

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 genteler 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 dairymen, 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 burst.

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 prac-

tised 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 Cistercian 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, kieves, 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, law-suits, 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 develop 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 downfall 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 wiped, and wiped down, and combed the mane, and sponged the hoofs and brightened them; and have sad-

dled 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 agri-

culture 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 sty; 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 accord-

ingly. 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 manured 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 work-house 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 Pennycuik 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 Pennycuik; 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 Pennycuik, 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 Banks, 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 families 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 to-morrow 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, and 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 toride 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 Thorneliffe—Francis Augustus de Aubrey Thorneliffe—at the age of 25, succeeded his father, Francis John de Aubrey Thorneliffe, 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 Thorneliffe 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 horses for 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 slightly 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 similarly 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 compulsion, 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 £10,000 a-year, agriculture was marred and buffeted, 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 unmingled 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 tugs, 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 provisoive 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 through 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 Northampton, 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

* The captain has succeeded his lamented brother, and is now Earl Spencer.

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.

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 Lord-

ship, 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, panelled 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 in-

creasing 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 im-

provement 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, over-shadowed 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 ascertained, 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, dur-

ing 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 Norman-ton, 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 work-house; 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 suffocate 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 sales-

man 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 carcasses, 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 dearth 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 far-

mers 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 rabbits, 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. 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 two-fold 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 sail-cloth, 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 coast-guard 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 unqua-

lified 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 necessities 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 rotteness, 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 co-operated 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 Busigny, 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 cloddish 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 grave-stones 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 "Lenard'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 journeyed 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 waist-coat. 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 furni-

ture, 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 fire-works; 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 farmyard 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 Bassett, 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 corn-fields ; 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 will 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 do 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 as 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

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 un-

fortunately 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 news-

paper 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, 23d 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 Phoenix 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 ven-

tured 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 the 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 gives 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 con-

siderable 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 steepes 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 leaseholding 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 lorry 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 redundancy 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 ammunition 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 peo-

ple :—" 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 barrell'd 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, turnscrows, 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 auctioneer. 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 disor-

dered 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 shop-keepers 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 magnificent 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 beggar-

ed 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; affluent 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, 12th February.

Looking from this western county town, through the medium of note-books and recollections, upon all the counties journeyed 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 priva-

tions 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 £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, it 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 $234\frac{1}{2}$ 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, 19th 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of meal per day each for ten months; this is 60,052 tons.

2. 2,057,156 persons aged from five to fifteen, 1 lb. of meal per day each for ten months, 279,185 tons.

3. 4,517,760 persons aged from fifteen to sixty, 1 5-7 lb. of meal per day each for ten months, 1,051,070 tons.

4. 353,795 persons aged above sixty, 1 lb. 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 £13,424,357. But the real price of meal is from 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. 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 26 lb. 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 2 lb. of potatoes per day for children under five years of age; 6 lb. per day for young persons between five and fifteen; 10 lb. per day for adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty; and 2 lb. per day for aged persons above sixty.

In the province of Ulster, consisting of the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Lon-

donderry, 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 uncultivated; 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*, 17th 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 negotiations 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 rate-payers 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 Knockerochery—"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 landlord 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 for 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 agriculturists 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 prosperity. 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 garri-

soned 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 do not 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 potatoes 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 Knocknixin, 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 Syngé. I was also sub-agent under Mr Lefroy. I was removed after the election in 1841. I disoblged 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 exe-

cution 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 ejection 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 candidates 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 Rosecommon, 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 Nafaoey, near whose solitary waters few wanderers approach without awe. On the shores of Nafaoey 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 they 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 unre-

conciled 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 the leases at last to protect them from ejection, 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 ejection 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 ejections 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 ejections 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 ejection 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 ejections 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 caught 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 otherwise 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 emptiness 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 reconciliation 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 demesne 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 improve-

ments 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 intillage, 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 bleach-field 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 in-

herited 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

hereditary 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 bare-footed 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 beyond 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 stand-

ing 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 slaty 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 woman-kind 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 valuers, 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 it 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, mea-

