

MY LITTLE FARM

BY "PAT"

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MY LITTLE FARM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

“ECONOMICS FOR IRISH-
MEN”

“THE SORROWS OF
IRELAND.”

MY LITTLE FARM

By "PAT", *pen name*.

Patrick D. Kenny
"

MAUNSEL & COMPANY, LTD.
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1915

LOAN STACK

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TO HIS FRIEND
WHO ONCE SAVED THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

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PREFACE

THIS is less a handbook in scientific agriculture than a headbook in profitable farming, but it is for both, and for the cultivation of character as essential to cropping. The profit is no longer possible without the science, but the science must either show the profit or remain under suspicion. The expert, working at the Government's expense, can do anything with a plot of half a rood, so long as he is not asked to balance the product against the cost, but the practical farmer wants to see the net profit on a working scale, and he is right, because the final measure of science in all industrial application is the economic value. No other standard can be safely admitted into industrial practice.

I have passed severe examinations, written successful books, edited too successful newspapers, lived the life of London, died the death of Ireland and come to life again, on the first day; but I have done no work, lived no life, and filled no place demanding of me so much breadth of knowledge, elasticity of judgment and variety of action as the conduct of a once wretched little farm in the West of Ireland. One must insist on the experience of the retrospect, because it is so commonly assumed that the farm may best be entrusted to the fool of the

family, while the brilliant brothers go off in ornamental occupations which require less than half the capacity of the capable farmer. It is clear that our first step landward is the industrial discipline of the agrarian mind, not merely for the farm, but also because of the character which could be developed by better farming to the advantage of all other pursuits and to the credit of the nation as a whole. The significance of this will be the plainer when we note that about three-fourths of the Irish population is always directly or indirectly agrarian. What, then, would be the use of writing about the agricultural industry without reference to the agrarian character? The necessity is not a pleasant one, and the official may not touch it at all, but if we are ever to move on, it must be touched by somebody. The alternative is State endowment of decay.

Hence the great failure of the official formula, at least in its chief purpose, which is the improvement of the peasant; the great waste of the Agriculture Department, though in itself admirable, and, I believe, the most generously endowed in the whole world, per unit of productive value. The Department may teach agriculture, but no industrial influence in existence among us is permitted to prepare the agrarian mind for the agricultural teaching. It is like a university condemned to accept its students from the primary school, and deprived even of the right to prepare them for matriculation. Its teachers, now well trained and the hardest workers that I know

in any public service, have to start with the agrarian mind at the length of a generation farther on than it can see, with dominant vested interests in the wall of prescriptive density intervening. Experts follow each other round and round, year by year, illuminating all our farm assets from bulls to bees, but only to find previous effort fruitless, unless among the few who can do the thing for themselves. The mental "atmosphere" is not industrial, and never can be industrial under the present scheme of supply, which fortifies a triumphantly defiant ignorance by means of the very funds annually voted in Parliament for the peasants' primary "education."

The mischief is farther enlarged by our Irish methods of criticism, always either denouncing or defending the Department in absolute terms, according to the gains expected or refused. The expectant can see no fault, the disappointed no virtue. There is never an attempt to adjust the blame and to show how much of the failure is inflicted on us by Ireland herself, in spite of the competent and expensive men employed by the Department to help us. Their failure is the measure of our sense, their service to us doubled the day we secure them fair play and a field as fit as they could find elsewhere. Under the double curse of politics at the top and the State endowment of industrial illiteracy at the bottom, they can but do their best and hold their tongues to keep their posts. Above all, they must never touch the main secret of their failure, but rather

deny it at the official pinch, so that the first need of the prudent official is to violate his first duty, and prudence is always one of the official virtues. The prescriptive density stands unchallenged, while the Treasury pours out gold through the Department for our industrial education, and much more gold through the primary schools for our mental bondage to make the purpose of the Department impossible. In one important aspect, the Department is profoundly instructive: it shows that it cannot instruct, and it reveals the reasons to us, even in spite of official prudence. That is why I give so much space to the Department in this preface. The rest of the chapters are occupied with matter of more importance.

Influenced by that impelling spectacle, I have attacked the agricultural problem in my own way, clear outside all the factions, by working a farm scientifically for the profit, strictly conditioned by the necessities of economic production, and in no way dependent on subsidised theory. I have no money for anything like that. I must make a profit or stop, but to make a profit, I must be scientific, and to be successfully scientific, I must be severely practical. The lessons I have to offer are economic data in the concrete. You may pick them up in your hand, look them over, take them to the market, and calculate to a penny what it costs to produce them there. The total result and its derivation are the subject of this book, which cannot be the less value for the exacting conditions of its creation.

One most valuable result is the conversion from heather to clover without tilling a yard, and showing a return on the investment something like twenty times the average on the scores of millions in surplus capital which this poor country has invested abroad, while our soil goes to grass and our grass to heather.* This is something more than mere success in farming. It implies a practically unlimited extension in the basis of food production, with corresponding gain to the quantity and kind of human life. Is it not natural that, knowing this, I should want others to know it? To myself, it would seem criminal to refuse. Yet the Department, while knowing all about it for years, has done nothing whatever to hand on the gift, though endowed by the State for this purpose. That is bad, but it is not the worst. The influence and authority of the Department, in so far as they count, have been used to deny my results, though these are permanently visible in concrete form, and have been inspected by inquirers from various countries abroad. Some of the best farmers in Scotland have come to me and confessed that they had something to learn in Mayo.

The scientific workers in the Department have had no part in this official treachery against the farmers. I have not found a trace of evidence for any such thing, and that is what I expect of men scientifically educated. They are competent agriculturists to a man, know how to do the thing

* The Department takes $\frac{3}{4}$ of a perch, per crop omitting cost!

as well as I do, and will be only delighted to do it for the farmers whenever the nation has the sense to relieve them of the politician. I need not waste space on the personal aspect of the matter, having no personal complaint to make.

The farmer himself is our last court of appeal, and his law of jurisprudence is his pocket. He can apply his own tests to the demonstration I submit, which is not an academic experiment, but actual work done at a profit. I offer him no quack short cut to a pet obsession, but a careful account of long experience on the farm all round. I do not ask him to drop what he is doing and to start something he has never done, in which he would probably do worse. The profit of production depends less on the product than on the producer, and he must depend on the capacity derived from his own experience. He cannot depend on the experience of others, however profitable, in forms of production that are strange to him. What he is doing is what I am doing, but I am doing most of it differently, and doing my best to show him how he can pocket the gain of the difference. He will find it attempted in three main sections : (1) How the land can increase its production ; (2) how the value of the produce can be farther increased in consumption ; and (3) a collection of somewhat various matter throwing farther light on the other two.

The little farm, however profitable in itself, cannot remunerate me at my rate as a writing man, and the difference, on the time given to it,

is already over £5,000. People wonder why I continue, because money is their highest measure of human motive. That is often the case with those who have never had money. I choose to make this use of my life, knowing that the things most worth living for are never measurable in money. It emancipates me from the slavery of writing to order, and I should not exchange my knowledge of Ireland and her people for five thousand pounds. Thus farming is not the first motive in *My Little Farm*, but there is enough for the farmer to make Ireland another kind of country in a few years. I am more interested in character than in crops, but either may be seen through the other. Humanity is more to me than vegetables, and there are plenty of men to write merely technical treatises on farming—if there is anybody to read them. Of course, I need not spend my whole life to exploit the economics of a peasant farm. In a few years, when the educational value of it is established, I can, if I like, sit down on it, dream my dreams, look on at the cows eating the grass, and at the clearance of the Irish out of Ireland, which must increase in proportion as the cow is capitalised. As occupants of the soil, Irishmen are nowhere in competition with cows, because the Irishman cannot be improved in Ireland, and the cow can.

I write to please nobody but myself, and I consult no conscience but my own. I would help the peasant; therefore, I would not attempt to please him. I paint him as I see him, not as

he sees himself. But it is fair to note that his worst characteristics are imposed on him rather than inherent. I do not think any other peasantry in the world could be any better under the organised brutalism that has morally deformed agrarian Ireland, where religion is still carefully directed to encourage theft and murder. The future of Ireland is with the numerical dominion of the peasant. National hope is limited by his moral emancipation, and this depends on the truth reaching him, against which he is fenced round on every side, with the British and their purse co-operating in the enslavement. The future of Ireland is with the peasant, and the future of the peasant is with the School.

I am indebted for help and advice in the early and ignorant stages of my farming to Messrs. Paul & Vincent, Messrs. Morgan Mooney, Mr George Ryce and Mr. John Kelly, who happened to be the Department's instructor in my district at the time, and the most conscientious public servant I have ever met.

I should like a farming pupil, preferably of the educated class for company, and "My Little Farm" might do more for him than could be done on the big farms. Should he fail as a farmer, he could have every opportunity to develop as a detective.

The Author desires to thank the editors of *The Morning Post* and *The Saturday Review* for leave to republish a Study in Congestion and Farming as a Profession. These are the only reprints in this book.

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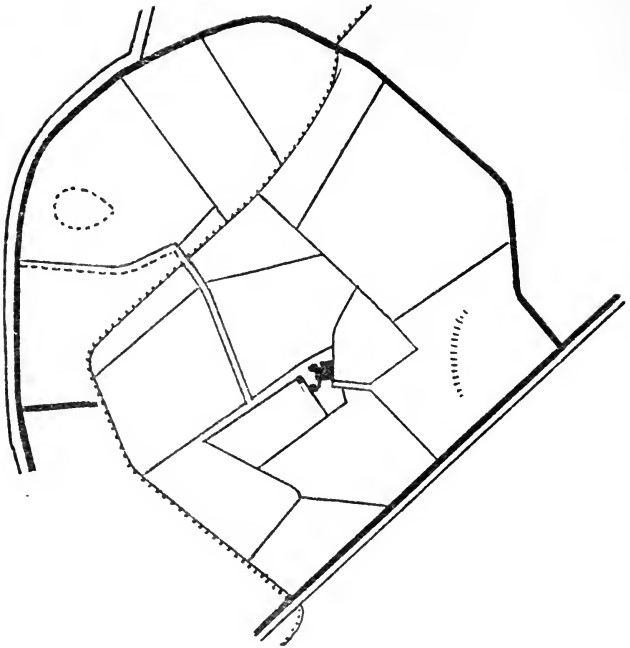
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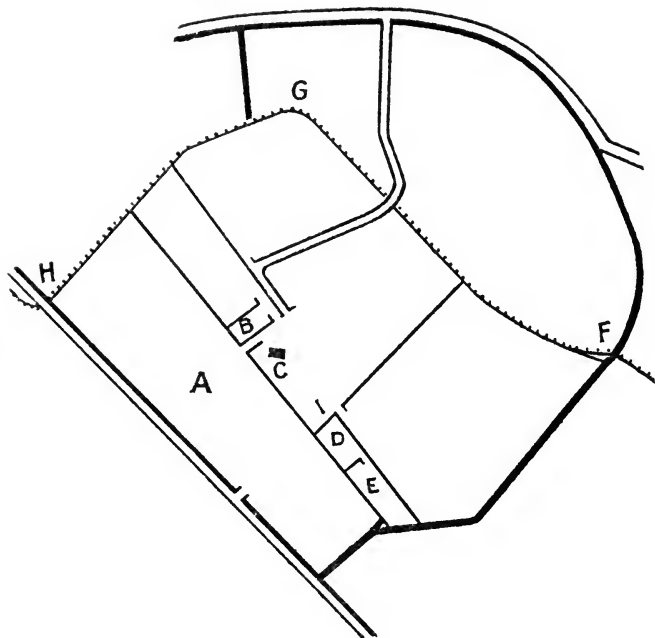
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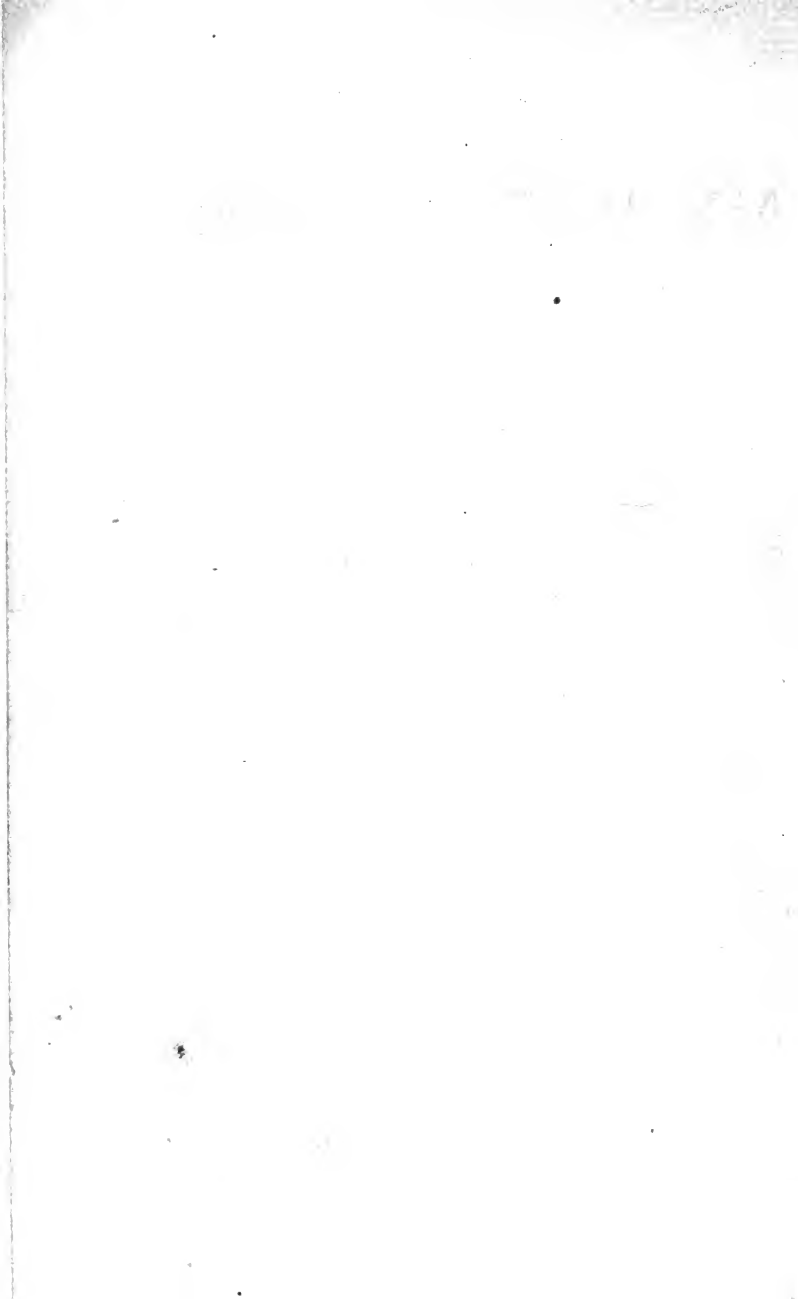
Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the
Controller of H. M. Stationery Office,

THE FARM



AS IT IS.

- A The paddock, once in five "fields"—the old map omitting a line. Now the five "fields" are one, and most of it has been converted from heather to clover without tillage. The lines removed were earth fences, now replaced by under-drains, and so it is with the lines removed from the other fields. Gardens apart, there were in all eighteen patches. The number is now reduced to seven, and the areas are enlarged in proportion, with the fence spaces and head lands saved in addition. See Chaps. II and III.
- B Out-houses, haggard and stock yard.
- C The house.
- I Garden cot.
- D The heather plot.
- E Kitchen garden.
- F G H The stream running west.
- == Roads,



MY LITTLE FARM

PART I.

TO ADVANCE PRODUCTION

CHAPTER I.

FARMING WITH A PEN

“PSYCHOLOGY” is a fearsome word to begin a book mainly about farming. Let us try to reduce its terrors. Our *conscious* activity of mind, with that of the five senses in its service, is what we call our psychology, and behind it is its driving power, which we call our energy. Here is a very wonderful scheme, exquisitely designed for our benefit, and lodged free of charge in each of us to begin the world. All the inventions of mankind are crude compared with the amazing mechanism of man himself. To be thus endowed and set down in a world of endless opportunity is no small thing, and our life is the result of the scheme acting on the opportunities.

The first of the great facts demanding our attention is that the driving power is always a limited quantity, while the mechanism, for application and direction, is comparatively unlimited. Hence the importance of applying the power economically, in reproductive directions, for the benefit and

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support of our lives, instead of squandering it on the barren waste, where no harvest can be reaped against the coming winter. The mechanism is prepared to conduct the energy either way, for waste or for wisdom, according to the will and judgment in the upper storey of the human workshop.

It follows that in so far as the limited fund of energy is expended in any pursuit or in any set of pursuits, good or bad, there is so much the less of it left for any other pursuit ; and we may add here the desperate fact that the mechanism itself varies its efficiency by the nature and amount of the work (or play) on which we keep it active, irrespective of our advantage or disadvantage. It is easy to infer the value of keeping the faculties consciously active on the things that matter, and of bringing up the young mind in familiar practice with these, so that maturity and efficiency may find their meeting point at pleasure. Keep the growing mind of youth filled with an exclusive interest, or exclude a particular interest from it, and the effect for good or evil may follow to the end of life. In the recent literature of industry we find a striking illustration of this. The technical capacity in textile manufacture is found to be higher in England than in Germany, and Dr. Shadwell attributes the difference to the fact that the young folk in the English factories start a year younger than the Germans. If that one year can make this great difference, or even a large fraction of it, what of the nation that brings up the bulk of its youth without any attempt at turning the

mind into any industrial direction whatever? The mechanism is left to waste the energy as if at the will of the winds, and this is the case of Ireland.

