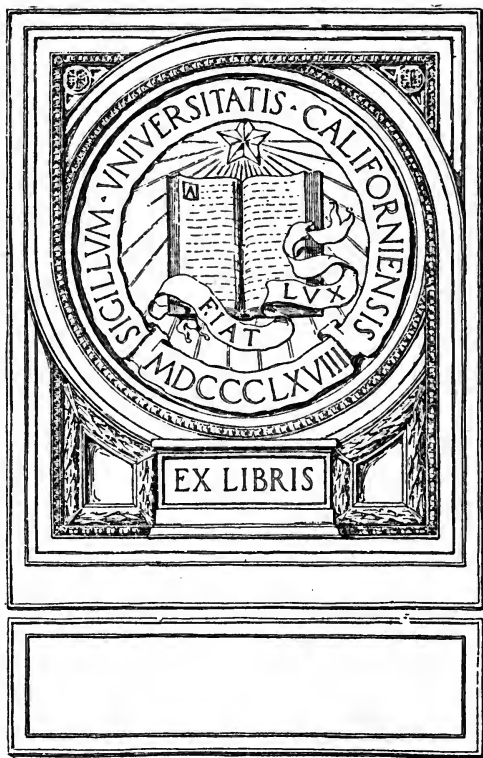


BRITISH  
RURAL LIFE  
AND LABOUR



*Francis George Heath*



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BRITISH RURAL LIFE AND LABOUR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY (1874)

- Quarterly Review*.—"We have placed at the head of this article" (on the agricultural labour question) "the names of three books . . . of these far the most valuable is a book by Mr. Heath, entitled 'The English Peasantry.'"
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(1880)

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- John Bull*.—"It is written with considerable power."





*Yours very faithfully*

*Francis George Heath*

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# BRITISH RURAL LIFE AND LABOUR

BY

FRANCIS GEORGE HEATH

AUTHOR OF

"THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY" "THE 'ROMANCE' OF PEASANT LIFE"

"PEASANT LIFE IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND" "THE FERN WORLD"

"OUR WOODLAND TREES" ETC. ETC.

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## PREFACE.

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OUTSIDE my previous books—brief extracts from a small selection of the press opinions on which are given on a page preceding the title page of this work—I am unaware of any book in which even an *endeavour* has been made to present, in anything like concrete form, a subject that is of urgent national importance to all British peoples.

Scattered through newspapers and magazines there have been, during the past half century, brief and fragmentary allusions to this subject; but I was the first, I think, in 1872, to put it into consecutive book form, and to endeavour to make a comprehensive picture.

As if to make such comprehensive treatment even officially “conspicuous by its absence,” a few monumental heaps of “Blue books” are, here and there—through the course of the last fifty years—scattered along the historical track; but these have been practically dropped still-born, “overlain,” or asphyxiated, by the mass of undigested, ill-arranged material obtained; and they are only used by the M.P. or other public man in hot haste to speak on the subject.

Yet the alarming and increasing depopulation of our rural districts, and the bearing of the whole question upon our national food supply, surely make this subject an important and urgent one for every inhabitant of the British Islands; and my last five chapters will, I trust,

be found to provide an effectual remedy for the evils pointed out.

This book will, I think, possess importance as an historical record, and should interest not only readers at home and in our Colonies and in other dependencies of the Empire, but, through translations, in foreign countries.

The claim of historical interest applies also, I think, to the *GLANCE AT THE PAST*, which I have relegated to an *APPENDIX*. The sections there, "Some Pictures of 1873," and "Seven Years After—1880," recording personal and painstaking investigations made during an extended walking tour through the great agricultural region in our Western Counties, are important as a record of past conditions that, happily, are now rapidly disappearing.

Whilst I am indebted to Board of Trade and other official returns for a good deal of information, I have expended a large amount of labour in making that information concise and valuable for easy reference.

My aim, as ever, has been to bring great classes nearer to each other, and to promote the most cordial of friendly relations between employers and employed.

FRANCIS GEORGE HEATH.



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# BRITISH RURAL LIFE AND LABOUR.



## BRITISH PEASANTS OF TO-DAY.

### ENGLAND.

#### CHAPTER I.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF LABOUR.

THE word "peasant" is a generic expression intended to include all those who are engaged professionally, so to speak, in the cultivation of the soil—all those, that is to say, who engage in farming as a business, but who work for an employer, a master man—the farmer, in short. The word farmer itself is a very broad expression, including under it two classes, the small farmer and the large farmer. Both of these classes are again generally divisible into two classes: those who farm their own freeholds, and those who rent their farms from a landed proprietor. Then there is the ordinary, or working, farmer, who takes part in the labour of the farm, and the "gentleman farmer," who merely superintends the operations of his staff.

"Peasant proprietor" means a small holder of land

from one acre to perhaps five or ten—one who, himself owning or renting a small piece of land, struggles by careful cultivation to eke out a living for himself and family.

We are, however, concerned only with the genuine labourer, who, always working for an employer, is nothing else. The term "farm servant" is perhaps the best expression—for that covers all grades of paid assistants, whether they live in the farmhouse or outside, and whether they receive their wages wholly in cash, or partly in cash and partly "in kind."

But, whilst the word "peasant," *per se*, covers all kinds of farm assistants, it will be interesting to indicate the various grades and denominations of these assistants in the work of agriculture. On large farms the "assistance" needs to be considerable, and there must be a well-ordered division of labour. First, under the chief or farmer, whom we may conveniently designate the "occupier," there come the managers or superintendents. Each of these may be, and usually is called, a foreman, a bailiff, or a steward. Next to these, the more important and responsible and invariably better-paid labourers are those placed in charge of farm animals. For convenience we will catalogue these in alphabetical order under the different names applied to them in different localities. Some of these names are of pretty universal application; others are purely local. The epithets designating them are "beastmen," "carters," "cattlemen," "cowmen," "foggers" (this name, in parts of Berkshire, is restricted to milkers, whilst in Wiltshire, on the other hand, the name, in some cases, is only applied to men engaged in feeding animals, and looking after them in the stockyards); "garthmen," "herdsmen," "hinds" (here, again, whilst in parts of Yorkshire the word "hind" merely denotes a foreman, in other parts of the same county, notably in the northern part of the North Riding, in Durham, and in Northumber-



land, the term means a ploughman simply); "horsemen," "horsekeepers," "shepherds," "stockmen," "team-men," "teamsters," "waggoners," and "yardsmen."

These cattle-caretakers, as we may term them, have naturally more onerous duties than ordinary labourers, and longer hours. They also have Sunday work, from which the ordinary labourer is exempt; and this applies especially to the winter. The animals must be properly housed in their stables or sheds. The latter must be kept clean, and proper and sufficient food supplied to them. The general cleaning-out takes place, ordinarily on Saturday, and, on large farms, Sunday work is taken in turns. In such dairy counties as Berkshire, Bucks, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, Staffordshire, and Wilts, a good many of the farm hands are specially told off for milking—a work involving very early hours, four o'clock in the morning sometimes, and sometimes earlier than that, and also Sunday work. On farms employing a considerable number of men and requiring a head manager in the shape of a foreman, bailiff, or steward, he may sometimes have under him a head carter, horsekeeper or waggoner, a head shepherd, and a head stockman, and each one of these "heads" is responsible to the chief. Also, where machinery is used, an engine-man will be required.

The division of labour on farms is, of course, mainly carried out on the larger ones, where it is necessary to keep it within strict limits. On small ones, economy will suggest a combination of functions, and the utilisation of the "all-round man" who can turn his hand to almost anything. The farmer himself is sometimes an all-round man, and is compelled, if in a small way of business, to do himself a lot of miscellaneous things; or, if he is able to employ only a few men, he frequently is fortunate enough to possess a general-utility man,

who proves an invaluable aid. But, on farms of fairly good size—large enough, for instance, to employ a shepherd—that functionary seldom does anything but look after his own work ; and on similar farms, too, the carter (“horsekeeper,” “horseman,” “team-man,” “teamster,” or “waggoner”), does little else than look after the horses, whilst, similarly, the “herdsman” (“beastman,” “cattleman,” “cowman,” “garthman,” “stockman,” or “yardsman”) looks after his cattle only. The region of the “working farmer” who manages, sometimes wholly and sometimes partly, to do the work of the farm, assisted by any available members of his family, is, more than in some others, found in the counties of Cambridge, Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Devon ; in Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Westmorland, and Yorkshire. Mr. Wilson Fox has an interesting note in one of his Board of Trade reports on this mixing of employments. He says, speaking of farms of medium size :—

“Perhaps two or three men may be engaged who will all give a hand to any job that may be required, whether it consists of ploughing, milking, or feeding and tending animals. The carter may milk the cows as well as attend to the horses. In Cheshire the operation of milking is often carried out by nearly the whole staff of the farm, including perhaps members of the farmer’s family, and the rest of the day they are engaged on the general work of the farm. Sometimes one man looks after all the animals, including a small flock of sheep, and where this does not fully employ him, he fills up the rest of his time with other farm work. In some cases the small farmer himself, particularly if he has risen from the ranks, and has been a foreman, shepherd, or head cattleman, looks after the animals, not only because he understands their management, but because on their well-being mainly depends the success of his farm. In Cumberland and Westmorland the farmer or one of his sons frequently acts as shepherd. In some districts it is not an uncommon practice, where the duties of the men are not particularly defined, or on farms where extra help with animals is required at particular seasons, to pay a shilling, or perhaps two shillings, a week extra on the rate to the ordinary labourers, to those who attend to animals on Sundays.”

Where a farmer acts as his own foreman, having no manager, he himself distributes the work to be done amongst his men ; but, if the farm is too big, he might do part of the management himself, and leave part to a foreman. Another method is for the farmer to give general instructions, leaving them to be carried out by his foreman, who would have to rise earlier in the morning than it might suit the farmer to do. The division of a large holding into several farms, distant from each other, sometimes renders necessary a resident foreman for each ; and the master has to exercise his general supervision of the whole by riding backwards and forwards.

When a shepherd is employed, the fact usually implies a large holding, and special and exclusive attention to the particular work of a shepherd. The position is usually a responsible one. The hours are necessarily long and the work arduous, more especially during the lambing season ; and then a good deal of night work is necessary. Sheep-shearing and sheep-washing, too, are occupations needing attention, care, and skill. Sometimes a shepherd has very long distances to travel over rough, broken ground ; and this duty must be performed in all weathers. They cannot be said, in the ordinary sense, to have hours of duty, as they work at all hours ; and it has been said, in effect, that a shepherd has " no hours," so uncertain are the times they have to be about.

Very varied is the responsibility of cattlemen, and the amount of their work depends largely upon the size of the farms on which they are engaged. It varies also according to the character of the system adopted. In breeding districts, where the owners of the cattle compete at exhibitions, and breed and condition count, very skilled men are required, and these, naturally, can earn the best wages. It so happens, not unfrequently, that the cattleman is the best paid of all the labourers. On dairy farms, where the simpler operations of grazing and

## 6 BRITISH RURAL LIFE AND LABOUR.

milking have to be seen to, less highly-skilled men are required, and the work can very well be done by the ordinary labourers at ordinary pay. The adaptability of this class for the operation of milking is shown by the easily-interchangeable character of the duties. Where large dairies have to produce regular supplies for town consumption, the mere work of milking is, of course, very onerous. The men have to be up very early in the morning, and in the summer the cattle have to be driven to and from the grazing grounds. The greatest anxiety of the cattleman comes in during the calving season, and at this time some knowledge and skill are requisite.

Owing to the extremely early and late work of the horsekeeper, the one man, or on very large farms, the numerous men, employed, cannot be said to occupy sinecures. First there come the feeding, grooming, and other preliminaries to getting the animals to work; and, after the working of the horses, there comes in again the routine process of feeding and grooming. The feeding and grooming are minimised in the summer; but there must be the inevitable fetching from the fields in the morning, and the turning them out into the fields at night. But the easing of this particular labour does not afford the men much respite, for when this especial work is slacker, they have to turn their hands to ordinary work. In Durham, and also in Northumberland, it is customary for each ploughman to look after a particular pair of horses, seeing to them entirely in the plough fields as well as in the stables. On the other hand, in North Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire, the head horsekeeper or waggoner looks after the horses in the stables, and the animals are led to their work at the ploughs by lads or young men, who generally board and lodge with the head horsekeeper, or with the foreman. Besides the horsework on the farm, the horsemen are sometimes

required to see to the carting of the produce off the farm—to market, in short ; and for this purpose they, very often, are required to undertake long journeys, not unfrequently travelling during the night.

The regular ordinary farm labourer is by no means an unimportant “ factor,” so to speak, in the daily work connected with agriculture. Of course, all the multifarious duties which fall to the lot of the “ ordinary ” man cannot often be performed by the same individual : so here again there is a subdivision of employment. The list of things to do is not by any means inconsiderable. There is ditching, draining, harvesting, hay-making, hedging, potato and other root-lifting (although a potato is not a root, but a “ tuber ”), singling, sowing, thatching, threshing, and weeding. For all these purposes the class of “ ordinary ” labourers has to be split into divisions. The more skilled work, for instance, is draining, hedging, ploughing, and thatching ; also the management of machinery. For this superior work, higher wages are paid, and the positions held by the men are more permanent. Their special knowledge makes them so necessary that their places cannot be always and regularly filled. Thatching, for instance, can only be done by specially skilled men, and, in some districts, they are so scarce that farmers have great difficulty in getting their ricks done, and are anxious lest the weather should spoil the contents ere they are covered. In villages where farmhouses and cottages are of thatch—needing, of course, periodic renovation, although it really makes, if well and properly done, a very durable roofing, lasting ordinarily a long time—the amount of work for the thatcher is largely increased ; but after both hay and corn harvest there is a very considerable “ run ” upon his services, and hence the good pay. Very often in districts of small farms the thatcher is not a servant, but a “ master man,” working for various farmers, and as there is not much competition

in the business—the alternating slack and busy times making the work somewhat intermittent—he can generally command his own terms. Ploughing, too, is something of a fine art, which is developed by ploughing “matches” or competitions; and an expert “plougher” is worth much more than the “common or garden” man, so to speak. There are many degrees of excellence, too, in what is called the “hedging and ditching” man. The bulk of the work is performed in the winter; but the banking up of hedges forming the boundaries of cattle fields, the repairing of “breaks,” and the confining within moderate bounds of the exuberant growths which revel in a hedge—briars, nettles, docks, and so forth—involve a great deal of work often required all at once; so that the “hedgers and ditchers” are in great demand in the winter season; and sometimes the foremost “expert” at this work cannot be got for “love or money” by many farmers wanting his services.

There is a temporary sub-assistant selected from the ordinary labourers, sometimes as a sort of “ganger.” He—delegated specially by the bailiff, foreman, or steward—looks after a certain number of the ordinary men, when these are engaged upon a particular kind of work: or he may be appointed by the men themselves to arrange about piecework, or may act by the same appointment as an intermediary to arrange as to work with the foreman or the head—the farmer himself,—and in that capacity may make contracts and settle about payments for the labour. These are arrangements that are made on some large farms in the eastern counties of England and in some other districts.

The “casual” man is another kind of individual who must not be forgotten in this chapter on the classification of labour. In some counties it is frequently the custom to employ casual men; in others, it is against the practice. For instance, they are not much employed in the northern counties, as, there, most

farmers engage all the men they may want, as far as possible upon half-yearly or yearly terms ; but, nevertheless, in some of the northern counties, migratory Irish labourers are employed, and in Cheshire, farmers begin employing Irish labourers as early in the year as February and March, and as late as October or November. It will be interesting, in this connection, to mention the English counties where Irish labour is casually utilised. From the west of Ireland the migratory stream generally goes to the midland and northern counties ; but young Irish women labourers cross from the Isle of Achill (Mayo) to Scotland. Not many Irish go farther south than Cambridgeshire. Occasionally, however, they are to be found in Beds, Bucks, Surrey, Sussex, and Worcester. Formerly, it is said, a great many more than now came from Ireland—in fact, a considerably larger number ; but the stream of migrants began to diminish when machinery was utilised at harvest times, and the acreage of grain crops grew less. Some Irish labourers go to various counties in succession as work for them is available. In Derbyshire, for example, men obtain temporary employment before the corn harvest in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, and then migrate there for work. Some manage to get the labour chances of two harvests—the earlier ones in the south of England, and the later ones in the north. Some migrants, who formerly came to Berks, Hereford, Huntingdonshire, Kent, and Oxfordshire, no longer do so. Those from Cavan, Galway, Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon, and Sligo go chiefly to Cambridgeshire (North), Cheshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Yorkshire.

Harvest times, of course, almost everywhere, create an extra demand for labour that cannot be satisfied by the normal labouring population in any rural district. On the largest farms, where a little surplus labour would not be a matter of great moment at any time,

provision is made for all-round ordinary requirements : but even on these there are "openings" for casual labour not only at harvest, but during hoeing and weeding and threshing times—although in Norfolk and in Suffolk the ordinary staff usually manages to do all the harvest work by overtime. The mention of weeding suggests that the amount of this kind of work largely depends on the weather—a close, rainy season causing abnormal growths. It is astounding how terrific, in a sense, is the exuberance of what the farmer calls "weeds." The ground sometimes, between the rows of corn, or other crops, is no sooner cleared than it looks green again through the myriads of seeds that seem to come almost miraculously out of the air. Amongst other causes which have rather reduced the demand for extra labour at harvest time has been the introduction of the self-binding machine. The different names for casual labourers are rather interesting. They are "catchmen," "datal men," "daymen," "jobbers," "oddmens," "slingers," and "strappers."

Hop growing, although confined to certain districts of England, such as Hereford, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Worcester, is an important branch of our agriculture, and affords a considerable amount of employment for labour. This is supplied, to an appreciable extent, from neighbouring towns, and, besides that, London furnishes a considerable contingent of "hoppers," as the pickers are called ; and many of the Londoners who go to the hop gardens in various parts of the country, but chiefly to those of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, look upon the work as recreation, and indeed use the occasions as for holidays. Casual labour, too, is required at certain times of the year in certain flower and fruit-growing districts, such as Cambridgeshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, and Worcestershire.

Upon the important and interesting question of women labour, Mr. Wilson Fox corroborates our own



statements later on as to its general decline, and as to the reasons for the decline. He says :—

“ It may be stated generally, that, with the exception of Northumberland and Durham, there are no counties in England where the employment for wages of women at ordinary work in the fields is a general custom. The practice of employing women and children on the land largely declined in the early ‘seventies,’ and in the early ‘eighties,’ it had almost entirely ceased in many districts. But on small farms, particularly in the northern districts, the wives and daughters of the owners or tenants frequently assist in the fields, particularly at busy times. There are, however, districts, besides those in the north, where women are engaged for wages at certain outdoor work, such as hoeing and weeding and picking stones, potato-lifting, and during hay and corn harvest. The practice is, however, becoming less common every year, owing to the difficulty of getting them to undertake such work. In the fruit and flower growing districts, and also in the hop districts, they are often employed at certain seasons. Unmarried women are frequently engaged for farmhouse work and dairy work. In the butter-making and cheese-making districts it is stated that they are becoming more difficult to procure. In some districts, particularly in the north, the women engaged for farmhouse work frequently feed calves, pigs, and fowls, and are often also expected to help at haytime and harvest if necessary. By the loss of the assistance of women, and also of children in recent years, the resident casual labourer, who could be secured for hoeing, and weeding, hay and corn harvest, and potato-lifting, etc., has also almost entirely disappeared in many districts. The farmers have tried to meet this difficulty by keeping more land in grass, and by using more machinery.”

We may say, in generally commenting on these statements, that the evident falling off in the employment of women and children in agriculture is a very satisfactory “ sign of the times.”

## CHAPTER II.

### TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT.

THE permanency or otherwise of their employment, as indicated by the terms of engagement of those concerned directly or indirectly in the cultivation of the soil, presents a subject of some interest, as the conditions are varied by the customs of different counties. The most responsible and hence valuable class of labourers—those entrusted with the care of animals—come in for the first consideration; and what is the fact might be assumed, that this class, whose services cannot so easily and quickly be replaced by others, as can those of the ordinary labourers, can obtain the best terms as to security of tenure. Nevertheless, these terms considerably vary in different parts of the country. It is, however, the usual custom in Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire (North), Northumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire, to engage all farm servants by the half-year or year. Shepherds are almost invariably engaged for the longer of those two periods; but in some places even shepherds are engaged by the quarter; sometimes by the month, and much less frequently by the week. The same short periods are also the custom in places for all men having the charge of animals. But even where the annual engagement is the practice, an agreement is made that it may be terminable by either side on giving a month's notice. That, of course, is much better, for both sides, than the curt "week's notice."

As to ordinary labourers, a week's notice is the general

custom, except in the northern counties ; but to this rule there are some exceptions. A fortnight is occasionally the term of notice ; a week sometimes. Now and then a general engagement for a year is understood, terminable by a week's or a month's notice. It is rather curious, however, that the northern long-term men change their situations more frequently than those in the south ; and it is certainly the fact that many southern labourers, although subject to a week's notice, remain on in the service of the same farmer for the best part and sometimes for the whole of their lives. In the majority of instances in Beds, Bucks, South Cambridgeshire, Essex, Herts, Hunts, Middlesex, Norfolk, Northampton, Somerset, Suffolk, Surrey, and Sussex, weekly engagements are the prevailing custom. But the systems vary in Berks, Hants, Kent, Gloucester, Oxfordshire, Warwick, Wilts, and Worcestershire, where, sometimes, ordinary men are engaged by the year, and sometimes for various periods extending from one week to twelve months. In Dorsetshire, there are some annual hirings—for all classes of labourers ; and then these hirings also are terminable by a month's or even a fortnight's notice. Most of the weekly engagements are made in West and North Dorset ; but in some of the counties just named, short notices by arrangement between employer and employed can be given on either side, at will.

The lodging and boarding of labourers in farmhouses, though still the practice on many farms, such as those in Cheshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devonshire, Hereford (West), Monmouth, Salop, and Stafford, seems to be declining. When so lodged and boarded, the arrangements are generally by the half-year or the year. Obviously, in such cases, short notices for termination are necessary, because the character of a "lodger" of this kind must be a matter of importance to a farmer and his family. So the terminable periods are weekly,

monthly, or quarterly, as may be settled between the parties. In the same counties, ordinary married men are generally engaged by the week. Animal caretakers, however, though sometimes engaged by the week, are frequently hired for longer periods, extending to a year. As intimated already, the "lodgers" in a farmhouse are most generally unmarried men. The methods of feeding them vary too. The men sometimes pay for their food—but when they happen to be lodging with a "foreman," the latter's wife cooks it for them, and in such cases the men are allowed eight to ten shillings a week extra for this purpose. This seems to be an arrangement confined to North Cambridgeshire; but a rather general practice in the counties just named is for the "foreman" himself to be paid from eight to ten shillings a week for each man—to provide for his food; but the payment is not always in cash, but is sometimes partly "in kind"—the food and drink, etc., thus supplied being in the form of beer, eggs, fuel, meal, milk, potatoes, vegetables, and wheat. In the same districts, married as well as unmarried men in charge of animals are often engaged by the year or half-year, and ordinary labourers on weekly wages. As to times of payment of wages, these are generally weekly, especially in the case of married men; but, in Durham and Northumberland, it is frequently the practice to pay fortnightly and sometimes monthly. In the case of those employed by the half-year or the year, advances are frequently made of part of the pay, but the bulk of it is paid at the end of the period of service.

The subject of the "hiring fairs" for farm labourers of both sexes is alluded to, and commented upon later on in this volume; but the result of recent inquiry has shown that they are "dying out" in the south-western counties rapidly. They linger, however, in the north—that is to say, in the counties of Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire (North), Northumberland,

Westmorland, and York ; but even there, there has been a marked indication of decline of the custom—farmers preferring to re-engage their old men, instead of going to the fairs for “ new ” ones. It is found to be increasingly difficult to get women, even for dairy-work or domestic service from these fairs, at which there is a diminished attendance for this purpose. In Cambridge-shire, some hirings at fairs take place—notably at Wisbech—for foremen and for men in charge of animals. Some hirings at the “ mop ” or “ statute ” fairs, as these institutions are alternatively called, are effected in the counties of Nottingham and Rutland, but it is in Lincolnshire that the fairs are most common, and farmers go there from Rutland and Nottinghamshire to hire farm servants. The practice still lingers, too, in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire ; but they are held chiefly for the hiring of youths to take charge of animals, but also for hiring girls for farmhouse and domestic service—although some of the so-called hiring-fairs are simply pleasure fairs—private hirings in those places having superseded the use of the “ mop ” fair for that purpose, although sometimes the farmer obtains the “ hands ” he requires by means of advertisements in the papers. The system of fair-hiring, though not extinct, is expiring in Herefordshire, but is more prevalent in Monmouthshire. Fair-hiring, however, to a certain extent, still goes on in Dorset, Gloucester, Hants, and Wilts. In Durham and Northumberland many engagements of farm servants are made at hiring fairs ; but shepherds, as in Scotland, in the Border counties and the Lothians, are privately hired. The engagements are mostly yearly ones, though the wages are quoted at a weekly sum. A good many women are employed, too, in Durham and Northumberland. A curious and rather interesting practice, too, exists in these counties : that

is, the hiring of whole families, or, of course, of such members as are available for work. These are sometimes lodged rent-free in cottages on the farm. Engagements are generally for a year, though the wages, at weekly rates, are paid fortnightly or monthly. Should a man have available daughters, he can command, too, better wages than those who have none. Women are engaged, too, like the men for a year, and are expected, if they are required, to work all the year, except in very bad weather. The farmer, however, does not undertake to pay them for every day as in the case of the men, but may engage them as he wants them. Unless, however, he does so pretty regularly, they will not continue with him the next year. As the supply of women is short, it is usually found that they are kept pretty regularly employed. Sometimes a woman, usually a widow, is specially employed by a farmer, lodging in a cottage on the farm. She is then called a "cottar." A curious system, which has now died out, was that of the "bondager." A labourer, who had no women of his own, hired some, and lodged them in his cottage, boarding them and paying them something in addition; and he then "sublet" them, so to speak, to the farmer. But as the money payment by the farmer for the women's service was little more than the man paid them, it was found, after adding the cost of their "keep," that the "bondager" lost by the transaction. His inducement to carry it on, however, was its being a condition of his getting employment. Still it is easy, for this reason, to see how it was that the system was abandoned. In the two counties last mentioned, there is a pretty good division of labour. The land being largely arable, the majority of labourers are ploughmen ("hinds"), each having the entire care, both in ploughing and in the stable, of a pair of horses. "Spade hands," as they are called, belong to another set, and they have to be employed in anything

and everything except horse tending. They have to do draining, fence-mending, corn sowing in spring, and stacking during harvest times. It is to be noted, too, that the men in charge of cattle are on the large farms called "byremen." In the smaller farms many women look after cattle, and they are named "byre-women."

The one position that is usually not mixed up with others is that of shepherd, and this is a race that largely appertains to the northern counties. On the subject of their special allocation to the work of flock-tending, Mr. Wilson Fox has published a very interesting note in one of his reports. He says :—

"There are a great many shepherds in Northumberland, both on the low ground and among the Cheviot Hills, the whole of which are let as sheep farms. The great majority of these men in the border districts are the sons, grandsons, or great-grandsons of shepherds. They are said to 'run in families,' and there are instances where a family has followed the calling of shepherd for many generations. Few men who have not been so bred and trained are to be found working as shepherds in these districts. These men often stay in their places for many years. This, to some extent, may be accounted for by the prevalence of the custom of paying part of their wages by allowing them to feed a certain number of sheep of their own in their employers' pastures, which gives them a personal interest in remaining on the same farm. But the nature of the occupation itself tends to continuous engagements, and it is much to the interest of the employer that changes should be but seldom made. If an employer has a good shepherd he will do much to keep him, because he knows the peculiarity of the ground and the requirements of the flock. Although there are not many flocks exclusively devoted to pure breeding as a specialty, yet there are many where pure breeding is carried on to a certain extent with a view to the production of rams for sale, and even where this is not the case certain flocks have recognised characteristics which make them specially suitable for certain purposes. For instance, the lambs from a certain farm, and also the draft ewes, may have a reputation for turning out well in certain other localities. It is, of course, to the interest of the farmer that such characteristics should be maintained, and therefore continuity of management is of importance. The shepherds make a regular study of their sheep; they know their pedigrees, and are usually much attached to their flocks. Consequently they do not

change their situations without good cause, and when they change them they generally do so with regret. On most farms of any size in Northumberland and Durham a steward is employed, and under him a ploughman steward, who has charge of the horsemen. The steward has charge under his employer of all the workpeople on the farm except the shepherd. As a rule the shepherd is responsible only to the employer. On the larger farms there are women stewards, who take immediate charge of the women workers."

In Durham, and partly in Northumberland, young men, and sometimes older but unmarried men, and also women and girls, are hired in spring and autumn by the half-year, and board and lodge in the farmhouses. This provides a sufficiency of labour in those counties, so that there are not many "datal men" or casual labourers required, although some Irish arrive before harvest time, and before and after it get some employment given to them by certain of the farmers. A similar system of hiring, lodging, and boarding exists in the Lancashire rural districts of Fylde, Garstang, Lancaster, Limesdale, and Ulverston,—though in some of these the hiring is for the year. In Cumberland, North Lancashire, and Westmorland the ordinary day-working, outside farm labourer, so common in most other counties, is almost unknown, and the boarding and lodging plan is the one generally adopted. In these counties the odd or casual men are called "darrikers,"—at any rate that is the name in parts of Cumberland. The "darrikers" live in the villages near the farms, take monthly engagements, and dig potatoes or do other piecework. But in the counties just mentioned, on many farms, the farmers and their own families manage almost entirely to do their own work. Some of them have risen from the position of labourers, and have ultimately become large farmers. But the "rising from the ranks" is a process performed in connection with many callings. Probably the best opportunity of saving to obtain the capital, whether small or large, necessary to make a start as a master man arises during the period of board-



ing "with all found"; for then most of the cash wages can be put away by a careful man, because there is little requiring money except clothes, and these, if carefully kept and mended, may last a long time. It sometimes fortunately happens that two young people who have been in service at the same farm may each save a little and get married, and their combined savings may form a nucleus of capital to start with. The smaller farms will afford more opportunity, perhaps, than large ones for learning various duties; and thus they become, so to speak, the nursing grounds for the "all-round man," who in his turn, perhaps, makes the best "budding farmer."

Of the conditions of employment in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, Mr. Wilson Fox has published some interesting notes. He says:—

"In Yorkshire the conditions of engagement vary considerably. Unmarried men are frequently hired by the year or half-year, the yearly term being the general one, and are usually lodged and boarded ('meated' is the expression sometimes used) in the farmhouses; but in some districts, notably in the East Riding, they are also lodged and boarded in the houses of the married foremen, who in the East Riding and in the south part of the North Riding are called 'hinds.' Most of the unmarried men in charge of horses, and unmarried cattlemen, are engaged on these terms. In some districts, on farms where unmarried foremen are employed, there are also hired men who lodge and board in the farmhouses. Women for farmhouse work, in some districts, are also hired, and lodge and board in the farmhouses. On the large farms, particularly on the Yorkshire wolds, there are often first and second waggoners, and usually a foreman (or hind) in addition. In such cases the foreman is usually a married man living in a cottage. In addition to work on the farm, the waggoners in such districts go out with the waggons for the delivery of corn to the railway or market towns and for fetching artificial manures, feeding stuffs, etc. On the large farms, both the first and second waggoner are for this purpose frequently sent out together, each with a team of horses. The other men who go with horses on the land are usually called second, third, or fourth plough lads, whose age usually ranges from fourteen to eighteen years. Foremen do not, generally speaking, go with horses or attend to them. When the foreman is absent the first waggoner is in com-

mand. On smaller farms the foreman will sometimes do the waggoning, and the next man or lad acts as ploughman. In such cases the waggoner is frequently an unmarried man, and lodges and boards in the farmhouse. In the East Riding, which is mainly arable, and where a number of the farms are large, especially on the wolds, foremen, shepherds, cattlemen, stockmen, yardmen, horsemen or waggoners, whether married or single, are generally engaged by the year, though there are also weekly and monthly engagements. The married men live in cottages, and the unmarried men are lodged and boarded either in the farmhouses or in the houses of the foremen. In the West Riding, where there are very small farms, mostly grass, weekly engagements are the rule, while in a few districts the engagements are yearly. But in many districts in the West Riding, as indeed also in parts of the North Riding, where the farms are small, there are no distinct classes of men engaged in the care of animals. In the North Riding it is exceptional for unmarried men to lodge and board in the foreman's house, and they generally lodge and board in the farmhouses. To some extent, more particularly in the north-eastern side of the Riding, in cases where farms have a sufficient supply of cottages, the Northumberland and Durham system of engaging ploughmen or hinds by the year is adopted. Shepherds, horsemen, and cattlemen are nearly always engaged by the year, and live in cottages in or near the farms. In some districts, however, the engagements are weekly or monthly, particularly in the southern or south-eastern parts of the Riding. Married men who are attached to the staff of a farm, and not in charge of animals (ordinary labourers), are usually employed by the week (though for longer periods in some districts). In the East Riding there are a number of this class on weekly engagements. In the West Riding there are comparatively few in the districts containing small grass farms. But in other districts, where the farms are larger and there are cottages on the farms, ordinary labourers are to be found in greater numbers. In the North Riding the conditions greatly vary. In some of the southern districts of the Riding there are a number of ordinary labourers, whereas on the Westmorland side many of the farmers cultivate their farms themselves with the aid of a man or two hired half-yearly at the Westmorland hiring fairs, and these hired men lodge and board in the farmhouses. In the north and north-eastern parts of the Riding there are comparatively few ordinary labourers, as the Northumberland and Durham systems exist there, either of hiring ploughmen or hinds by the year at the Durham hiring fairs, or of hiring men by the half-year to lodge and board in the farmhouses. Lincolnshire is another county where the conditions vary, and those prevailing in Nottinghamshire, Rutland, and North Cambridgeshire are not dissimilar. The ordinary labourers are engaged by

the week. But foremen and men in charge of animals (shepherds, horsemen or waggoners, and stockmen or 'garthmen') are engaged by the year. These classes are generally called 'confined men.' Single men are usually hired yearly at fairs, but married men are generally engaged privately, often through advertisements. The married men live on the farms in cottages, which they always have free, with gardens. The unmarried men seldom lodge with the farmer, but generally with the foreman or 'seedsman,' who receives from his employer a weekly cash payment for the board of each, or else a smaller cash payment and an allowance of pork, potatoes, or other food, and beer. Occasionally the men receive more cash and find their own food. The 'seedsman' in Lincolnshire is so called because he usually follows and controls the drill in seed time, and is next to the foreman in command on large farms. In cases where a farmer has several farmsteads in his occupation, the seedsman takes a certain number of confined men into the house on the same conditions as the foreman on the chief farmstead. There are more confined men in North Lincolnshire than in the southern part of the county, because in the northern districts the farms are larger and require the supervision of foremen, and because more sheep and cattle are kept on them, a condition of things which necessitates the attendance of confined men. Moreover, many of the farmsteads on the wolds are a long distance from villages, and it is consequently for the convenience both of the employer and of the men that the latter should live on the farms."

## CHAPTER III.

### PIECEWORK AND "EXTRAS."

THE word "piecework" may be freely translated into the expression "payment by results." It would no doubt be best for employers and employed if every description of work could be done by the piece—that is, its value accurately assessed and paid for; but in many kinds of business such an arrangement is either not possible or not desirable. A good deal of time may have to be spent in planning or arranging work, in discussion with regard to it, and in other ways, for which, as the saying is, there is "nothing to show." In payment by the week, with certain defined hours, but without a very clear definition of the amount of work to be done, there is always a possibility of "idling," which can only be checked by a very severe system of supervision; but with the very best system of supervision the unconscientious workman may get chances to "loaf."

A large amount of farmwork is what is called of a straightforward character—that is, more or less of a routine nature. The time required to do it can be easily estimated. The value—to the farmer—of the work, when done, can be easily calculated, and such labour, it might be thought, would always be done by the piece—ploughing the arable, cutting grass, reaping corn, and the almost interminable task of "weeding." The time required for these labours can quite easily be practically ascertained. We mean, there is an average time necessary for their performance. Some men will do the work

much more rapidly than others, and it is only fair to them—when they work ahead of the "average" time—to pay them more than the slow man who is behind the average. These considerations seem to prove the fairness of piecework systems, and—to show the general desirability of their adoption—it may be mentioned that, on large farms under well-ordered management, piecework is much more the custom than on small ones. It is, of course, more suited to the work of the ordinary labourer on a farm than to that of men in charge of animals. Taking England throughout, it is found to be much more the custom in arable than in grazing counties, or what are called "pastoral districts," and naturally the piecework system is more adopted in those counties where the cash wages are the lowest—in practically the worst-paid districts. In these it is more encouragement to the energetic worker to increase his pay. There is less disposition, and less need, for the better-paid farm labourer to exert himself. He can live with a fair amount of comfort, and does not care to overexert himself for a little more.

Nevertheless, there is no county in England from which the piecework system is entirely excluded. It is, however, the practice in the northern counties, where farm labour commands the best pay, not to resort to piecework except for casual—Irish or other—labour: the regular staff being paid what is called an "upstanding wage"—or average, all the year round, wages. The farmer does not generally, of course, know the worth of the casual man, and naturally elects to pay him "by results."

We have said, practically, that a large amount of farmwork lends itself, by its straightforward character, to piecework, but we may as well mention the kinds, and will do so in alphabetical order. They are: cleaning ditches, draining, drilling, turning, gathering, carting and cocking hay, hedge cutting, hoeing beans, cabbages,

corn crops, peas and potatoes, hoeing and singling mangolds, swedes and turnips, lifting potatoes, mowing clover or other green crops, pulling mangolds, pulling (topping and tailing) turnips, manure spreading, ploughing, sheep-shearing and washing, thatching and threshing. On fruit and flower farms the picking for the market of the flowers or fruit is also mostly done by piecework ; and in all hop districts the work similarly lends itself to the same arrangement. The counties in which it is most generally adopted are : Beds, Berks, Bucks, Cambridge, Dorset, Essex, Gloucester, Hants, Hereford, Hertford, Kent, Lincoln, Norfolk, Northampton, Oxford, Suffolk, Sussex, Warwick, Worcester, and Wilts. It may be adopted within restricted areas, in some other counties, but it is not easy to fix them, because systems of agriculture often vary much within the same county ; but, as already intimated, it is more prevalent where large farms are, than where small ones are more the rule. On such farms, which often have large fields, the men can work in companies under the supervision of a foreman who can distribute and regulate the labour. There is a double advantage in this arrangement, for the men, each knowing that his pay will depend upon the amount of his work, is stimulated by a spirit of emulation and a desire not to fall behind other men. The foreman, or other supervisor—it may be the farmer himself—must be experienced and skilled to enable him to distribute the work properly, and see that it is properly performed. Of course, it must be noted that the prices paid for piecework are subject to a good deal of variation, depending largely, as they must, not only upon the character of the crops dealt with, but upon the nature of the ground. The time taken, for instance, to gather in a light or scanty crop would be much shorter than for a heavy one. On the other hand, a light soil is much easier to work than a heavy clay one.

As to prices for piecework—not including piece harvest

work, which stands on quite a separate footing—they must necessarily vary a good deal; but it may be said that, where it is most resorted to, the labourer may earn as much as from three to five pounds per annum over and above what he could get as the recipient of the usual weekly wage only. It does not seem very much—in the most favourable circumstances—only about two shillings a week extra, and in many cases only fifteen pence extra per week. Still, the extra money, small as it is, is an appreciable addition to a farm labourer's small weekly pay. Sometimes, however, a first-rate man will earn a good deal more than five pounds extra, and occasionally the extra earnings have been known to equal a third of the total earnings from all other sources; but whatever the amounts now earned by piecework may be, it may be stated generally that the price of it has considerably gone up during the last fifty years in nearly if not quite all districts, sometimes to nearly double, sometimes quite to double; and in other instances, by no means inappreciable in number, to three times (and even more) than what was attainable half a century ago. In one part of the North Riding of Yorkshire, for instance, whereas in or about 1844 the price for hoeing corn was from sixpence to one shilling per acre; it is now from eighteenpence to half a crown an acre. In Derbyshire, about fifty years ago, the price paid for hoeing and singling turnips was four and sixpence an acre; but now men are unwilling to do it even for ten shillings an acre. On a farm in Nottinghamshire, between forty and fifty years ago, five and sixpence per acre was paid for hoeing turnips three times over. Now, for hoeing them over twice, eleven shillings an acre can be obtained. On a farm in Leicestershire the price for mowing grass had risen from half a crown to three shillings an acre, to six and eight shillings an acre. In Rutland during the same period the piecework price for mowing had doubled, rising from half a crown to five shillings an

acre. The same increase had been made on a farm in Warwickshire. In Bedfordshire hoeing wheat has also gone up from two and threepence to four and sixpence an acre. These are extreme instances. Sometimes the increase has only been 50 per cent. ; in others, less than that ; in some others, curiously enough, prices had not varied in fifty years : but where there was a large increase it was generally found that the amount of the work had fallen off considerably.

There is often an enormous difference in the pieceworking capacity of different men. Some can do even twice as much as others in the same time. We can personally recall one labourer in a large agricultural district of Somersetshire who stood up head and shoulders, so to speak (for the amount of work he could do), above the whole of the men on that countryside. Strong and well built, with sinews like iron, no one could touch him for the work he did. During corn harvest he could rise at three in the morning, cook for himself (he was a single man) a frying pan full of potatoes, and would then start for the fields. Returning to breakfast at the ordinary hour, he would eat such a large quantity of food that no one would suspect that he had really so substantially broken his fast at 3 a.m. All the neighbouring farmers were eager to get this Hercules at harvest work, but of course he could not divide himself into parts. He never, however, was in want of "a job." The amount of cider he could consume in a hot August day would alarm a total abstainer. We do not recall the wages this man could command, but we remember that they were far and away beyond the "average."

As to the question of "extras" in cash, Mr. Wilson Fox says :—

"A great distinction exists in many counties between the current rates of weekly cash wages and the actual cash earnings of ordinary labourers, the weekly wages being frequently augmented by money earned at piecework by special payments for corn harvest, and in some cases by



overtime money at haytime and other busy seasons. In the northern counties the hired men are paid an inclusive wage, getting no piecework or other extra money payments. In many of the arable districts, where weekly cash wages are the lowest, there is more to be earned by piecework and extra harvest wages than in the grass counties, where the men are paid a higher rate of cash wages and have fewer opportunities of earning extra money. No accurate comparison can therefore be made between the rates of weekly cash wages of ordinary agricultural labourers in counties like Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Dorsetshire, where the rates are low, and those of such labourers in counties like Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Durham, and Lancashire, where the rates are high. The only comparison which can properly be made is between the actual yearly earnings in the different counties, including in such earnings the special payments referred to. The extra cash earnings of ordinary agricultural labourers consist mainly of payments for piecework and corn harvest, and overtime at hay harvest. In some places extra cash is paid for hay harvest whether overtime is worked or not. It is not usual for labourers on time work to do overtime except when engaged at hay and corn harvests."

Whilst men in charge of animals on farms also generally receive "extras" for additional and exceptional work—the exceptions to extra payment being found in some of the northern counties of England—the nature of their occupations preclude the application of the piecework system to them. Nevertheless, at harvest times they do sometimes assist at those seasons of pressure, and for this assistance receive some extra pay. As an illustration of this, it may be mentioned that in some parts of Norfolk and Suffolk, when in May horses are turned out into the fields to graze, the team men do a little piecework, "joining in" with the ordinary labourers. Cattlemen, too, have opportunities during the summer and autumn seasons of doing some piecework. For shepherds the extra pay is in "lamb money." That, in fact, is their principal "cash extra," and it varies from a penny to a shilling, or from threepence to sixpence—the difference is rather marked—for every lamb reared, or for lambs alive at a particular date. It

is amusing to note that extra payment is sometimes given for "twins."

The shepherd is "encouraged" in some cases to do "his best" by giving him fourpence or sixpence per lamb, up to a lamb per ewe, and more, occasionally a shilling a lamb, for all beyond that number. This payment practically compasses the "twin" question. A sort of insurance money (without payment of "premium" by the shepherd—the premium, however, being paid for "in kind" by him in the shape of extra care) is awarded to the shepherd on what is called "lambs tailed." There is risk to life in "tailing,"—that is, cutting the tail of a lamb short. If the lambs—who undergo the operation usually at the age of two or three weeks—survive the "tailing," then the shepherd gets his money. Even these customs vary; and in some instances, instead of payment per lamb, a "bonus" in cash is given to their caretaker at the end of the lambing season. The "bonus" or extra pay may be given in addition to the allowance for each; or again, extra wages to cover everything may be given during the whole of the "lambing season." The total amount, in any case, of the shepherd's emoluments also varies appreciably, whilst in an ordinary way his extra fees—for such they really are—may not total more than from three to five pounds. They may possibly amount, on very large sheep farms, to as much as twenty or twenty-five pounds. Suffolk affords a good example of the best kind of lambing district for the shepherd. Here sometimes, for a flock of ewes averaging 280 with an average lamb "crop" of 350, the number of lambs over that of their maternal parents implying the advent of a good many "twins," the shepherd might make on his sixpence a head for his 350, no less than £8, 15s.; but the range of extra cash is from ten to fifteen pounds, the amounts sometimes rising as high as twenty pounds.

There are other ways of rewarding shepherds for their extra care and labour during "lambing time"; that is, by giving them beer, coals, or food. They also get "Michaelmas money," or a sum down paid at Michaelmas. It may amount to two pounds, or go up to as high as five pounds. Under-shepherds also get a small bonus at lambing time, and also a proportionately smaller one than the head shepherd at Michaelmas. Occasionally a shepherd is allowed to do sheep washing and shearing as piecework; or extra money for this may be given in addition to the ordinary wages.

"Michaelmas money" is also somewhat of an institution for men in charge of animals,—that is, if they do not get a share of the "extras" given during harvest. Now and then men get both "Michaelmas money" and harvest money. The former may amount to two pounds, or from that to five pounds. The payment at Michaelmas in North Cambridgeshire to unmarried men in charge of animals—men who get their board from the foreman, amounts sometimes to as much as from nine to eighteen pounds; but this is not all bonus, but a payment deferred on account of wages.

The extras of carters or waggons sometimes take the form of sixpence or a shilling a journey for taking carts or waggons a certain distance. The payment is called "journey money" or "road money." Higher rates are given for four-horse waggons, and then the accompanying lad or second man shares the extra pay. Again, the payment is sometimes per sack carted, or per load, and may be twopence per sack and a shilling per load for all corn delivered to destinations. Another kind of payment of "extras" is to horsemen working drills, and they are paid a penny to threepence per acre drilled, and the same per acre for grass mown by a machine. Like the shepherds who benefit by the birth of lambs, the horsemen get sometimes a "bonus" for each live foal. Then, again, cattlemen occasionally

get extra money for calves and pigs reared, for cattle fattened or sold, for pigs killed, and for the delicate duty when, in the capacity of nurses, they sit up at night during the calving of cows. For marketing, too, there is occasionally extra payment.

To add to the rather long and somewhat exhaustive list of "extras" obtained by cattlemen, there is a percentage allowed them when exhibits are made at agricultural shows,—the percentage being on the prize money obtained. This, no doubt, is very good policy, for it encourages the men to do their best to get the animals into "prize" condition, and they thus come into line with the master in the desire for success. Finally, Sunday work is very properly looked upon as an extra for cattlemen and horsemen: the allowance being from a shilling to two shillings per week in addition to the ordinary weekly wages. But perhaps in the majority of cases the general responsibilities and Sunday work of carters or waggoners and cattlemen are recompensed by the higher rates of weekly wages, than their superior duties normally command.

Of extra allowances in "kind" to carters and cattlemen, etc. we shall specially refer in a subsequent chapter, after an interim discussion of the "Special Extras," as we may call them, obtained during harvest.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EARNINGS AT HARVEST.

THE great "overtime" season of the ordinary agricultural labourer is the harvest. The word really applies to any ingathering of the fruits of the earth, but is in practice restricted to the corn and hay harvests. When, however, it is used without qualification, the corn harvest is understood, although both hay and corn harvests give extra employment—often extended in fine dry weather into the late evening or night, when the moon offers its aid, and hasty ingathering is desirable owing to the weather being unpromising—and extra "money." To the harvest the labourer looks forward with keen expectancy, as a means of seriously assisting the finances of the year, and enabling him to wipe off old scores run up against him by the indispensable village tradesman. In corn districts, where ordinary weekly wages are generally the lowest, the emoluments of harvest are the most keenly appreciated. As a rule—although we have previously alluded to the exceptions—shepherds do not assist in harvest work. Cattlemen and horsekeepers do assist at harvest, unless their occupations at the time should be too urgent to prevent them from doing so. On many, perhaps most, small farms, however, all the hands contribute their quotas of assistance to the great annual ingathering of corn crops; and every available member of the farmer's family is often also brought into the service.

As to the earnings at these seasons, there is a great

variety of systems in different parts of the country. As a rule, in the northern counties, where the "up-standing wages" system prevails—that is, a wage going on notwithstanding the weather or sickness—there are no extra cash wages given, but the men are very often paid "in kind" in lieu of cash,—that is, they get free food and drink during the time of harvest. Married men, except in Northumberland and Durham, however, are frequently given extra cash pay; and when this is the case the pay varies from four to six pounds a month, while the ordinary weekly cash wages are from seventeen to twenty shillings a week. Drink and food are often also given as well. Extraneous assistants, including the Irish, are paid even better, and get more food; in addition also, the latter obtain sleeping accommodation in barns or other outbuildings. In some parts of Northumberland the casual Irish labourers get all their food. There are special harvest hirings in Durham, Lancashire, Westmorland, and Yorkshire, and at these English and Irish are engaged for the harvests, both hay and corn.

As to the systems of harvest payment outside the northern counties, Mr. Wilson Fox has some interesting notes. In allusion to these he says:—

"Special rates of payment are not usually given at hay harvest to the ordinary staff of the farm, though overtime is sometimes paid for, and drink, or money in lieu of drink, is frequently given. As regards corn harvest outside the northern counties, the systems of payment vary. In some districts the system is to give the work to be done in connection with the harvest in separate portions as piece-work; in others, to contract for a certain sum for the harvest as a whole; or to give the ordinary weekly wages and, in addition, a bonus of a pound or two at the end of the harvest; or to give extra time—wages for a month certain, and then to pay the ordinary weekly wages; or to pay double the ordinary weekly wages during harvest; or to pay a certain rate per day as long as harvest lasts. Occasionally the ordinary weekly wage is paid, and overtime money given. Beer or cider is given in many counties, and in some districts light refreshment in the way of food.

In the midland counties, apart from the large corn-growing districts, where piecework is prevalent, a fixed sum for the harvest month is often given, frequently about £4, 10s. to £6, or else a higher daily or weekly rate of wages than that ordinarily paid. In the southern and south-western counties all the systems referred to are to be found, except that of contracting for the whole harvest, which is mainly confined to Norfolk and Suffolk. But this arrangement is practically based upon the piecework system, the only difference being that the whole staff undertake to do the work for a certain sum, instead of a certain number of acres being allotted to each man."

He adds :—

"It is, however, in the chief corn-growing counties in the eastern and part of the midland and southern and south-western counties, where piecework is largely adopted at harvest, that the labourers earn the most harvest money, and generally the largest amounts are earned in the fen districts of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Huntingdonshire. The harvest payments in Norfolk and Suffolk outside the fen districts of the former county, whether made on the system of a lump sum for the whole harvest or on the piecework system, generally amount to about £7 or £7, 10s. per man. In addition, beer is frequently given, or else about three bushels of malt and three pounds of hops, or an equivalent in money. Thus (if we assume the harvest to be completed in, say, four weeks, supposing the weekly rate of cash wages to be twelve shillings a week, about £4, 10s. extra will be earned by harvest work. In the fen districts men sometimes earn as much as £9 to £10 at piecework for a month's harvest."

This last interesting statement indicates what can be done by a first-rate man, even though only an agricultural labourer. Wages of £2, 10s. a week seem fabulous; but it is unfortunately only for the brief space of one month that such prosperity happens. "The weather," however, is a factor of great importance, and necessarily largely influences the time during which such money can be earned. Commenting on this factor, Mr. Fox remarks :—

"Harvest earnings, of course, depend a good deal on the weather and the state of the crops. Upstanding crops and fine weather throughout the harvest are favourable for both employers and employed. The employers, owing

to the crops not being beaten down, are able to use the self-binding machines, and thus save labour, and owing to fine weather are able to get the harvest in rapidly, while the men engaged at piecework or on contract are able to get through the work quickly and without interruption. Consequently, they can earn their harvest money in a short time, and be free to go on with other work at the current rate of weekly wages. On the other hand, if the weather is bad, those who are paid a lump sum for the whole harvest, and those who are paid a certain sum for a month and then are paid the ordinary rate of wages, are at a disadvantage. The former take a long time to earn their harvest money, and earn nothing at all on wet days, and the latter have to finish up the harvest and perhaps work a lot of overtime in return for merely the ordinary wages. When a lump sum is paid for the whole harvest, this sum is divided equally among the different men engaged in the work. Again, those on piecework run the risk of not being able to work in wet weather. On the other hand, piecework men often get more work if the crops are heavy and much beaten down, as the labour-saving self-binders cannot be used, and they are paid higher rates for work involving special difficulty. If the weather is too bad for harvest operations, a good many farmers often offer the men other work at the ordinary weekly wages."

The great piecework harvest counties are Beds, Berks, Cambridge, Dorset, Essex, Gloucester, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Sussex, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire. The counties are here named alphabetically, and not according to their relative corn-growing importance. It was found, according to a Board of Trade return, that the average earnings per man (during one entire harvest) of 1233 men, was in the southern and south-western counties, £4, 17s. 2d., in the Midlands, £5, 13s. 6d., and £7, 5s. 7d. in Cambridge, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincoln.



## CHAPTER V.

### PAYMENT "IN KIND."

THE question of payments "in kind" to farm labourers has been frequently discussed, and it has been quite recently pointed out that the system is on the decline, having been very properly superseded by increased payments in cash. It is far better, in all ways, that labour should be recompensed by money, because then a man can better measure his requirements, and adjust his expenses to his revenue. It has generally been the case that the value of the goods supplied to him in lieu of cash has been rather over-estimated by the employers. That has been proved in the case of cider truck. The inferior cider generally supplied has really not been worth the weekly amount set against it in the theoretical "wages bill"; and it was found that, when, from a scarcity of cider in certain years, its value had to be paid in coin of the realm, less than the previously estimated value was paid as an equivalent.

The articles "in kind" consist of a drink allowance of beer or cider, not always given, except at harvest times; potato ground free, food as well as drink during harvest; rough firing, free cartage of the same; milk and straw for pigs. These are more or less general throughout the agricultural counties. Cider, or beer, is chiefly given—cider predominating—in Devon, Hereford, Gloucester, Shropshire, Somersetshire, Staffordshire, and parts of

Worcestershire. Free cottages are given in the north, and in some of the western counties.

In the following notes Mr. Fox confirms statements which we make elsewhere. He remarks:—

“Potato ground is given in some counties, but more frequently it is let at a cheap rent” (we show in the Appendix, by more than one example, that the rent paid by the labourer is by no means ‘cheap’). “Sometimes the employer does the ploughing, tilling, and manuring, the labourer finding and putting in the seed and taking up the potatoes, but the precise arrangements vary in different districts. In some counties a certain allowance of potatoes is given. In Northumberland, Durham, and parts of the North Riding of Yorkshire, in addition to free cottages, coals carted free, and straw for pigs, either about one thousand or one thousand two hundred yards of planted potato drill is given, or an allowance of about half a ton of potatoes per annum. In Northumberland, farmers sometimes keep a cow for a man for about three shillings a week all the year round if he wishes it. In the winter the farmer agrees to give it about two loads of hay or five cwt. of cake. If a man cannot afford to buy a cow, the farmer will sometimes ‘put one on’ for him, that is, he buys one himself; but this custom is getting a rare one. In parts of Cheshire, a number of the cottages have two or three acres of land, chiefly pasture, attached. Some of them have as much as six or seven acres. The men are thus able to keep cows and pigs. A good many landowners have a number of these small holdings on their properties, which are let out at moderate rents. In certain other counties cow pastures are let at low rents to labourers by some of the landowners.”

A hard and fast line cannot be laid round the counties where allowances in kind are mostly prevalent; but it may be stated in a general way that the custom is favoured in Cornwall, Cumberland, Devon, Dorset, Durham, Gloucester, Hants, Hereford, Lancaster, Northumberland, Shropshire, Somerset, Stafford, Wilts, and the North Riding of Yorkshire; and, with exceptions, it is not the custom in the following counties: Bedford, Berks, Bucks, Cambridge, Chester, Hertford, Huntingdon, Kent, Lincoln, Norfolk, Northampton, Oxford, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, and the East Riding of Yorkshire. It is curious to note that one county, Yorkshire, should be divided so far as this custom is concerned.

In the same way, the allowances of a free cottage, which is practically a payment "in kind" to the labourer, seem to run in particular counties and to be absent from others. Here, again, a hard and fast rule cannot be applied; but the counties favouring—more or less—the free-cottage plan are Cornwall, Cumberland, Devon, Dorset, Durham, Gloucester, Hereford, North Lancashire, Northumberland, Shropshire, Somerset, Stafford, Westmorland, and the North Riding of Yorkshire. Generally, though not always, the free-cottage system prevails in the worst-paid agricultural districts.

As to allowances "in kind" made to men in charge of animals, Mr. Fox says:—

"Allowances in kind are frequently made to shepherds, and men in charge of horses and cattle. In most districts it is usual for the married men to have cottages and gardens free, and they frequently have potato ground, which is sometimes manured and tilled for them, or perhaps horses are lent them and they do it themselves. Sometimes manure is given to them. Among other allowances sometimes given to this class of men are straw for pigs, coal, milk, vegetables, food, and beer or cider. The 'confined men' in Lincolnshire, and the yearly married men in North Cambridgeshire and parts of Nottinghamshire, get many allowances in kind, such, for instance, as house and garden rent, twenty or thirty stones of pork, several sacks of wheat or flour, forty to sixty stones of potatoes, and in some cases coals, beer or beer money, and milk. In the northern districts of Northumberland it is still the custom to pay many of the married shepherds entirely in kind, no cash whatever being paid to them. In addition to a free house and garden, grain or meal, potatoes, straw for pigs, and free cartage of coals, they are allowed to keep a certain number of their own sheep with those of their employer—a system which encourages them to pay the greatest attention to the flocks under their charge. Sometimes they get a cow kept for them. The shepherds who are paid in this way generally state that they prefer this mode of remuneration to money payments."

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONTINUITY OF EMPLOYMENT.

IT may be said generally that in regard to what may be called "fixity of tenure" a farm labourer is pretty well off; and it may also be generally said that farm labourers have not suffered for a long time, and are not now suffering, from the great evil of "unemployment," which has been so rife in other occupations. The reason for this is in a nutshell—the chief reason, which will be accounted for presently, being that whilst in many other occupations the labourers are in excess of the demand, in farming the reverse is the case. In fact, the steady and serious decline in the agricultural labouring population is caused not only by the stream of emigration to other countries that has been going on for some time, but by the fact that farm labourers' sons are now more than ever found to prefer town occupations, instead of following those of their fathers.

Taking the country through, it may be said that there is more fixity of tenure for the labourer in the northern than in other counties, and this is because the large majority of the men employed are engaged for longer periods, mostly half-yearly or yearly; and they are paid regular wages without deduction for sickness or wet weather. This applies chiefly to the ordinary farm labourer. The same system generally prevails in other parts of the country so far as regularity of employment is concerned, but the practice varies somewhat in the case of men engaged in the care of

animals. These are often, but not invariably, paid when they are sick or unable to work in consequence of the weather.

Ordinary labourers, however, when employed by the week, anywhere, are not often paid when they cannot for any cause, work, although in this respect large employers of labour are more generous than the smaller farmers. Possibly all farmers would be more generous—compulsorily so in their own interests—were it not for the sick benefit clubs, and the “rates,” upon which the labourer must fall back if he has no “club”; or in cases of prolonged illness, when the club pay, if any, becomes automatically reduced.

It may here be said that the fact of Boards of Guardians, which generally consist, in rural districts, of farmers, or, at any rate, which usually have a considerable majority of farmers on them, having to administer poor relief out of public funds, the recipients being mainly agricultural labourers, is not calculated to promote the individual generosity of the farmer-employer; and the reduction of that excellent quality of heart is not likely to be affected, when the law provides, as it now does, that the receipt of parish relief shall not debar the recipient from obtaining an old-age pension. If the farmer-employer and guardian of the poor knows that if he does not pay a labourer during sickness or disablement of any kind, the “parish”—as represented by the guardian-employer—will do so, the knowledge will not encourage him to put his hand, more than he does now, into his own pocket, when the money can so easily come from elsewhere.

Naturally, the maximum staff required for the working of a farm, large or small, cannot be maintained throughout the year; because the same number of servants will not be required during slack seasons. This difficulty of keeping men employed equally all the year round, chiefly exists in the big corn-growing districts

during the winter months, that is to say, after the corn harvest, and after the usual autumn ploughing and sowing have all been done, and all roots have been taken up and stored away. The difficulty is still greater after poor seasons showing a diminished "yield" of corn and roots.

As far as possible, the difficulty is met by endeavouring to find employment under cover—especially in very wet weather, when outdoor work cannot be performed—but there is, of course, a limit to this kind of under-cover work. It is not so easy when the general system of employment is piecework. The work under cover, therefore, is usually offered at a weekly wage and not by piecework. This plan is especially adopted in the counties of Cambridge, Essex, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Suffolk.

There may, of course, be found, throughout the agricultural districts of England, a sort of floating population of agricultural labourers—resident in or near villages, and not "casuals" from outside—that are not attached to the staff of any particular farm. The best designation for these is "odd men." They may be said to fill up gaps in the work of the farms. They are especially available for doing odd jobs under cover. Such occupations may very often occur when the regular men, having their quota of daily work, are not available for these occasional jobs. To give just one illustration: a farmer might find something wrong with his root stores, requiring that they should be picked over. This would find a day or two's employment for the odd man. That particular individual has what might be called a tiny farm of his own; a good-sized allotment, which he cultivates chiefly for supplying his own needs, although he will often "spare" a sack or two of potatoes (or other produce in excess of his own needs), which he will sell. He may keep a pig and fowls, ducks, or even turkeys. His cottage also will

have a small garden, which he will turn to good account in the same way. But his small holding does not require all his time; and so he can put in odd days for the farmer, and is generally available at especially busy times. The "hedger and ditcher," too, except in very large farms where that particular kind of functionary must be kept "in stock," so to speak—is frequently an odd man. He works for different small farmers, and can often turn his hand to almost anything. A good worker at this species of labour can often earn very good, special wages. His "forte" is the spade, the pick, the hook, and very often the scythe—for he can mow well—and with these tools, and expert ability in handling them, he can put in a day now and then for private residents in or near a village, and get a little better pay *pro rata* than the more knowing farmer will pay him. He, of course, like everybody else, has his "rainy days," during which—when day after day sometimes it is "soaking wet"—he must perforce remain idle and, when no under-cover work is available, remain wageless. The thatcher, too, is often an odd man, and sometimes is very much in requisition by the small farmer.

