds, and hunt, and consume the produce of the farms, and spend the rents at home, it would be well for all of them. "See!" they exclaim "the numbers of grooms and helpers in the stables whom they would have; see the tradesmen they would employ by spending their rents here. See how easy it would be for the Galway, Mayo, and Sligo farmers to pay their rents if rent was spent at home. See how much employment they could give to labourers then; everybody would be well employed!"

As the fox-hunter of Galway has a supreme contempt for all such mean men as engage in trade, we shall believe for a minute or two, as he certainly believes every day of his life, and as all his family race believe through every generation, that to consume oats and hay with horses, oatmeal with hounds, and the flesh of cattle, and sheep, and pigs, with men who assist him in living a pleasant life, is the best way of spending rent. Let us suppose that neither Galway, Westport, Belmullet, Newport, Sligo, nor any other port is permitted to send away a barrel of oats or oatmeal, a firkin of butter, a pig, sheep, or horned beast, dead or alive, that everything produced in Galway, Mayo, and Sligo is consumed there. Let us suppose that two divisions of the people are made, one division to hunt foxes and consume the farm produce and spend the rents, the other division to labour on the farms, provide corn and cattle, and pay the rents, and what do we see before us? I think there is a wall before us that even a Galway fox-hunter would stand at.

What rent would the consuming division *have* to expend for the benefit of the producing division? If the consuming power of both divisions be just equal to the producing power of the division which works, they cannot have more than food; they cannot advance in comforts; they may retrograde, but they will not advance. The rent which the producers will pay can only be the corn and hay of the horses, oatmeal of the hounds, beef and bread and beer of the fox-hunters and servants. The latter, consuming all the rent, will have none to pay for whips to the whipmakers, boots to the bootmakers, scarlet coats to the tailors.

If they be, as a division, possessed of greater consuming powers than the ability to produce of the other division, they will get less than enough of corn and hay, beef, bread, and beer, and will be still farther from paying for whips, boots, and scarlet coats.

If, however, they consume less than the producing divisions can furnish, some oats and hay, bread, beef, and beer will be left in the hands of the producers, who will sell it, pay the price of it to the fox-hunters as rent, who, in their turn, will pay the whipmaker, bootmaker, and tailor. It is clear that the greater the number of persons who merely consume without producing, the poorer must all be.

The fox-hunter's tailor, boot and whip maker, may think, and they do think, that fox-hunting is good for trade. So far as they may be individually and immediately concerned, they reason aright. They are employed in adding by their skill and labour a greater value to cloth and leather than cloth or leather possessed before. But if they were employed in adding value to cloth and leather for the benefit of a person engaged in adding value to timber and iron, they would be adding more to the world's wealth than they do by makin boots and scarlet coats for fox-hunters who consume and produce nothing.

The men who give additional value to timber and iron, whether they fell the trees and quarry the ironstone, or stand by the right hand of Robert Stephenson and help that right hand to execute a new creation, are all, with a compound interest of industry, adding value to value, wealth to wealth. The owner of accumulated capital, who spreads the sails of commerce on the oceans of the world, to bring together materials for their workmanship, is one of them. So is the owner of accumulated spindles, looms, hammers, anvils, and workshops. The more which one man can do himself by his labour, or by his skill, or by his enterprise, or by his savings of industry, or by his inheritance of another's savings, to add value to something which again produces value; and the larger the number of other persons which he can assist in adding value to something useful, the more useful to the world is he himself. He is the employer of producers. Good as it is to produce by one's own labour, it is a more valuable performance to give the power of production to a number of persons who would not otherwise have it.

Some eyes see no difference between the fox-hunting squire who gives employment and wages to whipmakers, spurmakers, bootmakers, saddlers, tailors, and upholsterers, and the mill working manufacturer, who employs and pays wages to mechanics, spinners, weavers, dyers, clerks, brokers, and so forth. But the difference is, that the first makes every one work inwards for himself—the unit, the one atom of nine hundred millions; while the latter makes every one work outwards to the markets of the world, to reach as many of the nine hundred millions as possible, them all if he can.

An owner of money may withdraw his own labour and skill and enterprise from the world, and yet leave his capital in business to help others to make the raw matter of the world more valuable. The world, by his retirement, possesses less than it possessed before, by the amount of his personal labour, skill, or enterprise. If he betakes himself to a country mansion and keeps horses to eat corn and hay; servants who only minister to his pleasure, and who eat bread and meat; if he buys whips and scarlet coats, and top-boots, and hounds, and feeds the hounds, and rides after them fifty miles a-day, over fences and through fields, where ewes in lamb and cows in calf run from him and his hounds in terror, he may do some harm, but cannot do good beyond the pleasure he gives himself. Still, as his money which purchases that pleasure comes to his hand as profit upon capital working in the world for the world, he may be said to produce the purchase money of his profitless consumption of pleasure. In this he differs, and it is a great difference, from the fox-hunter of Galway who produces nothing, gives value to nothing, but consumes the produce of the land in personal pleasure.

Some persons may say, and some do say, that the land is to him what the capital of the retired merchant is in the last paragraph. Not so. The retired merchant has, as it were, a streamlet of commerce which flows and runs over; and he gathers the drops carefully and fills his cup of pleasure with what runs over. The main stream runs untouched. The Galway squire dips into the main stream; and being a stream so frequently dipped into, it becomes small, and often stops, in which case, rather than restrain himself, he goes to the spring head, the tenant's farm yard, and dips in there.

But such a squire is not confined to Galway nor to Ireland, though in Ireland it is more common than in England to find a gentleman eating golden eggs to his breakfast, having killed the goose the day before. Anywhere, in England or in Ireland, the mere consumer, wear what colour of coat he may, is a fugitive from usefulness.