It is now the winter season, which provides its own work on the farm, but while I write these chapters for their benefit, the peasants of Connaught around me, at least three-fourths of them, spend their nights and days in dancing, visiting and exclusively idling in one way or another, while the children in the schools, under teachers brought up in the same degrading atmosphere, are qualifying, at the nation's expense, to make themselves thoroughly useless, like their elders, unless as raw material for export to build up more sane communities abroad. For the rest, consult the statistics and see the pitiful use which the Irish make of their incomparable opportunities. The seat of failure is in the industrial psychology at home, not in the breed of people, who prove themselves fit for anything after they leave Ireland.

What, then, are the local forces which derange the mental mechanism and keep the industrial department of the Irish mind unfit to support progressive life in its own country? Up to our time, it has been explained on directly political grounds, but the last serious disability of this kind disappeared long ago, and the industrial incapacity remains. We must go deeper than this for the causes of our national failure. The following chapters attempt to present the mental factor in the problem, as revealed in our farming, and, in addition, I give a good deal of space to

the scientific and technical conduct of the farm itself. In this way, I hope to find a double answer to the question above submitted, illustrating the larger problem through the medium of agricultural criticism.

Friends outside often wonder how I can "stick it" for long periods in Mayo, surrounded by a painfully sordid life, a high native intelligence drilled against intelligent living, and a collective will deprived of even those primitive impulses which work upward from the lowest levels of normal existence. Well, I have never been able to accept the misfortune of the neighbour as good ground for avoiding him, but there are reasons more personal and more imperative. One of these is certainly in reverence for the character of my father, who lived and worked where I am here, and who, I believe, was never in the course of his life accused of a falsehood. A straight man in a triumphantly crooked environment, he brought up a big family as well as it could be done, if short of his own moral stature, and he transmitted to me as much of his most inconvenient virtues as a minor capacity could well assimilate. I think I am doing as he would like to have done, and in doing it, I am often forced to reflect whether, from the enlarged consciousness of another world, he may not be watching the attempt. Disabled during the last three of his eighty-four years, he got into debt, for the benefit of other people, and then left the land for him that could discharge the obligation. That was how I found myself a

farmer, with the pen, and not the plough, as the only implement by which I had so far justified my existence ; surely the first man ever known to go farming with a pen. There was also a derelict brother The farm might make a living for him, and I could live without it.

It appears that madness, with enough method in it, may be excess of sanity. Fail at something never done before, and your critics will point to the moon for explanation ; succeed at it, enlarging the limits of life, and you may find yourself denounced for not being mad. It appears there are vested interests even beyond the boundaries of human achievement, and mediocrity is ever disturbed by what has never been before, though the whole of human progress is founded on it. Meantime, not less than nine-tenths is mediocrity. In the whole world to-day there is little to satisfy us that was not at one time quite unprecedented, and so we may safely measure a people's capacity for progress by their relative attachment to precedent and initiative. It is not easy to move forward by looking only backward, but in Ireland we have the unnatural instance of a historic people determined to look no other way, which accounts for the stumbling. It is only when they do not know where they are that people have need to look backward, and even then, they have at least as much need to look forward. The vision of a fallen people is always backward, and their only vision when they are fallen to rise no more.

After fifteen years in the Strand writing,

writing, writing, I had produced little or nothing for more than a day's notice, though feeling that I could do something better. I wanted to write, really, in books, what I thought, instead of writing, in newspapers, what other people pretended to think. What if the plough should give the pen its opportunity? I might have to put up with plainer cooking and poorer company, but possibly compensated by better health and the treasure of loneliness. I might even have at times to do some of the farm work with my own white hands. What matter if it stopped the grinding of an immortal soul for the money value in moral dust?

It was the little farm that wrote the books, and such was the necessity which set me astride of two islands, in pursuit of two professions, contrary to all prudent counsel; but the best that I have done is due to the audacity of the decision. I know this now, though it was not easy to see then. Yet when the battle is won, we ought to be thankful that our will in daring is so mercifully adjusted to our capacity in doing. A little out of fit, and we either miss what we could do or go to bits in reaching what is beyond us. The nicety of the balance, in its terrible, silent play between tragedy and triumph, is one of the mysteries of our existence. There is only one rule in the matter, and it is not always safe: better lose by courage, than by fear. In the one case, you end either as a man or as a corpse; in the other case, you are morally dead from the beginning.

It is a misfortune of mankind that every man must be born into a mob, and I think the best thing that ever came to me was the longing to get out of mine. The younger the better, and after the first deliverance, I dragged myself in and out of succeeding mobs, only to find that they were in every case much the same—an organised attempt to average human values at the expense of the top for the benefit of the bottom. Your mob may be a "set" in society, a literary "school," a cult in criticism, a "departure" in art, a political party or, in its most vicious form, an Irish League. In any form, it starts the question: Why should a man be coerced to accept for his standard an average below his value? Having survived so many baptisms on the way to discover myself, I longed for the hills, and came to see a good furrow as a thing of beauty. The Irish, of all peoples, have need to see that until the individual is permitted, the community is blind. As a people, we bind each other down in a hundred deadly fetters, crippling the individual for the alleged convenience of the crowd, and for their destruction in the end. Every interest of Irish life proclaims it, and agriculture most of all, because the mob cult can dominate the agrarian mind more easily than any other. There is never more than one in ten who can really see. Destroy him, as the Irish always do, and all are blind.

The philosophy of the matter may be clear enough to me now, but it was not so when I had to decide between the Strand and Mayo as my

essential base. Indeed, all the argument seemed to be for the Strand, and every friend was on the same side; on the Mayo side, nothing but an apparently blind impulse driving me against all reason into solitude. The apparently blind impulse reveals itself now as the clearest vision of my life, which shows how shallow may be the best of argument compared with the undefinable forces by which we are sometimes driven against our finest schemes of intellectual prudence. I am sorry for the life never led by higher light than argument.

I knew that, even in the wilderness, I could live by the pen, without a penny from my farming, and besides, the farm must for a time take every cent I could spare for increased capital; but there was the farther motive of making my little bit of Ireland a standard in profitable productiveness, that my neighbours might share in the industrial value of any additional capacity that I could bring to the business. If my life could advance their lives without serious loss to me, that alone would be ample reward. In a closely congested district, where every man clamoured for an increase of land, it seemed to me that the net product of the average acre around me could readily be doubled, and without much increasing the average expenditure in labour. How could any man in any country ignore such an opportunity to help his fellow man? There is no special credit in the desire to do it, but rather a special ignominy in the refusal.

My own acres, now more than doubling the net production, show that my estimate of the room for improvement was not wrong, and while some of the neighbours follow close in the ascent, there is hardly a man within many miles who has not gained something considerable from my agrarian gospel. There is seldom a fine day at home without some time spent to show somebody how to do something, and they often come long distances to see how easy we have made the "impossible." Though the gratuitous interpretations are always various and often vicious, the motives of my excursion into agriculture are as I confess them here, and after our fourteen years, not one man can complain that I have once behaved contrary to the purpose. I am assured, and can believe, that the good I have done for the people, in their work and in their lives, is admitted even by those who are known to have attempted to murder me: I am guilty of showing that, to live by the land, the Irish must think; but, to their masters, thought is "sin," and the mastery is complete—for the present.

From the start, I simply felt that I could help the people, thought that if I could I ought, and saw that the attempt must count on no reward of any kind, not even the emptiest of verbal gratitude. I was in a position to give something for nothing, having no less left, and expecting only the liberty to do right. It is well for me that I expected little. On the whole, and up to this date, my reward has been in falsehood, slander,

cunning, fraud, perjury, treachery and cruelty, with several attempts to take my life, and, worse than all the rest, thievery. I set down these words in cold care that each may be the right word, expressing no more than the accurate fact. The words ought to be carefully used, for their significance goes far beyond the personal. The qualities which they indicate are cultivated for social virtues, as a kind of moral ammunition against mental emancipation—which is scarcely an encouragement to scientific farming. As directed in the battle against myself, most of these Irish virtues are badly outranged, and only amuse me, but there are several exceptions. A character that has so far outgrown the parish testimonial is not likely to worry about falsehood, slander, cunning, fraud, perjury, treachery and cruelty; but murder ends my teaching, and theft deprives me of the means to show the thief how, in a given time, he can produce more than he can steal. “On the whole and up-to-date,” it is as I describe, or worse, but no absolute conclusion follows. In the most unexpected corners of the west, I have met men honestly at war with the popular virtues and gloriously guilty of the greatest crime in Connaught—Conscience. They occur here and there like the seeds of a divine survival left behind among the nether weeds to witness the defeated purposes of Providence.

All communities have their thieves, but in normal communities theft is not a virtue, and the people as a whole co-operate in tracking down

the thief for the common good. In most of Ireland, you will find the thief a person as "respectable" as yourself, if not more so. He is often held up to you as an example in the devout and punctual practice of his "religious duties," and he is the last man to quarrel with constituted authority—so long as constituted authority accommodates thieving. He comes to you this morning and borrows an implement, on the friendliest footing. He comes to you to-night and steals another implement, which he has "spotted" before leaving the yard in the morning. He comes to you to-morrow to return the borrowed implement, and to "spot" another, still on the friendliest footing. Offer him work and wages for the time he can spare in thieving, and if he accept, it is only "to oblige you." The friendly footing must always be kept up—but always at your expense. Hand your thieving friend over to the police, and you are an "informer." The moral sense of the community makes you the offender and him the victim, which shows that the offence against society is in detecting the theft, and not in committing it. Again, let us guard against absolute inference. It has been my privilege to employ at least three persons in fourteen years who were not thieves; perhaps less than ten per cent. of the whole; but their honesty is the more to be honoured in a region where the official morality makes thieving such a respectable pursuit.

I can think of nothing that does more to harm agrarian Ireland to-day than the fixed conviction

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that no man can prosper on honesty. In Connaught at least, it is the invariable view of the average man that any man above him must have got there by fraud, and where fraud is accepted as the essential means to approved distinction, it follows that honesty is folly. Yet all this is quite natural in the circumstances. Up to this, these people have seen few rising among them, except by grinding them down, and the market value of the verities has remained accordingly low. The Irish nation is a native body, perpetually damned by the infliction of a foreign soul, the bastard spirit of the Tiber and the Thames, two of the dirtiest sources corrupting mankind.

Relieve them of this, and you have a normal people. Continue it, as now, for a medium of government, an official morality, and the curse remains, necessitating its own continuity from age to age. The Irish are not primarily to blame. The wonder is that they are not worse. They are what they have been made, and the method has never been more triumphant than to-day. How can industry in any form prosper on such a footing? It is waste of means attempting, unless in so far as the footing can be changed, but the footing becomes more firmly fixed every year, and is much worse now than when I left Ireland thirty years ago.

Here in the mental and moral waste, at the dead of night, the day's work done, I sometimes sit alone and think what can it be behind the brutal hostility against myself; and always with the same

result, the same conclusion on evidence in view. It is well known that I have wronged no man, not even my worst enemy; as well admitted that I have done something for all, much for some, and sometimes most for the man that robbed me. Why, then, an enemy? From information received, I know that I am strongly suspected of having a conscience, the one crime never to be forgiven.

So far as I can trace the history of my guilt in this, the suspicion started in the following manner. Years ago, while I was yet new to my country, we got up an "Industrial Revival." With due energy and attention to business, we more or less revived everything but industry, which, wisely shy of our wild ways and of our confidence in the virtue of falsehood, went on in its own shrewd course, neither expanding to the cult of our crude inflation nor contracting before the menace of its dominion. In Ireland, we were going to produce at home our own food, our own clothes, our own shelter, &c. Wishing to have our programme of production normal and symmetrical, neither overvaluing trifles nor excluding essentials, I had myself the misfortune to propose that we should produce at home also our own Conscience, instead of incessantly borrowing the official counterfeit from foreign sources at deadly rates of usury. It seemed to me in my innocence that a really great nation, defying the world in the moral symmetry of her inherent power, had as much need to grow conscience as cabbage; but from the day I

delivered that almost childishly plain truth, I found all eyes watching me asquint, and most men drawing apart, as if I had been suddenly transformed into a tiger. To this day, I have never been able to discover how I was wrong, and yet not one of my masters ever attempts to rescue me from my alleged error. It would add greatly to my comfort, and somewhat to my cash, if some superior person would show me how a nation can be the better for providing her conscience by import only, at frightful expense, while the native product, free of charge and of vastly superior make, is persistently suppressed, with Government, "religion" and revenue co-operating for the suppression. The real greatness of modern nations dates in every case from the day they insisted on Home Rule in Conscience.

I am not discussing conscience in any polemic or theological sense of the term, but simply as an industrial factor, for its value in trust and duty in the application of capital and labour to production. No industry of any sort can proceed far without it. The greater the scope of the enterprise, the larger the element of delegation and trust. Nothing extensive in industrial production is achieved by the man who can venture no farther than his own eye may at all times see. Indeed, the point of large expansion is reached only when he can transfer his authority with confidence in an honest result. How can anything of the kind be attempted in the Irish conditions

which I have described ? It is practically useless discussing industry with the Irishman while the expenditure for its development is misappropriated wholesale for his moral bondage. Until he may have property in mind, he can have neither property nor efficiency in anything. Where a man is held to merit murder because he has a conscience, hope implies moral revolution.

Give a man the whole earth, with his mind the instrument of another, and he remains essentially a slave. This is how we come to find agriculture in Connaught chiefly hindered by the popular practice of theft as a social virtue. The thieving habit, bad enough before, got its charter from boycotting, under the moral sanction of "patriotism"; but it remains to work against everybody who has anything to steal, and it is found more convenient to compromise with the practice than to revoke the charter. How can industry flourish in such conditions ? Let others beat about the bush, and pocket Government salaries for accommodating the elaborate fraud I have not time for trifling while a nation is dying. The Irish nation has either to establish private property in mind or perish. Irish nationality must choose between a home made conscience and an imported coffin. I suppose I need hardly tell the reader that this is not my first sermon on the present text, and it is but fair to acknowledge that several bishops have had the moral courage to follow my lead in declining to approve organised barbarism for patriotic virtue.

CHAPTER II.

THEN AND NOW

THERE are two little farms, in different townlands, but meeting on a stream and conveniently worked as one. Separately, they measure something over thirty-two statute acres; jointly, about an acre more, but the difference does not affect the purpose. The valuation is £6, the purchase annuity £5 13s. 10d., about 3s. 7d. an acre.

For estimating production, as attempted before my time, we can take the total as twenty-one acres, the rest being waste, under water, sedge, bent, heather and virgin bog. About a fourth of the workable area was tilled, in uncertain rotation, the rest pasture, and there was not a rood of the grass that could at any time be successfully reserved for hay. The river valley, gushing spring water from under the hills, was excellent for snipe, but we were not poachers, and it would not pay to licence a gun, everybody else being a poacher. That was the state of things when I escaped from my beloved country as a small boy in 1882, but it was considerably worse when I returned in 1901, except that the bog had been cut away for fuel, and the track left ready for reclamation.

At present the "waste" land is the best I have,

and the worst rood from end to end will make fair meadow, even without manuring. An area of about two acres remains still not sufficiently drained for the plough, but it is sufficiently reclaimed for good results in permanent pasture. In its present state, and at 3s. 7d. an acre, the land is as good as I have seen in England at £2 an acre, and the difference is enough to bring me as near to the Manchester market as the farmer living in Lancashire, not to mention my greatly diminished cost of production apart from rent. This may not apply to every single product of the farm, but farm produce is readily convertible into forms more portable. I cannot send a horse and cart to Manchester with a load of unpressed hay, but I can send the hay in live beef to Dublin for less than 2½ per cent. of the beef value. Enormous harm has been done by idle spouters getting Irish farmers to believe that the railways made their position impossible. How much saner it would be to tell them how their less marketable produce can be converted into more marketable forms. Besides, I have sometimes seen our local price for hay considerably higher than the Manchester price on the same day, and this year (1915) our local price for roots is 50 per cent. above the price in England.

On the most generous estimate, the gross production before I came could not be more than £60 a year. Now, I get a yearly average of £115 for cattle alone, all raised on the place, none ever bought unless a suckling calf; and in proportion to

the value of the animals, my bill for bag stuffs is considerably less, the feeding value of the home produce being so much higher. In another chapter it is shown in more detail how this result is assisted by the improved quality of the cow herself and by the new methods of feeding her from home production. There were eight cows, and calves, with a pony, all about the average. Now there are eighteen and a big horse, worth on an average per animal about twice as much in money. It is amazing how people persist in breeding from bad stock to return them a low result for the produce of their labour; and how, while wasting their life and work in this way, they will go five miles with a load of stuff for 2d. in 5s. on the price. My cow is my market, and unless she can yield a satisfactory price for my produce, she must go, to make room for one that will. I cannot afford to keep bad cows. The smaller the farm the better the cow ought to be. The poorer the farmer, the less he can afford the loss in feeding bad ones. By "good" and "bad" here, I do not mean merely the size or even the money value, but the productive and reproductive capacity of the cow in proportion to cost.

In addition to cattle and the field routine for their maintenance in all seasons, here is a list of our present products which were not formerly produced at all:—Rhubarb, strawberries, gooseberries, apples, plums, pears, early potatoes, onions and a seasonal succession of other garden stuffs, which go far against the bill for house-

keeping. I can pay the purchase annuity out of a strawberry plot which is less than thirteen perches, leaving me the rest of the land for nothing. The rhubarb is specially successful, and I see that these intensive products, on a larger scale, could be made much more profitable than cows, had it not been for the organised virtue of thieving. Yet the thieves have the necessary land of their own, as good as mine or better, and comparatively idle ; but they must enjoy the general holiday for three or four months of the working year, when I am grubbing up the gardens for the products which they prefer to steal. As I have said elsewhere, all are not thieves, but they are sufficiently numerous, sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently respectable to prevent the more profitable production on any extensive scale, which means that they make the advance of civilisation impossible in industry, not to mention their own material loss in the wages which might be earned from the products which they keep unproducibile. They proceed on the general idea that it is not wrong for a man to steal anything the neighbour has in excess of himself ; in other words, that the producing scale of the lowest must be the consuming scale for the highest. It is a source of consistent wonder why I have more than one pair of boots, one suit of clothes and two shirts ; and I am not alone in my acquaintance with the highly respectable man who, after refusing 2s. 6d. for the day, will stay out of bed all night to steal the value of 6d.