The "odd man," in fact, is quite an institution in the agricultural world, and, in a small-farm region, especially serves as a most useful complement to the regular staff: and as to the latter, their position is often assured even during slack times, because if the farmer lets many of his men go, he may not be able to get them back when he urgently needs assistance; and hence it "pays" him to suffer a little temporary loss.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COTTAGES AND RENTS.

THE important "cottage" question is one that has been very much discussed, and ample information given, in the shape of illustrative examples of their condition and the rents paid for them in particular districts. We propose now, and briefly, to deal with the question in its general aspect, and especially with relation to the systems under which cottages are built. The matter of free and rented cottages will also be dealt with in more than one chapter. Where free of rent, it is only a matter of payment "in kind," and is seldom a gift in the proper sense of the word, although there are instances in which it may be so regarded. The "house-free" principle is by no means confined to agricultural labourers, but it is invariably a part of remuneration when held by an *employé* of any description.

A large number of cottages are built by landowners, and form part of farms, and are let with the farms for the convenience of farmers. When all or the bulk of the cottages in a village belong to the proprietor of a large estate, the designation of "close village" is adopted. As a rule, such cottages are the best built. The inferior class of peasant dwellings occur mostly in what are called "open villages." They belong sometimes to farmers, or to small owners who have built them "to pay" as an investment. Properly-built cottages, let at the rents agricultural labourers can afford to give, do not pay. Badly built at the start, the cheap



and nasty cottage soon gets out of repair, and the owners being unwilling or unable to spend much on them, it is no wonder they—comparatively soon—get into a disreputable condition. Good landowners often prefer to keep their cottages in their own hands; but the farmer-tenants frequently stipulate to have the letting of some of them, especially for their carters and cattle-men. It is sometimes customary to call the landowner's houses "free cottages," whilst those let by the farmer are styled "tied cottages."

Not infrequently, very good cottages are built upon a large estate, and "thrown in," or included in the rent without especial calculation of their additional value, in order to obtain a superior class of tenant. Sometimes a feeling of pride in an estate will lead to more money being spent on peasant dwellings than is at all likely to be remunerative; and occasionally a rich owner may be a philanthropist, and desire to do his best—irrespective of cost to himself—to promote the healthfulness, morality, and general well-being of his tenants' labourers.

When the farmer has the disposition of a number of cottages, it is really to his advantage, and in order to attract the best kind of labourers, to let them at low rents. But this, in the past, has been by no means the rule—some of the very worst descriptions of rack-rented dwellings belonging to the farmers.

The question of the amount of rent ordinarily paid in the English counties for farm labourers' cottages is an interesting one, and the average amounts have been ascertained by the Board of Trade, as the result of extensive inquiries made of Rural District Councils, farmers, land-agents, landowners, and of a large number of agricultural correspondents. The questions put for answer were: First, the highest rents; second, the lowest rents; third, the rents most usually paid by farm labourers in the districts where inquiry was made;

and fourth, the change which had taken place, if any, during the ten years preceding the inquiry. From this it appears that the rents are from one to two shillings a week, the most usual rent being eighteenpence. It may therefore be deduced that the average rental throughout England is eighteenpence a week; but the landlords generally do repairs and pay rates and taxes.

These are sufficiently moderate terms, but they do not prevail near big towns or large residential and industrial centres; and in reference to these the rates go up appreciably—from a minimum of two to a maximum of four shillings a week, making an average weekly rental of three shillings, or just double the rents payable in the purely agricultural districts.

From our own inquiries, inferences, and deductions, we believe that the averages indicated are perfectly representative of the present time. The late Mr. W. C. Little, senior Assistant Commissioner to the Royal Commission on Labour, reviewing the statements of the other Assistant Commissioners who had reported on typical agricultural districts in nearly every county in England, said that the estimates of the Assistant Commissioners and their informants as to the value of a cottage and garden, as an addition to wages where no rent is paid, varied from £2, 12s. to £5, 4s. a year, the most usual sum being £4. Mr. Little further said that "Rent has generally no relation to the size of the cottage and cost of its construction, the accommodation which it affords, its condition as regards repair or sanitary arrangements, or to the earnings of the occupier."

Mr. Fox says what is perfectly true, and strikes at the root of the agricultural labourer's cottage difficulty when he says: "The cost of building a pair of cottages in accordance with present requirements is generally said to be from £300 to £400, and not unfrequently up to £450 or £500. It is apparent that, with rents at 1s. 6d. or 2s. a week, and with rates to pay and repairs to execute,

there is no direct profit on such an outlay." It is, in fact, clear that, taking the lowest estimate of £150 per cottage, £2, 12s. a week, the lowest rental—or what may be called the gross interest—would not "pay" any one as a mere investment.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DECREASE OF OVERCROWDING.

THERE are two principal reasons for the gratifying circumstance that there is, throughout the agricultural districts of England at any rate, a slight decrease in the overcrowding of cottages—which was so disgraceful a feature of so many of our rural villages forty years ago. This improvement has been more marked in the West of England, to which some of our Appendix chapters especially refer. One of these reasons is the appreciable increase in more sanitary dwellings; the other is the less satisfactory decline in the rural population brought about by the untempting conditions of an agricultural labourer's life—for, in spite of the increase in wages that has taken place during the same period, the fact remains that the cultivation of the soil in this country does not furnish, now, attractions sufficient to prevent the steady stream of migration to the towns, and emigration to our colonies and elsewhere.

Although actual figures are not available except from the last published census return (1901), there has been sufficient evidence forthcoming to prove that the process of diminution of the rural and urban labouring population has been going pretty steadily on—only checked in some places by exceptionally favourable conditions of employment. The most noticeable and significant of these favourable conditions has been the existence in particular districts of a really good allotment system. Of this important question of allotments;

something will be said in a later chapter ; but one noticeable example of the effect of a good system in arresting the flow of emigration might be quoted from Lincolnshire, where Lord Carrington had a thousand acres of land split up for allotments for farm labourers in so satisfactory a manner that it actually stopped the progressing depopulation of the district.

As to depopulation as affecting the cottage question, illustrated facts and deductions can be obtained from the census returns of 1891 and 1901 relating to nine counties. We will take them in alphabetical order. Whilst the population living more than two in a room in Berkshire in 1891 was 11,396, being a percentage of 4.83 of the total population of that county, the numbers fell in 1901 to 6118, or a percentage of 2.42 of the total population ; the decrease in percentage in 1901, as compared with 1891, being 2.41. We will give figures for the other illustrative counties in the same order. In Cornwall the number in 1891 was 21,282, or 6.60 per cent. of population ; in 1901 the number was 12,742, or 3.95 per cent. of population ; decrease, 2.65. In Hampshire the number in 1891 was 18,339, or 2.65 per cent. of population ; in 1901 it was 13,040, or 1.63 per cent. of population ; decrease, 1.02. In Lincolnshire, 20,384 in 1891, or 4.30 per cent. ; ten years after, 12,581, or 2.52 per cent. ; decrease, 1.78. In Norfolk, 28,020 in 1891, or 5.98 per cent. ; 17,357 in 1901, or 3.64 per cent. ; decrease in the ten years, 2.34. In Somerset, 20,067 in 1891, or 4.67 per cent. ; in 1901 it was 12,428, or 2.82 per cent. ; decrease, 1.85 per cent. In Suffolk, 21,478 in 1891, or 5.93 per cent. ; in 1901 it was 12,912, or 3.46 per cent. ; decrease, 2.47 per cent. In Sussex in 1891, population living more than two per room, 16,108 ; percentage, 2.94 ; ten years after, 11,095 ; percentage, 1.84 ; decrease, 1.10. In Westmorland in 1891, population 3229 ; percentage, 4.28 ; in 1901 ; population, 1804 ; percentage, 2.08 ; decrease, 2.20. Although the figures

given do not relate exclusively to rural districts, as they occur in districts largely agricultural, it may be assumed that they chiefly relate to the dwellings of agricultural labourers, because it is in the villages and not the towns from which the population have chiefly retired. This will be shown incidentally by the following paragraph from the special report of the Select Committee, in 1906, on the Housing of the Working Classes Amendment Bill, who say :—

“ Apart from the fact that an ill-repaired cottage is a contributory cause of the migration to the towns by the young and more intelligent element in the rural population, the Committee have had ample evidence to show that migration is also largely due to the monotonous existence and lack of prospect held out to the younger generation under the present system. The contrast between life in the country and in the town is so manifest, that it is not to be wondered at that large numbers every year migrate to the latter. It is aggravating the condition of the towns as regards overcrowding and unemployment, and it is paralysing the prosperity of the country districts by depriving them of the necessary population. Large sums of public money are being spent to alleviate the evils of overcrowding and of a congested labour market in the towns, whilst the country districts are spending an ever-increasing amount in rates to turn out a better-educated population, the best of whom migrate in large numbers to the towns and deprive the country ratepayer of the results of his local expenditure. The migration can only be checked by reforms in laws having for their object the renting or acquiring of land in sufficient dimensions to afford a proper career to those who remain in the country. If only the opportunity—or the hope of opportunity—were presented to the agricultural labourer that by the exercise of skill and energy he could improve his position by becoming a holder of land, the exodus from the country might be materially checked.”

These reliable statements prove conclusively, we think, that the lessening of overcrowding, shown by the census returns quoted, is in the rural districts, as the urban places have really, during the operation of the causes alluded to, become more overcrowded.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WAGES.

SUFFICIENT comment has already been made as to the varying items that constitute what is called wages—or the remuneration for labour. Whilst this remuneration does not necessarily take the same form in different districts, and varies considerably in the proportion of its parts to each other, enough general information has been given as to the character of the component parts; and it will now suffice to give the reader a general glance at the total average earnings prevailing throughout England for the various classes of labourers already enumerated. We have already discussed the periods of hiring in different counties, and the times of payment, and it will not be necessary to confuse the following information by indicating in each case of what the allowances in kind consist. It must be premised, however, that the figures given relate to ordinary agricultural labourers, not to casual labourers or “oddmen,” nor do they relate to men in charge of animals, as the data as to these will be subsequently given.

TABLE I.—ORDINARY FARM LABOURERS.  
*Average Weekly Wages.*

Counties.	In Cash.	In Kind.	Total.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bedfordshire . . . . .	13 6	3 0	16 6
Berkshire . . . . .	13 2	2 9	15 11
Buckinghamshire . . . . .	14 8	1 8	16 4
Cambridgeshire . . . . .	12 8	3 5	16 1

TABLE I.—ORDINARY FARM LABOURERS—(continued).  
Average Weekly Wages.

Counties.	In Cash.		In Kind.		Total.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Cheshire . . . . .	17	0	1	9	18	9
Cornwall . . . . .	14	6	2	10	17	4
Cumberland . . . . .	18	4	1	8	20	0
Derbyshire . . . . .	18	8	1	11	20	7
Devonshire . . . . .	13	9	3	4	17	1
Dorsetshire . . . . .	11	11	3	7	15	6
Durham . . . . .	20	0	2	2	22	2
Essex . . . . .	13	9	3	2	16	11
Gloucestershire . . . . .	12	11	2	6	15	5
Hampshire . . . . .	13	9	4	0	17	9
Herefordshire . . . . .	13	3	3	0	16	3
Hertfordshire . . . . .	14	8	2	6	17	2
Huntingdonshire . . . . .	13	8	2	6	16	2
Kent . . . . .	16	4	3	3	19	7
Lancashire . . . . .	18	10	1	9	20	7
Leicestershire . . . . .	15	9	1	7	17	4
Lincolnshire . . . . .	15	6	3	2	18	8
Middlesex . . . . .	17	10	2	6	20	4
Monmouthshire . . . . .	16	6	2	4	18	10
Norfolk . . . . .	12	4	2	11	15	3
Northampton . . . . .	14	1	2	1	16	2
Northumberland . . . . .	19	4	2	3	21	7
Nottinghamshire . . . . .	17	3	2	6	19	9
Oxfordshire . . . . .	12	0	2	6	14	6
Rutlandshire . . . . .	15	9	1	7	17	4
Shropshire . . . . .	14	8	3	4	18	0
Somersetshire . . . . .	13	6	3	5	16	11
Staffordshire . . . . .	15	11	2	5	18	4
Suffolk . . . . .	12	9	2	9	15	6
Surrey . . . . .	16	4	3	8	20	0
Sussex . . . . .	14	10	2	9	17	7
Warwickshire . . . . .	14	4	2	0	16	4
Westmorland . . . . .	18	4	1	8	20	0
Wiltshire . . . . .	12	9	2	11	15	8
Worcestershire . . . . .	14	2	2	3	16	5
Yorkshire . . . . .	16	11	2	4	19	3

The account we have given has been rearranged—to make it more easy for reference, and to enable the whole wage position of the ordinary agricultural labourers in England to be seen at a glance—from the latest Board of Trade return, and although that is not right up to the present date, we learn from inquiry of the Board of Agriculture and from other sources that there has been “little change”—so that practically these figures, and those that succeed them in this volume, may be taken to represent the present wage position of ordinary



English agricultural labourers. As explanatory of the table, however, there are some notes in the Board of Trade report that it is important to quote. They are as follows :—

“The figures for Northumberland and Durham relate to ploughmen (or ‘hinds’), and in Cumberland, Westmorland, and North Lancashire to ‘married labourers.’ In Northumberland and Durham the ‘hinds’ form by far the majority of the farm servants, there being comparatively few ordinary labourers (‘spade hinds’). Generally speaking, however, the wages of the spade hinds and also of the cattlemen or ‘byremen,’ except that these two classes often get some extra allowance in kind for special work, are about the same as those of the ploughmen. In Cumberland, Westmorland, and North Lancashire, the majority of the farm servants are unmarried men, who lodge and board in the farmhouses; and, as many of the farms are small, the occupiers being frequently working farmers, taking part themselves in the ordinary work of the farm, the hired men cannot generally be classified according to their duties, as they usually undertake all kinds of work whenever needed. The wages of the married labourers attached to the staff of a farm, who are paid weekly, have been given in the table, in the case of Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire, and also Yorkshire. This class is also frequently employed to some extent in looking after animals in the first three counties, and also in some parts of Yorkshire on the smaller farms.”

The report continues :—

“The average weekly rates of cash wages shown in the table are computed from the rates returned by farmers, the number of men employed at such rate being taken into account, and where the summer rates differed from those paid in the winter, the figure given is an average of the summer and winter rates, it being reckoned that the ratio of summer to winter weeks is as three to two. The rates from which the averages are computed are the weekly rates of cash wages which would be paid when the men were not engaged at piecework or harvest. In the total of earnings, from which the weekly wages per man from each county were calculated, every payment, whether in cash or kind, made to the labourers, had been included, a money value having been attached for this purpose to such payments as were not made in cash. Free cottages, which are generally the most important payment made in kind, have been valued at £4 a year throughout, although some would no doubt let for more and others for less. It will be seen that the excess of the average weekly earnings over the average weekly rates of cash wages varies considerably in the different

counties, but before entering into the reasons for this difference, a few instances may be given showing how the annual payments are made up in various counties."

These illustrations, however, will not be given, as they are not of supreme interest to the general reader. It will be necessary only to state, generally, of what the payments in kind mostly consist. For example, a house and garden given and valued at £5 per annum; potatoes free, valued at £3, 10s. per annum; food and drink given at harvest, 4s.; coals carted free, £1, 4s. In another case coals carted are only put at 5s.; whilst drink at hay harvest (a very "thirsty" time) is valued at 7s. 6d. In another case fuel or fuel carted is valued at £1, 10s.; in another at 7s. 6d., and potato ground at 5s. Then, again, fuel carted, is put at 10s., drink at harvest at 5s., and potato ground at 7s. 6d. Harvest, in one further case, is put down at £1, and in another, drink at harvest at £1.

Amongst the same notes is an interesting illustration of what may be called a very prosperous family containing four breadwinners—two sons and two daughters—besides the father. Their total earnings in cash and "kind" amount to no less than £207, 8s. a year, made up as follows:—Father, cash wages at 18s. a week, or £46, 16s. per annum; house free, reckoned at £4, 5s. per annum, 1200 yards of potatoes valued at £4, coals "led" free, £1, 4s. Total annual earnings, £56, 5s. The two sons together, earning 18s. cash per week each, made £93, 12s. per annum, and 1200 yards of potatoes each reckoned up to £8. Their "grand total" was £101, 12s. per annum. The two daughters earned 1s. 6d. a day in winter, for about 24½ weeks, £22, 1s.; and 1s. 8d. a day in summer, reckoning for about 21½ weeks, £21, 10s. Add to these earnings, 3s. a day each for twenty harvest days, or £6 for the two, brings their "grand total" of money to £49, 11s. It will be seen by adding these three totals together that the entire amount is as stated,

£207, 8s. per annum. But, in another family, in the case of a married man, having only one son and one daughter, the total "annual value" of the earnings were considerably less, only amounting to £131, 16s. 6d. One other general note is all that need be given here in reference to the earnings of ordinary agricultural labourers. It says :—

"In some counties the earnings of the labourers are fairly uniform throughout, and in these cases the averages given represent more faithfully the earnings most generally made by the men, than in counties where earnings vary in different districts. Such variations may sometimes be accounted for to some extent by the great opportunities for piecework in one district compared with another, but they chiefly depend on the differences in the rates of wages due to the proximity of towns or mines in counties like Northumberland, Warwickshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, and Surrey. On the other hand, in almost purely agricultural counties, such as Norfolk and Suffolk, there is a great degree of uniformity in wages and earnings. The rate of weekly wages of ordinary labourers in most cases in those counties is 12s. or 13s., and the harvest payments are usually between £7 and £8. The average weekly earnings amount to 15s. 3d. in Norfolk, and in Suffolk to 15s. 6d., the difference between wages and earnings in Norfolk being 2s. 11d., and in Suffolk 2s. 9d."

It will now be interesting to turn to a different class of labourers, namely, men in charge of horses, cattlemen, and shepherds; and for the amounts of their earnings, both in cash and in kind, we turn to the Board of Trade report already referred to, and quoted from. The information included in this report was chiefly furnished by Rural District Councils and farmers. The returns from farmers gave, for horsemen, cattlemen, and shepherds respectively, the number employed on the farm, the rate of weekly wages, the total amount of cash received in wages by the men, together with particulars of their allowances in kind, and also the value of the beer or cider given to them. We shall arrange these in three separate columns, with two columns under each grade, to show in one the cash payments, and in the other the total earnings, including payments in kind.

TABLE 2.—HORSEMEN, CATTLEMEN, AND SHEPHERDS.  
Average Weekly Wages.

Counties.	Horsemen.		Cattlemen.		Shepherds.	
	In Cash.	In Cash and Kind.	In Cash.	In Cash and Kind.	In Cash.	In Cash and Kind.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bedfordshire . . .	15 11	18 3	16 0	18 4	15 10	18 2
Berkshire . . .	14 10	17 11	14 8	17 8	14 6	18 4
Buckinghamshire . . .	15 11	17 11	16 3	17 3	16 0	18 1
Cambridgeshire . . .	14 7	17 11	13 11	17 3	14 8	18 11
Cheshire . . .	18 8	20 8	17 6	19 10	18 0	20 5
Cornwall . . .	14 7	18 5	14 10	19 1	14 11	19 4
Cumberland . . .	18 0	20 3	18 8	21 2	17 10	20 5
Derbyshire . . .	19 10	21 6	19 4	21 2	19 11	22 10
Devonshire . . .	14 1	17 7	14 7	18 7	14 6	18 9
Dorsetshire . . .	13 0	16 3	13 10	16 7	13 2	17 10
Durham . . .	20 0	22 2	20 5	22 4	21 3	24 8
Essex . . .	15 2	18 11	16 2	19 3	15 5	19 7
Gloucestershire . . .	14 0	17 2	14 1	17 1	14 3	17 8
Hampshire . . .	14 3	17 11	14 11	18 1	14 2	18 6
Herefordshire . . .	14 5	18 1	14 4	17 10	14 9	18 10
Hertfordshire . . .	16 2	19 0	16 9	19 2	16 4	19 9
Huntingdonshire . . .	15 3	18 3	14 9	18 3	15 8	18 10
Kent . . .	17 11	21 0	18 3	21 0	17 10	22 0
Lancashire . . .	20 6	21 7	19 9	20 11	23 4	25 5
Leicestershire . . .	17 6	19 10	17 8	19 11	16 11	19 7
Lincolnshire . . .	15 3	19 8	14 11	19 7	15 1	20 7
Middlesex . . .	18 9	22 11	18 3	22 8	20 0	22 1
Monmouthshire . . .	16 10	19 8	15 8	19 0	16 3	20 5
Norfolk . . .	14 1	17 2	14 0	17 6	14 5	18 2
Northamptonshire . . .	15 10	18 8	15 9	18 2	15 10	19 0
Northumberland . . .	19 4	21 7	20 1	22 7	19 6	23 1
Nottinghamshire . . .	19 3	22 4	18 10	22 4	18 3	21 9
Oxfordshire . . .	14 3	16 11	14 6	17 6	14 4	17 8
Rutlandshire . . .	17 6	19 10	17 8	19 11	16 11	19 7
Shropshire . . .	15 3	19 1	15 7	19 4	16 1	20 4
Somersetshire . . .	14 5	18 2	15 0	18 0	14 6	19 3
Staffordshire . . .	16 5	19 6	16 8	20 0	16 6	20 3
Suffolk . . .	14 6	17 7	14 6	17 5	14 9	18 10
Surrey . . .	17 5	20 5	17 5	20 1	17 4	20 6
Sussex . . .	16 5	19 5	17 1	19 11	17 1	19 11
Warwickshire . . .	16 4	19 1	16 1	18 11	15 10	18 11
Westmorland . . .	18 0	20 3	18 8	21 2	17 10	20 5
Wiltshire . . .	13 11	17 4	14 2	17 2	13 11	17 7
Worcestershire . . .	14 10	17 11	15 0	18 6	15 1	18 9
Yorkshire . . .	17 10	20 8	17 7	20 7	17 7	20 10

The Board of Trade report under Yorkshire gives three sets of figures, corresponding to the East Riding, the North Riding, and the West Riding; but as there is not much appreciable difference in the amounts for the three "Ridings," we have preferred to calculate an average for the whole of the county. This average is quite sufficiently indicative of the wage position in Yorkshire.

The following comments in the Board of Trade report is in confirmation of what we have already said ; but it will be interesting to quote them. The report says :—

“ A comparison of this table with the corresponding one relating to ordinary labourers shows that both the nominal rates of wages and the actual earnings of men in charge of animals are generally higher than in the case of the ordinary labourers. The reasons for this are not far to seek. A higher standard of skill is required of men in charge of horses, cattle or sheep, than of the men whose chief employment is raising and gathering crops, the hours of work are generally longer, and Sunday work is frequently necessary. The variations in the cash wages paid in the different districts of each county are also wider than in the case of the ordinary labourers, for not only do the men who live near the big towns receive higher cash payments than those in the more rural parts of the county, but the men in charge of animals vary more as regards proficiency. The older and more experienced men, who are usually married men, generally get free cottages, potato ground, and other allowances, while young unmarried men, working under them, are paid a lower wage often entirely in money, and their yearly earnings sometimes do not amount to as much as those of ordinary labourers. The men employed on large farms or estates, or where prize herds or flocks are kept, are generally better paid men than those on the smaller farms, and this naturally tends to create wide differences in rates of wages even in a purely agricultural county. These men usually get more allowances in kind than ordinary labourers, though the practice of making such payments varies considerably. Generally speaking, a free cottage is given. Even in the same county the custom varies in different districts, more especially as between the areas in the neighbourhood of towns—where the men prefer to be paid in cash in the same way as are workmen engaged in other callings—and those more rural in character.”

## CHAPTER X.

### FOOD AND CLOTHING.

THERE can hardly be more important matters, of great interest to all who are concerned in the welfare of our agricultural labourers, than the food and the dress of this indispensable section of the working community. Some information will be found in the Appendix to this volume on the subject ; but it is obvious that the visits of one observer, and the most exhaustive inquiries which one person can make—although, in our own case, those visits and inquiries related to one of the most extensive and to a large extent typically representative of the agricultural districts of the United Kingdom—could not compass, unless a very considerable time was taken for the work, all that it is important to include in a comprehensive account of the conditions of life of the tillers of our soil. Only the resources of a great Government department, like our Board of Trade, with its army of correspondents in all parts of the kingdom, could enable us to give a rapid survey, which would be at the same time simultaneous. If that survey should occupy too long a time, there is the great danger that parts of the account might get out of date, if kept back from publication, until the materials were being obtainable for other parts, when the process had to wait for the investigations of one individual. It is possible, of course, to imitate the action of a Government department, and send round to correspondents—a plan that we have ourselves adopted, as will be seen from subsequent

chapters of this book. A private individual, however, has not and cannot have the same status and authority as a great Government department, with its big register of correspondents selected, as authorities, after careful official investigation. We were fortunate, in our own inquiries, to obtain information from thoroughly reliable persons; but to get at those persons involved a large amount of preliminary inquiry.

For the information which follows we have preferred to rely on the Board of Trade reports, based on not one or even a dozen "commissioners," had they been employed, but on no less than one hundred and fourteen returns furnished by landowners, farmers, Local Government Board inspectors, members of local boards, the clergy, Poor Law relieving officers, local tradesmen, and agricultural labourers themselves. The report from which we shall quote says:—

"The particulars given were compiled after careful inquiry by these investigators among a large number of farm labourers and their wives, and they represent the ordinary expenditure on food by farm labourers in the districts to which the returns relate."

The table on next page will give the average quantity of the various kinds of food consumed in a week by an agricultural labourer and his wife and four children in certain groups—named—of counties in England. We take it that the family of six is looked upon as an average family for the purposes of the return.

The report says:—

"Particulars of the quantities of fish and eggs were asked for, but in many cases, consumption under these headings is very occasional, and, in some cases, is not in addition to, but in place of, the items included in the table. Other articles sometimes purchased are tinned meats or tinned fish, currants, raisins, pickles, and suet. But dumplings are frequently made of flour and water without suet. Salt has, of course, to be bought."

TABLE 3.—AVERAGE WEEKLY QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FOOD CONSUMED BY AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' FAMILIES IN ENGLAND.

Articles.	Northern Counties.	Midland Counties.	Eastern Counties.	Southern and South-Western Counties.	General Average for England.
	lb. oz.	lb. oz.	lb. oz.	lb. oz.	lb. oz.
Bacon . . . . .	3 7	3 0	2 0	2 6	2 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
Beef (or mutton) . . . . .	4 10	3 12	1 12	3 5	3 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bread . . . . .	5 0	27 0	17 0	29 0	19 8
Butter . . . . .	1 6	0 15	0 14 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 15	1 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cheese . . . . .	0 12	1 5	1 2	1 10	1 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Coffee (or cocoa) . . . . .	0 1	0 5	0 1	0 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Flour . . . . .	23 0	7 0	20 8	9 0	14 14
Lard (margarine or dripping) . . . . .	1 13	0 10	0 15	0 12	1 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Milk { new or skimmed	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints	4 pints or 9 pints	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints or 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints	4 pints or 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints or 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints
Oatmeal and rice . . . . .	1 4	1 8	1 0	1 4	1 4
Pork . . . . .	0 3	1 5	2 1	0 14	1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Potatoes . . . . .	26 0	22 0	24 0	31 0	25 12
Sugar . . . . .	4 12	4 12	4 0	3 12	4 5
Syrup (treacle or jam) . . . . .	1 12	1 8	1 0	2 4	1 10
Tea . . . . .	0 8	0 7	0 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 9	0 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Average total value . . . . .	14 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$

The proportion of bread and of flour, and of meat, and the percentage of these articles on the total value of the articles consumed in the different groups of counties, are as follows :—

TABLE 4.—AVERAGE VALUE OF (1) BREAD AND FLOUR, AND (2) MEAT CONSUMED WEEKLY BY AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' FAMILIES.

Articles.	Northern Counties.	Midland Counties.	Eastern Counties.	Southern and South-Western Counties.	General Average for England.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bread and Flour . . . . .	2 10 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 10	3 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 5
Meat (including beef, mutton, pork, and bacon)	5 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 9 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 2	3 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 2
Total . . . . .	8 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	7 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	7 0	7 3 $\frac{3}{4}$	7 7
Per cent. of total value of food consumed . . . . .	54·5	58·2	56·6	54·6	56·0



We make no apology for quoting, *in extenso*, the extremely interesting paragraphs which follow the tables we have given in the Board of Trade report. Although the figures and deductions were not published yesterday, they are of comparatively recent origination. On such returns there must always be fluctuations, but those given represent the circumstances with quite sufficient general accuracy fairly to show the earnings of present-day agricultural labourers throughout England. The comments on the tables—the contents of which, for greater convenience of reference, we have arranged alphabetically—are as follows :—

“ It will be observed that more bread and less meat is eaten in the eastern and southern groups than in the northern and midland groups, where wages are on the whole higher, the weekly expenditure on bread and flour in the eastern and southern and south-western groups being nearly 4s., and on meat between 3s. and 3s. 6d., while in the northern and midland counties the weekly expenditure on bread and breadstuffs is about 3s., and on meat between 4s. 10d. and 5s. 3d. In counties in which wages are comparatively low, beef or mutton is frequently purchased only once a week, on Saturday, for consumption on Sunday. In the eastern counties the amount of beef and mutton consumed in a week is shown to amount to only 1 lb. 12 oz., while pork and bacon amount together to about 4 lb. In the northern counties and in some of the north midland counties more beef or mutton is eaten than in the other districts, but frequently not every day. Pigs are often kept by the labourers there, and a good deal of bacon is consumed. The single men who are hired in the farm-houses in the northern counties are well fed, frequently having five meals a day—namely, breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, and supper. They usually have mutton or beef, hot or cold, for dinner, and sometimes they have cold beef or mutton at breakfast or supper as well. The figures given in the first table bring out clearly the practice of many of the labourers in the northern counties of baking their own bread, their expenditure on bread being comparatively small, and that on flour large. The practice also prevails to a considerable extent in the eastern counties. The computed value of the articles of food shown in the last tables compared with the average earnings of farm labourers, including all classes (ordinary labourers, and also men in charge of animals), is shown below :—

TABLE 5.—WAGES AS AGAINST FOOD OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.

England.	Average Total Earnings of Adult Agricultural Labourers (including all Classes).	Average Value of Food consumed by Families of Agricultural Labourers (including Food home-produced or received as Allowances in Addition to Wages).
	s. d.	s. d.
Northern counties . . . . .	20 6	14 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Midland „ . . . . .	18 1	13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Eastern „ . . . . .	17 3	12 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Southern and south-western counties . . . . .	17 10	13 4 $\frac{3}{4}$
England .	18 5	13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$

To make the reference to groups of counties perfectly clear, we would interpolate that what are called the “northern counties” are Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire; the “midland counties” are Beds, Bucks, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Rutlandshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire; the “eastern counties” are Cambridgeshire, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk; whilst the “southern and south-western counties” are Berkshire, Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Kent, Monmouthshire, Somersetshire, Surrey, Sussex, and Wiltshire.

Going on with the interesting paragraphs momentarily interrupted, we proceed to quote from the Board of Trade report, which continues:—

“In considering, however, the value of food stated to be consumed by farm labourers’ families, it must be understood that, in the tables given, no allowance has been made for the smaller cost of home-grown produce, such as vegetables, potatoes, bacon, pork, and eggs, the estimates of value of the articles being based on the ordinary retail

prices in the various districts. On the other hand, if pigs, poultry, and eggs are sold, or the produce of gardens, allotments, or potato ground, the labourers' incomes are increased, but the earnings given in the table are those derived from farm labour only. Further, the wives may earn something at farm work at busy seasons, particularly in the fruit-, flower-, and hop-growing districts, or by doing a little charring, or by taking in a little washing. In certain districts the wives and daughters of farm labourers have opportunities of earning money by taking work from clothing, glove, or other factories. Married women, however, particularly those with very young children at home, are often prevented from earning money, owing to their domestic duties. The children may also earn a little occasionally, and when they leave school and begin to earn regularly the family is in a better position; though of course the older the children grow, the more they cost to feed and clothe. Many men have gardens, allotments, or potato ground. The gross annual value of the produce of a garden or allotment up to a quarter of an acre may, perhaps, be put at from 25s. to £5. Gardens or allotments of a quarter-acre are thought to be rather larger than a man in regular employment can manage, but they are not usually so extensive. It, however, makes a good deal of difference if they are close to the cottages and the men are saved the time and fatigue of walking some distance to them. If a quarter-acre garden has some well-established fruit trees, the gross value of the fruit might be worth from £1 to £2 a year. In a number of districts the practice is to consume the home-grown vegetables and to sell the fruit. The principal vegetables grown in gardens or allotments are potatoes and cabbages, but other vegetables would be onions, peas, beans, turnips, carrots, beet, broccoli, lettuce, and celery. If a man keeps a pig, he will often grow some barley, if he has an allotment of sufficient size. On a garden or allotment of a quarter of an acre, a man might have to work between two hundred and three hundred hours in the year. Apart from his own labour his other outgoings would be the cost of seed and of manure, but if a man has manure from a pig, and also gets road scrapings, etc., he probably will not buy any. The rent of a garden can hardly be separated from that of the house to which it is attached. In many cases a house with a large garden is let for the same sum as a house with a small garden. In cases where men hire allotments, the rent in purely rural districts is frequently at the rate of about £1 to £2 an acre, but nearer towns it may range from £4 to as much as £8 an acre. Encouragement is often given to the cultivation of gardens or allotments by the holding of local shows, at which prizes are offered for fruit and vegetables grown upon them. Though the keeping of pigs and poultry by farm labourers is a common practice in many districts, it is not so general

in England as in Scotland and Ireland. Some farmers object to their men who have charge of food for animals keeping fowls and pigs, on account of the temptation to take grain and meal. In some districts there is very little poultry-keeping, and this is frequently due to lack of accommodation and of a suitable run. If a labourer understands keeping fowls he might make a profit of about 5s. a year on each fowl. The keeping of pigs also depends largely on the facilities for accommodation, and whether there are fair-sized gardens or allotments from which food can be provided for them. Correspondents in some districts state that the labourers do not keep as many pigs as formerly, owing to the requirements of the sanitary authorities. Where pigs are kept, it is the more usual practice to buy one for between 10s. and £1, and fatten it for home consumption, though some sell it. In some districts, such as in parts of Cheshire, where labourers have the opportunity of renting several acres of land, two pigs are fattened, one for home consumption and one for sale, and it is not uncommon in those localities for breeding sows to be kept. Some of the men there are able to keep cows and a good deal of poultry, and to grow fruit, in addition to vegetables and potatoes. The profit derived from buying a pig and fattening it is not large, and no doubt the labourers could often buy bacon cheaper than they could feed it, but generally it would not be so good as home-fed bacon, and they would miss the manure for their gardens or allotments. A pig costing (say) 15s. can be fed to a value of about £5 on about £3, 10s. worth of meal, if helped out with 'wash' and vegetables, thus leaving 15s. profit for feeding. The price of pigs, however, varies a good deal, and if store pigs are bought when the price is up, and fat hogs are sold when the price is down, the profit vanishes."

On the interesting subject of clothing, the report says :—

"Inquiries have been made with regard to the amount spent on clothing in a year by a man, his wife, and four children, and correspondents usually put the expenditure at sums varying between £6 and £10, but higher estimates are given from some of the northern counties. No doubt the clothing, boot, and blanket clubs which exist in many parishes are an assistance in this respect. Some correspondents state that in their parishes a good many clothes are given to the children from one source or another. Fuel and lights cost about 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. a week. In a good many parishes there are coal clubs."

"The expenditure on tobacco and beer can only be roughly estimated. In low-wage districts, about 1½ to 2 oz. of tobacco a week at 3d. an ounce is a common allowance,

and in higher-wage districts up to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  oz. a week are smoked. The amount of beer purchased must largely depend on the character of the man, and also upon the amount of his earnings. The sum of 1s. a week does not purchase a large amount of beer at 4d. a quart, and yet there would appear to be but little margin for such expenditure in low-wage districts. Some correspondents put the amount spent on beer at between 1s. and 2s. a week, and more in cases where the man drinks at the expense of the comfort of his family. A large number of farm labourers belong to benefit societies and sick clubs, and in a good many parishes there are clothing, coal, or blanket clubs, to which reference has already been made."

In conclusion, this part of the report says :—

" Reviewing the available information as to income and expenditure of farm labourers, their estimated average weekly earnings, including all classes (ordinary labourers, and also men in charge of animals), are 18s. 3d., exclusive of earnings of wives and children, and of any profits derived from the sale of home-grown produce. The estimated average weekly value of food consumed by farm labourers' families, comprising two adults and four children, is 13s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., this value being based on ordinary retail shop prices, and no allowance being made for the smaller cost of home-grown food. Turning to other expenditure, the rent most usually paid in purely rural districts is 1s. 6d. a week. Estimating the cost of firing and light at about 1s. 9d. a week, clothes (say) 3s. a week, and club 6d., there is a deficit of 2s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., if the value of food, the cost of rent, firing, light, clothes, and club is compared with the earnings of the head of the house (without allowing for any expenditure on beer, tobacco, and household requisites). The labourer's garden produce, however, may be valued at 6d. to 2s. a week, 1s. a week might be realised from poultry-keeping, and 3d. to 4d. a week from keeping a pig. In addition the men's incomes may be supplemented by the earnings of wives and children. The importance to a labourer of having a good garden becomes apparent from these figures. Returns from low-wage districts, where the earnings of an ordinary farm labourer are under 16s. a week (including earnings on account of piecework and harvest), not infrequently give the value of food consumed by the family at 10s. a week, and sometimes 9s. 6d. It may be of interest to give some examples of the class of food eaten in various localities by farm labourers. These examples are not put forward as typical of whole counties, but as illustrations of the customs prevailing in the districts reported on by those who undertook to make investigations."

We have rearranged in the alphabetical order of counties the information given by the Board of Trade.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

In the east of the county—

*Breakfast.*—Bread, butter, cheese, tea. *Dinner.*—Meat, puddings, pork or bacon, potatoes and vegetables, cheese, perhaps beer (on Sundays, beef or mutton, pudding). *Tea.*—Bread, butter, cheese, tea; perhaps herrings or a little cold pork. *Supper.*—Bread, cheese; perhaps a glass of beer. *Note.*—Most of the cottages in this district have gardens, and great interest is taken in the annual village flower shows, which have done a great deal of good, and some excellent vegetables are now grown—a great addition to the labourer's food. There are a fair number of allotments; and when the labourers have allotments they are almost sure to keep pigs. Most of the men now belong to one of the large benefit societies, and look to their "club" for relief in sickness.

In the west of the county—

*Breakfast.*—Cold meat (generally pork or bacon), or eggs when fairly cheap, or if hens are kept; bread, butter, bloaters, tea, skim milk. *Dinner.*—Flour-and-water pudding with meat in (this is very general); or pastry, or part suet pudding, with jam, apples, or currants in; or batter pudding. Meat is very seldom eaten by itself, but nearly always in a pudding. What may be described as dinner "accessories" are rice and sago puddings, potatoes and other vegetables, tea, or ginger beer. *Note.*—Beer is not kept in the house, but men who drink go to the public-house at all times, morning (even before breakfast), between meals, and at night. When the children take dinner to school, the chief meal is at 6 p.m. They take cold tea to school in bottle, with their food (on Sundays, fresh meat). *Tea.*—Women have a cup of tea and sometimes bread and butter. *Supper.*—Tea, milk, or cocoa, bloaters, syrup, bread and jam or butter; perhaps a little meat or cheese, and cake. *Note.*—The following is a description of the food eaten by a family in this district. There are five children, whose ages vary from two to twelve years. Both the man and his wife are described as extremely industrious, and the wife an excellent manager. Both are teetotallers. For breakfast the man has a cup of tea and bread and butter at 6 a.m. He takes away food for two meals—bread, meat, and pudding made of apples, currants, flour and water, or suet; or cheese, instead of pudding. The woman and children have bread sopped in hot water, with either sugar or salt and sometimes butter. For dinner for the woman at home and the children who take theirs to school, home-made buns or bread and cheese, or bread and jam (Sundays, fresh meat). For tea and supper for the whole family, pudding of flour and water, or pastry, or part suet with jam, apples, or

currants, vegetables, tea, and skim milk. The correspondent who sends this particular instance has made exhaustive inquiries in this district, and sends the following information as regards the district as a whole. He says: "Most of the men in the district keep pigs, and most have gardens, but some are said to be very small. All have allotments; they are, it is said, often a mile from the villages. Most of the men belong to sick clubs, local or otherwise. There are also clothing clubs, pig clubs, and some coal charities."

In the Isle of Ely—

*Breakfast.*—Tea with sugar, no milk; bread, butter, or lard. The man probably has a herring or small piece of pork. *Dinner.*—Potatoes fried in lard, or pudding with pork and onions in it, potatoes (Sundays, fresh beef or pork). *Tea.*—Tea with sugar, no milk; bread and butter or lard. *Supper.*—Bread, and scraps left over from dinner. *Note.*—Nearly all the men buy a small pig, fatten, and sell it. They mostly have gardens and about twenty poles of potato land. Some have allotments.

#### CHESHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea or coffee, bread, butter, oatmeal and milk gruel; sometimes a little bacon. *Lunch* (at 10 a.m.).—The man has a piece of bread and cheese or butter. *Dinner.*—Cold meat left over from Sundays, bacon and potatoes. If eaten away from home, the man has bread instead of potatoes (Sundays—beef, mutton, pork or veal, potatoes or other vegetables, rice pudding, or jam or fruit dumpling). *Tea or Supper.*—Tea, bread and cheese or butter. Sometimes cold dumpling left from dinner on Sunday. *Note.*—In this district a large number of the farm labourers have small holdings, and keep pigs, a cow, and poultry; they grow potatoes and other vegetables. They make their own butter. The majority feed two or three pigs each year, and one is sold towards the rent; the others are killed for home consumption. When there are not small holdings, most cottages have good gardens. Most of the men belong to benefit societies. Their children are insured, when infants, in assurance companies. The wives of many of them are members of parish or estate clothing clubs.

#### DERBYSHIRE.

**WEEKDAYS**—*Breakfast.*—Bread, butter, bacon, cheese, tea. *Dinner.*—Beef, pork or bacon, potatoes, tea or beer. *Tea and Supper.*—Bread, butter, syrup, jam, tea; perhaps fish (fresh or tinned). **SUNDAYS**—*Breakfast.*—Bread, butter, bacon, tea. *Dinner.*—Beef or pork, occasionally a fowl, potatoes, tea, beer. *Tea.*—Bread, butter, jam, tinned fish, tea; perhaps some fancy bread. *Supper.*—The same sort of diet as tea; perhaps some beer. *Note.*—Nearly all the men in this district keep pigs to supply bacon for their own use, and some to sell. They also have gardens and potato land free, ready prepared. They generally belong to benefit societies or clubs.

## DERBYSHIRE, WEST.

*Breakfast.*—Oatmeal porridge, milk, bacon, coffee, bread. *Dinner.*—Beef or mutton or pork, stews, potatoes, and other vegetables. *Tea.*—Bread, butter, or cheese, tea. *Supper.*—Sometimes porridge, or cold meat, or both. *Note.*—A good many men keep pigs. Most have large gardens, sometimes big enough to grow all the potatoes and the other vegetables required by the family. The allotment system is but sparsely adopted. It generally happens that the labourers can grow pretty well all the potatoes they need on the employer's land. Nearly all the men belong to benefit societies.

## DEVONSHIRE.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Home-cured bacon and fried potatoes, tea, eggs (if about eighteen a shilling); or it may be, in another set, bread cut in small slices and soaked in hot milk, followed by fried bacon and hot potatoes. *Dinner.*—Meat (fresh or salt), hot or cold vegetables, suet pudding; or hot pies (vegetables and bacon) if the men are near home; otherwise, cold potatoes and meat pasty, cider. *Supper.*—A pasty, or fried fish, potatoes, tea; or it may be, both for tea and supper, fried potatoes and bacon, followed by cake or bread and treacle or butter, tea. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Sometimes same as weekdays, but often tea, potatoes, or turnip pasty; or bread, butter, cake, tea. *Dinner.*—Small joint, fresh meat (baked with potatoes), and other vegetables; or roast fresh meat, potatoes, or other vegetables; apple tart when in season. *Tea.*—Bread, butter, cake, tea; or for tea and supper, cake, bread, butter, jam, and now and then cream, tea. *Note.*—The men generally keep pigs and have gardens and allotments. They usually belong to benefit societies and other clubs. Another correspondent writing from North Devon says: "Breakfast is taken early, before going to work. It consists usually of fried potatoes and a rasher of bacon; or bread fried in dripping. They have an early lunch, locally called 'namett,' which is often a cake with some saffron and currants, or a piece of bread and cheese. For dinner, about 12.30 to 1 p.m., they usually have a small loaf with a piece of bacon or other meat in the centre, called 'Toad in a hole,' or a pasty. They get a jug of tea if within reach of their homes or the farmhouse. Farm cider is given in some cases, but it is being generally given up. For Sundays, they usually buy a piece of fresh meat. For supper, they generally have fried potatoes and bacon, or other meat. During the season, herrings are used a good deal. No meat is usually taken at tea-time except at harvest, when the living is more liberal. The women then generally bring out the dinners to the harvest-fields, usually meat and vegetables; and also tea at four o'clock, consisting of bread, butter, or cake, and tea. Most men keep a pig and salt it."



## DORSETSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Bread, butter, cheese, cold bacon, tea (Sundays, fried bacon). *Dinner.*—Boiled bacon, potatoes, and other vegetables (Sundays, mutton or beef with pudding); or salt pork, vegetables, dumplings (Sundays, a little fresh meat or pork). *Tea.*—Bread, butter or jam, cheese, tea (Sundays, cake); or bread, cheese, butter, jam, or treacle, tea (on Sundays also cake). *Supper.*—Very rarely any; or if any, vegetables and salt pork. *Note.*—Nearly all the men keep pigs, and all have gardens and allotments. The allotments are always manured and cultivated for them, so that they have only to plant and hoe. The majority of the men belong to benefit societies, and nearly every village in the district has a coal club. Referring to one particular district, a correspondent states: "The farm labourers are not allowed to keep pigs or poultry. They usually have both large gardens and allotments. They do not generally belong to benefit societies or coal and clothing clubs."

## DURHAM.

*Breakfast.*—Bread, bacon, tea (children, bread and butter). *Dinner.*—Beef or bacon, potatoes, pudding, or tart (Sundays, generally beef). *Tea.*—Tea, and bread and butter or treacle. *Supper.*—Same as tea. *Note.*—Pigs are not generally kept. Most of the men have small gardens. Some men belong to benefit societies, but this is not a general practice.

## ESSEX.

*Breakfast.*—Bread, butter, cheese, tea, milk. *Dinner.*—Bread and cheese (Sundays, pork or bacon; a little fresh meat occasionally; potatoes, tea. *Tea.*—Bread, butter or jam, tea. *Supper.*—Pork or bacon; a little fresh meat occasionally. *Note.*—A good many men keep pigs, and they have allotments to the extent of 20 rods. They generally belong to benefit societies, and the aged and widows belong to coal and clothing clubs.

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea, bread, cheese, butter; sometimes oatmeal; bacon occasionally. *Dinner.*—Bread, cheese, bacon, potatoes, and green vegetables; fresh meat once or twice a week (Sundays, fresh meat, vegetables, pudding). *Tea.*—Tea, bread, butter, jam. *Supper.*—Tea, bread and cheese. *Notes.*—As a rule, labourers keep pigs when stys are provided. Some farmers object to their men keeping pigs on the ground that the temptation of taking food for them is great. All the men have gardens or allotments. "Allotments" (one correspondent wrote) "are not popular in this neighbourhood." In one parish 16 acres of derelict allotments have been thrown back on to the farms. The principal demand for allotments is not by farm labourers,

but by men who will not take regular work. Such men may take three or four allotments. As a rule, the men do not belong to clubs (this was in one neighbourhood). Some years ago there were some small local clubs, which, owing to mismanagement, broke up, and the men were too old to join the larger clubs.

#### HEREFORDSHIRE.

**WEEKDAYS**—*Breakfast*.—Cold bacon, bread, tea, or cider; or, bread, butter or dripping, tea. *Dinner*.—Principally cold bacon, bread, cheese, cider (the farmer's allowance). If the man can get home he often has something warm, or bread and cheese, or bread and cold boiled bacon, cider. *Tea and Supper*.—Warm bacon, vegetables, and tea, when the man returns from work (if anything is eaten later, bread, cheese, and cider are taken); or for supper only, in most cases the wives provide a warm supper, consisting of stewed scraps of meat with hot potatoes and other vegetables. On Sundays, *Breakfast* usually consists of fried or boiled bacon, bread, tea or coffee, or of bread, butter or dripping; *Dinner* of hot fresh meat, vegetables, and pudding; or of American beef or boiled bacon and vegetables; *Tea* of butter, jam, bread, and tea; or of tea or cocoa, bread and butter or dripping; and *Supper* either of bread, cheese, and cider, or of bread and cheese only. *Notes*.—One correspondent says: "Nearly all the labourers in the district keep pigs. In many cases two are fed, one being sold and the other kept for home use. Large families will consume more than one 20-stone pig a year. All have good-sized gardens—in many cases, also, a small plot of grassland, used as a pig run or for fowls, and planted with fruit trees. Manure is readily obtained, and horticultural societies encourage a great interest in the gardens. The farm labourers usually belong to one of the large friendly societies, or to a thriving local benefit society. Coal and clothing clubs are open to all labourers of good character, and substantial bonuses are added yearly. The children of the day-schools have their shoe club at the cost of a penny a week. Some of the labourers belong to more than one society, and meet their payments by the extra money obtained in harvest, by their wives' earnings, and by selling the produce of their holdings, such as apples, small garden fruit, eggs, and potatoes." One correspondent in Herefordshire reports: "In this district a great many labourers keep pigs, and they generally have large gardens. A great deal of food for the pig is grown in the garden, namely, surplus vegetables, and the small and faulty potatoes. There are no allotments in this district. Many of the men are members of benefit societies, and the wives are frequently members of coal and clothing clubs."

#### HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

*Breakfast*.—Bread and milk, bread and lard, sop with sugar, oatmeal, tea; sometimes herrings when in season. Salt pork

for the men, or bread, bacon, butter or lard, tea. *Dinner*.—Onion and potato pudding, with a little piece of salt pork in it, suet dumplings, potatoes, and other vegetables; rice pudding for children (Sundays, a small piece of beef or mutton; or bread, bacon or pork, and vegetables, pudding. *Tea*.—Bread and lard, sometimes butter or jam, tea. *Supper*.—If supper is taken, bread and cheese, occasionally herrings or bread, bacon or pork, and vegetables. *Notes*.—The men generally have gardens and allotments, and a good many of them keep pigs. They belong to benefit societies, and a good many belong to clothing and coal clubs.

## KENT.

*Breakfast*.—Bread, butter, cheese; a few have porridge or bread and milk; sometimes tea, bread and butter (on Sundays, bacon and an egg, with bread and butter); but before leaving for work in the morning a cup of cocoa is taken and a piece of cake is eaten on the way to work. *Dinner*.—Pork or bacon, hot vegetables, pudding, bread and cheese (on Sundays, butchers' meat is eaten), or bacon, pork, cold meat, and suet pudding (Sunday is the time for hot fresh meat, vegetables, suet pudding, and fruit pie). *Tea*.—Bread and butter, cake, tea; or bread, butter, cheese, tea; and Sunday diet may comprise, for tea a slight variety from the weekday fare. *Supper*.—As a rule, few have supper as well as tea; but, if so, for supper, bread, butter, and cheese, or simply bread and cheese. On Sundays very much the same. *Note*.—About 10 per cent. of the men keep a pig. They all have gardens with their cottages, and about 15 per cent. have an allotment as well. They grow sufficient vegetables for their own use, and sometimes have a few to sell. Most of them belong to benefit societies, and a few to clothing clubs.

## LANCASHIRE.

*Breakfast* (in the north of this county).—Bread and butter, bacon, fruit pie, porridge, tea or coffee, or milk. *Dinner*.—Fried bacon, bacon with potatoes, perhaps cold meat left over from Sundays (but on Sundays, hot beef or mutton, vegetables, rice, or tapioca pudding). *Tea*.—Bread, butter, tea, cheese, fruit pie. *Supper*.—In cases where the father has dinner in the fields, there is generally a hot supper of potato pie or potatoes and bacon, the dinner consisting of the articles mentioned for tea as above. *Note*.—The majority of farm labourers in Lancashire keep a pig, and, as a rule, have a small vegetable garden. Some have a small allotment, on which a cow is pastured. Most of the men belong to some benefit society, and clothing clubs are not uncommon.

## LINCOLNSHIRE.

*Breakfast*.—Bread, butter, bacon, tea. *Dinner*.—Fresh or salt pork or bacon, pudding or tart, vegetables, cheese (Sundays, beef or mutton, pudding). *Tea*.—Toast, bread, butter or jam,

tea (Sundays, cake). *Supper*.—Bacon, pudding, vegetables, cheese, tea or milk. *Notes*.—In some cases both tea and supper are not taken, but the meal is eaten about 6.30 p.m. If the man takes his dinner in the fields with him, the meal in the evening is usually a hot one. Most of the men keep pigs, and have good gardens and allotments. They also belong to clubs.

#### NORFOLK.

*Breakfast*.—Bread and butter or dripping; sometimes pork (salted). Children have bread, jam, treacle, and in some cases oatmeal. *Dinner*.—Norfolk dumplings or pork, or sometimes meat left over from Sundays; sometimes stewed bones to make gravy; potatoes, bread, cheese, sometimes currant dumplings (Sundays, beef or pork, fruit pies or jam tarts). *Tea and Supper*.—Bread and butter, or dripping, jam, tea; sometimes cake (Sundays, some men have tinned beef or tinned salmon). Another account of the dietary of the Norfolk peasant is as follows:—*Breakfast*.—Bread, milk, butter or cheese, margarine, lard, onions, perhaps herrings or salt pork, baked apples, treacle, jam. *Dinner*.—Light dumplings, vegetables, and gravy out of pork diluted with water, pea soup, small piece of bacon or fat pork, perhaps some dumplings or pigs' fry, bread (Sundays, pork or butchers' meat). *Tea and Supper*.—Bread, butter or jam, cheese, onions, or apples, bread, cake with currants, tea, sometimes herrings. *Notes*.—A good many men have good gardens; on the other hand, some of the gardens are small. Allotments are said to be getting into the hands of small tradesmen and mechanics rather than farm labourers. Many of the farm labourers belong to benefit societies. Some men keep pigs, but it is not a general practice. The thriftless do not get sufficient money in hand to raise a pig or two. Many farmers object to their servants keeping either pigs or fowls, particularly if they have care of their employers' horses, pigs, etc. In most cases the men have good gardens. Allotments are in a parish here and there. Where there are large gardens, men do not, as a rule, seek allotments. Nearly all the men belong to benefit societies. The youths enter as soon as eligible. There are very few coal or clothing clubs. Many pay for clothes by instalments.

#### NORTHAMPTON.

Before going to work the men have tea, and bread and butter. Then they have for so-called *Breakfast*, bread, cheese, and tea. *Dinner*.—Pork and pudding (Sundays, beef and Yorkshire pudding), and in both instances, vegetables of some sort, no doubt, although the Board of Trade report does not mention vegetables. *Tea*.—Bread, jam, tea. *Supper*.—If supper is taken, bread and cheese. *Note*.—Most of the men have gardens or allotments, and keep pigs. They usually belong to benefit societies and clubs.

## NORTHUMBERLAND.

The following refers to the north of this county—

*Breakfast.*—Bread, butter, cheese, bacon, tea. *Dinner.*—Broth, bacon or cold beef, potatoes, cabbage or turnips, suet or currant dumpling, rice or bread-pudding (on Sundays, roast beef, dumpling or rhubarb tart, when rhubarb is in season, fresh). *Tea.*—Bread, butter, cheese or jam, tea. *Supper.*—Coffee, bread and cheese. *Notes.*—Most men kill either two or three pigs in the year, average weight 20 stones each. They all have gardens. They do not belong to benefit societies or clubs.

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Cold boiled bacon, bread, tea, milk. *Dinner.*—Cold beef or mutton the first part of the week. The rest of the week hot boiled bacon; also potatoes, and flour or milk puddings (Sundays, hot beef or mutton, puddings). *Tea.*—Bread, butter, jam, tea, dripping toast. *Supper.*—Bread and cheese. *Note.*—All the labourers in this district have gardens or allotments, and about half the men keep pigs. The majority of the men belong to benefit societies and coal and clothing clubs.

## OXFORDSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea, coffee, bread; sometimes bacon. *Dinner.*—Boiled bacon, vegetables, tea; sometimes a glass of beer (Sundays, butchers' meat, currant or jam pudding). *Tea.*—Bread and butter, tea; sometimes cocoa or coffee. *Supper.*—Bread, cheese, perhaps a glass of beer (on Sundays, some fresh meat). *Note.*—Most of the men keep pigs. All have gardens or allotments—many have both. Nearly all the men belong to benefit societies, and some to coal and clothing clubs.

## SOMERSETSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea and toast; or, it may be, fried bacon or milk, broth, or bread and butter, and tea (on Sundays, roast beef or mutton, and pudding; or fish or eggs). *Dinner.*—Potatoes, rice or suet pudding, and bacon; fresh meat over from Sundays on Monday (Sundays, roast beef or mutton, and pudding; or, it may be, milk pudding with fresh meat). Sometimes for the weekday dinner butchers' meat is bought and eaten, if it can be afforded, instead of bacon, and with either potatoes or other vegetables. *Tea.*—Bread, butter, tea, or, it may be, bread and dripping, or bread and jam (cake is added on Sundays). *Supper.*—Bacon or ham and vegetables, or alternatively bread and cheese, and beer or cider. *Notes.*—Many of the men keep pigs, and also have gardens and allotments. They frequently belong to coal and clothing clubs, but not to benefit societies, except in some instances, and the women also belong to clothing clubs. Sometimes a coal club will provide a family with coal at a discount of twopence in the shilling.

## STAFFORDSHIRE.

In the east of this county—

*Breakfast.*—Oatmeal porridge, milk, bacon, coffee, bread. *Dinner.*—Beef, mutton or pork, stews, potatoes, and other vegetables. *Tea.*—Bread, butter or cheese, tea. *Supper.*—Sometimes porridge or cold meat, or both. *Note.*—A good many men keep pigs. Most have large gardens, sometimes big enough to grow all the vegetables required by the family. The allotment system is but sparsely adopted. It generally happens that the labourers can grow pretty well all the potatoes they need on the employer's land. Nearly all the men belong to benefit societies.

## SUFFOLK.

In the east of the county—

*Breakfast.*—Porridge, milk, a little fat pork or bacon, cheese, bread and dripping, tea. *Dinner.*—Boiled pork, occasionally a rabbit, potatoes, cabbage, swedes, turnips, or other vegetables; boiled rice and treacle, or dumplings (made of flour and water). On Sundays, beef or mutton, often foreign, at 5d. to 6d. a pound, and vegetables, baked batter pudding, milk pudding or plum pudding, or fruit pie. *Tea and Supper.*—Bread, butter, cheese, tea; occasionally a meat pudding. *Note.*—A number of labourers keep both fowls and pigs, and join benefit societies, whilst the wives belong to clothing clubs; but sometimes, where a family is large and expensive, there are no means of finding even the small necessary subscriptions to these institutions.

In the west of the county—

*Breakfast.*—For the man, tea, bread, butter, bacon; for the wife, tea, bread, butter; for the children, bread and milk. If the man is working at a distance from home he takes with him bread, butter or cheese, and occasionally a piece of pork or other meat. *Dinner.*—Pork, suet pudding, vegetables; sometimes the mother and children have bread and butter, or bread and cheese, and tea at both breakfast and dinner, with the addition of potatoes for dinner. At Sunday's dinner, beef or mutton, with pudding and vegetables. *Tea.*—Bread, butter, tea, milk. *Supper.*—For the man only, bread, cheese, and tea; or, it may be, potatoes added, and occasionally a small piece of pork. *Notes.*—Perhaps about half of the labourers keep pigs. They have small gardens attached to their cottages and a fair number of allotments. Sometimes a man may have as much as half an acre of allotment ground. There are also some benefit clubs and coal and clothing societies. In the case of clothing clubs, a bonus of twopence is given to every deposit of one shilling, but the bonus does not exceed in all more than two shillings. Allotments not obtainable near cottages are falling into disuse.

## WARWICKSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea or cocoa, bread and butter, or bread and dripping; sometimes bread, bacon, and tea. *Dinner.*—Bread,

bacon, and vegetables ; or on Monday, beef or mutton left over from Sunday, and then, for the rest of the week, bacon with potatoes, bread, and puddings. For drink, home-brewed beer (on Sundays, fresh meat, vegetables, and puddings). *Tea and Supper.*—The same as for breakfast, or, it may be, bacon, vegetables, cake, puddings, tea. *Notes.*—Nearly all the labourers keep pigs ; some two pigs, one to eat and one to sell. They also have allotments of various sizes, up to even as much as an acre. In these they occasionally grow wheat, and make their own bread from their own flour, as well as a good quantity of potatoes. Now and then they buy a sack from the farmer. They also often brew their own beer. In their allotments or cottage gardens they grow fruit sometimes. Benefit societies and clothing clubs are found to have a good many labourers as members.

## WILTSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Bread and salt butter or lard, tea ; in summer fresh butter is used. *Dinner.*—Bacon and vegetables (on Sundays, sometimes fresh meat, and rice or suet pudding). *Tea.*—Bread or toast, and salt butter or lard, and tea. *Supper.*—Kettle broth (made of boiling water poured over bread with a little butter, pepper or salt) is sometimes taken for supper, and also for breakfast. *Notes.*—A good many of the men keep pigs, and all, or nearly all, have allotments or good gardens. A considerable number belong to benefit societies and coal and clothing clubs.

## WORCESTERSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea, bread, butter or jam. The men often have cheese and sometimes bacon. *Dinner.*—The men take tea, bread, cheese, and sometimes bacon or pork, or cold meat left over from Sundays. The children take bread, butter or jam ; sometimes vegetables, and some bacon (on Sundays the family has fresh meat, pudding, and vegetables). *Tea.*—The men have no tea as a rule. The children have tea, bread and butter, or jam. *Supper.*—The men take tea, bread and cheese. But if they are away from home at dinner-time, they have something hot for supper, such as vegetables with a little bacon, or occasionally pork. The children do not usually have supper. *Note.*—About three-fourths of the men keep one pig a year for fattening. They usually have good gardens, but no allotments. They generally belong to benefit societies, and sometimes to coal and clothing clubs. Some of the farmers give cider.

## YORKSHIRE.

In the East Riding—

*Breakfast.*—Bacon, bread, tea. *Dinner.*—Beef, potatoes, pudding, or fruit tart (on Sundays, hot beef). *Tea and Supper.*—Bacon, fruit tart, bread and butter, tea. *Note.*—Nearly all the men keep pigs, and have good gardens or allotments. Many have

sufficient grass land to keep a cow. Practically every labourer belongs to a benefit society, and a good many to coal and clothing clubs.