Those remarks, extending by no means to the end of the subject, have been suggested by the fact that the oats and oatmeal, and butter and pork, of the west of Ireland, which are sold to get money to pay rent, are carried to the west of Scotland, and paid for and consumed there by a population whose industrious hands are engaged in manufacturing human comforts for themselves and for all the people of the world who will or can buy from them. If a part, or a very considerable portion of the rent, which is the price of the oats, butter, and pigs, be sent to the landowners who do not live in Ireland, to England it may be, the loss is doubtless felt in Mayo. Those exports of farm produce and of farm rents give rise to some well founded complaints, but also to many errors. An argument for the repeal of the union is founded on the exportation of farm produce and of farm rent. And England, which is supposed to seduce those gentlemen of the west from their hounds, horses, bugle-horns, and native hills, has a great deal of scolding to hear and bear for keeping them from home. All which Henry the Second and Elizabeth and Cromwell did to Ireland is mixed up with the charge of having seduced from his home the fox-hunter of Galway and Sligo. If Henry, and Elizabeth, and Cromwell were now alive, they might very properly be spoken to on the subject of making war on Ireland; but the persons who now eat Irish butter, pork, beef, eggs, poultry, and meal, and who *pay* for it all, have no interest whatever in, or from, anything done by the King, Queen, and Republican aforesaid. All the wars of those sovereigns and their servants were mischievous to England as to Ireland. War, like fox-hunting, consumes without producing wealth. Nor is it of any benefit to England as a nation that the Irish squires choose to go and live idly there. Whatever they or their servants may eat in a day, that day passing without their adding some value to something of usefulness in England, is national loss, though it may not be a local loss in London.

At all events, they do not live in Glasgow, nor does Glasgow care the value of one peck of meal whether they ever do or not. She does not even question the place of residence of her own landowners. Nor had Glasgow or Scotland any share in the union of England and Ireland. Yet Glasgow receives more of the oats, oatmeal, butter, and pork, of Mayo and Sligo than London does. But she pays for them. And, hard as the case of Mayo and Sligo is, obliged to sell their farm produce in Glasgow to obtain money to send to their landowners elsewhere, there is a possibility of their being in a case still worse. As it is, there are mills to grind the oats and millers who are paid wages for adding value to the oats by reducing them to meal. There are ships, warehouses, wharves, roads, sailors, porters, carmen on the roads, road-makers, and others, all giving greater value to oats and to meal; to cows, butter, poultry, eggs, hogs, horses, and the provender of all of these. Now the worst conditions which it is possible to be in is that of having all the landowners and their families at home *to eat food and still be idle*, with no market beyond their own shores; and still, as now, nobody among themselves employed otherwise than in working on the surface of the land.

To work at something which shall become of greater worth, and to work in such aggregation or in such division of numbers as shall give the work the greatest worth in the shortest time, is the way to make national wealth; and the greater proportion of the people of a nation so employed, otherwise than on the land, the more wealth will they have to exchange for agricultural produce, and the richer will agriculture be the sooner that this is understood in Ireland, and in some other places which might be named, the sooner will Ireland rise out of destitution.

The following passages in the evidence of Mr M'Donnell, a corn-merchant of Westport in Mayo, given in July 1844, are worth notice at the present time:—

"Has the use of wheaten flour at all spread among the farmers?" "No, they do not use it themselves, they sell it. I have never known them use it by any means in this country except when they could not dispose of it. In the year of scarcity, in 1831, when we got money from the benevolent people in England, we were then, from the want of oatmeal, obliged to bring wheat from different parts of the country; but the people never make use of wheaten flour except when they cannot get oatmeal. The poor man uses oatmeal for meat and drink, when reasonable in price. He has thin oat gruel and oaten bread, and he takes it out with him to the fields. The price of labour has been very low. During the winter there were not more than twenty men in this neighbourhood working, and they at 7d. and 8d. per day. When the potato crop has been injured by blasts from the sea, the people have suffered very much. In the year 1821, we suffered very severely in that way, and also in 1822. We had to import food from other countries."

"Was there no oats in the country?"—"Yes, there had been oats, but they had been exported previously. In truth, the vessels had met each other going out and coming in. A man may have engaged his vessels for two months before, and he must go on with his business, no matter what the consequences may be. I have imported wheat into this country, and the vessels taking out oats have actually met the vessels bringing in the wheat."

This was the case in 1846 and the year before; and even in 1847, oats have been sent from Westport to England, where they are in demand, at high prices, for horses; and Indian corn, coming to Westport, has met them in other ships. To those who have an interest in understanding the self-adjusting principles of commercial exchanges, those passages will be instructive. To those who feel desirous of knowing the chief evidence of all the witnesses examined by the Land Commission in Mayo and Sligo, and who cannot read all that was deposed to, I may say that the burthen of it was, destitution among the mass of the population every year; misery at the best of times, absolute famine often; and I may add that my belief is, that the bulk of the west of Ireland population is better provided for now by government than they used to provide for themselves; that they, never having parted with rent, but when money or produce, often the latter, was forced from them, they will not be readily induced to work on their land now for rent, when they see food given to them from some where else than from their own country.

EXTRACTS FROM IRISH LETTERS.

To conclude this account of the condition of Ireland in the year of famine and pestilence 1847, and to conclude this volume, I shall here give some passages from letters written by me on the state of Ireland in 1843. Copies of those letters were given to the leading members of parliament. At the beginning of the session of 1844, Lord John Russell, in the famous debate on the condition of Ireland, referred to them, but said the facts detailed therein were almost too horrible for belief, and he would not read them to the house. Sir Robert Peel, in the same debate, referred to the letters as mentioned by the noble Lord, and said he had read the pamphlet in which they were contained; the statements were indeed horrible, but he feared too true. The Marquis of Normandy, in the House of Lords, quoted the pamphlet soon after as an authority, and, about the same time, the *Dublin Review* had an article on the subject of these letters, and said that the facts were known to the writer of the article to be as truly horrible as I had given them. Indeed, as regards Sir Robert Peel's belief in the facts, he, as prime minister, had taken the best possible means of inquiring into the truth. He sent a private and confidential agent to the locality of these landlordly crimes, after my first reports were sent to London and privately laid before government, upon whose report, confirmatory of mine, the Devon Commission was issued, to inquire into the whole subject of landlord and tenant in the whole of Ireland.

Thus much, by way of introduction to the passages of the Irish letters which I now append, is deemed necessary, lest readers, innocent of knowing much about Ireland, might lift their hands and heads in wonder, and let this book fall, and cry, "Impossible! we shall not take up that book again!"—They must take it up again; at any rate the subject of these letters must be taken up again and again.