Without going into detail, the general character

My Little Farm

of the field cropping can be inferred from the area and the stock carried, but I may mention the rate of production per acre in a few of the heavier items:—Mangolds, 50 tons; potatoes, 12 tons; hay (in two cuttings), 3 to 4 tons; and oats at a like rate; but, having ceased to thresh, I cannot give the quantities in grain and straw. It is all eaten unthreshed, and seems to make very good fodder, particularly for the young bulls, which have so far come out specially healthy and fertile. There is a chapter in Section III on the very important business of rearing and treating young bulls to assure their fertility. I once threshed the oats, but other people took the grain, and the straw was left to me. That manner of distribution did not appeal to me, and there was much anger when I stopped threshing, which was regarded as a selfish attack on the vested rights of those who had stolen my kernal and left me the husk. In such a perfect habitat for the blight parasite, I have ceased to grow potatoes, except earlies and for home use. I prefer products which can flourish the more in the conditions which kill the potato. I do not think a man's working time is worth sixpence a day growing potatoes with the spade and cooking them to feed for bacon, but that is how most of my neighbours spend their working time. Yet when they come to work for me, at six or seven times as much per day as their work is worth to them at home, they invariably insist that they come only "to oblige me." In my fourteen years, there is not one such "obligation"

that has not been discharged in coin of the realm, at something more than the local rates, and still it is "to oblige me" every time.

The total area now tilled is no more than it was when I came, but the produce is at least three times as much. An increase in the food value per unit is equally certain, if less easily put into accurate terms, but a fair idea may be inferred from comparing the standard analysis of bad cereals and good legumes. In such a comparison, however, the whole advantage or gain is not in the food values, because the acre after legumes, as compared with the acre after grain, must have its reserve fertility increased by the value of at least £1. The nitrogen fixed in the soil from the air by a crop of vetches cannot be worth less than 10s. per acre at present prices, and a value not less than this in nitrogenous fertility must be taken out by the grain crop. Assuming the cereal to equal the vetch in feeding value per acre, which it does not, the £1 per acre in plus fertility has still to be considered, and then there is the farther gain of a second crop in the same year from the soil producing the vetches. I am putting these plus values of the legume at the lowest point rather than at the average, and at every point the estimates of science are checked by the practical results of experience, since I am not in a position to be scientific at the expense of the taxpayer.

Before me, there were two men and two women. The work now is the equivalent of one man's at most. The product of the one man's work is three times as much as the product of the two

men's work was, not to mention the assistance of the women ; and the one man never works as hard, unless during the general holiday. He works *regularly*, with industrial intelligence in the direction, and there is practically nothing else to account for the difference. The cattle work is so arranged that one man can do it all in three hours a day. To make sure of this, I have done it all myself, for weeks in succession, and found that, barring accidents, I could get through with the eighteen cattle and the horse in an hour and a half twice a day. It takes a little longer when young calves are fed three times a day, but this is only a very short time in their lives. In addition to the regular farming, the one-man equivalent finds time for some other work every year, and the improvements of a permanent kind effected for the past ten years seem to be considerably more than for the previous ten generations. A youth of seventeen now in my employment (a typical average lad) is worth more in his work than the whole average family of five or six anywhere about me, and I think he has a much better time of it than they. He certainly lives at a far higher level, both physically and mentally, with a collection of standard literature at his disposal in the long winter evenings when the day's work is done, while the crowd of his age and class go hunting from house to house and pelting the iron roofs with stones for their amusement. He is the only lad of the peasant class that I know in all Ireland at present enjoying the least chance of an intel-

lectual existence, though there can hardly be another peasantry in the world more mentally inclined by nature. Waste of mind is waste of life at its best, and this means national ruin ; but crime is openly preferred to culture by those who control the collective psychology. Not far from me, there was an empty building. Nobody had any use for it, and somebody suggested that it ought to serve some public purpose. It was bought, and the roof pulled down, for no reason that could ever be discovered but to prevent it becoming a reading room—while the progressive communities of the world are taxing themselves to provide books and libraries. The Local Government empowers us to apply the Free Libraries Act, but in the only attempt that I know of to start a reading room in Connaught, the bulk of the books were stolen. So much is crime preferred to culture. Is it any wonder that the work of one little boy, intelligently directed, can be more productive than that of three or four average men ?

Paying wages, I am not in a position to waste working power ; I must either make the expenditure reproductive or stop farming. From end to end of the year, my agricultural neighbour has not a shilling a day for his work on his own land, but I must pay wages at more than twice this rate of his working value, necessitating more than twice his result in production, per unit of energy applied. Working for himself, he can limit his standard of living to his rate of production, however low, while I must meet the wage bill

many months before the product comes in view. Bound by these obligations, I must of necessity go for a maximum of production at a minimum of labour cost, and since this cannot come from multiplying the power of the man, *per se*, it must come from multiplying the productiveness of the process.

Here we reach what seems to me to be one of the most important points in any practical study of Irish farming and of the peculiar conditions in which our peasant production is carried on, with a standard of living kept down to accommodate a half barbaric standard of production, and the soil consequently held at less than half its proper use to the national existence. What I am forced by the circumstances to do is, for example, to produce 50 tons of mangolds from the same plot from which my neighbour would produce 15 or 20 tons, and with no more labour than he applies; or, to put it another way, while he applies his labour to an acre for a given result, I get an equal result from less than half the acre and less than half the amount of his labour. What is more, I must do it, because I have to get back the wages expended, and cannot cover my failure by sinking to his lower standard of life. In this levelling up, there is a farther asset to be noted: while I produce more from the half acre than my neighbour produces from the acre, I have the other half acre free to produce something else. Now I will leave the patriotic reader to think it out for himself what the Irish nation would gain by having about three-fourths of the peasantry in the employment

of the remaining fourth, under the double necessity for better work on the one side and better management on the other, with a doubled efficiency of brain in the business of agricultural production, and an agrarian character advancing at the same rate, instead of rotting in a sink of artificially protected Congestion. In other countries, where crime is not officially preferred to culture, the desire for a higher standard of living impels the peasant proprietor to work for the maximum production, and character is necessarily advanced at a like degree ; but I see no sign of this in a country where the peasant dares not even claim personal property in what he calls his own mind. The soil of Ireland is usurped by men who are not farmers. They are only labourers, and incompetent at that.

The national significance of it for the future will be more clearly realised when we reflect that considerably more than half the agrarian population of Ireland live by little farms about the size of mine and less, all now on the way to become peasant proprietors, each employer his own labourer, and each labourer his own employer, but all alike methodically deprived by their "education" of that freedom in mental and industrial motive which we invariably find at the foundation of successful proprietorship in other countries. Until the Irish peasant is moved up mentally, this huge expenditure on his material improvement must remain waste in the main ; and by the terms of the Home Rule contrivance, he would, in about twelve years after the enact-

ment, be no longer entitled to have his failure financed from the pockets of his British neighbours. Unless he could in those twelve years be lifted to the status of personal property in mind as well as land, the "free constitution" must at the end of that period, confront a stoppage of the "foreign" funds, an incapacity to replace them at home, and a recurrence of organised calamity expressed in a howl of revolution from the green hills of Ireland. I do not believe that the necessary mental transformation could be achieved in twelve years by any provision in view. The industrial redemption of agrarian Ireland requires nothing less than the death of a whole generation and the education of a new one under totally different auspices. There can be no other country in the world where the gospel of uselessness is so expensively triumphant in the degradation of industrial character.

This contrast, "Then and Now," is not mere writing. It is work, pressing for expression; energy, translated into life; life, advancing itself in action; and the painful discipline of sacrifice to a pleasant purpose; in a country where few or none are prepared to take the pains essential to the pleasure, and where the strengthening thrill of conquered crisis is practically unknown. I need add not a line to the limits of my personal experience. Argument is unnecessary. There is blood on the track that I have trodden these fourteen years attesting pain at every point; and a thousand little farms like mine, however profitable, could not possibly compensate the sacrifices of living such a life, the more painful

because nearly all the pain has been gratuitous, and deliberately inflicted to prevent success, apparently in fear that the peasant, industrially emancipated, might be a less convenient instrument in our foreign monopoly of the native mind. The pain is over now, its consecrated savages all silent, their treachery defied by triumph. The net gain to me is my knowledge of Ireland, which is much. Starting from a filial motive, I continue from a national one ; because so much of Ireland, her character and her destiny depends on the future of her little farms, not merely for her farming, but also for the higher efficiency in every other pursuit of life which is derived from intellectual application to agriculture. I have not forgotten the young chemists and engineers from the little farms of Scotland who sat in the same classes with me at college, and I have yet to meet the first Irishman of the kind from an Irish farm of the same size, though we know how to accumulate funds out of poverty for those forms of " education " which help only to export us as human raw material.

Let me not make a picture to deter the enterprising peasant. More than half my complaints would not apply to him at all in the circumstances. To a hundred of the attacks that hurt me, he would be invulnerable, because unaccustomed to the life I had enjoyed before coming to Connaught. I am not a peasant ; I am only trying to be one, and finding the chief hindrance in the moral conflict.

The means and methods of the contrast above described are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THERE IS NO BAD LAND

BY far the largest factor in my transformation is a thoughtful use of artificial manures, but there were several stages before that. Intelligent farming begins in geology, and I determined to begin from the very beginning. Having spent about a month most scientifically, under good direction, I astonished myself by the amount of agricultural chemistry and economic botany that a man with a knowledge of laws and principles could master in a month ; and even now, after fourteen years, I find very little added by the needs of practice to that first month's work. In other words, the amount of science necessary in doubling the production of a Connaught farm can be acquired in less than one-third of the time which the Connaught farmer spends on his annual holiday.

I found the uplands an impoverished peaty loam, on a base of limestone gravel, with a ferric stratum intervening, in some places solidly impervious to the necessary percolation under rain and to the necessary evaporation under heat, though a good deal of the "flag" had been empirically broken by the uninstructed muscle of preceding generations. They had apparently found out that it was good to "break the flag" ; it remained for

me to find out why. So far, a fairly simple diagnosis, inferring for prescription: plenty of potash, plenty of phosphates, some lime on the most peaty spots, and then, either tilled or pastured, a leguminous growth to put in the required nitrogen from the air instead of paying £12 per ton for it. Very much of the most costly manures required I always get out of the air for nothing, but the way of doing it demands intelligence. It is one of the differences between farming with your head and without it.

Every field I have is more or less hilly, and, in the upper parts, mostly of the make described in the last paragraph; but every one is skirted at the lower levels with streaks of clay, and, farther out, margins of deep peat, tempered with alluvial iron, nearly level with the water before I lowered it. These lower levels are now by far the most productive parts of the field, but the prescription must be changed: as before, but with the lime everywhere, and in much increased quantities, not less than 10 cwt. in each of two dressings, with a year between. Apply in October or November, in dry weather, and harrow in. I have a bagful of scientific and other proofs for everything I say here, but I remember a professor who, having edged my appetite for proofs, often refused to quote them, and set me to hunt them up for myself, which gave them something like double effect in my mind when I had found them. Besides, what I say here is enough for the man who wants to know, and nothing is enough for the

man who does not. Let him give up his land and become an honest labourer. For the credit of agriculture and for the good of Ireland, the sooner he loses his land the better. Meantime, I would put a tax of many shillings per acre on him, to be exempted only by his passing an examination. Leaving a nation's soil in the occupation of a lazy and illiterate man is about as bad as putting it in pawn with a usurer, and industrial illiteracy becomes more economically intolerable throughout the world every day. Progressive civilisation can no longer be supported anywhere by any form of industrial production dependent on brute force only, and this fact is at the bottom of the failure in Irish farming. The knowledge is not enough to make the soil and the labour on it progressively productive, and the production can never be enough to establish the necessary knowledge so long as the expenditure on "education" is conducted to perpetuate the ignorance. The farmer has no better right to the soil than any other man, except in so far as he can produce more from it.

My stream is the one thing on the farm that has behaved in a uniformly admirable manner from the first. Fed from permanent springs up the country, it runs into the middle of my land, turns a right angle there, and runs out at the other side, with the result that every field, without exception, touches water at some point. The contrast in the drawings at the front shows how the "bottoms" adjoining the stream were every-

where fenced off as unworkable, and how these partitions are now removed, making a clean sweep from end to end. The dividing fences had been planned intelligently enough in their way, along the line between the workable and the unworkable areas, often tapping springs in their course ; but a line dividing such areas, and aiming at the springs, was necessarily crooked, which made wiring very difficult, and left the lower end of every working area an irregular zig-zag, with the utmost waste in work and headlands. They were all earth fences, with not more than 100 yards of hedge in the whole place, but every one of them is now replaced by a deep drain, sunk well into the sub-soil of limestone gravel, so that the high waterlevel no longer prevents the lime and the necessary aëration assisting economic vegetation on the surface. In some of these drained " bottoms " I found very rich deposits of various kinds which had all through the ages been held useless by the excess of water and the exclusion of air. Men who have plenty of such land held useless, and who cry out for an increase of land, come wondering now at my clover on the track of sedge and flaggers ; but while I lower the water level, they make holiday, expecting the Government and the taxpayer to make good the loss.

The field of five acres which we call the paddock, where the calves and the young bulls are herded, may stand to illustrate the whole, in fencing, draining and manuring alike. The area was in five patches, only one of which could be tilled.

My Little Farm

Two acres of it were "bottom," adjoining the stream, and two acres at the other end were cut-away bog, some of this a surface of bare sand, some thickly coated with heather, and some so deep in marsh that no cow could walk in it. There is not a yard of it now without clover, and £75 to £80 worth of young cattle get their only grazing on it every year, which proves it to be more productive than the whole farm was when I began. The conversion from marsh and heather to clover and crested dogstail has been accomplished absolutely without tillage, and the soil seems to be still improving, though five years have passed since I expended the last cent on it. It is admitted by those around me that in any average year I get back more than the whole cost of the reclamation, and yet those who have land of the kind, all waste, look on with their hands in their pockets. Some, however, are beginning to move, now that they see the reclamation permanent and the whole cost coming back once a year. Here is an industrial investment at 100 per cent. per annum, in a country which exports her working power and has a surplus balance of many millions * invested abroad, for much less than five per cent. all round.

* This is only the balance on which dividends are paid at a single Irish Bank, and it consists chiefly in Government securities. What of all other heads? It is clear that what Ireland lacks is not capital, but the character to afford it reproductive security. The men among us who control "Education" to keep the Irish mind incapable of this are very large investors of our idle capital in foreign countries. They gather up the money out of our poverty, and they keep us afraid to ask questions.

This field is rather famous. It has been visited by bishops, peers, baronets, knights, statesmen, politicians, royal commissioners, experts, travelled foreigners and even farmers; all attracted by the Connaught short cut to reclamation without tillage, and all as incredulous when they come as they are convinced before leaving. I never knew one of them either to believe before he saw or to doubt after seeing; and considering such incapacity for intelligent belief, in rather intelligent people such as I describe, we must not wonder at the suspicion of facts shown by the Irish peasant, who cannot believe even in himself. I do not think they could believe it even by seeing had it not been for my foresight in preserving a plot of pure heather across the fence among the private lawns and gardens. I take them first into the field, tell them what it was a few years ago, and describe the method of the change. "Yes, it is very wonderful," they reply, but I can see that they do not believe a word of it. Then I take them to the heather plot, the final refuge of my receding credit, and I find it pleasant to follow the effulgence of beautiful Faith as it advances over their wondering faces. To the Irishman who reads this, and has not seen, I must, I suppose, be either the best farmer or the best liar in a land of farmers more gifted in falsehood than in farming. Either way, it is a sort of distinction, but the picture I have on view, worked out in the most concrete verity, is, in so far as I know, the only

thing of the kind in the United Kingdom, though the profit of it is more obvious than the painting.

I might have had a visit from the German Emperor, for I and he are the only two men I know in Europe doing anything like this with land ; but I fear my Imperial colleague is at present absorbed in pursuits more unpleasant to himself and less worthy of the higher crown we ought to share. It is a loss that he cannot come over, because I find on comparing notes that he has much to learn from me, though the bag stuff which I have found most useful has all come from Germany, and cannot be got anywhere else. In his capacity as farmer, he attacks his moor in the German way, with any amount of method and patience, but with strikingly less intelligence than we have shown in Mayo, assisted by the potash of Stassfurt. Accordingly, I have much more economic results to show, though there are circumstantial grounds for believing that His Imperial Majesty has been somewhat more satisfactorily supplied with capital. Perhaps that is the reason he is less satisfactorily rewarded in dividends. Prussia has had a good deal of such moor as we meet here in the West of Ireland, but the area is narrowing now, since other German capitalists have followed the example of their Emperor in reclamation. They and their Emperor together have not done as much in this way for Germany as I have done for Ireland, though they have attracted more than twice as much attention. The United Irish League does

not work in Germany. The German Government would have the decency to hang its officials.