In the North Riding—

*Breakfast.*—Bread, bacon, tea (on Sundays there is an addition of butter). *Dinner.*—Bread, potatoes, cold beef or mutton, fruit-pie or pudding, and tea (on Sundays, hot roast beef, bread, potatoes, and green vegetables, fruit pie or pudding, and tea. *Tea or Supper.*—Bread, butter, bacon or cheese, tea, and sometimes potatoes (on Sundays, for tea, hot toast, cakes, tea, butter or jam; and for Sunday supper, cold meat and potatoes). *Note.*—Most of the cottages have good gardens, but many men do not keep pigs. They generally, however, belong to benefit clubs.

Although the preceding accounts are not absolutely exhaustive, for to give a complete account would require the space of a large volume, they give a very interesting and representative idea of the daily food and drink of the English agricultural labourer.



## WALES.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### GENERAL SYSTEM OF LABOUR.

BROADLY, the agricultural labouring population of Wales are divisible into two classes—the larger one consisting of unmarried men, who are lodged and boarded either in the houses of the farmers for whom they work, or in adjacent outbuildings. These are engaged not by the week, but usually for a year—the hiring taking place either in May or November. In some districts, such as Anglesea, Carnarvon, and Glamorgan, the hiring is half-yearly—the term commencing in May or November of each year.

In the case of married men, cottages are rented, and these cottages are either on the farms or in the adjacent or the nearest village. The engagement of these men is weekly, as a rule, and they are boarded—but on weekdays only—at the farms where they work. Sometimes—the county of Anglesea furnishing instances—there is also a yearly arrangement of hiring for married labourers.

In parts of Wales, and the cases are pretty numerous, the farms are small, and in that case all the work is done by the farmer himself and his family. Where the farms are rather larger, the farmer obtains some assistance, employing one or two hired men. The latter help in the general work of the farm, and take charge of any

sheep or cattle ; but the farmer and his family " join in " ; and no distinction is made as to a selection of work—the employer working as hard, and at all sorts of labour, as the employed. In these cases the entire staff, farmer and engaged farm hands, are all placed on an equality, the employed having the same consideration as the members of the employer's family.

On large estates in Wales, as elsewhere, in the agricultural districts, there are bailiffs or foremen, and shepherds, stockmen, carters, and spademen, but in a general way no special work is given to the general labourer, and hence the difficulty of classifying them in accordance with their special occupations, as in England.

The employment of women in agriculture in the open fields is dying out in Wales as elsewhere ; but those who still follow this occupation are, as a rule, unmarried women, and these are engaged by the half-year or the year, and are lodged as well as boarded in the farmhouses. The field occupation of women has lingered in the counties of Cardigan, West Carmarthen, and North Pembroke ; but even there it is being discontinued. Elsewhere, and generally, women's work on the farm takes its proper course, and is concerned with such labour as a woman can properly perform—work in and about the farmhouse and sheds—feeding pigs, calves, cows, poultry, milking, and inside cooking, and domestic work of different kinds. They, however, join in with others in assisting at the usually urgent work of harvest—both hay and corn ingathering.

There is not a large number of casual or odd men employed on Welsh farms ; although they are to be found in some districts where piecework is obtainable, and especially during harvest, for which they usually make a special arrangement. It often happens on farms in remote districts away from towns and railway communication, that farmers cannot get odd men, and have to rely upon those hired by the half-year or year. Wales

being to an appreciable extent a country of miners and quarries, the natural competition and the higher wages offered by the industries connected with them, serve to draw away such extra labour as is available in their direction. There is also a class of men who are not casual, wandering, or migrating labourers, but who have settled down to small holdings of their own—keeping perhaps a few cows, and who, not requiring quite their whole time, can do a little in the “odd job way,”—such as occasional draining, hedging, or in the more remote districts, breast ploughing and peat-burning. There are some counties to which outside migratory men come in at certain seasons, but these migrate chiefly from other parts of Wales, such, for instance, as from the Vale of Clwyd, in the county of Denbigh, to the hilly districts of Monmouthshire, and from the county of Anglesea to Carnarvonshire, to assist in haymaking—returning to their own districts for the corn harvest. In reference to this sort of inter-migratory labour, Mr. Wilson Fox has some interesting remarks in his report to the Board of Trade. He says:—

“In some districts in Cardiganshire and North Pembroke-shire, there are cottages on the farms with five or six acres of land attached, which are let by the farmers to men who earn their livelihood in a variety of ways, in addition to what they can make out of their land. For instance, the tenants are sometimes road men, or perhaps they may do a little carting or other odd work, or may work for farmers at certain seasons of the year. In the letting of these small holdings it is a frequent practice for an agreement to be made that, as part payment of the rental, the tenant and his family shall assist the farmer in the hay and corn harvests as long as they last. The history of these small holdings is that in former years, when the farmers wanted cottages for their men on the farms, the landowners found the materials and the farmers erected them. In this, as well as in the other counties in South Wales, there is a custom for farmers to provide potato ground free for labourers who have cottages, whether they work for them regularly or not. The giving such a potato plot constitutes a sort of vague retainer upon the labourer’s services. The farmers undertake the ploughing and the manure carting,

while the labourers find the manure and seed potatoes, and set and lift them. They pay the farmer by giving so many days' work free at hay and corn harvest, the number of days depending upon the amount of potatoes put in. In parts of Pembrokeshire a custom exists by which the wives of labourers, who are 'bound tenants' of cottages on farms, work for the tenant of the farm, when required, at turnip-hoeing and harvest. A 'bound tenant' is a labourer who has a cottage let to him by a farmer, often with a few acres of land attached, on condition that he works for that particular farmer whenever required so to do, though the farmer is usually under no obligation to employ such tenant at all. In addition to cash wages he often gets certain allowances in kind. In some parts of South Wales, men working in the collieries, whose families live in the country districts, return to work at the harvest for the owners of their cottages. No Irish labourers now come to Wales for harvest work, as was formerly the case. In parts of South Wales, notably Glamorganshire, a number of labourers from the western counties of England are hired in the farmhouses. Many hundreds of lads have been introduced during recent years from industrial and reformatory schools into the counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen, but during the last three or four years farmers have not been so willing to take them. A fair proportion of these lads get absorbed into the purely Welsh-speaking rural population, while the rest drift into town and industrial districts after a few years' farm service."

As to the method of obtaining the bulk of the staff, procured, as already stated, on a system of yearly and half-yearly hiring, it used to be the case that they were obtained at fairs; but as in England, so in Wales, although the fairs still exist in certain parts of the country, the men required are usually engaged privately before the fairs are held. Women, too, are also obtained before the fairs, although, even for purposes of farmhouse work, they are more difficult to get now than formerly. A good many farm labourers still attend the fairs, but chiefly for the usual "pleasure" to be obtained, and they have practically lost their old character of "hiring fairs." It is curious that agreements between masters and employed are seldom, if ever, made in writing. They are merely verbal ones, cemented by the payment of "earnest" or contract money, usually fixed at a shilling or two shillings.

It is customary for indoor servants in Wales, those lodged and boarded in the farmhouses, to get such advances of wages as they require, but they are not allowed to draw beyond what is owing to them. The periods of payments of the married labourers living in cottages is either weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. In the case of small farmers, when the servants are engaged by the week, the whole of a week's wage is not always paid, because there is often an "account" against the man for goods in the shape of butter, cheese, or other supplies of food; and, in such cases, there is a half-yearly settling up.

In the case of regularly engaged weekly-paid men, employment of some sort is generally found for them under cover when the weather prevents outdoor occupation. The same arrangement does not extend to casual men who lose pay for times when they cannot work out of doors; but when these casual men belong to the class having cottages in the same district, and working small holdings of their own, they can, not unfrequently, find something to do in their own places. In certain districts, however, where there may be a great scarcity of labour, farmers deem it discreet to find something—never very difficult—for the men to do rather than run the risk of losing them should they be sent back without work on, for instance, a very wet day. If, however, men on weekly engagements become sick, it is very unusual for them to be paid, and then they have to fall back either on the friendly societies or sick benefit clubs to which they may belong. Unmarried indoor servants join such institutions as a rule. There are exceptions to this wise precaution local to certain districts, such as Anglesea and the western parts of Carnarvonshire.

## CHAPTER XII.

### EXTRAS, PIECEWORK, AND ALLOWANCES IN KIND.

THE payment of "extras" for farm work in Wales is much less frequent than in England, and working by the piece is also exceptional. The absence of "extras" is owing to the hiring and boarding arrangements. A fixed and agreed wage is paid for the yearly or half-yearly term, and such payment is for anything and everything the men may be called upon to do. So that nothing is paid "extra" for harvest, and, obviously, there is no piecework for them. This arrangement applies particularly to the men living and boarding in farmhouses who, as we have seen, are unmarried. As to married men living in cottages on the farms or adjacent to them, they are frequently paid a higher rate of wages during harvest time, both hay and corn; but the extras paid are usually in the shape of food and not in cash. There are instances, however, where a "bonus," in addition to ordinary wages, is paid during harvest times, the amount paid ranging from ten shillings to £2 for the whole period; but as the general area of corn crops in Wales is smaller than in England—about two-thirds of the cultivated area—not including a large area of hill and mountain grazing land (although that is more or less meagre) is grazing, the corn harvest is not quite so important as it is in England.

Piecework, as a rule, is not given to the married men regularly employed, but is sometimes given to casual

labourers, although these form quite a small proportion of the agricultural labouring population of Wales. In fact, so important an authority as Mr. Lleufer Thomas, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, has stated that the total of agricultural piecework in the country is "a most infinitesimal quantity"; and he explains the reason by the circumstances that "the smallness of the holdings and the general unevenness of the surface form additional obstacles to a very general adoption of the piecework system."

On large estates only, where men in especial charge of animals are employed, extra cash payments are sometimes given, and, in such cases, the payment may take the form of a shilling a week for winter Sunday work, when the cattle are housed and fed in farm out-buildings. Besides this, extra "journey money" may be given to carters or horsemen, and "lamb money" to shepherds.

Allowances in kind mostly take the form of the food given to hired men—unmarried—lodged and boarded in the farmhouses, and to some of the married men—residing outside—who may get their meals in the farmhouse on weekdays, and consequently receive a rate of cash wages lower *pro rata* to the quantity and cost of the meals; or married men, living outside, as stated, may get allowances of free potato ground, the free carriage of fuel, and also—a not unimportant factor—buttermilk and "litter" for their pigs when these are kept by the men. At harvest, when the total-abstaining Welshman is not the *employé*, beer is given; and if not beer, then beer-money; and possibly the conscience of an abstainer may not prevent him from accepting the cash substitute. Food sometimes is given during harvest to married men "on their own finding," which includes such as have wages paid entirely in cash.

Cottages do not come into the category of allow-

ances in kind, unless they are given to the labourer free of rent, but a free cottage is so often a part of the agricultural wage arrangement, that the value of them may as well be here stated. It is reckoned that in Wales the range of value is from about £2, 12s. to £5 per annum, that is, roughly, from one shilling to two shillings a week—although, for new and superior ones, the rent may be as much as £6 or £7 per annum. The attached gardens usually average rather less than a quarter of an acre. Rents are naturally higher when cottages are situated in the neighbourhood of industrial centres; but a general average rent may be struck at £4 a year.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### HOURS OF WORK AND WAGES.

THE hours of work of farm labourers are very similar all over the kingdom, varying here and there according to the circumstances of different farms. We may, therefore, take it that the hours are for ordinary labourers 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer, and 6.30 a.m. until it is dark in the winter. For horsemen, 7 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. in summer, and 7.30 a.m. until dark in winter. For cattlemen, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, and 6 a.m. till dark in winter. But the cattleman, like the shepherd, must look after his animals at any time that it may be necessary to do so, irrespective of particular hours. Horsemen, for instance, have to arrive about half an hour or three-quarters of an hour before the time given above, in order to feed and get ready their animals for work, as in dark winter mornings lamps can be used for the preliminary purpose indicated; and, similarly, about the same time extra is required in the evening for grooming and feeding after the day's work. When horses are left in the fields in summer they have to start getting them out about 5.30 a.m., go to their breakfasts, return at 6.15 a.m., and leave the stables for work about 6.45 a.m. Then, after the day's work, it takes them from twenty minutes to half an hour in turning the horses out again.

Coming now to the important question of wages, it is material to point out the two principal classes of men employed—those who are married and live outside

the farmhouses in cottages, and those, unmarried, lodged and boarded in the farmhouses. The outside men find their own food, and therefore their earnings, as shown by the following table, represent the whole of their incomings. In this table the actual cash is distinguished from the payment in kind in whatever shape the latter may be, so that a glance will show the amount of the extras and the total earnings.

TABLE 6.—AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, IN WALES, OF MARRIED LABOURERS FINDING THEIR OWN FOOD.

Counties.	In Cash.	In Kind.	Total.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Anglesea . . . . .	16 0	0 7	16 7
Brecknockshire . . . . .	17 0	1 6	18 6
Cardiganshire . . . . .	14 6	1 2	15 8
Carmarthenshire . . . . .	17 0	0 9	17 9
Carnarvonshire . . . . .	18 0	0 8	18 8
Denbighshire . . . . .	17 0	0 8	17 8
Flintshire . . . . .	17 0	1 5	18 5
Glamorganshire . . . . .	20 0	1 3	21 3
Merionethshire . . . . .	16 7	1 1	17 8
Montgomeryshire . . . . .	15 0	1 0	16 0
Pembrokeshire . . . . .	15 0	1 7	16 7
Radnorshire . . . . .	14 0	2 10	16 10

In Wales, as in England, the rate of wages is materially influenced by the presence of industrial undertakings competing for labour. Glamorganshire, for instance, being the chief centre of the coal and iron industries, shows the highest rate of agricultural wages, whilst appreciably higher rates than in the low-wage counties are obtainable in Brecknock, Carmarthen, Carnarvon, Denbigh, Flint, and Merioneth, because of the existence in those counties of coal, copper, and lead mines, of limestone and slate quarries, and of other industrial competing undertakings. The five remaining counties of Anglesea, Cardigan, Montgomery, Pembroke, and Radnor are purely agricultural, and the remoteness of Cardiganshire, including so many districts from which towns

and railways are absent, affords another object-lesson as to the cause of low wages in purely agricultural regions.

In the ensuing table, quoted, like the preceding ones, with some alteration of arrangement from the Board of Trade report, are shown the earnings of the "hired men"—those lodged and boarded in farmhouses—both the minimum and maximum wages being given, as there is a good deal of fluctuation amongst the several districts. Flintshire is not included, because in that county there are very few "hired men." The total earnings are computed by adding the sum of 6s. 6d. to the weekly cash payments. For simplification we give only the earnings per week, omitting the annual amounts as also given in the Board of Trade report; and by this plan our readers can more conveniently compare with preceding weekly payments of agricultural labourers in England.

TABLE 7.—EARNINGS OF "HIRED MEN," BOARDED AND LODGED IN WALES.

Counties.	Weekly Cash Wages.				Total Weekly Earnings, adding 6s. 6d. for Value of Board and Lodging.					
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.		
Anglesea . . . . .	8	6	to	12	4	15	0	to	18	10
Brecknockshire . . . . .	7	9	"	11	7	14	3	"	18	1
Cardiganshire . . . . .	7	9	"	10	10	14	3	"	17	4
Carmarthenshire . . . . .	8	6	"	12	4	15	0	"	18	10
Carnarvonshire . . . . .	9	3	"	13	1	15	9	"	19	7
Denbighshire . . . . .	7	0	"	10	10	13	6	"	17	4
Glamorganshire . . . . .	9	8	"	13	1	16	2	"	19	7
Merionethshire . . . . .	8	6	"	11	7	15	0	"	18	1
Montgomeryshire . . . . .	7	0	"	9	8	13	6	"	16	2
Pembrokeshire . . . . .	7	9	"	10	10	14	3	"	17	4
Radnorshire . . . . .	7	9	"	10	5	14	3	"	16	11

It is naturally a somewhat difficult matter to make an average amount for an addition to cash wages that shall accurately represent the value of the food supplied to a boarded farm labourer. This difficulty is expressed

in the following paragraph from the Board of Trade report, which, when dealing with the subject, says :—

“ The food and accommodation supplied vary somewhat in quality, according to the pecuniary position of the employer, and, so far as concerns some of the larger farms, the sum may perhaps be considered scarcely high enough. But the difficulties of attempting to draw a distinction between the value of the food and accommodation in one district compared with another would be very great. It has, therefore, been thought best to take a figure which could be fairly used throughout Wales, and, after consultation with a number of leading agriculturists in both North and South Wales, the sum of 6s. 6d. a week has been adopted.”

As to the remuneration of men in charge of horses and cattle, and of shepherds, it is on the whole higher than that of the ordinary farm labourers in Wales. Mr. Wilson Fox says that this is particularly the case with married men, and he adds :—

“ The shepherd, if he is in charge of a large flock, is frequently the highest-paid man, though on estates where a valuable herd of cattle is kept the cattlemen gets as high a wage, or perhaps rather a higher one. Men in charge of animals, especially the married men, usually get more allowances in kind than the ordinary labourers. The giving of lamb-money to shepherds in Wales is not nearly such a common practice as in England ; neither do carters or waggons often get journey-money, which is customary in so many districts in England, particularly on the large farms within travelling distance of the large market towns. Men of these classes frequently take part in harvest, though in some cases the shepherd does not.”

On the whole, however, harvest payments in Wales are much less than they are in the arable districts of England. The system of employing horsemen, cattlemen, and shepherds on their distinctive duties, being not nearly so common in Wales—owing to the large number of small farms—as in England, we shall content ourselves with giving some individual instances of the annual amounts received in cash and kind—it being difficult under the circumstances to get at a representative average. We include in the sums we give

varying amounts received for "journey-money" for cattlemen and horsemen, ranging from five to thirty shillings; for harvest and other extra payments, ranging from eight to fifty shillings; and to shepherds for "lamb-money," ranging from twenty-four shillings to eighty-two shillings and ninepence, and in one recorded instance to an extra payment for the year under the denomination of "Michaelmas-money" to as much as £5, 2s. Including also extra sums as "Sunday pay" going up to £3, 18s. for the year, the following "grand totals" may be given; but we must premise that the "grand totals" are exclusive of varying allowances in kind, such as free cottages and gardens, some special allowances of food and drink, potato ground, beer at harvest, free cartage of fuel, land—rent free—on which to keep a cow, and some sundry allowances—the whole of the enumerated additions ranging from £1 to £5 or £6, and up to as much as £8 or £9, and in one instance to £18, 4s. The annual sums received were, in different cases: Cattlemen—£50, £54, 11s. 3d., £52, 16s., £46, 16s., £62, 11s. 4d., £44, 16s., and £46, 16s. respectively; horsemen—£42, 16s., £48, 11s., £42, 13s., £38, 8s., £46, 16s., £60, 12s., £50, 1s., £43, 9s. 6d., and £47, 6s.; shepherds—£34, 18s., £45, 19s. 9d., £42, 10s., £52, £57, 11s. 4d., £55, 18s. (in the case of a man who was "foreman" as well as shepherd), £51, 18s., and £46, 16s.

These figures have been obtained from inquiries in seven Welsh counties—namely, Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Carnarvonshire, Flintshire, Glamorganshire, and Montgomeryshire, some of the highest amounts occurring in Brecknockshire.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FOOD OF WELSH PEASANTS.

SOME illustrative examples selected from half a dozen Welsh counties will suffice to indicate what is the general dietary of the peasantry. It will be seen that it does not vary very greatly from that of the adjoining country of England, except perhaps in the somewhat greater prevalence of "broth," although the "tea-kettle" form of that "beverage"—if we may so term what is rather a cross between meat and drink—is by no means unknown to the labourers in other counties, but more especially in Devon.

#### BRECKNOCKSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Bread, cheese ; sometimes butter, tea. *Dinner.*—Broth and bacon in winter with bread and vegetables. In summer, mutton or beef, bread and vegetables (on Sundays the same as on weekdays, but with the addition of puddings). *Tea.*—Bread, butter, tea, and sometimes cake. *Supper.*—Tea, coffee, or milk, with bread and cheese. *Note.*—Every labourer, as a rule, keeps a pig, which is fed and killed for the use of the family. The labourers also have gardens. Sometimes shepherds have a cow as part of their wages. Very few men belong to clubs.

#### CARDIGANSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea, bread and cheese, or butter ; boiled milk with oatmeal in it. *Dinner.*—Broth (made of salted beef, potatoes, and thickened with oatmeal), and salted beef or bacon (Sundays, fresh meat, boiled rice and milk. *Tea.*—Bread and butter, tea. *Supper.*—Scalded milk with bread, or both re-warmed with bread and cheese ; sometimes tea. *Note.*—In almost every case the labourers have gardens, and in many cases allotments. They frequently have a cow and a pig or two. The pigs are fed with

the skim milk and "wash," fattened with meal, and killed and salted, the bacon being kept for the family consumption. Very little fresh meat is consumed by the family of a Welsh farm-labourer. The men do not generally belong to benefit societies or clubs.

## DENBIGHSHIRE AND FLINTSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Bacon, bread, butter, and tea. The children have bread and milk, or porridge. *Dinner.*—Any meat left from the Sunday dinner is made to last as long as possible, supplemented by potatoes, vegetables, and bacon (on Sundays, a small joint of beef or mutton with vegetables and pudding). *Tea.*—Tea, bread and butter, jam or syrup, cheese (on Sundays, cake). *Supper.*—Bread and butter, cheese, "browis" (scalded bread, with a small piece of butter or dripping, and pepper and salt—"to taste" as the cookery books say), coffee and cocoa, and white bread. This "browis"—a curious name—is apparently a near relation to the "tea-kettle" broth of the Devon and Somerset peasant. A bit of bacon, however, is the flavouring "factor" of the last-mentioned broth; but very frequently it simply "reeks," so to speak, of the kettle, and there is not even a *soupçon*, as the French phrase it, of any fatty matter. Pepper and salt are cheap beyond the dreams of frugality, but they cannot add much "taste" to *water*. *Note.*—Nearly all the men keep pigs, and all the cottages have gardens in which potatoes are chiefly grown. The men usually belong to benefit societies to provide against sickness, and many of them, including children, are insured. The wives and children nearly always belong to clothing and coal clubs.

## MERIONETHSHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Broth or bread and milk, bread, butter, or cheese. *Dinner.*—Bacon or beef, potatoes (on Sundays, pudding in addition). *Tea.*—Bread and milk, or gruel, tea. *Supper.*—Porridge or broth. *Note.*—There are not many married men employed as farm labourers in this district, as most of them are engaged in mining and quarrying. In some cases the married farm labourers keep pigs. There are no coal or clothing clubs, but one or two chapels in the district have clubs connected with them.

## PEMBROKESHIRE.

*Breakfast.*—Tea or coffee, bread, butter, cheese, or bacon. *Dinner.*—Bacon broth, bacon, occasionally beef or mutton; potatoes, cottage and wheaten bread (on Sundays, same as weekdays, but often rice pudding and occasionally a fowl). *Tea.*—Tea, wheaten bread, butter, cheese, or syrup. *Supper.*—Wheaten bread, butter, cheese, milk, tea or coffee. *Note.*—All the men keep pigs and rear a large number of fowls. Allotments can easily be obtained, but few labourers want them. In most cases the farmers allow the labourers to grow sufficient

potatoes on the farms where they are employed. The men do not usually belong to benefit societies or clubs. *Important General Note.*—The regular farm labourers in Wales, whether married men or unmarried men boarded and lodged in the farmhouses, are said, generally speaking, to spend little on drink. Many men do not take any alcohol during the year, except on special occasions, and it is a frequent practice for none to be given by the farmer at harvest. In some of the agricultural districts near the mines there is said to be more drinking.



## SCOTLAND.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### GENERAL SYSTEM OF LABOUR.

HISTORY and fiction—the last word being a curious misnomer for what is, or should be, a faithful presentment, under assumed names only, of life and speech and manners—have combined to throw a great deal of interest around the personality of the Scottish peasant. Fiction may be compared to a series of cinematographs of figures which owe their resuscitation to the skilful pen of the novelist, who can infuse life into dry bones ; but we are here concerned with living realities, and with men and women as they are now moving and having their being ; and for the subject of this chapter we cannot do better than quote verbatim the very accurate and interesting sketch published by the Board of Trade—a sketch which, we may say, covers the ground we desire to traverse so completely that no apology is needed for giving it in full. The report says :—

“ In Scotland nearly all the farm servants are engaged by the year or the half-year, and are given continuous employment and a regular wage, payable if they are prevented from working owing to weather, or if absent on account of illness. Except when the farms are too small to admit of special classes of work being assigned to particular men, their work is defined, and they may be classified as follows : grieves or stewards, horsemen or ploughmen (‘ hinds ’ as they are called in the more southern counties), cattlemen (or ‘ byremen ’), orramen, and shepherds. On a large farm, where there is no regular

steward, the head ploughman (sometimes called 'ploughman steward') often acts in that capacity, or as foreman or under-steward, if a head steward is employed. He has always a responsible position, as he has to look after the work of the other ploughmen and see that they give proper care and attention to their horses and their work. On a large farm the ploughmen are classified as first horsemen, second horsemen, and third horsemen, the last class being frequently lads or 'halfins.' Each horseman has not only to work his pair of horses in the field, but to feed and generally look after them whether in the stables or out in the fields. In arable districts the horsemen form the considerably larger portion of the farm servants, the proportion of orramen being, perhaps, one to six or seven horsemen. The orramen, or 'spade hinds,' as they sometimes are called in the Lothians—the Lothians are Haddington (East Lothian), Edinburgh (Mid Lothian), and Linlithgow (West Lothian)—do all the odd work, hedge-cutting, draining, and heavy work in the fields and steadings, which is more suitable for them than for women. Generally speaking, the earnings of the orramen do not differ materially from those of ploughmen, but in many cases they are a trifle lower. On some farms there is a woman steward in charge of the women, or a leading woman, who is paid a little extra to lead on the others—or, in other words, 'to make the pace.' Shepherds, or herds, are an important class in Scotland. In the chief sheep districts the calling is often hereditary. The sons follow their fathers, being frequently employed on the same farm from boyhood, and the flock, or 'hirsell,' as it is called in some districts, not unfrequently passes to their charge. The reasons for their remaining in their situations for long periods are generally the same as those given in the case of the Northumbrian shepherds (p. 17). On some of the large sheep farms in the Highlands a number of shepherds are kept. Single shepherds are often boarded by the married men, who either get allowances of food for them, extra cash, or else are paid directly by the men who are boarded. Each shepherd has his own 'hirsell' to look after. If the land is unenclosed, as it often is in some of the Highland districts, he may frequently have to go long distances after his flock; and when there are snowstorms and he has to search for buried sheep, his work is exceptionally heavy. The work of shepherds is also necessarily arduous at the lambing season, and when engaged at such operations as washing, dipping, clipping, smearing, and 'speaning,' *i.e.* weaning or separating the lambs from the ewes. Hill shepherds have also sometimes to mow and make hay for their flock, and in this they are usually assisted by their families. It is a common practice for northern hill farmers to send their hogs in the winter to the arable districts nearer the east

coast to feed on turnips and foggage on the grass lands. A shepherd who accompanies them is known as an 'orra shepherd,' generally an unmarried man, who may be engaged for that particular purpose only, or he may be regularly employed at the farm work during the year, but assisting the shepherds at such special times as washing, dipping, etc. He may also assist at haymaking for the flocks. The shepherd in arable districts where sheep are turnip-fed during the winter have much work changing and enclosing the ground, etc. In some of the southern counties special men are engaged to assist at lambing-time, being paid between 25s. and 30s. a week with board extra. Shepherds are usually given extra money payment or allowances in kind for lodging and boarding extra hands taken on for lambing, clipping, etc. In many districts sheep farmers make an arrangement to assist each other at clipping-time. The married farm servants, who are generally shepherds, men in charge of cattle, and first horsemen, usually live rent free in cottages which are let with the farm to the farm tenant. Cottages are more generally found on large farms than on smaller ones, the small farmers more usually employing unmarried men, lodging and boarding them in the farmhouses. This is often known as the 'kitchen system.' In some counties the married men who live in cottages are called 'cot-tars,' 'cottagers,' or 'cot men.' Several systems for lodging and boarding unmarried men are in existence. In many cases, particularly on the smaller farms, they lodge and board in the farmhouse, and sleep in an apartment at the farm-steading, usually adjoining the stable. In a good many districts they are frequently lodged and boarded in the houses of the married men. Another system is to lodge them in a bothy adjacent to the farm-buildings. Food is either cooked for the men in the bothy, or else the 'bothy system' is adopted in its fullest sense, and the men cook their own food in the bothy, in which case they usually receive allowances of meal, and sometimes milk and a small quantity of potatoes, and buy the remainder. Occasionally food is provided for the bothy men in the kitchen of the farmhouse. Beds, blankets, towels, the necessary furniture, lights, and coal are also provided. Bothies are chiefly found on the larger farms—generally speaking the bothy system is much more common in the north-eastern part of Scotland than in the southern. In the Border counties—those touching the English Border, namely, Berwick, Dumfries, Peebles, Roxburgh, and Selkirk—and the Lothians it practically does not exist. The system is the most prevalent in Forfar, Kincardine, and Perth. It also prevails to a greater or lesser extent in the counties of Inverness, Elgin, Banff, Nairn, Aberdeen, Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan, though the kitchen system is likewise in existence in these counties. In Caithness, Orkney,

Sutherland, and Ross the kitchen system is not a common one, the unmarried men, and in Sutherland and Ross the unmarried women also, either lodging in bothies or in the houses of the married farm servants. In the Border counties and the Lothians most farmers engage their *employés* by families, who live in cottages on the farm on which they work, though there are some unmarried men hired by the year or half-year (mainly on the small farms), who are lodged and boarded in the farmhouses. In other parts of Scotland the proportion of the boarded men is usually larger than that of the married men; but the number of married men which a farmer can engage depends, of course, on the cottage accommodation on his farm, the English village system being but little known in Scotland. In the arable districts in the Border counties and the Lothians, a considerable majority of the farm servants are ploughmen or 'hinds,' the proportion of orramen being small, and in the hill districts there are a number of shepherds. The system of engagement is generally similar to that described as prevailing in Northumberland—fathers, sons, and unmarried daughters working on the same farm and living together rent free in the cottages let to the tenant of the farm. Where a father and son are hired to work on the same farm, it is sometimes called a 'double hinding.' All classes of male farm servants in these districts are paid a regular wage during the term of engagement, and the women, 'women workers' or 'workers,' as they are generally called, are paid by the day. The women are not paid, as the men are, if absent on account of illness. They can stay away on such days as they choose, and the farmer is not bound to employ them in bad weather; but in practice they are regularly employed, except, perhaps, in heavy snowstorms, and as a rule do not lose more than about a day's pay in the year. Farmers usually give preference to a man who can supply women workers. A custom called the 'bondage system,' which formerly existed in the Border counties and the Lothians, under which men provided strangers as women workers, if they had no daughters of their own, has disappeared. A woman who takes a house direct from a farmer is called a 'cottar.' Such a woman is usually a widow, and she may, perhaps, have a daughter, or a female relation living with her and working on the same farm. In all parts of Scotland women are frequently employed at field work, taking part in the ordinary work of the farm. The women workers are generally the daughters (particularly in the Border counties and the Lothians), sometimes the wives, of the men living in cottages and working on the same farm. Near towns and collieries they are, however, sometimes the daughters of artisans and colliers. In Ayrshire and other dairy districts the women workers usually do milking and dairy work, as

well as field work, and the ploughmen's wives often help at milking. In some districts in the south-western counties a cottar woman or 'byre woman' is engaged to look after the dairy cows and other cattle and to do the milking. A number of young women are also hired for farmhouse and dairy work. On some farms the female servants who live in the farmhouses assist in the housework and in the farmsteadings and also do field work. It is now a frequent complaint that it is most difficult to get female servants for farms, as the young women prefer situations in towns. For the same reason 'outworkers' (women not living in the employer's farmhouse) are also said to be getting scarcer. Employers also state that the wives of ploughmen are less inclined to undertake field work or milking. Girls from the western islands take service in farmhouses in some counties for certain periods of the year; but it is stated that not so many come now as formerly. The number of women workers in Scotland is large, particularly in the arable districts, and especially in the Border counties and the Lothians. In these districts the number of women workers is nearly equal on many farms to the number of men; and on some farms, where potatoes are largely grown, there are sometimes more women than men. It will readily be understood that it is a great advantage to the Scottish employer to be able to secure the services of a considerable body of strong and active young women for field work at about half the wages of the men, especially in connection with the various operations incidental to the growth of large potato and turnip crops. Though the wages of the women workers have been excluded from this report, it may be stated that they are usually paid between eight and ten shillings, sometimes eleven shillings a week, with extra money at harvest, and sometimes at potato-lifting. In most cases the rate of daily wage is less in the summer than in the winter. On many of the small farms, which are mainly, if not wholly, worked by the farmers and their families, the wives and daughters do a great deal of field work. Farms of this character are numerous in the counties of Ayr, Bute, Aberdeen, Banff, Kincardine, Elgin, Nairn, Inverness, Ross, and Renfrew. Speaking generally, the unmarried men are hired by the half-year, and married men by the year. But there are many exceptions, the engagements in some districts being half-yearly for all classes, whether married or single, in others yearly, in others a mixed system. Men and women, with the exception of stewards and shepherds, are mostly engaged at the numerous hiring or 'feeing' fairs, which are held at various periods of the year in practically every county in Scotland. The system of private engagements is, however, said to be increasing, particularly in the case of the more experienced men, and also in the case of the best women for farmhouse and dairy work. The yearly

hirings in the Border counties and the Lothians for those who live in cottages take place in the spring, the majority in March, the term of service commencing in May, though in Haddingtonshire hirings are held in February. Berwick has a hiring fair which is attended by farm servants from both Berwickshire and Northumberland. The yearly farm servants from either county rarely enter service over the Border, partly because the days on which situations are entered are different in the counties, 28th May being the day in Berwickshire and 12th May in Northumberland. Half-yearly hirings for unmarried men lodged and boarded in the farmhouses take place in certain districts in the Border counties and the Lothians, chiefly in May and November. At the Berwick half-yearly hirings there is some changing over the Border. In the other counties the greater number of hirings take place in May, June, November, and December, though there are others held in certain counties in April, August, and October. Employers do not necessarily confine themselves to hiring men at fairs in their own counties. For instance, a good many employers in Renfrewshire hire their men at Kilmarnock in Ayrshire; Clackmannan and Kinross farmers often hire at Falkirk, Stirling, and Perth, and a good many Kinross farmers hire from Fife. Employers in Perthshire often hire at Glasgow and Falkirk. Generally in the northern part of Scotland the hiring fairs come nearer to the commencement of the term of service, usually within two or three weeks, which is thought by employers to be a better system than that in vogue in the most southerly counties, of having an interval of two or three months. The hirings are attended by both men and women, but in districts where families are hired the head of the house does the bargaining. As an earnest of the bargaining, a shilling or two, known as 'arles,' is given by the employer. The constant changing of situations—'fitting' as it is called—is remarkable. On very trivial grounds, or perhaps solely for the desire of change, the farm servants, both married and unmarried men, seek new situations. The changes in Scotland, where the engagements are mostly yearly or half-yearly, are far more numerous than in the case of the English farm labourers on weekly engagements. In Scotland the new employer usually fetches the furniture of the servant he engages from the farm of his late employer, carting it free of charge. In recent years, in some towns, halls have been used for the hiring of women, thus obviating the necessity for their standing in the open street to be hired. Generally speaking, there are not many casual labourers in Scotland. There are but few villages as compared with England from which casual labour can be procured. It is customary in Scotland for farmers to hire a regular staff for the year; and they get the services of the women workers, which farmers in

England are not able to obtain. In addition, a number of Irish migratory labourers, both men and women, come over from Ireland, and go to certain counties, chiefly for corn harvest and potato-lifting, but some come earlier, for turnip-thinning, haymaking, and lifting early potatoes. The counties which they visit in Scotland have already been referred to in this volume. In certain districts, however, casual labourers are employed. In the Border counties and in the Lothians, where farmers on farms near towns require a good many extra hands, both men and women are employed for turnip-hoeing and turnip-lifting. Farmers often fetch them from, and take them back to, their homes in farm waggons. Irishmen resident in Glasgow often come into these districts for work on farms at busy seasons. In East Berwickshire, potato-lifting is frequently done by extra hands from the fishing villages. In the neighbourhood of Dunbar, where potatoes are largely grown, many of the wives and daughters of the fishermen gather them after the plough or digger. Extra men, often Irish, are frequently employed at making and digging the pits. Extra hands from towns or villages are sometimes employed at corn harvest on weekly or monthly engagements, and they frequently get food in addition to the cash wages paid. In other parts of Scotland, near towns, colliery districts, or villages (where they exist), extra hands, both men and women, are sometimes employed at special seasons, such as hoeing, weeding, harvest, and potato- and turnip-lifting. In some of the Highland districts the farmers employ 'orra' labour from among the 'crofters.' It is a custom in some of these districts for farmers to do a certain quantity of ploughing for the crofters before seed-time, and, as payment for this, the crofters give so many days' labour at hay and corn harvest. The wages of the regular men in Scotland are, as a rule, nominally payable half-yearly or yearly, but advances are usually made weekly, fortnightly, or monthly as required. The custom of paying wages at short intervals (in some cases weekly, but more frequently monthly) is growing in favour all over the country, especially in the Lothians, and many of the married men there are now paid weekly."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### EXTRAS, PIECEWORK, AND ALLOWANCES IN KIND.

THE system of half-yearly and yearly hiring acts in Scotland, as in England and Wales, in minimising "extras," and in reducing the amount of piecework—the general effect of season engagements being, so to speak, to "reckon in" nearly everything in the way of work in settling the half-yearly or yearly amount to be paid to farm labourers. No doubt this system has many advantages, because "extras" are very much in the same category as "tips" to attendants, and it is better when both sides to any agreement for the performance of any kind of service are agreed as to the full amount of remuneration. The payment of piecework in Scotland is mainly confined to casual labourers, and these are very small in number, including a certain proportion of Irish emigrants. It is occasionally the case that the regular staff have the opportunity given them of earning extra pay on such work as turnip-hoeing, and sometimes during harvest; and it would seem that this kind of work is somewhat on the increase in Scotland. Women workers, however, get a higher rate of pay during the corn harvest, and sometimes at potato-lifting. During the hay harvests, also, men are allowed occasional extras in the shape of refreshment when doing overtime at harvest. In lieu of food they may get a payment in cash for the whole time, of from fifteen to twenty-five shillings, in lieu of



refreshments. As a rule, shepherds in Scotland do not assist at harvest. As a general rule, it is in the arable counties that extra money is most frequently given. Cattlemen are occasionally paid by farmers for extra work on Sundays, such as attending to cattle in the sheds; and in the Lothians orramen occasionally get extra money for making stacks, or "sowing" artificial manures. "Journey-money" also is paid to horsemen when they have to go longer distances than usual with carts, and to cattlemen when they have to make long journeys with sheep and cattle to fairs for their sale. The giving of "lamb-money" to shepherds is not a common practice in Scotland; but this rule is broken by occasional exceptions. Mr. Wilson Fox says, in his report to the Board of Trade:—

"The practice of giving part of the wages in allowances in kind is a very common one in Scotland, especially in the case of food allowances, although there has been a growing tendency for wages to be paid to a greater extent in cash than formerly, particularly in the more southern districts of Scotland. It is a very general custom, as already explained, for unmarried men to lodge and board in the farmhouses, or to be lodged in bothies and to be provided with food, or else to be given certain allowances of food, such as milk, oatmeal, and potatoes. They are also frequently given an allowance of coal; if coal is not provided, it is at least carted free. In the Border counties and the Lothians, where the system largely prevails of families being engaged to work on the same farm, the sons get an allowance of potatoes in some cases, while in others they are paid entirely in cash. The allowances in kind given to married men in those counties usually are free cottages and gardens, a certain number of yards of potato drill planted (generally from 1200 to 1800 yards), or an allowance of potatoes, oatmeal, coals carted free, sometimes an allowance of coals, and frequently food and drink during harvest. Milk is also often given, and sometimes straw for pigs and manure for gardens. Formerly the men in the Border counties and the Lothians were mainly paid in kind. The allowances in kind were, and still are, generally known as 'gains.' In some districts in the Border counties the old 'boll' system is still adhered to, though it is fast dying out. A 'boll,' according to the ordinary use of the term, is a measure, but it has a special meaning attached to it in these districts, being

used to denote a specific quantity of allowances in kind. There is what is known as the 'Kelso boll' and the 'Lauderdale boll'. The 'Kelso boll' consists of ten bolls of oats (60 bushels), worth from £7 to £9. Four bolls of barley (24 bushels) are worth from £3 to £3, 10s.; one boll of peas or beans is worth from £1, 3s. to £1, 5s. There is in addition, to complete the 'Kelso boll,' a varying allowance of potatoes. The 'Lauderdale boll' consists of 65 stones of oatmeal, worth about £5; three bolls of barley (18 bushels), worth about £2, 10s.; and a varying allowance of potatoes."

The report continues :—

"Those who are paid on the 'boll' system always have, in addition, a free cottage and garden, and, as stated, an allowance of potatoes, coals carted, and sometimes an allowance of coals, and often a cow kept. The cash payment is, therefore, a comparatively small one. Farmers will generally keep cows for the men if they wish it, for about £8 or £10 a year; but the custom is not so general as formerly, and this is said to be partly due to the desire on the part of the men to have a larger part of their wages paid in cash, and partly because the women dislike the trouble of milking and churning. Sometimes the cows belong to the men, but more frequently to the farmer. In the latter case the calf belongs to the employer. A definite arrangement is frequently made as to the amount of hay, turnips, and cake to be given during the winter, and as to the period during which the cows should be out at grass. In other parts of Scotland the allowances in kind given to the married man, though generally of the same character, vary considerably in amount. In some districts more cash is given and less in kind, and in others the contrary is the case. In most counties houses and gardens are provided free, but in some districts where the supply of cottages on a farm is insufficient, and there happens to be accommodation in the neighbourhood, married men get from £3 to £5 more money, in lieu of a free cottage. Milk is a very common allowance, also potatoes; allowances of meal are often given, coal carted free, and not infrequently coal or peat is given free. Sometimes the men will take half the customary allowance of potatoes and have the rest paid in cash. In some cases they sell part or all of their oatmeal allowance, and sometimes also milk. Some employers keep pigs and fowls for their men. Shepherds in all parts of Scotland are generally paid a considerable portion of their wages in kind. In some cases they have the whole of their wages paid in this way. Although the custom is not such a prevalent one as formerly, many shepherds have a 'pack flock,' *i.e.* they are allowed to keep a certain number of their own sheep with those of

their employers. The shepherd's 'pack' is fed, clipped, washed, etc., and sold with his employer's flock. The size of the shepherd's 'pack' varies in different counties and different districts according to prevailing customs and to the class of sheep kept. He often has the keep of one and sometimes two or three cows, and also the keep of one and sometimes two 'followers' (calves) for a year. In parts of the Highlands, shepherds also have two or three acres of land called 'crofts,' part of which is generally planted with potatoes. A perquisite which is frequently allowed to shepherds, more particularly in the Highlands, is the right to the carcasses of 'fallen' sheep which have died from no disease rendering the flesh harmful for consumption. It is called 'braxy' mutton, because the sheep taken by the shepherds have usually died of a disease called braxy, which is a sort of inflammation. The flesh of these sheep is dried and is frequently eaten by the shepherds and labourers in the Highlands. Generally a shepherd is allowed a definite number of such carcasses, but sometimes all the sheep which die of braxy in the flock under his charge. Another small perquisite is waste wool at clipping-time (*i.e.* matted or dirty wool, sometimes called 'clarty' wool), and wool found on bushes, etc., known in the Highlands as 'brock' wool. In some districts shepherds get some food given to them at particular times when the work is especially hard, such as at clipping, marking, etc."

We have now given in considerable detail information as to the extra earnings, perquisites, "privileges," or whatever else they may be called, in order to present the fullest possible information of the entire proceeds which the Scottish agricultural labourer derives from his calling. Whilst it is not claimed that the statements are absolutely exhaustive, they present as complete a representation of the case as it is possible to give within moderate limits.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### EARNINGS OF SCOTTISH PEASANTS.

ENOUGH has been said in preceding chapters of this volume as to the various ways in which the total remuneration of farm servants is made up in the parts of the United Kingdom—England, Wales, and Scotland—so far dealt with. It will be unnecessary, therefore, to refer further to these details; but it will be important and interesting to show at a glance the proportionate difference between cash payments and earnings in kind. It will be interesting, also, to mention that, taking a wide and general average, the value of board and lodging has been separately estimated to be 8s. a week, and the average value of cottage rent, given in as part of earnings, has been reckoned at £4 per annum, which is slightly more than 1s. 6d. per week. It will be seen from the figures in the following tables that the weekly difference in particular cases cannot be made to “tally” with the average; but that is because all classes of labourers are put together—married and unmarried—that is, roughly, those living outside the farmhouses and finding their own food, and those living inside and boarded and lodged at the expense of the farmer. Before giving the tables, it may be as well to give the Board of Trade notes in explanation of them. The report says:—

“In the tables giving the wages and earnings of the different classes of farm servants, no distinction has been made between married and unmarried men, and the figures

## EARNINGS OF SCOTTISH PEASANTS. 103

relate to all those in receipt of men's full wages, with the exception of grieves and foremen, on the farms of the employers from whom returns have been received, irrespective of the terms of engagement (whether yearly or half-yearly), and whether including board and lodging

TABLE 8.—AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS OF SCOTTISH CATTLEMEN, HORSEMEN, AND ORRAMEN.

County.	Cattlemen.		Horsemen.		Orramen.	
	Yearly Cash.	Yearly in Cash and Kind.	Yearly Cash.	Yearly in Cash and Kind.	Yearly Cash.	Yearly in Cash and Kind.
	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.
Aberdeen . . . . .	30 8	48 12	31 17	50 11	32 8	48 2
Argyll and Bute . . . . .	35 11	48 10	35 6	48 12	39 7	49 3
Ayr . . . . .	37 4	49 10	46 1	54 3	44 4	50 7
Banff . . . . .	33 2	48 3	31 15	47 6	27 15	44 13
Berwick . . . . .	40 13	51 15	42 7	51 7	42 1	50 12
Caithness, Shetland, and Orkney . . . . .	18 6	37 4	18 8	35 8	16 11	34 12
Dumfries . . . . .	36 4	48 10	37 18	48 18	34 6	46 4
Elgin . . . . .	31 12	45 7	32 1	46 5	35 0	44 4
Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan . . . . .	38 9	53 17	38 14	53 4	45 6	52 11
Forfar . . . . .	36 12	52 10	38 13	53 14	37 11	51 6
Haddington . . . . .	43 19	50 17	43 12	50 12	43 19	49 17
Inverness . . . . .	26 14	43 11	29 9	46 0	33 9	43 6
Kincardine . . . . .	32 9	50 14	33 18	50 14	35 0	47 7
Kirkcudbright . . . . .	37 7	48 1	38 12	48 0	39 1	45 19
Linlithgow and Edin- burgh . . . . .	47 14	54 12	47 13	54 5	46 15	52 6
Nairn . . . . .	30 18	45 16	30 14	44 8	28 16	40 18
Peebles . . . . .	38 5	50 10	43 1	53 10	42 4	51 4
Perth . . . . .	36 1	51 14	36 19	51 14	37 15	48 8
Renfrew and Lanark	45 2	55 16	48 15	57 14	48 10	54 4
Ross and Cromarty . . . . .	29 11	44 14	27 1	43 17	29 16	40 18
Roxburgh . . . . .	39 12	51 2	42 1	50 9	40 14	51 3
Selkirk . . . . .	{ number of men too sm all for compu tation }		45 3	{ number of men too sm all for compu tation }		
Stirling and Dum- barton . . . . .	41 10	55 2	47 19	57 3	40 14	52 16
Sutherland . . . . .	22 16	40 4	25 15	41 2	22 19	40 11
Wigtown . . . . .	33 15	46 19	31 10	46 0	36 16	44 6

or not. Speaking generally, the earnings of the different classes of unmarried men, whether horsemen, cattlemen, or orramen, are virtually identical, as between the different occupations, while the yearly earnings of the unmarried men usually amount to a few pounds less than those of the married men. In computing the annual earnings of

farm servants in Scotland, great care has been taken to arrive at the actual value of the allowances in kind, and much information on this subject has been obtained from employers in every county. In the case of certain allowances, however, a uniform value has been taken for the whole of Scotland, following the course adopted in the reports in England, Wales, and Ireland. In the case of cottages, an annual rental of £4 has been taken, this being the value most generally put upon them by employers, whose estimates, as a rule, range between £3 and £5. Again, the value of board and lodging in the farmhouses has been taken at 8s. a week. No doubt there are differences in the class of food given in different districts, and, indeed, in different farmhouses in the same districts; but, after many inquiries in all parts of the country, it has been ascertained that the figure named is thought to be a fair one."

The foregoing table is concerned with yearly earnings, and distinguishes the cash payment for services from the estimated total earnings, including everything "in kind."

It is pointed out in the Board of Trade report that there is not a great deal of difference in the total yearly earnings of the three classes of farm servants mentioned in the preceding table. In the succeeding one, the cash wages and earnings are reduced to weekly amounts, and the average weekly cash wages, and also total earnings, are given against counties for the same three classes.

Some interesting and important notes upon the tables occur in the Board of Trade report, which says :—

"Taking horsemen as the most representative class, it is found that, in the majority of counties, the average weekly earnings were between 18s. and 21s. In six counties the average weekly earnings were between 15s. and 18s. a week, while in three counties, namely, Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland, they were 13s. 7d. At the other end of the scale, four counties show earnings over 21s. a week, namely, Renfrew, Lanark, Stirling, and Dumbarton. The lowest rates are to be found in those northern and western counties in the grazing section, in which there are no large towns, mines, and industries, and which contains districts remote from railway communication. The western or grazing division comprises the counties of

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Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness, Stirling, Dumbarton, Argyll, Bute, Renfrew, Ayr, Lanark, Dumfries, Kirkcubright, and Wigtown. The eastern or arable division comprises the counties of Nairn, Elgin, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine,

TABLE 9.—AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS OF SCOTTISH CATTLEMEN, HORSEMEN, AND ORRAMEN.

County.	Cattlemen.		Horsemen.		Orramen.	
	Weekly Cash.	Weekly in Cash and Kind.	Weekly Cash.	Weekly in Cash and Kind.	Weekly Cash.	Weekly in Cash and Kind.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Aberdeen . . . . .	11 8	18 8	12 3	19 5	12 6	18 6
Argyll and Bute . . . . .	13 8	18 8	13 7	18 8	15 2	18 11
Ayr . . . . .	14 4	19 0	17 9	20 10	17 0	19 4
Banff . . . . .	12 9	18 6	12 3	18 2	10 8	17 2
Berwick . . . . .	15 8	19 11	16 3	19 9	16 2	19 6
Caithness, Shetland, and Orkney . . . . .	7 1	14 4	7 1	13 7	6 4	13 4
Dumfries . . . . .	13 11	18 8	14 7	18 10	13 2	17 9
Elgin . . . . .	12 2	17 5	12 4	17 10	13 5	17 0
Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan . . . . .	14 9	20 9	14 11	20 5	17 5	20 3
Forfar . . . . .	14 2	20 2	14 10	20 8	14 5	19 9
Haddington . . . . .	16 11	19 7	16 9	19 6	16 11	19 2
Inverness . . . . .	10 3	16 9	11 4	17 8	12 10	16 8
Kincardine . . . . .	12 6	19 6	13 0	19 6	13 6	18 2
Kirkcubright . . . . .	14 4	18 6	14 10	18 6	15 0	17 8
Linlithgow and Edinburgh . . . . .	18 4	21 0	18 4	20 10	18 0	20 1
Nairn . . . . .	11 11	17 7	11 10	17 1	11 1	15 9
Peebles . . . . .	14 9	19 5	16 7	20 7	16 3	19 8
Perth . . . . .	13 10	19 11	14 3	19 11	14 6	18 7
Renfrew and Lanark . . . . .	17 4	21 5	18 9	22 2	18 8	20 10
Ross and Cromarty . . . . .	11 4	17 2	10 5	16 10	11 6	15 9
Roxburgh . . . . .	15 3	19 8	16 2	19 5	15 8	19 8
Selkirk . . . . .	{ number of men too small for computation }		17 4	19 6	{ number of men too small for computation }	
Stirling and Dumbarton . . . . .			16 0	21 2		
Sutherland . . . . .	8 9	15 6	9 11	15 10	8 10	15 7
Wigtown . . . . .	13 0	18 1	12 1	17 8	14 2	17 1

Forfar, Perth, Fife, Kinross, Clackmannan, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Berwick, Peebles, Selkirk, and Roxburgh. In Caithness, Shetland, and Orkney, where the weekly earnings average 13s. 7d., the population is an almost purely agricultural and fishing one, and the earnings of farm servants are not influenced by the presence of large towns or industries. There are a number of

crofters who cultivate the slopes of the hills, and also some small owners who cultivate their own land. About half the earnings in this group of counties consists of allowances in kind. A number of men keep cows, and it is a common practice to keep pigs and poultry. In Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, and Inverness, which come next in order in this group, the average weekly earnings are 15s. 10d., 16s. 10d., and 17s. 8d. respectively. In some districts in these counties there are a number of large sheep farms, and the crofter class is numerous in certain parts. The weekly earnings in Argyll and Bute, which abut on several counties where earnings are high, were 18s. 8d. In Argyll there are numerous large sheep farms, but in certain districts, for instance in the south-west and also in Bute, there are a number of small farms, both dairy and arable, mainly cultivated by the farmers and their families. Taking Ayrshire next, the average weekly earnings of horse-men come to 20s. 10d. There are coal mines in the north-eastern part of the county, and Ayrshire joins Lanarkshire, the largest coal-mining centre in Scotland. In Ayrshire dairying is largely carried on, and sheep-farming on the hills. In certain districts on the western side of the county, a great many early potatoes and vegetables are grown, crops which give much employment. In Wigtown, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries, the average weekly earnings, are 17s. 8d., 18s. 6d., and 18s. 10d. respectively. These counties are purely agricultural, though there is some quarrying in Dumfries. Dairying is carried on in all three to a considerable extent; also cattle-breeding and feeding, and sheep-farming on the hills. Turning to the rest of the counties in the grazing section, *i.e.* the group in the centre near Glasgow and Edinburgh, containing the coal mines and also other industries, the highest average earnings are to be found here—in the counties of Renfrew, Lanark, Stirling, and Dumbarton. The average weekly earnings in Renfrew and Lanark are 22s. 6d., and in Stirling and Dumbarton, 22s. In Renfrew there are textile industries (cotton, wool, hemp, and flax). Lanarkshire is not only the largest coal-mining centre in Scotland, employing about 52,000 miners, but contains about 13,000 cotton operatives. In Dumbarton, engineering and shipbuilding are carried on, while in both Dumbarton and Stirling there is also some coal mining. Taking the arable section, from north to south, *i.e.* Nairn, Elgin, Banff, and Aberdeen, the earnings of the horse-men are 17s. 1d., 17s. 10d., 18s. 2d., and 19s. 5d. These counties may be described as purely agricultural, but there are a few quarries in Aberdeenshire, employing about 2000 men, and also some textile industries, employing about 4000 operatives. In parts of these counties there are a number of small farms worked by the farmers and their families. In some districts there are a good many crofters whose sons and daughters work



for farmers, particularly at busy seasons. South of this group are Kincardine, Forfar, and Perth, where the earnings come to 19s. 6d., 20s. 8d., and 19s. 11d. Forfarshire is the principal seat of the textile industries in Scotland, Dundee being the chief centre. There are about 48,000 textile operatives in the county. The next counties are Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan, which are grouped together, and the average weekly earnings come to 20s. 5d. Fife, besides being an important arable and stock-farming county, contains about 18,000 miners, and about 12,000 textile operatives. Clackmannan also contains a few coal mines, and in the town of Alloa there are a number of distilleries. Next come the Lothians, *i.e.* Linlithgow, Edinburgh, and Haddington, and the border counties, *i.e.* Berwick and Roxburgh, excluding Dumfries which has already been referred to in the grazing section. To the border counties may be added Peebles and Selkirk. These are fine agricultural counties, comprising many large farms in the hands of gentlemen of considerable capital. In the hill districts there are many large sheep farms, the sheep being mainly Cheviots and half-breds, whilst these counties also contain much excellent grazing land and also some of the best arable land. Mixed farming is carried on—corn-growing, sheep-breeding, cattle-breeding and fattening. There is also a little dairying in some parts. Large quantities of potatoes are grown in certain districts, notably in Haddingtonshire, in the neighbourhood of Dunbar, where the soil is specially suitable. Root crops are also extensively grown, and sheep from the hill districts are usually brought to the low districts for the winter. The number of farm servants in this group is large, and in most farms they have definite spheres of work. From what has been said as to the system of farming, it will be seen that there are a number of all classes of farm servants employed in these counties. Women are largely employed in the arable districts, and they are found especially useful in connection with the corn, potato, and root crops. In the Lothians the average weekly earnings of horsemen are in Linlithgow and Edinburgh, 20s. 10d., and in Haddington, 19s. 6d. There are some coal mines in all the Lothian counties, and in Linlithgow there is also some shale mining. The proximity of the city of Edinburgh has also had an effect upon agricultural wages in these counties. The average weekly earnings in Peebles and Selkirk are 20s. 7d. and 19s. 6d. respectively. In Selkirk there are about 5000 textile operatives. In Berwickshire and Roxburgh, which may be described as purely agricultural counties, the average weekly earnings are 19s. 9d. and 19s. 5d. respectively. In the case of horsemen, by far the largest of any agricultural class in Scotland, the excess of earnings over wages is, the Board of Trade report points out, with the exception

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of small extra cash payments for harvest in some districts, practically due to allowances in kind. Except in eight counties, the excess of earnings over wages is 3s. 6d. a week and upwards, and amounts to between 5s. and 7s. in eighteen counties. In Aberdeenshire the excess is 7s. 2d."

TABLE 10.—AVERAGE YEARLY AND WEEKLY EARNINGS OF SCOTTISH SHEPHERDS.

County.	Average Yearly.		Average Weekly.	
	In Cash.	In Cash and Kind.	In Cash.	In Cash and Kind.
	£ s.	£ s.	s. d.	s. d.
Aberdeen . . . . .	30 9	50 14	11 11	19 6
Argyll and Bute . . . . .	26 19	49 19	10 4	19 3
Ayr . . . . .	41 13	52 13	16 0	20 3
Banff . . . . .	33 10	48 3	12 11	18 6
Berwick . . . . .	37 6	56 2	14 4	21 7
Caithness, Shetland, and Orkney . . . . .	21 13	43 11	8 4	16 9
Dumfries . . . . .	32 18	51 2	12 8	19 8
Elgin . . . . .	33 9	45 11	12 10	17 6
Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan . . . . .	38 12	54 2	14 10	20 10
Forfar . . . . .	33 0	52 0	14 7	20 0
Haddington . . . . .	46 12	55 8	17 11	21 4
Inverness . . . . .	24 0	47 9	9 3	18 3
Kincardine . . . . .	34 16	51 19	13 5	20 0
Kirkcudbright . . . . .	38 6	50 12	14 9	19 6
Linlithgow and Edinburgh . . . . .	48 2	55 10	18 6	21 4
Nairn . . . . .	33 9	45 11	12 10	17 6
Peebles . . . . .	35 4	52 5	13 6	20 1
Perth . . . . .	30 17	48 18	11 10	18 10
Renfrew and Lanark . . . . .	34 8	49 9	13 3	19 0
Ross and Cromarty . . . . .	26 14	43 2	10 3	16 7
Roxburgh . . . . .	35 4	55 2	13 6	21 2
Selkirk . . . . .	35 3	50 11	13 6	19 5
Stirling and Dumbarton . . . . .	30 17	50 17	11 10	19 7
Sutherland . . . . .	23 6	45 10	9 0	17 6
Wigtown . . . . .	32 0	49 1	12 4	18 10

It is added :—

"Generally the excess of earnings over wages is less in the southern than in the northern parts of Scotland. With the exception of Wigtown, the excess of earnings over wages in no case reaches 5s. a week south of the Firth of Forth. The places where excess is least are mainly in the neighbourhood of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The excess is greatest in the counties in the extreme north. The position of shepherd in Scotland is an important one. In numbers the shepherds come next to the horsemen,

although they are only about one-fourth as numerous. It will be seen from the foregoing table of earnings, that there is no marked difference between those which they receive, and what are obtained by the other three classes of agricultural labourers—but the orramen are at the bottom of the scale.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FOOD OF SCOTTISH PEASANTS.

WE have already given, rather elaborately, so far as its extent and variety may be described as in any way elaborate, the dietary of English and Welsh peasants; and a necessary and interesting corollary to that information will be looked for in this chapter. We are, as before, indebted for the details here given to the exhaustive inquiry made for the purposes of the Board of Trade reports; but in giving, as before, two tables, we must note the distinction made between what may be roughly called the northern and southern divisions of Scotland. In the first table, rearranged—for easy reference—from that given by the Board of Trade report, we shall give two sections corresponding to the northern and southern divisions, calling each a district, and then a section called “All Districts,” to make an average or *resumé* of the whole. District 1 will comprise—Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, Elgin, Inverness, Nairn, Orkney, Ross and Cromarty, Shetland, and Sutherland; and District 2—Ayr, Berwick, Clackmannan, Dumbarton, Dumfries, Edinburgh, Fife, Forfar, Haddington, Kincardine, Kinross, Kirkcudbright, Lanark, Linlithgow, Peebles, Perth, Renfrew, Roxburgh, Selkirk, Stirling, and Wigtown.

TABLE II.—AVERAGE WEEKLY QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FOOD CONSUMED BY FARM SERVANTS' FAMILIES IN SCOTLAND.