In different parts of the county of Kilkenny, in several directions from the town, there were what is usually called "disturbed districts." In one place a murder had been committed, and in several others there had been attempts at murder—at all events, there had been accusations against certain parties of attempting to murder; but we shall see by-and-bye, from the trials at assizes and from other evidence, that it is no unusual thing in Ireland, and especially in a "disturbed district," to get up accusations of attempted murder for purposes which, when we come to the facts, will be easily understood.

The cases of ejectment now about to be particularized were not the cases of tenants-at-will, nor of an under tenantry who held their land from some one subordinate to the landlord; they were leaseholders, holding direct from the landlord himself, under covenants as indisputably legal as any lease in Scotland or in England. The landlord never attempted to dispute the validity of the leases; he knew that most of them had been granted by his immediate predecessor, and some by the predecessor's father. He knew that he could not eject any one of the tenants by disputing about the lease, but he knew that the law gave him power to eject if the tenant did not pay his rent. But here he encountered a difficulty. The very fact which excited him to a war with his tenantry operated to defeat him. The farms were generally held at about 30s. an acre, and from that to 40s.; he knew the land could be let for more; for in some cases, where farms on the same estate were not let on lease, he had raised the rent to 60s. and 70s. an acre; and found that the people would rather pay that than renounce their holdings. Thus, because the farms were let at a moderate rent to the leaseholders, he sought to get them into his own hand, that he might re-let them at higher rents; but, because they were cheap, the tenants kept clear of arrears, and he, having no means of breaking through the leases, was at a considerable loss to know how no act; but he did act; and a history of his proceedings will not only exemplify the condition of landlord and tenant in Ireland, but will, at the same time, shew how the laws in Ireland can be set at defiance by a man who has money and is a staunch adherent of the dominant party. This last fact is most necessary to be borne in mind, because the landlord now under notice has been defended by the press of the dominant party as one of the best though worst used of churchmen. He has been heard of through the government newspapers over the world as a martyr and a Christian. How far he is entitled to the honour of either will become apparent in the sequel. Suffice it now to say, by way of preface, in addition to what is already explained, that my authority for the following statements rests, first, on the narratives of the tenantry themselves; second, on the account given me by Mr Coyne, a gentleman of respectably, who for two years acted as the agent of this landlord, but who, at last, threw up his situation, out of sheer disgust at the odious work he was called on to perform; third, on the testimony of several magistrates and other gentlemen in the towns of Kilkenny and Thomastown; fourth, on the information, very comprehensive and valuable, afforded me by the solicitor who has been engaged in defence of most of the tenants in the numerous lawsuits which have arisen during the last three years; fifth, on evidence given in various cases tried at the sessions and assizes, part of which has been published in the local papers, all of which has been recorded by official persons, who furnished me with matters of importance not published; and, sixth, from what I heard with my own ears from the witnesses in the assize court.

The district in which this estate is situated, it may be proper to say, was, until three years ago, a peaceable one; agrarian crime was unknown; the people industrious and moral; and there were no constabulary in the neighbourhood, nor any need of them. It is only four years since the present landlord came to the estate, since which he has had upwards of 250 lawsuits with his tenantry, has erected a police barrack on his property, and obtained from government a detachment of armed police to remain there continually. The military, both cavalry and foot, have been greatly augmented in the district in the same time. Several men have been tried for their lives—some transported, and some hanged. The tenantry amount to between seventy and eighty, and the estate occupies a beautiful situation on each side of the Nore at Bennet's Bridge.

CASE OF JOHN RYAN.

John Ryan had been a road contractor as well as a farmer. The landlord alleged a debt against him, and threw him into prison. While there his contract was unperformed, and he lost it, and sacrificed his security to perform it. It was satisfactorily proved, in a court of law, that the debt never existed; that it was brought forward by the landlord at the expense of forgery and false swearing; upon which John Ryan brought an action for false imprisonment. Had the defendant not been a landlord, the plaintiff might have prosecuted him criminally; but, being a landlord, there was no chance of succeeding against him. Even in the action of damages there was little hope for John Ryan; but the case was so very bad, and the judge, in summing up, made such severe comments on the conduct of the landlord, that the jury gave a verdict for plaintiff. I was present at the trial, and I quote both from my notes and from the report of the trial as published in the local papers, in giving the following words as a portion of the judge's summary:—"Gentlemen—If you believe that the defendant fraudulently alleged this debt against plaintiff, that he might put him in prison and ruin him, you will give a verdict accordingly. In that case you will make him worse than the man who goes boldly to the highway and robs openly. You will weigh well the evidence you have heard, and if you are satisfied that plaintiff has been injured, you will give damages accordingly. Do not give overwhelming damages; still you must teach defendant that, though he is a gentleman of rank and property, he is not to trample on a poorer man than himself with impunity."

To this the jury gave a verdict for plaintiff—damages L.100.

The landlord, out of about 250 actions at law, of various kinds in less than three years, has been defeated in four-fifths of them—and though he had thirteen cases at last quarter sessions, and was defeated in all—he still triumphs. He appeals to higher courts. He does not pay the L.100 damages to Ryan. He makes an appeal which will not be settled until some time next year. Meantime, Ryan, by being in prison, and by being involved in litigation, of which this is but a mere sample—by losing his contract for the roads, having all his implements and farming stock seized and sold while in prison—was unable to cultivate his land so as to enable him to pay his last Michaelmas rent. The rent being less than L.100, which the landlord owed him in damages, it might have been supposed that this L.100 would be a set-off for the rent. But no, a letter to me on the 8th of November says—"And he (the landlord) canted John Ryan to the potatoes, and did not leave his family one bit that would eat." This John Ryan, it must be borne in mind, was a leaseholder, and never owed a farthing of rent until those proceedings were taken against him to compel him into arrears which would justify anejectment. His case, from first to last—from the time that he was an independent man, with as happy a family around him as lived in the Queen's dominions, living in a house of his own building, with a farm-steading erected at his own expense, which are equal to any cottage or farm-steading of the same extent in England or Scotland for cleanliness, order, and substantiality—I saw them with my own eyes, and judged for myself; from the time that John Ryan was an independent man in that farm to the present, when he and his family are potatoless and penniless, and on the point of being ejected, the proceedings against him have been of the most extraordinary kind and almost beyond belief.

CASE OF WILLIAM RING.