Returning after my month of science in Dublin able to see everything with a new eye, I went carefully over the five-acre plot of five "fields," and found three divisions of botanical habitat, as distinct as if they had belonged to different latitudes in different continents or to the differentiated altitudes of a mountain five miles high. There was the patch of impoverished upland, dry enough, yet sour, with sorrel taking supreme possession; the skirts of waterlogged clay, grey with a species of stunted sedge, which seemed never to change either its quantity or its colour with any season of the year; and then the bog-track, with banks of heather and with open pools holding water under a green scum at mid-summer. Fertility implied a different treatment for each division, and, to complicate the necessity, all three divisions ran in and out among each other. What I have said above about artificial manures and their different application will apply again here, but there was much to do before manuring, because manure may be lost without oxygen in the soil, and because the required air is excluded by excess of water. The whole area looks now as if of uniform quality. It is only a plot of five acres, but, for purposes of demonstrating the needs and means of economic reclamation, it is big enough to put nearly half of Ireland inside its four fences.

I was building a house. It must stand on the limestone gravel, with a drainage at least three feet lower, which, on discharge, meant a considerable outer cutting, permanently open, and in some places nine feet deep. This by-product of the builder's plan gave me an outlet from the bog, and next summer I had the pools on fire, burning out as much as I could of the bog vegetation, and leaving a seed bed of ashes for clover. The stuff dug for the foundation of the buildings must go somewhere. I carted it on to the bog, increasing the seed bed, and harrowed all down after a little levelling of the bank edges. This was in summer. Late in autumn I applied 7 cwt. to the acre of a mixture two parts of best superphosphate to one part of best kainit, and harrowed down again. Harrowing is cheap, and it assists the action of air on the soil. Next March, I seeded down my bog-track with Italian ryegrass and broad-leaved English red clover, choosing both for their capacity to grow high, bush out, and kill everything but themselves. I rolled the place heavily and repeatedly during the spring drought to close cracks and to prevent the peat drying to a greater depth than the deepening roots of the clover.

In June, I had, surely, the strangest crop ever seen in Ireland*—sedge, bent, sorrel, bog cotton, heather and rushes, with clover and rye grass looking fine and steadily suppressing the native competitors; but what must I do with this curious "crop"? It occurred to me that if I

* Sections were shown at Ballsbridge.

could cut them all away together early, the natives must go wholly under in a second growth ; but any man that has ever attempted to cut heather with a scythe would rather have any other job. I was delighted to find the scythe running through the stuff readily, the potash and phosphates having already set in a deadly dry rot in the stems of the heather. Having carted off the " hay " I gave the land a good dressing of farmyard dung, and in autumn I had the finest pasture that I knew within fifty miles, though I had expected nothing of value before next year.

Next year, without farther manuring, I mowed two great crops. With a machine and two horses on " the bog," I was personally cutting the second crop one fine day, when who should come down from a motor car into the field but Sir Horace Plunkett, Lord Shaftesbury and Sir Henry Doran ? They agreed that it was " the best crop, first or second, they had seen that day," and they had travelled far. What shall we say of an agricultural community kept drilled to discredit a demonstration like this, and to persecute a man who has given so much of his life to establish the economic practicability of it for their benefit ? There is an end now of the discredit and the persecution, but only because both are successfully defeated and defied. These people do not desire the productiveness of the land. They only desire the land, on terms to accommodate their organised incapacity at the expense of the landowner and the taxpayer. They never had any personal

reason for attacking me. It was rather because I had persistently pointed out to them the economic fact that no gain in rent could ever be more than a fraction of the gain in good farming. They are now coming to see the truth of it, and organised barbarism has to shut its foul mouth before the irresistible evidence of industrial sanity. There is even some danger of my becoming "popular," a sort of social disease which has up to now destroyed possibly useful Irishmen in large numbers. In my part of Ireland at least, persecution is still as much a compliment as "popularity" would be an insult.

The work in the paddock was my first serious performance on the agricultural stage, and it taught me something. On such soil, I should not now begin with phosphates and potash, but rather with potash and slag, adding a good deal of lime on the wilder areas, especially the pure peat and the stiff clay. With this combination, the process would be more slow, but more permanent and less expensive. I should not now confine the seeding to red clover and Italian ryegrass, but add some alsike, Timothy and rough-stalked meadow grass to take permanent possession on the death of the two first, which takes place largely on any soil in two to three years. At that time, however, I meant to plough up the whole field as soon as the fertilisers could give me a sufficiently workable surface. This has not been done, because I have found the red clover and ryegrass followed thickly with indigenous herbage of good

quality and long life, chiefly white clover and crested dogtail, which, if not grown to seed, makes admirable pasture for young cattle. In so far as I can see, the crested dogtail is the only superior grass indigenous to our part of Ireland, though Timothy appears to assert its right of existence quite as successfully with me. On this field, about a hundredweight of milk is consumed daily for a large part of the milking season, and then there is the consumption of the solids fed in the milk. This appears to maintain the fertility, which must go down without it, but then, is there any soil that can maintain its production without some return in manuring from the consumption of the produce or its equivalent?

Let us now consider the cost. Seven cwt. of potassic superphosphates, then at £4 2s. per ton = £1 9s. per acre. Allow an equal sum for labour and the dung on two acres of the plot. We are still probably within £3 an acre, but it is hard to be quite accurate with the labour element. For instance, the cost of making the fences would have to be deducted from that of making the drains in place of them, and the deepening of the stream is more benefit to other fields than to this. Then there are the "broken" days. In hay time, the morning is wet, and we go draining. At 10 45 we go back to the hay, and I have not been able to ascertain every trifle of this kind. What I can do accurately is to estimate the cost of the work when done, and this will make the whole

capital outlay on the field about £3 an acre. I cannot charge the main cutting against it, because this was done for the drainage of the house, while the field could not possibly be such a success without it. In addition to the drains closed, there are some still open, but the peat dug out of them and dried has made valuable bedding. On the whole, at £3 an acre, we must be near enough to the mark for any practical farmer to form his own judgment, and I hope it is the spirit of this book to stimulate judgment rather than to dictate it. There is no use inviting men to capital expenditure with their eyes shut. They must see where they go or remain where they are, and too many of them will remain where they are even when they see where to go.

I think the fair conclusion is that there is no "bad land," but only bad farmers and bad owners. It must be clear to anybody that the capital value of my field, as it is, will many times over cover the cost of changing it from what it was, with a rent-value still at 3s. 7d. an acre and a production value as I have shown. I am satisfied that, on all workable land, the worst can always be made as productive as the best at something less cost than the difference in letting value between them. It is so at least as a general fact, and probably more so in the peasant farms than elsewhere. In any case, for myself, I would always prefer the "bad" land at its lower capital liability. Let the peasant mind once grasp this and we are on the way to an economic revolution in food production, but it is

not in Ireland that I expect to see the lead, though the Irish have probably the best opportunity in the world. I expect nothing of value from the Irish while they remain afraid to think and give up their minds to the direction of their slave drivers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEATHER PLOT

THE paddock is a long field, running from end to end, between the house and the public road ; then a plantation, with a break in it at the middle to give a sense of distance about the house, which looks south, with gardens, orchard and lawn. The sun shines to us across the paddock all the afternoon, with the young cattle generally in view. I like to keep calves where they can be seen easily and often. Next come three fields, abreast, and then the little river ; beyond that, the largest field of all, bought separately. Thus we have four main divisions, to accommodate a four course rotation, apart from the strip from side to side occupied by the buildings, gardens, plantations, &c.

Through the yard, north of the house, a private road connects all the fields conveniently, and the yard is washed down into a Timothy meadow on low ground at the back, with the outlet from the yard lined by a row of ash, flourishing immensely, though planted only in the subsoil. They say ash is a severe test of soil, but when we planted it there was no soil here. After the dung heap is shifted in spring, I grow nearly as much mangels on the track of it as my neighbours can get out of their year's crop.

As a whole, the plan works out rather effectively, and gives the house an air of distinction quite large for the size; a big advance on peasant dignity, yet not at all beyond peasant means, assuming efficiency. The whole thing, to begin, is only a typical peasant farm about the average, and what interested me was to see what could be done with it.

The peasants' homes could be made beautiful for practically nothing. Of two ways to do a necessary piece of work, one makes an eyesore from the start, the other a delight for generations. Yet we live in unrelieved squalour, while the Government gives us young trees free, to be planted this year by the official expert, and torn out next year by the pig. The taxpayer bears the cost of the continuous destruction, and we cannot be induced to fence the trees. The level of civilisation is readily inferred. The essentials of civilisation are probably lower in agrarian Ireland at present than they were a thousand years ago.

At the south-eastern extremity is the kitchen garden, as far from the yard as I could go, because poultry and gardening do not agree. Then comes the heather plot, the centre of agricultural interest, which has been visited by travellers from three continents. Choice vegetables and heather nearly a yard long flourish on opposite sides of the paths, and this was the contrast which Mr. T. W. Russell came to see—when I was “not at home.” His instructive visit is described in the chapter on “My Visitors.”

I have grown great crops of many kinds, but my half rood of heather is by far the most valuable bit of the farm, though the total produce for ten years of precious preservation would not make five shillings an acre in the market. The heather grows closer and closer, longer and longer, killing out everything else ; and I am pleased, because I feared that it might die in the shelter of the plantations. This plot is the final proof as to whether I am really a farmer or the most audacious liar in Europe. Without the heather, nobody could believe me about the reclamation. Even with the heather, Mr. Russell cannot believe it, and thus, through him, we have the authority of the Agriculture Department exercised to discourage the reclamation of the land, which is a novel way of earning a salary from an Agriculture Department, probably impossible in any country but Ireland.

I should be almost ashamed to admit how much money I have made from my half rood of virgin heather. When the liabilities were discharged for possession here, I had not much ready cash, and many a time in the past fourteen years have I been rudely roused from my literary dreams by demands for money ; but I had the heather plot always there, surer than a milk cow, and more than twice as prompt in yielding money. Time after time, year after year, I "wrote up" my heather, this aspect of it now, another next, each as "fresh" as it could be made by the trick of the trade ; for this editor in March, for the other in April, and

so on, getting a cheque every time, and each cheque worth more than all the heather that the plot could produce in three hundred years: I am still open to write any number of interesting and instructive articles, long or short, on this half rood, provided the pay is large enough.

Like the rest of our gifted race, I am afflicted, or fortified, by periods of abnormal indolence, probably due, in my case, as the natural reaction after much longer periods of over activity. At least, that is how I like to explain it, rather than submit to the general cult of normal indolence occasionally disturbed by work. The Irishman is to other men like the racehorse to other horses, tempered to justify his existence by a short, grand display of energy, rather than by regular effort at a supportable rate; but the racehorse is the most useless of all horses unless kept in "form," and the human temper in Ireland does not like this keeping in "form." See, for instance, our love for soldiering and, in soldiering, our preference for the deadliest of the work. This is the temperament which keeps the Irishman gambling with life, and I may as well own that it took me some time, and cost me some pain, to conquer it after my escape from Ireland as a little boy; for I had been brought up quite in the Irish way, without a sense of duty, unless as derived from the unpleasant consequences of having none. The natural superiority of my parentage and descent seems to be inferred from the fact that I did not distinguish myself as a thief.

After my return to Ireland, this national

tendency to fits and starts came back upon me, and it might have resulted awkwardly but for the heather plot, so potential in money. To-day, I got a bill, which must be paid next month; to-night I caught an unsuspecting editor in the heath, and he delivered up the required cash, leaving my cows and calves to flourish undisturbed until the right time to sell them, at their best. I was not, like my neighbours, in a position to repudiate rent and to play at the expense of my landlord, since I had no landlord; but I had a heather plot, and I sometimes wonder whether the certainty of the income from it had not the same effect on me as agitation on other people, ministering to my indolence. That, however, would lead to a subtlety of self analysis outside the present purpose. Productive and profitable as the farm is, I know that I have made more than twice as much every year from my half rood of heather, which, indeed, has done very much to capitalise the rest of the land.

A certain class of agrarian pessimist will object that the experiment is valueless, because the ordinary farmer cannot get capital out of a heather plot by writing about it. The ordinary farmer has no such need. He is better situated than I was. He suffers from no such disability. He has the advantage of me, in that he has his capital already, which I had not. It does not matter how or where the capital is derived; what matters is the result of its application. The ordinary farmer has more capital than he knows how to use,

and the more he knows how to use it, the more of it awaits him. The whole civilised world is at this moment searching for men to take its ample capital and make use of it on the land, and the search grows keener as the cost of food goes higher. The tendency in this direction is no more than well begun, and Ireland's opportunity is very great—had it not been that the agrarian energy is held in foreign fetters. You cannot enslave mind and have muscle free.

The peasant is afraid to think ; therefore, unfit to work, and unfit to be capitalised. He has not the use of his wits. He has muscle, but not mind, and capital insists on both co-operating. The peasant is bred and trained to regard the free use of mind as a vice and a vital danger ; therefore, fear of thought is among the first of his virtues, and the man afraid to think is no fit man to be entrusted with other men's capital. This is how the Irish peasant is now missing, and bound to miss, the increasing reward for the food producer, already greater than it has been for sixty years, and bound to become much greater still, while agrarian Ireland looks on, industrially disabled, because morally demented. It is not possible to deny mental freedom in the most important interests of life without disabling industrial capacity. You may as well deprive a man of his legs and expect him to run. I owe all that is worth having in my own life to my freedom in the use of my mind ; and I owe this to my escape from Irish "education." Can any man suppose that if I had

not escaped from Ireland and learned to think, I could sit down in Mayo and make more by writing about my half rood of heather than our ordinary farmer can make from sixty acres of our best land ? After long study and obviously intimate experience my advice to any ambitious young Irishman is : Get away from Ireland at once, before you are old enough to get fixed useless for life, and unless you can recover the use of your faculties abroad, stay away ; but if you have really learned to think, and got character enough to support your thinking, come back, and you will find Ireland the most fascinating country in the world, where a comfortable income can be made by preserving half a rood of heather from the encroachments of reclamation.

My heather plot has made men think, in a country where thought is "danger." It is exactly like a miracle, achieved without apparent effort, and I keep every side of it as rich and green as possible to accentuate the contrast. If I told them it was done miraculously, I have no doubt that large numbers could believe in it, but I am reduced to mere reason. When they ask me to explain the transformation, I am forced to talk chemistry, but chemistry implies thought and mental freedom ; therefore, my explanation is "dangerous," and so is my plot—a standing example of miraculous effects from merely natural causes. I have no desire whatever to usurp the miraculous function, and it is really not my fault if the natural has here contracted the limits of the

supernatural; but the suspicion of my plot remains. I might have said to them: "I came out here one silent midnight under the Summer Moon, looked over my many acres of heather, and prayed that it might all turn green and fatten good cows, all except one half rood, to be preserved as a memorial of my supplication. I came again next morning and found sweet tufts of clover beginning to peep up through the heather, and these flourished and spread until all but the half rood was clover and fat cows." See how a man may miss his way to popularity from want of a little foresight. It is too late for me now to set up the miraculous explanation, and it appears that even Mr. T. W. Russell will not accept any other, though he showed no special talent for miracles before he became Vice-President of the Agriculture Department. How can we expect science to prevail with the peasant?

Perhaps it is as well. I am not sure that the mantle would fit me even if it fell on me, and it is something to know that if I cannot teach men to lie, I can at least force them to think. Even the Department's experts came my way—thinking. The phenomenon had to be explained, they were paid to explain such phenomena, and they delivered lectures in the district; but their explanation was frightfully like my own. One of these lectures is worth permanent record.

An admirable lecture on scientific manuring, to a full audience of empty farmers, but their natural intelligence was almost as high as the

barriers that hold it useless. Having told them about the three agents of fertility, the expert showed them how much the whole was greater than its parts, when properly blent for purposes of production; how potash, phosphates and nitrogen, mixed in right proportions, must yield more than the same money's worth of either by itself. Best of all, he had a way to defeat cheating in the purchase. Given the analysis, the money value could be calculated on the units, and this plan of calculation was called "The Formula."

A most excellent lecture, especially in its assurance against fraud, and they passed a powerful resolution of eternal gratitude to the Department, after which they went home, and so did he; but they went home in the belief that the Department had brought out a new manure, that there was nothing in the world like it, that no trader could cheat them in it, and that the name of it was "Formula." That was the agricultural result of our admirably scientific lecture on manuring, admirably delivered, to men who regard themselves as admirable farmers.

In the course of the week, they dropped into the towns, and asked the manure merchants the price per ton for "Formula." "We haven't it in stock at present," said the merchants, "but we can get it for you in a few days." The scientific farmers went from shop to shop, but not one merchant could quote per ton for "Formula," and they confided their suspicions to one another. Why had the merchants left them in complete

ignorance of the one article in which they could not be cheated? The merchants denounced the Department for its new fangled notions, but they determined to stock the new manure. They wrote to the manufacturers for it, and the manufacturers replied that they had never heard of any manure made or sold under any such name.

Not one bag of "Formula" could be bought in our region, and then the scientific farmers came to me, as they generally do for what they cannot get to know anywhere else. I explained "Formula" to them as best I could, but I do not believe that they were as happy in the knowledge as they had been in the suspicion. That was the end of the most soundly scientific lecture I ever heard from any of the Department's experts, and it left me wondering how vast must be the waste of money in this "instruction." However, it is not the expert's fault. He is condemned to teach men who are permanently deprived of the power to learn: science must not enter the School.

The rule laid down for the expert is to take half a rood on the farm and to transform it; mine is to transform the farm, all but the half rood. The peasant suspects that an expert working at the public expense is concerned only to make a show and to advertise the Department, without regard to cost in relation to the product. It is not for me to say how far this suspicion may be well founded, but it is certain that the expert does not ascertain the net result of his expenditure on the plot. He may get an approximate calculation on

a tillage crop, such as oats or turnips. How can he know the final value of reclamation by top-dressing, which may take five years to reach its maximum result and fifty to exhaust itself?