Articles.	District 1.		District 2.		All Districts.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
	lb. oz.	s. d.	lb. oz.	s. d.	lb. oz.	s. d.
Bacon . . . . .	0 11	0 6	1 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 4	0 11
Beef or mutton . . . . .	2 7 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 5 $\frac{3}{4}$	2 5 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 7 $\frac{3}{4}$	2 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 7
Bread . . . . .	9 7	1 3	15 0	1 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	12 12 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
Butter . . . . .	1 5	1 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 7	1 6	1 7	1 6
Cheese . . . . .	0 8	0 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 4	0 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 14 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 7
Cocoa or coffee . . . . .	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 1	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 1	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Eggs . . . . .	dozen	0 88	dozen	0 76	dozen	0 81 $\frac{1}{2}$
Fish . . . . .	—	0 6 $\frac{3}{4}$	—	0 4	—	0 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Flour . . . . .	lb. oz.	0 5	lb. oz.	0 4	lb. oz.	0 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Jam . . . . .	3 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 2	6 13	0 5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Lard or dripping . . . . .	1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 6	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Margarine . . . . .	0 6	0 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Milk—New . . . . .	—	—	0 1	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Skimmed . . . . .	pints	11	pints	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	pints	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Buttermilk . . . . .	12	1 6	7	1 3 $\frac{1}{4}$	9	1 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Oatmeal . . . . .	1	—	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	—
Other meal . . . . .	lb. oz.	1 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	lb. oz.	1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	lb. oz.	1 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Pork . . . . .	17 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 1	9 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	13 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Potatoes . . . . .	0 15 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 6	0 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Rice or barley . . . . .	0 5 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 12 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 8 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Sugar . . . . .	36 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	28 1	0 3 $\frac{3}{4}$	31 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 3
Syrup or treacle . . . . .	1 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 14 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 9 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 9 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 9 $\frac{1}{4}$
Tea . . . . .	3 12 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 8 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 3	0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Total value of food consumed (including food home-produced or received as allowances in addition to wages).	0 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 12	0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Average weekly earnings of all classes of adult farm servants . . . . .	0 8 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 8	0 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
	—	13 9 $\frac{1}{4}$	—	16 2 $\frac{1}{4}$	—	15 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
	s. d.	17 9	s. d.	19 10	s. d.	19 0

The proportion of bread and flour, meal and meat, and the percentage of these articles consumed in Districts 1 and 2, are as follows :—

TABLE 12.—AVERAGE VALUE OF (1) BREAD, FLOUR, AND MEAL, AND (2) MEAT CONSUMED WEEKLY BY FARM SERVANTS' FAMILIES IN SCOTLAND.

Articles.	District 1.	District 2.	General Average for Scotland.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bread, flour, and meal . . . .	3 7½	4 2½	3 11¼
Meat (including beef, mutton, pork, and bacon) . . . .	2 1½	3 4½	2 9½
Per cent. of total value of food consumed . . . . .	41·8	46·7	44·2

Preceding the Scottish farm servants' *menu* are some interesting notes by Mr. Wilson Fox, commenting on the tables of dietary—the whole being a *resumé* of the facts carefully ascertained as the result of exhaustive inquiries from correspondents of the Board of Trade—and we cannot, we think, do better than give them in full. He says:—

“The consumption of beef and mutton appears to be fairly uniform throughout Scotland, being between 2 and 3 lbs. a week. It is not generally purchased more than once a week. The consumption of pork and bacon varies from about 1 lb. in the northern district (‘District No. 1’) to as much as 2½ lbs. in the southern district (No. 2). On the other hand, rather more fish is eaten in the northern than in the southern district. The consumption of oatmeal differs greatly in the two districts. In the northern district it amounts to nearly 18 lbs. per week, while in the southern it is under 10 lbs. This difference, however, is counter-balanced in the latter district by an increased consumption of bread and flour, which is as large as 24¾ lbs. as compared with 13 lbs. in the northern district. Speaking generally, the consumption of sugar, syrup, and jam is less in the northern district by about 1 lb., and the consumption of cheese by about ¾ lbs. Nearly 36½ lbs. of potatoes are used weekly in the northern district as compared with about 28 lbs. in the southern. It will be seen from the tables that the northern farm servants live on plainer and cheaper diet than those in the south. The consumption of tea is very uniform in the various counties, between 8 and 9 oz. being used. It is much the same as in the northern

counties of England, where the amount consumed averages 8 oz. a week. It will be observed that in both districts the value of food consumed by the family is only a few shillings lower than the average weekly earnings of the man (including the value of allowances in kind). In District 1 the difference is 3s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.; in District 2 it is 3s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. The earnings given in the tables, however, are those of the men derived from farm labour, but the wives sometimes earn money by milking or by working in the fields at harvest, or potato-lifting, weeding, etc. The children begin to work as soon as they leave school. Further, the men's incomes may be increased by profits derived from the sale of garden produce, or from keeping cows, pigs, sheep, and poultry. Again, no deduction has been made in the estimates of value of the articles enumerated as consumed, for the smaller cost of home-grown produce, such as pork and bacon, or of milk and butter, or of eggs; or for potatoes, meal, milk, etc., which are given as allowances in many districts. The values are based on the ordinary retail prices in the various districts. Consequently, the cost of the housekeeping, as shown in the table, must frequently be reduced to some extent, or the yearly income increased, leaving a larger margin for expenditure on clothes, household requisites, tobacco, and rent, in the cases where it is paid, but it is usual for farm servants to get their houses rent free. A large number of farm servants keep pigs, and many fatten two. The keeping of fowls is a common practice, more particularly in the north. Eggs are often sold when dear, and consumed at home when cheap. Where cows are kept (and this is nowhere so common as formerly, though shepherds in all parts often have one and sometimes two), butter is made at home, and both milk and butter are often sold. Butter is also often made at home from the milk allowances. Sometimes a man buys a sheep and salts it for eating in the winter, and occasionally some men club together and buy a cow to kill in the winter. Jam is made at home in some districts; fuel is very frequently carted free, and sometimes provided free by the employers, particularly in the case of shepherds. In the counties in District 1, where the earnings are lowest, peat is often given free. Estimates of the annual expenditure on clothes and boots of a man, his wife and four children, given by correspondents after making careful inquiries, vary from £7 to £14. A good deal of information has been obtained with reference to the expenditure of farm servants on alcohol and tobacco, and the general consensus of opinion appears to be that, as a class, they are sober, and spend comparatively little on drink. Many correspondents say that the men drink but little whisky or other alcohol except on holidays, market days, or during the visit of a friend, or on some special occasions. More money appears to be spent on

whisky in some of the southern counties, where there are more towns than elsewhere, but in no case do the estimates given exceed 1s. 2d. a week. There is very little of the English village system in Scotland; consequently, the temptation of the village public-house is largely absent. The consumption of tobacco is generally said to be from 2 to 3 oz. a week at 3d. an oz. Some correspondents put the quantity consumed as high as 4 oz. a week."

In connection with the dietary of the Scottish peasant, the matter of oatmeal, which may perhaps be called the great national food, is especially interesting. The report on this subject says:—

"Many of the returns refer to a decline in the practice of eating oatmeal and other meal, and of keeping cows, and to an increase in the consumption of baker's bread, and other flour products, and also of tea, which is now stated to be largely drunk instead of milk. The changes in these respects are no doubt due to the growing tendency of the farm servants to prefer their wages being paid more in money and less in kind, and to the facilities afforded them of buying bread, groceries, tinned meat (of which, especially in bothies, a good deal is used), jams, cake, etc., from the tradesmen's carts and vans which now frequently call at their houses. Sometimes oatmeal and potatoes are bartered for fish with the fish-wives, and, in some districts, a portion of the allowances in kind are sold. Farm servants do not often belong to benefit societies, and this is doubtless largely due to the system of yearly or half-yearly engagements with regular wages, payable during sickness or absence from work from any other cause. Coal and clothing clubs are also very uncommon. The figures which have been given as to the value of food consumed, apply to a man, his wife, and four children; but in Scotland, particularly in the Border counties and the Lothians, it is a frequent practice for the unmarried sons and daughters, after they are grown up, to continue living with their parents, and to work on the same farms as their fathers. In these cases the united family earnings often amount to a considerable sum, enabling the household to live comfortably, as far as a good supply of plain food is concerned. The following examples of the class of food eaten by farm labourers in various districts in Scotland are not put forward as typical of whole counties, but as illustrations of the customs prevailing in the districts reported on by those who undertook to make investigations:—

#### ABERDEEN.

*Breakfast* (5.30 a.m. for father; 8 to 9 a.m. for rest of family).—  
Brose (oatmeal and a little salt stirred up with boiling water, and



milk poured over), with some oatcakes or white bread and milk. Sometimes oatmeal porridge with tea and oatcakes, more often white bread with treacle, syrup, or jam. *Dinner* (12 noon).—Boiled potatoes, plain or mashed, with "schives" (a kind of small onion known as "size" in some parts), sometimes potato or milk soup. Oatcakes or white bread, with milk or tea; seldom cheese. In season, cabbage, turnips, kail, or brose made from vegetables (on Sundays, from 1 to 2 p.m., Scotch broth, with beef and potatoes, bread, milk or tea). *Supper* (6.30 p.m.).—Tea, oatcakes, white bread, rolls or biscuits, sometimes fish (yellow haddock) or cheese; syrup or jam, seldom much butter. Children may be seen at any time with bread or biscuits and jam. Home-made jam is used as much as possible. The grocers' vans (mentioned under "Banff") are said to be very numerous. *Note*.—A return states that most married farm servants keep a few hens and sell the eggs.

## ARGYLL, WEST.

*Breakfast*.—Porridge, tea, bread and butter, scones, oatmeal cake (on Sundays fish). *Dinner*.—Broth, fish, potatoes (butchers' meat occasionally and on Sundays). *Tea*.—Bread, scones, oatmeal cake, tea, butter and jam. *Supper*.—Porridge and milk, bread, butter and jam. *Notes*.—Several correspondents state that farm servants often have one or even two cows, of which they sell the milk or make butter; that they sometimes keep one or two pigs which they kill and cure, and that most of them keep fowls, eggs being eaten when cheap and sold when dear. Some catch large quantities of fish. It is said that the people in this county drink too much tea, and that they might grow more vegetables. Another writes that many families get their groceries in bulk from Glasgow.

## AYR.

*Breakfast*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread, flour scones, butter, jam, or ham. *Dinner*.—Soup, potatoes, beef, mutton, or fish, tea and bread, flour scones, jam or butter. *Tea*.—Tea, bread, flour scones, eggs, butter or jam. *Supper*.—Porridge and milk, or potatoes and milk. *Note*.—Most men are said to keep a pig.

## BANFF.

*Breakfast* (5.30 a.m.).—Porridge and milk, with tea, bread and butter (fish—herrings—or eggs instead of porridge on Sundays). *Dinner*.—Various—(a) Potatoes and milk; (b) potato soup; (c) ham and potatoes; (d) tinned meat and potatoes; (e) rice, barley, or tapioca boiled with milk; (f) brose made from pea meal or greens; (g) cabbage or turnips, with butter and tea (broth, with fresh meat and potatoes, milk pudding or dumplings, on Sundays). *Supper* (6.30 p.m.).—Porridge and milk, with tea, bread, butter, and eggs (or fish on Sundays). All meals are later on Sundays. *Note*.—A correspondent mentions the grocers'

and bakers' vans which go round the country and call at nearly every door, selling tea, sugar, jam, syrup, bread, etc. Oatcakes are now out of fashion, flour products taking their place, while farm servants' wives often barter the oatmeal or potatoes (which they get free) for fish. Another correspondent states that only three meals a day are generally eaten, except in harvest time, when there is also a supply of coffee or harvest beer and rolls.

## BERWICK.

*Breakfast* (5.30 a.m.).—Tea and home-made scones, or white bread and butter or jam. *Second breakfast* (8.30 a.m.).—Cold tea, scones, butter or jam (in field). *Dinner* (11.30 a.m.).—Potato or barley broth, with meat in it, either beef, mutton, pork or ham; bread and butter, cheese, and tea, potatoes. (At 3.30 p.m.).—Cold tea, bread and jam (in field). *Tea* (6.30 p.m.).—Bakers' white bread or home-baked, white flour scones, tea, butter or jam, and occasionally ham and eggs. *Supper*.—Oatmeal porridge or bread, butter and eggs, or fat ham, home-cured. *Note*.—Many returns state that all farm servants in this county keep pigs, and in many cases a cow. Most of them kill two pigs a year (weight 16 stones).

## BUTE.

A return from the Isle of Arran gives the following details:—*Breakfast*.—Porridge and sweet milk, tea, bread and butter, with sometimes a little bacon or an egg, or a little fish when procurable (on Sundays the parents do not generally have porridge). *Dinner*.—Scotch broth, with the meat that made it, with potatoes. Occasionally stewed meat and potatoes, with pudding afterwards. Sometimes stock fish and potatoes, with bread and milk afterwards. *Supper*.—In summer there may be fresh herrings, and, in winter, salted or cured herrings or other fish, with, perhaps, bacon or cheese. Young children may take bread and milk. *Note*.—It is stated that all keep poultry, and some a pig. They get meal in bolls at wholesale prices from the farmer, this being charged against their wages.

## CAITHNESS.

**WEEKDAYS**—*First breakfast* (5 a.m.).—Oatmeal brose with milk. *Second breakfast* (11 a.m.).—Oatmeal porridge and milk, oat bread, loaf bread, or flour scones, with tea, butter or jam. *Dinner or Supper* (6 p.m.).—Potatoes and salt herrings, with some kind of bread as at breakfast; tea, butter or jam. **SUNDAYS**—*Breakfast* (9 a.m.).—Salt herrings, tea, bread, butter or jam. *Dinner* (3 p.m.).—Broth, butchers' meat and potatoes. *Supper*. (7 p.m.).—Tea, bread, butter or jam. *Note*.—Other reports say that most married farm servants keep about twelve hens, which one return estimates as producing £2 worth of eggs yearly, one half of which is sold. Many also keep a pig, and some a cow, from the milk of which butter is made.

## CLACKMANNAN.

*Breakfast*.—Children, porridge and milk, or syrup; father and mother, tea, bread and butter, an egg, and small bit of ham, or a sausage (on Sundays something better for the children at breakfast and dinner). *Dinner*.—Soup (potato, lentil, or pea—usually enough made at once for two days) or broth with meat (the parents have the meat). *Supper*.—Bread, scones, butter, jam, tea. The children have rice boiled in water with sugar or with some milk if available (on Sundays, a bit of cake or some biscuits as well). *Note*.—Correspondents say that most men feed two pigs yearly, while hens are kept.

## DUMBARTON.

*Breakfast*.—Porridge, tea, and ham; sometimes an egg or bread and butter, after porridge. Children have porridge, tea, bread and butter or syrup (on Sundays, fish or ham and eggs). *Dinner*.—Broth and potatoes, with either beef or mutton. Sometimes potato soup, with bread and cheese and milk; or rice and milk with bread, cheese, and tea; or potatoes, with cured fish, bread, and milk and tea (on Sundays, sometimes stewed beef and potatoes and milk). *Supper*.—Porridge and milk with tea, bread and butter; sometimes cheese and jam.

## EDINBURGH.

*Breakfast* (5 a.m.).—Tea; (8 a.m.) porridge (on Sundays, bacon and bread). *Dinner* (12 noon).—Broth, beef and potatoes, or bacon and potatoes, or fish and potatoes, or milk, cakes and cheese. *Tea* (6.30 p.m.).—Tea. *Supper*.—Porridge or bread and milk. *Note*.—A large number of "bottle carts" come round with whisky, beer, lemonade, soda, etc.

## ELGIN.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast* (5 a.m. for father).—Plate of oatmeal porridge, with milk, and afterwards a cup of tea or coffee, with bread; (7 a.m.) same for rest of family. *Dinner* (11.30 a.m.).—Various—(a) Broth, bread, and potatoes, with a little meat; (b) potatoes, herrings, milk and bread; (c) tinned meat, potatoes and milk; (d) brose, made from vegetables boiled with a bone, the vegetables being eaten afterwards with bread and milk. *Supper* (6.30 p.m.).—Tea and bread, butter, jam, marmalade or syrup, often with a little fish, tinned meat, or cheese. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast* (8 a.m.).—Tea, bread, butter, fish, eggs or meat (fried liver). *Dinner* (2 p.m.).—Broth, bread, potatoes, and meat. *Tea* (5.30 p.m.).—Tea and bread, with some sweets. *Supper*.—Usually not taken—some have bread and sweets.

## FIFE.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Oatmeal porridge, with new milk, although tea is gradually ousting that diet. *Dinner*.—Scotch

broth in winter ; potatoes invariably find a place at this meal. Pork and beef are much used during cold season. Rice, sago, cornflour, tapioca, with rhubarb and wheaten bread are the staple food of the summer season. *Tea*.—Wheaten bread (batter baked), with butter, cheese, jam, treacle or syrup ; occasionally porridge with skimmed milk, and a cup of tea afterwards. *Supper* is not recognised as a meal ; a few have something in the winter months. **SUNDAYS**—*Breakfast*.—Tea is preferred to either coffee or cocoa. Fried bacon with eggs when cheap. Flour scones or mixed bannocks (for old people). *Dinner*.—Many abstain from this, as breakfast is later and tea earlier, and take only a light lunch. *Tea*.—Pudding or dumpling, besides usual fare. *Notes*.—Some correspondents say that most families feed, kill, and cure one or two pigs. Butter is sometimes made from the milk allowance. Grocers' vans and tea drinking are mentioned as prevalent. A correspondent notes the tendency to prefer wages all in cash to the older system of part cash and part "perquisites." The demand for oatmeal is said to be declining.

## FORFAR.

*Breakfast*.—Oatmeal porridge with milk ; or tea, bread and butter (on Sundays, ham, eggs, sausages or fish, instead of porridge). *Dinner*.—Broth or soup, boiled bacon, pork, or beef, with potatoes and bread. *Supper*.—Tea or cocoa, bread and butter, with cheese, jam, treacle or syrup. Most married men keep a pig and sometimes two, which are fed and killed. They usually have leave to keep six fowls.

## HADDINGTON.

*Breakfast, first* (5.30 a.m.).—Tea, bread, butter and cheese ; *second* (8 a.m.), tea or coffee, bread, butter or cheese (carried into field). (On Sundays, at 9 a.m., ham or eggs added to dietary mentioned.) *Dinner* (11.30 a.m.).—Broth or soup, beef and potatoes (on Sundays, at 1 p.m., rice with milk). *Tea* (3 p.m.).—Tea, bread and butter (carried into field). (On Sundays, the same at 5 p.m.) *Supper* (6.30 p.m.).—Oatmeal porridge and milk, tea or coffee afterwards (on Sundays, bread and milk). *Note*.—Fresh fish is also mentioned as an article of diet in this county.

## INVERNESS.

*Breakfast*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread, and jam. *Dinner*.—Tea, bread, butter or jam—sometimes fish (dried herrings or cod), or eggs and bacon, or tinned meats, with potatoes and milk. (On Sundays, broth and beef or mutton, with potatoes.) Afternoon tea is not a usual meal. *Supper*.—Tea, bread and butter, jam or marmalade, often porridge and milk. *Note*.—Other returns note that farm servants generally keep their own fowls and often pigs. The farm servants are said to depend to a great extent on meal and potatoes, and fish when procurable. Tea is much more drunk than formerly, some having it three times a day.

## LANARK.

*Breakfast*.—Tea, bread and butter, ham or eggs. *Dinner*.—Beef and potatoes, with bread and milk. *Supper*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread and butter, cheese or jam. *Note*.—Very few farm servants keep fowls, according to this return, and none pigs.

## ORKNEY.

*WEEKDAYS*.—*Breakfast* or “morning piece” (6 a.m. for working members of family).—Milk and bread, or tea and bread (9 a.m. for children), porridge and milk, cup of tea, bread and butter or syrup; *second* (11 a.m. for working members of family), porridge and milk, eggs, coffee or tea, bread and butter or syrup; (1 p.m. for children at school) piece of bread and syrup in winter, and bread and milk in summer. *Tea and dinner* (6 p.m.).—Tea and bread, with fish and potatoes, or ham and eggs, or pork, cabbage and potatoes, with occasionally potato, barley, or pea soup, also jam. *Supper*.—Bread and milk, or tea or coffee, and bread. *SUNDAYS*.—Same as on weekdays. *Note*.—Married servants are said to have liberty to keep one or sometimes two ewes, and in most cases hens and ducks; also hoe and set potatoes, which yield 2 to 2½ tons a year.

## PERTH.

*Breakfast*.—Porridge and milk, ham or bacon, fried eggs, wheaten bread and butter, tea or coffee (essence). (Sundays, some extra fry instead of porridge; also jam. *Dinner*.—Broth and beef or pork; or fresh or salted fish, potatoes and vegetables, cornflour and similar food and milk; often tea to finish (on Sundays, extra vegetables, stewed meat and onions, etc., and milk pudding). *Supper* (6.30 p.m.).—Fried fish, or ham and eggs, bread, butter or jam; cheese. Sometimes bread and milk later. *Note*.—Other reports stated that a good deal of tinned meat is eaten; many men keep a pig and usually a dozen hens. Most have gardens and grow potatoes and other vegetables.

## ROSS AND CROMARTY.

*Breakfast*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread and butter (sometimes bacon on Sundays). *Dinner*.—Potatoes, salted white fish or herrings, bacon once a week, tea, bread and jam (on Sundays, broth and beef, rice or cornflour). *Tea*.—Tea, bread and jam (no tea on Sundays). *Supper*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread and butter or jam (on Sundays, no porridge or milk). *Note*.—Most cottars keep a pig and some hens, food for which is in some cases given by the farmer free.

## ROXBURGH.

*Breakfast, first* (5.30 a.m.).—Oatmeal porridge or milk or oatmeal brose; *second*, tea, flour scones, or barley, or loaf bread, with a little cheese, butter or jam (on Sundays, fried ham, boiled eggs, or fresh or kippered herrings). *Dinner*.—Kail or

vegetable (lentil or pea or potato) soup, followed by potatoes and pork, sometimes beef or mutton (Sundays, soup usually made with beef or bones, and semolina, cornflour, or rhubarb pudding, tarts, or dumpling. *Tea*.—Bread and butter or jam, tea. *Supper*.—Cup of new or skimmed milk (in winter, coffee), bread (often barley bread) and butter or jelly. *Note*.—A correspondent states that the consumption of oatmeal is decreasing, while that of tea, flour, jams, jellies, cheese, and eggs is increasing. Few now receive meal, though they get milk if they have no cow. Other correspondents say that most families keep one or two pigs, and some a cow; all keep hens. Some salt a sheep in the autumn.

## SELKIRK.

*Breakfast, First* (5.45 a.m. in summer, 7 a.m. in winter).—Bread and tea, butter and jam; *Second* (8 a.m.), the same. *Dinner* (11.30 a.m.).—Bread and tea with bacon or butcher's meat and potatoes (on Sundays, pudding). (At 3.30 p.m.) Bread and tea. *Tea* (6.30 p.m.).—Bread and tea, cheese, butter, and jam. *Supper*.—Bread and milk, or oatmeal porridge and milk. *Note*.—All the returns say that bacon and potatoes are home-grown. In some cases jam is home-made. Many keep hens.

## SHETLAND.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread and butter. *Dinner*.—Usually fish and potatoes, occasionally meat. *Tea*.—Tea, bread and butter. *Supper*.—Porridge and milk, or bread and milk. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Porridge and milk, tea, bread and butter, and eggs or meat. *Dinner*.—Broth, meat, and potatoes. *Tea*.—Tea, bread and butter and jam. *Supper*.—Coffee, bread and butter, an egg or meat. *Note*.—Married servants nearly all keep a cow, and any surplus milk or butter is sold. They also keep fowls and catch fish.

## STIRLING.

*Breakfast* (6.45 a.m.).—Oatmeal porridge and skimmed milk, followed by tea, home-made scones or loaf bread, and cheese or jelly (on Sundays at 7.30, ham and eggs added to weekday dietary). *Dinner* (12 noon).—Scotch broth or potato soup, followed by beef and potatoes with skimmed milk and bread. *Tea* (3.30 p.m.).—On some farms tea and bread is sent out to the fields, but this is not general except in haytime or harvest. *Supper* (6.30 p.m.).—Oatmeal porridge with tea and bread, the same as breakfast (on Sundays sometimes no porridge). *Note*.—The consumption of oatmeal is continually decreasing, and tea is constantly drunk.

## SUTHERLAND.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Oatmeal brose or porridge, with probably flour bread, butter, and tea. *Dinner*.—Broth made

of vegetables and dripping, potatoes, oat bread, and milk. On some days salt fish (herrings or cod) or potatoes with tea afterwards. *Supper*.—Oatmeal porridge, with tea, bread, butter and jam. Tea is said to be used more or less at each meal. *SUNDAYS*.—Much the same diet as on weekdays, but the breakfast and dinner hours are later. *Note*.—Married men have liberty to keep a pig and hens at their own expense.

Perhaps the most interesting and indeed remarkable fact concerning the preceding dietary of Scottish farm servants is the "decline of oatmeal" and the encroachment, so to speak, of tea. Nevertheless, it still maintains a remarkable popularity by the extent to which it forms a component part of almost every meal.

## I R E L A N D.

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### GENERAL SYSTEM OF LABOUR.

THE interest of the reader will not diminish as he comes to the part of this volume dealing with the Irish peasant : but in Ireland the classification of the labourers cannot be quite so easily made as in the more prosperous agricultural regions in the other parts of the United Kingdom. Again, we cannot, we think, do better than quote from the comprehensive report of the Board of Trade ; for we thus get “boiled down,” so to speak, the gist of a great accumulation of tables and returns that, whilst interesting and in place in a “Blue Book,” do not provide the succinctness and comprehensiveness that the general reader will look for. Our task, a rather considerable one, has been to extract and put before the public as clear and distinct a picture as is possible of the whole subject, without tiring the eye or confusing the mind. We seek, laboriously, to extract the essential from the non-essential, and to present nothing that will not prove of permanent—we may say historical—interest. There is nothing in the ensuing quotation that will not come into this category. The report, dealing with classes of labourers and terms of remuneration, says :—

“In many parts of Ireland agricultural labourers cannot be classified according to their duties, as so many of the farms which employ labour other than that of the family are



too small to admit of special duties being assigned to particular men. It is only on estates or large farms that distinct classes, such as stewards, cattlemen, yardmen, horsemen, carters, and ploughmen are to be found. Stewards are generally only employed on estate farms. On a number of farms the herds attend to the cattle, sheep, and pigs. Frequently some of the ordinary labourers plough or attend to the horses and cattle, and in such cases they are sometimes paid rather higher wages on account of Sunday work. In many districts in the counties of Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Kerry, Cork, and Donegal, agricultural labourers as a class scarcely exist, except on the larger estates, the work on the larger farms being undertaken by the sons of the small farmers, who work on their father's land, cut turf, and gather seaweed, if near the shore, when not able to earn wages. A number of small landowners and their sons go to work on farms in England and Scotland for part of the year, and those who live near the coast often do some fishing. In counties where farms are large enough and have sufficient tillage land to employ a staff of men, the terms of engagement vary considerably in different districts. The men in charge of animals are usually engaged for the largest periods and have continuous work. In Ulster the greater number of agricultural labourers of all classes, including ordinary labourers, men in charge of horses and cattle, and also boys and girls, are engaged half-yearly, those who are unmarried being lodged and boarded in the farmhouses, the married men living in cottages on the farms or in villages. Generally speaking, it is on the smaller or medium-sized farms which have no cottages, or only a short supply, that hired men (unmarried men, generally called 'boys') are boarded and lodged. The majority of the farm servants in Ulster are hired at hiring fairs, though an increasing number of private agreements are now made, especially in the case of married men and girls. The term of service usually commences in May and November. The greater number of married labourers in Ulster are engaged by the half-year, 'wet and dry,' and paid weekly. In some cases, however, the weekly payments form only a part of the total wages, the balance being paid at the end of the half-yearly term. Unmarried labourers are given such sums as may be desired from time to time for holidays and other special requirements, and the balance is handed over at the end of the half-yearly term, when payment is usually made of debts for clothing, etc. There are also yearly and weekly engagements in Ulster. In some districts, on estates and farms where there are cottages attached, the engagements are by the year, but on farms where there are none the engagements are half-yearly, the men being paid weekly wages and sleeping at home, but given their board in the farmhouses. In the case of the

men on the longer terms of engagement living in cottages, they are sometimes subject to one month's, two months', or a quarter's notice. In the western half of Ulster, where the farms are small and the districts poor, very little regular labour is employed. In certain Poor Law Unions in Ulster, on the western and southern side, in the counties of Donegal, Fermanagh, Cavan, and Monaghan, the farm work is done mainly by members of the family and hired lads living in the farmhouses, the farms being small ones. In these districts it is unusual to find ordinary agricultural labourers attached to the staff of farms, and casual labour is undertaken by the sons of small farmers. Again, in certain other Poor Law Unions in the same counties, and also in certain unions in the counties of Londonderry and Tyrone, a good many lads are hired to live in the farmhouses; and where regular married men are employed they generally get a free cottage, about a rood of potato land, and sometimes milk in addition to their cash wages. Some of the principal hiring fairs in Ulster are Antrim, Armagh, Aghnacloy, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Bailieborough, Banbridge, Ballynahinch, Cavan, Cookstown, Coleraine, Cootehill, Comber, Dungannon, Derrygonnelly, Enniskillen, Irvinestown, Killyleagh, Lisbellaw, Letterkenny, Monaghan, Magherafelt, Newry, Newtownards, Newton Hamilton, and Strabane. Young boys and girls frequently come from the western part of Donegal to the half-yearly hirings at Letterkenny, and many of them go to the smaller farms in the counties of Londonderry and Tyrone. In other parts of Ireland the terms of engagement are not generally so long, and there are no hiring fairs, although in many districts unmarried men are engaged privately, usually by the year, but sometimes by the half-year or quarter, and occasionally for such periods as nine or ten months, and lodged and boarded in the farmhouses. Frequently definite agreements are made as to notice, but difficulties are not often raised if either of the parties desire to terminate the engagement. The married men are mostly paid weekly, and the unmarried lodged and boarded in the farmhouses at the end of their term of service, though advances are frequently made during the term. It may be stated generally that for ordinary labourers, regularly attached to the staff of a farm, a weekly engagement is a common one. There are, however, many exceptions. In numerous cases the engagement is a daily one; and where it is nominally a weekly one, but not 'wet and dry,' it is for all practical purposes a daily one. In certain districts, monthly, half-yearly, or yearly engagements are to be found. Sometimes in the same locality there is a mixed system. Thus, in a Poor Law Union in Limerick, both weekly and yearly engagements exist for ordinary labourers. In the rich dairy lands for a wide area round Kilmallock (Co. Limerick),

dairy girls and men are engaged from Kerry from about St. Patrick's Day (17th March) to Christmas Day. Again, in Tipperary, in one union, engagements are by the month, with a month's notice; in another union by the week, 'wet and dry'; in another by the day or the week, not 'wet and dry.' Again, in King's County some engagements are weekly and others yearly, and in County Longford, engagements are yearly, half-yearly, and weekly. Generally speaking, the daily engagements are to be found more often in the poorer districts, or in localities where the farms are small, labour not being required all the year round. In many counties ordinary labourers get their food in the farmhouses on working days, the cash wages in such cases being at a lower rate than in districts in which no food is provided. Herds and shepherds are usually engaged by the quarter, the half-year, or the year, and the notice to quit their situations varies considerably. They are frequently paid largely in kind, receiving a free house, some tillage land, potatoes, hay, the right to graze a certain number of animals, to cut peat, etc. In cases where a farmer takes more than one farm, a herd is often put in charge of one, and his responsibilities are then considerable. Herds frequently stay in the same situation for many years. It is not uncommon to find cases where they have been born on the farm or property where they are employed, and where their fathers and grandfathers 'herded' on the same farm. The engagement of men in charge of horses and cattle, though sometimes as long as that of herds, is often a weekly or monthly one, but their work is continuous, and they frequently remain in their situations a long time. Casual labourers are nearly always engaged by the day, and lose no time in wet weather, though they are sometimes engaged by the week. In a good many districts, notably on the western side of Ireland, there is not sufficient casual work to enable men to gain a livelihood by it, and in such localities casual work is frequently undertaken by the sons of small farmers. It is in these districts that many of the small farmers and their sons become migratory labourers at certain seasons of the year. But in some other parts of Ireland farmers have complained in recent years of a scarcity of married casual labourers—that is, men who earn their entire livelihood by working for different farmers, or by taking other odd jobs. In the small towns there are often some men of this class. At haytime and harvest casual labour is frequently in considerable request for mowing and cutting. On the other hand, this class of men not infrequently find it difficult to obtain sufficient work in the winter months. Except where there are market gardens near large towns, women are not much employed at outdoor work for wages, though the wives and daughters of small farmers frequently assist on the farm. At busy seasons,

however, in some districts, women are engaged, generally by the day, for such work as haymaking and harvest, weeding and hoeing, turnip-lifting, potato-picking, and flax-pulling. A good many girls are engaged in the farmhouses for farmhouse work."

Separated by a comparatively narrow arm of the sea from the western side of Scotland, it is not surprising that in Ulster the hiring system is similar to that of the first-named country. In the subsequent chapter on earnings of the Irish peasantry it will also be noticed that the highest-wage counties, Antrim and Down, also benefit, so to speak, by the juxtaposition as it were of the prosperous agricultural region comprehended within Ayr, Wigtown, and Renfrew. These opposite coasts are in a sense, in fact, in touch with each other, and that no doubt, at least in part, explains a sort of high-wage uniformity in the respective districts.

## CHAPTER XX.

### EXTRAS, PIECEWORK, AND ALLOWANCES IN KIND.

THE generally low earnings of the Irish farm labourer are supplemented to a very small extent by "extra cash"; piecework is rare, and allowances in kind are "conspicuous" only by their absence in most cases. This chapter will therefore, and necessarily, have to be a very short one. Even at the extra-paying season of harvest extra wages are not often given in Ireland—at any rate to the regular men ordinarily forming part of the *personnel* of a farm. In some districts a rate of pay a little higher than the summer wage is given during harvest; but this is mainly, if not quite entirely, given to casual labourers when their aid happens to be needed—no doubt as an inducement for them to work at that season. Occasionally a bonus is given for the whole harvest work in sums ranging from ten to thirty shillings, or it may take the form of extra wages ranging from half a crown to three shillings extra per week; and near populous places, such as those close to or around Dublin, the extra weekly pay may go up to four and even, sometimes, to nine shillings a week. Even cattlemen or horsemen at harvest-times do not command additional pay, as it is argued that they only work as at ordinary times and at their ordinary rates; but if "extras" are "going" they get the same as other labourers. Speaking of Ireland, Mr. Fox says:—

“The following operations are sometimes done by piecework: cutting and saving turf, mowing, making fences, making drains, grubbing up furze, stone-breaking, and occasionally thinning turnips. Mowing and saving hay by piecework is chiefly done by casual labourers, who are often engaged at it for a number of weeks, and in some districts they are in considerable request. They also do cutting at corn harvest in some districts by piecework. Ploughmen sometimes do ploughing, and herds occasionally do shearing and cut and save hay by piecework. In some districts it used to be a common practice for herds to be bound by the terms of their agreement to cut and save a certain quantity of hay each year, but since the introduction of machinery the custom is dying out.”

The custom of giving the labourers “allowances in kind” is by no means an extensive one in Ireland, excepting, of course, the cases of those which are lodged and boarded in farmhouses, and who, necessarily, receive a substantial part of their remuneration in that way. There are instances, however, in which such payments are made, and when this is so they consist of such things as milk free, free turf given, or the right to cut it conceded. Coal also may occasionally be given free, or free grazing provided for an animal. Potato-ground also comes in, as in other parts of the kingdom, and then there is the free manuring or it may be tilling of ground. When, however, allotment or other ground is not given actually free, an unusually low rent may be asked for it, and the balance in this of advantage to the peasant is, of course, so much payment in kind.

Free cottages are not so much a custom in Ireland as in some other parts of the kingdom; but the plan is more frequent in the eastern parts of the country, Ulster and Leinster, than in Munster and Connaught. There is an arrangement made in some parts of the county of Limerick that those labourers who have free cottages should agree, in consideration of this, to work all the year round for a fixed wage. Another plan adopted in some districts of Clare is for the peasant “to work out” his rent by giving a fixed number

of days' service, when required, in return, the number of days being generally about thirty in the year. Reckoned at the usual rate, the labour given free would be equivalent to something like a shilling a week for the cottage or perhaps a little less,—a very low rent,—so that the difference, if any, between it and the actual rental value would practically amount to an "allowance in kind."

When we come to the value of cottage rents in Ireland, we find rather an extensive range—from the hovel—for it can be little else—of sixpence to the better-class dwelling of two shillings a week, the higher rents being for houses near towns. So far as we know, the sixpenny cottage is an institution unknown in England. Mr. Wilson Fox says :—

"Herds are usually provided with cottages free, and married men in charge of cattle and horses often get them, though not so frequently as herds. In addition to getting free cottages, herds often get other payments in kind, such as tillage and grazing land, turf, hay, milk, the right to graze a certain number of animals, including cattle, horses, sheep, and to turn out pigs and geese. In some districts in the province of Connaught, and also in parts of County Clare (Munster), they are often paid entirely or almost entirely in kind. Married men in charge of horses and cattle are not infrequently given turf, milk, and potato land."

Yet another arrangement prevailing in the lowest-wage districts of Ireland—notably in County Clare—is to give the peasant about half an acre of land and free grazing for a cow as part payment; and in such cases the cash wages are frequently as low as six shillings a week. The nearest parallel to this is the condition of things forty years ago in the worst-paid district of Somersetshire—the neighbourhood of Wooton Courtney, elsewhere referred to in this volume.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### EARNINGS OF IRISH PEASANTS.

So much has been said and written of the poverty of the peasantry in the "distressful country," that peculiar interest should attach to this chapter. We are indebted for the actual details of the earnings of the agricultural labourer in Ireland to Government returns; and it will be important to show how these have been obtained. The Board of Trade report says:—

"It has already been explained that in a number of the poorer districts in Ireland agricultural labourers as a class scarcely exist, and that, in many parts, owing to the small size of the farms, which are mainly worked by the farmer and his family, the number of agricultural labourers regularly attached to the staff of a farm is comparatively small. Consequently, the difficulty of obtaining information, which could be described as representative, as to the annual earnings of farm labourers in these districts is great. But in many other parts of Ireland where the farms are larger, although a considerable number of agricultural labourers are employed, the task of securing accurate information as to their earnings is by no means an easy one, on account of the absence of labour books. Figures can, indeed, be obtained from many owners of estates who farm on their own account; but the wages paid by employers of this type are frequently somewhat higher than those paid by neighbouring farmers, and, in addition, more allowances in kind are often given. The method by which information has been obtained has already been fully explained, and for the reasons stated it has not been found possible in many cases to give the annual earnings for a county based entirely on figures actually taken from books, and consequently some estimates have had to be made, particularly as to the amount of allowances in kind given. But since representative employers in different parts of each county have given full



particulars of the weekly rates of cash wages of their labourers, and the total yearly cash earnings, with details as to how they are made up, and also the allowances in kind, and since information given by the Local Government Board Inspectors as to the precise allowances usually made in most of the Poor Law Unions in Ireland is available, it is believed that the figures given in the tables, (pp. 131, 133, and 135) are

TABLE 13.—EARNINGS OF ORDINARY FARM LABOURERS IN IRELAND.

Province.	County.	Range of Weekly Cash Wages.				Predominant Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.			Estimated Total Weekly Earnings (including Value of Allowances in Kind).		
		Summer.		Winter.		Summer.	Winter.	Average of Summer and Winter.			
		s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.		
Ulster . .	Antrim . .	11	6 to 15	0	11	6 to 15	0	12	6	12	11
" . .	Armagh . .	10	"	14	0	9	"	12	0	11	6
Leinster . .	Carlow . .	10	0	12	6	9	0	12	0	10	7
Ulster . .	Cavan . .	9	0	12	0	7	6	11	0	10	4
Munster . .	Clare . .	9	0	12	0	9	0	12	0	9	0
" . .	Cork . .	9	0	12	0	9	0	12	0	10	0
Ulster . .	Donegal . .	7	6	"	10	0	7	6	"	10	0
" . .	Down . .	11	0	"	15	0	11	0	"	15	0
Leinster . .	Dublin . .	12	0	"	15	0	10	0	"	15	0
Ulster . .	Fermanagh . .	9	0	"	11	0	7	6	"	11	0
Connaught . .	Galway . .	9	0	"	12	0	7	6	"	12	0
Munster . .	Kerry . .	9	0	"	11	0	9	0	"	11	0
Leinster . .	Kildare . .	9	0	"	12	0	9	0	"	12	0
" . .	Kilkenny . .	9	0	"	12	0	9	0	"	12	0
" . .	King's County . .	8	0	"	11	0	8	0	"	10	0
Connaught . .	Leitrim . .	8	0	"	12	0	7	6	"	11	0
Munster . .	Limerick . .	9	0	"	12	0	8	0	"	11	0
Ulster . .	Londonderry . .	10	0	"	11	0	10	0	"	11	0
Leinster . .	Longford . .	8	0	"	12	0	8	0	"	11	0
" . .	Louth . .	8	0	"	12	0	8	0	"	12	0
Connaught . .	Mayo . .	8	0	"	12	0	7	0	"	11	0
Leinster . .	Meath . .	8	0	"	12	0	8	0	"	12	0
Ulster . .	Monaghan . .	8	0	"	12	0	8	0	"	12	0
Leinster . .	Queen's County . .	9	0	"	12	0	9	0	"	12	0
Connaught . .	Roscommon . .	7	0	"	12	0	7	0	"	12	0
" . .	Sligo . .	7	0	"	10	0	7	0	"	10	0
Munster . .	Tipperary . .	10	0	"	12	0	9	0	"	12	0
Ulster . .	Tyrone . .	9	0	"	12	0	9	0	"	12	0
Munster . .	Waterford . .	9	0	"	13	0	9	0	"	13	0
Leinster . .	Westmeath . .	9	0	"	10	0	8	0	"	10	0
" . .	Wexford . .	9	0	"	10	0	9	0	"	10	0
" . .	Wicklow . .	9	0	"	12	0	9	0	"	12	0

practically correct. Owing to the general absence of piece-work and of opportunities of earning much in the way of extra payments in harvest-time, the annual earnings of farm labourers who are not fed in the farmhouses do not, generally speaking, much exceed the total amount received in weekly cash wages. In estimating the annual earnings, the value of cottages, where given free of rent, has for all

counties been computed at £2, 12s. In all classes in the tables, the wages and earnings are those of men in receipt of full men's wages. In the table (see previous page—131) the maximum and minimum summer and winter rates of weekly cash wages of the ordinary labourers regularly attached to the staff of a farm, who have no food provided in the farmhouses on working days, are given for each county, also the predominant rates of weekly cash wages and the estimated total weekly earnings, including all extra cash payments and the value of allowances in kind. In counties where the predominant rate of wages in winter is lower than in the summer, it has been reckoned, for the purpose of arriving at the rate for the whole year, that the ratio of summer to winter weeks is as 3 to 2.

A note attached to the table in the Board of Trade report says :—

“ It has already been explained that, generally speaking, ordinary labourers do not earn much extra in cash over and above their regular weekly wages, as little or no piecework is done by men in constant employment, and the extra payments for hay and corn harvests are generally comparatively small if any. It will be seen from the preceding table that in ten of the thirty-two counties the average weekly earnings do not exceed the average of the summer and winter rates of weekly cash wages by more than sixpence, while the excess amounts to a shilling or more in five counties only.”

The next subject of interest in connection with the wages question in Ireland will be concerned with the earnings of “ hired men ”—that is, of those who are hired for periods, and lodged and boarded in the farmhouses. This custom of boarding and lodging farm servants exists mostly in Ulster ; but, as our table of information will indicate, there are “ lodgers ” of this description in every county. The following notes in reference to this class of labourers are of importance as explaining how the information has been obtained :—

“ It has not been found possible,” the report states (as was also the case in Wales), “ to ascertain what is the predominant rate paid to the hired men in each county, as the range of wages is frequently so wide. Too strict a comparison should not be made between the minimum and maximum in one county and another, because in one case the figures may refer to extreme rates paid, which may possibly be quite exceptional, and in another case such extreme rates

may have been omitted. It should, however, be added that the figures have been obtained from gentlemen whose knowledge of the districts for which the figures are given is great, and that in their opinion the rates quoted are representative. The yearly earnings of the hired men have been obtained by adding the sum of 5s. a week to represent the value of board and lodgings, there being no other cash payments or allowances in kind in the case of this class of men. The selection of any particular sum as the value of the board and lodging of the men throughout Ireland is open to objection, because any figure so selected must of necessity be sometimes too high or too low according to the varying circumstances; but after consultation with a number of authorities, the figure named has been selected as fairly representative.

TABLE 14.—ANNUAL AND WEEKLY EARNINGS OF HIRED MEN IN IRELAND.

Province.	County.	Yearly Rate of Cash Wages.		Estimated Total Earnings (including Value of Board and Lodging).						
				Per Annum.		Per Week.				
		£	£	£	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	
Ulster . .	Antrim . .	14 to	28	27 to	41	10	5	to	15	9
" . .	Armagh . .	14	22	27	35	10	5	"	13	6
Leinster . .	Carlow . .	12	15	25	28	9	7	"	10	9
Ulster . .	Cavan . .	12	20	25	33	9	7	"	12	8
Munster . .	Clare . .	10	14	23	27	8	10	"	10	5
" . .	Cork . .	12	18	25	31	9	7	"	11	11
Ulster . .	Donegal . .	14	20	27	33	10	5	"	12	8
" . .	Down . .	16	24	29	37	11	2	"	14	3
" . .	Fermanagh . .	16	20	29	33	11	2	"	12	8
Munster . .	Kerry . .	12	18	25	31	9	7	"	11	11
Leinster . .	Kildare . .	12	16	25	29	9	7	"	11	2
" . .	Kilkenny . .	12	18	25	31	9	7	"	11	11
" . .	King's County . .	11	15	24	28	9	3	"	10	9
Connaught . .	Leitrim . .	12	16	25	29	9	7	"	11	2
Munster . .	Limerick . .	12	18	25	31	9	7	"	11	11
Ulster . .	Londonderry . .	14	20	27	33	10	5	"	12	8
Leinster . .	Longford . .	11	15	24	28	9	3	"	10	9
" . .	Louth . .	12	18	25	31	9	7	"	11	11
Connaught . .	Mayo . .	10	14	23	27	8	10	"	10	5
Leinster . .	Meath . .	12	16	25	29	9	7	"	11	2
Ulster . .	Monaghan . .	16	22	29	35	11	2	"	13	6
Leinster . .	Queen's County . .	12	16	25	29	9	7	"	11	2
Connaught . .	Roscommon . .	10	14	23	27	8	10	"	10	5
" . .	Sligo . .	10	14	23	27	8	10	"	10	5
Munster . .	Tipperary . .	12	16	25	29	9	7	"	11	2
Ulster . .	Tyrone . .	14	20	27	33	10	5	"	12	8
Munster . .	Waterford . .	12	20	25	33	9	7	"	12	8
Leinster . .	Westmeath . .	10	14	23	27	8	10	"	10	5
" . .	Wexford . .	12	15	25	28	9	7	"	10	9
" . .	Wicklow . .	13	15	26	28	10	0	"	10	9

“Owing to the smallness of so many of the holdings in Ireland, the special positions of shepherds, ‘herds’ and men in charge of animals only, are not so numerous as in some parts of the United Kingdom. Men are, in fact, specially employed in those positions only on large estates or farms; and for this reason it has not been possible to obtain a general return of particulars as to their employment; nevertheless, the illustrative examples given in the following table will give a good and accurate idea of the conditions of employment, showing the amount of cash wages and the value of allowances in kind. Taking them generally, their wages are somewhat higher than those of the ordinary agricultural labourer, and they also get more payments in kind,—married men especially,—and these allowances include free cottages, peat (or ‘turf’), coal, potato ground, and milk. Herds get even more than the privileges just mentioned; they may get grazing ground free for animals—horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, a ‘run’ for pigs and geese, and hay and tillage land. In parts of Connaught, herds, when put, as they sometimes are, in charge of farms, are paid no cash, but their entire earnings are in ‘kind.’ Here are one or two details of particular instances of what the allowances consist of: an employer in the Swinford Poor Law Union of County Mayo, who has a herd to look after cattle and sheep, pays him no wages in cash, but this man has a free house, with five acres of land and free turbary (the right to cut turf), also free grazing with the employer’s cattle for three cows and their calves up to one and a half years of age. The employer estimates the annual value of these allowances at £40 a year. Six herds in the Castlebar Poor Law Union, under the same employer, get no regular cash wages, but they get paid for extra work. Their allowances in kind are as follows: four acres of land for tillage, and grass and hay for four ‘soms’—a ‘som’ meaning a cow, a half-year-old calf, and a ‘weanling’ calf. In the Westport Poor Law Union of Mayo, four herds, under the same employer, get £13 a year each, three acres of land, grass and hay for two ‘soms,’ a mare and a foal until a year old. In the Boyle Poor Law Union of Roscommon a herd on a certain farm gets no cash wages, but two acres of land and the grass of two cows.”

Taking a general glance, and comparing the average cash wages of the ordinary Irish peasant as shown by the following table, the “rise” since 1873 has been from an average of 7s. 10d. a week to an average of 9s. 10d., or just two shillings more per week in favour of the present generation!

TABLE 15.—EXAMPLES OF EARNINGS OF MEN IN CHARGE OF ANIMALS IN IRELAND.

Province.	County.	Occupation.	No. of Men.	Rate of Weekly Cash Wages.	Allowances in Kind.
Munster . . . . .	Cork . . . . .	Cattlemen . . . . .	2	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{s.} \\ 11 \\ \text{and} \\ 0 \end{array} \right\}$	Free house, potato ground, firewood, and half-ton of coal.
Ulster . . . . .	Down . . . . .	Shepherd Herd . . . . . Assistant herd . . . . .	1 1 1	$\left. \begin{array}{l} 10 \\ 0 \\ 15 \\ 0 \\ 12 \\ 0 \end{array} \right\}$	Free house.
" . . . . .	Fermanagh . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	4	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{No cash} \\ \text{wages, but} \\ \text{2s. a day} \\ \text{for extra} \\ \text{work.} \end{array} \right\}$	About 2 acres of manured land for potatoes and corn, and keep of 2 cows with calves (until one year old).
Leinster . . . . .	Kildare . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	1	13 0	Free house, milk, and coal.
" . . . . .	King's County . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	1	6 0	Free house and garden (2 acres), grass for 2 cows and horse, run for calf, pigs, etc., and turf (peat). None.
Munster . . . . .	Limerick . . . . .	Horseman . . . . .	1	10 0	Free house, potato ground, and keep of a cow.
Leinster . . . . .	Longford . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	3	10 0	Free house and garden to both : one gets grazing for cow and the other for 4 sheep.
Connaught . . . . .	Mayo . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	2	$\left. \begin{array}{l} 10 \\ 0 \\ \text{and} \\ 9 \\ 0 \end{array} \right\}$	Four acres of land for tillage—grass and hay for 4 "soms" (i.e. 4 cows, 4 half-year-old calves, and 4 "weanling" calves).
Leinster . . . . .	Meath . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	6	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{No cash} \\ \text{wages, but} \\ \text{paid for} \\ \text{extrawork.} \end{array} \right\}$	Free house and garden ( $\frac{1}{2}$ statute acre), 2 tons of coal, grass for cow and calf (until one year old).
" . . . . .	Queen's County . . . . .	Herd . . . . . Cowmen . . . . .	3 1 2	$\left. \begin{array}{l} 9 \\ 0 \\ 15 \\ 0 \\ 11 \\ 0 \end{array} \right\}$	None.
Connaught . . . . .	Roscommon . . . . .	Herd . . . . .	1	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{No cash} \\ \text{wages.} \end{array} \right\}$	Grass for 2 cows and 2 acres of land.
Munster . . . . .	Tipperary . . . . .	Herd . . . . . Horseman . . . . .	1 1	$\left. \begin{array}{l} 8 \\ 6 \\ 12 \\ 6 \end{array} \right\}$	Free house and grass and hay for cow to both ; also half-acre of manured potato ground to herd.
Ulster . . . . .	Tyrone . . . . .	Shepherd . . . . .	1	14 0	Free house and garden.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### FOOD OF THE IRISH PEASANT.

THE interesting information which follows has been obtained as the result of a considerable amount of careful inquiry, and may, therefore, be accepted as giving an accurate representation of the facts of the case. Its collection has been rendered difficult owing to the scarcity of labourers as a class in some parts of Ireland, notably on the western side, where the work, even on the large farms, is mainly undertaken by sons of smaller farmers who live and board at home with their parents. But a sufficient number of facts have been obtained from the right quarters for the purposes of the ensuing account. The following quoted paragraph is important :—

“ The conditions under which the Irish agricultural labourer lives vary somewhat in the different provinces, and it is evident from the returns that in Connaught and Munster a larger proportion of the food of the family is grown, or produced, by the labourers themselves than is the case in Ulster or Leinster. In tabulating the returns, therefore, it became necessary to separate the articles consumed into two classes : (a) those articles which are purchased, and (b) those articles the whole or the principal part of which are produced or obtained as allowances. The value of the latter has been calculated from the prices charged for them by the retail shops in the village or district to which the returns relate. The following table shows the average quantity and value of the various kinds of food consumed in a week by a farm labourer, his wife, and four children in Ireland :—

TABLE 16.—AVERAGE WEEKLY QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FOOD CONSUMED BY AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' FAMILIES IN IRELAND.

Name of Article.	Average Weekly Value.	Average Weekly Consumption.
(a) Articles purchased :—		
Bacon . . . . .	s. d. 1 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	lbs. oz. 2 13
Beef, mutton, and pork . . . . .	0 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 9
Bread . . . . .	0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	7 12
Cheese . . . . .	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 1
Flour, oatmeal, and Indian meal . . . . .	2 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	24 5
Sugar, syrup, and jam . . . . .	0 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 8
Tea . . . . .	1 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 9
Total weekly expenditure . . . . .	7 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	—
(b) Articles, the whole or the principal part of which are produced or obtained as allowances :—		
Butter . . . . .	0 11	1 lb. 2 oz.
Eggs . . . . .	0 4 $\frac{3}{4}$	8
Milk, new, old, or skimmed, and buttermilk . . . . .	0 11	9 qts. 1 pint
Potatoes . . . . .	1 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	46 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.
	3 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	—
Total value—(a) 7s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., (b) 3s. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. =	10 5 $\frac{3}{4}$	—

The following notes, published by the Board of Trade, add considerable interest to the facts of the table. The report says :—

“ From the table it will be seen that the average weekly value of the various articles of food enumerated amounts to about 10s. 6d., and of this amount 7s., or two-thirds, represent roughly the money expenditure. In the provinces of Munster and Connaught a certain amount of barter is said to take place in the villages, some of the potatoes and eggs produced by the labourers being often exchanged for tea and sugar at the village store. Of the total amount disbursed, 4s. is expended on meat, flour, and meal. The estimated money value of the articles, which are wholly or principally produced, amounts to nearly 3s. 6d., the value of the potatoes consumed being 1s. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., and of milk and butter, 11d. each. The value of the meat, bread, flour and meal, and potatoes consumed is 6s. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., or 58·6 per cent. of the total value. Tea and sugar account for 19·6 per cent., and milk, eggs, and butter for 21·3 per cent. The quantities of the articles consumed, generally speaking, do not show any marked variation as between the provinces, with the exception of

potatoes, the consumption of which in the western provinces is greater by more than a stone per week than in Ulster. Taking Ireland as a whole, the returns show that  $3\frac{1}{2}$  stones of potatoes a week are consumed, whereas in the eastern counties of England the amount is less than 2 stones. The consumption of potatoes varies greatly, according to the time of year, it being often as much as 5 or 6 stones per week during the autumn. They are seldom purchased, and in the spring, when the stocks are exhausted, more bread, oatmeal, or Indian meal are used until the new crop is available, and the consumption of these articles thus, roughly, varies inversely with that of potatoes. The amount of bread, flour, and meal consumed in Ireland is 32 lbs. per week, compared with  $38\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. in the eastern counties of England; but in Ireland nearly 5 lbs. of oatmeal are consumed, compared with 1 lb. of oatmeal and rice in the eastern counties of England. It will be observed that the amount of fresh meat eaten is small ( $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.). It mainly consists of pork, and in very many cases ordinary agricultural labourers in Ireland seldom eat beef or mutton during the year. The average quantity of bacon eaten is a little over  $2\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. The amount of meat eaten in the eastern counties of England is 1 lb. 12 oz. of beef or mutton, and about 4 lbs. of bacon and pork. In England the labourers who keep pigs frequently eat home-fed bacon and pork, but in Ireland the labourers usually sell their pigs, and buy cheap American bacon for their own consumption. As compared with the other districts of Ireland, it would appear that in Connaught and Munster less meat is eaten and more potatoes. In districts near the coast fish sometimes takes the place of meat, and in other parts it is occasionally eaten on fast days. The quantity of tea consumed is also rather larger, and a greater proportion of maize meal is consumed. The average amount of tea consumed in a week is said to be 9 oz., and of sugar, jam, and syrup,  $4\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. In the eastern counties of England the weekly consumption of tea is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  oz., and of sugar, jam, and syrup, 5 lbs. Eggs are seldom eaten unless produced at home. Milk is rarely purchased, and the sources of supply are, allowances from the farmers (often skimmed, or buttermilk), the produce of their own goats, and, particularly in the case of herds, of their own cows. Butter is used very sparingly when not obtained by the labourer from his own cow or from his employer. The average weekly earnings of all classes of adult male farm labourers, excluding casual labourers, in Ireland, is 10s. 11d. But the labourers often add to their earnings by the sale of home-grown produce derived from tillage or grazing land, or from cows, pigs, goats, geese, ducks, and poultry. The estimates of value of the articles given in the preceding table are based on ordinary retail prices in the various districts. No account has been taken of the smaller cost



to the labourers due to home-grown produce consumed by them. But there is no doubt that a very large proportion of the farm labourer's money earnings is spent on food, and that there is but little margin, if any, for other expenditure. This must necessarily be so in the poorer portions of the western side of Ireland. The Irish farm labourers, generally speaking, have, however, more opportunities of adding to their supply of food, and of earning extra money by growing produce and by keeping pigs, goats, fowls, ducks, geese, etc., than English labourers. A Local Government Board Inspector of great experience, writing from the west of Ireland, states that it is from the profit on the sale of pigs, fowls, and eggs that clothes are provided for the family and the rent paid. Other correspondents express the same opinion, and several consider that £10 to £12 a year can be made from the sale of eggs, and about £2 from the sale of fowls. Land is generally cheaper in Ireland, and there is more waste land for goats and poultry to wander over. The 'herds' or men in charge of animals frequently get potato land free, from their employers, sometimes manured and tilled, and, though some ordinary labourers get it free, many pay a comparatively low rent for it. The families in Ireland keep together and help each other as far as possible. The wives and children look after the animals and fowls, help to till the land, get turf, and, if near the sea, collect seaweed for manure and for kelp manufacture. Occasionally the wives earn a little in some districts by working for the farmers at odd times. But without the opportunity of getting some land, a farm labourer in Ireland must have great difficulty in making both ends meet. In towns, or on the outskirts of them, there are men with no gardens or land who work partly for farmers and partly for builders or contractors, and if they are in irregular work in the winter they get into great difficulties. The rent of cottages is cheaper than in England, the most usual rent in Ireland being 1s. a week, and some land is frequently attached to them. Cottage accommodation is, however, often very inferior. Where labourers have cottages built under the Labourers' Acts, the weekly rental averaging 10½d. a week, they no doubt get good value for their money, for the cottages are of a superior type, and have land, from ¼ of an acre to an acre in extent, attached to them. They are provided with pigsties and some with cow-sheds. Fuel ("turf" or peat) is frequently given free to farm labourers in Ireland, or is obtainable at a cheap rate, the men having to cut and saw it."

The following notes are of especial interest :—

"The estimates given as to expenditure on clothes for a man, his wife, and four children vary considerably, ranging from £5 to £10 a year. Boots are frequently dispensed with,

or worn only on special occasions, particularly in the case of the women and children. A good deal of information has been received with reference to the amount spent by farm labourers on tobacco, porter, and whisky. As regards the consumption of tobacco, the returns show that the men generally smoke from one to three ounces a week, the majority of correspondents giving the quantity at between two and three ounces. A Local Government Board Inspector in Ulster writes that 'probably three-fourths at all events of the ordinary labourers smoke. Half a pound a month would not be at all an excessive allowance.' Another Local Government Board Inspector in the west of Ireland expresses the opinion that nearly all labourers smoke one ounce of tobacco weekly, at 3d. an ounce. With reference to the expenditure on alcohol, the evidence of the correspondents is to the effect that the farm labourers generally drink very little. When alcoholic liquor is taken, it is generally porter, and in most districts this is usually only taken on special occasions, such as a fair day, at a market, or on a journey, or when any money is obtained casually. Writing from the west of Ireland, a Local Government Board Inspector says: "Generally speaking, the labourers are sober and steady, so long as they keep out of the towns and small villages. A labourer might consume 3s. worth of porter at one fair, but it is to be remembered that he will probably not attend another for three months. As a rule not more than £1 a year is spent on liquor, if so much.' The estimates of the correspondents as to the amount spent on alcohol naturally vary. One employer in Donegal says that his men spend nothing on drink, while another correspondent in the same county puts the expenditure at from 3d. to 6d. a week. An employer in Cavan thinks that his farm labourers only spend 2s. 6d. on porter in the year. A few correspondents put the expenditure as high as 1s. a week in their districts; but, taking the evidence as a whole, the majority of returns give from 3d. to 6d. a week as the amount spent. A good many correspondents state that the expenditure on tobacco and alcohol together amounts to a shilling a week. Farm labourers in Ireland do not, generally speaking, belong to benefit societies; and Irish villages lack the parish societies, clubs, and charities which so frequently exist in the agricultural districts in England.

The succeeding account of the food of Irish peasants is not put forward as exhaustive, but as illustrative examples of the ordinary dietary in the various localities named:—

#### PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT.

##### GALWAY AND MAYO.

WEEKDAYS — *Breakfast*. — Tea, hot soda bread. In the poorer districts, Indian meal porridge and milk, tea and soda

bread. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, milk, sometimes eggs if plentiful, and dried salt fish, when procurable. *Tea*.—Soda bread (generally hot) and tea, potatoes. *Supper*.—None (Sundays). *Breakfast*.—Tea, home-made bread, and eggs. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, American bacon, and cabbage. In sea-coast districts, principally salt fish with a small quantity of bacon. *Tea*.—Tea, soda bread, with perhaps a little butter. *Supper*.—None. Another return says: WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Tea, home-made bread and occasionally an egg. For the poorer classes, potatoes and milk when procurable. *Dinner*.—Potatoes and cabbage with bacon or fish, and a little butter milk or tea. *Tea*.—None. *Supper*.—Potatoes or porridge and milk. A cup of tea, bread and butter. SUNDAYS.—Same as on week days. *Notes*.—A correspondent in Galway states that it is from the profit on the sale of pigs, fowls, and eggs that clothes are provided for the family, and the rent paid. A correspondent in Mayo says: Flour, tea, sugar, bacon, and herrings are practically all they buy,—they sell eggs, chickens, and a pig or two in the year. Firing for the house costs nothing; the children saw the turfs.

## LEITRIM.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Indian meal “stirabout,” eggs, tea, home-made bread (soda bread), and sometimes butter. *Dinner*.—American bacon, vegetables, and potatoes; or eggs and potatoes; or potatoes and milk. *Tea*.—Tea, home-made bread and butter. *Supper*.—Indian meal “stirabout,” sometimes oatmeal, or potatoes and milk. SUNDAYS.—No difference. *Note*.—During winter butter is frequently not used. Eggs are never bought, and very few are used in winter. From the end of July to December, potatoes take the place of “stirabout” for supper, and jam is now beginning to be used as a substitute for butter. Another return says: WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Tea, bread, butter, when under 9d. per lb., potatoes, milk, and an egg or two. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, milk, and when cheap an egg or two, herrings, cod, or ling fish. *Tea*.—Bread and tea. *Supper*.—Indian meal “stirabout,” or oatmeal porridge and milk. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays. *Note*.—Bakers’ bread, tea and sugar are now universally used for one or two meals a day (generally for breakfast and supper), whereas formerly breakfast consisted of oatmeal or Indian meal porridge and supper of home-made bread, porridge and milk.