William Ring is also a leaseholding tenant on the estate, and is uncle to Patrick Ring. He is considered a man of substance, and was never known to owe any man sixpence unreasonably, being at all times scrupulously punctual. He has a limekiln on his farm, and makes and sells lime. On one occasion, eighteen or twenty months ago, the landlord had lime from him to the amount of L.9. William Ring sent in his account, but the landlord, through his steward, taunted him with having assisted Patrick Ring to plough and sow his land at a time when the landlord had seized and carried off Patrick Ring's implements, (these were carried off, as afterwards appeared by the decision of the jury, when no rent nor debt of any kind was due; they were carried off that Patrick Ring might be unable to cultivate his land and pay his rent. Patrick went to law and got damages against the landlord. He also got assistance from three of his neighbours to plough and sow his fields; all the other neighbours, though willing to help him, being afraid of the landlord, save these three, one of whom was his uncle, William Ring, whose case about the lime I am now relating.) The landlord refused to pay the L.9 for the lime, saying, through the steward, that as William Ring had thought fit to set himself against him by helping Patrick Ring to plough and sow his fields, he, the landlord, would set himself against William Ring; he would not pay the L.9 for the lime—he would let him do his best.

William Ring might have let it remain to be deducted from the next payment of rent, some one will say. But this would not do in Ireland, at least with a landlord such as his, who hesitated not to seize on tenants who owed nothing. He knew that an immediate seizure would be made on the day the rent was due if this L.9 was deducted from it, because it had become common on this estate, and is yet, as shewn by the reports of the trials at the last sessions, to proceed to distrain on the day following term day. Seizures in some cases had been made at one o'clock for rent due at twelve; and in one case, that of Mathew Dormer, brother-in-law of Patrick Ring, a distraint was made at ten o'clock of the rent-day; therefore William Ring did not let his claim for the price of his lime stand over to be deducted from the rent. He summoned the landlord, and in due course got a decree against him. The landlord had to pay; but on the same day he did so, he got a party of the armed constabulary, who are located on the estate for the purpose of carrying on the war, and with them, and a carpenter, and his steward, he proceeded to William Ring's farm. The farmhouse and haggard (garden, &c.) were sheltered and ornamented by trees and bushes which had been planted by the tenant and his forefathers, and which were highly prized by the farmer and his family. In law they were the property of the landlord; and the landlord, the carpenter, the steward, and the police, set to work, cut them all down, and carried them home to the landlord's residence.

CASES OF MATHEW DORMER AND JAMES MULLINS.

Mathew Dormer, the brother-in-law of Patrick Ring, is a leaseholding tenant, but holds only a small field of about three acres. The other farms are from twenty to fifty acres. Dormer does not depend on his land further than for potatoes to his family and for keep to his horse, with which and a cart he does jobbing work. He had assisted Patrick Ring in time of trouble, and thus brought on himself the power of the landlord. His field can only be approached by either of two roads through other farms from the village where Dormer lives. Having paid all rent, the landlord had no power on him but by shutting him out of his field. The tenants who occupied the land through which Dormer had to pass were served with notices that, if they allowed him ingress with a cart or horse they would be ejected. I went and saw the field, and was told by Dormer and his neighbours the whole case. He had planted his potatoes without manure, and, though it was August when I saw them, they were not six inches above ground, nor did they shew symptoms of at any time being more ; and this because Dormer was not allowed to carry the manure, of which he had abundance, to his field. He was told by the lawyers that he had a good case, and would be sure to gain a suit at law ; but while that is pending the potato season has passed over with almost no crop, and winter has come without a potato for his family ; worst of all, his barley, which occupied, I think, about two-thirds of the ground, (I saw it when nearly ripe in August,) and from which he hoped to pay his rent and get provender for his horse, was still in the field rotting on the 8th of October. Thus Mathew Dormer will be unable to pay his November rent, and a process of ejectment will of course issue and take effect.

Another case which may be mentioned now is brief and characteristic. A tenant who held on lease went with his rent to the landlord last spring on the day it was due. Says the landlord, " Mr Mullins, you need not be so particular about paying your rent, you are always very punctual, and you may perhaps want the money for some other purpose. I should advise you now to buy some cattle and sheep at the fair, and depasture your grass fields instead of making hay this year ; but, even if you do make hay, you have not enough of stock." To which Mr M. replied, " I am exceedingly obliged to you ; I would have bought stock had it not been for my rent ; but if you forego it for the present, I will do as you suggest ; and, if you have no objection, I will hire another field for the season as well, and put cattle in it." " An excellent thought," said the landlord ; " buy all the cattle your money will afford ; you will, no doubt, be able to hire pasturage for them." And Mr M. did as his landlord advised. But what was his astonishment when, in less than a week, indeed within three days, the landlord distrained on the whole, and sold all the cattle, and all the farm implements as well, for his rent. This, of course, gave rise to litigation, which will only end in the ruin and ejectment of the tenant, with the re-letting of the farm at a higher rent, an object not far from being accomplished.

Since these remarks about Dormer were written, the *Kilkenny Journal* has been received, containing a report of the cases at petty sessions on the 18th of November. Of ten cases which occupied the attention of the court, seven arose out of the disputes between the landlord and his tenants in the disturbed district already described. Five of those cases were at the instance of the landlord against the tenant Mathew Dormer, who had been excluded from his field, and whose corn, as stated in a letter which I quoted, was standing rotting on the ground up to the 8th of October. It does not appear by the report of the cases decided at petty sessions whether the corn is yet in the field or carried home; but it appears to have been in the field on the 15th of November. On that day Dormer proceeded to make a gap in a stone wall, the gates being shut against him, to get into his field. For making this gap three actions were brought against him by the landlord, and two by persons whom the landlord put forward as prosecutors. It seems the first time the gap was attempted was on the 13th of October. The field through which Dormer then attempted to pass to his own field was in the occupation of the landlord himself; and the landlord now prosecuted under the Malicious Trespass Act; but the magistrate dismissed the case because it was not *malicious*. His remarks give a better exemplification of what law is in Ireland than any description of mine could do. The case is thus reported:—The steward of the landlord called "deposed that he saw the defendant levelling a wall, the property of the plaintiff; he was making a gap in it."