When the farm as a whole is transformed, and half a rood kept as before, the peasant has the sense to see that this cannot be merely for show. He knows that no sane man would willingly extend the experiment to the whole area without economic results. In short, the large scale implies an investment, not a mere experiment, and the uninstructed peasant can perceive the difference, if he cannot explain it scientifically. The transformation of half a rood is only a matter of a few shillings, and it might be worth attempting, even at a loss, especially when the official expert is expected to have so many "demonstrations" at the end of the year. The expenditure on the whole, omitting a plot, is another matter, simply foolish if not reproductive.

It is obvious, then, how much more valuable and instructive my scheme is than the Department's, and it explains why the more intelligent of the peasants pass by the Department's "demonstrations" and travel long distances to see my plot. I do not invite them to see a transformation from heather to clover without regard to cost. I invite them to see the difference between the product and the cost of production. Instead of costing a penny to anybody, my "demonstration" makes money. It pays for itself and leaves much over. The practically

unproductive land is there in the plot to show how the bulk was when I began ; and the bulk is there to show what it produces now. The cattle on it can be counted and valued, and not one intelligent man has ever seen it without admitting that the capital expenditure must come back once a year. What, then, can the executive head of the Department have in view in discrediting these results ? If they are better than his own, that is not my fault. I cannot imagine that he has any desire to do me a personal injury. I have never had anything to do with him personally.

The controlling fact which Mr. Russell and I and the rest of us have to face is that the peasant is not scientifically approachable, and that it is waste of good money trying to approach him in that way so long as his primary education is under the present control. Where science is "sin," who would be scientific ? Talk science to the peasant if you must—the man paid for attempting it must only do his best, and hold his tongue as to the waste of money. When he has done his best, the peasant proceeds empirically, if at all. If science is to reach him, it must be in the concrete result, not in the abstract causes. His pocket may lead him from the concrete to the abstract ; his head cannot lead him from the abstract to the concrete. From something which he can touch with his hand, he may proceed to the forces governing its production ; he cannot proceed from these to any touchable thing producible from them, but not yet produced. It is time I knew

the peasant mind, and these two facts I can affirm of it :—(1) It makes waste of the Department's expenditure ; and (2) it cannot but do so while primary education is directed and financed against mental freedom.

I knew these facts (and much else like them) from the start. That was the reason I had no faith in abstract teaching among peasants, and decided to put my own "demonstration" in concrete form, so that it could be seen as plainly and calculated as easily as the results of a chemical experiment. I thought then that I was right ; now I know it. Every day of my life makes it plainer to me that the peasant must be mentally liberated before he can be industrially redeemed ; that his mind must be restored to the service of his body before his energies can react reproductively in a higher standard of either work or life. The best men in the Department know this as well as I do, but they are paid for the silence of their failure rather than for the success of their service. Speaking the truth, they would be dismissed. They have to do their work and take their pay in the conditions imposed on them, and it is the nation's business, not theirs, to find out what it is that keeps them useless. In spite of the agrarian mind, they have done something to improve agrarian conditions, or at least to create the opportunity ; but their results remain necessarily small in proportion to the cost, and impossible where most required.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE FENCE

THEIR own employers, paying no wages, the peasants ignore the money value of working time lost by bad fences. One might think they would imagine some value in the work they could do for the time lost at herding, but they debit that in the leisure account rather than as waste of productive power. The dominant motive in work is the length of leisure procurable by the product, on a standard of life fixed low, rather than the higher standard attainable by a full working year, as in other countries. Apart from some local exceptions, as in Wexford and on a few farms tilled by wage labour here and there, we have no full year's work at farming anywhere in Ireland outside Ulster. As I write this, the winter is nearly half gone, and except in tending live stock, which is not enough occupation for one person per household, I have not seen one day's work done within any distance of me for the past six weeks. With this small exception, the productive process is absolutely suspended, while the consumptive side of the account expands increasingly at this time of the year. Meantime, the fences are down, and the school time of children is to be lost by herding next year, helping to assure agricultural incapacity

in the coming generation—that is, if we assume the “education” to have any industrial value.

They are earth fences in our region, and after all the centuries of practice, I find few men who know how to make an earth fence. They have it four times the necessary width on top. In reaching the grass that grows there, the hungry cow tears out the face of the foundation with her hoofs. Narrow the top to twelve inches, and she will not do so, with the hungry cow on the other side co-operating to exhaust the joint attraction. The want of space would help to prevent the cow getting up, but as it is, she gets up, and the fence gets down. Then Michael or Dominick or Bridget, or all three, must stay at home to “mind the cow,” after daddy has wasted the morning to watch her. One man is supposed to account for £10,000 worth of cows in herding, but here I can see the one man occupied with one cow, worth £10.

I beg pardon. I ought to have written “Delia,” which is our Roman disguise for Bridget now in general use. Bringing up our children for export only, why should we not give them names to disguise their nationality, as so many of them find it reasonably wise to do when they go abroad? I think I am myself the only Irishman left now who is quite content to call himself “Pat,” and there are great patriots who would give much to see “Pat” dropped, if only in the grave; but I am inclined rather to make the good old name live even longer than myself, and, assuming

no offence, to live as long as I can, if not as comfortably as I could. Half a century of unrewarded hardship awaits the men who must restore the Irish peasant to the use of his wits for the industrial development of his character. Meantime, we must teach him how to make an earth fence and let the children go to play if not to school. Now they mind the cow, and look forward to play like their big brothers when they grow up, instead of looking forward to work as the children do in the countries that prosper.

I had fences everywhere, but no fence anywhere that could stop a pig, and every patch had its double border of waste headlands in addition. More than half the fences are now gone, with so much working power economised to keep the other half good, and I never make or repair an earth fence without setting some sort of a hedge to grow in it. Years ago, I found thorn seedlings absurdly cheap, and bought some thousands of them for five shillings. They were not big enough to plant out, but a few square yards were enough to nurse them until needed. Ever since, I have had thorn quicks at hand whenever I wanted them. It is one of those small matters which, put together, mean big results in the economy of the farm, and a better race of men when we are gone. Nine-tenths of all we have has been provided for us by predecessors, and unless we hand it on increased, there is no progress. Under our double dose of crime-made law and professional patriotism, we have rather diminished the

hereditary total, deliberately destroying the farm for evidence to reduce the judicial rent in the land court, though the gain of a penny in this is impossible unless by the loss of sixpence to secure it. We are the only people who plunder posterity and call it patriotism.

I cut the upper angles off my earth fence, and turned the stuff in on top, raising the height and sloping the sides. Then a single wire, with furze seed under it, and in three years I have a hedge as well as a fence, good for at least two generations, or perhaps indefinitely, assuming the necessary attention to hedges. The whole work was only like a last touch to the heavy lifting done in vain before me, and it often sets me reflecting whether the Irish people will ever come to see their opportunities, or die out blind and let their beautiful bit of the earth pass into stranger hands, when organised crime, dying of its own diseases, can no longer depend on legislative fraud to disguise industrial inefficiency. We were told, and the fiction is still abroad, that proprietorship would improve on all that ; but the final test is the total of life supported by the soil, and this goes down as proprietorship goes up, the man disappearing all the more where the master has become landlord. The gain of the new annuity, as against the old rent, goes to ease the existing standard of life rather than to raise it, so that the purchasing tenant who had four labourers retains one, lets three go to America, and can live as well as before. Without a tradition to maintain, he is the happy

medium through which the British Treasury finances the death of the Irish nation. National destruction can be prevented by only one thing, work, and the value of work depends on industrial character, which in turn, depends on education; but the Irish peasant would not for his life dare express any of his deep objections to the dominant dementia so lavishly endowed for the destruction of his children. Until he dares to become articulate in this, good-bye to industrial character and the last hope of nationhood in agrarian Ireland. It must be plain, even to the politicians, how the factor of nationality has steadily died out of the agrarian character in our own time, but not one of them dares to ask why.

The reflective foreigner travelling through Connaught, and not meeting one man, could infer the character of the people from the fences. The earth fence without a hedge is an open denial of civilisation. The wasted earth is there to grow it, the plants for practically nothing and the time wasted. Nine-tenths of the work for the fence has been done already, and many times repeated, but there is no effective fence. The work must be repeated again next year, but before autumn is out, the cow will again be through, and the child must turn to herding, in its age of play, to be compensated by adult idleness later on. The finishing touch which would give their value to all other units of the work is missing; that last factor of mind which gives muscle its normal reward, and without which it must either decay at home or be rescued by emigration.

It is not a question of expense. I can sow a mile of fence with three shillings' worth of furze seed ; and thorn, the most durable hedge of all, is for nothing. Trimming a neglected hedge of thorn some years ago, I cut out and planted a bundle of the best stems, without roots, of course. Everyone of them grew. Next year I had rooted plants for a hundred yards of new hedging ; much better plants, too, than the quicks of nursery commerce from the haw, because many times as strong, and bushing out much more closely from the bottom. I have not space for such minute detail as the intelligent farmer may readily master for himself, but since every Irish farmer I know thinks that my rooting of the thorn stems is impossible, let me show how easy and simple it all is. I cut each stem just below a joint, because, under the soil, a root springs where a branch would start if above. Roots are only another kind of branches, with a somewhat different function. For like reasons, I made the top cut just above another joint. The lengths were 12 to 18 inches, according to the distance between the joints. Early in February, they were sown in rows, so close that they were nearly touching ; slightly slanted, the top ends level with the surface, and the soil pressed closely down to them. Nothing more, but keep the soil clean while the plants are nursed, and we have as much as we please of thorn hedging. I assume that the pig is not allowed to root out the plot while the plants are fixing themselves to grow. My scheme has

one serious defect: our agricultural holiday of three or four months in the year does not end until it is too late in the season to cut and plant the thorn, but that is not my fault.

Of all the hedges, give me gorse, the best for shelter, while as good as any in most other ways, and incomparably the most beautiful. I do my writing in a garden cot, a hedge of gorse quite close in view, between me and the east wind. Its quiet green is always there, above the brown heath on one side and the brown soil prepared for springtime on the other. It is nearing Christmas now. Before a month, the green above the brown begins to be shot with its screen of golden yellow. The arresting contrast will continue to enrich its joy until relieved by rhododendrons next summer, when the yellowhammer, gaily hooded like the gorse, comes to sing his love song by my window and the mother bird administers the home among the perfume of the gleaming bush. I have had memorable evenings alone with these two friends, listening to the song of two soft notes, watching the shadows lengthen on the lea, and wondering if my countrymen could ever rise to claim the proper place of Man in Nature. Brave little bird, he takes his dangers for his joys; my countryman his fetters for their peace, and finds it but a war of pain that kills the coward even before his birth. So can we conquer winter's weary colours in the Connaught waste of sloth and death, keep endless summer in the eye and twelve square yards of thinking freedom bounded round in "dangerous" books.

My Little Farm

One dark, wild night about a year ago I went along by this fine hedge on the safe side of a gale, struck a match, and found that I could hold it alight in the shelter, which extended far into the field, because the wind, striking an immovable square edge like that, takes a long leap upward in the line of least resistance. What is the money value of it in plant and beast? We cannot measure it in money, but it must be great, and yet it is only a bye-product of the fencing. I remember sowing the seed of this hedge with my own hands in less than two hours. That was twelve years ago, and I do not think the whole fence has cost me more than the equivalent of half a day's work since then. Who would not give so much for the flowers and the perfume during so many months in a single year, through a season, too, when daylight bloom is impossible, unless from the bulbous tribe and their expensive artificialism? We pay for beauty by the yard, and trample on higher qualities of it by the mile, merely because we have them for nothing. I am certain that if the common gorse were quite unknown to us, and some enterprising nurseryman came out with a sample bush in bloom, he could make a fortune in a year by propagating it. The gorse is a legume. As such, it gives a hardier and more durable growth in the metallic soils, not in too deeply nitrogenous fertility. I give the young hedge a good dose of potash and phosphates when the plants are strong enough to stand it, about the second year. This appears to make a permanent

difference. On a soil insufficiently metallic, failing the things mentioned, try lime. The cost is trifling, and it may be the cheapest way to a perfect fence, not to mention the shelter and the beauty. There is no permanent way to keep up earth fences but by getting permanent things to grow in them, and the common gorse is my favourite, unless where the water level is too high. Like other legumes, the gorse cannot stand water for any length of time.

Let the hedge grow as it will for four or five years. Then cut at eighteen inches, every cut just over a joint. In the following years, the stumps will thicken stout and strong against the storm, instead of wattling helplessly in the air, working in the wind as levers to loosen the earth in the fence, making round holes by the roots, admitting the air, falling down, splitting the crowns, killing the plants and turning the whole scheme into wasted energy. Much of the work on a farm is such that an hour at the right time may save days later. Gorse is the best thing I know to grow in a desired direction by laying it down with a sod on its neck, and I have closed up a gap of twelve feet in two years by "layering" in this way. I prefer our native common seed to the hybrid import, because it grips the fence, bushes out, covers its ground, and keeps down out of the air so much better. Its seeds, unlike those of the hybrid, may scatter and root in the fields, but not in mine, because the soil is too rich and the grass too big to let the seedlings live. Yet the

spread of superfluous gorse on good land advances rapidly in many districts. Why not pass a brief Act of Parliament empowering the State, at a year's notice, to levy a tax of ten times the rent or purchase annuity on any area so wasted? Should ten times be not enough, extend the tax until the gorse disappears before it, and let the resulting revenue go to subsidise a class in agricultural education as near as possible to the man who pays. The only other plant worth discussion for farm hedging is the thorn, but our farmers know more already about it than they put in practice.

I have planted trees, and this is the place for a word about them. A common and blindly selfish objection to planting is that the trees are "only for those that come after us." Twelve to thirteen years ago I put down five pieces of plantation, in different directions, making nearly half a mile, for shelter and ornament, on land hitherto mainly waste. The trees are already old friends, some rising to eighteen feet, all doing well, presenting a new horizon of foliage to the eye and a revolution in landscape which makes the whole place almost unrecognisable. Notwithstanding the success, my site was about as difficult as could be chosen. The main border runs across the farm from side to side, with a break for space near the house. I wanted it so, because the prevalent winds and all the storms came that way; but the belt passed through six different kinds and conditions of soil, requiring as many kinds of trees, with as many variations in the attention and treat-

ment. Those who have read the chapters on reclamation can see the nature of the ground without repeating the description. I have oak, ash, sycamore, beech, alder, Lombardi poplar, chestnut, Scotch fir, Austrian pine, American cedar, and two of the spruce family. We may infer the situation from the fact that every one of these was required to meet some varying necessity in the scheme. Without one failure, I cannot but feel that I know something about trees. Yet this is my first and only experience in studying and planting them. I think the secret is in my sympathy with the trees, which have eloquent ways of their own to tell what they want. I can never see even another man's tree unhappy without a wish to go and help it, which may often be vitally done in a few minutes. We all know what it is to have a sick cow or a sick horse. Why not a sick tree? It is a live thing, and has its ailments, organic, parasitic, climatic and accidental. It is obviously grateful for relief, and for anything I know, a proper subject of conscious pathology. Then I love the trees because they make the world beautiful, and I study them because, in a situation like ours, they afford a test of man's fitness for the privilege of a place on the face of the earth. It is a sound test, and judged by it, the great bulk of the Irish people ought to move at once to some easier sphere, less conditioned by intelligent activity. The first great mistake of the Irish race was their eviction from the Garden of Eden, and they suffer the more from it because of their

exclusive interest in getting back, if only as care-takers, instead of trying where they are, as lords and masters, to transplant the good points of Eden, including the trees. Operating under endless uncertainty from a base at such deadly distance, and declining to revise the strategy for the changing needs of the campaign, they must spend their power to make progress on merely guarding the line of communication, necessarily missing the best that could be at either end. Forward motion is not easy astride of two worlds of which one is despised and the other unknown.

The trees planted by the peasants seldom survive, and in so far as I have seen, nine-tenths of the loss is from one simple cause: in need and treatment, they see no difference between trees and cabbages. When the young trees begin to look sick from sinking the stem too deep in the soil, they heap up more soil to that suffering stem, which depends for its life on contact with the air down to the crown. Next year, the tree is dead. In the third or fourth year of their life with me, I go among the trees, examine the young stems, and remove any earth I can find fixing itself above the level of the lowest bark. The conifers are specially vulnerable. I can go now and pick out among them trees that suffered in this way before I relieved them. They responded at once to the attention, and they are growing vigorously now, but still smaller than their neighbours, which needed no relief, showing how neglect for a year or two can retard the progress for many years to

follow. This is in plantations properly put in under my own eye and to some extent with my own hands. Then, what chance can we have for trees planted in the drumhead manner, with the bark below the surface and more earth heaped upon them when they begin to die from excess of earth? The same treatment will not do for milk cows and he asses. Why not see a difference between the cabbage and the conifer? All organisms, vegetable as well as animal, have their laws of life and death, varied by the necessities of their ever-varying nature. Yet here in the west of Ireland is a community of land workers who, though greatly satisfied with themselves, have not yet come to see any difference in organic necessity between the Austrian pine of the igneous Alps and the drumhead cabbage of muggy Holland. We cannot persist in ignoring the world in which we have to live and hope to make much out of it.