## ROSCOMMON.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Home-made bread, butter, tea, and in some cases oatmeal porridge. *Dinner*.—Three days a week bacon (American) and vegetables (cabbage or turnips) and plenty of potatoes. The remaining three days, eggs, butter milk, and potatoes, and on Fridays generally salt herrings. *Tea*.—Bread, jam or butter, and tea. *Supper*.—Porridge and milk (generally composed of equal quantities of Indian meal and oatmeal). SUNDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Home-made bread, butter,

tea, and in summer, when they are cheap, a couple of eggs. *Dinner*.—Bacon and vegetables (rarely fresh meat), plenty of potatoes and milk. *Tea*.—Bread, butter, and tea. *Supper*.—Oatmeal porridge and fresh milk. *Note*.—Each labourer's wife, even those who have only a small garden, keeps a good deal of poultry (hens and ducks). These they feed very well in winter, and they add greatly to their income by the sale of eggs. The egg industry in this and all the western towns is a great source of capital, and thousands of pounds are paid annually. Each market day in the western towns you meet droves of women and girls with baskets of eggs, bringing them to the street corners, where they dispose of them to the men who buy, and send them to the English and Scotch markets.

### PROVINCE OF LEINSTER.

#### CARLOW.

*WEEKDAYS*—*Breakfast*.—Bread, butter and eggs. *Dinner*.—American bacon, potatoes, and cabbage (occasionally). Often potatoes and milk alone. *Tea*.—Bread, and occasionally butter, tea. *Supper*.—None. *SUNDAYS*.—Same as on weekdays. *Note*.—Some labourers keep a goat, as milk is otherwise impossible to get.

#### KING'S COUNTY.

*Breakfast* (between 4 and 5 a.m. in summer).—Girdle bread (home-made), butter, tea. *Dinner*.—Bread and butter and tea, potatoes and milk, and about once or twice a week a bit of bacon. *Supper*.—Tea, an egg, bread and butter. This is the principal meal. A labourer correspondent says that in his village there is no one so well off as "the farmer's boy." His dietary is: *Breakfast*.—"Stirabout" and milk, with bread and tea to follow. *Dinner*.—Meat (bacon) and potatoes or eggs, and butter and potatoes. *Tea*.—4 p.m., bread and tea. *Supper* (9 p.m.).—Same as breakfast. Happy "farmer's boy"!

#### LONGFORD.

*WEEKDAYS*—*Breakfast*.—Tea, bacon and eggs, bread and butter. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, bacon and cabbage. *Tea*.—Tea, bread and butter. *Supper*.—"Stirabout" (porridge) and new milk. *SUNDAYS*—*Breakfast*.—Same as on week days. *Dinner*.—Butchers' meat, or salt or fresh pork, potatoes, cabbage. *Tea*.—Same as on weekdays, with generally the addition of potato cake. *Supper*.—Generally the remains of potato cake from tea, and tea, cocoa, or new milk. *Note*.—Potatoes and other vegetables are always grown; many have patches of oats as well, and some have cows or goats.

## MEATH.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Bread and butter, sometimes an egg. *Dinner*.—Boiled bacon and potatoes; cabbage or eggs and potatoes. *Tea*.—Tea and bread and butter. *Supper*.—Indian and oat meal porridge. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays, with fresh meat occasionally for dinner.

## QUEEN'S COUNTY.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Tea, "griddle cakes" or bread and butter; sometimes eggs where fowls are kept. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, cabbage, and American bacon. *Tea and Supper*.—Bread and butter, tea, and in some cases porridge. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays, substituting occasionally sheep's head or pig's head for bacon at dinner. Another return says: WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Bread, butter, and tea. *Dinner*.—Three days—potatoes, bacon and cabbage; three days—potatoes and milk, or potatoes, with herrings or eggs. *Tea*.—Bread, butter, tea or cocoa. *Supper*.—Potatoes or porridge and milk. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays, except that no supper is taken.

## WEST MEATH.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Oatmeal "stirabout" with butter-milk, or sometimes skimmed milk, and afterwards tea and a slice of bread (either bakers' or home-made) with a little butter or fat bacon. Where dripping can be obtained it is often used in lieu of butter or bacon. *Dinner*.—Many labourers take their dinners with them in the fields. In such cases, a bottle of milk or cold tea, flour cake (home-made) with slice of cold fried bacon, or on Fridays butter instead of bacon. Those who can go home have boiled bacon, cabbage, and potatoes. Tea is used for dinner by all adults. Salted herrings with potatoes are occasionally used for dinner on Fridays instead of butter. *Tea*.—Tea is given by employers during harvest or very busy times, otherwise there is no meal between dinner and supper. *Supper*.—Tea and bread with boiled potatoes; or, in winter, hot potato cake. Labourers who have not been able to return to their dinner generally have fried bacon with their supper. Cocoa in place of tea for supper is also coming gradually into use. SUNDAYS.—Among the better-paid labourers, ploughmen, carters, etc., "stirabout" for breakfast is ceasing to be taken, and much larger quantities of tea, bread, butter, and bacon are used. Tea is taken at every meal, but in some cases cocoa is gradually coming into favour. All farm labourers keep pigs, fowls, and goats. Pigs are only kept for sale, and are never killed by the feeders, the profit derived therefrom being generally sufficient to pay for the rent. With the profit from the sale of eggs and a few chickens, tea, sugar, and clothes are provided. Milk is obtained from the goats, and new milk is rarely purchased. Buttermilk is generally given gratis by the employers, and sometimes skimmed milk also.

## WICKLOW.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Butter, bread, and tea. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, other vegetables, bacon, and milk. *Tea*.—None. *Supper*.—Bread, butter, and tea. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays.

## PROVINCE OF MUNSTER.

## CLARE.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Bread, butter, tea, and, in spring and summer, eggs. *Dinner*.—Tea, bread and butter. *Tea*.—Tea, bread and butter. *Supper*.—Potatoes and milk. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Tea, bread and butter. *Dinner*.—Bacon, cabbage, and potatoes. *Tea*.—None. *Supper*.—Tea, bread and butter.

## CORK.

WEEKDAYS — *Breakfast*. — Home-made bread and tea. *Dinner*.—Pork, potatoes, and other vegetables, or, on fast days, eggs or dried fish instead of pork. *Tea*.—Home-made bread and tea. *Supper*.—Home-made bread and tea. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays, with the addition of butter for breakfast, tea, and supper. A variant from the dietary just given is as follows. It is taken from another return: WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Tea, bread, and occasionally butter or eggs. *Dinner*.—Meat seldom. Pork, salt or fresh, and potatoes. Sometimes potatoes and milk only, and, on Fridays and fast days, fish, generally salt. *Tea*.—Same as for breakfast, with occasionally jam. *Supper*.—None. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays, with generally a piece of meat for dinner.

## KERRY.

WEEKDAYS — *Breakfast*. — Tea, bread, sometimes eggs, and other times butter. *Dinner*.—Potatoes, American bacon, and, if potatoes are scarce, cabbage, home-made bread, and on fast days, fresh or salt fish. *Tea*.—About 4 p.m. A quart of tea with a piece of bread is brought to the field, and consumed while the labourer is at work. Some few years ago this meal did not exist. *Supper*.—Potatoes, with a little fish or milk. At other times bread and tea. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Tea, bread and butter. *Dinner*.—Potatoes and meat. *Tea*.—Tea and bread (dry). *Supper*.—Bread and milk. From another return the following is extracted: WEEKDAYS — *Breakfast*. — Bread and tea. *Dinner*.—Potatoes and milk or bread and milk. *Tea*.—Rarely taken. *Supper*.—Bread and milk or Indian meal and milk. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Bread and tea. *Dinner*.—Potatoes and pork, or potatoes and cured fish. *Supper*.—Bread and tea.

## LIMERICK.

WEEKDAYS — *Breakfast*. — Bread, tea, and sometimes eggs and butter. *Dinner*.—The same as for breakfast. *Tea*.—

Bread and tea. *Supper.*—Bread and tea. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Bread, tea, and butter or jam. *Dinner.*—Meat, potatoes and vegetables. *Tea.*—Tea and bread. *Supper.*—Tea and bread. *Note.*—The food given to labourers who are boarded in farmers' houses is much better than that just described. From another account the following dietary is furnished: WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Tea and bread; in some cases butter and milk, and perhaps an egg. *Dinner.*—Potatoes and milk or tea. American bacon is taken about two or three times a week with cabbage. This diet is only for the labourer who is able to return home for dinner. His dinner, if he has to carry it with him, consists of cold tea and bread as a rule. *Tea.*—Very seldom taken except when given by the employer, when it consists of bread and tea. *Supper.*—When potatoes are used for dinner, bread and butter and tea are principally used. If dinner is taken out, potatoes are used at this meal. Jam is occasionally used, and sometimes some of the family take cocoa instead of tea, and they may at times have eggs. SUNDAYS.—Same as on weekdays, with American bacon and cabbage for dinner.

## PROVINCE OF ULSTER.

## ANTRIM.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Tea, bread and butter or bacon. *Dinner.*—Potatoes, American bacon, and eggs. *Tea.*—Tea, bread and butter. *Supper.*—Porridge. SUNDAYS.—Much the same as on weekdays. *Note.*—Labourers in this county are said, as a rule, to keep large stocks of hens, ducks, and turkeys.

## CAVAN.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Bread and tea, occasionally butter or jam. *Dinner.*—Potatoes, and generally dripping or bacon. *Tea.*—Bread and tea, occasionally butter or jam. *Supper.*—“Stirabout.” SUNDAYS.—Much the same as on week days.

## DOWN.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Oatmeal porridge and milk, with cup of tea and bread and butter to follow. *Dinner.*—Potatoes and bacon, also eggs when under 8d. per dozen. *Tea.*—Very few get tea in the afternoon. *Supper.*—Bread and butter and tea. SUNDAYS.—Much the same as on weekdays. *Note.*—American bacon is used principally, farmers selling their own. Butter is a home production, and of middling quality. The cheese used is always American.

## LONDONDERRY.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast.*—Tea, bread and butter, or bread heated—with dripping or lard, occasionally bacon or eggs, in lieu of butter. *Dinner.*—Potatoes, bacon, buttermilk or potatoes and butter, or potatoes and herrings or dried fish. *Tea.*—Bread and butter, tea. *Supper.*—Oatmeal porridge and

buttermilk, or tea and bread and butter. SUNDAYS—*Breakfast*.—Bread, butter, and tea, or occasionally bacon, eggs, or beef in place of butter. *Dinner*.—Bread, tea, bacon and eggs, or occasionally beef, soup, and potatoes. *Tea and Supper*.—Same as on weekdays.

#### MONAGHAN.

WEEKDAYS—*Breakfast*.—"Stirabout" (Indian meal or oatmeal), an egg, tea, bread and butter, or preserves. *Dinner*.—Fresh meat or bacon, potatoes and other vegetables, or eggs and potatoes, or porridge "stirabout," tea and bread and butter. *Tea*.—Bread and butter, tea. *Supper*.—Dry bread and tea or milk, or "stirabout" and milk. *Note*.—One correspondent writing from a part of Monaghan makes the significant statement that the food of the labourers in his district is "very superior to that of the small farmers." The food of the latter he describes as "wretched," and as consisting of little else but Indian meal "stirabout," tea, dry bread and potatoes. No doubt the same condition of things exists in many parts of the country, where labourers in good employment are better fed than some of the struggling middle class, who are obliged to keep up appearances.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### MIGRATION OF IRISH LABOUR.

WE have already alluded to the subject of the periodic migration of Irish labour to certain parts of England and Scotland ; but as the matter is one of appreciable interest in connection with the general question of the Irish peasantry, it will be desirable to extract and reproduce here some of the detailed information given in the Board of Trade Report, which says :—

“ A large number of men and also a good many women go every year from Ireland to work on farms in certain counties in England and Scotland. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland estimate that about 70½ per cent. of the migratory labourers are small landowners, the majority of these landowners coming from the province of Connaught. Some of the men start as early as February, and take part in the ordinary work on farms, not returning till late in the autumn ; but the majority do not start until June. They find employment during the summer and autumn at hoeing, haymaking, harvesting and taking up potatoes and roots, and on dairy farms in parts of Cheshire they are engaged at milking. In that county Irishmen begin to come in February, and some stay until November or even December. When engaged in England upon ordinary farm work, such as thinning turnips and potato lifting, they are frequently employed at piecework ; and in parts of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, and Warwickshire they undertake harvest by piecework. But in the northern counties they are generally engaged by the week or month, and in some districts they are hired at ‘ hiring fairs held specially for the hay and corn harvest.’ In addition to cash wages, they are frequently found sleeping accommodation in barns. They generally find their own food, which chiefly consists of bread, potatoes, porridge, tea and milk, and sometimes bacon, but not infrequently their employers

find them fuel, milk and porridge, sometimes potatoes, tea and coffee, and occasionally a little beer. In some cases, chiefly in the north, they are found all their food, particularly during harvest, and occasionally employers give them fresh meat. It is customary in some districts for men to work on the same farms year after year. Some farmers in England write to the men and tell them that they want them, or sometimes they communicate with one of their old hands, and ask him to secure a certain number, sending him money for their fares. By far the greater number of migratory labourers go from the province of Connaught, and the majority of these go from the county of Mayo. Nearly all the other migratory labourers go from the province of Ulster, and most of them go from Donegal (chiefly from the western side of the county). According to the report published by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, based upon information obtained at the homes of the migratory labourers by the enumerators of agricultural statistics, 13,703 went in one year from the province of Connaught, and of these 70 per cent. were natives of the county of Mayo; 2950 went from Ulster, and of these 80 per cent. were natives of Donegal; 514 went from the province of Munster, and 692 from the province of Leinster. This makes a total for Ireland of only 17,859; of this number it is stated that 71·7 per cent. sought work in England, 20·5 per cent. in Scotland, and 7·8 per cent. in Ireland. But the report gives figures showing that 21,198 migratory labourers were booked on the Midland, Great Western, and Great Southern and Western systems to Dublin. It also shows, on the authority of returns collected from the various provincial ports by the emigration enumerators, that 12,272 left certain specified ports between 1st January and 31st August in the same year. This number, added to the returns furnished by the railway companies, makes a total of 33,470 for the whole of Ireland. The report states that this number is very much greater than the number of migratory labourers shown in the tables compiled from the returns made by the enumerators of agricultural statistics. In considering this difference, it must be borne in mind that a large number of the agricultural labourers who migrate annually to Great Britain pay two visits, and this is an element which it is impossible accurately to eliminate from the emigration and railway returns. The men from the west of Ireland generally go to the northern and midland counties of England, but some young women go from Mayo, mainly from the Isle of Achill by sea to Scotland. Very few of the men who go to England go farther south than north Cambridgeshire. Those from Mayo and also from Galway, Roscommon, Sligo, Leitrim, and Cavan chiefly go to Lancashire, Durham, Yorkshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Lincoln-

shire, and north Cambridgeshire; some also go to a few districts in the counties of Cumberland, Shropshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Middlesex, and Hertfordshire. A very few are said to be sometimes found in parts of Worcestershire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, and Sussex. In former years it is said they came in considerably larger numbers to some of the counties referred to; and reports from Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kent, and Herefordshire state that they used to come there, but have now ceased to do so, chiefly owing to the introduction of machinery at harvest, and also owing to the smaller acreage of grain crops grown. It is not uncommon to find men going to several counties in succession during the season. For instance, a number go to Derbyshire for temporary employment before the corn is ripe in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. A good many men manage to get two harvests by going farther north when they have completed one in a more southern county. The migratory labourers from Donegal chiefly go to Northumberland or Scotland. A few start for Scotland early in the year; some, both men and women, arrive in time for the potato planting in Ayrshire, the Lothians, and a few other districts where potatoes are largely grown; but the majority do not migrate until the summer, some starting in June for turnip-thinning, hay-making, and lifting early potatoes. While many start in August for harvest, some remain for potato-lifting, chiefly in the great potato-growing districts of the Lothians, and the counties of Forfar and Perth, and a few men stay still longer for storing turnips. Irish labourers in Scotland are usually engaged by the day, though sometimes they do piecework. At harvest their engagement is usually a weekly one, though sometimes it is for an agreed period for the whole harvest, *i.e.* four or five weeks. The counties in Scotland in which both Irish men and women are employed are Ayr, Wigtown, Lanark, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Forfar, Perth, and the eastern border counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Peebles, and Selkirk. They are most largely employed in the counties of Edinburgh, Haddington, and Linlithgow, where a large extent of land is devoted to corn growing. Next to the Lothians they are most largely employed at harvest near Glasgow, and in the eastern border counties. In the county of Ayr, where large quantities of early potatoes are grown, a considerable number of Irish men and women are employed in the months of June, July, and August, lifting them. They are employed in large companies by the dealers, who purchase the growing potatoes in the ground. The dealers often communicate with a man in Ireland (whom the labourers call a 'gaffer'), who collects and takes a gang of young women over for this work. The 'gaffer' accompanies them from farm to farm, and makes all arrangements as to travelling, etc.

In many districts the same men often seek work on the same farms for a number of years in succession. Employers frequently find accommodation for the men, and also for the women, in barns or temporary bothies, though, if the farms are near towns, the Irish labourers often find their own lodgings. In the bothies they usually have the use of wooden bedsteads, blankets, and coals. The employers sometimes supply milk and potatoes, and the men or women buy tea, bread, and oatmeal extra, but frequently the farmers provide all food, which may consist of tea, bread, butter, eggs, fish, and sometimes meat. In recent years the introduction of the self-binding machines has considerably decreased the employment of Irish hands at harvest, both in Scotland and England."

## UNITED KINGDOM

### CHAPTER XXIV.

#### GENERAL AVERAGE OF EARNINGS.

IN spite of the fact that it savours somewhat of disparagement, the expression the "ordinary labourer" applies to a factor of very considerable importance in the agricultural systems of this country. Without his indispensable aid farming as a business would come to an immediate standstill. Shepherds and other "men in charge of animals" are most essential for the economical management of large farms; but as soon as the time arrives, and it may not be very far distant, when all farming operations can be conducted by the aid of machinery alone without the aid of animals, the "ordinary labourer," by which is practically meant the all-round farming man knowing something of everything, and thus practically showing that "a little knowledge" is *not* "a dangerous thing," is very likely to come to the front.

It may be contended that even in the day of universal "small holdings," when a man, now aided by animals, can do all his own tillage, horses at least will be needed to draw the produce to market; but to argue thus is to forget the possibility of motor waggons or motor vehicles of much smaller size doing all that is essential in the way of haulage. It may then be that the

specialists now called horsemen—and they are numerically a large class—may find their occupation gone unless they can turn their hands to “ordinary labour.” They may; it is true; become “machinists” in large farming regions in arable districts. There is not much apparent danger of the shepherd and the cattlemen losing their occupations in pastoral districts; but, nevertheless, there is every possibility that the position of the ordinary man will increase in importance, and it will therefore be interesting to give in this chapter a glance at the position from the “earnings” point of view of his class, and in the ensuing table will be found a statement of the average total remuneration of that class in every one of the 118 counties of the United Kingdom—re-arranged from the Board of Trade returns, and for convenience placed in alphabetical order. To make it quite clear what is presented by the table, we affix the explanatory note given in the Board of Trade Report, which says:—

“The classes of agricultural labourers included in the table are, in England and Ireland, ‘ordinary labourers,’—that is, men not specially engaged in the care of animals, as are shepherds, horsemen, and cattlemen; in Wales ‘married labourers,’—that is, the men who live in cottages, and not the men hired yearly or half-yearly, who live in the farmhouses; in Scotland ‘horsemen’ or ‘ploughmen,’ who are the most important class of farm servants there. The ‘orramen’ in Scotland are a comparatively small class, and their earnings do not differ much from those of the horsemen. The classes selected in England, Scotland, and Ireland are the largest class in each of those countries. In Wales, however, the ‘married men’ are not in the majority, but they have been selected for the purpose of this table because it is considered that their earnings, which are generally higher than those of the hired men, are more comparable with the earnings of the classes selected for England, Scotland, and Ireland (many of whom are married men) than with the earnings of the hired men, who are unmarried and frequently comparatively young. In any event, it has not been found possible to ascertain with sufficient accuracy the predominant rates of wages of the hired men in all districts, on account of the wide range of wages given in some of the returns.”

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TABLE 17.—AVERAGE TOTAL WEEKLY EARNINGS (IN CASH AND IN KIND) OF ORDINARY AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Country.	County.	Average Weekly Earnings.
		s. d.
Scotland . . . .	Aberdeen . . . . .	19 5
Wales . . . . .	Anglesea . . . . .	16 7
Ireland . . . . .	Antrim . . . . .	12 11
Scotland . . . . .	Argyll and Bute . . . . .	18 8
Ireland . . . . .	Armagh . . . . .	11 6
Scotland . . . . .	Ayr . . . . .	20 10
" . . . . .	Banff . . . . .	18 2
England . . . . .	Bedford . . . . .	16 6
" . . . . .	Berks . . . . .	15 11
Scotland . . . . .	Berwick . . . . .	19 9
Wales . . . . .	Brecknock . . . . .	18 6
England . . . . .	Buckingham . . . . .	16 4
Scotland . . . . .	Bute ( <i>see</i> Argyle).	
" . . . . .	Caithness, Shetland, and Orkney . . . . .	13 7
England . . . . .	Cambridge . . . . .	16 1
Wales . . . . .	Cardigan . . . . .	15 8
Ireland . . . . .	Carlow . . . . .	11 3
Wales . . . . .	Carmarthen . . . . .	17 9
" . . . . .	Carnarvon . . . . .	18 8
Ireland . . . . .	Cavan . . . . .	10 4
England . . . . .	Chester . . . . .	18 9
Scotland . . . . .	Clackmannan ( <i>see</i> Fife).	
Ireland . . . . .	Clare . . . . .	9 7
" . . . . .	Cork . . . . .	10 10
England . . . . .	Cornwall . . . . .	17 4
Scotland . . . . .	Cromarty ( <i>see</i> Ross).	
England . . . . .	Cumberland and Westmorland.	20 0
Wales . . . . .	Denbigh . . . . .	17 8
England . . . . .	Derby . . . . .	20 7
" . . . . .	Devon . . . . .	17 1
Ireland . . . . .	Donegal . . . . .	10 1
England . . . . .	Dorset . . . . .	15 6
Ireland . . . . .	Down . . . . .	13 0
" . . . . .	Dublin . . . . .	12 9
Scotland . . . . .	Dumbarton ( <i>see</i> Stirling).	
" . . . . .	Dumfries . . . . .	18 10
England . . . . .	Durham . . . . .	22 2
Scotland . . . . .	Edinburgh ( <i>see</i> Linlithgow).	
" . . . . .	Elgin . . . . .	17 10
England . . . . .	Essex . . . . .	16 11
Ireland . . . . .	Fermanagh . . . . .	9 11
Scotland . . . . .	Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan . . . . .	20 5
Wales . . . . .	Flint . . . . .	18 5
Scotland . . . . .	Forfar . . . . .	20 8
Ireland . . . . .	Galway . . . . .	9 9
Wales . . . . .	Glamorgan . . . . .	21 3
England . . . . .	Gloucester . . . . .	15 5
Scotland . . . . .	Haddington . . . . .	19 6
England . . . . .	Hants . . . . .	17 9

TABLE 17.—ORDINARY AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (*continued*).  
*Average Total of Weekly Earnings.*

Country.	County.	Average Weekly Earnings.
		s. d.
England . . . .	Hereford . . . . .	16 3
" . . . . .	Hertford . . . . .	17 2
" . . . . .	Huntingdon . . . . .	16 2
Scotland . . . .	Inverness . . . . .	17 8
England . . . . .	Kent . . . . .	19 7
Ireland . . . . .	Kerry . . . . .	10 3
" . . . . .	Kildare . . . . .	10 7
" . . . . .	Kilkenny . . . . .	10 6
Scotland . . . .	Kincardine . . . . .	19 6
Ireland . . . . .	King's County . . . . .	10 5
Scotland . . . .	Kinross ( <i>see Fife</i> ). . . . .	
" . . . . .	Kirkcudbright . . . . .	18 6
" . . . . .	Lanark ( <i>see Renfrew</i> ). . . . .	
England . . . . .	Lancaster . . . . .	20 7
" . . . . .	Leicester and Rutland . . . . .	17 4
Ireland . . . . .	Leitrim . . . . .	9 3
" . . . . .	Limerick . . . . .	10 4
England . . . . .	Lincoln . . . . .	18 8
Scotland . . . .	Linlithgow and Edinburgh . . . . .	20 10
Ireland . . . . .	Londonderry . . . . .	11 3
" . . . . .	Longford . . . . .	10 9
" . . . . .	Louth . . . . .	10 8
" . . . . .	Mayo . . . . .	8 9
" . . . . .	Meath . . . . .	10 7
Wales . . . . .	Merioneth . . . . .	17 8
England . . . . .	Middlesex . . . . .	20 4
Ireland . . . . .	Monaghan . . . . .	10 9
England . . . . .	Monmouth . . . . .	18 10
Wales . . . . .	Montgomery . . . . .	16 0
Scotland . . . .	Nairn . . . . .	17 1
England . . . . .	Norfolk . . . . .	15 3
" . . . . .	Northampton . . . . .	16 2
" . . . . .	Northumberland . . . . .	21 7
" . . . . .	Nottingham . . . . .	19 9
Scotland . . . .	Orkney ( <i>see Caithness</i> ). . . . .	
England . . . . .	Oxford . . . . .	14 6
Scotland . . . .	Peebles . . . . .	20 7
Wales . . . . .	Pembroke . . . . .	16 7
Scotland . . . .	Perth . . . . .	19 11
Ireland . . . . .	Queen's County . . . . .	10 8
Wales . . . . .	Radnor . . . . .	16 10
Scotland . . . .	Renfrew and Lanark . . . . .	22 2
Ireland . . . . .	Roscommon . . . . .	9 1
Scotland . . . .	Ross and Cromarty . . . . .	16 10
" . . . . .	Roxburgh . . . . .	19 5
England . . . . .	Rutland ( <i>see Leicester</i> ). . . . .	
Scotland . . . .	Selkirk . . . . .	19 6
" . . . . .	Shetland ( <i>see Caithness</i> ). . . . .	
England . . . . .	Shropshire . . . . .	18 0
Ireland . . . . .	Sligo . . . . .	8 11
England . . . . .	Somerset . . . . .	16 11
" . . . . .	Stafford . . . . .	18 4



TABLE 17.—ORDINARY AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (*continued*).  
Average Total of Weekly Earnings.

Country.	County.	Average Weekly Earnings.
		s. d.
Scotland . . .	Stirling and Dumbarton . . .	22 0
England . . .	Suffolk . . .	15 6
" . . .	Surrey . . .	20 0
" . . .	Sussex . . .	17 7
Scotland . . .	Sutherland . . .	15 10
Ireland . . .	Tipperary . . .	10 5
" . . .	Tyrone . . .	10 10
England . . .	Warwick . . .	16 4
Ireland . . .	Waterford . . .	11 1
" . . .	Westmeath . . .	10 3
England . . .	Westmorland ( <i>see</i> Cumberland).	
Ireland . . .	Wexford . . .	10 4
" . . .	Wicklow . . .	11 4
Scotland . . .	Wigtown . . .	17 8
England . . .	Wilts . . .	15 8
" . . .	Worcester . . .	16 5
" . . .	York, E. Riding . . .	19 2
" . . .	" N. Riding . . .	18 10
" . . .	" W. Riding . . .	19 10

The accidental juxtaposition of figures in the alphabetical arrangement of counties adopted by us for greater convenience of reference presents — curiously — some strange contrasts in the average weekly amounts of the total earnings of ordinary agricultural labourers in the United Kingdom. For instance, the 11s. 6d. of Armagh against the 20s. 10d. of Ayr; the 10s. 4d. of Cavan against the 18s. 8d. of Carnarvon; the 9s. 7d. of Clare against the 18s. 9d. of Chester; the 10s. 10d. of Cork against the 17s. 4d. of Cornwall, and the 20s. of Cumberland and Westmorland; the 10s. 1d. of Donegal against the 17s. 1d. of Devon (once amongst the lowest paid of agricultural counties, where wages were lower less than forty years ago than they are in Donegal to-day); the 12s. 9d. of even Dublin (the Irish metropolitan county) against the 18s. 10d. of Dumfries and the 22s. 2d. of Durham; the 9s. 11d. of Fermanagh against the 20s. 5d. of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan; the 9s. 9d. of Galway against the 21s. 3d. of Glamorgan (appreciably

less than half) ; the 10s. 3d. of Kerry against the 19s. 7d. of Kent ; the 10s. 6d. of Kilkenny against the 19s. 6d. of Kincardine ; the 10s. 5d. of King's County against the 18s. 6d. of Kirkcudbright, and the 20s. 7d. of Lancaster ; the 9s. 3d. of Leitrim against the 17s. 4d. of Leicester and Rutland ; the 11s. 3d. of Londonderry against the 20s. 10d. of Linlithgow and Edinburgh ; the 8s. 9d. of Mayo against the 17s. 8d. of Merioneth ; the 10s. 7d. of Meath against the 20s. 4d. of Middlesex ; the 10s. 9d. of Monaghan against the 18s. 10d. of Monmouth ; the 9s. 1d. of Roscommon against the 22s. 2d. of Renfrew and Lanark ; the 10s. 8d. of Queen's County against the 19s. 11d. of Perth ; the 8s. 11d. of Sligo against the 18s. of Shropshire ; the 10s. 5d. of Tipperary against the 15s. 10d. of Sutherland ; the 10s. 10d. of Tyrone against the 16s. 4d. of Warwick, and the 11s. 4d. of Wicklow against the 17s. 8d. of Wigtown. These are very marked differences, but the most striking contrast is shown by the very lowest placed against the very highest figure ; the 8s. 9d. per week of the Mayo peasant and the 22s. 2d. of the Durham and of the Renfrew and Lanark men.

In concluding this chapter, it will be very interesting to give a general average for the whole of the United Kingdom of the total weekly earnings for each country constituting that kingdom. First, of ordinary agricultural labourers, and secondly, of all classes of agricultural labourers.

TABLE 18.—AVERAGES OF WAGES FOR EACH COUNTRY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Country.	Ordinary Agricultural Labourers.		All Classes of Agricultural Labourers.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
England . . . . .	17	5	18	3
Wales . . . . .	17	7	17	3
Scotland . . . . .	19	5	19	3
Ireland . . . . .	10	9	10	11

Here Scotland leads ; England comes next ; Wales follows third ; and Ireland is the very lowest tip of the tail end.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### POPULATION AND DEPOPULATION.

VERY interesting and very serious questions arise for discussion in this chapter. First, as to the existing population in the United Kingdom engaged in purely agricultural pursuits or in occupations directly connected with agriculture, it is obvious that no return later than that derivable from the census of 1901 is yet obtainable. The colossal work of obtaining the necessary information could only be accomplished by the machinery of a Government department. Nevertheless, the information obtained in 1901 on this subject, whilst of very great interest, though not exactly conveying what is the present number of the purely agricultural population, will give at least an approximate idea of that number. But from indications from many districts it may be assumed that the process of depopulation which has been going on for so long a time is continuing.

In the census table which follows we have embodied in one account, for clearness and convenience of reference, the information given in three tables by the Board of Trade.

It must be particularly noted that the figures given in the following table are exclusive of woodmen, non-domestic gardeners, nurserymen, seedsmen and florists, who, nevertheless, are returned in the census accounts as persons occupied in agricultural pursuits; but they do not come within the category of the agriculturists with which this volume is dealing. But even thus re-

stricted, the figures for 1901 show a marked and extraordinary decline in the agricultural population. In England and Wales alone the reduction in fifty years amounts to over 500,000. The figures are—obtainable from the respective census returns—including ordinary labourers, shepherds, horsemen, and cattlemen, as under. There were in 1851 in England and Wales 1,110,311. This number by 1861 had dropped (by 12,050) to 1,098,261. In the next decade, however, there was the

TABLE 19.—CLASSIFIED AGRICULTURAL POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Classes.	Males.			Females.			Totals of both Sexes.
	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.	
Farmers, graziers . . . . .	202,751	45,573	328,853	21,548	7,822	70,534	677,081
Farmers, graziers, assisting relatives . . . . .	89,165	17,550	214,261	18,618	12,402	*	351,996
Farm bailiffs, foremen, grieves . . . . .	22,623	4,650	1,892	39	5	—	29,209
Shepherds . . . . .	25,354	9,647	5,469	12	9	160	40,651
Labourers of all other classes . . . . .	583,751	73,794	212,187	11,951	19,796	14,059	915,538
Agricultural machine proprietors' attendants . . . . .	6,480	417	38	65	1	—	7,001
Others engaged in or connected with agriculture . . . . .	5,757	1,763	1,768	226	34	572	10,120
TOTALS . . . . .	935,881	153,394	764,468	52,459	40,069	85,325	2,031,596

\* Females not tabulated in returns and presumably included amongst males.

extraordinary drop of 174,929; the 1871 census showing the rural population of England and Wales as only 923,332. Between 1871 and 1881 there was a further serious fall of 92,880 in numbers, the returns for that year showing only 830,452 as remaining. By 1891 the number was 756,557, a further drop of 73,895.

The most startling result, however, since the one shown in 1871, was shown by the census of 1901, which gave the total number of rural labourers for England and Wales as no more than 609,105, a swift decline in

ten years of no less than 147,452, or nearly 20 per cent. ! Fortunately, there is a slight set-off against what would otherwise be a very alarming state of things. The Board of Trade report remarks on this subject :—

“ The returns show a decrease of 147,452, or 19·5 per cent. in the number of male agricultural labourers (of the classes specified in the table) since 1891, but owing to changes of classification the rate of decrease is somewhat overstated.

The report adds :—

“ It may be questioned, however, how far the decrease for 1901 shown by these figures represents an actual and permanent diminution in the supply of agricultural labour. It should be remembered, in the first place, that at the time of the census of 1901, the country was at war in South Africa, and that large numbers of the military reserves had been called up for active service. At the close of the war, a year later, many of these men would return to their former occupations, and to this extent, therefore, the decline would only be temporary. Then, again, there was considerable industrial activity at the date of the census of 1901, and the higher wages obtainable in other industries probably attracted some agricultural labourers from their normal occupation. On the other hand, it is probable that fewer agricultural labourers were omitted in 1901 from the agricultural class through insufficient designation. But balancing, so far as possible, one against the other, these disturbances in the census returns, there can still be no doubt that a large diminution has taken place in the number of labourers. It is not necessary to discuss its causes here at length. The principal of them are generally said to be the greater attractions of town life, the higher wages paid in nearly all other industries, the conversion of arable land to pasturage, and the introduction of machinery for farm work.”

These are, no doubt, part of the reasons for the serious depopulation of the rural districts. Other and more important ones will be presently given. Meanwhile, although the figures of the decline have, so far, been given only for England and Wales, the same decline, for the same alleged reasons, has been going on in Scotland and Ireland ; but data is not available for extending the comparison so far back as 1851. We can, however, show the decline from 1881. In that year the number of agricultural labourers of all kinds, including shepherds,

in Scotland was 102,075. By 1891 that number had fallen to 95,470, a drop, in the ten years, of 6605. By 1901 the number was only 83,441, showing a drop of 12,029, or nearly double the dimension of the fall for the previous decade.

In Ireland the same classes of labourers show a much more serious decline than in Scotland. In 1881 the numbers were 300,091. By 1891 they had fallen to 258,042—a decline of 42,049, considerably more than double, *pro rata*, the Scottish decline. By 1901 the numbers had fallen to 217,652, another drop of 40,390. It may fairly be assumed that the more distressful conditions of Irish labourers—the lowest paid in the United Kingdom—has been answerable for the much larger proportionate decline.

It is important to note that the decline mentioned as having taken place in the three divisions of the United Kingdom—England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—only refers to male labourers; but the decline in female labour also has been most striking in England and Wales, where the numbers fell from 143,475 in 1851 to 90,525 in 1861, to 58,656 in 1871, to 40,346 in 1881, to 24,150 in 1891; and then in the succeeding decade the drop was the startling one of more than 50 per cent.—the number running down in 1901 to 11,963. The report is silent as to whether there has been a decline in the number of female labourers in Scotland and Ireland. It is probable that there has been, but it may not have been so serious as in England and Wales. In any case, it is rather an astonishing fact that the number of “female agriculturists” in Ireland in 1901, mainly coming under the heading of farmer or grazier, was no less than 70,534.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FREEHOLD COTTAGES AND LAND.

THE principal cause, in the opinion of the present writer, of the serious, and it is not too much to say, the alarming, depopulation of the rural districts of the United Kingdom, lies in the absence of that hold upon the soil of our country which would be secured by the adoption of a system of freehold cottages and small holdings.

It will be interesting, in this connection, to refer to a correspondence that occurred twenty-five years ago. In August 1886, the late Mr. Arthur Kinglake, J.P., a brother of the historian of the Crimean War, wrote to the late Lord Randolph Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, alluding to the present writer's labours on behalf of our peasantry. Lord Randolph replied by a letter dated 26th August 1886, in which occurred the following passages :—

“ I am much obliged to you for drawing my attention to the great services rendered to the public by Mr. Heath, and for making me aware of his knowledge and experience of the condition and wants of the agricultural labourers in the west and south of England. Certainly it is the genuine desire of the Government to do their utmost, as far as such may be effected by legislation, to ameliorate that condition and to satisfy those wants, and I am sanguine that, before the close of next year, some appreciable progress will have been made.”

His lordship then added :—

“ It would be very gratifying for me to have the advantage of a personal interview with Mr. Heath, so as to ascertain

from him his own ideas as to the course which it would be best for the Government to pursue towards this object."

Three interviews subsequently took place with Lord Randolph Churchill, at the first of which at the Treasury his lordship invited Mr. C. T. Ritchie, M.P., then President of the Local Government Board, to meet the writer who, at that interview, was desired to put before Lord Randolph a written statement of his views. This was done in a letter dated 9th September 1886. Dealing in it with the allotment question, strong opposition was offered to the proposal made in a Bill then before Parliament to take land by compulsion for allotment purposes—the writer arguing that if this Bill became law it would be

"disastrous to the friendly feeling towards the allotment question which prevails throughout the country. It would cause irritation and annoyance everywhere, and would set up antagonisms between landowners and farmers on the one side and labourers on the other, that would utterly sever the bonds which now unite these classes. The only merit of the Bill," it was added, "was its provision for free holdings as well as for allotments—a provision which is most essential in any Bill."

The writer continued :—

"In making the following suggestions, I must premise the necessity for a collateral measure for the simplification of the title to land, and for the institution of an easy, simple, and inexpensive system of registration of title. It will not be enough, I am convinced, to leave the settlement of the allotment question to the mere continuance of the voluntary agencies, excellent as these are. Impulse and stimulus to the movement must be given by the State, either by direct Government loans under Government supervision, or by empowering local authorities to borrow (from Government) money to be lent at the lowest possible interest for allotment ground. Assuming that Parliament would give this power to local authorities, I am of opinion that no hard and fast line of policy should be adopted by those authorities in administering the law. The wants and wishes of particular agricultural communities should be consulted, as also the capabilities of individual labourers. In many cases these would be satisfied by the acquisition of rented allotments of from one-eighth of an acre to one acre. In other cases men of exceptionally good character and of exceptional



industry and ability—men earning wages higher than the average (in the worst-paid districts such men may receive wages 50 per cent. beyond the average) might fairly be allowed to acquire the freehold of an acre.

“My plan for giving such facilities to such men is as follows :—I will assume the land to be acquired to be an acre, and to carry an annual rental of thirty shillings. Taking twenty-five years’ purchase of the rental as the value of the freehold, the amount would be £37, 10s. If the cost of conveyance were as much as £2, 10s., the price to the labourer would be £40. I propose that this principal—and interest—should be paid off together—each at the rate of 5 per cent. annually of the whole. Principal and interest the first year would thus be £42, and the first year’s payment would be 10 per cent. of that amount, or £4, 4s., equal to 1s. 7½d. per week, half of which would be repayment of principal. I propose that the labourer should continue to pay the same amount until the extinction of the loan ; but that each quarter the amount of capital, *i.e.* principal paid off, should be deducted from the amount remaining unpaid, and interest charged only on the balance of the advance remaining in his hands. Thus the amount for interest would diminish each quarter, and the amount of his repayment of the loan would increase each quarter ; and in this way the debt would be extinguished, and the land would become the labourer’s freehold in just under fifteen years. Five per cent. of principal is, I propose, the maximum amount of repayment. A smaller amount of repayment might be adopted—involving a somewhat longer time for the final extinction of the debt—in the case of labourers unable to pay the larger amount. In certain cases, where a labourer might, perhaps, be assisted by one or two wage-earning sons living with him, a cottage might be erected for him by the local authority on the freehold, say, at a cost of £150 or even less, the amount advanced being returnable on the same principle. In both cases security would be obtained by the local authority by their retention of the mortgage deeds.

“A freehold cottage on a freehold allotment would constitute possessions that would be largely sought after and highly prized, and which would, I am firmly convinced, give an enormous stimulus to industry and perseverance. The whole cost of transfer should be fixed by Parliament, and should be the lowest possible amount. There are plenty of conveyancers who would be glad to do, even at so low a rate, the large amount of business that would accrue to them.

“In many instances it might be desirable to advance to the labourer, on personal security, in cases recommended to the local authority, small sums of money to enable him to stock or to improve the agricultural value of his allotment. The fund for such a purpose, and for covering the entire cost of the system I advocate, might be formed by

the difference in the percentage of interest charged by the Government to the labourer. Government could advance the money necessary at 3 per cent., and if the labourer were charged 5 per cent., there would be a profit for the purpose indicated of £2 on every £100 advanced. If the sanitary authority in each district were made the local authority for the purposes indicated, a small department under the Local Government Board might be created for purposes of general inspection and control. Four or five inspectors would be sufficient, in my opinion, for England, for instance, and the institution at headquarters in London of a small correspondence department might prove, by affording facilities for giving information—of inestimable advantage to the agricultural labourers throughout the country. In support of these views I should like to quote an opinion of the late Professor Fawcett :—

“ ‘ How much more powerfully,’ he said, ‘ would prudence be stimulated if a definite prospect were held out that a labourer might, in course of time, by means of his saving, secure a small landed property ! The value of such an acquisition is not to be estimated by the amount of wealth with which it enriches him. It makes him, in fact, a different man ; it raises him from the position of a mere labourer, and calls forth all those active qualities of mind which are sure to be excited when a man has the consciousness that he is working on his own account.’

“ The present time is, I think, most favourable for the institution of a thoroughly good and sound allotment system. I believe that, with legislative authority, local boards would find ample facilities for the acquisition of land for allotments without any resort to the objectionable principles of compulsion, and that with a steady persistence in the plan I have lightly sketched, the clouds of agricultural depression would be speedily dispersed, and the position of the farm labourer throughout the country would be enormously improved. Such, at least, is my earnest hope and belief.”

Lord Randolph Churchill was especially interested in this communication, and gave the writer two more interviews on the subject of it. The last of these interviews was held on 1st October 1886, the day before what may be called his lordship's remarkable and historic speech at Dartford. By his special request the writer was asked to formulate the especial points which he was of opinion should be introduced into the speech. The following are the points which were put into a letter the same day, prefaced by the request that

he would read them before speaking, as the agricultural labourers and their friends would keenly note every word that might be uttered :

“ 1. Nothing will please and attract those labourers so powerfully as a plan for enabling them to obtain, by easy instalments—elastically arranged to meet any case—a freehold allotment with a freehold cottage on it. 2. Such a prospect will attach to the soil of this country the cream of our labourers—the very section of them that would otherwise emigrate. 3. If this end can be obtained, as it certainly can, without robbing other people, every honest man in the country will applaud it. 4. The two existing allotment Bills simply provide for a change of landlords—the ‘local authority’ for ‘the squire.’ 5. The proposed Bills, too, would never release the local authorities from their responsibilities. Under a system of securing small freeholds for the labourers, the lands bought would, from time to time, be disposed of, and sometimes the entire question of allotments would be finally settled in particular districts. 6. It is most essential that the labourers should be actually represented on the local body. This arrangement will give life and spirit to the whole movement. 7. The compulsory taking of land would be a fatal mistake, as conciliatory arrangements are absolutely necessary for producing really successful results. 8. The most popular and successful action which any government could take would be to facilitate the acquisition of freeholds when it is desired. 9. Such a plan, without robbery, would enormously please the labourers, could be carried out absolutely without the smallest risk, and would secure the enthusiastic support of the entire press of this country.”

This scheme, as outlined, was put forth in Lord Randolph's famous speech—as it has been called—at Dartford, and the anticipated result actually ensued ; for the entire press of the country of every shade of opinion rang with approval of it. But, unfortunately, Lord Randolph remained only a little time longer in office, and it was never carried out. The same scheme was subsequently put by the writer in a personal interview before Lord Carrington as President of the Board of Agriculture ; but a small holdings committee of inquiry had practically reported against a freehold

system, and the legislation that resulted was the present Small Holdings Act, under which county councils can take land compulsorily, after inquiry by commissioners as to the allotment requirements in any district, but have no power to enable small holders to acquire the necessary land as a freehold.

The freehold is, in the strong conviction of the writer, the absolutely essential part of a good scheme; and good management is equally essential, and that has been absent from a large number of abortive plans.

The difficult cottage question, too, would, we believe, be satisfactorily settled were agricultural labourers enabled to obtain their dwellings as freeholds. Good cottages, as it has already been shown, do not pay their builders; and it is only when they are given rent free that the outlay upon them is regarded by the landlord as a means of letting a farm at a remunerative rent, and by the farmer as part of the wages of the labourer, that the speculation of building them is made to "pay." With the labourer owning the cottage himself he would not require that it should pay. Although the money he spent upon it would not produce as much interest in the shape of the rent as he might get by other investments, he would have the enormous satisfaction that it was his own inalienable property, and that this freehold land for cultivation would furnish the strongest possible inducement to remain in the country.

It is very gratifying to know that another small holdings inquiry is in progress, conducted by a committee whose chairman is Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P., with the very object of instituting a system of freehold allotments. It has published its programme in a little green-covered *brochure*, entitled "The Land for the People." It is also very gratifying to read in the preface to this little book that so prominent a statesman as Mr. Balfour gives his hearty support to the same system, and that before long legislative power will be

sought to put this system into force. Speaking at Birmingham in September 1909, Mr. Balfour said :—

“I have always been one of those who have ardently desired to see, and yet hope to see, the ownership of agricultural land and to see it distributed in an incomparably greater number of hands than it is now. There is no measure with which I am more proud to have been connected than that of giving peasant ownership in such large measure to Ireland, and I hope to see a great extension of such ownership in England. Nothing can be more desirable and important. . . . Depend upon it, it is not so very easy or light a task to make a living out of a small holding in this country, unless that small holding be a specially favourably situated one. But what, you say, can you make an appeal to, to make these holdings a success? A feeling of ownership and nothing else.”

The last sentence is a pregnant one, and Mr. Balfour's view is incontrovertible. It may be argued that a feeling is a matter of sentiment, but it is sentiment of a kind that exercises the most powerful of all influences. It is a selfish sentiment, perhaps, but selfishness largely rules the world; and, after all, the sentiment or selfishness is directed to an object which, though it may most of all benefit the individual, also, though indirectly, must benefit the community. A large number of small holders striving by might and main to get the utmost farthing of profit out of tillage of the soil can only succeed by selling the produce of their labour. The mere numbers must bring about competition that will automatically reduce the price, and that is where the community must benefit; and in the struggle for the market—which is a huge one—the producer's benefit will be quick returns, and quick returns will compensate him for small profits. The community, moreover, will secure the enormous benefit which must arise by the retention of the energetic producer who would—in the absence of inducement to him at home—go abroad and give the advantage of his persistent energy to foreign countries.

Writing on 25th October 1909, in a preface to Sir

Gilbert Parker's "Land for the People" brochure, Mr. Balfour says:—

"The extract from my speech at Birmingham, which you have placed in the forefront of your pamphlet, sufficiently indicates my general attitude towards the all-important problem of which you treat. But I may, perhaps, be permitted to add that, in my judgment, you have done a great service by calling public attention to some of the methods by which, in other lands, the creation and maintenance of small agricultural owners have been effectively aided. It is a mistake to suppose, as many people do, either that small ownership is the natural organisation of rural life—*i.e.* the one which would universally prevail but for antiquated laws and bad tradition—or that, if it were suddenly established, as by a stroke of the pen, it would immediately work smoothly and automatically to the general advantage of all concerned. This is too sanguine a view. The life of a small owner, though honourable and independent, is rarely an easy one. In some parts of the country his industry needs, for its full success, to be supplemented by other employments. It is laborious, and requires the vigorous co-operation of all the members of the family who are able to help, be they young or old, male or female. It has its risks, and in many of the States where the system is most deeply rooted in the national life, it yet has to be sustained by heavy protective tariffs. But such considerations as these, though they suggest caution, should not produce discouragement. We must bear in mind, in the first place, that they do not apply or scarcely apply to the districts—and they are many—whose soil, markets, or other conditions, are really favourable. We must bear in mind, in the second place, that every criticism which can be directed against the freehold tenure which we so ardently desire to extend, can be directed with far greater effect against any attempt to multiply small cultivators who are not also small proprietors. From them is exacted toil as severe, and care as minute; but they are not given the same reward, nor are they supported by the same hopes. For the land they till is not their own; and multiply, as you will, your enactments for securing the fruits of an improvement to the man who makes it, you will never efface the distinction between possession and occupation. It is based on sentiment, not on finance; and no demonstrations of profit and loss will extract from the tenant of a county council, or a public department, labour which he would cheerfully expend upon a holding which belonged to himself, and which he could leave to his children. But more is required for the full success of the small farmer even than the 'magic of property.' It is that 'more' which is dealt with in your pamphlet; and it may be described in two words

—‘credit’ and ‘co-operation.’ The study of foreign methods is here invaluable; and the suggestive account which you give of the manner in which, without danger to the State or undue interference with individual initiative, foreign nations have helped the farmer to find the capital necessary to raise, and the organisation necessary to market, the produce of his farm, will be invaluable to all those who are seriously considering the great problem of which you write. I am sure they will be grateful.”

Whilst on the subject of land, it will be very interesting to add to this chapter a table (pages 170, 171) showing at a glance the total area of agricultural land (not including mountain, heath land, or land permanently covered by water) in the United Kingdom, comprising Great Britain, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, and Ireland, and its allocation, in 1910—that is to say, the respective areas devoted to permanent grass and arable, and the disposition of the arable over the respective crops.

By arable is of course understood not fallow land, but cultivated (that is, land occupied by crops other than grass and fallow land). The unoccupied arable will be indicated by the item described as “bare fallow.” It must be noted, however, that, whilst from the returns obtained for Great Britain, the Isle of Man, Guernsey, and Ireland, the acreage of mountain, heath land, and water is very properly excluded as not being cultivable land, the figures for Jersey include water. The fact, however, is inappreciable, because the area of water is in Jersey comparatively a very small one. Against the item of “small fruit,” it must also be noted that the figures for Ireland include orchards.

Broadly, the total agricultural area of the United Kingdom extends to 76,646,803 acres; the total acreage under crops and grass in 1910 was 46,931,637; of which 19,603,821 was arable and 27,327,816 was grass. The addition to the table of the number and distribution of live stock in the United Kingdom will add another feature of interest. Included in horses, in this return, are mares kept for breeding.

TABLE 20.—ACREAGE UNDER CROPS AND GRASS, AND NUMBER OF LIVE STOCK IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND PRINCIPAL ISLANDS IN 1910.

CROPS.	Great Britain.	Isle of Man.	Jersey.	Guernsey, Etc.	Ireland.	United Kingdom.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total area . . . . .	56,214,153	140,986	28,717	15,750	20,247,197	76,646,803
Under crops and grass . . . . .	32,145,930	93,783	19,467	11,412	14,661,045	46,931,637
Arable . . . . .	14,668,890	73,600	16,301	5,881	4,839,149	19,603,821
Grass (permanent) . . . . .	17,477,040	20,183	3,166	5,531	9,821,896	27,327,816
Barley . . . . .	1,728,681	2,184	113	144	168,008	1,899,130
Beans . . . . .	270,042	55	6	41	1,839	271,983
Oats . . . . .	3,020,974	19,797	1,019	657	1,073,690	4,116,137
Peas . . . . .	168,728	91	20	22	230	169,091
Rye . . . . .	48,249	8	60	6	8,681	57,004
Wheat . . . . .	1,808,854	341	628	217	47,631	1,857,671
Total corn . . . . .	7,045,528	22,476	1,846	1,087	1,300,079	8,371,016
Bare fallow . . . . .	354,010	154	162	146	...	354,472
Cabbage, kohlrabi, and rape . . . . .	158,531	622	24	28	33,713	192,918
Clover, sainfoin, and grasses under rotation . . . . .	4,157,037	39,320	4,487	1,539	2,468,015	6,670,398
Fruit (small) . . . . .	84,309	118	122	168	12,994	97,711
Hops . . . . .	32,886	...	1	...	...	32,887
Mangold . . . . .	442,779	284	300	360	75,267	518,990
Potatoes . . . . .	539,684	2,282	8,887	627	592,985	1,144,465
Turnips and swedes . . . . .	1,565,345	8,128	70	80	275,296	1,848,919
Vetches or tares . . . . .	104,604	30	22	270	2,303	107,229
Other crops . . . . .	184,177	186	380	1,576	78,497	264,816



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LIVE STOCK	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.
<i>Cows, etc.</i> —							
Cows and heifers in milk or in calf . . . . .	2,767,618	7,007	6,710	3,267	1,557,584	4,342,186	
<i>Other cattle</i> —							
Under one year . . . . .	1,396,952	5,032	2,438	1,299	1,110,986	2,516,707	
One year and under two . . . . .	1,519,562	6,277	2,208	937	1,014,061	2,513,045	
Two years and above . . . . .	1,353,195	2,760	675	628	1,006,257	2,363,515	
Totals of cattle . . . . .	7,037,327	21,076	12,031	6,131	4,688,888	11,795,453	
<i>Horses</i> —							
Used for agricultural purposes . . . . .	1,136,915	3,633	2,188	1,477	376,590	1,520,803	
<i>Unbroken, viz.</i> —							
Under one year . . . . .	126,180	695	14	11	61,249	188,149	
One year and above . . . . .	282,281	1,610	45	21	101,678	385,635	
Totals of horses . . . . .	1,545,376	5,938	2,247	1,509	539,517	2,094,587	
<i>Pigs</i> —							
Sows kept for breeding . . . . .	331,478	452	732	431	129,787	462,880	
<i>Other pigs</i> . . . . .	2,018,468	2,637	3,907	3,371	1,070,218	3,098,601	
Totals of pigs . . . . .	2,349,946	3,089	4,639	3,802	1,200,005	3,561,481	
<i>Sheep</i> —							
Ewes kept for breeding . . . . .	10,665,644	35,165	84	95	1,580,519	12,281,507	
<i>Other sheep</i> —							
Under one year . . . . .	10,949,984	40,449	83	91	1,624,823	12,615,430	
One year and above . . . . .	5,487,317	6,017	19	123	774,174	6,267,650	
Totals of sheep . . . . .	27,102,945	81,631	186	309	3,979,516	31,164,587	

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### FREEHOLDINGS—THE PEASANT'S LADDER.

THERE can be no question of the supreme importance of the action of Sir Gilbert Parker and his parliamentary Small Holdings Committee: and, supported as it is by a statesman of the high standing of Mr. Balfour, it is certain to bear fruit at no distant date.

Although the agricultural labourers are not particularly mentioned in the *brochure* of Sir Gilbert Parker, there is no doubt of the intention of the promoters of the movement to include them in the beneficial operations of the parliamentary Small Holdings Committee.

Sir Gilbert Parker explains that their object is to establish land banks "for the purpose of aiding people of small means to acquire land for ownership and not tenancy." He points out that, although in this country we have one million landowners of one kind or another, in France there are five millions of small land proprietors, who are the very backbone of the State.

The intention to provide a large number of small holdings is undoubtedly an excellent one; and peasant proprietorship is the end to be attained. The promoters of this movement aim, in fact, at the creation, as we take it, of a new class—a class of peasant cultivators who may be able to get a living out of their holdings; and we also assume that they aim at providing largely for the present state of unemployment existing throughout the country, by recruiting the ranks of the new class

from the masses of the unemployed. By this means alone a curse would be turned into a blessing.

It might be argued that people who have never been accustomed to use a spade, a fork, a hoe, or a rake would find some difficulty in turning their hands to agricultural pursuits ; but this is a difficulty that would rapidly disappear ; and to a man of energy and common sense a little perseverance would soon be rewarded by success. A very strong inducement to follow the new pursuit would be its healthful character ; and the knowledge that the smallholder was working on his own freehold, and that every ounce, so to speak, of additional effort would be for his own benefit, would act as an enormous stimulus to his endeavours.

Under a system of what is called intensive cultivation, and with a careful selection of crops, it has been alleged that a single acre of ground would produce enough to provide a livelihood for one man ; but as a large number of prospective small holders are likely to have families to support, it will be most important that any legislation which may result from the present activity of the movers in the direction of freehold small holdings shall provide that they shall be of all sizes to meet any requirements—say from a quarter of an acre to ten acres. If this were so, the creation of such varying holdings would provide stepping-stones that would be in the nature of a ladder for the ordinary farm servants, enabling them to rise gradually from mere positions of dependency to positions of more or less substantial ownership.

Thirty-six years ago the present writer said :—

“ Few things will tend so much to make the peasant contented, and to give him an interest in the soil which he cultivates, as the extension of the allotment system. Every farm labourer should have the opportunity of renting, on very moderate terms, not less than half an acre of land. This land should be held direct from the landlord, or, if held from the farmer, the rent charged should never be higher in proportion than that paid by the farmer himself. In every way the labourer should be encouraged by the

farmer to make the most, by cultivation, of his small plot of land. He will thus be encouraged to regard his allotment with all the pride of a small farmer. He will grow fruit and vegetables which, after supplying his family's need, may leave him a surplus, which he can sell, and then invest the money in the village or other savings bank, or in some other way. It is calculated that in England there are about 350,000 small holdings of five acres in extent. Of holdings below a quarter of an acre, the number is about 250,000. It must be borne in mind, however, that a great number of these holdings of less than a quarter of an acre are held by artisans and labourers other than farm labourers—for the town workman likes his plot of 'garden ground'; and of the holdings from a quarter of an acre to five acres few are held by agricultural labourers. But even if the whole number of a quarter of a million of allotments and other holdings were held by farm labourers—and this, as I have shown, is assuming too much—there would, taking the total number of labourers at a million and a half, be only one allotment of a quarter of an acre to six labourers. In the matter of allotments alone, therefore, there is great room for extension, if the desirable and necessary system of giving a plot of ground to *every* labourer be established. There is some advantage, doubtless, in the large farm system, adopted within moderate limits, and only for the purpose of getting the greatest production by an extended use of machinery and by economical management. It is often urged that the large farmer can produce more per acre than the small farmer. This arises, however, chiefly from the fact that the large farmer is almost invariably a man of capital, whilst the small farmer is not. Given the same proportion of capital, and the same facility to the small tenant as to the large one in the utilisation of machinery, combined with an equal amount of energy and industry, and the chances of greater productiveness per acre will be found in most cases on the side of the small farmer. I shall not enter, in this case, into the great land question, or discuss the merits or demerits of our English system, beyond remarking that some change at least in the mode of transfer must be made, and is, in fact, inevitable at no distant date. A change that would tend, not to cause, on the one hand, the absorption of small holdings and the division of our agricultural land into great farms; or, on the other hand, to cause its division into a chess-board system of farms, but a change that would *graduate* the existing system into a better and more perfect mixed system of farms; and that would bring about at the same time a simple and inexpensive method of transferring land, and give compensation for unexhausted improvements—would be highly desirable. An intelligent, well-paid peasantry would then have afforded to their class

the same opportunity of rising in life which is afforded in other occupations. The peasant would aspire first to rent his small piece of land. By his cow or cows, his pig or pigs, his fruit, his vegetables; by the profits derived from the keeping of poultry and bees, he might, by frugality and industry, save money. He might then aspire to increase, by degrees, the size of his rented land. He might, in time, become a small farmer, then, perhaps, a large farmer; and he might, in some cases, ultimately become a landed proprietor. There is no reason whatever why our peasantry should be eternally tied down to slave at their toilsome occupations with no prospect of advancement, and no future beyond the plough tail. Give them a chance, place them fairly in the human race, and—coincident with the development of our national agriculture—instead of remaining a disgrace to our civilisation, they will become a credit to the nation, and an important element in its glory and in its strength.”<sup>1</sup>

Although this was written thirty-seven years ago, the argument in it is, it is submitted, wholly and unalterably applicable to the present day. The condition of the peasantry of these islands has, in the meantime, and happily, greatly improved; but, nevertheless, it is to be feared that depopulation, with all its serious results, continues its steady process—indicating that the conditions of peasant life are not, by any means, what they ought to be. In every other occupation, or, at any rate, in nearly every occupation, there is practically a chance of rising. The humblest clerk or other assistant in a store may rise to be managing director; the porter in a railway company's employ may, and frequently does, become an inspector or stationmaster. He may, indeed, rise to the position of superintendent of the line. The sailor before the mast may become captain of the ship; a cabin boy may become an admiral of the fleet; the policeman, a chief superintendent of the force; the common soldier a field marshal. But the cases are rare, indeed, in which an ordinary agricultural labourer becomes even a small farmer. The reason largely is because there is no middle course—no stepping-

<sup>1</sup> “The English Peasantry.”

stone ; no chance of saving money enough to jump into the position of a farmer. A graded small holding system will offer this stepping-stone—it will provide a ladder for climbing. The hard-working tiller of the eighth of an acre may scrape up enough to get the freehold of a quarter of an acre. From that position he may become the owner—not merely the renter—of an acre. And so he can rise, getting a larger and larger portion of land, until he may eventually become the freeholder of five hundred acres—all his own, with no rent to pay.

This is the prospect which will most effectually arrest the progress of depopulation. The peasant's sons, seeing a chance of something better than the dead-level barrier which now stops the avenue to advancement, will be tempted to enter the ranks instead of swelling the already congested crowds of clerks : his father's calling will no longer be despised. And with this opening which the creation of a peasant proprietary will disclose, unemployed clerks will be induced to come "back to the land," with its healthful occupation, and the charm of a country life.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### FUTURE OF THE BRITISH PEASANT.