Cross-examined: "I live with Mr Shee. The defendant said he would not be prevented till the law prevented him, and that he must get a passage, *and that if he got a passage he would build up the gap at his own expense.* There was no other passage to his field than that. There was formerly a passage to the farm through a field of one Ring, but Dormer was since prevented."

The attorney for the defence then addressed the bench; stated that Mathew Dormer owed nothing to the landlord, and had a legal right to a road to his farm. He had followed the way which had been formerly used, namely, through another tenant's ground; but at the instance of the landlord this tenant had been compelled to prosecute, and Dormer had been fined for trespass by this bench. He then attempted to make this gap and have a passage, as complained of to-day, through a field in the occupation of his landlord, who was bound to give him a passage to that farm, the rent of which Dormer would be compelled to pay as soon as it became due. What, therefore, could the poor man do? His corn was rotting in the field at that time, the middle of October.

To which the magistrate, in giving his decision, replied, "It was a hard case; but he thought Mathew Dormer had no right to break Mr Shee's wall or commit the trespass. It certainly was not malicious; and if Mr Quin (the defendant's attorney) insisted on it, the bench must dismiss the summons; but another summons might be brought for common trespass, and the case would have to be heard *de novo*. Why did not Dormer bring his action?"

The Attorney—"And so he will."

"The magistrate, after some farther discussion, agreed to dismiss the complaint, Mr Quin undertaking to prove, should another summons be brought for common trespass, that Dormer had a right to break the gap."

The point, of all others, which the English public should look at here, is the question of the magistrate, "Why does not Dormer bring his action?" The magistrate knows well that in this case Dormer would succeed in an action against the landlord; that is to say, if the jury should not be entirely a landlord's jury. But the action could not be tried before next spring or summer assizes; and the landlord might, as he has done in similar cases already, make an affidavit that he was not ready to go to trial even then. And if this was overruled, and the case proceeded with and decided against him—as it would be, provided always the jury was not one formed of men of his own rank, politics, and religion—he could appeal to a higher court. Meantime Dormer is ruined. He could not plant his potatoes last spring without committing a trespass by walking on another man's land—not the land bearing or preparing for a crop, but the footpath at the bottom of it. He planted his potatoes, however, and was fined for this trespass. But he planted them without manure, for he could not get an entrance at which to carry it in, and the crop was worthless. "Why does not Dormer bring his action?" asks the magistrate. No doubt he can bring an action, and ultimately carry it too; but his crop is rendered worthless in the meantime, and the same magistrate fines him for walking on the footpath which leads to it. "Why does not Dormer bring his action?" The magistrate who has fined him for going to his land without having first brought his action, which would occupy probably one or two years, asks this question on the 18th of November, knowing that Dormer's crop of barley was still rotting on the field, or had been so as late as the 15th, three-day's before! No doubt the magistrate administers the law as it stands; but it is the law as it stands of which such men as Dormer complain. The object of the landlord is to render the payment of rent impossible, and a consequent ejectment certain. This is the policy by which a leaseholder is overcome in Ireland.

But the prosecution did not end by the magistrate dismissing the first summons at the petty sessions. Another prosecutor was ready. A man had been sent by the landlord to watch Dormer in case he made a gap in the wall; and on the 13th of October, when he began to make the gap, this man, who is a mere minion of the landlord—fit for any kind of work—went to prevent him. Wherever Dormer attempted to lay the stones, this man put himself in the way, that the stones might fall upon him, and that a case of assault might be got up at the same time as that of malicious trespass. This case, however, did not succeed, Dormer having taken care not to hurt him, although he put himself in the way of the stones for the purpose. The summons was dismissed. The following is a portion of the cross-examination of this witness:—

"He was in England last summer twelvemonths. He was there also at the time of the Whitefeet; is not aware that the neighbours ever said he used to be out with his face blackened. Was up in Cork lately; saw Mr Shee, who gave him travelling charges to the amount of L.1 : 5s. Had no conversation with him then about Mathew Dormer. Had a conversation with Mr Shee lately about him at Blackwell Lodge."

The Attorney—"On your solemn oath, did Mr Shee (the landlord) say he would give you anything in the world if you would transport Dormer?"

"The witness," says the *Kilkenny Journal*, "was silent amidst the sensation of the court, and the question was again and again repeated, and he was still silent. At length he muttered an evasive answer."

It may be proper here to remark that Dormer is a man bearing the very best moral character. He was several years in the police, and saved some money. I saw and read the certificates of character which he held, and they bore out the good report of his moral character. Moreover, in his very appearance he carries respectability of behaviour. He is a tall man, about forty years of age, and has a wife and several young children.

The next prosecutor against him, for making a gap in the wall to get to his field and crop, was a man who alleged that the field over which Dormer trespassed was in his occupation, and not in that of the landlord. This man produced a lease, signed the 16th of November, in which he appeared to be the tenant of the field. It was argued that Dormer made the gap previous to that lease being completed. It was a gap in the same wall at the same place as that of the 13th of October, that having been, it seems, built up. The court in this case decided against Dormer, and fined him a shilling, and cautioned him against a repetition of the offence. Two other cases of trespass came on in which the landlord was plaintiff and Dormer defendant. They were dismissed through an informality in the summonses.

These cases, though they are as innocence itself compared with some others in which the landlord has been engaged, will shew how powerless the law is to protect a tenant in Ireland, even where a magistrate inclines to mercy. But perhaps the most remarkable fact of law in connection with these cases is, that while the wages of a working man in the district is 6d. a-day, with many not able to get employment even at that, the expense of doing any work for which the law allows payment is fully as high, in some cases much higher, than similar work costs in London. The expense of building up the gap which Dormer made (not being allowed to build it himself) is 10s. It is only a *dry*-stone wall, between three and four feet high. Now, supposing the gap wide enough to admit a cart, any labouring man could rebuild it in three or four hours at the very utmost.

In the matter of seizures the charges are similar. In London, a broker who distrains can only put one man in possession, and charge for him 2s. 6d. a-day. In Ireland a landlord puts what men he chooses in possession, and charges for them from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a-day. The landlord now spoken of has, as law papers proved to me when I inspected them, seized on a man's potatoes who was working for 8d. a-day, the current wages, and put two men on as "keepers" for a week, and allowed them (the law allows him to do so) 2s. 4d, a-day.