The shelter and the beauty are but a small part of my gain from the trees. They have taught me more than I could have thought possible. Among themselves, they make an autonomous society, with a system of government at once wonderfully co-operative and quite as intolerant of incapacity. So much wiser than my countrymen in this essential matter, they do not permit the rabble to join and destroy the best members of the family by weight of numbers, leaving only the inferior seed for the next generation. In a score of ways, the strong fellows protect their weaker neighbours, but they are equally ready to put them to death,

and do, unless they show themselves capable of responding to the advantage. Two of my Scotch firs are specially instructive. One of them, injured in early life, began, with my assistance, reasserting his right to a place in the sun, sheltered from the storms by the other, a rather powerfully self-willed individual, with a touch of moral anarchy in him. In addition to the shelter he gives the little fellow, he invites all the birds to his own branches, and when they tear down a leading shoot, his superior strength enables him to throw up another, a necessity under which the little fellow would go under for ever. My rapidly reviving invalid makes the most of his opportunity, reaching resolutely up to that place in the sun, and wasting not one tissue in any other direction. In his own inherent wisdom, he knows that he has either to grow or die, but he does not attempt an agitation among his fellow weaklings to kill the big neighbour who protects while threatening him. On a windy day two years ago, I found the big fellow beating him about the head with his arms, and finding these, as I thought, unnecessarily long, I shortened some of them—an administrative amendment in the native code of laws which has so far worked well, though the permanent relations between these two neighbours are not yet finally fixed. It is really important to observe that the guiding principle in government is not the survival of the fittest, but rather the security of all that are fit against the supremacy of organised unfitness.

PART II.
TO ECONOMISE CONSUMPTION

CHAPTER VI.

COWS AND MEN

A MAN of towns, away from the soil since childhood, in a pursuit as far from farming as it could be, I became also a farmer, against my will and solely for the sake of others, with a passion for country life as the sole sustaining motive, a keen sense of my ignorance as the last ground for success, and no interest in farm animals that had any relation to their profit. That was fourteen years ago.

I had, however, been occupied with the study of economic tendency, and I thought I could see that, in the course of things as they worked, civilisation in general must some day confront a food problem, to the advantage of the farmer and at the expense of everybody else. During several generations the urban growth throughout the world had been increasingly large out of proportion to the agrarian economy in productive power, multiplying so many more appetites than hands to feed them, not to mention the increasing proportion of non-productive people who always arise, to consume the more, in an advanced state of industrial development. I could hear grave

statesmen grinding out their futile programmes to restore the normal balance, by tariff statutes ; and politicians preaching "Back to the Land," for its value in votes ; but I knew that the ultimate way back to the land was through increased remuneration for productive power in food, to come about by the advancing disproportion between food and appetite. What I could not foresee was the tragic rapidity with which the crisis must be hastened by the greatest and most destructive war in the history of the world. I do not believe that the Irish peasant has yet entered upon the possession of himself sufficiently to secure his proper share in the possession of the gains in view ; but the farmer's day has come, and it may be long, for though the war end before this chapter, and though it leave the farmer's profit doubled, it cannot wholly stop the townward movement of modern life, which must find its ultimate limit in terms of food and prices. The war must in some measure reduce the rate of townward displacement, but modern life remains to correct its urban psychology by the painful evidence of the stomach. The economic revolution in modern industrial method has not yet ceased to work towards the town and away from the soil.

I could see fundamental forces surely active in my favour as a farmer, but the equation of time remained uncertain. The dominant tendency was certainly on my side, but it belonged to that class of sociological tendencies whose reaction is

never reached but by self-exhaustion. My day might come, but I might be dead. Meantime, I must consider what my farming was to be, whether in plants, in animals, in both, or, most critical decision of all, in what kind of either. To a man of towns, agriculture was an oppressively vague term. I might fatten cockrils or breed elephants and call it farming. About that time, and before I had yet decided, the *Spectator* published a special article on "a new industry" in Ireland—the breeding of lions at the Dublin Zoo for export; but while £300 looked tempting for a lion puppy, I had already more than enough beasts of prey around me in Mayo. I knew enough of economic history to have small confidence in industrial short-cuts, the royal roads of the incompetent; but on the other hand, I could learn little from my neighbours, unless to avoid their ways. I could not exist on their standard of living, and, unless I could realise a higher one, the whole undertaking was not worth an hour of my time. As compared with me, the neighbours had the advantage of practical experience. My own advantage was the honest ignorance which has nothing to unlearn. He needs more than twice teaching who has been taught wrong.

Reviewing that instructive retrospect from the present standpoint, it looks like an act of Providence that set me to work mainly in cows. No other kind of production could have suited so well, and the reasons may apply most where they are least admitted. First of all, we have practically

ceased to steal cows from each other. The practice has become almost unpopular. The social feeling sets in so strongly against it that we may hope to see cattle stealing some day denounced on moral grounds as well, because the moral standard follows the social when convenient. This is often the case wherever human nature stands higher than its code of morals. Men find out for themselves that crime is but folly in the long run, and the professional moralist rises to the level of the discovery. Meantime, there is no social or moral prejudice against stealing the cow's food, which, cleverly done, may even advance the popularity of the thief. Let a man steal the cow, and we will not be seen in his company; but let him starve the cow to steal the food, doubling the crime, and we will go arm in arm to Mass with him. I am not competent to quote theological authority for the subtle distinction, but I can keep the cow in the field and the food locked up. It is so much simpler than striving to trace the derivation of a morality which makes it wrong to steal one thing and right to steal another. Before I returned to Ireland, I had always assumed that it was wrong to steal anything.

The next great reason for the cow is that she is the best tenant we can keep on the soil to make human beings unnecessary. For half the year in some cases, and for the whole year in many cases, she takes care of herself, requiring the minimum of labour and enabling us to ship our fellow countrymen out of Ireland, which is the ideal and

the necessity of most men who have capital in Irish agriculture. They can trust the cow, but they cannot trust the man; therefore, the man emigrates, and the cow prospers, increasing her numbers and extending her relative occupation of the soil year by year. Being honest, she makes a satisfactory return for money expended on her, and thus becomes a great instrument of capital to advance depopulation. In other countries, the use of capital has the opposite effect, advancing the lives of men, but only where they can be trusted. The Irish are now the only race in civilisation so unfit to live that they can be cleared out of their own country by their own cows.

In addition, the Irish cow, unlike the Irish people, is quite remarkably improvable in her own country, and, of course, the more she is improved, the more she can remove the people. The Imperial Parliament has accordingly endowed a Department of State to improve the cow, adding revenue and taxation to the forces of private capital for the removal of the human stock, who remain still quite incapable to see that the costly plans which they accept for their salvation, assist in their steady destruction. It is now about twenty years since the Government began to improve the cow, and with every improvement in her, the tillage area has receded, reducing the numbers of the human occupants on the land, and reducing their fitness to live even more than their numbers. We have it now officially from the Department that the human efficiency falls while

the efficiency of the cow increases, and we all know that the end of inefficiency is extinction.

It would be unfair and untrue to infer that the Imperial Parliament has made no expenditure on the improvement of the people. It has made a very great expenditure, even more ample than on the cow, and continued now for generations longer, with the opposite of improvement as the admitted result ; but note this deadly difference in method, that whereas the Imperial Parliament keeps the expenditure on the cow under its own control, it entrusts the expenditure on the people to an alien and irresponsible secret society, dependent for its privilege on the people's incapacity. The expenditure on cows and men alike is voted on the estimates every year, but not one man in either House of Parliament dares to raise this essential question : " How is it that while the expenditure on the cows results in great and progressive improvement, the money voted to improve the people might as well be thrown into the Thames ? " A Parliament that dares not discuss this, whether on the Thames or on the Liffey, is obviously quite incapable of good government in a country like Ireland, and while the criminal waste of ample means remains unmentionable, the human decay must continue in vital interests generally, but probably most of all in agriculture, which accounts for three-fourths of the population. In the whole world, and in the whole of history, I can find no such example as we have in Ireland to-day of ample

waste in the means to progress, misappropriated wholesale against the inner verities which alone can make real men. You cannot pervert the means of man's emancipation to his enslavement and expect him to hold a progressive place in the economy of human values ; and you cannot prevent the perversion while his education remains an alien and irresponsible monopoly.

To people very ignorant of Ireland, including most of the Irish themselves, all this elaborate inversion of the normal must seem strange, if not incredible ; but I am only trying to put in plain words, dictated by the most intimate experience, what is thought and felt by practically every agricultural capitalist in at least three provinces of our island, especially those on the larger and better farms. They may fear to express it, and for like reasons, they may even deny it ; but they invariably act on it, everywhere doing their best to be rid of their fellow-countrymen, and to prefer the beast, even for company. One of the chief causes is the cultivation of theft for a virtue, openly supported and encouraged by "religion."

The removal of the man by the improvement of his cow has not yet operated most on the peasant plot. As yet the peasant can defend his inefficiency by lawlessness ; but let property in the soil get really settled,* with the prices of the product rising even higher, and a day comes when

* The politicians assume that they can "abolish landlordism" by transferring fee simple from one class to another !

capital can make a profit by buying out the peasant to replace him by the efficient cow. It is only by organising crime against capital that the human clearance is delayed, but it has already begun, even on the peasant plot. Every little town has already its extending ring of grass, secured chiefly by the capital of the rich shopkeeper removing the incapable peasant ; and every prospect of agrarian peace widens the area of the depopulation. Ask the wealthy shopkeeper why he never tills his ring of grass, and he will tell you (in confidence) that it is because he cannot trust his fellow countrymen. Pasture cannot well be stolen, the cow can be trusted, and the price of beef goes up, while the peasant remains unimprovable, with his very mind and conscience appropriated as his enemy's assets. Who would risk his money on the unimprovable ? So long as the money provided to educate the Irish peasant is administered to degrade him, as it certainly is now, other expenditure on him must be waste ; and that is why the Department finds the human efficiency falling while the expenditure on the brute economy remains reproductive. The cattle driving is simply because the cow can make more per acre out of the soil than the man, who, in his removal from the soil, fights a rear guard action by way of organised outrage ; and, no matter how expensively governments may scheme, there is not the least hope for the man against the cow until he is permitted to claim personal property in mind and conscience, an elementary liberty against

which his education is at present particularly directed. It would be cruel to reveal his character as we find it without revealing along with it the cowardly conspiracy which for a hundred years has been directed against him by the Imperial Parliament and its alien ally in control of Irish education. In view of his double dose of social and intellectual poison, the wonder is that he is not worse.

It will be easy to infer my good fortune in deciding for a minimum of man and a maximum of cow. I knew, as I know still, that there were other products which could be more profitable; but, with a far higher wage factor in their cost of production, they depended so much more on men, multiplying the points of leakage in the process. The wage factor in the cow is comparatively small, and I can go to the fair with her myself, making leakage practically impossible—unless when she happens to be sucked by a man, which requires an ingenuity too rare for common practice, even with us, though indicating the unsafety of products more easily annexed.* Around me here in Mayo, I find vegetable products imported which afford a net profit of £50 to £80 per acre, with the local soil and climate quite suitable to them; but the ordinary peasant has neither the knowledge nor the means, while the man who has both is deterred by thieving.

Thus the cow is to me something more than a

* A "man" was found sucking one of my cows when he found thieving in any other form impracticable.

mere asset of the farm. She is my friend, quietly defying a crowd of enemies ; my bank, assuring a high rate on deposits and demanding none on overdrafts ; my steward, locking up my property in her own reproductive chambers ; my detective, indicating losses by her condition and by the very look of her eye. In return, she enjoys all the kindness and care that I can afford, and with these advantages, she goes forward in her career, realising higher and higher growth in her capacity and character from generation to generation ; while my fellow man, deprived by " religion " of the cow's liberty in self development, either nurses his atrophy at home or seeks relief from it in emigration, escaping from the richest and the loveliest land in the world. The Irish prosper abroad because they are forced to act up to the honesty of those with whom they live and work.

It is clear that I could, with equal ease and more delight, do as much for men as I can for cows, but that would require the men to begin, like the cows, in possession of their faculties, as free to think as the cows are to feed, and not organised in a damnation of dementia directed at their own expense against the eternal economy of their better being.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REGIONAL PROBLEM

I HAVE invented a cow. The invention must be real, because she reproduces her peculiar characteristics with unerring certainty. The necessity arose more than fourteen years ago, when I took charge of the little farm in Mayo, and wanted a cow to suit it; no easy matter, with half the land then under heather, some under water, and the remainder degraded by bad tillage.

My ideal cow would be as productive as the best, but she must be easier to feed, and have it in her to improve with the improvement I meant to make in the land. Besides, I must have an idea. Without ideas, farming in Mayo looked like a form of penal servitude, but lacking its assurance in continuity, and I have not changed my mind on this.

I went to the fairs, but could not find my cow. Probably it was as well. At the fair, I might know nothing of her descent, and though right in herself, she might throw calves after a grandparent that ought to have been shot. I might have started the Aberdeen Angus, but I wanted a cow that could produce milk. The native stock could milk, but that was all, and I could not see my way to give a calf worth £4 10s. what would

feed a calf worth £10. With the Department's pedigree shorthorn sires in reach, I wanted the cow which, in the conditions described, could produce the most economic results from these, but what cow was that, and where could I find her?

The end of breeding solely from native stock and pure shorthorn sires would be a most undesirable variety of shorthorns, in a region by no means fit for them, and I noticed that the calves from such breeding came generally either too good (after the sire) or too bad (after the dam) with a small minority of happy accidents and no sign of raising a type to suit the conditions. That was the problem, and it applies still to large regions in Ireland. I claim to have solved the regional problem, having produced a cow that can thrive on land worth less than 5s. an acre, and can justify herself on land worth £5. Having seen her on both, I need not depend on mere opinion.

I came to the conclusion that my best cow to begin with would be a composite, judiciously blent. The indigenous hardiness of the native would make a useful element in the mixture, but between the native and the pure shorthorn a gulf remained to be bridged. Add size and stomach to the native, without diminishing milk, and the missing link is in view, an animal fit to mate with the pure shorthorn in the necessities of the situation. At this stage a lucky thing happened. I found an in-calf heifer that embodied several generations towards my purpose, bred exactly as

I should have bred her. This seems to take the beginning back to about twenty years ago.

This heifer's dam was an Irish "common" cow, but a very good one, and the sire was a pure red poll. Why the black polls, any of them, should be crossed with the shorthorn in a country like Ireland, while the red can be found, is more than I can ever make out. The black can add neither beef nor hardiness unless at the expense of milk, but the red can. In size, conformity, colour, milk and other important matters the red is less extremely removed from the shorthorn type and you can count with fair certainty on the result. In crossing the Aberdeen, you can count on nothing but an increase in beef, a fall in milk and an undesirable number of violent reversionaries from the meeting of too far distant extremes. Is this good policy for a dairying people, poor in means and rich in children? There are places where the creameries, assisted by the Aberdeen Angus, have left the children crying for milk.

My heifer, in calf to a pure shorthorn, was a beauty, with a large sirloin, large quarters, great depth, a right bag and a big eye; a heavy animal, yet light of movement, with every limb so accurately set that you could see a clear space between them when she walked.

Her calf came, happily a heifer, but hornless, with only one hornless individual on the male side of the known pedigree, and none on the female side, except as his result. The calf set me thinking of Mendel, and other calves in the line

since then have set me thinking of him still more, but we will come to that. Having assured myself of that calf's progeny, male and female, and of their fertility, I sold her for twenty pounds, at a time when a cow of her kind was worth three to four pounds less than at present. That was "Polly I."

Her first calf, by a pure shorthorn, was all red, and a beauty, but again without horns. I sold him at a handsome price for breeding to Mr. Byrne, of Bakan, who had Togo, and his people have been wanting another of them ever since. They say that the produce of the "little red bull" was the best they ever had. They called him "little" because he had short legs, and was not built for racing before cur dogs like the cur bulls that are ruining the cattle of Connaught while the Department tries to improve them. Why can the Department not adopt a simple bylaw, that every bull kept in the whole country, with or without a premium, shall pass an inspection? Without costing a penny but for inspection, it might do more for the cattle than all the other schemes together, and that is much. The bulls could be bought subject to the inspection, and if some were prevented from keeping bulls, that alone would be an advantage. I know five of these cur bulls within a mile, all leggy things, bought at £8 to £10 each without any knowledge as to how they are bred. Judging from their calves, their breed must be even worse than their appearance. The people generally prefer them to the pure short-

horns, though it would pay them to subscribe their market price and have them put to death, given a guarantee that nothing like them should ever appear in the place again. Every one of them is an embodied fraud. The premium sires apart, everybody I know in Mayo buying a bull goes to Roscommon for him, and probably the Roscommon is the last type in Ireland that ought to be brought into Mayo. Besides, only the weeds go west from Roscommon.

Following the "little red bull," and just like him, came his half sister, but well horned, and now she is in the dairy herd book (Polly II., No. 739), with her tests about forty per cent. above the requirement in butter fat, and her milking record, produced in the main without hand feeding on pasture of which the purchase annuity is 3s. 7d. an acre. Is not this a cow worth multiplying? The gentleman of the Department who superintended the milking tests will remember the facts and conditions. The heather was still abundant, and by way of permanent proof, a plot of it has been carefully preserved, now the most precious plot on the whole farm, because my facts would look quite impossible without it. The official explanation of it, given in another chapter, is that I planted the heather on good soil for an economic illusion to impose on the Estates Commissioners and bring down the purchase annuity.

Polly II. is a red cow, near the ground, with the good points of her predecessors on both sides ;

a better milker than the shorthorn when the butter is reckoned, a better beefer, and very much easier to feed. She eats the big bunches and lies down to make milk of them, while the ordinary shorthorns are seeking the sweeter grass on the bare spaces between. Except in the three months of her heaviest milking, she looks always fit to go to the butcher. She wants no bag stuff to milk, even in winter, given good hay and plenty of roots, but I always try to keep some piece of pasture not eaten too bare when the winter sets in. In summer a succession of vetch plots is ready before the flies, when the cows are in all day and out at night, the opposite of the arrangements around me, where the flies hunt in the milkers and the dog hunts them out again all day. Between the dogs and the flies and the cur bulls, there are not many cows that could qualify for the dairy herd book.