A RETROSPECT and a glance ahead may fittingly conclude this section. It will be important to advert, briefly, to the starting-point of the new order of things—marked by the “strike” of 1872—one of the most justifiable, yet one of the mildest on record in the history of labour disputes—a gentle revolt that enlisted the whole-hearted sympathy of the British public. The first stage of progress from that starting-point was recorded by the present writer in 1880, and the progress was in every way remarkable. It will be interesting, now—thirty-one years afterwards—to quote the “summing up” of thirty-one years ago. The present writer then said:—

“In estimating the moral, intellectual, and material progress made within the last few years by the peasantry of the western counties” (whose condition, as will be shown, was but representative of that of the labourers in other purely agricultural districts), “it is not sufficient merely to take account of external signs. The diminution of drunkenness, the more general ability to read and write, and the increase of money earnings, for instance, must not alone be judged by visible degrees. The prominent and actual indications, of a kind to admit of being reduced to visible proofs, do not convey all that there is to be told. There is sufficient, if not very tangible, indication of a great unspoken advance. The rapid development of our railways; the extension of the telegraphic system of this country; the increase of postal facilities; and beyond and above all, the widely-extended power of THE PRESS, have exerted an educating influence which has been mighty in its effects upon what was, not long since, the poorest and most ignorant population of England—a population which had been too long left uncared for and forgotten. Scattered

over the land in remote and outlying districts, away from the hum of busy city life, this population had lived and toiled almost, as it were, in a world apart, and under a system which was nothing better than a relic of feudal times. The English peasant was the victim of this system. Ignorant, isolated, helpless, he would never, perhaps, unaided, have ventured to lift up his head. Generation after generation were born to the same life of cheerless toil, alternated by no warm ray of hope or ambition. Children of tender years were sent out into the fields to earn a few pence, to help to keep the hungry wolf, whose name is STARVATION, from the squalid 'cottage,' that, damp and unhealthy though it was, served, with its mud walls, and its mockingly 'picturesque' exterior, to hide from the passer-by the terrible poverty and suffering that were borne with so touchingly-patient an endurance by its inmates. Helpless ignorance, social and physical degradation, wretchedness and squalor—such were the results of our agricultural system, so far as the labourer was concerned. But times, happily, have changed. Substantial advance has been made beyond the barrier which, at one time, seemed to shut up the English peasant in a state of hopeless misery; and he now looks out upon the expanse of a larger world, with bright hopes of further progress from the point he has already reached. Burning lights have searched the dark corners of our island, and industry and commerce from other fields have offered a helping hand to the tiller of the soil. In the western counties the peasant's frame is still enfeebled, and his movements are slow, from the effect of years of semi-starvation. But this is a constitutional condition, which will disappear when better wages have induced a larger consumption of animal food. The rising generation will be freer from this taint—the taint of misery; and each succeeding race—under brighter circumstances—will be stronger and better than its fore-runners. Agriculture, in this country, has by no means reached its maximum limit of excellence. There is room for a great advance. It is natural to suppose that the inertia, which affected the labourer a few years since, should have also affected the farmer. The peasant has shaken himself, to a great extent, free from the influence of this inertia, and his emancipation has given a shock to the agriculturist from which the latter has not even yet recovered, and the effect of which has had very much, we believe, to do with the recent 'depression.' So much for the material phase of the peasant's condition. Education, as we all recognise, does not consist in mere 'book knowledge.' But whilst the present generation of peasant children have secured, and are continuing to secure, more of this species of acquirement than any previous generation, their parents, although in some cases unable to read, are nevertheless better instructed, both socially and politically,



than their predecessors. There is, doubtless, still room for great improvements in the condition of our peasantry; but it is pleasant to know that, in the comparatively short period of eight years, this section of our labouring population gives unquestionable evidence of moral, intellectual, and material PROGRESS."

It is eminently gratifying to note that the improvement recorded in this excerpt from comments of over thirty years ago, has, though slowly, nevertheless, steadily continued, and that whilst the friends and well-wishers of our peasantry forty years ago were few and far between, they now constitute a host of well-wishers, and that a small but resolute band of influential public men are seeking to better their condition.

The present writer repeats that he looks upon the efforts of the parliamentary Small Holdings Committee to create an army of agricultural proprietors as conducing to bring round the ladder which offers the mere labourer the opportunity of rising from his humble position to a position of comparative opulence. Whether by means of land banks or more direct State aid, the farm labourer must, in every way, be encouraged to use the steps of this ladder: and it cannot be too much emphasised that freehold possession alone, and not mere leaseholds, will bring about the desired results.

But the present writer contends very strongly that the freehold dwelling must be added to the freehold land for cultivation; and, as already pointed out, the State should equally assist to enable the cultivator to obtain this freehold dwelling by the payment of easy instalments of the purchase money, elastically adjusted to meet his moderate earnings. Large sums of public money have been advanced to assist the Irish cultivators. Is it too much to ask that the same generosity should be shown to the Englishman, the Welshman, and the Scotchman? It has often been said that the Englishman's house is his castle, an expression which is used to denote the strength and independence of the

individual members composing the nation. To a very large extent the phrase does not convey the literal truth. To make it true to the fullest extent would result in every man in the country being able to possess a freehold house and freehold land to cultivate. Let us look forward to the time—and it does not seem to us that it is now very far distant—when every British man's house shall be his castle, and the land surrounding or near it his private estate, however small it may be—his own inalienable, indefeasible possession. Thus would be built up in the counties of the United Kingdom a solid rock against which the mad waves of the most mischievous forms of what is called "Socialism" would beat in vain? Such, at least, is the earnest hope of the writer of this volume.

## APPENDIX.



### A GLANCE AT THE PAST.

SOME PICTURES OF 1873.

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

#### ROMANCE AND REALITY.

ONE of my first rambles into peasant land, in my tour from village to village in 1873, took me to one of the prettiest parts of the green and smiling West Country. I was fully prepared, by previous acquaintance, for what I should find; but my recollections were general ones. Pencil and notebook in hand, however, I determined not to draw upon memory or imagination, but to sketch only what was before my eyes: and here is the sketch made at once before the visual and mental impressions could fade:—

“My path wound away from the town; it gracefully bent to right and to left through an amphitheatre of beautiful hills; now sinking between high hedges surpassingly rich in their verdant clothing, which, in the fulness of its early summer glory, blotted out all but the blue sky overhead; and now passing into soft gloom as it found its way under a natural archway of trees. I had proceeded some little distance in my ramble, when, at a turn in the road, I came upon a little scene, the like of which is rarely to be met with. Away from the main road, a lane led up to the right, and a peep over the hedge revealed just a glimpse of the whitewashed walls and the low thatched roof of a cottage. It was impossible to resist the temptation to

turn in the direction of this cottage. Down one side of the lane gurgled a limpid stream of water ; and from the hedge-bank hung, in all their gentle majesty of form, the graceful intermingled fronds of the lady fern, the hartstongue, and the soft-prickly shield fern—lapping the surface of the brook. In front a hill rose proudly up over this charming scene. Another turning, this time round to the left, after a few steps up the lane, and a pretty sight met my view. Straight in front a narrow path led up under a kind of vista. On the right of this path there was a line of creeper-bound cottages, eighteen in all, as I afterwards ascertained. Facing the cottages was a row of little gardens overshadowed by fruit-trees. Here and there rustic beehives were scattered over these gardens, which contained flowers and shrubs in addition to their little crops of vegetables. The walls of some of the cottages were almost hidden by the creepers which trailed upon them. The little ‘nook’ was shut in on almost every side by orchards. Surely Mrs. Hemans must have visited this very spot when she wrote the well-known lines :—

‘ The cottage homes of England,  
By thousands on her plains,  
They are smiling o’er the silvery brook  
And round the hamlet fanes.’

There, in very truth, were the ‘cottage homes,’ situated in one of the most charming spots in the delightful West of England: hard by bubbled the fern-lapped ‘silvery brook’; and the ‘gurgle’ of the pure water, as it tumbled over the stones in its bed, mingling with the hum of the bees, and the voices of birds singing in the adjoining orchards, made a chorus of soft sounds which were a fit accompaniment to the whole scene.

‘ From glowing orchards forth they peep,  
Each from its nook of leaves,  
And fearless there the lowly sleep  
As the birds beneath the eaves.’

‘ The lowly sleep ’! The ‘lowly’ human element was not wanting. I caught sight of a child without shoes sitting on a doorstep. It was that of No. 1 in the row. I went up the steps, knocked at the door, and was asked ‘Would I please to walk in?’ by a woman who, with a baby in her arms, stood upon the stone floor as I entered, and curtsied, after the custom of the country, on catching sight of me. I sat on a chair where I was politely asked to seat myself. What a change from the outside! A piteous tale was unfolded in response to my numerous inquiries. The husband was a carter, and as the wages in this district had been ‘risen’ during the last few months, he was then in receipt of an income of 10s. a week, in addition to which

he had three pints of cider daily when driving the horses for ordinary work, and an extra pint daily when ploughing. No cottage-rent given, no 'privileges.' The cottage had a tiny bit of garden ground—fifteen 'yards'—in front, and there was the 'privilege' of paying 7s. 9d. a year for a few yards of potato ground. The cottage-rent under the old squire had been £2, 2s., but the new squire had raised it to £3, 5s. In addition to this, out of his wages this poor creature had to pay 10s. a year for rates—namely, poor rates, 'school rate,' and gas rate for the adjacent parish. The poor folks wondered, naturally enough, why they had to pay a gas rate when there was no gas within more than a mile of them. Deducting these items of expenditure from the grand total of 10s., there was left the sum of 8s. 7d. on which to subsist each week. In this family there were the husband, his wife, and five children, besides the husband's mother, a poor old bedridden woman ninety-three years of age. The eldest of the children was a boy of nine and a half years old. This little fellow had commenced his career as a farm labourer at the age of eight. His wages were then fourpence a day and a pint of cider. The previous Lady Day, however, his master had raised our little hero's wages to fivepence a day! The remaining children of the family were a girl of eight, a boy of seven, my little shoeless friend of five, and a baby boy not quite two years of age. All except the husband and the poor old 'granny' stood before me—these poor people are too humble to sit in presence of a stranger in respectable attire. In the one downstairs room were grouped the ragged little children looking wonderingly at me. On the table stood a brown pan, filled with butcher's offal. This had been that day purchased at the adjoining town, and would, when cooked, constitute the rare 'delicacy' of this family of eight. I inquired concerning the poor old grandmother, and learnt that she had been bedridden for many long years. 'Would you please to walk upstairs and see her, sir?' said the mother. I replied that I would like to see her, and I was accordingly shown up the narrow staircase. Winding round to the right, I was not long in reaching 'the first floor.' Exactly facing the stairhead was one room, and immediately to my right another. Preceding me, my conductress led the way into the first-mentioned room.

"Never have I witnessed so sad a sight as I saw in that tiny garret of a small hut. There was one bedstead, besides two other—I cannot say articles of furniture—things purporting to represent a table and a chair, on the bare floor. On the bedstead, in the darkest corner of the room, which might have been some twelve or thirteen feet long, by some eight or nine feet wide, and perhaps seven feet high, lay the poor old bedridden grandmother, her poor wrinkled face looking the picture of patient and uncom-

plaining misery. Nothing on the floor besides the 'bedstead' and the 'table' and 'chair'; no pictures, even of the rudest kind, on the walls. One tiny window, cut through the thick wall of the cottage, admitted a little light into this chamber; and there, with her head in the darkest corner, had lain, for years, this poor old creature, the helpless mother of an English agricultural labourer!

"It is terrible to witness want and misery in the foul slums of a great city; but it is assuredly much more terrible to find it in rose-bound cottages—embosomed in the most charming of country nooks, where the very richness of nature seems to rebuke the meanness of man. The poor old bedridden woman had received from the parish a weekly allowance of two shillings and a loaf of bread: but it appeared that even the parochial eyes had moistened at sight of her helpless misery, and the parochial pocket had furnished forth one extra shilling a week in lieu of the hebdomadal loaf of bread. I tendered a trifle in money to the poor old grandmother, whose wrinkled face shone for a moment with a pleased expression, whilst she fairly overwhelmed me with thanks which were altogether disproportioned to the smallness of the gift. Turning away, I went, before descending the stairs, into the other of the two bedrooms. Words can hardly convey, with sufficient effect, an impression of the abject poverty which silently, but eloquently, told its piteous tale in that small room. A ragged-looking bed was before me. It filled up the greater part of the room. An old brown, worn tester stretched over this bed, in which the father, mother, and the two youngest children slept. Looking at the ceiling over this tester I noticed dark stains in the plaster, and I said, 'Does the rain come in there?' The rain had come in upon their bed, I was told, often and often, in wet weather, but now the roof was repaired, although many vain requests had been preferred before this work was done. On the floor at the foot of the bedstead there was a nondescript heap of rags, amongst which the three elder children slept. Seven human beings in this tiny ill-lighted room! As in the case of the adjoining chamber, there was only one small window. Several of the panes were out, and I expressed my surprise that the landlord had not ordered new ones to be put in. But the landlord never mended windows: that was the tenant's duty; and this was one of the 'duties' which the poor tenant of this 'Rose Cottage' had neglected. These poor people may be pardoned if they cannot understand the proper and legal relationships which exist between landlord and tenant."<sup>1</sup>

But the ten shillings a week of the bread-winner for this family of seven—a sum that had to be stretched to

<sup>1</sup> "The English Peasantry."

assist the poor old "granny" to obtain what the three shillings of parish allowance could not provide, was—it must not be forgotten—the high-water mark of his incomings. The father of the family was "delicate," and frequently could not work; so that the average of his wages did not reach the normal weekly half-sovereign; but assuming it to be a typical condition that the ten shillings was maintained—what a sad struggle it must have been for the eight people to live, and provide all that mere existence necessitates! Let us suppose an unbroken continuance of the thirteen weekly shillings—the average for each member weekly was the sum of barely one shilling and eightpence to cover all contingencies—food, clothes, house rent, and sickness!

There was, however, one other asset—the pig: but that had to be obtained from "savings," and how savings could be made was a mystery. Possibly, now and then, a farmer might give a young pig, but I heard of no instance of such generosity. The one belonging to the tenant of "Rose Cottage" had been honestly bought. It was a very young one; but, nevertheless, it cost twenty-six shillings. Its predecessor had been a dead loss—for it got the "measles" and became unfit to eat. So that, now, anxious expectation centred round the new one: but it would not live and grow fat without food, and the weekly sum of "scraps" from the meagre table of the family would not be nearly enough for the normal appetite of a thriving pig. The "scraps," therefore, must be supplemented by purchases of barley meal—a half-bushel of barley meal cost at the time under review half a crown, and it is needless to suppose that such a big sum could be shared out of the weekly wages: so the meal had to be obtained on "credit," and such a score would soon mount up to be a set-off against some portion of the pig when killed. This was a plan not unfrequently adopted—the living pig being a sort of tacit security against the supplies of meal.

Rent in arrear too—and oftentimes there was no help for such arrears—could only be met by the sale of a portion of pork : so that it often happened after deductions—which were a first charge, so to speak, upon the living bond—that nothing was left to the poor families for all their anxious care and trouble : and should disease come upon the animal, as in the instance just referred to, the cruel loss would come with overwhelming severity upon the poor toiler. Such a catastrophe could only find a parallel in the breaking of a penny bank.

But looking at the bright side of the pig investment it is not so roseate as it has sometimes been represented to be, as the following extract may serve to show :—

“ Putting things at their best, it is a happy thing for the labourer when, besides satisfying the tradesman, paying his rent, and saving a little piece of bacon for his own use, he can get money enough from the sale of the pig to enable him to purchase another ‘suckling’—or rather one just past that interesting stage of pig existence—to start another ‘live’ savings bank. We will suppose that when ready to kill, the average weight of a pig, fattened by an agricultural labourer, is, say, eight ‘score.’ That, reckoned at fifteen shillings per score, would realise six pounds. Deduct from that the twenty-six shillings paid for the pigling—and it would be a very small one that could be got for that price—and the balance is four pounds fourteen. Deduct from that the ‘cost of maintenance’ and the ‘back rent,’ and then let us judge whether pigland, the rustic arcadia of poets and descriptive writers, is so enviable a place as it is represented to be. The labourer’s pig, however, is in fact a kind of surety with the petty village tradesman. The peasant would get no ‘credit’ if he had not some such security as a pig affords. It is a fleshy bond, due execution of which is not unfrequently exacted to the disadvantage of the labourer. There is this advantage, however, about the pig system. It is the one ambition of the peasant to keep a pig. It is something for him to look upon with pride. It acts as an inducement for him to save. He delights in his pig ; for he regards him, or her, as the case may be, with emotional feelings which only an agricultural labourer can understand. But it must be remembered that it is not every poor labourer—very far from it—who possesses a pig ; and those who do, are not, as we think we have shown, the lucky beings which they are represented to be.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ Peasant Life in the West of England.”



## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE WEST COUNTRY GENERALLY.

No tracts of England are more purely agricultural than the district which comprises the counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Wilts. Alternations, here and there, throughout this large and important region, of chalky hill or down, and of barren and rocky moorland, do not appreciably affect the general agricultural character. Corn land and pasture largely predominate; but orchard and other fruit areas, and green crop spaces, are also abundant. The geological formation of the district and the moisture of the atmosphere lend themselves, in combination with the general and exceptional richness of the soil, to abundant agricultural produce; and these, in turn, promote the raising of cattle and the production of poultry of a quality which stands high in the order of excellence. The extensive coast-line and the proximity of the sea are also conducive to the refreshing and prevailing moisture which is a factor of extreme importance from an agricultural point of view.

A brief sketch of the characteristics of each of the four counties named will be important and interesting. Beautiful Devon, with its two thousand five hundred and eighty-five square miles of country, has a reputation of its own for scenic loveliness quite apart from its high character as a food-producing area. Below the granite tors of Dartmoor and the uplands of its abounding hills lie valleys of surpassing richness, watered by sparkling streams rarely dry during the worst periods of drought.

Throughout these valleys farm lands abound ; and there are to be found not merely pasture of the highest quality for its herds of cattle, but—stretching to the summits even of its boldest hills—thousands of acres of green crops and corn lands innumerable. The distribution of this plethora of agricultural wealth follows the physical conditions of the region. Countless flocks of sheep graze on the high grounds of Dartmoor and Exmoor ; and the moorland region boasts of a unique production in the classes of cattle—for there are bred the hardy ponies which, characteristic of the place of their birth, have obtained a world-wide fame : and their cheapness vies with their excellence. In the lower-lying parts of the famous county—watered also by abundant streams—the grateful and useful moisture being augmented by stretches of sea-line, the region under immediate mention includes the South Hams, the Vale of Exeter, and the delightful and fertile districts watered by the Axe, the Exe, the Otter, the Sid, the Taw, the Teign, and the Torridge, nearly all of which give names to adjacent towns ; and extending along and between the lines of seacoast, and the streams and their tributaries, are cornfields, orchards, and pastures innumerable—their products including barley, beans, clover, oats, potatoes, pulse, and other cereal and green crops. From the orchards of the county is produced the far-famed “ Devonshire cider ” : whilst the pastures produce in abundance food which finds its way to many an English meat-market, and the inimitable cream that, by its superlative richness, is enormously in demand : so much so that, both in and beyond the county borders, there is never a glut in its markets. Moreover, not only the sea which borders the Devon coasts, but its inland streams, furnish, in exceptional plenty, fish of the finest quality, including the delicious mackerel, the wholesome and plentiful whiting, the beautiful trout, and that king amongst the finny tribes, the lordly salmon.

Agriculturally important, though in a less degree than beautiful Devon, the county of Dorset, with its area of over a thousand square miles, presents large stretches of surface soil which, "wethered" from a basis of chalk, has not the intrinsic richness of the red soil of the first-named county, produced from the "weathering"—with decayed vegetable additions—of the geologically famous "red sandstone." Soils over chalk—prehistoric sea bottom—owe their quality more to cultivation than to nature: but, naturally, being thin, are chiefly productive of pastures for grazing and corn.

More famous than Dorset, for reasons which give pre-eminence to Devon, is the county of Somerset, which is fittingly and tersely described by an old ballad in the lines:—

"Go look through merrie England,  
Of all the shires you there may see,  
Oh, the fairest is green Somerset,  
The flower of all the west cuntry!"

Pre-eminently a pastoral county, there is no question of its eminent richness and greenness, and a description by the present writer, penned nearly forty years ago, is so true to its present character that, without alteration, it may be quoted:—

"Its character is eminently pastoral, its soil is singularly rich, and its greenness is pervading and luxuriant. Yet its greenness owes its distinguishing feature to cultivation. But instead of the monotonousness which is apparent in some of our purely agricultural counties, where wide areas of corn and of other crops extend without apparent lines of division, mile after mile, in level uniformity, meadow and corn land in Somersetshire are prettily diversified. Quiet pastures extend upon the slopes of gentle hills. Parting hedges, topped by leafy elms, portion out the country, not in regular squares, but in fields of varying size; and these, in turn, present aspects which do not tire by ceaseless repetition of the same crop. In spring the pasture lands are golden with the bloom of buttercups; and the wealthy hue is indicative—so experts say, though opinions differ—of the richness of the soil. But, interspersed amongst the crowfoot meadows are potato and bean fields and spaces of corn land, bright, in the spring, by the vigorous green-

ness of sprouting wheat and barley. Then there are squares of blood-red trefoil, and the alternation of green crops—vetch and turnip, 'mangel' and swede—give pleasant variety to the agricultural features of the country. Towards the north stretch the bold crests of the Mendip Hills, whilst between them and the great cities of Bath and Bristol lies an undulating and fertile district. To the west are the Quantocks, which are the outposts of the hilly country that terminates in the rugged expanse of the beacon-crowned 'forest' of Exmoor. But between the Mendips and the Quantock Hills lies the beautiful vale of Taunton Deane, rich in leafiness, and green and beautiful by the presence of orchard, and cornfield, and meadow. Cattle are largely bred upon the Somersetshire pastures, and as sale-stock form an important feature of the agricultural industry of the district, whose area exceeds sixteen hundred and forty square miles. Dairies, too, are everywhere, and the cream, butter, and cheese, manufactured from the abounding milk, are famous throughout the west country, and find their way into the London market, and to many another distant city and town. The fame of its Cheddar cheese has reached even to the opposite shores of the Atlantic, and has so stimulated the cheese-producing ambition of our American cousins as to induce them to imitate the quality of this favourite and well-known product of the green western shire of the mother country, and regardless of the belief that 'there is nothing in a name,' to export to our shores large quantities of their own manufacture under the ingenious designation of 'American Cheddar.' Nor must the orchards of Somerset be forgotten, for they produce what forms a very large contribution of the 'raw material' which furnishes the far-famed west country cider. From its bordering port of Bristol the produce of Somersetshire finds its way to a wider market than that which is furnished by its own substantial towns, or provided even by the important line of railway that passes through it on its way from London to the Land's End."<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Devon, Dorset, and Somerset, Wiltshire has not the advantage of a seaboard; but, like Dorset, much of its substratum of rock is chalk. It has an area of thirteen hundred and sixty-seven square miles, and may, roughly, be said to be divided into two parts—for a range of hills, from the north-east to the south-west, traverses it about midway. The northern or north-western division is watered by the rivers Avon, Kennet,

<sup>1</sup> "Peasant Life in the West of England."

and their tributaries, and consists of a very fertile and rich tract of country, containing abundant pasture and corn land. The divisions of these by parting hedges escape the monotony of a chess-board arrangement by the varying sizes of the enclosed fields ; but are typical of much of England's agricultural land, and strangers to it have the opportunity of seeing what it is like when they travel by the great railway lines that run from London to Exeter and Penzance. To such travellers the familiar town names of Salisbury on the South Western and Swindon and Chippenham on the Great Western will indicate points which will illustrate the general features of the country. Farms of varying size are numerous, and abundantly produce butter, cheese and milk, barley, green crops, potatoes and wheat. Numerous cattle graze on its pastures, and the race of pigs easily take front rank by virtue of being the providers of the far-famed Wiltshire bacon. The middle and south lands of Wiltshire have the honour of including the historic Salisbury Plain, and the chalky downs of which that famous region consists roll on to meet the northern boundaries of Dorset and Hampshire. Here also, upon levels and over leafy uplands, sheep-farming extensively prevails, and interspersed with the pastures provided for them are cornfields of large area ; but the soil generally owes its richness to cultivation.

The region that has been briefly and rapidly surveyed, comprising the principal agricultural counties of the South and West of England, is second to none in this Kingdom ; and yet in the past it has bred a race of peasants notorious as being the worst paid and the worst housed, and the most generally wretched of all the classes engaged in the cultivation of the soil in Great Britain and Ireland and the islands of our seas.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### WEST COUNTRY PEASANTS.

ALTHOUGH this volume deals more particularly in its preceding section with the condition of the British peasant generally, this portion of it is largely concerned with the wages, dwellings, and general circumstances of the West Country labourers. The condition of the West Country peasant is, to a considerable extent, typical of the conditions elsewhere, except in the important matter of degree—doubtless a very important exception.

In connection with what may be called the “ uprising ” of the British peasant, the movement commenced in Warwickshire in 1872, and, heralded by the famous “ strike,” the present writer may claim to have pioneered the cause of the West Country men. So far as he knows, not a word as to the condition of the latter had been printed in any London paper of prominence until he—recalling the distressful circumstances prior to 1862 of the men of Dorset, Devon, Somerset and Wilts—determined to go down, as the correspondent of a London “ daily.” The “ strike ” in Warwickshire was chronicled by the late Archibald Forbes, the famous war correspondent of *The Daily News*: and the late Sir John Robinson, for many years manager of that paper, told the present writer that it was he who had requested Forbes to do what he did; and the clever war correspondent performed his task with a graphic ability that

at once focussed public attention and aroused widespread sympathy.

But much more sympathy was deserved and aroused when it became known—through the present writer's articles and volumes—that the Warwickshire labourers were getting fifty per cent. more wages than their compatriots in Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wilts—the average twelve weekly shillings in the Midlands being little more than an average eight in the South-Western Counties. Moreover, it is significant to note that, whilst the men of Warwickshire had “struck” for more, the Western men were patiently and uncomplainingly bearing their much harder lot.

The general public may well have doubted the exceptional poverty of the West Country labourers. The beauty of the country itself, its great fertility, and the prominence and abounding display of its harvests of all kinds distracted attention, perhaps naturally, from the tillers of the soil. Wide areas of luxuriant grass, the exuberant “fatness” of root crops, the golden richness of cornfields, the plethora of autumnal fruits arresting and compelling attention by their glowing colours—all attested a wealth that suggested abundance for the toilers who, though worthy of their hire, and of liberal hire, very rarely obtained what they well had earned.

There were many persons of course who knew what was the condition of the ingatherers of the most bountiful of British harvests; but these were not what is called “the public at large,” and when their misery was brought, so to speak, under the limelight of that stage, which is another name for public opinion, it naturally created astonishment.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### GLANCING BACK AT DWELLINGS AND WAGES.

ONE of the most crying evils in connection with the condition of English agricultural labourers was the state of their dwellings: and the evil was especially marked in the counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wilts. It had been growing rather than lessening between 1843, when a Poor Law Commissioner's report was issued, and the period from 1868 to 1870, when further official reports were published; and on, in fact, to the period, 1872, when the present writer's "'Romance' of Peasant Life" was issued.

It is notorious that Blue Books do not attract the same amount of public attention as what may be called private volumes issued by individual authors. Elaborate reports crowded with hundreds of pages of reliable and valuable evidence too frequently lie *perdu*, so far as accessibility by the general public is concerned. Even those especially interested in the subjects too frequently just dip into the masses of printed matter and "skim" the tables and summaries. It is probably the uninteresting and complex methods of producing official reports that are largely answerable for the delays in bringing about remediable measures. Busy legislators, pressed by other work, have not time to unravel threads that could be made much more easy for them than they commonly are by the investigators. Now and then the eye lights upon interesting passages that



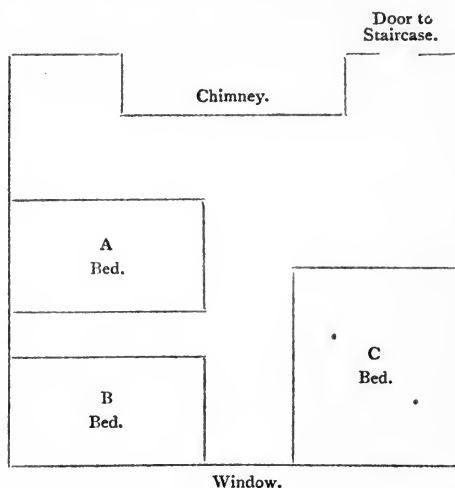
attract attention, and it is the business of book writers to give emphasis to these.

Here, for instance, is a paragraph—from the Poor Law Commission report of 1843—that gives an excellent summing-up of the general condition as to the dwellings at that time of agricultural labourers. The Commissioner says :—

“ The want of sufficient accommodation seems universal. Cottages generally have only two bedrooms (with very rare exceptions); a great many have only one. The consequence is, that it is often extremely difficult, if not impossible, to divide a family so that grown-up persons of different sexes, brothers and sisters, fathers and daughters, do not sleep in the same room. Three or four persons not unfrequently sleep in the same bed. In a few instances I found that two families, neighbours, arranged so that the females of both families slept together in one cottage and the males in the other : but such an arrangement is very rare, and in the generality of cottages I believe that the only attempt that is, or that can be, made to separate beds, with occupants of different sexes, and necessarily placed close together from the smallness of the rooms, is an old shawl or some article of dress suspended as a curtain between them.”

To give an illustration of his statements, the Commissioner measured a cottage bedroom in a village called Stourpain, near Blandford, in Dorsetshire. This cottage possessed only two rooms, one above the other—and it must have presented a very tiny appearance. The general “ sitting room ” was, naturally, the ground-floor one—and used for meals and every other domestic purpose except sleeping. There were eleven persons in the family occupying the cottage ; and it is significant to note that the entire earnings of the eleven were sixteen and sixpence per week ! The “ privileges ” given, in addition to this princely income, consisted of the allowance by the farmer per week of one bushel of “ grist ” corn—the inferior kind, sometimes called “ tailings.” The family were allowed to have this at one shilling below the current market rate. This practically meant the addition of a shilling to the

weekly sixteen and sixpence. The single bedroom for the eleven persons was ten feet "square," but that does not mean ten feet high—for the room was immediately under the sloping roof, and at its highest part—the centre—was only seven feet! There were, however, two small recesses about eighteen inches deep, one on each side of the chimney-piece. This tiny sleeping chamber was lighted by one small window placed opposite the fireplace, and about fifteen inches each way. Three beds were placed in this tiny, ill-lighted and ill-ventilated chamber. The diagram below will indicate the positions of the chimney and window, and the relative spaces occupied by the beds; and it will, at a glance, tell its own tale.



It does not appear there was any curtain or screen to separate the beds. In the one marked A the father, mother, a little boy called Jeremiah, a year and a half old, and a baby of four months slept. In B three girls slept—twins, Sarah and Elizabeth, aged twenty, and Mary, aged four. Bed C had to accommodate four

sons—Silas, seventeen, John, fifteen, James, fourteen, and Elias, aged ten,—eleven persons, six of them practically adults, in this tiny sleeping apartment! Unhappily, this was not a solitary instance of gross and shameful overcrowding—for the Commissioner stated that it was not an extraordinary example—every bedroom in the cottages at Blandford being overcrowded with inmates of both sexes and varying ages. The dearth of cottages—a very widespread “dearth” throughout the agricultural districts generally—was the cause of the overcrowding. The Commissioner, indeed, gave an instance in which, in another parish, no less than twenty-nine persons were compelled to occupy one cottage, and it was stated to him—and this was by an estate agent—that the twenty-nine were “married men and women and young people of nearly all ages”! In yet other cases it was by no means at all uncommon to find whole families occupying one room, and he added the painful and yet almost inevitable result of such a demoralising state of things, that the number of illegitimate children was very great in the district.

That the deplorable state of things indicated was of very general prevalence is amply proved by the evidence obtained by the Commissioner—the cottages everywhere throughout the four counties under notice being “old and frequently in a state of decay.” Here is an illustrative picture, which, though merely verbal, is sufficiently descriptive of a most deplorable state of things:—

“The floor of the room in which the family live during the day is always of stone in these counties, and wet or damp during the winter months, being frequently lower than the soil outside. The situation of the cottage is often extremely bad, no attention having been paid at the time of its building to facilities for draining. Cottages are frequently erected on a dead level, so that water cannot escape; and sometimes on spots lower than the surrounding ground. In the village of Stourpaine in Dorsetshire, there is a row of several labourers’ cottages, mostly join-

ing each other and fronting the street, in the middle of which is an open gutter. There are two or three narrow passages leading from the street between the houses to the back of them. Behind the cottages the ground rises rather abruptly, and about three yards up the elevation are placed the pigstys and places of convenience of the cottages. There are also shallow excavations, the receptacles, apparently, of all the dirt of the families. The matter constantly escaping from the pigstys, etc., is allowed to find its way through the passages between the cottages into the gutter in the street, so that the cottages are nearly surrounded by streams of filth. It was in these cottages that a malignant typhus broke out about two years ago, which afterwards spread through the village."

The bedroom of which a diagram has been given in this chapter was in one of these cottages! It is true that the Commissioner admitted that "this was perhaps an extreme case, but," he continued:—

"I hardly visited a cottage where there were any attempts at draining. The dirt of the family is thrown down before or behind the cottage; if there is any natural inclination in the ground from the cottage, it escapes; if not, it remains till evaporated! Most cottages have pigstys joining them, and these add to the external uncleanness of the labourer's dwelling."

To quote large numbers of similar instances of overcrowding and insanitariness, indicating a really terrible state of things at this period—1843—practically typical of what had been prevalent during the first part of the nineteenth century, and how long before it is unnecessary here to state—would be quite easy. An experienced surgeon, well versed in the condition of things in this respect, wrote to the Commissioner confirming the latter's evidence, and stating that "cottages everywhere" in his district were too small for the families living in them. He gave a striking illustration of the statement. He said:—

"Two years ago typhus fever occurred in a neighbouring parish which I attend. There was one cottage I attended which consisted of one room on the ground floor and two small bedrooms upstairs. In this cottage lived an old man with his wife, his two daughters,—middle-aged women,—and his son and wife, with three children—in all, ten

individuals. The whole family had the fever, some of them very severely. The son's wife, with two of her children, were in a bed in an outhouse ; in the outhouse was a well and a large tub containing pigs' victuals, and the general receptacle for everything. The floor was earthen, with no ceiling but the thatch of the roof. In the same village there were more than forty cases of typhus, and the spread of the disease must be attributed to the people living so densely packed together ! ”

A, at that time, well-known clergyman, a frequent correspondent of *The Times* under the signature of “ S. G. O.,” the Honourable and Rev. Sidney Godolphin Osborne, wrote to the same Commissioner from Bryanston Rectory, near Blandford, and gave other illustrative instances. He stated :—

“ Within the last year I saw, in a room about thirteen feet square, three beds : on the first lay the mother, a widow, dying of consumption ; on the second, two unmarried daughters, one eighteen years of age, the other twelve ; on the third, a young married couple whom I myself had married two days before.”

He added :—

“ A married woman of thoroughly good character told me a few weeks ago that, on her confinement, so crowded with children in her one room, they are obliged to put her on the floor in the middle of the room that they may pay her the requisite attention. She spoke of this as, to her, the most painful part of that, her hour of trial.”

But this clergyman said he “ could not put on paper ” scenes that had occurred in consequence of the overcrowding of labourers' cottages.

The Blue Book exposure of 1843 seems to have effected very little, if any, improvement, and at the end of twenty-five years, namely, in 1868, when further inquiry was made by a Poor Law Commissioner, things were generally very much as before. If in a few instances there was improvement it was practically due to individual benevolent effort. One of the individuals indicated was the clergyman already referred to, Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne. Although in alluding to

Dorsetshire he mentioned that there had been "the greatest improvement," largely, in all probability, due to himself—and although one of the Commissioners of 1868 spoke of "great changes" which landlords had effected in their estates, yet Mr. Stanhope, the Commissioner, had to confess that "in spite of these changes the cottages of this county are more ruinous and contain worse accommodation than those in any other county I have visited, except Shropshire"—the other counties being Kent, Chester, Stafford, and Rutland. He added: "Such villages as Bere Regis, Fordington, Winfrith, Cranbourne, or Charminster (in which there is an average of seven persons in a house), together with others described in the evidence, are a disgrace to the owners of the land, and contain many cottages unfit for human habitation." It is important here to qualify the expression "in a house," which means the smallest of small cottages.

Another Commissioner, the one for Wiltshire, Mr. Norman, was confirmed in his own report by the evidence of the medical men who were consulted that the cottage accommodation of that county was deplorable. He mentioned an interesting fact—the difference between cottages built by landlords of the estates containing them, by speculators, and by labourers themselves. It may be assumed what was really the case, namely, that the first-named description of dwelling was the best, those of speculators coming in as bad seconds, and the wretched erections of thatched wattle and cob made by the labourers the worst—containing usually only two rooms, a bedroom and a "sitting"-room. These last named were, in the majority of instances, entirely destitute of drainage, and, because of the poverty of the occupiers, in extremely bad repair.

One very important remark made by this Commissioner was, that the evils resulting from the unwholesome overcrowding of the rural labouring population

would be far greater than they actually are, but for the large proportion of time which they spend in the open air. There is recuperating force in pure air, and a large resort to it makes great amends for shorter periods of subjection to a vitiated atmosphere.

The result of the 1868-9 inquiry of the Commissioner who investigated the condition of things in Devonshire was to reveal a state of things, as regards dwellings, very similar to that existing in Dorset and Wilts. Exceptionally good dwellings were found on a few estates ; but they were merely the exception which is said to prove a rule. The general verdict was unsatisfactory. Overcrowding was largely prevalent ; and the two-roomed cottage there, as elsewhere in the south-western counties, largely abounded. There was found to be a general want of comfort : " cob " building, bad lighting arrangements and draughtiness, warped and badly-hung doors, and ill-fitting casements. As to evidence from reliable persons of these general averments, none could be more trustworthy than that of Canon Girdlestone, who, writing from the district of Devon,—Halberton,—where he had commenced his work of peasant migration, said to the Commissioner :—

" Many so-called cottages are mere ruinous hovels. In visiting the sick I am often obliged to take great care that my legs do not go through the holes in the floor of the sleeping-room to the room below. Some of the cottages are conveniently situated with regard to the work and some are not. Few have more than two bedrooms ; many have only one. They are overcrowded with the family ; the rooms are small, low, and badly ventilated ; the drainage is bad ; the water supply is usually good ; the gardens good ; the outhouses bad, and generally without doors. No progress is being made towards increasing cottage accommodation."

This particular report upon the condition of things in Devon—for the remarks were quite of general application—affords incidentally a striking illustration of flaws which nature remedies and of those which arise

from human neglect on the part of those responsible for the recorded condition of things. Good water supply is a characteristic of the county of Devon, which abounds with springs; and the goodness of the gardens is largely due to the natural richness of the red sandstone soil; but absence of drainage, insanitary rooms, and the general badness of structures for the accommodation of man and beast, are due to the farmers' culpable laxity.

With rare exceptions the same tale was told of Somersetshire :—

“ A special complaint,”—remarked Mr. Boyle, the Commissioner, in his report,—“ and that I found urged by all classes alike, was the deficiency of cottage accommodation throughout the whole of the West of England. In this county it is not an uncommon thing to find large families brought up in a cottage of two rooms, sometimes even in a cottage of only one room. At Butcombe a cottage was shown to me in which a man and wife and family of little children live, a mere lean-to against the wall of another house, with open thatch, and the sky visible through the thatch in many places.”

It may fairly be said that little if any improvement in dwellings had occurred in the thirty years from 1843 to 1873; and the following brief summary of the present writer's eye-witness experiences during 1872 and 1873 will probably be admitted as confirming this general statement, if comparison be made between this summary and the statements already extracted from the reports of the Poor Law Commissioners. A previous careful description may best, perhaps, be quoted verbatim—the scene being near a village in Somersetshire :—

“ A little further on we saw a strange sight. Lying a little way back from the road, we descried what might have been taken for a pigsty, but for the fact that a man was standing in its doorway, engaged in cutting up the body of a sheep. Upon calling him out and questioning him concerning himself and his cottage, we were invited to visit the interior of the latter. Unless we had seen it we could scarcely have believed that such a place could exist in England. It was



necessary to stoop very low to get inside this habitation of an English agricultural labourer. The total length of the hut was about 21 feet, its width 9 feet, and its height, measured to the extreme point of the thatched roof, about 10 feet; the height of the walls, however, not being so much as 6 feet. From the top of the walls was carried up to a point the thatched roof, there being no transverse beams or planks. In fact, had there been any, we could not have stood upright in this hovel. There was, of course, no second floor or 'upper storey' to the place, and the one small ground floor was divided in the middle into two compartments, each being about 9 feet square, one used for a bedroom and the other for a sitting-room. The ground was irregularly paved with large stones, and earth between and in their crevices. On our remarking that the floor must be very damp, if not wet, in winter, the man said, 'Oh no, sir, it don't "heave" much'; by which he meant that the moisture did not come up very much through the stones. From the thatch, in all directions, hung festoons of spiders' webs, intermingled with sprays of ivy, which, but for the squalor of the place, would have given a romantic appearance to the hut. John — (the inhabitant of this 'cottage') was a short, thick-set man, sixty years of age. He had lived there, he told us, a quarter of a century. His predecessors were a man, his wife, and six children, all of whom, he said, had slept in the 'bedroom,' 9 feet square. He paid his master out of his wages (averaging in his case five shillings a week!) £2, 10s. a year rent for his 'cottage,' and ten shillings a year more for the privilege of 'running' his pig—for John had a pig as well as some fowls—on his master's land. John also rented one-eighth of an acre of 'potato ground,' for which—still out of his miserable wages—he paid fifteen shillings a year. And yet this man appeared happy amidst it all. His poor patched garments looked singularly inconsistent when seen in connection with his pleasant-looking face. He spoke well of his employer. His cottage walls were made of 'cob,' or hardened mud, and, sometime since, the rain had come through the old thatched roof, and he thought it was very good of his master to put a new roof and a new door to his 'cottage' when he asked him to do so. Our hero had been married, but had lost his wife. One daughter however, was still living, and she had married a policeman in London. John said that when his cottage became no longer fit—according to his idea of fitness—for a 'residence,' the 'master' intended to pull down the mud walls and plough up the site." <sup>1</sup>

In another district, not a very long distance from the cottage last described, we found the greater number of

<sup>1</sup> "Peasant Life in the West of England."

the dwellings of the labourers in a miserable condition—so bad, in many cases, that they could not be made in any way habitable, and had to be used for barns or store-houses of a rough kind, and not unfrequently they had to be absolutely abandoned as useless. Overcrowding of the possibly tenantable ones was therefore, necessarily, rife. The men had to walk two and sometimes more miles to their work, and the same distance in returning home—the extra walking task having to be performed in all weathers. The suspension of farming operations during very wet weather was a relief, in such cases, to which there was the heavy set-off of no pay for the large number of those who were day labourers.

For some reasons the inevitable walk to and from work might present a small bright side when the weather was fine and invigorating, but under rainy conditions, not too pronounced to stop work, but quite sufficient to wet through a thinly clothed man, the weary plod, through deep rutted roads, thick, perhaps, with mud, to a dreary, damp, and frequently fireless hovel with nothing but coarse and scanty food to alleviate the hunger caused by outdoor labour, was a dismal set-off for the day's discomfort. Six miles, and sometimes more, of walking, in addition to farming work, was a not infrequent circumstance.

We found, in many instances, that cottage closets were actually built over a village brook that carried typhoid contagion to places where such drainage water was actually drunk!

Of typical cottages some further descriptions may here be given. In one the stone floor had numerous large fissures between the flags, caused by long use. These fissures were, in fact, small pits. The cottage itself stood in a hollow of the ground, and frequently, in winter and after rainfall, the water would actually soak through to the room and form little pools. Even in summer the floor would "heave," as the poor people termed it, or

become very damp, and often quite wet. If it is remembered that this damp room was very frequently the only sitting-room, the other one of the two-roomed cottage being the single bedroom, the misery and wretchedness of it may be imagined. The rent in this particular case was eighteenpence a week. Several cottages adjoining and in the same "row" were equally miserable. Coming in from the road a paved pathway ran along in front of the cottages, each of which was fronted by small bits of garden or "potato ground," as the occupiers usually designated it.

Another dwelling, in another village, consisted of three rooms—the sole accommodation for a family of ten—a labourer, his wife, and eight children. Here also the rent was eighteenpence a week. A cottage in the same village had for its lower room a stone floor that was fortunately raised about two feet from the street level, and was entered by steps. The only other room, for sleeping, above it, was all the accommodation available for eight persons—six children and the father and mother; the children being aged respectively fourteen (a boy), thirteen (a girl), and four younger ones, including twins five years old. The "bedroom"—the single one over the single living-room below—was practically only an attic, and almost furnitureless. There were actually two windows, but several panes had been broken and the holes stuffed with rags to keep the draughts out. It was impossible for us to stand upright in parts of this room where the roof sloped to the low bordering wall. The mother of the family (of eight) informed us that no less than thirteen persons had, at one time, slept in this tiny chamber.

The squalor of another hovel in the same Somersetshire village was almost indescribable. The occupier was a man of sixty-nine, "crippled up" with rheumatism. He had therefore been obliged to discontinue regular work, and all beyond what he got for occasional odd

jobs was eighteenpence from the parish and a weekly loaf of bread. He paid a shilling a week for his two-roomed hovel. It was hardly possible to call the squalid downstairs place a room. It was much more like a hole, and the "ground floor" was literally earth, and had no paving of any kind!

Other cottages in the particular village under notice had bedrooms that were pitiable to look at. A rickety table and a broken chair formed sometimes their sole furniture; often no vestige of carpet on the floor; and huddled down in corners miserable rags of bedclothes. These were so meagre that when divided at night amongst "the family" they were inadequate for sufficient warmth. And yet the land in this neighbourhood was notoriously rich, and the farming prosperous.

We traversed the well-known Exmoor district, bordering on Devon and Somerset, and found that there also the general condition of dwellings for the farm labourers was very bad—one general or living-room and one bedroom serving for the accommodation of an average of some seven or, it might be, eight persons. In fact—to sum up the general position as regards the four counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Wilts—our personal investigations in all ways confirmed the reports of the Commissioners, which indicated that, with few exceptions, the dwellings of agricultural labourers throughout that large and important district were extremely bad. Inadequate altogether in size, ill-built or ruinous, ill-drained, damp, draughty, and overcrowded, they were utterly unfit to house a class of workers who more than others, on account of the exposures to which their labours subjected them, required dry, roomy, and in other ways sanitary habitations.

It will now be interesting to glance back at what may be called the general position of the English peasantry as regards remuneration for their labours—that remuneration taking the form not only of cash wages, but

of certain benefits "in kind" commonly designated "privileges." It will be especially interesting to present information that shall show the exact position of the labourer in this respect at the period when the revolt against existing conditions took the unexpectedly bold form of the "strike," that was the unique occasion of calling prominent public attention to evils that had long been patiently and uncomplainingly borne. The only reliable sources of information on this subject were those of the Reports of the Commissioners appointed under the Royal Commission of 10th May 1867. The object of their investigation was "to inquire into and report upon the employment of children, young persons, and women in agriculture, for the purpose of ascertaining to what extent and with what modifications the principles of the Factory Acts can be adopted for the regulation of such employment, and especially with a view to the better education of such children." An immense amount of information was obtained and collected into seven closely-printed volumes, extending to about 2250 large pages. As the inquiry went on for about three years, continuing until the close of the year 1870, it will readily be understood that it was very exhaustive; and although no summary of the reports was officially issued, the present writer was favoured by one of the Commissioners—the Honourable Edward Stanhope—with the material from which we have made the succeeding *résumé* as to the average of ordinary wages in England, cider and beer allowance, cottage rents, piecework, pauperism, etc. The information will be most conveniently given, perhaps, alphabetically, under the names of counties.

The wages referred to are those of ordinary labourers, not of carters, who usually receive a somewhat higher rate of pay; nor of shepherds, an also somewhat superior and better-paid class of men; and the Commissioner supplying us with the information was of opinion that the

weekly supply of beer or cider, when given regularly, was worth about a shilling a week. As to perquisites, they depended so much upon the individual good-nature or otherwise of employers that they could not be valued for the purposes of a general summary of emoluments. Mr. Stanhope considered that the ordinary weekly wages might be taken as the true test of an agricultural labourer's earnings in any part of the country.

#### BEDFORDSHIRE.

Taking the county throughout, the wages averaged from eleven to twelve shillings a week for weekday work, but there was some extra payment for Sunday work, sometimes with beer, reckoned at one shilling a week. If working by the piece the labourer was able, adding the value of his daily beer, to earn thirteen and sixpence a week. Cottage rents in the Bedford and Woburn Unions ranged from one shilling to two and sixpence a week, sometimes being as high as three and sixpence. The pauperism was equal to 7·2 per cent. of the population.

#### BERKSHIRE.

Average wages in this county were from ten to eleven shillings per week ; but in the Witney Union they were only nine shillings a week. Extra allowance, however, was given during harvest, with beer for carting. Cottage rents averaged from a shilling to eighteenpence a week. The Poor Law returns for Berkshire gave the average wages in the Hungerford Union as nine shillings a week ; in the Farringdon Union as ten shillings, and in the Wantage Union also as ten shillings. When engaged in piece-work eleven shillings a week could be earned. Carters, in some cases, were allowed a daily quart of small beer ; and, in addition to that, the rent of, or provision of, a cottage. The pauperism in this county was reckoned at 6·5 per cent. of the population.

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

In Buckinghamshire the wages ranged from eleven to thirteen shillings a week. Sunday work was only performed occasionally, but, when required, there was some extra payment. By piece-work a little more could be earned, and the extra amount, reckoning in the value of the beer allowance, ranged from eighteenpence to half a crown a week. As already stated, the earnings of carters are usually above those of ordinary labourers, and in this county the difference was placed at two shillings ; so that, practically, a carter in Buckinghamshire could earn fourteen shillings a week. Cottage rents varied from a shilling to half a crown ; but in some cases the men paid three and sixpence a

week—a big deduction from, for example, wages of even fourteen shillings a week. Pauperism in this county was 6·5 per cent. of the population.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

There was rather an extreme range in the county of Cambridge, from the lowest to the highest wages. The former was ten shillings, the latter thirteen; and although carters were not alluded to they no doubt got more, as elsewhere, for their work. Pauperism was considered to be 6·9 per cent. of the population.

## CHESTER.

In the Nantwich Union in Cheshire wages ranged from eleven to twelve shillings a week, and piecework was rather seldom performed. In the case, sometimes, of married men whose cottages were situated at some distance from their work, they were boarded at the farmhouses, and obtained payment in addition to their board of five or six shillings a week. Cottage rents were generally about eighteenpence a week. In two other Unions wages were better: in the Runcorn Union, fifteen shillings and beer; in the Hawarden Union, fifteen shillings without beer. Pauperism was 3·2 per cent.

## CORNWALL.

It was rather a curious circumstance that in the parts of Cornwall bordering upon Devon a lower rate of wages prevailed than in the more remote parts of the first-named county. Near Devon—the rates in which naturally perhaps influenced the contiguous parts of the adjoining county—wages were from nine to ten shillings a week: but on the “off” side, so to speak, of Cornwall they were twelve shillings a week, with the addition of a “privilege” in the shape of grist corn allowance and cider. It was, however, only the best of the peasantry in Cornwall who were, by the farmer’s selection, employed on piecework. Poor Law returns, as distinct from the findings of the Agricultural Commissioners, put the average wages at this period in the Camelford Union at eleven shillings a week; and the same returns gave pauperism the percentage of 4·9 per cent. It must be noted, however, and it will be shown in instances later on, that wherever mining industries, as in Cornwall, or manufacturing industries existed, the competition, for labour generally, always tended to raise the rates of the lowest kinds of labour. It is this circumstance, no doubt, that caused the marked and very appreciable difference in wages between Cornwall and Devon, and also influenced the pauperism of the two districts; for pauperism in Cornwall was only 4·9 per cent. of the population.

## CUMBERLAND.

Here again the marked effect of a mining district is shown on rates of wages, for they were as high in Cumberland as from fifteen to eighteen shillings per week; and in addition to these

quite superior wages, privileges were occasionally given. About two-thirds, however, of the farm work in Cumberland was done by men who were "boarded in," and obtained both food and sleeping accommodation in the farmhouses. In some cases food was given with less wages. This was the case in the Wigton Union, where either fifteen shillings in cash formed the entire wages, or nine shillings in cash and food in lieu of the difference. The returns of pauperism gave a comparatively low rate—3·8 per cent. of the population.

#### DERBYSHIRE.

It was stated that in this county "an average man could command an average wage of fifteen shillings per week, besides having some potatoes planted for him." Near the mines, however,—again showing the beneficial influence of competition,—wages went up to as high as seventeen shillings a week. Pauperism for the Bakewell Union was returned at the lowest yet quoted,—so far as we have gone in our enumeration,—2·4 per cent. of the population.

#### DEVONSHIRE.

The purely agricultural character of Devon is shown by the rate of wages, the "range" being very limited, namely, from eight to nine shillings a week only. In addition to this was a pretty regular allowance of cider—the prime drink of the county, made from its more or less (according to the seasons) abundant crops of apples. There were, however, sometimes "perquisites" thrown in, in the shape of "grist corn," food, besides drink during harvest time, firewood also, and sometimes free potato ground. Besides these privileges, it was often customary to give carters and shepherds rent-free cottages. The value of these was usually "reckoned" as from a shilling to eighteenpence a week. The differences prevailing in the same county in wages and privileges are rather interestingly shown by the Poor Law returns. In the Axminster Unions, wages eight and sixpence to nine shillings and three pints of cider; in the Barnstaple Union, eleven shillings, without mention of cider; in the Okehampton Union, wages ten to twelve shillings per week, three pints daily of cider, and potato ground; and in the Tiverton Union, wages nine shillings, two quarts of cider daily, fuel, and some other but unenumerated privileges. Pauperism was given for the whole county as averaging 5·7 per cent. of the population.

#### DORSETSHIRE.

Wages were given in this county as eight shillings a week, with a rent-free cottage, or nine shillings without a cottage. "Privileges" varied, but are thus described as existing in the Vale of Blackmore: "Some cider only," and "sometimes grist corn, potato ground, or cartage of fuel. These might add two shillings a week to the average wage or nothing." Averaging everything—piecework and all included—the total earnings of ordinary



labourers ranged from ten to eleven shillings per week. Cottages were obtainable at rents of from one to two shillings per week. The following, however, were the Poor Law returns from various unions in Dorsetshire: in the Carne Union, wages nine to ten shillings a week, together with a free cottage and garden and grist corn; in the Wareham Union, wages nine and sixpence to ten shillings a week, besides cottage and garden and manure for the latter—a privilege that probably in other cases, though not specifically mentioned, would be given by a good-natured master; in the Poole Union, wages took the exceptionally high range of from twelve to fifteen shillings a week. The return of pauperism for Dorsetshire—it must have been highest in the eight shillings a week districts—was the serious one of 7·1 per cent.

#### DURHAM.

Once again the influence of mining competition is shown by the higher comparative wages of the peasantry of Durham: for wages ranged, at the period under review, from fifteen to eighteen shillings per week; the payment to "hinds" being from ten to thirteen and sixpence per week, with, in addition in their case, free fuel and free cartage of it to their homes, and some allowance also of potatoes. Rents of cottages in the county of Durham were from a shilling to eighteenpence. Poor Law returns gave the arrangements in the Darlington Union somewhat differently, namely, wages fifteen shillings, with house rent given, an allowance of potatoes, meat and drink during harvest; and in the Sedgfield Union wages were returned as seventeen shillings. The average of pauperism throughout the county was a fairly low one, by comparison with other counties, namely, 3·5 per cent. of the population.

#### ESSEX.

It may seem surprising that the wages in the parts of Essex near London were not higher than they were; but they were given as ranging from ten to thirteen shillings per week, although "first-class labourers" could earn from £35 to £36 a year, or thirteen and sixpence a week with piecework, etc. Cottage rents were eighteenpence a week. Returns given by the Billericay Union show wages in that district at twelve shillings a week; in the Tendring Union at eleven shillings; and in the Dunmow Union at ten shillings, in addition to beer at harvest-times. Pauperism for the county of Essex was rather high, namely, 6·2 per cent. of the population.

#### GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Cider, in another county for the production of that beverage—Gloucestershire—naturally formed part of the "allowance" of the farm labourer; and was added to the wages prevailing of from nine to ten shillings per week. In this county also it was stated that "first-class labourers could earn from £32 to £35 a year," but allowing for some lost time their earnings on the whole would

often barely, it is said, exceed the already-quoted weekly rate. In the Vale of Berkeley there was a higher rate, making it from one to two shillings more. Cottage rents were from one to two shillings a week. In the following unions wages were returned as under : in the Cheltenham Union, ten shillings a week ; in the Newent Union, the same ; in the Stow Union, nine and sixpence ; but in the Strood Union they ranged from ten to twelve shillings. It must be noted that the general rate first given as ranging from nine to ten shillings a week for the whole county of Gloucester comes from the summary of the Agricultural Commissioner, and that the maximum is exceeded by the Poor Law returns in one Union, that of Strood, where it is given at twelve shillings. The more reliable returns were understood at the time to be those of the Commissioners, and for this reason, in all probability : Boards of Guardians in the rural districts, then as now, were largely composed of farmers, and when the clerk of a union was written to for information his easiest method would naturally be to bring up the inquiry at a Board meeting, as all the districts in the union would be there represented. Naturally also the farmers' disposition would be not to minimise the amount of wages paid ; and some possibly local circumstances might have occasioned a temporary rise in the Strood Union of Essex when the farmers were asked to give the prevailing rate of wages. The present writer, who is a member of a rural Board of Guardians, remembers, only a short time before penning these lines, an inquiry coming from the Local Government Board as to the existing rates of wages in his particular union. There was quite an appreciable variety of opinion, and finally a vote had to be taken on the subject, and the opinion not of the whole Board but of the majority of those present at the inquiry had to be sent to the Local Government as the answer ; and it would not probably have been stated by the clerk that it was only the "return" of the majority. Returning to the Gloucestershire record, pauperism was given as 5·2 per cent. of the population. That information also was of course obtained from the Poor Law Guardians of the unions ; but it may be assumed to be accurate, because it was a mere question of arithmetical calculation based upon the actual number of the poor dealt with by the various unions, and calculated upon the number of the population, or, to be more exact, the estimated population.

#### HAMPSHIRE.

Wages in the county of Hants were returned at from ten to eleven shillings a week ; but there was no truck system in that county, and therefore no "cider truck." Cottage rents were from a shilling to eighteenpence a week. The Poor Law returns gave wages as follows : in the Alresford Union, ten shillings ; in the Andover Union, ten to eleven shillings ; in the Droxford Union, eleven to twelve shillings ; and in the South Stoneham Union, eleven to eleven and sixpence. Pauperism was returned as 5·5 per cent. of the population.

## HEREFORD.

Here wages ranged from nine to eleven shillings a week, and, naturally, in so famous a cider county as that of Hereford, a daily allowance of that drink. The allowance, however, also naturally varied in summer and winter—three quarts in summer, an appreciably large quantity, and two in winter. To drink eight "half-pints" in winter would seem rather considerable refreshment. Cottage rents were from a shilling to eighteenpence a week. It was reckoned that, taking the year through, from a shilling to eighteenpence extra per week could be made by pieceworkers, and at harvest-time—when farm work is often done on the piecework principle—an extra sovereign was generally given for the periods instead of the piecework rate. Extras, in the shape of perquisites, were uncertain. The union authorities made the following returns of wages: in the Bromyard Union, ten shillings per week, with cider in addition; in the Hereford Union, from nine to ten shillings per week, with cider; and in the Ledbury Union, nine to eleven shillings, as well as cider. Pauperism was returned at 5·1 per cent. of the population.

## HERTFORDSHIRE.

The Agricultural Commissioners return of wages for Herts was from ten to twelve shillings per week, and the Poor Law returns gave them as from ten and ninepence to eleven and sixpence in the Hitchin Union, and eleven and threepence to eleven and sixpence in the Royston Union; whilst pauperism was returned at 6·5 per cent.

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

The Commissioner who furnished material for the summary now being given did not give us the average wages prevailing in Huntingdonshire; but the Poor Law returns record them for the St. Neot's Union as from ten to eleven shillings a week; and pauperism was returned for this county at 5·2 per cent. of the population.

## KENT.

Somewhat better rates than many prevailing elsewhere are recorded for the Garden—that is, the kitchen or fruit garden—of England. In the clay lands of Kent they were given at twelve shillings a week, but in other parts of the county a little more—rising, in some localities, to as much as fifteen shillings; but where piecework arrangements were the custom, the tiller of the soil could earn five or even six shillings a week more. This high rate, however, was practically confined to the hop districts. According to the Poor Law returns, the wages for the several unions were given as under: in the Eastray Union, from thirteen to fourteen shillings per week; in the Faversham Union, fourteen shillings; and in the Romney Union, fifteen shillings. Cottage rents were rather high in Kent, averaging half a crown a week.

## LANCASHIRE.

Another fairly good wage county was Lancashire, and there, according to the Poor Law returns, wages were : in the Clitheroe Union, fifteen to sixteen and sixpence per week, or if board and lodging were given, seven shillings per week in cash in addition ; in the Garstang Union also, seven shillings a week and food ; whilst in the Ormskirk Union, fifteen shillings without food was the rate—or twelve shillings and some food—that is to say, partial food. In this county pauperism stood at the low figure of 3·3 per cent. of the population.

## LEICESTERSHIRE.

Wages in the county of Leicester were from eleven to thirteen shillings per week. But more was obtainable in the districts in close proximity to towns, or collieries ; and an extra payment of one shilling a week for Sunday work. There was not much piecework in Leicestershire. Cottage rents were from one and sixpence to two shillings. Poor Law returns showed the wages as follows : in the Market Bosworth Union, thirteen shillings, and in the Melton Union, twelve to fourteen shillings. Pauperism was returned as 4·3 per cent. of the population.

## LINCOLNSHIRE.

A comparatively good rate of wages prevailed in the county of Lincoln. The lowest were in the south-eastern districts of that county, and there they averaged thirteen and sixpence per week ; in other parts, fifteen shillings. Piecework was very general, especially in the northern parts, and there, by adopting it, the labourers could add an average of two shillings a week to the ordinary wages. In parts of the county the peasantry lived on the farms, and then were paid partly in cash and partly in kind—their total earnings, in such cases, being reckoned at from £40 to £45 per annum. Cottage rents ranged from one and sixpence to two and sixpence per week. Pauperism was given at 4·9 per cent. of the population.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE.

The general average of wages in the county of Monmouth was given at ten shillings a week—yet near the town of Monmouth, nine shillings was said to be the rate, but there were perquisites in addition. The Poor Law returns of wages, however, materially differed, and were as follows : in the Bedwelty Union, fifteen to sixteen shillings a week ; in the Monmouth Union, eleven, with a daily allowance of two quarts of cider ; and in the Newport Union, thirteen shillings. Pauperism was returned at 6 per cent. of the population.

## NORFOLK.

Wages generally were said to range in Norfolk from eleven to twelve shillings a week, but first-class men, by piecework, could

manage to earn as much as from £37 to £40 a year. Poor Law returns, however, gave them as follows: in the Aylsham Union, ten shillings to twelve shillings a week; but in the Depwade and Downham Unions, ten shillings; and pauperism 6·8 per cent. of the population.