The following extract of a letter from Patrick Ring, whose case (just ended with his utter ruin and beggary) I shall relate at length, will give some information on the high wages allowed by the law, even where men are willing to work for 6d. a-day :—

"I got my crop valued by two farmers, and they valued it at L.30. He (the landlord) then takes and puts three keepers on it to run up expenses, and canted it (sold it) for L.17 : 10s., and out of that, keepers' fees and expenses were L.6 : 10s."

It may also be stated that a landlord in Ireland can call on any one of his servants or labourers to act as auctioneer. If he wants to buy a bargain himself, or to ruin the tenant to have him ejected, he can give this domestic auctioneer orders to knock an article down at a price far below its value. The landlord under notice has, in many cases, bought the effects of his tenants himself through an agent.

CASE OF PATRICK RING.

Patrick Ring held three small fields, amounting in all to about eighteen acres. He had a lease of thirty-one years and his own life. He had succeeded his father in the occupancy of the farm, who had also been on the estate far many years. Ring's mother, an aged woman, now bordering on eighty, was born on the farm so long held by her husband and son; and thus there was doubtless a strong attachment to the place on the part of the whole family. Previous to the accession of the present landlord they had been on the best of terms with those to whom they paid their rent; and, having the land at a moderate rate, they had never fallen into arrears. They are Catholics—the present landlord is a Protestant. But whether it was that he wished to serve his party by substituting a Protestant tenantry for a Catholic tenantry, Protestant jurymen for Catholic jurymen; whether it was merely to have the leases broken and the farms re-let at a higher rent; or whether it was to accomplish both objects at once, is not clear, nor is it a matter of great importance; the landlord, and those who support him in all he does, are welcome to excuse themselves on any ground they choose to take as excusable. It is sufficient to say that the ejection of Patrick Ring and many more was resolved upon.

As he owed no rent, and as no possible reason for getting rid of him as a tenant could be assigned, nor was ever offered until long after proceedings had begun, a bold stroke to make a beginning was absolutely requisite, and it was struck. The lease specified a certain day in May and in November as that on which the half-yearly rent would fall due. Those days had been strictly adhered to, and no one knew this better than the landlord. But in 1841 he obtained a warrant of distraint, and seized on Ring on the 26th of March for rent alleged to be due on 25th. It might have been a hard enough misfortune to be distrained on the day following that of the rent being due in any case, especially in spring, when the cattle and implements of labour, as also the seed-corn and potatoes, the articles distrained, are required for the peculiar duties of that most important season, seed-time. But when such distraint was made on such articles so indispensable in their uses, even for a day, to say nothing of weeks, and no rent nor debt of any kind owing, the case is peculiarly a hard one on the tenant.

Patrick Ring caused a replevin to be entered with the sheriff, that is, he gave security that he would pay the rent, if rent was due, as soon as a trial at quarter-sessions or assizes could be had, that he might in the meantime have the use of the property upon which the distraint lay. He accordingly proved by his lease that he owed nothing—that no rent was due until May. But before that was done May had come, and the rent was due. He paid it punctually, and proceeded against the landlord for damages, or rather for the costs to which he had been exposed. This, being opposed, occupied much time, and before it was settled the landlord once more distrained for rent alleged to be due on the 29th of September. Again Patrick Ring replevined, and proved his rent-day to be in November and May, and not in September and March. The case of costs and trespass came to trial in respect of both seizures, and was decided in Ring's favour. Thus a jury and a judge certified by their decision that the tenant was right and the landlord was wrong. The damages awarded were very moderate, only L.12 and costs; but the tenant looked on the verdict as most important in respect of its setting, as he thought, the validity of his lease and the period of his rent-days at rest. But that the damages were too moderate as regarded the landlord was manifest from the fact that he again distrained in March for rent not due until May.

He now, it being again seed-time, took a more effectual way of crippling the tenant than before. He seized on the farm implements and stock, of which the dunghill was in his eyes the most important. He had it, without a legal sale, carried away to his own farm-yard, even to the very rakings and sweepings of the road and the yard near which it lay. This he did that Ring might have no manure for his potato ground, knowing that crops so planted would not easily afford the rent; and that, when no rent was forthcoming, an ejectment would soon follow. Other things, a plough and a horse, and some furniture, were sold, and Ring was once more involved in litigation. These things were bought in with his own money, save the dung heap, which the landlord would not give him a chance of buying in; and thus Ring was obliged to pay his rent before it was due, with all the expenses of a distraint and sale—the most expensively conducted of any distraints and sales under the British crown. He thought to recover damages for all this loss, but he was not able to pay his rent in addition to all this when it became due; and thus, by some hocus pocus of the law, the two cases became so mingled together as to be inextricable.

It would be too tedious to give a detailed account of every lawsuit that now followed; but from that time, the summer of 1842, up to the summer assizes of 1843, the landlord proceeded in the courts for a warrant of ejectment against Ring nine times. On the first eight cases he was defeated, but he succeeded on the ninth. He had thirteen other lawsuits of various kinds with the same defendant, during which he sold his furniture five times and his horse twice. In all, he had twenty auctions of sale previous to midsummer of this year. Part of the furniture was in several of these instances only bought back by the agent, Mr James Coyne, handing money privately to Ring to pay for it. This is the agent formerly spoken of, who at last gave up his situation out of sheer disgust at the odious work he was called on to perform.

The crop of 1842 was seized on and sold at seven different times. It was much more than sufficient to pay the rent, even though the manure was carried away in the spring by the landlord; but those seven different seizures, with seven different sales, with a number of men receiving at each of the seven seizures 2s. 4d. a-day as keepers to watch the crop from the day of distraint to the day of sale—those seven seizures on a crop which might have been all seized and sold at one time, with only one set of expenses—resulted, as they were intended to do, in nearly doubling the rent. Moreover, the crop being distrained on while growing, was cut down by people whom the landlord employed, although the tenant and his family were standing unemployed; and to such work people the landlord can give any wages he chooses, to be deducted from the tenant, up to 2s. 6d. a-day! even though the harvest wages of the district be 8d. or 10d. a-day! even though the tenant, who is thus not allowed to give his own labour to his farm, may, to avoid starvation, be compelled to work to another employer for the fourth part, to wit, 7½d. a-day, of what the law obliges him to pay for workmen on his own farm.