Polly II. is a happy blend of these two fine types, with the exterior of the shorthorn and the constitution of the red poll, which seems to run in the female foundation, even after the fourth generation from pure shorthorn sires. There is a theory, and I think it is more than a theory, that the dam has the more to do with the constitution. I had that also in view when incorporating the red poll factor. In so far as my experience goes, the theory is a very plain fact, and I am dealing with an average of eighteen animals in the year—on a scrap of land in a congested district which was regarded as permanent waste in my grandfather's

time, and of which the annual valuation now is only six pounds.

Polly II.'s calves are the third generation from pure shorthorn sires and their female progeny, but the red poll constitution is still strong in them, and looks like fixing itself permanently. They are all horned, and in every other outward appearance they are a type of plump shorthorns, built for economy in nutrition. A young bull of them, "Patrician I.," is now at service with Mr. McCormac, of Westport. The youngsters always look well fed by the side of ordinary calves. They eat what the others leave, and they are not sick in their early days. At the same age, and on the same treatment, they are always my best calves, apart from additional values in special breeding, and any heifer of them will produce a calf before she is two years old if permitted.

"The Mermaid," a fine cow, calved by a handsome half sister of Polly II., is a generation more shorthorn, but she has no horns. Her calf, though two generations more shorthorn than Polly II., is hornless. He is the fourth generation from pure shorthorn sires and the female progeny of pure shorthorn sires. This brings him within a generation of being pure shorthorn, but he has no horns, short or long. He is a deep red, and looks shorthorn in everything but his polled head, his broader forehead, his bigger eye, his stronger constitution and his plumper appearance, on a pound and a half of meals in the day and his three and seven penny pasture. He was born when his dam

was two years old. She has grown much since then, and she has fed more than two calves in addition to her own, so that she counts as four, and is not yet three years old. Is there any three year old bullock worth as much money on land worth £5 an acre? This cow is now bought to breed by Mr. Webb, of Carlyle, and her calf has made a record as a bull, with Mr. Jordan, Raith, Aghamore.

Here are two branches of the one family, Polly II. and the Mermaid, bred exactly alike, one of them invariably horned at the third generation, or sooner, the other invariably hornless up to and including the fourth generation. Recognising the scientific importance of the contrast, I have taken care to verify every service. There are standing orders that no cow of mine shall ever go to any but a pure shorthorn bull, but, in addition to that, I have seen to it personally. The "Mermaid" leaves me a heifer calf, the first horned in this line.

Science apart, the industrial and economic question is—Have I solved the regional problem? If so, a nation is my debtor. Around me, and more or less in something like half of Ireland, the economic cow does not yet exist, and it is not likely to exist so long as individual incapacity is permitted to cancel the value of official policy and of its necessary expenditure. In these regions the shorthorn is too often like a skeleton after the winter, and the coarser animals that might stand the treatment are bad milkers, even on the best

treatment. Meantime, on these poor areas children have to be brought up, probably three or four times as many as on equal areas of Ireland's best land, where the economic process has silently removed more families than all the landlords together; where the bullock, on unbroken grass, has been able to produce more per acre than could be got from people as the occupants, and where this human disadvantage, as compared with the cow, can never be cancelled until we raise the human efficiency to assure the bovine subserviency. Meantime, I think I can safely claim that I have produced the cow that can profitably accommodate herself to the largest area and to the widest variety of conditions in Ireland. The Department's dairy herd idea is a similar intention, but I was at work on it years in advance, with the additional advantage of a very specific plan instead of depending for the female foundation alone on the wretchedly nondescript native stock, whose unapproachable extremes from the pure shorthorn, and the consequent liability to bad reversions are too often more likely to produce a violent vagary than a normal embodiment of permanently progressive factors. It seems to me in the nature of a national loss that my invented cow cannot be at once multiplied by a million.

What of Mendel? My respect for "Law" made me watch the progression with the greater interest, but it seems that Mendel must retire as my experiment advances. Mendel is interpreted to this effect: "Horns and no-horns will produce

half horns and half no-horns ; ” but here is a hornless calf, a young bull still at home, after all these pure horned generations on the male side, and after as many hornless dams on the other side, each dam the product of a horned sire, not to mention that the breeding was horned on both sides before the intervention of the red poll. So far, only one calf in this line has had horns. If Mendel be right, or half right, how could that one hornless sire of so long ago have imposed his unscientific prepotence through all these generations and against all these odds ? The thing may apply to sweet peas. It does not apply to cattle, at least not as interpreted. In my cattle, the exceptions are more than twice as numerous as the indications of the “ Law.”

It is but fair to add that whatever the value of the scheme, it would have been impracticable to me without the facilities afforded by the Department ; and its value is not confined to the results described above, for, along with these, on the same little farm, and as carefully worked out, there is another experiment, with native stock and pure shorthorn sires alone. The results here are described in a later part of this chapter. I have now started yet a third experiment, crossing the two best representatives of the respective families, just to see what results ; but I do not mean to merge the two families in one, because it seems to me of great interest to keep the different developments side by side for comparison. The comparative results have proved very instructive already, showing the need for an element neither native

nor shorthorn to come between the two for the production of the type required. Most of the land now unfit for the shorthorns could be made fit for them at a profit, as in my own case, but since we do not make the land fit the cow, let us make the cow fit the land. The ill condition of the land is a question of human efficiency, and it is not easy for people to do better who have not seen better ; but the cow responds at once to any intelligent attempt at her improvement. For the regions I have in view, it seems to me quite impossible to produce the required cow by pure shorthorn sires on a female foundation of native stock alone ; and even if we grant the possibility, it is still a long way round as compared with the other course. We want more substance in the native stock before they can reproduce from pure shorthorn sires a type to suit these regions.

The second experiment, starting much lower, from native blood alone, and with so much more room for improvement, shows a still greater rate of advance ; but it does not follow that the greatest rate of improvement implies the best result. The starting point and the nature of the material have to do with this. The two lines run side by side, on the same treatment, with the male parentage pure shorthorn in both alike, but with the female foundation in the one line solely native stock, in the other a mixture in equal parts of native stock and red poll ; and both lines are kept unrelated through the sires, so that I can cross them at

any time without risk of in-breeding. The comparative results are striking.

So far, there is not much to choose in milk. The native line have it in quantity, but the excess does not balance the richer quality in the red poll line, and these are substantially ahead in everything else that matters. Their milk is produced at less cost per unit, and, on the same fare, they are in better condition. They are very much more successful to fatten, and can be fattened at any age, even while they grow. They mature much earlier, sometimes nearly a year. They produce their calves in a shorter time from the last calving. They are always in a more presentable condition for sale, and can always be put into that condition at less cost. In short, they are very much better cows.

At the fair, the contrast is not less instructive than at home. I have not yet been able to shorten the native legs enough, and to most of the local buyers, an inch of leg is worth a foot of cow. Their fixed meaning for "big" is mere height from the ground, which would make the giraffe much "bigger" than the elephant. Their measure of money value follows, so that the inferiority means a gain in price, and not a loss, since the buyer is as much astray as the seller; but the loss in economic productiveness is plain, even in the market price of the progeny when they come finally to face the intelligent feeders and breeders who take them out of Connaught. While the buying and selling are local, the legs have it, but

the cows have it when the intelligent stranger comes along.

There are two fairs, within ten miles. Englishmen and other strangers come to one, never to the other. When I have cows to sell, I take them to meet the strangers, and get a bigger price ; when I have legs to sell, I take them to the other fair, and get also a bigger price, profiting by the judgment in the one case and by the want of it in the other. A group of my short legs, in the proper place will always beat the " bigger " animals with the long legs ; but the short-legged groups are too few and too seldom in the fair to affect local judgment, which goes on selecting for longer and longer legs from generation to generation, while the Department expends taxes to shorten the legs for the superiority accompanying the shortness. We pay taxes to improve the cattle, and we pay bull fees to destroy them, preferring the inferior sire for sixpence in half-a-crown, and losing at least a pound in the calf in order to gain the sixpence. The investment of that sixpence for forty times itself in one year, equal to 4,000 per cent., is the most reproductive investment that I know in any industrial application within these islands, and the Department enables us to secure it every time, while we deliberately choose to throw it away.

The difference in price is not confined to the ordinary conditions of the fair. Every male of the better line, without exception, makes a good bull, and sells for such, often privately, at prices well over those of the fair. Sometimes it happens with

the native line also, but less often and less successfully. They come out much more variously in size, colour, shape, constitution and general appearance, their qualities not being yet sufficiently fixed, owing to their more nondescript origin, while the red poll factor, on the other hand, enables me to know with practical certainty what I can expect at any time.

Why does the Connaughtman so consistently pay the higher price for the inferior animal? That he does so is certain, and the importance of the question is plain. In doing so he increases his cost of production by many times the length of his legs. A cow is a kind of machine, consuming to produce, and the best machine obviously is that which produces most at least cost. Yet the machine requiring the higher consumption for a given standard of production is preferred every day, and a higher price is paid for its inferiority. There is hardly anything more certain of cows than that length of leg, beyond a symmetrical proportion to physique, is a sign of small production for the cost in consumption, and I know no surer sign.

A clever jobber might make money by buying the best cows in Connaught to sell elsewhere, and the worst elsewhere to sell in Connaught. By "best" and "worst" in this real sense, I mean something of more importance than price. One of the worst cows I have seen for some time was sold for £23, a coarse brute that ought never to have lived; but she went to England, where they know better than to allow her to reproduce

herself. She was great in legs. I would back her for a steeplechase against all other cows, even in Connaught, but the racing quality is not the most economic in a cow.

When Togo, one of the best sires that ever came west of the Shannon, was on sale by the Department for premium purposes at the Athenry Station, he was refused by seventeen bull keepers in succession, the elect of Connaught farmers, and he might have been thrown on the Department's hands, for his better qualities, had it not been for the good sense of the official who advised Mr. Byrne that he was the best sire at the station for the year. His subsequent record in the shows and his purchase at a large price as a superannuated sire by a foreign government, make a complete criticism on the Connaught judgment.

"Betty," the chief representative of the second or native line, also in the dairy herd book (No. 740), is, though a daughter of Togo's, a rather angular creature, but a great cow, a great milker, and as sound as a dog. I have seen her jumping at play with the calves in her seventh year, and I have seen her, week after week, milking half a hundredweight every day, on nothing but her three and seven penny pasture. Feed her how I will, only milk increases, and I have never yet seen Betty to clothe her frame in flesh as I should like to see it. On the highest fare, she must be a thousand gallon cow, but I will not have the highest fare for any animal I intend to breed from. She is a light roan, of gentle

temper, with a big, innocent eye, at peace with all things. She will not quarrel even with Mammy-Long-Legs, who jumps a wire fence to trespass on my sweeter grass; but receives her with a well-bred curiosity, as if in doubt as to whether the visitor is really a cow or a specimen of some remotely kindred genus.

Betty's daughter is a big improvement on Mamma, a generation more shorthorn, and apparently several generations more to my purpose, especially in shape and flesh—twice as much like Togo as his own daughter. They are at least twenty pounders, and let us now see the sort of stock from which they started fourteen years ago.

The best of them was sold at her best as a springer for £8 10s. She was the last of a tribe my father had for forty years, good little cows of their kind, good milkers for their weight, sound and hardy, but always wasteful in their cost of production. Both in price and in production, one of mine is worth nearly three of them, and does not approach two of them in her cost of production. They were the native stock, with possibly a thin survival of shorthorn blood in them. The colour was red and white, the legs too long, the maturity a year too late, and the shape an excess of middle for the frame—as if the result of an evolutionary effort to enlarge the digestive department out of proportion for the accommodation of inferior food. In forty years my father could not advance on £8 10s. In about a fourth of the time I

advance on £20, even allowing for the increase in money values; and this is due mainly to the facilities afforded by the Department of Agriculture. The cow, as a cow, apart from monetary variations, is more than twice as valuable. It results solely from the pedigree sires, the better treatment and the improvement I have made in the land to accommodate the better breeding.

As it appears to me, the most valuable fact in the dual development is the marked superiority of the line which has the red poll blood in it, as compared with the direct blend of native stock and pure shorthorn, which is necessarily the basis of the Department's scheme. The opportunities in both lines have been exactly the same, but no judge could hesitate for a moment about preferring the red poll family on pure form, not to mention their still greater superiority from the economic point of view. How long, under the shorthorn sires, can the plumpness and the stronger constitution of the red poll persist? These qualities are apparently undiminished in the fourth generation, and it is fair to expect that they must persist in many more generations, if not permanently; but in addition to this there is the great advantage that, by starting from the red poll blend, as compared with the native stock alone, the time of generations is saved in the production of a first class cow.

I might have described these experiments years ago, but for the fact that my smaller scope required a longer time to justify generalisation. Instead of operating on fifty dams together, I had

to put years behind me in making my observations and ascertaining the results generation by generation ; but the experimental value of these generations is obviously more instructive than that of any number of animals in one or two generations. Little or nothing can be shown until the calf by the pedigree shorthorn is produced out of the cow bred from native stock and the pure red poll. I could not indulge dogmatism from an experiment confined to an average of fifteen to twenty animals and only two generations. We have more reliable data when we go back six generations, even with only a single cow at the start ; but what I rely on most of all is the accuracy with which the combined characteristics are reproduced every time in everything but horns. A neighbour had a calf by one of my bulls, and I did not know of it until I saw the animal among his herd, when I was able to pick it out at once. Only one in any number can be the best, and, for breeding purposes, twenty right animals on thirty-five acres, even of bad land, may readily produce better results than five hundred wrong animals on a thousand acres of the best land anywhere. Other things being equal, the chances are in favour of the five hundred, but other things are not equal when the five hundred are taken unknown, and every one of the twenty against them has an ascertained history. In view of the facilities afforded by the Department I see no reason why, with time and skill, a man may not become a first class cattle breeder on less than a ten pound

valuation ; and in any case the attempt is extremely instructive, costs nothing, and is quite certain to make some money by the improvement in the stock, even assuming that not one of them is ever sold at a special price for breeding. Everything I have done is well within the means of the average peasant, and the wonder to me is that a people naturally so clever should not make more of the opportunities provided for them free of charge by the Department of Agriculture. In addition to the improvement in their pockets, it would call brain activity into their business, and lift their labour to a mental plane, redeeming energy from slavishness and character from apathy.

A really educated community is utterly impossible unless they can find something to do for mind in the work by which they live.

CHAPTER VIII.

CALVES AND STATESMEN

IN November 1912, in London, called upon to defend civil war for constitutional policy, I found the task too much for me, and left for Mayo, giving up the company of statesmen for the company of calves; and after some observant reflection, what struck me most was the intellectual gain of the change. I began by spending half an hour among the calves every morning, and the innocent expression of their big, ingenuous eyes made me a better man for the rest of the day. Besides, they invariably responded in gratitude and in profit to every expenditure in material and attention, which seemed to raise them so high morally above my experience of statesmen. The man who starves a calf to steal the food ought to get penal servitude. He is almost as bad as a party politician.

There was another reason for returning to Mayo just then. I knew that I had been steadily robbed at home during my two years in London. I had left directions to feed a calf for every four quarts of milk per day in the milking season, and at that rate, I ought to have fifteen to twenty good calves for the year, instead of which I found four bad ones, starved, dirty and verminous. During those

years, three cows had been milked, but they were real cows, two of them in the dairy herd book, and the third as good as either. Those in charge could not be induced to see that it was possible to raise five good calves on the milk of one cow in the course of her normal milking period. Milking the cows themselves, they knew that the quantity per cow was at least twice as much as they had been accustomed to see, but they would never admit that calves could be fed in the same proportion. In their view, I was to breed and feed cows on a scale higher by a hundred per cent., while they reckoned the product in their old style, at half the rate of my improvement and expenditure. I might advance the scale of production as much as I could, but my scale of profit must remain still at the barbaric margin. I had already raised wages above the local scale, to assure labour a share in the plus value of progress, but I must count on no remuneration at all for the plus factor in skill and capital. Such is the human equation in the Irish industrial problem, and it is by no means confined to the farm. The milk must have been stolen, but by whom? I do not know? It might have been stolen from the man in charge by outsiders.

I removed the man in charge and replaced him by one considerably worse. Early in 1913, I saw five of my calves dead in eight days, and when I asked the man what he thought of it, he told me my plans were impossible, which might readily be proved, from his point of view, by our death-rate

My Little Farm

in calves. Then I saw to the milking and the feeding personally, after which the calves began to flourish immediately, so that I could not help wondering what must have happened to the food before I began to feed them. The new man joined the Army, and I am glad to hear that he is in the firing line. I should be sorry to say he was a thief, and he lost even more by the thieving than I did.

I got another new man, making the third in four months, but by this time I had ceased to trust anybody, and from the day of that decision my calf scheme prospered. Notwithstanding the loss of time and milk, I raised eleven in 1913, and some of these were sold for twelve guineas each at the age of twelve to thirteen months, having cost me, from birth, only 17s. each, apart from the products of the farm. But I was not satisfied. It was the result for only part of a season, and I made up my mind, at whatever cost in my interests outside agriculture, to continue the work personally through the whole of 1914, at the end of which I am writing this. No man in my employment can tell me now that what I have done is impossible. If I cannot get servants to do what I have done myself, it is because they are unfit for their work, which confirms the Department's declaration of their falling efficiency, in spite of all the State expenditure to advance them. The secret is chiefly in the primary education and the foreign forces trading in it, but nobody in the Department dares mention that.

This year, I have raised sixteen calves on the milk of three cows, not a larger quantity than that on which four calves were starved behind my back previously. During the whole year, I have attended personally to every detail. During most of the year, I have milked the cows, fed the calves, washed their buckets, prepared their mixtures, and made their bed with my own hands. I suppose I will be hundreds of pounds out of pocket in literary work left undone, a loss which the ample profit on the calves cannot compensate ; but have I not realised a practical demonstration of more value to the Irish nation than anything I could have done as a Member of Parliament or a professor in an impossible language ? The little farm is very largely the Irish nation, and the first of her problems is to find out how human energy can advance human life.