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

According to the Agricultural Commissioners, in South Northamptonshire the wages were eleven shillings a week, and in the north of the county thirteen shillings. A good amount of piecework was, however, obtainable, and that would raise the average rate of pay. Poor Law returns gave wages as follows: Brixworth Union, twelve shillings; Oundle Union, eleven shillings; and Peterborough Union, twelve shillings. Potatoes were given to permanently employed men.

## NORTHUMBERLAND.

To state briefly the prosperous condition of the Northumbrian peasant, as shown by the fact that his wages at the time under notice were quite double those prevailing in many parts of the south-western counties, will be to epitomise a condition of life that is capable of very interesting amplification from the bare fact of a "wages reckoned from fifteen to eighteen shillings a week"; and for that amplification we cannot do better than quote from the Commissioners' report. They say:—

"'Hind' is the name given to the carters who work the horses; each man looking after two horses. There are also shepherds, spademen, and byremen. It is the custom of the county to pay the labourers mostly in kind, but a few prefer money payments. Their wages may be put from fifteen to eighteen shillings per week, including everything, and taking the average price of corn as a basis. The hind, who is paid in kind, has a cow kept for him, and receives also £5 or £6 of stint-money in lieu of an allowance formerly given for the keep of a 'dry cow.' He has a certain amount of corn, permission to keep one pig, or two, as the case may be, a house rent free, coals led, and potatoes planted. The three last items are more or less considered as the retaining fee of the woman worker, formerly known by the name of the 'bondager.'"

The wages in Northumberland, as given by the Poor Law returns, were in the Berwick Union, fifteen shillings a week; in the Glendale Union, sixteen to eighteen shillings; and in the Morpeth Union, fifteen to sixteen shillings. Pauperism for the county—4·7 per cent. of the population.

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

In this county, as elsewhere, wages near the larger towns, where, necessarily, there was more competition for labour, were higher than these in the remoter parts. In Nottingham-

shire they were given as at an average of fifteen shillings a week ; but somewhat lower on the clay lands. Cottages were obtainable at rents of from eighteenpence to two shillings a week. According to the Poor Law returns of the Newark Union, however, wages were given as from twelve to fifteen shillings a week ; and pauperism was returned as 4·7 per cent. of the population.

#### OXFORDSHIRE.

Contrary to what might be supposed, wages in Oxfordshire were returned by the Witney Union as only nine shillings a week, but the Commissioners gave them as generally throughout the county from ten to eleven shillings a week, with extra payment during the harvest season ; and pauperism was returned at 4·7 per cent. of the population.

#### SHROPSHIRE.

An appreciable difference was noticeable between the rates of wages in the north and south respectively of the county of Salop. In the former they were from ten to twelve shillings a week, whilst in the south-west they were from nine to ten only ; but during harvest, in Shropshire, as in some other counties, food, in addition, was given during harvest instead of extra or overtime money ; and on this plan there were, perhaps, some obvious advantages. Besides wages, however, some perquisites were given—cartage, for instance, free, cottage rent free, and shorter hours of labour. When rent was paid, the amounts were from eighteenpence to two shillings a week. According to the Poor Law returns for the Shifnal Union, wages were given as from eleven to twelve shillings a week, with beer allowance two quarts, and potatoe ground. Pauperism was not very high—4·1 per cent. of the population.

#### SOMERSETSHIRE.

We come now to a very low level, in a county of which we have already had something to say. The general wages are given by the Commissioners as from seven to eight shillings a week, with cider allowance, and "sometimes perquisites." The cider, to the extent of two or three pints a day, was valued at a shilling a week ; sometimes there was potato ground given, and sometimes grist corn. Pauperism was naturally at the high rate of 6·8 per cent. of the population, a condition caused by the miserable wages.

#### STAFFORDSHIRE.

In the county of Stafford, also, wages were higher near the larger towns ; but, on the pasture lands, work was stated to be not very constant. The rate given was twelve shillings a week, with perquisites, which were of a varied character. Poor

Law returns in the Burton Union gave the wages as thirteen shillings a week, and two daily quarts of beer. Pauperism was low—3·7 per cent. only of the population.

## SUFFOLK.

The Commissioner to whom we were indebted for the summary of information we have been giving, did not furnish us with the wages for Suffolk; and therefore reliance must be placed upon the Poor Law returns, which gave the wages in the Blything Union as from ten to twelve shillings a week; in the Samford Union, eleven shillings a week; and in the Stow Union, ten shillings a week. Pauperism for the county—7 per cent. of the population.

## SURREY.

It is rather curious that proximity to London had a more beneficial effect upon farm wages in the case of Surrey than in that of Essex: for in the county now under notice wages were returned as from twelve to fifteen shillings per week; and, by piecework—taking the average of twelve months—one or two shillings per week more. The Poor Law returns made from one Union—that of Epsom—gave wages of fourteen shillings a week, and for the Godstone Union, one shilling less. Cottage rents were—except near London, where somewhat higher prices would naturally obtain—about eighteenpence a week.

## SUSSEX.

A general estimate for Sussex gave wages at from twelve to thirteen shillings a week; but Poor Law returns were as follows: in the Horsham Union, twelve shillings; in the Midhurst Union, the same; also in three other unions, the same—the Thakenham, the Ticehurst, and the West Hampnett Unions. Pauperism was returned at 5·5 per cent. of the population.

## WARWICKSHIRE.

This county was agriculturally made famous by the "strike"; and it was pretty widely known that the strike was against twelve shillings a week, the rate given by the Commissioners for the period not very long before it took place. Cider as well as perquisites were occasionally given. Cottage rents were from a shilling to eighteenpence per week. The Poor Law returns gave wages for the Stratford Union as eleven shillings a week, and for the Warwick Union as twelve; and pauperism at 3·6 per cent. of the population.

## WILTSHIRE.

We come now once more to one of the south-western counties, and find, naturally, that the rate of wages drops, and was recorded as from nine to eleven shillings a week; but piecework

would bring it up to from one to two shillings a week more, although sometimes a lump sum was given in lieu of it for a stated period. The Commissioner mentions £1, but does not state for what period that amount was payable. Cottage rents were, in Wiltshire, as in so many other counties, a shilling to one and sixpence a week. Returns from the Wiltshire Unions give the undermentioned results: in the Aderbury Union, nine and sixpence to ten shillings a week; in the Chippenham and Melksham Unions, eleven shillings; but in the Warminster Union, nine and sixpence to ten shillings. There were seldom any allowances, except at harvest-time, and pauperism was naturally swollen to 7·2 per cent.

#### WORCESTERSHIRE.

East and west differed very appreciably in the county of Worcester; whilst in its eastern parts twelve shillings were obtainable, wages in the west of the county were only nine shillings weekly. Cider, but only in some cases, was given. Harvest work was mostly performed by the piece; but, in some instances, £1 extra was paid. Cottage rents, as in so many other counties, were from a shilling to eighteenpence a week. The Poor Law returns gave wages, as follows, in the Unions mentioned: Droitwich, ten shillings, and cider; Evesham, the same; Pershore, ten to twelve shillings, with cider; Stourbridge, twelve shillings, with beer allowance. Pauperism, 4·1 per cent. of the population.

#### YORKSHIRE.

A good deal of piecework was the rule in Yorkshire, but ordinary wages were given as from fourteen to fifteen shillings a week. Food, however, as part of wages, was a not uncommon arrangement; and then the cash paid was usually about seven shillings a week. The Poor Law returns, however, for the several enumerated unions, gave the following as the wages paid per week: Doncaster, fifteen shillings; Leyburn, thirteen to eighteen shillings; Malton, fifteen, or seven or eight shillings with food; Pateley-Bridge, fifteen to seventeen shillings; Richmond, twelve to fifteen shillings; Settle, thirteen and sixpence to eighteen shillings; and Thorne, thirteen and sixpence to fifteen shillings. Pauperism was very low, as may be inferred from the comparatively prosperous wages of Yorkshire labourers, namely, only 2·9 per cent. of the population.

Our "glance back" at dwellings and wages has been rather a long one: yet the facts are of historical interest and importance, as revealing the material condition of one of the most important classes of labourers in this country before prominent public attention was called to that condition.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### CHARACTER AND EDUCATION.

THERE are exceptions to every rule ; but it may be said that a sturdy honesty characterises the British peasant. In other respects, however, it may be that lapses in what is called morality should not be too hardly pressed, bearing in mind the circumstances under which he is born and brought up. General ignorance, including to a rather appreciable extent inability to read and write, was widely spread at the period, now about forty years ago, particularly under review. It is probable that the old system of parish apprenticeship, with its numerous attendant evils, has largely, if not quite entirely, died out. It oftentimes involved much cruelty, both to the children apprenticed to the farmers as well as to their parents. Under certain circumstances it might have proved advantageous ; but it is to be feared that, in the majority of instances, it led to suffering and immorality. The case of the western counties was, it must be feared, largely representative of other agricultural counties. One of the Commissioners for the inquiry of 1842-43, Mr. Austin, wrote, referring particularly to Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Wilts :—

“ A great many women, accustomed to work in the fields like other women of the same class, are unable to read and write, or if to do either, it is very imperfectly. This is more particularly the case with the women above thirty ; but generally, even where they have been taught to read and write, the women of the agricultural labouring

class are in a state of ignorance, affecting the daily welfare and the comfort of their families. Ignorance of the commonest things—of needlework, cooking, and other matters of domestic economy—is described as nearly universally prevalent; and when any knowledge of such things is possessed by the wife of a labourer, it is generally to be traced to the circumstance of her having, before marriage, lived as a servant in a farmhouse or elsewhere. A girl brought up in a cottage until she marries, is generally ignorant of nearly everything she ought to be acquainted with for the comfortable and economical management of a cottage. The effects of such ignorance are seen in many ways, but in no one more striking than in its hindering girls from getting out to service, as they are not capable of doing anything that is required in a family of a better description. The further effect of this is, that, not being able to find a place, a young woman goes into the fields to labour, with which ends all chance of improving her position; she marries and brings up her daughters in the same ignorance, and their lives are a repetition of her own."

As every penny that could be earned by the children was required for the maintenance of the family—living in a semi-pauperised condition—encouragement was offered to the bad system of employment at a tender age. Hence education—this was long before the era of compulsory legislation—became totally neglected. Both day and Sunday schools offered some meagre instruction—just a smattering of the rudiments of education was the most that was acquired; but it was not possible to give more than a smattering of things that should have been acquired, as the children could not work and also attend school. Obviously, farm work materially interfered with the labourers' children's instruction, as it was so urgently necessary to send the poor little creatures out to the fields for "bird scaring," or other occupation that a child of tender years might be able to manage, at the very earliest moment at which they could earn even the merest pittance. The Commissioners very properly pointed out that what little a child might learn at school would generally be forgotten by the time it returned, after the interruption of farm work. Even at the best the school period

was very short, because of the extreme urgency of beginning the serious business of their lives—rarely other than farm work—at the earliest possible opportunity. A most interesting commentary on the condition of the peasantry was made at the period under review, by the Honourable and Reverend Sidney Godolphin Osborne, who remarked :—

“ Whilst I trace the immorality of the labouring classes to defective education, the want of means to preserve decency in their families, and the temptations to intemperance which are to be found in the manner in which the beer-shop keepers, unchecked by legal interference ” (these were the days before modern licensing laws) “ offer, at every hour of the day, and almost every hour of the night, all the inducements likely to draw the labourer from home, and to fix in him a love of drink and bad company, I trace much of the crime he commits to *absolute want*.”

Nothing could be more pertinent to the position of affairs at the time when the quoted remarks were penned—1842—a position that had not materially altered thirty years later, when the present writer made his first visit of personal inquiry to the great agricultural district named—than Mr. Osborne’s concluding remarks. He most truthfully said :—

“ Pamphlets on cottage husbandry, plans for cottage building, tracts on morality, treatises on economy, have been sent forth with no sparing hand ; but in nine villages out of ten the cottage is still nothing but a slightly improved hovel, morality is borne down by the pressure of temptation on minds unfortified by education in good principles, and the wages of the stoutest and most industrious scarce find the coarsest food, the smallest sufficiency of fuel. In my opinion, unless those above them soon determine to give up some of their own luxuries, that they may give to the labourer such wages as shall enable him to rear his family, in comfort, in a dwelling in which decency can be preserved, and within reach of a school and a church in which he and his may be taught the learning fitted for their station here, and tending to place them in the way to Heaven hereafter—unless some great effort is made to obtain these objects, our peasantry will become, not the support they should be to the country, but a pregnant source of all that can tend to subvert its best institutions.”

In saying that the position of affairs thus pointedly and truthfully outlined by Mr. Osborne had not materially changed in thirty years, it is perhaps just to note that there were some signs of an upward tendency towards a better condition of things; but they were very slight. To illustrate the slight change for the better, it may be mentioned that a decrease was observable in the number of persons unable, on marriage, to sign the parish register, but having to make marks. In 1855, in one illustrative county, Devonshire, no less than 27 per cent. of the men and 33 per cent. of the women had to sign by marks. Ten years after, namely, in 1865, the proportion was 18 per cent. of men and 22 per cent. of women. It is curious that the exact proportion between the two classes was maintained at the later date, as compared with 1855, the result, tried by "rule of three," leaving no fraction.

"There was evidence, too, in 1868-69"—the present writer remarked in 1872—"of a greater desire on the part of parents to secure education for their children than had previously existed; though plans and proposals for education were more conspicuous than any practical efforts to make instruction a reality. There were signs, too, of a slight improvement in morals, in so far, at least, as a diminution of drunkenness was concerned; but the terrible evils of overcrowding still existed in full vigour, and the 'mop,' 'hiring,' or 'statute' fair, to which no reference has yet been made, had not ceased to disgrace some of the smaller towns of the western districts. These fairs, annually held to enable servants of both sexes to be hired, were oftentimes the occasion of the greatest drunkenness and profligacy. Young girls dressed in their finest clothes were exhibited, like cattle, to be hired by the would-be employers who came to the fair to seek their services; and the scenes which frequently took place at the close of the day were too disgraceful for description. But though the 'mop' fair had not then, as it has not yet, become an institution of the past, there were, happily, signs that its decline had commenced."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Peasant Life in the West of England."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### PEASANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

SOME reference, in the preceding chapter, has already been made to the employment of women and children in agriculture. It is probably the stringent regulations of the Education Acts now in force that have largely brought about the discontinuance of child labour; and women are very much less employed than they used to be in farming occupations. But, at the time under review, it was quite a frequent occurrence to see women in the fields. The system, however, was fraught with serious evils—the worst of which was practically the entire neglect of her family during the whole of the daytime. Now and then it might happen that a grandparent or aunt or other relative was available to look after the little ones; but that would be quite exceptional. Older children could sometimes look after the younger ones; but often, quite untrained as these older children were, they could ill supply the mother's place. Ordinarily, a child above the age of seven or eight would be required to work, and then, in many instances, young ones less than seven or eight had to be left in the care of mere babies. Eightpence or ninepence a week was, nevertheless, all that a young child of eight or nine could earn in the fields; but even that miserable sum was a not inappreciable item in the total earnings of the family.

Children had actually to be locked up in a cottage under the charge of one no older than seven, and the

most distressing accidents often occurred in consequence, such as the children setting themselves on fire. Here is a note made by the present writer, in 1872, as the result of his personal inquiries :—

“Babies left in charge of tiny children, themselves little more than babies, have been found dead by distressed mothers when the latter have returned at night ! Apart from the actual dangers of this kind to which peasant children were subjected, there could be, of course, little or no control exercised by young guardians—left in charge of tiny brothers and sisters—over those entrusted to their care. No training or education of any kind could be given to them. What a sight for a mother returning at night to her cheerless home, tired, wet perhaps, and hungry, to find her little ones dirty—from having, uncontrolled, run riot through the house—with their clothes torn—the poor clothes which had been neatly mended perhaps by the hard-working mother in weary moments stolen from her exhausting toil ; and food so scanty and poor at the best of times—wasted or destroyed by thoughtless little ones.”

The Commissioner truly remarked :—

“There is not the same order in the cottage, nor the same attention paid to the father’s comfort, as when his wife remains at home all day. On returning from her labour she has to look after her children, and her husband may have to wait for his supper. He may come home tired and wet ; he finds his wife has arrived just before him ; she must give her attention to the children ; there is no fire, no comfort, and he goes to the beer-shop.”

Up to 1869 there had been no improvements in this state of things. Mr. Stanhope, speaking of Dorsetshire—typical of many other counties—remarked :—

“Throughout the county, except where gloving is a constant source of occupation at home, women are largely employed in the fields. A good deal of the work done by women is in the winter, among the turnips, on the threshing machine, or in the barns.”

He stated that boys were engaged by farmers at a very early age—sometimes at six years of age or even younger. Quite a large proportion of boys were employed in farm work from the ages of six to nine, and

the poor parents were obliged to let them go. There was a difference in favour of Devonshire, where children were not employed quite so much on farm work as in other counties; and in 1868 Boards of Guardians in Devon expressed the opinion that children should not work on farms until over ten years of age. Women, too, were not so much employed in that county as formerly, and farmers found it increasingly difficult to get them. The same decline was noticeable in Wiltshire and in some other counties. The Wiltshire Commissioner, Mr. Norman, stated:—

“Those whom I visited and talked to often told me that although they themselves had always been in the habit of working, they had made up their minds that it did not answer, and that they would not encourage their children to take to it. They seem to be arriving at a conviction that where a cottage is to be kept clean and tidy, and a family provided for, the whole time of the mother of the family should be spent indoors; and that the money she can earn by going into the fields is insufficient to compensate her for the necessary loss which is occasioned by her absence from home.”

He remarked, further, that the increased employment of machinery tended to a decrease in women's labour, because the kind of work done by machinery was largely that done by women and children; and, moreover, the women themselves got more and more to prefer indoor occupation. It is rather distressing to learn that sometimes children of the tender age of five were made to do some kinds of work—a very sad state of things, because children of that age were little more than babies.

As to women, and oftentimes very old women, there were cases where farmers preferred to employ them because of the cheapness of their labour. Here is one little picture gathered from the writer's personal observation:—

“We met a poor old woman, with a bronzed and weather-beaten face, toiling along under a load of long poles which

she had evidently cut and trimmed herself. It was then between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, and she was just returning from her hard toil. 'What wages may you get now?' we asked. 'Aightpence (eightpence) a day, sir,' she answered. She was, she further informed us, seventy years of age, and, poor old soul, probably on account of her feebleness, she had to work from six o'clock in the morning till eight and nine o'clock at night for her daily eightpence, with the usual allowance of some cider. She could not, of course, she told us, work every day—probably not more than four out of the six days—so that her weekly labour would produce the sum of two shillings and eightpence with which to keep body and soul together!"



## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE MISSION OF CANON GIRDLESTONE.

As the present writer's account of the noble work of the late Canon Girdlestone was, as far as he knows, the only carefully elaborate and authoritative one, he feels he cannot do better than quote it *verbatim*. He is inclined to do this because, although the method of putting the case is his, the facts were supplied by Canon Girdlestone; and because one of the present writer's reviewers, in dealing with that method, commended the author's plan by remarking that he was "above the temptation to deaden the force of startling facts by padding the statements of them with cheap declamation." It may, indeed, be said that the facts disclosed in the following narrative—which should possess historical interest as representing a condition of things now, happily, altered for the better—need no "declamation" to emphasise their startling character. The narrative is as follows:—

"Early morning in June could scarcely open upon a prettier scene of its kind, looked at from a distance, than a Devonshire village upon which has fallen the 'hush' of Sunday. The profound quiet—made audible now and then by the 'cock's shrill clarion'—serves to assist the imagination in creating impressions of beauty—for the eye is but the servant of the mind. Red stone and cob-walled cottages, left in their native warmth of hue, or whitened—with roofs of thatch, slate, or tile—strongly contrast with the greenery of their own little garden enclosures, and with the verdant clothing—bright in its spring freshness—of level meadows, upland, and hill all round. Peace and stillness brood upon the scene, and the cottagers are

steeped in slumber made heavy by the toil of the preceding week. Can aught but comfort, contentment, and happiness exist under such roofs whose picturesqueness give so peculiar and characteristic a feature to this Devonshire village? We must answer this question by the following record of a noble work—carried on during six years by Canon Girdlestone in the village of Halberton—the particulars of which were furnished to us during a visit which, on the Canon's invitation, we paid to him at Halberton in the month of June 1872, shortly after we had commenced our first tour of inquiry into the condition of the peasantry in the West of England. Canon Girdlestone's invitation was accompanied by the courteous offer to place us in possession of all the facts connected with the system of peasant migration which he had established and maintained from 1866 to 1872. The village of Halberton lies about midway between the town of Tiverton and the Tiverton junction of the Bristol and Exeter " (now the Great Western) " Railway. Previous to his going there, Canon Girdlestone had lived in Lancashire, and, in that county, had been accustomed to see farm labourers who were well paid, well housed, and in every respect well cared for. The condition of the Devonshire peasants, when compared with that of the peasantry of Lancashire, presented a painful contrast. The first fact which the Canon ascertained, on taking up his residence at Halberton vicarage, was that the wages of the labourers amongst whom he had come to live—able-bodied, well-conducted men—were, in some cases, only seven, and seldom more than eight, shillings a week. He at once naturally asked himself, 'How is it possible, on such wretched wages, for a man to house, to feed and clothe, not only himself, but his wife and children; and to pay, in addition, the doctor and the midwife when their services were required; to provide shoes, fuel, light, such incidental expenses as school-fees, and, in fact, many other items which cannot be enumerated, but which enter nevertheless into the cost of living?' It was evidently impossible to answer such a question. But Canon Girdlestone set himself closely to investigate the condition of the North Devon peasant, in order to completely satisfy himself as to the actual circumstances of his case. He thus learnt the following facts:—

The system of agricultural labour prevailing at Halberton was representative of the whole of North Devon, with very few exceptions. In addition to the average wages of able-bodied labourers, already stated to be between seven and eight shillings a week, paid in money, there was a daily allowance of, in some cases three pints, in other cases two quarts, of cider, the quality of which ordinarily rendered it unsaleable. Carters and shepherds being employed on different work, necessitating much longer hours of attendance, were usually paid either one shilling a week

more than ordinary labourers ; or, in lieu of extra wages, had their cottages and gardens rent free. The North Devon labourer had, Canon Girdlestone affirmed, absolutely no privileges in addition to his money wages. There was the nominal privilege of what is called 'grist' corn, already referred to, the labourer, all the year round, being allowed to have wheat from the farmer, his employer, at one fixed price, whatever the state of the wheat market might be. In dear seasons this was an advantage ; but when wheat was cheap, the labourer still paid the same price, which, in such a case, was frequently higher than the market price. But the advantage gained during seasons of scarcity was counterbalanced by the fact that the 'grist' corn was always of inferior quality, consisting, as it did, of the 'tailings,' or wheat which was too small in grain for the market. From his acquaintance with the 'grist' corn custom, Canon Girdlestone came to the conclusion that it conferred no privilege whatever upon the labourer. As to work, the labourer was obliged to commence at seven o'clock in the morning, and he was supposed to leave off about half-past five in the evening, being allowed during the day half an hour for 'forenoons'—luncheon—and an hour for dinner. At this rate, the nominal day would last ten hours and a half. Really, however, the regular labourer was often kept many hours later, on overtime, but without any extra pay whatever, and sometimes from six in the morning until eight and nine o'clock at night ! Piecework in North Devon, at the time referred to, was not very general, the majority of the labourers being employed on the regular weekly wages already named. In harvest time—both in hay and corn harvest—the men were usually employed much beyond the regular hours, frequently until nine and ten o'clock at night. For this extra work, each day, they usually got their supper, but seldom any additional wages, except in cases where the harvest was done by piecework. But it has been seen that piecework was not the general practice. Women were employed to a great extent, and they earned sevenpence or eightpence a day. But, deducting the wear and tear of clothes—which was considerable in the case of women—the advantage was so small as to be scarcely appreciable. On this ground, many women would have refused to work at all, but for the fact that they were very often compelled to do so by the agreement made between their husbands and the farmers ; the latter making the employment of the wife a condition of the engagement of the husband. Fuel was only given to the labourer in payment for the work of 'grubbing up' the foundations of a hedge, or cutting a hedge down, such work being always performed during overtime—the fuel obtained being what was 'grubbed up.' In very many cases the peasant of North Devon was forbidden by the farmer to keep a pig or even poultry, for fear he might steal the food for fatten-

ing them. Potato-ground could only be rented by the labourer from the farmer at a rack rent—very frequently at four and five times the rent paid by the farmer to his landlord. The food of the North Devon agricultural labourer was stated by Canon Girdlestone to consist of, for breakfast, what was called ‘tea-kettle broth.’ This was made by putting into a basin several slices of dry bread, which was then soaked by having hot water poured upon it, after which the sop was seasoned with a sprinkling of salt, and now and then an onion in addition; sometimes, however, with half a teaspoonful of milk. But milk could only be obtained on rare occasions, as the surplus milk was almost invariably given by the farmers to their pigs. The peasants’ ‘forenoons,’ or luncheon, usually consisted of bread and hard, dry pieces of skim-milk cheese. The same fare constituted his dinner. The ‘forenoons’ and the dinner, being taken during the intervals of work, were not enjoyed with so much zest as was the labourer’s supper, which was the last as well as the best meal of the day, and was always taken at the conclusion of the day’s work. The supper, as a rule, consisted of potatoes and cabbage, flavoured and made rich, when the labourer was allowed to keep a pig, by a tiny piece of bacon. Butchers’ meat found its way sometimes on Sundays—but only on very rare occasions—to the peasant’s table. When by any chance it could be obtained it was always in very small quantities. At the age of about forty-five or fifty the peasant was usually found to be ‘crippled up’ by rheumatism occasioned by exposure to cold, and by being frequently obliged to remain in wet clothes, either when there was no change to be had, or when there was no fire by which the clothes could be dried. At all times feeble from lack of a proper amount of food, the North Devon agricultural labourer, necessarily unable out of his miserable wages to make any provision either for times of sickness or for old age, had, during illness, and also finally, when totally incapacitated for work, to come upon the rates.

The general sanitary condition of the village was very bad. Picturesque as they were externally, many of the peasants’ cottages were unfit for the housing of pigs. Pools of stagnant water stood in different parts of the parish, many of the ditches of which were offensively odorous. Not infrequently heaps of manure were thrown up just under dwelling-house windows. The whole village was badly drained; open sewers ran through it, frequently trickling down from the cottages into the village brook, from which cattle slaked their thirst and the villagers and their children often drank! From such a practice ensued the natural result—disease and death. The sanitary government was in the hands of the Board of Guardians, consisting chiefly of farmers. Disliking to incur expense in such matters as drainage, because, as principal ratepayers,

the burden fell largely upon themselves, nothing was done by the guardians to improve the sanitary condition of the place; and hence the perpetuation of the serious evils which have been enumerated. Every labourer who was a householder in Halberton was entitled to vote for the election of guardians, waywardens, overseers, and vestry men; and thus had, it may be supposed, the power of remedying the state of things from which he suffered. But Canon Girdlestone stated that he never saw a labourer at a vestry or other meeting. The men, he affirmed, dared not go! Insufficient wages were, however, supplemented out of the general rates, and though this method of supplying, or helping to supply, the necessities of the local peasantry was not pleasant or acceptable to these ratepayers who did *not* employ labour, it was advantageous to those who did! Kind treatment, it might have been hoped, would at least help to make some amends for the lowness of the rate of wages prevailing in Halberton, for the miserable dwellings of the peasantry, and for the unhealthy surroundings of those dwellings. Such treatment, however, was unhappily the exception and not the rule, judging by the following illustrative cases:—A carter saved a valuable team for his master, a farmer, by rushing at the horses' heads when the animals had one day taken fright at something and were running away. The man fell, in doing so, under one of the wheels of the waggon. His ribs were broken, but his bravery saved the waggon and team. For two months he was confined to his bed, during the whole of which time the farmer, his master, refused to give him one sixpence in wages, and the man had nothing but what he got from the rates! Canon Girdlestone one day, during this labourer's illness, met the master, and asked him to give the poor fellow a quart of milk occasionally for his children whilst he remained unable to work for him. The Canon reminded the farmer that this labourer had been maimed in his, the farmer's, service, and that he had saved him a valuable team of horses, adding that the milk was a trifle that would not be missed. Will it be credited? The farmer, who was a substantial yeoman, refused to give his injured servant either the milk that he was asked to give, or anything else, and he never even went to see him. Another carter in the employ of a Halberton farmer was crushed by a restive horse in his master's stable, through no fault of the man's. Through his injury he was laid up, and his wages were immediately stopped by his master, who refused to give him any sort of assistance. This was not all. The man occupied a cottage belonging to his master, and, being a carter, he held this cottage rent free as part of his wages. During the whole of the time he was disabled he was not merely refused a single penny of his wages, but the rent of the cottage was charged to him, and the amount was deducted each week

from the wages of his son, who worked for the same farmer ! In another case, a carter in the employ of a Halberton farmer was sent by his master on a long journey to a distant place. The journey took him twenty hours. The master, a man of substance, refused to give him anything for his additional work beyond a bit of bread and beef and fourpence ! To record, unimpassioned, such instances as these is a somewhat difficult task. But we simply record them, leaving the facts, uncoloured as they were related to us by Canon Girdlestone, to speak for themselves—merely adding that, whilst too many similar cases might be given, there are, on the other hand, we believe, not a few farmers whose blood would tingle with indignation on learning the circumstances we have detailed. Such as we have described them were, with few exceptions, the condition of life and the treatment experienced (when Canon Girdlestone came amongst them) by the peasantry of North Devon, whose cottages—hovels of only two rooms, with consequently insufficient provision for the decent accommodation of families—were not fit, many of them, to house cattle in ; and whose earnings were not enough to keep body and soul together. And although the district was a rich and important one, it was populated by a peasantry enfeebled in body and depressed by their deplorable circumstances. The question at once arose in Canon Girdlestone's mind, what was to be done ? He could not permit the state of things which he found existing to go on without making some effort to put a stop to it. He did nothing hastily. He had over and over again visited the houses of the labourers ; he had made minute and searching inquiries into all their circumstances and surroundings. He could find nothing to palliate the wrong which was inflicted upon them by the system under which they worked ; and, as a Christian minister, he could not remain unmoved at what he saw and heard. He first tried the effect of private remonstrance ; but that proved unavailing. Then he determined on the bolder course of addressing the farmers from the pulpit and reproving them, in his capacity as a pastor and a teacher, for the manner in which they treated their human labourers, to whom, he said, they had been accustomed to give less consideration than they gave to their cattle. The sermon in which he made this home-thrust raised a terrible storm in the parish. The farmers were highly indignant at the conduct of the vicar, and from that moment made open war upon him, adopting, amongst other methods of attack, that of writing, in reference to what he had done, offensive letters which were published anonymously in a local newspaper. About the same time the annual tithe dinner took place, and it was pre-arranged that when the vicar's health was proposed, the glasses, instead of being filled, should be reversed empty. The canon, however, having learnt this intention beforehand, left the room where the dinner was being held before the time arrived for proposing his health. As it became

necessary to accept the state of things which had been produced by his bold and outspoken protest in the pulpit, Canon Girdlestone determined to put into execution a plan which he had formed. He accordingly wrote a letter to *The Times*, giving a clear and plain statement of the wages and of the condition of the agricultural labourers in the north of Devon. The effect produced by this letter was remarkable. The Canon was overwhelmed with letters from all parts of England and Ireland, and with newspapers also from different parts of the country, containing letters and comments on the subject of the condition of the Devonshire peasantry. The private letters contained offers, from farmers and others residing in England and Ireland, of good wages, with the certainty of comfortable homes, for such of the men in Canon Girdlestone's district as would accept them. Some of these correspondents remitted money to pay the whole expense connected with the proposed removal of the men whom they wanted; others sent money, with the stipulation that a part of it should be returned out of the wages of the labourers in such a manner as they could afford to repay it. Then there were sums of money received by the Canon from philanthropic persons, who placed them entirely at his disposal. This money he determined to lay out in partly paying the expenses of removing labourers when it happened that places were offered without any remittances being sent to pay the cost of travelling and other items. Having obtained the means of securing his object of removing the miserably-paid peasants of Devonshire to places where they would be better remunerated, better housed, and better treated in every way, Canon Girdlestone set himself manfully at work to organise a regular system of migration. He had the men; he knew where to send them; and he had the money furnished to defray the cost of sending them. Only one difficulty now presented itself. How was he to set the stream in motion? The answer appears simple, but practically the difficulty was not so easy of solution. The peasantry of Halberton and North Devon had been so long accustomed to their miserable circumstances that they dreaded—with the want of energy and enterprise which their depressing conditions of life had engendered—making any change. A kind of 'home-sickness' appeared to affect them. They dreaded the journey, in the first place; they dreaded the change of habits. They feared that perhaps there might be some uncertainty as to their new homes being suited to them. Hence many of them clung to the wretched state of things to which they had become used: to their hovels and to their state of semi-starvation. In some instances they were so strongly affected by this dread of change, that when every arrangement had been completed, and they were just on the point of starting for their new homes, they begged to be allowed to remain, giving back the money they had received towards defraying their ex-

penses. It can easily be understood that it needed no little courage and no small amount of energy and determination to overcome the difficulties which Canon Girdlestone found were thus thrown in his path. But the disinclination of the peasants to move was not the greatest part of the difficulty. There was an immense amount of opposition on the part of the farmers and the landowners in the district. Canon Girdlestone was, in fact, engaged for years, during which his work was carried on, in single-handed conflict with nearly the whole district of squires and farmers. Even the clergy declared themselves against him. He was, in fact, completely ostracised and tabooed by local 'society.' But the enmity of the better classes in the district took practical shape. The vestry of Halberton, composed almost entirely of the farmers in the neighbourhood, began their opposition by refusing to vote a church-rate that was needed. At the various vestry meetings they would not hear the vicar speak. No labourer dared to show his face at these meetings; hence the farmers had it all their own way. With great courage and determination the vicar insisted, not only at being present at the vestry meetings, but upon taking the chair, as he was entitled to do. But the farmers would not let him speak, and drowned his voice when he attempted to do so. Patiently, however, and with a bold front, the courageous minister would wait until there was momentary quiet, and then would say, 'Now, gentlemen, when you have done abusing me we will proceed to business.' One farmer, bolder than the rest, at a vestry meeting held on Easter Monday, in 1867, went up to the Canon, who was presiding, and told him, in language that cannot here be literally repeated, that he was not fit to carry off to a bear. Two or three days afterwards this extraordinary scene formed the subject of a cartoon in *Punch*. Following up this system of persecution, and as a means of depriving the vicar of his voice in the affairs of the parish, the farmer-vestry claimed the right to appoint both of the churchwardens. The question, for the annoyance of Canon Girdlestone, was even carried to the Court of Queen's Bench. But judgment was given against the vestry, and the heavy costs which were incurred, having to be paid out of individual pockets, appear to have taught the malcontents a salutary lesson. Then, once, on the occasion of the distribution of the charity bread, the farmers attempted to create a disturbance in the church. The police had to be called in, and this circumstance was made a cause of complaint against the vicar. The complaint was carried to the Quarter Sessions at Exeter, but was dismissed. Still the war of opposition was vigorously carried on by the local farmers, who threatened to desert the church, stop the playing of the organ, the ringing of the bells, and the singing of the choir, and even to empty the church schools. A number of the farmers, indeed, left the church



and repaired to the Wesleyan chapel in the village. But the minister of the chapel, a plain-spoken divine, told them they had better go back to their own church. This, however, they would not do, so they remained at home on Sundays. The enmity of the irate agriculturists was extended even to the ladies of Canon Girdlestone's family, who were slighted in every way, and even passed by in the road unnoticed by the local magnates. The preceding facts are curious and instructive. It is almost incredible that so much violent and bitter opposition should have been aroused simply because a brave and conscientious clergyman was earnestly striving to benefit the underpaid, half-starved labourers by whom he was surrounded. But the pockets of the local agriculturists had been touched and their most selfish instincts aroused. Few attempts at reform, however, have ever met with more unwearied and unscrupulous opposition than that which Canon Girdlestone experienced. But he anticipated resistance, and he was accordingly prepared for it. He carried out his plans, in the face of every obstacle, boldly and perseveringly, and with an exhibition of singular energy and admirable method. The system of migration commenced in October 1866. From that date until the month of June 1872 the admirable work was continued, and in that period between four and five hundred men, many of them with families, were sent away by the direct instrumentality of Canon Girdlestone to Lancashire, Yorkshire, Durham, Kent, Sussex, and other counties. He sent a number of men to the Manchester and to the West Riding police forces. From their miserable cottages in Devonshire these peasants went to really comfortable homes in the places already named. They left wages of eight shillings a week, and they secured in their new employment earnings which were never less in any case than thirteen shillings a week, and which ranged from that sum to as much as twenty-two shillings a week, in addition to which they had good cottages and gardens rent free. From first to last this work of Canon Girdlestone was eminently successful. But the success which attended his efforts was largely due to the large amount of personal labour which was bestowed upon it. It can easily be understood, for instance, that the negotiations connected with the removal of a single labourer entailed a good deal of work; and the work was of course multiplied when a family—two-thirds of the total number removed from 1866 to 1872 were married and had families—was sent away. First, the situations had to be obtained, the wages and the conditions of the new employment settled, and the travelling expenses forwarded. In each case this work entailed some correspondence. A good deal of trouble, too, was caused by the necessary inquiry into character, especially because in many cases the farmers would not give the men any

character at all on account of their leaving their employ. Canon Girdlestone, however, was naturally scrupulously particular to ascertain the character of the men he sent away, as he, of course, would be held responsible for any failing in this respect. When, however, the character was found to be satisfactory, the situation obtained and the wages fixed, there was a considerable amount of labour entailed in superintending in each case all the arrangements preliminary to the start. The packing up and the preparations for the journey had to be seen to. The majority of the peasants were perfectly helpless in this respect. Almost everything had to be done for them,—their luggage addressed, their railway tickets taken, and full and plain directions given to the simple travellers. The plan adopted when the labourers were leaving for their new homes was to give them plain directions written on a piece of paper in a large and legible hand. These were shown to the officials on the several lines of railway, who, soon getting to hear of Canon Girdlestone's system of migration, rendered them all the assistance in their power by readily helping the labourers out of their travelling difficulties and seeing them safely booked for their destinations. Many of the peasants of North Devon were so ignorant of the whereabouts of the places to which they were about to be sent, that they often asked—when their destination, for instance, was some well-known place in the North of England—whether they were going 'over the water.' It is really difficult to estimate the immense amount of labour which, during his six years of philanthropic work, was thrown upon the hands of Canon Girdlestone. The only assistance which he obtained was from the members of his own family, who aided him in his increasing labours. But his work of migration, large in itself, became the centre of a great system. The men who went away, with very few exceptions, prospered; and they in their turn procured situations for their relations and friends in Devonshire, and undertook the work of getting them removed without any assistance from Canon Girdlestone. The total number of peasants, therefore, removed from Devonshire to the north of England was very considerable. But the stream which began to flow from that county to the more prosperous—agricultural, mining, and manufacturing—districts of England soon had the effect of stirring the stagnation which had before existed in neighbouring counties. Migrations to the north set in from Devonshire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire, until at length the stream had acquired a considerable volume. We were glad to find, on the occasion of our visit to Canon Girdlestone at Halberton, that the misfortunes which it had been predicted would overwhelm the courageous vicar as the result of his advocacy of the cause of the peasantry had not happened. We attended the morning and afternoon services at the church,

and listened to the excellent sermons delivered by the Canon in the well-filled building. The singing was led by an admirably trained choir, Mrs. Girdlestone being the organist. In company with Canon Girdlestone, we also visited the successful and well-attended Sunday school connected with the church. The day schools, we learnt, were equally flourishing; and notwithstanding the great demands made upon the vicar's time by the maintenance of his system of peasant migration, he found the opportunity—aided materially in this, as in all his good work, by the ladies of his family—to encourage attendance and stimulate the progress of education by adopting the plan of obtaining situations for the most deserving of the pupils in his schools. Later in the same month of June 1872, which was the period of our visit to him, Canon Girdlestone and his family took their departure from the scene of their energetic and benevolent work, and went to reside at Olveston in Gloucestershire; and whilst the peasants of Halberton and the country round were deprived, by his retirement from amongst them, of the presence of an earnest and courageous friend in the worthy and excellent clergyman who had stood by them for so long a time, the kind, gentle, and generous ministrations of the ladies of the vicar's family—who were ever active in good work, in all times of sickness and need—were missed from many a humble home."

In a subsequent chapter—"Canon Girdlestone's Justification"—will be shown the beneficent mark which this practical missionary had made upon perhaps the most pitiful class of humble toilers in the British Islands.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### CIDER AS A "PRIVILEGE."

PROBABLY no toil of the labouring man in this country, as indeed elsewhere in the agricultural regions of the world, occasions quite so much "thirst" as toil in the open fields, especially in summer—when labour is conducted under the trying conditions of heat. It follows, therefore, quite naturally, it may be allowed, that in apple districts the well-known beverage obtained by the fermentation of the luscious juice of the fruit which has its earliest mention in connection with the Garden of Eden should be used for the drink of the labourers. In the western country especially the famous orchards form one of the prettiest and most striking features of that region, nestling, as these great apple nurseries do, in the midst of green and smiling valleys; and on the slopes of the bold or gentle elevations of its hills and other uplands. The present writer's remark of nearly forty years ago, when he penned the following lines, are equally true of to-day :—

"Beautiful in itself by the picturesque ruggedness of its trunk, limbs, boughs, and twigs, mossy as these oftentimes are, and splashed with the gold and silver of encrusting lichen, the apple-tree is a marvel of productive utility; and hence not only do the extensive apple orchards of the west of England furnish, for consumption, large supplies of their pleasant and edible fruit, to markets far outside their own immediate districts, but they provide the raw material for the manufacture, within those districts, of large quantities of cider."

A good deal is exported, and an appreciable quantity

is drunk within the cider districts themselves; and for both markets—home and outside—it is provided both in cask and bottle, and in varying degrees of excellence, or of inferiority, according to the quality of the apple used for its production.

It was probably owing to the abundance of cider in the apple districts that the cider truck system originated—a system under which the farm labourer is paid part of his wages in drink. Although it is practically part of his pay, it is commonly included in what are called the "privileges" of the men, although very often it is the only "privilege." But ordinarily the "privilege" does not, or at least it did not at the period to which we are referring, extend to the quality of the drink. It was notorious that not only the worst kind of apples, but the dirtiest and the most rotten, were ground up, or rather pressed in the cider "cheese"—as the squeezed mass of apples is called—for the labourers' use. Sometimes the same apples were used for the men as for the farmers' own use or for sale; and then what was called the "second wringing," or the juice extracted by additional pressure after the first lot of juice had been run off from the "cheese," was utilised for the peasants. To strengthen the "second wringing" or inferior liquor, some hop water—about four gallons to the hogshead—was added to it. This addition would tend to preserve the inferior cider, which otherwise, from its inferiority, would be likely to turn sour. It was estimated that, as a marketable commodity, the "second wringing" was worth about half the value of the first or better "wringing." We were, in fact, assured, by those who knew, that the value of the poor stuff was no more than one-third of that made for the farmers' "own drinking" and for the publicans or other customers. Sometimes the labourers' cider was called the "second tap," and that expression originated the saying that the farmers had

“two taps running,”—the inferior “tap” being so poor that practically it was not a marketable commodity.

The amount of the “second tap” given to the men varied somewhat in different districts. It was ordinarily three or four pints a day, and was usually carried in tiny casks called firkins. Women as well as men had the cider “allowance,” and boys also; but the former had less than the men, and the boys less again than the women. The adult allowance was reckoned by the farmers to be worth from eighteenpence to two shillings a week; but those best qualified to estimate impartially considered that the value was not equal to so much. Sometimes extra wages would be given in lieu of cider, but it was alleged that the men as a rule preferred the allowance of liquor. They had for so long a time become used to the cider system that they were wedded to it.

A good many people have condemned the cider truck system, and have advocated its abolition by the Legislature,—contending, as we quite agree, that the labourer should be paid the full value of his wages in money and left to make his own provision for drink. On the other side, it has been argued that with the poor food of the peasants something stronger than water—something rather more “feeding”—so to speak, “is necessary. A certain proportion of the men, but not a large one, are total abstainers from alcoholic liquors of all kinds, and they drink either water or cold tea, or cold cocoa perhaps. Good cider is considered to be wholesome; but the great evil of supplying any alcoholic beverage as a part of the agricultural system is the danger of indulgence to excess.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### POVERTY.

THE condition of life which is tersely but pitifully summed up in the word "poverty" is one that may accurately be said to apply to any class of labourers unable by the utmost toil to provide more than enough to keep them from absolute starvation. When the meanest shelter from the weather, a sufficiency of clothing to keep the body moderately warm, and just food enough to keep body and soul together are alone obtainable, the condition described is "Poverty." It applies equally, of course, to those who—unable to obtain employment or afflicted in such a way as to prevent engaging in any employment that may be offered—are absolutely destitute and compelled to resort to the workhouse or obtain such outside help as the Poor Law provides through the instrumentality of the poor rates. The man or woman who is able after providing for necessaries to put a little money by in a savings bank, however small the amount may be—is just lifted out of the condition of poverty. It is probable that a not inappreciable number of what are called the working classes are able to make some provision—if only a slight provision—for old age or sickness during active occupation.

The condition of English farm labourers, however, has, with very few exceptions, been such as to prevent them from ever putting anything aside for what is called a "rainy day"; and such a condition is sad

and deplorable in the extreme. Those who have means to enable them to indulge, if only to a very moderate extent, in the recreations of life, cannot easily realise the state of a man who has absolutely nothing but what is necessary to keep him alive, and that notwithstanding the most incessant toil. "The labourer is worthy of his hire" is a scriptural doctrine; and that hire ought to be sufficient to enable him to have some margin, however small. It seems especially hard that this should not have been so in the case of those very toilers who produce what is most essentially required by the community—their food; and that to enable the consumers of this produce to obtain it at such a price that the most moderately-circumstanced amongst the better classes shall have an ample supply, the tiller of the soil should practically be in a starving condition!

It must be obvious that the system of keeping the farm labourer in this condition is the worst possible public policy. The enfeebled frame engendered by insufficient food is not nearly so well able to produce the best results as a well-fed race of men could; so that the starving policy does not "pay."

Of course, under such a policy the workman is not and cannot be independent of extraneous aid—a condition of things which largely tends to reduce his own self-respect, and which prevents him from becoming, humble though his position be, a free citizen. In a previous chapter—relating to the noble and public-spirited labours of Canon Girdlestone—it will naturally be noted by the observant reader that the farm labourers dared not attend a vestry or other public meeting in which their masters held all the power. They were far too dependent, in every way, upon their employers to venture upon the slightest opposition. Even the magistrates sided against them on very many occasions when they had to appeal to the law in cases of particular injustice. One such case occurred upon the very day of



our departure from Halberton, after inquiry into Canon Girdlestone's most interesting labours. The Canon was anxious that we should be present at a trial he was going to attend at Cullompton, after driving us to the Tiverton Junction Station; but a pressing engagement in London prevented our doing so. The circumstances occurred on 3rd June 1872, and were communicated to *The Times* in a letter under the heading of "Migration of Labour," signed by Canon Girdlestone. The letter, *verbatim*, is as follows:—

"SIR,—Will you kindly publish the following facts, which I send you without note or comment, of which I was an eye-witness yesterday, and which are reported in the local papers?

"John Webber, a labourer, with a wife and three young children, earning eight shillings a week, with a cottage and garden free at Holcombe-Rogus, near this village, applied to me for a place in Lancashire, which I got for him, with sixteen shillings a week wages. After receiving from me £3, 15s. for his expenses to Lancashire (on Monday, 27th May, in order that he might start the next morning), he was arrested on a warrant, at the suit of his master, Mr. White, a farmer, on plea of breach of contract, had his money roughly taken from him, was afterwards liberated on bail, and had his money returned, but was bound to appear at the Petty Sessions at Cullompton yesterday,—one whole week after he had sold the furniture and left his cottage. I was present at the trial. Of the magistrates on the bench, one, the chairman, had granted the warrant, and another was the landlord of the farmer, Mr. White, who sued the labourer. The remaining two were landed proprietors in the adjoining parish, from which many labourers, much against the will both of landlords and tenants, had migrated. The warrant had been issued under 30 & 31 Vict. cap. 141, in which Act 'contract' is defined 'as an agreement made in writing or by parole.' No mention was made by Mr. White of a written contract. He swore, however, that he had made a contract for a year with John Webber by word of mouth, and that he had done this in the presence of a woman servant; but when pressed he confessed that he had not summoned that servant as a witness. John Webber swore that he had never made any contract at all, but was merely a weekly servant, and had given a month's notice, which Mr. White admitted. John Webber's evidence was corroborated by that of his wife. The farmer White, moreover

acknowledged that he had received from John Webber the key of the cottage, which was part of his wages, had occupied the garden with his own men, and had paid John Webber a week's wages then due, though usually he only paid him once a fortnight, thus voluntarily terminating the contract, if there ever had been one. The presiding magistrate constantly interrupted John Webber's advocate, and himself pleaded more strongly for Mr. White than his paid advocate did. He next conferred privately with the farmer, Mr. White, and then fined John Webber £2 with costs, which, together with the sum he had already paid to the solicitor, who most ably pleaded for him, amounted to about £5. All this time, though I confess I felt in my own mind very indignant, I never opened my mouth or made a sign, but remained perfectly quiet, as was my duty in a Court of Justice. But no sooner had the presiding magistrate pronounced his sentence upon John Webber than, without the slightest right or even provocation to do so, he turned upon me, and, addressing me as though I were the prisoner, began to animadvert upon my conduct in sending labourers away for better wages. I more than once, and very strongly, protested against such an impertinent violation of all rule and order. Then the presiding magistrate, turning to the audience, which was large, and composed partly of farmers and in still greater numbers of townsfolk and labourers, appealed to them as to whether he should go on animadverting on me or not. Invited in this remarkable manner by the chairman in a Court of Justice to express their opinions, the farmers shouted 'Yes,' and the labourers 'No,' at the top of their voice. The other magistrates did not interfere. The Court was turned into a bear-garden, such as could be seen in no other part of the civilized world except North Devon. The 'Noes' had it by a large majority. The chairman, finding that the 'Noes' and the Canon together were too much for him, sat down. A kind gentleman in the Court advanced the money to pay the fine and costs, which the prisoner, for as such he was throughout treated, will work hard to repay. And with his wife and family he is now in Lancashire, whither he started this morning, and is under a kind master, and is earning sixteen shillings a week."

*The Times*, in a leading article devoted to this extraordinary case, very properly asked:—

“What is there Canon Girdlestone has done that a Court of Justice should be the scene of a sort of town and county row on the propriety of his work?”

Very many similar cases of magisterial prejudice could

be quoted, and cases where there was not for the victims of injustice the same advantage of kind friends and resulting better employment; and such cases again illustrate the terrible disadvantage of helpless poverty.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### BENEVOLENCE.

THE dark pictures of peasant life presented in the preceding pages are relieved here and there by flashes of kindness. Farmers are not by any means all bad, although, as we have seen, sordidness and ungenerosity have run, in numbers of instances, to extremes. The rule unfortunately has been unjust treatment of the labourer. The exceptions are all the more welcome. A good deal of generosity has emanated, in a considerable number of instances, from the vicarage or rectory of a country parish, and the ladies of the minister's household have often proved active agents for good works. The institution of "coal" and "clothing" and other benefit clubs has been one kind of help, and they have often been founded on the excellent principle of encouraging thrift. The labourers have been invited to contribute something, however small, to a Christmas fund planned to help those who help themselves; and so subscriptions beforehand from the labourers have been encouraged by the adding of sums similar in amount, all to accumulate against what is called a "rainy day."

In some villages there were, as there are to this day, "charities" of different kinds originating with a fund left in trust by some beneficent founder for distribution amongst the poor, who, with few exceptions, would be found to be either farm labourers residing with their families and living lives of half starvation, struggling painfully to keep body and soul together, or destitute

widows or children of labourers. It would, in fact, be probably difficult in any village to find a large proportion of its poorest residents who had not some connection with present or former tillers of the soil. These charities, supplemented by the "benevolence" extended by aid of the poor rates and administered by the guardians of the various unions, have done a great deal to prevent an absolute collapse of the whole agricultural system in the poorest paid districts. Referring to his own experience in the west of England, Canon Girdlestone once remarked that the "labourers of North Devon did not 'live' in the proper sense of the word. They merely 'didn't die!'" and it is quite certain that in a very large number of instances it was only private and public "benevolence" that kept the poor creatures from starving!

As illustrative of the kindness and generosity of many of the clergy we may mention one worthy rector, a retired colonial bishop, who kept a number of cows and gave all the milk to the poor farm labourers in his village. He and his curate were always active in good work of this kind, and never failed to render speedy aid in any case of distress. The land in this particular district was owned by four principal proprietors, and before the slight rise in wages that followed the period of the famous "strike" in Warwickshire the maximum of wage was eight shillings a week, with two pints, daily, of cider, set down in value at a shilling a week. Putting the total earnings, therefore, at nine shillings a week, there was the deduction from that sum of a shilling a week for cottage rents. The "cottages" were mostly two-roomed hovels—in a majority of cases, one room over the other,—the whole family, often a long one, having to herd in the lower or sitting room, and to sleep in the single bedroom—both rooms being often very tiny ones. One farmer in the village referred to was paying his men only six shillings a week in money, but in addition to this

munificent pay, gave them each a two-roomed hovel rent free. This was reckoned—as part of wages—equal to a shilling a week, and the daily two pints of cider at another shilling. Thus the total earnings were no more than eight shillings a week; and many of the hovels had no gardens whatever attached to them; so that the occupiers could not grow even a few potatoes to supplement the starvation pay. The expression “starvation pay” is used advisedly—for families (sometimes possibly, but very rarely, only two) usually consisted of six, eight, and even more persons. The farmers’ contribution to what may be called the “benevolence” in this district being sometimes the allowance, rent free, of an eighth of an acre of potato-ground.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### ALLOTMENTS.

THE modern expression for allotment is "small holding," and commissions of inquiry, various legislation, and public speeches of cabinet ministers and other leading parliamentarians have succeeded in attracting a good deal of attention to the subject, which, for many reasons, is one of considerable importance.

One great object of all the stir that has been properly made in reference to the allotment or small holding question is the necessity of interesting farm labourers and other available small holders in the soil of this country. The stream of emigration from the rural districts that has been proceeding for so long a time has been largely caused by what may be called the pernicious and unfair system under which small bits of land have been let to the farm hands.

Writing to us some years ago on this subject, a well-informed West Country magistrate—the late Mr. Arthur Kinglake, J.P., a brother of the historian of the Crimean War—remarked :—

"He (the labourer) becomes (as the holder of an allotment) for the time being an owner of the soil, and he has a feeling of independence which nothing else can give, and which at once exalts his character. His ground yields him a large supply of vegetables for his family, and enables him to keep and fatten a pig or two, and likewise some poultry, which fetch large prices. Besides these advantages from the allotment system, his children are trained to habits of industry and carefulness. I agree with the opinion of a well-known and much-esteemed Dorsetshire squire, that

the contented grunt or murmur of a fattening pig is pleasanter to the agricultural labourer's ear than the delicious notes of the sweetest nightingale."

This is the pre-eminently roseate and ideal picture, only realisable under the very best conditions which very rarely prevailed at the period to which this section of our volume relates. These best conditions, of which more will be said in a later chapter, are the absolute possession of allotment ground as a freehold easily and fairly obtained. Very different, however, were the circumstances to which reference will now be made.

All the advantages enumerated by Mr. Kinglake might arise from ground obtainable at anything like a fair rent; but in a very large number of instances the rent exacted from the poor struggling servant was nothing less than extortionate; and the amount of ground obtainable—generally the eighth of an acre—in some few instances a little more—has not been sufficient to provide anything like vegetables enough for the family consumption during a year. The most careful cultivation could not produce so much as that. If granted on fair terms and charged only at about the rate which the farmer himself paid the landlord, it would undoubtedly prove to be an appreciable advantage, in the way of supplementing the food of the peasant.

It is important to distinguish the allotment *per se* from the cottage garden. The latter—when existent—as a free adjunct of the house was, and is, often utilised for the growing of vegetables as well as of flowers, that by their prettiness and quaint, old-fashioned, character have so often attracted wayfarers. Very frequently, and often with the smallest-sized cottages, there were no gardens: and so it happened that where the need was the greatest the want was most keenly felt. In a large number of instances, too, the ground apportioned for allotments—in a particular district—was not sufficient to provide all that were required.



Allotments, when obtainable, were provided either by the landowner, and in such cases the rents were generally fair and reasonable, or by the farmer who let off part of his own holding—whether he was himself a freeholder or only a tenant of the squire—for “potato-ground,” as it was synonymously termed. Sometimes a lord of a manor has allocated a portion of ground for allotments, charging a uniform rent. One would naturally suppose that farmers would generously concede a portion of ground—as an encouragement to their men, and as something varying the monotonous sphere of the daily labours of the latter for the masters—on the best possible terms. Instead of that, however, in large numbers of instances, they reaped considerable profit on this sub-letting—charging three and even four times the proportion of the rent actually paid. In one case into which we personally inquired—the farmer paid his landlord three pounds an acre for his farm, and charged his men for their little portions at the rate of twelve pounds an acre. And even the measurement sometimes went against the men : what was called the eighth of an acre being less. Moreover, cases were not by any means infrequent of the labourers being refused allowance for the value of their unexhausted improvements. Fallow or grass land was taken over in a quite barren state, and, after being brought into a high state of cultivation, was taken away without the smallest compensation for manures and tillage supplied by the poor workers. The farmer at times has alleged a reason for changing the land, and has given a piece of fresh uncultivated and unmanured ground in exchange for the carefully tilled allotment. The amount of ground available in this way being limited—sometimes very strictly limited—the labourer has no remedy. He is quite in the hands of the farmer. If he requires an allotment he must pay the possessor’s terms for it ; and there is no appeal.

There were, of course, generous exceptions. Some-

times a good master would let his men have potato-ground, either free or at a normal rent, in no case higher than the larger tenant paid the squire : would give the use of his horses to plough it up, if meadow or rough arable, and would further give seed potatoes free and all the manure that was necessary from the ample heaps on the farm.

These generous exceptions were made by men really wise in their generation : for such treatment of their dependants was sure to attract the best and most faithful service : and therefore the considerate action would " pay."

## CHAPTER XL.

### OTHER "PRIVILEGES."

IN moorland country, the cutting of turf for fuel was a privilege enjoyed by the farm labourers. Sometimes this cutting was exercised within manors, as a commoner's right. In other cases, where the lord of the manor, rightly or wrongly, claimed to exclude all commoners' rights, the turf cutting—within limits—was "allowed" as a concession. The "turf," or peat as it actually is, was permitted to be cut, and was dried and sold by the labourers, and in such cases furnished quite an active little industry. Some of the poorer inhabitants in the peat districts were enabled to eke out a moderate livelihood by this industry alone. Peat makes excellent fuel, and has often proved a valuable substitute for the more expensive coal. In towns, too, a good market is often found for "turf," which is there used for lighting fires. The "top crust" being taken off from the moors often revealed a thick underlying bed of peat—extending some times, as in Ireland, to a considerable depth. It is in fact an "asset," like a substantial coal seam. The usual plan is to cut the turf into squares, or rather into parallelograms about the size and shape of the bricks used for building. Then, after stacking and drying, it is ready for the market or for such "home consumption" as the needs of the district may require.

Farmers, in such districts, will sometimes lend horses and carts free for the hauling of the turf: but against this bright side of the humble industry there is the loss

that ensues when turf piled up ready for removal cannot be moved because it is not "convenient" for the farmer to lend his horses when required; the consequence being that it gets spoilt by rain. There was a further small privilege—the ash, excellent for manure, resulting from the burnt turf. This ash the farmer would buy from the labourer. Another small concession was the "gleaning" privilege after wheat harvests—the scattered fragments, so to speak, left on the cornfields after the bulk of the crops had been carted away.

Children were sometimes put to do this work, and their parents—if *employés* of the farmer—were allowed to get what could be raked up. Generally the "gleaning" had to be done at the end of the day after the corn waggons had got all they could out of the fields; and the process of raking up had often to be extended to very late hours and performed under the light of the "harvest moon." But there was, of course, a dark side for the labourer to the "gleaning" privilege. It must be the very last thing attended to—the primary function being to get the bulk of the crops off the ground; and this being the case the rain which had "held up" for the big crop, often descended pitilessly upon the straggling remainder and soaking it, continued perhaps to soak it until it got spoilt—rotten and unusable.

Another little privilege was in the gathering of the wild but wholesome fruit the whortleberry, which in some seasons grows in large quantities on the moors, in the wide stretches of moor country. This fruit, commonly called "worts," was mostly gathered by children, and by them hawked round the district for sale; also in the towns, where "worts" proved a nice change to other fruits. Cranberries, too, are another wild fruit contrasting against the black "worts" by the scarlet hue that lends quite a feature to moorland scenery. Sometimes a "market overt" may be established by greengrocers in the whortleberry and cranberry districts—these

"dealers" waiting to receive the fruit as it was brought to them by the berry pickers. During the season children were able, if energetic, to make as much as eightpence and a shilling a day—their "wages" for this work nearly rivalling the munificent pay of their fathers and brothers on the farms.

Here, again, after this bright little picture of childish earnings—the silver lining of a cloudy existence—came the darker side. The "weather"—that uncertain quantity—was not always good: and persistent "rainy days" prevented the ingathering. Then, again, for worts and cranberries there are bad seasons as for all kinds of fruit—seasons of great scarcity, during which the expected copper or silver harvest was impossible for the little ones.

Another wild fruit is available for an industry, the well-known blackberry with its beautiful flavour and its adaptability for "pies," especially when its mellow though rich flavour is mingled with the sourer flavour of the apple, and for "jam" and blackberry jelly, so appetising when eaten with bread and butter for tea or supper; or even for the poor labourer's dinner in the absence of animal food, so scarce a commodity, and so conspicuous by its absence from the majority of peasants' tables. Children in the rural districts are the great blackberry pickers, and although the fruit is sold very cheaply, the money obtained provides a welcome addition to eke out poor earnings: and to the extent to which it is gathered from farmers' hedges, may perhaps be reckoned as a "privilege."