It will give some proof of the exertions made by the tenant to pay his way when I state that, notwithstanding all the extraordinary expenses of the seizures, and of the protracted and complicated litigation, the rent was paid by the autumn of 1842. There was nothing owing by Ring save a sum of L.1 and odds, connected with the expenses of a summons which had been decided against him on some technical point of law.

For the recovery of this debt a decree was obtained against Ring, and orders were given by the landlord to arrest him and put him in gaol. This Ring endeavoured to avoid by keeping out of the reach of the officers, which he did successfully for the space of a month and some odd days. The reason why he was so averse to go to gaol, and why the landlord was so desirous to have him lodged there, is worth relating at full length, as it is characteristic of certain customs in Ireland altogether unknown on this side of the channel.

It is a very rare thing to find a landlord in Ireland building a house or farm-offices for a tenant—the tenant builds them himself. Hence it is that so many mean houses exist in that country; and hence, also, the desperate tenacity with which the Irish peasant or farmer holds to his house when an ejectment comes upon him. If his lease has expired, or if he is ejected for the non-fulfilment of some condition of his lease, say the regular payment of his rent, he must leave the house and barn and stable which he built, the doors and gates he erected, without receiving anything for them. To live in a house which we have ourselves built, or which our father or grandfather built at no expense to a landlord, is to live in a house which we are naturally inclined to consider our own, though in law it may not be ours, and therefore an ejectment is the more distressing. It is thus that we see so many houses in every part of Ireland in ruins; that we see in the county of Kilkenny the walls of stone and lime, substantial and undecayed, but roofless and marked with violence, because the landlords, not having built the houses, nor having any fear of being obliged to rebuild them, hesitate not to unroof a house in order to eject a tenant. It is a remarkable fact, exemplified on almost every estate where the clearing away of a tenantry has been practised, that wherever an ejectment takes place, the legality of which is doubtful, the landlord, or the agent who acts for him, levels the house and farm buildings with the ground the moment the holder is forced out, lest he should come in again.

This is particularly the case on the estate where the unfortunate Pat Ring held his farm; and Ring had seen that the landlord did not always wait for an ejectment of the tenant before he pulled down the house. In one case, that of a tenant named Bushe, of whom, with many other sufferers, I have not yet spoken, the landlord resolved on an ejectment; but Bushe owing no rent, he could only proceed as he had done against Pat Ring, or by some other process of a like kind. He took a shorter one. It so happened that, though Bushe had paid his rent in order to keep the house above his head—a very good house it was, to judge from the size and worth of the substantial walls which, in most parts, were still standing when I was there—he had not paid every man in the county to whom he was indebted. He owed one person, residing at a distance, a sum of money, more, as it soon appeared, than he could pay at once. This man the landlord found out, through some of his agents appointed for such purposes, and purchased from him the debt which Bushe owed him. This account being legally conveyed to the landlord, he at once proceeded against his tenant, the debtor, threw him into prison, and as soon as he got him there, went and took the roof off his house, turning out his wife and six young children upon the open highway. There they remained without shelter and without food until some of the people of the adjoining village assisted them. The father was in prison, and could neither resist the spoliation of the house which he himself had built, nor could he do anything, by work or otherwise, for his family's subsistence. In every respect, the proceeding was illegal on the part of the landlord; but, though the lawyers urged Bushe to prosecute, and assured him of ultimate success, he was to far gone too listen to them. He was heart-broken. He had no confidence in any redress the law might give; he had seen a rich man set the law at defiance; and the ruin of his roofless house—every piece of timber from which, and every handful of thatch, as also the doors and windows, had been carried away by order of the landlord, and by the assistance of the constabulary, who are located on the estate at the express request of the landlord, and by sanction of the government—the ruin of his roofless house, and the utter beggary of himself and family, so overwhelmed Bushe, that he would trust nothing more to law. He was heart-broken, and rather than stay among people who had known him happy in mind and comfortable in circumstances, he would leave that part of the country altogether, and be a beggar, now that he was compelled to be one, where he was not known. A less sensitive man than he was might have done differently. There have been cases in Ireland, many of them, and in that county, even in that district of the county, where fathers of families so treated have taken the law of vengeance into their own hands, and have afforded the newspapers and the police *Hue-and-Cry* the materials for publishing to the world paragraphs and advertisements of offered rewards, headed "*Un*provoked assault!" "Barbarous outrage!" "Frightful state of Kilkenny—the fruit of unchecked political agitation!" "Attempted murder of the excellent Protestant landlord, Richard Shee, Esq. of Blackwell Lodge!"

Such paragraphs are by no means rare; and many people in England believe that Tipperary and Kilkenny are filled with criminals who take a savage delight in assaulting landlords and land-agents without any provocation. Others, who do not believe that every assault is so entirely "*un*provoked" as the newspapers would make appear, have an opinion that the Irish do not allow the oppressor to escape with impunity;

but the case of Bushe is one of the many of the vast majority of such cases that prove the contrary. We hear of those tenants who, feeling or fancying a grievous wrong, avenge themselves and their starving families; but we never hear of the many—the far greater number—who submit to die in the ditches and highways quietly; or who, like the spirit-stricken Bushe, wander away with their wretched families, to famish in the Irish towns, or to fill the St Giles's and Peter Streets, the Cowgates and Wynds, the Saltmarkets and Vennels, of London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Liverpool.

Now, it was the knowledge that Pat Ring had of such cases of house-demolition by order of landlords, when a tenant was out of the way—lodged safely in prison—that made him so fearful of the officers, who had a decree on which to arrest him for the non-payment of costs due to the landlord by one of the many cases then pending having been decided in the landlord's favour. The amount was not great; but the frequent seizures, with costs of lawsuits and rent, had reduced him to less than his last penny. He had potatoes, a part of the feeble crop grown on the land which in the spring had been defrauded of its manure, and, though there were less of them in his possession than would keep his family over winter, even without feeding a pig, he might have sold some to pay this bill of costs rather than go to gaol, where he could do nothing either for his family or farm. But, though the potatoes were distrained upon, the object of the landlord was not so much the payment of the small debt of costs as the confinement of the tenant in gaol.