## SEVEN YEARS AFTER—1880.

### CHAPTER XLI.

#### EYE-WITNESS EVIDENCE.

A CHANGE of some importance had taken place in the seven years since our first personal and other inquiries in the, to a large extent, typical agricultural districts of the West of England. One feature of the change came out incidentally as we were seated in the train, in 1880, on our way, in the first instance, to Wiltshire. Two farmers came into the compartment we were occupying, and a conversation ensuing between us—beginning with the weather and the crops—it was easily directed to the then position of the farm labourer. One of the farmers gave expression to his opinion that the Agricultural Children's Act had proved detrimental both to the farmer and the men he employed. He told us he was a large farmer in a rather outlying part of Wiltshire. Education generally, he also argued, was bad for master and man. The other farmer dissented from this view, in so far, at least, as the peasantry were concerned; for he believed, and of course sensibly, that an educated *employé* must prove a more useful servant than one crassly ignorant, whatever his work might be, and that his knowledge must necessarily be useful to himself as well as to his master. At this point, overcome by the delivery of so weighty a view, he fell asleep, and his companion—farmer number two—was evidently relieved to find an opponent to his views

*hors de combat*, and so returned, with renewed insistence, to his view as to the Agricultural Children's Act, which, though largely inoperative, was intended to do for rural districts what the elementary Education Acts had effected in cities and towns. The Agricultural Children's Act, this farmer insisted, was the principal cause of the then existing agricultural depression! Upon probing this somewhat extraordinary view to its source, we discovered that it was a purely personal experience that had caused him to form his conclusion. The Act had been put into operation in his district, he explained, with the result that it had deprived him of a good deal of very cheap labour. Formerly, on his extensive farm, where he kept a considerable number of horses, he had been in the habit of utilising labourers' children to look after them whilst they grazed upon the hedge sides on the lanes around. The children's duty was simply to prevent the horses from straying. Now, he said bitterly, he could no longer do this, because the district educational authorities insisted upon the children going to school. So a much larger supply of corn than of yore was needed for the feed of the animals, and it amounted to an extra cost to him of a hundred and twenty pounds per annum. This circumstance having caused him to be depressed, he looked at things in general through the medium of his own feelings,—for in other ways we ascertained he had not suffered so much as agriculturists generally.

Our first encounter, in the itinerary we had planned from village to village, was a poor old woman, whose age had precluded her from benefiting by the improvements that had occurred since our previous visits of inquiry. She was sixty-six years of age, and told us that she had begun work on a farm at thirteen. Her earnings then were threepence a day, but advanced from year to year by stages to fourpence, fivepence, and sixpence respectively. She had only attained to

sixpence a day when she was twenty. She then further advanced by steps to her maximum woman's pay of ninepence a day—that is, four-and-sixpence for a week ! At harvest time, however, she could earn a shilling a day, with an allowance of beer in addition. Her father, she said, had died sixteen years before, at the age of seventy-three ; but he had never, during his life, earned more than nine shillings a week, and not unfrequently only five. Her mother had done farm work for three and sixpence a week, and had lived to the age of eighty-five. Our informant had to work from eight until eleven in the morning, with an interval then of two hours for meals, and from one to five in the afternoon—that is, seven hours for a little more than a penny an hour. But even this pay would be lost if wet weather prevented her working, unless something under cover could be found for her to do. Piecework at a penny an hour ! Weeding, leading horses for ploughing, even in the bitterest weather between Michaelmas and Christmas, for a poor old woman of sixty-six ! Often she got wet to the waist over her work, and frequently shivered with the damp and cold. Naturally her food was not luxurious—chiefly bread, with an occasional bit of bacon and three pennyworth of butchers' meat in a week. There were "luxuries" in her weekly dietary, namely, a quarter pound of butter, two ounces of tea, and three quarters of a pound of sugar for the whole week ; and they could only be regarded as luxuries not always to be indulged in, for, although the nominal earnings were ninepence a day, the net average for a year—deducting wet days with no wages—amounted to no more than three and sixpence per week !

Another member we met of the old school—too aged to benefit by the dawning improvement—was an old fellow of eighty-one. His life history was significant, interesting, and yet representative. He began farm work at eight, to the obvious neglect of school ; but



at a dame-school he learnt enough to enable him to decipher such big letters as those on posters, waggons, and directing-posts. He had, however, never learned to write. As a boy he worked from six in the morning to six at night, and for this long labour he was paid eighteenpence a week ! At nine years of age he earned two shillings a week, and half a crown when he was ten. At that early age he led horses in ploughing, driving carts, and odd jobs, and when eleven years of age he got three shillings a week, and got sixpence more per week up to fourteen. At sixteen he could perform a man's work, and earned six shillings a week. Then came a shilling extra for each of the succeeding three years. At twenty-five, with ten shillings a week, he married, and thereafter brought up a family of nine children. Like the farmer already mentioned, this labourer of eighty-one had his opinions on educational matters, and, although unable to read himself, he thought reading and writing were useful ; but he considered there was danger in " summing," as it tended to " breed cunning."

## CHAPTER XLII.

### WAGES ADVANCED.

NOTWITHSTANDING the recurrence, during the period from 1873 to 1880, of a severe agricultural depression, there had been appreciable improvement in the rate of pay—an improvement which had affected all our agricultural districts. It is not proposed to give in detail the changes in every district, but to select the representative area of the four western counties of Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, and Devon. To traverse that district as we did occupied a rather appreciable time. For an individual to have gone similarly all over the kingdom would have taken so long a time that the information gathered in the first visited districts would have grown somewhat stale and out of date before the end of the inquiry, and would require to be supplemented. In fact, for an individual writer to attempt to present a complete and simultaneous account, no part of which shall be out of date, would be impossible. Royal commissions with a plethora of members pursuing simultaneous inquiries, and each undertaking a comparatively small district, take years to report in similar circumstances. The only way in which what may be called a *coup d'œil* of this subject—uniformly representative of the condition of things at a particular moment, so to speak—may be given, is by the employment of official machinery simultaneously set in motion. For this purpose the Poor Law and other official machinery offers a convenient method; and in the section of this

volume relating to British peasants of to-day the official material obtained in this way has been utilised to enable us to present as simultaneous a picture of present-day conditions as is possible. Meanwhile we shall proceed in this chapter to give local illustrative details that will largely reflect a general state of things, and which may, at the same time, be relied upon as exactly representing the peasants' circumstances in 1880.

Taking Wiltshire first, we found that around Marlborough wages were from ten to eleven shillings per week ; or ten shillings and a rent-free cottage. On one farm a carter was getting fifteen shillings a week and a good cottage in addition as part of his wages, the carters generally being two shillings in advance of the ordinary men. A shepherd's daughter was working for ninepence a day, and an additional daily fourpence instead of an allowance of beer ; in Wiltshire generally, beer being given instead of cider as part of the wages. A son of the same shepherd was earning nine shillings a week, and received eightpence a day instead of beer. At another village—Kennet—not far away, there was no beer allowance except at hay and corn harvests, and cottages at a shilling a week rent were paid for out of ten shillings wages ; but by piecework the men could sometimes earn two shillings a day. One man engaged in " picking," *i.e.* clearing weeds, was paid ten shillings an acre for clearance, and could do an acre in five days. At Avebury average wages were eleven shillings, and in one family of nine—the parents and seven children—one of the lads earned four and sixpence ; another, half a crown, and one girl was in domestic service. The mother worked also, and got ninepence a day. But in another family, where the father was earning ten shillings a week—working from seven in the morning to six, there were five non-bread-winning children. Here the mother worked, when she could get away from attendance on her children, at ninepence a day ; and this employment

averaged three days a week, from eight to six o'clock. Cottage rent, out of their total of twelve and six a week, had to be paid—a shilling a week. On the road between Marlborough and Oare we met a healthy looking young labourer, who described himself to us as a “lump” or pieceworker. He was a “handy man,” and could do most things connected with a farm, including thatching, which is quite a distinct art. Like many, especially energetic, labourers he worked for various farmers, and including everything could earn fifteen shillings a week. About this neighbourhood the weekly average of wages was ten shillings; shepherds and carters earning two shillings more,—paid in these instances by a free cottage and a shilling in cash. Ordinary wages had gone up two shillings more, but the wave of farming “depression” had recently—the men averred—brought them down again to eleven first, and then to ten shillings. The men phrased the agricultural depression “the bad times.” For twenty “lug,” or the eighth of an acre of allotment ground, the peasant paid ten shillings annually, or double what the farmer paid per acre; so that a profit on subletting of a hundred per cent. was “raked in,” so to speak, by the farmer. Around Wilcote and at Pudsey wages were ten and eleven shillings a week without additional “advantages.” At Manningford we met a boy of fourteen who earned, he said, three and sixpence weekly; his father earned ten; and on the total father, mother, and four children lived. Beer was allowed at harvest. Another lad we met earned four shillings a week. He had to lead a horse that drew a rake. We came upon a picturesque family group a little way from Up-Avon sitting under a hayrick, and consisting of father and mother, a son of twenty, and a little girl of nine all taking their dinner just brought in a basket from home by the mother. Their total earnings, including those of two sons not present, were actually thirty shillings a week! But four such bread-

winners in one family was quite an exceptional event. Against this, a labourer in a neighbouring village had to maintain a family of eight on eleven shillings a week. Women in these districts were still employed, and earned an average of ninepence a day. Wages of ten and eleven shillings a week obtained at Nether-Avon for ordinary labourers. In one family the earnings fortunately were : father, ten shillings ; two sons of twenty-four and twenty-seven years of age, ten shillings each ; and one lad of fourteen, four and sixpence. The prevailing rates of pay in other parts of the same county—Wilts—were ten, eleven, and sometimes twelve shillings. Putting it in an average, therefore, the rate would be eleven shillings. Near Amesbury, on the borders of Salisbury Plain, we encountered and conversed with a shepherd of the plain with his accompanying dogs. He told us that he got twelve shillings a week and a cottage rent free. His dog allowance was fourpence per week for meal,—and doubtless the man supplied what scraps there fell from his own table. A special payment was made to him of two pounds in money for the “ lambing season,” but the necessary care and attention of the sheep and lambs during that season were considerable—often requiring him to stay up all night. Once, he said, during a whole fortnight he had not been able to take off his clothes or boots. Around Salisbury the general average of wages mentioned was maintained. In Wiltshire, as elsewhere, there was additional pay for the increased work during harvest time, and in the neighbourhood of Westbury some manufacturing work that had sprung up caused farm wages to go up to as much as twelve and sixpence and thirteen shillings a week, and it caused even women labour to go up to a shilling a day. Railway labourers, in the same neighbourhood, earned fourteen and fifteen shillings a week, and from fifteen to thirty shillings a week could be earned by other labourers in coke and coal works.

Finally, as regards Wiltshire, the following interesting communication was received from a correspondent, who wrote :—

“ We are now in all the hurry and drive attending upon the getting-in of the harvest, and not only all the regular *employés*, but a goodly number of ‘strappers’ are engaged in this work, all of which is piecework. Most, if not all, the wheat is being cut down by patent reaping machines, so that the terribly trying work of cutting it down with the scythe and reaphook has not now to be done by the men ; but they and their wives and children tie up and ‘isle.’ The work is paid for by the acre—five shillings being generally the minimum, and seven the maximum, price paid per acre ; but some of the farmers in this neighbourhood—either from inability to pay or niggardliness—are giving only three and sixpence per acre. Others, however, are giving four and sixpence and five and sixpence per acre. When the scythe and reaphook are used the price paid is ten shillings an acre for cutting, tying up, and setting up into ‘isles.’ A man and his wife will tie up and ‘isle’ two acres in a day of some twelve or fifteen hours. These harvest times are the halcyon days, in a pecuniary sense, of the farm labourer, enabling him to wipe off some long ‘scores’ run up at the shopkeepers during the year. When the peasants hired for piecework are employed in turnip and swede hoeing, they are paid for the former at six shillings an acre ; for the latter, or swede hoeing, they are paid according to two rates, corresponding to the two hoeings of swedes—six shillings an acre for the first, and four for the second. The regular wages of the district of Wiltshire, to which reference has just been made, for men employed by the week, and not by the piece, is eleven shillings—though twelve is the rate paid by a few farmers ; carters and shepherds getting for their extra attendance two and, in some cases, three additional weekly shillings.”

Dorsetshire wages had also gone up ; ordinary wages ranging from ten to thirteen shillings. Two miles from Shaftesbury, at a village called Melbury Abbas, wages were ten and eleven shillings. In one case a father of thirty-five was getting twelve shillings, a lad of thirteen five, another aged twelve three and sixpence,—total family earnings, one pound and sixpence ; but there were eight to keep on this, including two younger ones at school and two at home, including a baby. Ten to

twelve shillings a week prevailed at Fontmell-Magnus. At another village, Iwerne Courtney, extensive building operations, involving appreciable competition for labour, had caused farm wages to rise to as much as thirteen and fourteen shillings a week. Similarly at Thornycombe, a very pretty village, as its name would seem to suggest, two miles from the town of Blandford, and again at Milborne St. Andrew, wages ranged from eleven to thirteen shillings a week; and at Puddleton, not very far from the county town of Dorsetshire, wages had rather a long range, from ten to fourteen shillings per week. Women earned eightpence a day, both in summer and winter, but during the harvest a shilling a day.

Proceeding to Devonshire, and selecting representative districts, we found that around Honiton wages were from ten to twelve shillings a week, and around the cathedral city of Exeter they went as high as fourteen shillings. At Teignmouth an Inland Revenue officer and collector of agricultural statistics in an extensive district around informed us that, whilst the average pay was about eleven shillings, and inferior men could only get nine, first-rate men could command thirteen shillings. Of that important and very beautiful part of Devon called the South Hams a correspondent, writing to us from Kingsbridge, said :—

“ Twenty years ago the wages of an able-bodied labourer in this district did not exceed eight shillings per week; but then it was supplemented by a sort of truck. The peasant got what corn he wanted for his family at twelve shillings per bag for wheat, and six shillings per bag for barley; and as that price was generally under the market value, it was considered equivalent to an addition of so much to the wages. This system, however, while it generally ensured the family a supply of bread, did not work well, as a labourer often complained that he got the inferior corn. How the peasant subsisted and reared his family on such a pittance has often been a matter of wonder to me. The wages in this district now range from twelve to fifteen shillings per week; and in most farms the men

are allowed from a quart to three pints of cider per day. This is valued at about eighteenpence per week. Many farmers think, as I do, that this system is bad, and should be abolished, and the value, in money, of the cider given to the labourers. But, as a rule, the men themselves are averse to the change. At harvest-time they have double wages, or they have meat and drink at the farmer's table as long as harvest lasts. But I am afraid that, whilst wages have advanced, the labourers have very much deteriorated in their work. It is a general complaint with farmers (and I believe they have cause to complain) that they cannot get the young labourers to do as much work, or to do it as well, as was done by the older men. There is not the desire to give satisfaction; they do not take pride in their work, and evince a tendency to scamp it. This is very different from what I can remember of the past times. I think one reason for this is the abolition of the system of apprenticeship, for the different manner of master and man has brought about neglect of interests on both sides—a state of things prejudicial to both."

In other parts of Devon, including Totnes and its neighbourhood, we ascertained from personal inquiry that many wages were eleven or twelve shillings a week, with the usual cider allowance, making, including the estimated cider value, twelve and sixpence or thirteen and sixpence per week. Again, around Tiverton and Halberton wages ranged from ten to twelve shillings, in some cases with cider added; in others with an additional money payment in lieu of it. The important districts in the north of Devon also showed signs of improvement, as our inquiries disclosed. In a very interesting communication from a doctor who was also a magistrate at Bideford, the writer said:—

"I am able to give you some information respecting the peasant life in this part of Devon, from observations extending over nearly forty years. The condition of the agricultural labourer in north-west Devon has, during this period, improved greatly, and his wages have risen in a greater proportionate degree than those of the mechanics of the district. Some thirty years ago seven shillings a week was the average money payment to our farm labourers. They had some perquisites which might have been worth a shilling a week, making the entire earnings equal to about eight shillings a week each. At present



time twelve shillings a week in money may be reckoned the average rate at which agricultural labourers are hired ; but it is not usual for them to have perquisites added when paid at this rate. During the last twenty years, our agriculturists have hired outdoor labourers in preference to indoor, and a large number of these have duties assigned them out of the hours of their usual daily service—namely, to attend on the cattle, and to see to the horses, etc. ; and for this extra work a cottage with garden is usually given free of rent, making the wages in such cases amount to fourteen shillings a week. The wives of the labourers, in a large number of cases, earn a little by sewing gloves for the glove manufacturers, who carry on a considerable trade, the centre of which is Torrington. But women do not commonly work in the open fields. They sometimes, however, go out for the day as washerwomen, and earn a shilling and their food in each instance, for their day's service. Taking the whole of a labourer's earnings into account, I am satisfied that they amount to £10 a year for each family above what was obtained twenty years ago."

Of another portion, the extreme western one, of Devon, another medical correspondent spoke as follows :—

"The district of which Halsworthy (a busy, thriving little market town, recently blessed with railway communication) is the centre is probably the most uninteresting in Devonshire. It is purely agricultural, and consists, for the most part, of moorland. It is very sparsely populated, there being about one person to every eight acres. The usual wage is about ten or twelve shillings per week, with cottage, and certain perquisites. As tiller of the soil, it is notorious that the present labourer, as an 'all-round' man, is greatly inferior to his predecessor of twenty or thirty years ago. The system of apprenticeships produced labourers that cannot be matched now either for morality or usefulness. This applies to female domestics as well as to men."

The rise of wages had also extended to Somersetshire. Giving illustrative districts we may briefly mention Milverton, where we found the rate from ten to twelve shillings a week ; and here it was rather interesting to note that the scarcity of cider at the time of our inquiry had caused farmers to discontinue giving it to their men and to pay them extra money in lieu of it—the amount of compensation varying from a shilling to fifteenpence a week. When it came to paying for the

value of the cider it was curious to note how the estimate of value had lessened : so that the imaginary eighteenpence and two shillings became a shilling and fifteenpence. Near Bridgwater, however, we found that the cider custom was partly continued, and also at and about Cannington ; but here when there was none the " cash " substitute was only a shilling a week. About Martock the custom was a good deal in vogue of employing labourers by the day, and then paying them two shillings a day—a rather artful plan for the farmer, as he could slip the employment on days too wet for work. Railway men doing very much the same kind—both kinds being largely spade and pick work, at least at times—could earn fifteen and sixpence per week. The previous winter, farm wages had been ten and eleven shillings a week, but without either cider or cider-money. Two shillings a day was paid at Stoke-sub-Hamdon. There was there, however, a large gloving industry, employing the wives and daughters of agricultural labourers. One other of the fortunate families with more than one bread-winner we came upon in this village—the father earning twelve, two sons ten and eight shillings each respectively, and a third son five and sometimes six shillings a week. From Burington, in the Mendip Valley, a communication reached us from the vicar, who said :—

" Wages rather exceed twelve shillings a week, with cider " ; and he added, " there is reason to hope that some of the money earned is finding its way into the savings bank, particularly at harvest and haymaking time, when the wages average a pound a week."

A rich agricultural district, in the centre of which is the parish of Norton Fitzwarren, had also, on the whole, materially advanced ; and we received the following communication from a large farmer and starch manufacturer there. He wrote :—

" Wages in this parish have advanced about two or three shillings since 1870 ; and the following is a fair sample of

those now generally paid, but without cider : carters, from twelve to fourteen shillings per week ; shepherds, from twelve to thirteen ; general labourers, from eleven to twelve—all exclusive of house rent, which generally costs from fifteenpence to two shillings a week, according to the size and condition of both cottage and garden. Cider has not been given during the last year or two to any extent, partly owing to the scarcity of apples, and (I believe) partly from a desire to break down the system. In lieu of cider the farmer usually gives one shilling per week. The quantity of cider when given is usually from three to four pints per day, and is often, in this immediate district, a fair article, with some amount of strength or intoxicating power."

We have had occasion, in a previous chapter, to call attention to the exceptionally low rate of wages prevailing in the extreme west of the county of Somerset, a sort of isolated, out-of-the-world district—away from any important town and not subject to the competition of other kinds of labour. We refer to the district of which Wootton Courtney is the centre ; and that, it may be remembered, where the worthy vicar kept a number of cows and gave all their milk to the farm labourers.

Although in a position to be uninfluenced by the general tide of improvement, there had nevertheless been some beneficial advance in the condition of its peasant inhabitants ; for in 1880 the then vicar wrote :—

" With regard to the wages, privileges, and condition of the labourer, this parish may be taken as an instance. The wages of an able-bodied man are generally from nine to ten shillings a week—a carter or shepherd receiving from one to two shillings more. In the majority of cases the houses are let with the farms, or at least a certain number with each farm, and the men who occupy these houses have them rent free with a garden, which additions may be reckoned as worth eighteenpence or two shillings more—this being about the average rent paid by those who do not have their houses free."

A comparison with the former conditions as to wages will show that the amounts recorded in this chapter are appreciably in advance of them ; and indicate the sure and steady, if slow, hand of improvement.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### PRIVILEGES DYING OUT.

It will have been inferred from what was stated in the previous chapter as to the decline in the custom of giving cider in addition to cash wages, that the tendency was in the direction of absolute discontinuance of the custom. Such customs, however, usually die rather slowly ; and it may be that part of the reason for the slowness of the departure of the cider truck system was the indisposition of farmers to add to their cash outlay for wages. Cheaply produced cider really costs the farmer less than its estimated " value " as part of wages. So long as it could be made to count as part payment at more than its actual worth, so long was there an interest—a pecuniary interest—in maintaining a most undesirable system ; and it would disappear much more rapidly, no doubt, if it could be abolished without compensation.

But at the period under review, 1880, there was indication of a general tendency to do away with all allowances " in kind," including the grist corn system, and even free cottages. Our inquiries in Wiltshire disclosed the fact that money wages had increased at the expense, so to speak, of " privileges " generally. Clothing and coal clubs still went on in places, and the donations towards them of the charitably disposed continued ; but those donations, although benefits, were not " privileges " in the sense of this chapter—that is, were not gifts by the farmers in addition to wages.

In Dorsetshire, except in a few places, it was noticeable that privileges were declining. An exception was to be noticed at Puddleton, about four miles from Dorchester. In the village mentioned, labourers hired by the year were annually given two hundred and fifty faggots of firewood, valued at a pound a hundred, although if a poor person in the village wanted one it could be bought for twopence ; but the supply in such a case was limited to six in a fortnight. Another privilege at Puddleton obtained by the farm labourers was an annual ton and a half of coal.

Amongst a few privileges not extinct in Devonshire, at the period under mention, was, besides, an occasional piece of potato-ground free, and permission for the labourer's poultry to run in the farmyard. But the birds, if their pens were near and the farmyard accessible, would avail themselves of the "run" without permission, and yet return punctually to their own roosts at night. One South Devon farmer who gave this "privilege" considered it to be worth, with straw given for the labourer's pig, a shilling a week ; and another farmer reckoned an allowance of firewood given to his men as worth a shilling a week. It was calculated that the privileges mentioned, together with cider, where given, valued at eighteenpence a week, were altogether, with wages in cash of twelve shillings, worth a total of sixteen shillings. The keeping of a cow belonging to the labourer on the farm, though probably a very rare and exceptional occurrence, was mentioned as sometimes allowed ; one correspondent who referred to it thinking it was a practice that would be allowed to increase as a substitute for what is called peasant-farming. Certainly the more advantages, even if individually slight, that could be given to the men, would make it all the more likely to keep them to their occupations, and help to stem the serious tide of emigration. Nevertheless, when all has been told, the fact

remains that "privileges" generally in Devon were disappearing.

Coming to the last county for mention—Somersetshire—it was to be noted that privileges generally were gradually disappearing.

From a note of our own, made in 1880, we say :—

"It is very much the same with regard to privileges in Somersetshire as in the three other western counties. In a general way it may be said, with regard to all four, that the system of privileges is dying out. Where it still exists it is on sufferance, so to speak, and is rather owing to the generosity of individual farmers than to any desire to retain it, as formerly, as part of the payment of labour. It is no doubt a healthy sign of the times that wages now keep to a much more uniform rate throughout the West of England than they formerly did. Where privileges remain they are not given generally as part payment, but are 'thrown in,' as it were, by the employers, who probably think that if they have any gifts to bestow, their own poor servants are the most deserving recipients, and that even at the best the weekly wages of a farm labourer enable him to provide nothing but the barest sustenance."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### IMPROVEMENT IN DWELLINGS.

THE wave of improvement that—surely, if slowly, moving, since the public awakening of 1872, to the condition of our peasantry—had, as we have seen, affected their rates of wages, had not left their habitations untouched. Again taking the West of England as illustrative, to a certain extent, of changes elsewhere, we will give the result, as briefly as possible, of our own careful investigations in 1880. Whilst cottages were then—as in many examples we could supply—far from what they ought to have been, and the two-roomed hovel was lingering and dying hard, so to speak, there were many pleasant indications of an appreciable change for the better; and signs too that the improvement had, to use a somewhat trite phrase, come to stay.

Taking the four important West Country counties seriatim, we will indicate the improvements—merely remarking that to quote the too numerous examples we encountered of the old and disreputable order of things would only confirm the “types” we have already given. At Fyfield in Wiltshire we came upon some excellent recently-erected cottages, about three miles from Marlborough, on a hill slope. We found them well and solidly built, of stone—with five rooms each—two “sitting” or “living” rooms and three bedrooms. There was plenty of space for decency and comfort; and æsthetic considerations had not been neglected—for “creepers” and roses had been planted to trail

upon the walls. At Nether Avon the landlord, a well-known man and a Member of Parliament, had caused to be erected a number of excellent dwellings, each containing four or five rooms—a “living” room, a scullery, and three bedrooms. There was no complaint, we found, by the occupiers of want of accommodation or of any kind of discomfort; and on going into the matter of the other and older cottages the people told us that even they had been “tackled up,” as they put it, and made at least more comfortable if not more roomy. From other districts in the same county came what, on the whole, were favourable signs of improvement. A Wiltshire clergyman wrote to us:—

“In sanitary matters I doubt whether the county be quite up to—it certainly is not ahead of—the factory districts of the north. On some noblemen’s estates—notably that of the Marquis of Bath—the cottages and farmhouses will compare favourably for health and neatness, and perhaps for convenience, with the working men’s houses of Sir Titus Salt of Saltaire. The same may be said of the estates of the late Mr. C. P. Phipps of Chalcote.”

We are tempted here—although at first intending to exclude repetitions of the evil kind of things already recorded—to quote the same clergyman’s candid report of the still existent “bad” dwellings, especially as there is some appreciable humour in his concluding sentences. His letter went on:—

“Yet in many places the cottages of the peasantry are wretched—ill-drained, ill-roofed, and ill-ventilated. The wind comes in at the doors of many, not by crevices, but by apertures through which the hand can be thrust. The bedroom windows, many of them, will not open at all, and there is no fireplace or chimney, and no means of ventilation except the door. The water used for drinking and cooking is drawn, in many cases, from stagnant ponds, or from streams polluted by sewage, or by factory dye-houses. This is the case, for instance, at Heywood and Hawksridge, two villages with 500 inhabitants, of which I have the charge at present. In a few cottages only one of the landlords provides filters. While the borough town of Westbury itself, which is lit up with gas, by subscription, is only surface-drained, and while clear spring water is very sparingly laid



on or supplied from springs, sewage and factory-polluted water runs in drains hardly six inches below the streets. In some places the drains are open, and occasionally overflow the footway on their course to meadows which are irrigated by them a little to the north of the town, and to villages where their water is drunk! Yet the place is said to be 'healthy,' in spite of this abundant provision for fevers; and when—having refused a drink of water offered to me in a village one day, because the liquid was not clear—the woman tendering it to me remarked, 'That is nothing to what it is sometimes, sir,' it struck me that, like the old lady in the fens, who, when asked her opinion of the water laid on from the newly opened 'works,' exclaimed in disgust, 'Call ye that water! why, it has neither taste nor smell!' So here they might in some villages have the same idea—for their drinking water possesses both these qualities. Though in some villages the springs, especially in chalk districts, give excellent water, yet much needs to be done to give better water, better drainage, better houses, and more elevating recreations to the people."

Another correspondent from another Wiltshire village wrote to us very encouragingly. He said :—

"The cottage accommodation is generally very good. Recently a great number of new cottages have been erected, and I think if the artisans and even some of those who consider themselves much 'higher up' socially could see some of the compact, commodious, and convenient dwellings which we have in this neighbourhood, their envy would be excited. The new cottages are, I think, everything that could be desired. They are built in most healthy situations, have each, in most cases, two good rooms on the ground floor, and three bedrooms upstairs, and are well provided with every convenience. Each cottage has a garden attached to it of some ten 'lug' of ground, and the rent is only one shilling per week. But the occupier is also entitled to, and gets, from ten to twenty 'lug'—there are a hundred and sixty 'lug' to the acre—of potato-ground."

Speaking of other and dilapidated cottages to which the same correspondent had called our attention when he had previously and personally taken us to see them, he wrote : "They have since been put into good repair"—another indication of the hand of reform to which we have already alluded. A very pertinent and interesting remark concluded his letter. He said :—

"It seems to be the design of landed proprietors to have as few people as possible on their estates. Time was when

the farms were small, and rented by a class of plain, hard-working farmers ; but during the last quarter of a century the small farms have been massed together, and the large farms thus made are rented by gentlemen farmers, living in quite palatial residences. Manual labour is being put off the land by machinery. Standing on an eminence and taking a survey of the surrounding country, one is pained to note how few cottages and homesteads the eye encounters, while our towns are growing to a great and, I fear, dangerous extent. The evil tendency of this system will be that there will be no middle class in the country between the gentleman farmer and the peasant."

In Dorsetshire we were also convinced of improvement in peasant dwellings, and we noted, with great satisfaction, that the good ones predominated. For instance, at Melbury Abbas, two miles from the town of Shaftesbury, on a hilly slope, a most healthy situation, we found two prettily vine-clad cottages. In each of these were three bedrooms and one sitting-room. One was occupied by a labourer and his wife and six children—very different from the one, small, sleeping-chamber and eight children. Good gardens, too, were attached to the cottages. Four pounds per annum, or a trifle more than eighteenpence a week, was the very moderate rental. In an adjoining village, Compton Abbas, no complaint was made either as to the number or the condition of its cottages. Again, in a village of some size, Fontmill Magnus, we found a good number of quite excellent dwellings, stone built, substantial, and of pretty design, in the majority of cases each having two or three bedrooms. Also at Iwerne Courtney, where the property belonged to a nobleman who had been a prominent Member of the House of Commons, the general verdict as to cottages was "good." In some cases, and not a few, they were, in fact, all that could be desired. We noted, too, on the occasion of our visit, that some rather extensive building operations were in progress, all for new cottages ; and it was clear from our inspection that the owners were intending to make them so as to provide a maximum of accommoda-

tion for the local peasantry. Moreover, in Milbourne Saint Andrew, which had been rather conspicuous for meetings in connection with the agricultural labourers' movement—we found that the cottages generally were good. At Puddleton, already mentioned, the scene, we remember, of an interesting descriptive article in the *London Daily Telegraph* some years ago in connection with the same movement, we found that although bad dwellings were still in existence, there was a greater proportion of good ones ; but whilst the rents of the bad ones were only fifteenpence or eighteenpence per week, the rents of the new and improved ones were rather high, as much as five pounds per annum, and sometimes six, seven, and even eight pounds. Naturally only the better paid, that was, also, the better class of labourers, could afford to take the highly rented ones. From a rector of a parish not far from Dorchester came a very interesting communication. He wrote to us :—

“ Where cottages are not ‘ found ’ they may be rented for about five pounds a year ; but they are still, in so many places, very unfit for human habitation—lacking a suitable number of rooms and other accommodation. The sanitary laws, so objectionable to farmers and agricultural members of Boards of Guardians, have done much to enforce a supply of water, and to enforce cleanliness. Still there is much to be done, though it must be allowed that cottages are vastly improved throughout the county.”

After commenting upon some bad cottages in his district, this clergyman concluded his letter with the following excellent sentences :—

“ I have long made it a great point to hold up the *injustice* and *folly* of bad cottage accommodation. The present agricultural depression will do good if it serves to induce farmers to take only farms upon which are the best buildings for *man* and *beast*.”

The following comments of our own must suffice, with its concluding optimistic expressions, for a summing up of the condition of the peasant dwellings of Devon ;—

“ Picturesqueness is pre-eminently the external characteristic of the cottages of Devon, into which quality the red cob of the walls enters largely. But the old red cob dwellings of the Devonshire peasantry are passing away, and are giving place to buildings whose external aspect is very various. The variety, however, is increased by the existence of the cob-built houses, which, though they are disappearing, are going slowly. Slate roofs spotted with yellow lichen—from which stand up red-brick chimneys—sometimes surmount white or yellowish white walls; or the roof may be of bright red tiles surmounting walls of yellowish white; and though the chimney be also red in colour, a curl of blue smoke will perhaps afford the necessary contrast. The old-fashioned thatch roof still surmounts various descriptions of buildings—sometimes bare brick walls, the red of which is set off, when the dwelling is new, by the interlineation of white mortar; or the thatch may surmount white-washed or yellow-washed cob, or plastered brick, and be plain in style, or crown, neatly and prettily, the gabled projections of the building. Green moss and yellow-blossoming ‘stonecrop’ will often add external prettiness to the roof, but they are suggestive of dampness and discomfort within; and though trailing plants add a charm to external walls, they take from the too-limited light of the small windows. Cottages in Devonshire, as elsewhere throughout the West of England, are, on the whole, improving; and are better than they were eight years ago, though there is still too much of the old and evil state of things existing.”<sup>1</sup>

An appreciable amount of evidence reached us from a number of sources confirming this general view—one correspondent alleging that—

“ All the new residences are great improvements, both in reference to the size and number of the rooms.”

He added that—

“ The landed proprietors as a class are well disposed at the present time to promote improvement in the construction of the labourers’ cottages.”

In the adjoining county of Somerset we found that there was evidence of improvement in its farm labourers’ cottages. Once more disregarding the continuance in some places yet, of the species of peasant dwellings already described and condemned, let us proceed to

<sup>1</sup> “ Peasant Life in the West of England.”

the indications of improvement. The vicar of Burrington, writing to us in reference to the adjoining parish of Wrington, confirmed what has been previously stated in this volume, that a noble duke admitted to a friend of the present writer that his grace's knowledge of the wretched and insanitary conditions of some of his own cottages was first derived from reading our former description of them, and that he had immediately ordered them to be repaired. Alluding to the former bad condition of these same cottages, he remarked :—

“ This state of things has now been rectified at considerable cost ; and I understand the health of the inhabitants has proportionately improved.”

From the isolated and remote district of Wootton Courtney, already referred to, came a communication from the vicar, who said :—

“ The houses vary much, but a general improvement has undoubtedly taken place, especially in the case of estates owned by resident landlords, and of those who take an interest in the welfare of the labourers.”

Finally, from an extensive agricultural district in the Vale of Taunton came the following communication :—

“ The cottages so far as I know are all in a fair state of repair, and generally consist of a roomy kitchen and wash-house, or back kitchen on the ground floor, and always two, and frequently three, fair-sized bedrooms on the first floor. Most of these cottages, having small flower gardens in front, present a neat and comfortable appearance, whilst their interiors, at least downstairs, are generally fully furnished with necessary articles for daily use, and there is often some attempt at ornament—the flower-pot being a noticeable feature, as well as picture frames, either for prints or for family portraits. Overcrowding is of rare occurrence (at least overcrowding in the usual form), and I know of but one or two attempts to overcrowd cottages ; and these have been speedily checked by the relieving officer of the district. Indeed, only in one family have persistent attempts been made to lodge too many people.”

It is very gratifying to note that, as already intimated, and in spite of dark touches, the hand of improve-

ment in peasant dwellings is conspicuous in the picture of peasant life which we have endeavoured to paint, as representative of the year 1880, eight years after the first uprising of farm labourers in Warwickshire; and that there were abundant signs that the reforms begun would go steadily onward as the years rolled by.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### A MODEL VILLAGE.

PERHAPS the most interesting of all our experiences during our tour of inquiry through the western counties in 1880 was the discovery in Wiltshire of what was, in very truth, a model village. It came upon us as an instance of "good spoilt by no admixture of evil"; and it may be as well to give the description then written verbatim :—

"The external aspect of the little village of Wilcote would instantly impress any chance passer-by. The pretty cottages of which it consists do not number more than about fifty or sixty. Some are thatched, with thatch-work that is veritably a work of art, so neatly and admirably has it been done. Others are slate-roofed, and all are either brick or stone built, after simple but elegant designs—the walls being pierced by red-latticed windows that give abundance of light to the interiors. No cottage in Wilcote has less than two bedrooms, and the majority have three, in addition to which each has two rooms below—sitting-room and kitchen or pantry. Pretty porches, —creeper and rose-entwined,—rustic summer-houses, and box-edged gardens are notable features in the aspect of the peasant dwellings of this little village; and over all there is an air of brightness and freshness, and there is especially an absence of the sort of 'soiled' appearance which too frequently is noticeable in workmen's dwellings which have been inhabited a few years. All the gardens in their season grow such fruit as apples, plums, and gooseberries, and such vegetables as potatoes, beans,—'broad' and 'kidney,'—parsnips, etc., whilst portions of them are devoted to the brightest of flowers. The rents of these excellent cottages—whose interiors, in the matters of dryness, room, and comfort, are everything that could be desired—are no more than fifty-two shillings per annum, and eightpence per annum in addition for two chimney-sweepings each year,

The chimney-sweeping of the whole village is done by contract, by order of the cottage owner,—all belong to one landlord,—so that it may be regularly and properly done, and not left to the possibility of neglect by the tenants. Against overcrowding the utmost care is taken—lodgers being strictly forbidden; and arrangements are made, when necessary, to shift occupiers from one house to another—for there is variation in size and accommodation—to suit the necessities from time to time of families. It will be readily believed that the cottages at Wilcote are in great demand—so admirable are the dwellings and so low the rents. But ‘conduct’ is the key to admission. If any member of a family occupying a Wilcote cottage is known to be ‘drunk’ notice to quit is forthwith served upon that individual. Similarly, if the daughter of a labourer proves to be ‘unfortunate’ on returning from service or otherwise, the family to which she belongs are also required—on the circumstances becoming known—to leave the house they occupy. This last-named regulation may be considered a harsh one, and the reply to the contention is that its effect upon the morality of the village is remarkable. So anxious are the peasants to get these model cottages, that they willingly comply with the strict regulations of the cottage owner, and serious misconduct is unknown in Wilcote. There is one inn in the village; but this institution never opens on Sundays—not because Sunday opening is forbidden by the inn owner, who is also the owner of the cottages, but because there is no ‘demand’ for Sunday trade on the part of the inhabitants. We had the good fortune to meet the singularly intelligent policeman of the district, and we had a long conversation with him. We gathered from him that his services were never required in Wilcote, and he contrasted the ‘Saturday nights’ at this village with those at a large adjoining village, where the overcrowded peasant hovel still exists in fine condition, and inns abound. ‘Go whenever you will, sir,’ said our informant, ‘to Wilcote, you will never see a man, or woman either, the worse for liquor. Just a few people perhaps,’ he added, ‘will be sitting in the bar-parlour of the inn there, sipping their beer; but never any noise or disturbance! But,’ he continued, ‘what is the case at O—where I live? The “publics” are full on Saturday nights, and it is seldom a Saturday passes without a “row” or a fight in the street.’ Surely this simple statement speaks volumes for the moral effect of a decent dwelling, and of the thoughtful and constant supervision of an excellent landlord. Not only does the latter insist upon strict attention to everything which concerns the healthfulness, comfort, and convenience of the peasant cottages, but he lets it be understood that he admires neatness and tastefulness in the cottage surroundings—well-kept gardens, neat and well-trimmed borders, and the display of flowers.



And the cottagers take the hint—for rarely have we seen such admirably laid-out gardens enclosures as those of this model Wiltshire village.”<sup>1</sup>

The preceding illustration of what a peasant village ought to be, is also a striking example of the power for good which one individual landowner can wield. Had such beneficent arrangements been carried out everywhere, it would have, there can be little doubt, effectually arrested the disastrous depopulation of so many of our rural districts.

<sup>1</sup> “Peasant Life in the West of England.”

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### FOOD, DRESS, AND "CREDIT."

A QUESTION that will naturally arise in connection with the increase in agricultural labourers' wages between 1872 and 1880 is how far has that increase been wholly beneficial to the recipient, and how far has it been counterbalanced by a corresponding rise in the cost of living? It may be stated, generally, that the increase of wages has appreciably outstripped the increase in the cost of living.

But whilst we are on this subject of the cost of living, which in the case of the farm labourer we confine practically to the cost of food, it will be interesting to go much further back than 1872—to go back, in fact, a hundred years, and information carefully obtained is available to enable us to compare the differences between 1770 and 1878, the last-mentioned date corresponding practically to our selected date of 1880; and we will make the comparison in respect of the value, as shown by the rent, of cultivated land, the cost of provisions—limiting these to bread, meat, and butter (quite enough to cover an agricultural labourer's dietary), the rents of peasant dwellings, and the average wages of the labourers. The available information enables three periods to be taken, 1770, 1850, and 1878; but it relates to England only. In 1770 the average rent of land was thirteen shillings per acre; in 1850, twenty-seven shillings; and in 1878, thirty shillings per acre. In 1770 the four-pound loaf was sixpence; meat, threepence farthing; and butter,

sixpence per pound. In 1850, bread was fivepence for the four-pound loaf; meat, fivepence per pound; and butter, one shilling. In 1878, bread was sixpence per loaf; meat, ninepence a pound; and butter, twenty pence a pound. Cottage rents, which in 1770 were eightpence a week, were seventeen pence in 1850, and two shillings in 1878. Wages show a considerable increase. From an average of seven shillings and threepence a week in 1770, they had increased to nine shillings and sevenpence in 1850, and to fourteen shillings in 1878.

From a note we made in 1880 we extract the following:—

“ Since the year 1770 there has undoubtedly been—owing to the introduction of machinery and to other causes—an improvement in farming; and this improvement, so far as general husbandry is concerned, had continued until the last few years. But, in this respect, there has, of late, been a great falling off. It may be assumed that very little change has taken place in the relative position of the foregoing figures since 1878. The prices of bread, butter, and meat remain about the same—for the falling off in the supply of agricultural produce since 1878, owing to the period of ‘depression’ that has occurred, a falling off which, in an ordinary way, would have caused a rise of prices, has been counterbalanced by largely increased supplies of food from abroad. Corn and butchers’ meat, poultry, fish, and other tinned articles of consumption have been pouring into this country of late years—chiefly from the United States of America—in rapidly increasing quantities; and prices would have fallen lower than they have fallen of late, but for an increased and increasing consumption, stimulated by the recent and continuing revival of trade. The money earnings of the peasantry have fallen somewhat since 1878, from the general average for that year. But the fall is, doubtless, only a temporary one, and wages are certain to recover the rate prevailing in 1878 under the influence of the good harvest of the present year of 1880. The average money earnings of the West Country peasantry are, of course, below the general average; but the cost of items of living, other than bread, is also somewhat below the rates we have mentioned as prevailing at the latest of the three periods we have referred to. The price of bread is tolerably uniform throughout the country. But butter in the western counties, of the quality consumed by the peasantry, can always be obtained for a

shilling the pound, and the price of meat, as well as the rate of cottage rent, is somewhat lower there than elsewhere. It will be seen, therefore, that though the cost of living has increased, wages have increased in greater proportion, and the result is that the West Country labourer not only lives better now than he did a few years since, but that he lives better than he ever did before, although his prosperity is not nearly equal, in degree, to that of the landed proprietor, whose incomings—whatever his outgoings might have been—had doubled between 1770 and 1850, and have been rapidly augmenting in value from 1850 to the present time.”

Coming now, after this general survey of the changed position of the agricultural labourer, in something over a hundred years, let us note the character of the food obtained by the farm labourer in 1880; and we cannot do better than quote from the interesting communications of a number of experienced correspondents, whose statements confirm the facts we elicited ourselves in an itinerary journey. Beginning with Wiltshire, one correspondent wrote :—

“ You may be sure that very little bacon (in a county, it is noteworthy, famous for that item of animal food) finds its way to the house of the poor toiler who has a family of seven or eight children, or perhaps ten or a dozen, especially when it has to be purchased at the shop, which is often the case, as some farmers will not allow their men to keep pigs, lest their grain might be stolen to feed these animals; and certainly, when a family is so numerous as to require nearly all the wages for bread and clothes and schooling, the temptation to pilfer a little grain to feed the pig is somewhat strong.”

From Dorsetshire a clergyman wrote to us :—

“ The Dorsetshire labourer decidedly lives better than he did, for he ‘ sees,’ ‘ smells,’ and ‘ tastes’ meat regularly, instead of once a week as formerly. A slice of fat bacon no longer satisfies, and extra fat has no superabundant charms in these days.”

A correspondent from Devonshire said :—

“ Devon is, of course, noted for its ‘ clotted ’ cream, and for its ‘ junkets ’; but both these are far beyond the reach of the peasantry, who, for breakfast, have what is called

'broth,' made of fat, bread and water; for the mid-day meal, perhaps a little bread and cheese, or potatoes and pork—sometimes, for a change, a little dried fish instead of pork; for the evening meal a cup of tea with dried bread. Pies and pasties are the great feature of the Cornish diet. The ordinary pasty of the Cornish labourer is clean, wholesome, and nutritious, and the Devonshire labourer might with advantage adopt the same kind of diet. When a pig is kept by the Devon peasant and is fat enough to kill, half of it is salted for the use of himself and family for the greater portion of the year; the remainder is usually sold to the butcher. The salted portions of the pig thus forms the whole, or nearly so, of the animal diet of the peasantry in this district."

A farmer of considerable experience, long residing in the "South Hams" of Devon, a wonderfully fertile and beautiful region, agreed with the previously quoted correspondent as to the peasant's improvement in food. He remarked:—

"The peasant certainly lives very much better than his father did. Living, during the last generation, consisted chiefly of barley bread and broth for breakfast, with a little skimmed 'country' cheese. For dinner he had barley dumpling with a very small piece of bacon in the middle—and barley bread, with a little salt fish or bacon for his supper. But when potatoes were good, plentiful, and cheap, this diet was often varied by large quantities of potatoes being used. Many an old labourer, however, has told me that he could not work on a potato diet as well as he could on a barley one. If the peasant then tasted meat, it was generally bacon—beef or mutton being, as a rule, a treat. Wheat was sometimes mixed with the barley to make loaves, and the peasant's wife then always made and baked the family bread at home under an iron kettle on the hearth. By this method the labourers were sure of one thing, namely, that the bread they manufactured was pure and unadulterated. To show how little wheat was then used in large, poor families, an old labourer of mine has told me that, when a boy, his mother used to hold out to him as an inducement to be 'good' that they would have a peck of wheat at Christmas next, and this promise was often given to the children in *January*. But the peasant eats very little, if any, barley now. His wife generally buys wheaten bread, ready made, and baked by the small town or village baker, who delivers it at the labourers' doors; and most rural districts have their butchers, who deliver meat in the same way. The small shops, too, of most villages and hamlets,

now keep in stock almost every necessary that the peasantry require—not forgetting the luxury of tobacco, which is very largely indulged in by the peasant of to-day.”

Anent tobacco, it may here be noted that by no means unfrequently has chewing it been resorted to, to stay the natural craving for unobtainable food.

From Somersetshire came the short note of a correspondent, who said—

“ I often hear farm labourers remark on the difference between their food now and what it used to be in their younger days, when horse beans were the sole provision after a hard day’s work. This year, however, in this district, a very splendid potato crop is being dug.”

A large employer of agricultural and other labour in Somersetshire wrote to us :—

“ The peasant’s food usually consists of a breakfast (before seven a.m.) of bread and bacon or dripping, with fried potatoes ; a lunch, at about ten or eleven, of bread and cheese and cider ; dinner, if taken in the fields, of bread and cold bacon or other cold meat, washed down with cider, or, if near enough to home, of a dish of hot vegetables with a little meat. Further, the peasant has a slight meal of bread and cheese at about four o’clock, and a substantial supper, soon after leaving work, of hot vegetables with meat or fish of some kind, boiled or fried, and tea and bread and butter—the whole making a grand total of no inconsiderable amount, and which only fairly hard work and fresh air enable him to digest. I should say that the pig—no inconsiderable factor of the family supply—is very generally kept here, and is certainly looked upon, and justly so, as the poor man’s ‘ savings bank.’ It is, indeed, a fact, that but for the pig the money spent by the labourer upon his food would either be wasted by his wife in finery, or by himself at the public-house. The important animal is usually purchased for about twenty shillings, and is kept on and fattened until it attains a weight of nine ‘ score ’ or upwards. Then it affords a large supply of good, wholesome, solid meat, which lasts a long time, and is, in fact, usually in stock until another pig is ready for the knife.”

It will be important to note that this particular correspondent had the reputation of being a very liberal employer, who gave his men two shillings a

week more than the current rate of wages prevailing in his district ; so that the dietary he details was exceptionally good. Concluding a most interesting communication, the same correspondent said—

“ Very much may yet be done to improve the food of the peasantry by systematic instruction in the rules of simple cookery. Few, if any, of the labourers’ wives here know how to make the best of the plentiful supply of vegetables abundantly raised by their husbands and sons on the unusually large and good gardens attached to the cottages, or on the plots of land which can be rented at about eight shillings per annum, either of the Great Western Railway Company, who let, in allotments, the waste pieces of ground along the sides of their line, or of the vicar of the parish—plots which, under the hands of an ordinary farm labourer, produce enough vegetables (including potatoes) to supply any average family during the year. Unhappily, however, none of the women here seem to know how to prepare the dainty soups and other simply-made but appetising dishes, which are so well known to the peasantry of France, and which are very cheap, and, at the same time, highly nutritious.”

The picturesqueness of dress which distinguishes the peasantry of some other countries is very conspicuous by its absence amongst our native field-labourers. To a certain extent the “smock-frock” and the “corduroy” trousers linger in outlying districts that have not been brought under the influence of modern changes. The wearers of the “smock frock,” however, were chiefly shepherds—though even they seemed to be giving it up at the period under review—but as regards other labourers, it was almost a thing of the past. The poverty of the class is probably the reason for the discontinuance of costume, the material for which had to be purchased, whilst old pairs of trousers, old coats and waistcoats had to be used because they were “gifts” from the labourers’ employers and others. When he did not obtain clothes in this way, he obtained them from the second-hand shops, and would be compelled to select not what was most attractive, but what was most serviceable—and of any shape or any colour—both

qualities doubtless being determined by their cheapness. Now and then, of course, both men and women would manage somehow to obtain new clothes of the "Sunday best" style, in order to appear decently clothed at the places of worship. Such clothes are ordinarily taken great care of, and never used during work of any kind, and naturally they would last a long while—sometimes, it has been averred, almost for his lifetime. Women, too, of carefulness and neatness, and having the sense and the skill to select good things, would make their clothes last for many years. It has often been obvious to those who have been observant of such things, what evident pride a farm labourer takes of his carefully brushed coat, waistcoat, trousers, and hat—a pride extended to the endeavour to show spotless white linen and brightly polished boots. And we must not forget the often "showy" tie, the clean, well-starched collar, and the white, blue, red, or checkered pocket-handkerchief; and it was noticeable that the older generation wore the more sober colours, whilst the younger generation "affected" more smartness. Some most interesting correspondence on this subject reached us from various persons. Writing from Wiltshire, one said—

"The dress of the farm labourers has undergone a great change of late years. You will seldom, or never, except in the case of very old men, see the smock frock. That has been discarded in these days of 'cheap fustian' for a corduroy jacket in the winter, and a short cotton slop in the summer. Our peasantry are pretty well clad on weekdays, and if you were to visit our neighbourhood on Sunday, you would be greatly surprised at the very respectable appearance, with regard to dress, which the men and their wives and children present—the men in suits of cloth neither threadbare nor patched, and the women and children the very pink of neatness and cleanliness. The Sunday clothing is taken great care of, and is very rarely worn on weekdays. There is nothing in the work of a peasant to cause him to doff his working habiliments after his day's toil. Breathing pure air all the day, and browned by exposure to the sun, he always has a cheery, healthy, and clean look, which is quite independent of the tailor."



He continued :—

“The women are helped in the matter of obtaining clothing for themselves and children by the institution, common, I believe, to all our villages, and known by the name of ‘the clothing club,’ over which the clergyman’s wife ordinarily presides. Those who take advantage of this institution—and most of the women do—pay into that lady’s keeping a weekly subscription of from one penny to sixpence, to which one penny weekly is added out of the fund subscribed by the benevolent persons of the parish. At the year’s end each member of this club receives a ticket representing the sum due to her, which ticket she takes to the draper’s and makes her purchases. I believe it is the rule of these clubs that all purchases shall be submitted to the manager for her approval. This rule serves as a precaution against the money being expended on light, useless finery ; but it is not offensively carried out. We have in this small agricultural town what is called a ‘lying-in charity,’ which gives twenty-five shillings each to fifty poor women for the purchase of substantial clothing on the special occasion the nature of which the name of the charity indicates. Then there is the ‘Blanket Loan Club.’ A blanket is lent to any poor woman who likes to apply for one from November to June, year by year, for six years, at the expiration of which period the blanket becomes her property ; but she has to pay sixpence a year for the first two years and fourpence each year afterwards during the remainder of the six. Amongst other minor benevolent institutions is the ‘Marriage Portion Charity,’ which every year gives ten pounds each to three or four young women on the point of being married. This charity is dispensed at Easter.”

A clergyman from Dorsetshire wrote to us :—

“If finery indicates an improvement in dress, then there is an advance, but it may be questioned whether too much does not go on the back—as much as, expended on an improved bill of fare, might do real good to a whole family. But with the example set by the ‘upper ten,’ what else can be expected than what is now visible everywhere ?”

A correspondent, writing from South Devon said—

“The everyday ordinary dress of the Devonshire peasant has nothing to commend it to a romantic mind, even the ‘smock frock’ being now, to a large extent, conspicuous by its absence. I must not, however, forget to mention the suit of black cloth, worn on Sundays, holidays, and

special occasions. It is made the object of the greatest care by the labourer, who will carefully lock it up during the six days of the week ; and if his wife be a good, thrifty woman the one suit of black will last a lifetime."

From another Devon correspondent came the communication :—

"The present dress of the peasant is certainly in great contrast to what it used to be. But whether the present style be more conducive to comfort and adaptability to labour than was that of the past—I mean the style of the fathers and mothers of the present generation of farm labourers—is, I think, questionable. The 'tally system,' under which so much per week is paid towards an article of dress or cheap jewellery, too often unsuitable and unbecoming, has engendered a taste for finery in the wives and especially in the daughters of our labourers—a taste that, in its results, is sometimes almost grotesque."

Confirmatory communications all tending to similar conclusions came to us from Somersetshire. One simply said, in reference to the dress question :—

"It has partaken of the spirit of the age. It is not for me to say whether the peasant's expenditure on dress is in excess of his income."

Another remarked :—

"Dress shows no distinctive feature, and usually consists of cord trousers, and cloth coats and vests which have completed their Sunday duty. The useful and durable 'smock frock' is here a thing of the past. For Sundays the men generally have a very good suit of clothes, the children are neat and tidy, and the women are sufficiently well clothed to make a respectable appearance at church or chapel, when they choose to go."

From another Somersetshire parish the vicar wrote :—

"The 'Clothing Club' in this district is in a flourishing condition, and does much to improve the social position of the children."

He concluded :—

"A lady not long ago congratulated me on the fine day we had had for our school treat. 'We have not had one,'

I replied. 'I certainly thought you had,' rejoined the lady, 'because I saw your children all standing in order before the school house with their Sunday clothes on.' I took some time to make the lady understand that this was their ordinary apparel. It may be taken for granted that when school children are well dressed their parents are not frequenters of the public-house. This is the case in my district, for happily the inducement to drink is removed, since there is not a beerhouse in the parish."

To refer, in conclusion, to the third subject in this chapter, the question of the labourers obtaining credit for goods—chiefly food—that he has not the money to buy, yet must have in some way or he would necessarily starve, it is to be remarked that the small store-keeper—or the larger one for that matter—and the little village tradesman commonly styled a "huckster" are very good to and trustful of the poor farm labourers. On the whole it may be averred that the village tradesman, as we may generically term him, gives a considerable amount of "credit," exacting little or any security, and depending largely for payment upon the reputation for honesty of the poor customers. In by no means a few cases "scores" are allowed to run up of from five to ten pounds; and instances have actually occurred, though they are probably rather rare, where the "scores" have reached fifteen, perhaps twenty, thirty, forty, and even fifty pounds. No doubt such large amounts take a long time to accumulate, and would not have been allowed had the debtors not proved to be "good customers," willing to pay to the utmost of their ability. The plan in operation is to require—besides cash for current purchases—regular repayments of the old debt. In such cases, if the shop is a general store, practically all the weekly wages go to the proprietor. Something special is paid off in such cases at harvest time, and a big slice—by which is meant the bulk of the labourer's pig—goes as a further set-off against the debt. It is, in fact, pretty clear that a tradesman giving so much credit—for the aggregation of even small sums

makes up to a considerable total, must be a man of some substance. It may, however, be allowed that, whilst he must protect himself against the drain of credit on his resources by exacting good profits, he does really stand, as much as do some of the charitable contributors to a farm labourer's necessities, in the position of a benefactor.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### CANON GIRDLESTONE'S JUSTIFICATION.

ESPECIAL interest will naturally centre in and around the district made famous by the late Canon Girdlestone's work of peasant migration, carried on under the tremendous difficulties we recorded in a previous chapter ; and a most important justification for all the worthy clergyman so nobly and unselfishly did is furnished by the condition of affairs at Halberton, directly resulting from the Canon's six years' labour. A correspondent fully conversant with all that had taken place at Halberton, and with the condition of the district before, during, and after Canon Girdlestone's tenure of the living, wrote to say—this was in 1880—that it was very different from its former state eight or ten years previously to 1880. Men who, having moved away with the stream of migration set in motion in 1866, had chanced to return to see their former living place, admitted that it was like a new world owing to the great changes they noticed. From the seven and eight shillings of wages per week obtained when the Canon commenced his work, the rate had advanced to eleven, twelve, and in some cases more per week, and a couple of shillings a week in addition in lieu of cider. It is true that the then scarcity of this beverage had occasioned the substitution of cash for liquor, but the compensation was on the maximum scale, and more than in a number of other districts of the west of England. The increase in wages was therefore a rise of more than 50 per cent.,

and that notwithstanding the agricultural "depression." The shopkeepers of Halberton had prospered also proportionately with the improved condition of the labourers, a natural and, so to speak, automatic advance. The cottages, too, had greatly improved, the two-roomed hovels of Canon Girdlestone's time remaining, it is true, in many cases, but tenantless, as ugly mementoes of a past condition of things. The same correspondent wrote :—

"The school accommodation at Halberton is greatly improved. Some years since there was only one school here—the National School, which was then one half the size it is now, although there were, at the time I speak of, a private school or two here and there."

He added :—

"I remember a very elderly lady who kept a private school which I attended. I also quite well remember a long stick she kept—from seven to eight feet long at least—to give us 'a crack on the head' now and then if anything went wrong. A favourite and novel punishment whose infliction was 'enjoyed' by this old lady was to pin any of us who chanced to offend her to her apron. But the severest punishment of all was to be put in the dark, under the stairs, in a place we called 'the dark hole'! Would this kind of thing be tolerated now? Certainly not. Now, as I have said, we have our National School enlarged to hold twice the number it used to hold. We have also a Board School built to hold nearly a hundred children; and both institutions are doing well and annually carrying off honours."

We ourselves paid a special visit to Halberton, and noticed the great improvements that only in the previous eight years had been effected; and we may fitly, perhaps, conclude this chapter by quoting the personal impression penned at the time of our visit :—

"We saw nothing offensive except the still lingering but tenantless mud hovels, whose broken glass, ruined roofs and walls, and general aspect of desolateness were strongly suggestive of the miserable population which at one time were indecently crowded within them. There were no offensive odours from bad drainage or fever-stricken air. The whole village, in fact, had an aspect of quiet comfort; and over it there seemed to be brooding the spirit of that

reform whose shafts have pierced, at length, the thick walls of the obdurate selfishness which was mainly responsible, in this district of Western England, for the disease, misery, and death of its unfortunate inhabitants. How bright, in the minds of these humble toilers, was the memory of 'the Canon' who so fearlessly and successfully laboured for them, in spite of local 'sneers,' and of the frowns of the well-to-do, we learnt by many inquiries amongst the villagers ; and we could not but feel that the noble work of the excellent clergyman who is the subject of these remarks was enough, in its wide-reaching results, to fill a long life with honour."

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### PIG-INSURANCE.

FEW people have probably ever heard of "The Woodford Pig-Insurance Society"; nor was Mr. William Conduit, smith in the Wiltshire village of Woodford, ever, so far as we are aware, "known to fame," except within the very restricted area which first witnessed his great pig-insurance scheme; but it occurred to him one day that it might be possible to insure the farm labourer against the ruinous loss, through illness, of what is ordinarily his greatest asset—his pig. Even from the slender revenue of a labourer it might be conceivable that sixpence could be spared as an entrance fee for admission to a pig club, and a premium of a halfpenny a week might also be feasible. The idea was "mooted" at a small public meeting consisting of seven labourers; it was voted to be a good idea, and the pig society was started: the whole of the "meeting" plus the originator of the scheme forming the first membership of eight persons. The initial "capital" of the club was five shillings and fourpence: four shillings entrance fees of the eight "original members," and eight times twopence each, "advanced" as four weeks of the premium rate of halfpenny a week. Mr. Conduit was very properly appointed the "secretary" of the club or society.

Fortunately, no Woodford pig, at that very critical moment in the history of the undertaking, died. If it had done so it is to be feared that the company of



insurers would have had to "wind up"; but the pigs were considerate and kept healthy, so as to give the society a chance of existence and continuance. In the meantime, and pending the possible illness and death of a pig, the idea of the club took on. The news of it travelled rapidly, not only around the village of Woodford, but to adjoining parishes, and in a very short time ninety labourers had enrolled themselves members, and all had paid their entrance fees and advanced a month's subscriptions, and ere long the society was placed upon a sure foundation and able to meet its obligations. The "rules" formulated are interesting. It was discreetly arranged that no member could claim for loss of a pig until he had been insured for three months. The committee of management, including the secretary, was to consist of seven persons, and these were to be appointed in turn as they stood upon the books of the society. Proper precaution was taken against any unfair claim. Directly any pig was taken "ill" it was ruled that the owner should give "notice" to one of the committee, who would thereupon "visit" the invalid animal, and endeavour, in the interests of the society generally, to ascertain whether the illness had been occasioned by any neglect of the owner. The report of the visiting member would then be referred to the committee, and possibly—in the case of difference of opinion—to the whole society in council assembled; and then decision would be made as to compensation, which would, however, not be less than one-half the agreed value of the animal. A valuer was appointed by the society, and was paid the sum of one shilling for each pig valued. Upon his valuation the committee would pay, giving the owner of the pig an order for payment. The society's "rule seven" is interesting and informing. It runs:—

"If any member shall have a valuable pig ill, not likely to live, the Committee are empowered to have the same killed,

and if the Committee are not at hand the opinion of a butcher shall be obtained ; and if it is not safe to let the pig live any longer it shall be killed, valued, or sold for what it is worth, and the remainder made up to the owner by the Society. If it is sold at market price, nothing shall be allowed from the Society, and if it be not valued by the person appointed by the Society, nothing shall be allowed. The Committee must and shall be allowed to see the pig—alive or dead.”

At the time of our inquiry we found that this excellent society had prospered, and that, after paying all claims, it was perfectly solvent and had a capital fund of no less than fifty pounds—a sum which, for security, had been placed in the Post Office Savings Bank. The Society, moreover, indulged in the recreation of an “annual dinner” ; a payment of five shillings or a five-shilling subscription as honorary member entitling an outsider to dine with the society, whose dinners were “good” and much appreciated,—“leading persons” in the village often attending them.

THE END.

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