For more than a month Ring avoided the officers by crossing the walls and ditches and fields whenever he got notice of their approach. He slept in the fields as well, and in the shelter of limekilns and ruined houses—houses ruined as he feared his would be, and as he feared but too truly. The case came at last to a crisis, thus:—

He was seen to enter his house; the bailiffs followed, but found the door fastened, and therefore could not legally enter; but they kept watch outside, to see that he did not escape. They received orders that, if he did not surrender, they were to remain there night and day, and prevent the introduction of any article whatsoever into the house, food or water. The potato-store being out in the field, and no supply in the house, and the water being also outside the house, it was expected that the family would soon be starved, and that Ring must capitulate. In thus laying seige to the house, the bailiffs might not be acting according to the law of the land, but they were acting according to the law of the landlord, which, on that estate as on many others in Ireland, is of paramount importance compared with the law of the land.

Before the first day of the seige was over, there was neither food nor drink in the house ; and there were shut up in it the father, mother, and five young children. Next day the children cried for food and for drink, but got none. Some of the neighbours and relatives of Pat Ring would have supplied them, but they were sternly told that, if they attempted to do so, they would not only be prevented, but that the landlord would cause them to regret it. Again and again, through night and through day, did the cry for water come from that famishing family. It was not the case of a shipwrecked crew at sea, with no hand to help, with "water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink !" with no probability of being relieved but by reaching some unknown land in some unknown ocean, or by meeting a ship—blessed though rare chance—whose mariners would joyfully share their own scanty water for the relief of those perishing with thirst. It was not a case of this kind, where men in their desperation will drink salt water, and go mad from so doing ; but, having done so, do not always all die, but sometimes live to tell us of the pangs they endured, until our breasts burn with pity and our hair rises on end with horror at what they did. This was not a case like theirs. This was the captivity of a family in their own house ; foodless for days, though they had a potato-store in the field ; waterless and unquenched by any liquid, though they had a well within a minute's walk ; and all this by the mandate of a man who lived at the distance of half-a-mile, in the enjoyment of every luxury which wealth could procure and voluptuousness desire. The mother had a sucking infant, and in her attempt to save all her children from starvation by admitting them to the privilege of infancy, she but augmented their distress and her own. She saw her infant famishing, for, when she would have divided her own milk, there was none to divide ; she was herself starving, and to her infant she was without nourishment.

It was the third day, and hunger and thirst in the house were so manifest to the bailiffs outside, by the pitiful cries of the children, and the wailings of the mother—who begged for water from their own well, and for potatoes from their own store—that hopes were entertained of a speedy surrender. Reports of the symptoms of extremity were conveyed at intervals to the landlord, who, as he heard of the increasing cries for water and food, gave orders afresh to the bailiffs to persevere, to keep watch and prevent all supplies from getting in, being assured that as the pangs of hunger and thirst became more poignant, the sooner would the beleagured family capitulate.

Mrs Dormer, the wife of the tenant who is shut out of his land, and whose crop of barley is rotting on the field in November, though he owes nothing to the landlord—this woman, who has herself a family of young children, and who is the sister of Pat Ring, went many times to the beleagured house to offer relief, but was not permitted to approach it with anything in her hand. She was allowed to approach the window when she carried nothing, that she might hear the sufferings within, and so urge her brother to surrender.

She listened to the sickly wailings of the mother and children, and at last on the fourth day heard the horrible fact from the mother that the children in desperation had drank their own urine. At this moment she seized a dish of some sort which lay in the yard, and filling it quickly from a pool of stagnant water in the yard, broke the window with her hand, before she could be prevented by the officers, and gave the unwholesome water to the family, which they drank greedily. Perhaps she would have done more, but she was compelled by the officers to desist. The landlord was informed of what she had done, and he promised that she would live to repent it. The crop of Dormer rotting in the field in November, and his potatoes poor and meagre for the want of manure, because he is not allowed a road to his field, tell whether the landlord forgets his promises.

The sufferings of the family and of himself now worked on the father until he could hold out no longer. He opened the door. He had a pitchfork in his hand, and he shewed it to the bailiffs. He bade them keep off—said he would not touch them if they did not touch him—but that the hunger of himself and family had made him desperate—that he had potatoes in his store in the field, and potatoes he would have; and he bade them prevent him at their peril.

They did not offer to prevent him; they waited until they saw him take the potatoes, and then they informed the landlord. On that instant a criminal warrant was sent for from Kilkenny. It arrived; so did also a party of the armed constabulary, who occupy the barrack built by the landlord on the estate, and the door was at once forced open, and Pat Ring was taken and lodged in gaol on a charge of robbery accompanied with threats of violence. He had stolen his own potatoes, they being under distraint, and he was in due course of time tried at Kilkenny for the felony. The jury refused to convict for a crime committed under such circumstances, and he was acquitted.

This case has now reached the month of July 1843. At that time he was once more in prison for the non-payment of costs incurred in defending himself against the landlord.

These were paid, and a new decree for some other costs was got against him. There was also a warrant for his ejectment obtained. At this time his family were ill of typhus fever, and had been for several weeks. The sheriff refused to execute the ejectment while they so suffered. The landlord was exceedingly anxious to eject as early as possible, because (let the English reader mark this peculiarity of Irish tenures) a tenant, though ejected, may recover possession; the law says he may redeem within six months. Now Ring had an action for damages pending against the landlord, a very simple action, which could have been easily tried, and in which a jury could not have hesitated to award ample damages. To this, at the summer assizes, the landlord, through his law agents, pleaded that he was not ready to go to trial; consequently it was put off until next assizes, to wit, March 1844. If, therefore, Ring could have been ejected in July, or early in August 1843, the six months in which he could redeem possession of his land would have expired before the trial of the case postponed to March 1844—a case which promised to put Ring in a condition to redeem his land by payment of his debt to the landlord.

We need not proceed farther with those cases of injustice. The landlord now under notice has proceeded in litigation and expenses until he is no longer in the management of his estate. Others in Ireland, less tyrannical than him, but not more wise in the management of their estates, have brought Ireland to a condition unparalleled in the history of nations. It would be vain to speculate on what the future may be, we can only say that the present (end of 1847 and beginning of 1848) is deplorable. Law set at defiance; rates uncollected; and rents unpaid.

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