In the sixteen calves, I had only one death, a death too many, and an unnecessary one. While writing an article for London, I entrusted the " man " with part of the work, and found when I had finished that he had given the animal an effective poison for castor oil three times in four days. It was the only instance of my putting any essential part of the work out of my own hands in the whole year, and that was the result. The death occurred when the calf had been fed out of milk, so that my calculation of the milk per calf is not affected by it. Among the fifteen calves that remain, there is not a bad one, and one of them, by no means the most valuable, is sold for

£12 12s. at the age of seven months. Another, registered, is with Mr. Walsh of Dunmore. In addition to those calved for myself, I have to buy some, and the average price paid for these in 1914 is 31s. 6d., which is not more than half what I should have had to pay if I had arranged the milk flow for summer instead of getting my calves dropped in winter and early spring, when my neighbours are hurrying to sell their calves and running down their prices. They will not take the trouble of winter feeding. A few months later, you will find the same neighbours rushing to buy and running up the prices against one another. I buy no calves then. In one period of six weeks this year the price of calves was fully doubled, apart from the value of any improvement in the animals themselves. It is hardly possible at any time to pay over £3 for an ordinary suckling calf and feed him at a profit, but my neighbours are never in such a hurry to buy as when the price is highest, and never in such a hurry to sell as when it is lowest, which exactly suits me both ways, buying from them at the lowest price and selling to them at the highest. It is largely a matter of making proper provision in food and care for milk cows during winter, but a farmer cannot see to this and spend half his working time smoking and talking politics at his neighbour's house. By immemorial precedent, the agricultural process is in the main suspended for three months of the year, depending on the sunshine of next summer to make up for the neglect

against cold and scarcity this winter. While the industrial psychology remains so primitive, it is hard to improve it by State expenditure, and I believe that my own method is more educative, showing my neighbours how I can make money out of their incapacity. They know as well as I do that the profit of rearing calves may in any year be much increased, and may in some years be more than doubled, by making the start in winter ; but it conflicts with our charming custom of making holiday for a whole quarter of the agricultural year. I know of no other peasantry in the world who could do it and keep roofs over them, but then, no other peasantry in the world have their industrial inefficiency so generously endowed by Government expenditure from the pockets of hard working people who pay taxes out of other industries in other regions of the realm. The rest of the community is taxed for the luxury and privilege of the Connaught peasant who sleeps until nine, takes a walk until five, and then goes visiting until the next bed time. I cannot say exactly how far this style of spoon-fed agriculture extends in our island, but it is certain that more than half the peasant population spend the winter as I describe in every part of the West within my knowledge—and there is not much of the West that I do not know.

The contrast between my four starved calves in 1912 and my sixteen fine ones in 1914, on the same supply of milk, illustrates the human factor in our agricultural problem very well, but it is not yet

complete. Six of the sixteen have been suckled on the cows, several of them wholly, the others for a time, and any practical farmer can infer how far I might have increased the number by milking all and feeding from the bucket only. My own estimate is that I could raise seven good calves per cow—as against starving four on the same milk.

The remarkable efficiency of the expert whom I had in charge of the four, in 1912, has been the subject of an expensive slander action in the King's Bench, tried at the Four Courts on the 4th and 5th of November this year. The action was no affair of mine, except as an unwilling witness, and my expert left the court with his character as free from stain as when he entered it. I have to add to his credit that he is a man much above the average in natural intelligence, and that I never dismissed him on account of any charges against him. I was plundered, but I had no proof that it was by him.

In Ireland, I have never been able to work smoothly with a servant a great deal more clever than myself, and I dismissed him for his excess of ability, which I could never get to run on the simple lines of the work for which I employed him. You may depend on a Connaught man speaking the truth sometimes, provided he is not on oath, and the cross swearing at the Four Courts was a discovery on a grand scale of our native talent for perjury. On the other hand, I do not remember having seen at work in any country a finer judicial sense than that shown by Judge Molony, though a recent rescue from party

politics. It seems to infer good stuff still surviving in the Irish nature, and ready to assert itself whenever relieved from the organised insanities of self enslavement.

In industry, in politics and in morals alike, the Irish character is always a reflex of forces external to its true economy, and that is one reason why the Irishman is so much a better man anywhere out of Ireland. Abroad, the good in him is free to grow; at home he cannot be trusted for any sense of duty. It is striking to note how, after returning to Ireland, he steadily descends from the level at which he has lived and worked in other countries. These facts apply to Irish interests in general, but more to industry, and most to agriculture, which, more than any other occupation, helps to turn the minds of a thousand men into the instruments of one.

The agricultural incapacity around me advances my gain on calves in another way. At the fairs the calves left unsold are usually the best, and because they are unsold, their prices drop as the day advances. Early in the morning, you see the buyers rushing nervously and outbidding one another for the calf with the longest legs, which has usually the shallowest body and the weakest constitution, while the better calves, with the short legs and the deep bodies, are left waiting for me, at prices far below those of the inferior ones. I never buy now before mid-day, when they come begging me to take the best at less than the prices of the worst. The underlying fallacy, so expensive to my neighbours and so profitable to me, is in

mistaking mere altitude for size, weight and real value. You cannot get them to see this difference in the young calf, and yet they have invariably to admit it later, when they are trying to sell legs and I am selling bullocks. They buy daylight at the price of beef, and then wonder why my calves thrive better than theirs on less milk and at less cost.

After long experience, I am convinced that a shilling made in the straight way gives a Connaughtman less delight than a penny secured by Connaught methods, and yet the excessive cleverness assailing my simplicity often works out to my advantage in the end, even without the least effort on my part. One day last spring I went to a fair for calves. It was noon, and the best remained unsold. I said I wanted males as I went through, bidding for everyone that suited me. The heifers were about ten shillings a head dearer, and the difference could not disappear before the age of twelve months. Of course, I should prefer the females, at the same price. I met an excessively clever man, selling an unusually good calf—a female, but I did not know this. “Cum here, sor,” he said; “I have the noicest little bull calf in the fair.” At 25 per cent. less than it was worth as a male, and about 40 per cent. less than its value as a female, I bought the calf, and the excessively clever man was evidently pleased, but in a great hurry to get paid. I paid him quickly, and as quickly he vanished, no doubt to tell his friends of the “flat” he had caught and the clever thing he had done. Only next day, at home, I found out in full how he had imposed on

my simplicity at a loss of more than 20s. to himself and an excess gain of the same amount to me, in one little calf a few days old. I intend that calf for the breeding list, and who knows whether her farther history may not be worth writing some day? As to the excessively clever man, I can meet him everywhere every day under every name; and from my own dealings with him at least, I cannot but see that honesty would be worth more to him than all his cleverness in the long run. Yet the popular estimate in human and moral values continues to regard the honest man as a fool, and it will take some time to improve on a standard so firmly established.

I am often asked a question like this: "If the people in general were to adopt your methods, would not your peculiar advantages be largely cancelled?" Of course, they would, but in that case, I should expect compensating advantages to arise. For instance, should I not be able to spend less of my time and energy in the detective department of my work as a farmer? Besides, I see no immediately disturbing prospect of my methods being adopted on a dangerously large scale. The excessive cleverness of the people in general assures my peculiar advantages against any such hypothetical alarm. I am prepared to sacrifice much profit for the luxury of living among a community of straight men in my own country, but the creation of that community is not to be achieved by lying to them for their applause. Only the worthless care for the applause of the worthless.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NURSERY

SIXTEEN good calves, on three cows' milk, and now let me tell how it is done. To make a success of calves, we must always begin with the cows. As I have said, two are in the dairy herd book, the third as good as either, and none can get in on less than 600 gallons. All these are well over that, and one of them* has milk so rich that about one-third of water can be added without bringing the percentage of butter fat below the average. The total yield is approximately 2,600 gallons, which gives each of 21 calves (7 per cow), an average of 5 quarts a day for 100 days—quite ample for first class results, assuming efficient attention and proper feeding in addition to the milk. Of course, no calf gets 5 quarts uniformly from start to finish, but we will come to that. Here I have to show how the most can be made of the cows.

Get a cow calving late in winter or in early spring, and the period of natural decline in the milk will coincide exactly with the increasing warmth and its new grass. Going to pasture about the middle of May, she makes a new start in milk, with the whole summer before her, and

* Polly II, No. 739. Her last calf Patrician II, age one year on March 9, 1915, now for sale as a registered sire.

it is like having two milk seasons instead of one. About the middle of August the nutrition in the pasture begins to diminish, and then, to maintain the albumenoid ratio, I have vetches ready. As winter approaches, the yield of milk falls faster still, and then I have rape, grown where I cut the earliest plot of vetches, in May to June. This year, I have had a statute acre of vetches, in four succeeding plots, with catch crops following in the two earlier plots, and I consider that the total product of the acre is worth more to me than the best ten acres of my pasture. Yet they pay for the out-grazing of one wretched heifer, on wretched grass, what would raise first-class food for four good cows during the whole season from a single statute acre.

Now, reverse the plan, getting the calves dropped at mid-summer, and compare what happens. The period of natural decline in milk coincides with the check in the food value of the pasture during August, doubling the loss; and at the first snap of winter, the decline in milk is sharper still, some cows drying up altogether, at a stage in their milk season, which corresponds with the renewed yield in summer from the winter-calving cow. Add to this the popular incapacity for feeding, and it is easy to infer the ruinous difference between a cow calving in February and one calving in June or July. Yet nine out of ten prefer the mid-summer calf, when you find them rushing to buy calves and raising the prices to an unprofitable figure. While other

people's money is spent in vain by the Department teaching them how to develop skill and industry, these fairweather farmers prefer to depend on sunshine for half the year (and on moonshine for the rest) keeping productive power at the barbaric margin, which cannot but help to keep character at the same level. I have no complaint to urge on grounds of personal profit. The thing suits my pocket well, enabling me to buy calves at less than they are worth when I want them and to sell them at more than they are worth when I have them ready ; but I should prefer the joy of living among a community of capable men in the land of my fathers, and no man shall be more pleased than I the day my special gains are cancelled, if ever, by the advancing scale of work and character around me. Meantime, I shall go on making unduly large profits from the laziness and folly of my fellow countrymen, frankly telling them in the fullest detail how it is done. They can see already that my place pays more in wages every year than the value of the total production on the average place of the same area ; and they can see that I have more left than they have after the wages are paid. Should Ireland ever wake up to her normal destiny, these people must be called upon either to quit the soil or make proper use of it in the interests of the nation. What right has a man to live idly on the margin by which he has confiscated the former landlord, and to starve the labourer for the accommodation of his own idleness ? The farmer has no more right to the

land than any other man, unless in so far as he makes it more productive.

I start the new-born calf on two pints a day, in three feeds, and he is fed three times a day until he chews the cud, at 10 to 20 days; but by this time the milk has been gradually raised to four quarts, and now the first solids are added—never before the cudding, because that, and not sooner, is the stage at which the young constitution is sufficiently developed to assimilate solids. I have seen an obstinate manufacturer persistently advertising his solids for use from birth, and I have followed up his result, among a trail of dead calves. There may be a food other than milk for the age before cudding, but if so, I do not know it, and should I hear of it, I shall take care to see it tried on some other man's calves first. Let us bear in mind that, before the cudding stage, a calf is but potentially a ruminant, not actually; that a ruminant, when said to be eating solids, is not really eating at all, but gathering up its food into a sort of stomatic ante-chamber, to be really eaten when it lies down later to cud; and that stuff requiring to be ruminated cannot but do harm when fed to the potential ruminant before it can ruminate, while the ante-chamber is not yet normally prepared for it.

If we reflect that the process of nutrition in a calf before birth is practically continuous, and supplied at the natural temperature of its own body, it may help us to see the importance of feeding often, in small quantities, and as nearly

as possible at the same temperature, for some time after birth, until the young creature has grown to store larger quantities against longer periods, and to develop the required heat from them on his own account. It follows that the same necessity must be observed in housing and bedding. I have a large vessel to hold all the milk, with a little fire under it to keep blood heat; a measure stick figured by the inch to tell the total yield at every milking, and a lactometer to drop in for the detection of fraud by watering. I once had people who gathered as many as they could of their relatives and friends into the cow-house at milking time, and the calves looked starved, but they began to thrive again at once when I scattered the camp.

Calves will not cud at the same age, but from the time they are old enough to do so, something suitable, such as old meadow hay of good quality, ought to be kept within their reach. They may be trusted to find what suits them among it, and unless they can find that, they will probably attack something very unsuitable, maybe, their bed or worse. Fed three times a day up to cud-ding, with the right quantities and conditions of milk only, I have never known a calf to develop that diseased taste for rubbish which kills so many; but it is as certain that, if starved, or if fed only twice a day in quantities too large and at temperatures far below their own, they will often show a deranged state of stomach, either taking months to recover from it or ending in death. Knowing the results, but ignoring the causes,

many people muzzle them with an old stocking or a perforated saucepan, which deprives them of what they need as well as what would hurt them. Bring the young constitution in a normal state to the cudding stage, which can be done as I direct, and there is no need whatever for such laborious tinkering with muzzles, not to mention the advantage of having a healthy calf instead of one more or less injured either by disease or by the cure. The quantities of milk above mentioned are averages, and some calves ought to get more than others at the same age. We have now covered the first fifteen to twenty days in the calf's life—up to cudding.

Take a like period, or a little longer, after cudding. By far the greatest consumption of milk ought to be now, when the capacity to assimilate solids is rapidly advancing, but not yet sufficiently advanced to diminish the milk, which makes the best possible foundation for its substitutes in the future. Stinting now might mean a waste of milk, requiring an otherwise unnecessary consumption of it later on, and producing a worse calf in the end. During this critical period, I give six quarts, but never more, and any additional food is in supplemental solids; but the need to differentiate is greater than ever, because not two of a dozen calves at the same age may have the same stomach for solids, and while some reject what they do not require of them, others will swallow an excess. Irregularity in the milk is less dangerous. As in dealing with the milk, the total

ration of solids is averaged, but the individual rations are varied, according to the size, weight, appetite, progress and appearance of the calf. This may seem too minutely tedious for practice, but it is all the result of practice, and I have found it far more interesting than party politics, though my interest in real politics grows keener than ever in the company of the calves; so much so that I cannot help dropping a hint here and there among the milk, as if in the hope that some fortunate agrarian may find it at the bottom of a bucket, since all more suitable media are systematically denied to him in Ireland. We all fancy that we are shrewd politicians, and yet we remain as blind among politics as among our calves. It is but natural, since organised atrophy at the source must produce its effect and find its expression in every aspect of life. You cannot deprive people of the free use of their brains and expect them to progress in industry.

During this second period, of two to three weeks, the calf must be watched to ascertain how soon his milk can be diminished; that is, in proportion as he can assimilate the necessary substitutes. Stop any portion of the milk he requires before that, and he is permanently injured; continue the full supply much after that, and milk is unnecessarily wasted. If you watch, the calf himself will show you these things, by the signs mentioned in the last paragraph. At this stage especially, every individual calf ought to have a distinctive place in the mind of the man in charge,

and the calf's behaviour at every meal ought to be remembered against the next. Of twelve calves born on the same day, not two may be fit for solids on the same date, not two will require exactly the same quantity at any date, and not two will exactly coincide in their fitness to begin diminishing the milk supply. I have found, however, that the calf chewing the cud at the earliest age is generally the earliest at the subsequent stages, and the best in the end ; not necessarily the biggest or the heaviest, but generally the most successful in his return for the expenditure on him, which is the final test of all animal farming.

There is a third period. Some time in the sixth week the average calf can maintain his progress on less milk and more solids, but the change may be made as successfully with one in the fifth week as with another in the seventh, due to the hereditary factor. In either case, and in every case, the change must start gradually. I diminish the milk per calf twice a week, by a pint each time, for the next four weeks, so that in the tenth week he has only two quarts a day, which continues for the next three weeks without farther fall. During the fourteenth week the two quarts are gradually diminished to nothing, and we get out of the nursery ; but by this time we have a younger family making their way up from the other end through the various stages, on the milk set free in increasing quantities from those on the way to weaning. This second lot usually take more time and attention, because started from

time to time as the milk is ready for them, and thereby varying so much more in their ages. More than once I have with advantage put back some of the first lot to finish out over again among the second, and I have sometimes been able to promote the strongest of the younger to the company and treatment of their elders; such is the variation in the thriving power of calves which must be watched and studied to make the most of them. Looking back, I see one omission: the new born calf, starting on two pints the first day, ought to have three pints the second day, gradually increased farther to three quarts on the seventh day, and again to four quarts at cudding, which is quite enough until the ruminant stage is well established. Questions of health will be discussed in the next chapter, but there will not be much need of it for the man who attends to this, and an ounce of active brain is better than a ton of physic.

So much for milk, and now we had better turn back briefly on the solids:

$\frac{1}{4}$	lb.	per calf	per day	at cudding.
$\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	"	a week later.
$\frac{3}{4}$	"	"	"	" "
1	"	"	"	" "

That is simple, an increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ per week from cudding for the next four weeks, when the calf ought to be out of his sixth week. Of course, the increases ought to be made gradually from any

stage to the next. The above quantities are well mixed with the milk at feeding. There is no need for any increase over 1 lb. a day until weaning, but here comes another matter of great importance. From the fourth week, I keep a meal mixture, *dry*, in the trough; at first, the same stuff as in the milk, gradually changed to a cheaper one about the eighth week. Begin with only a little dusting that they may learn to lick. Then let them have as much as they can clean up. Some preferring their solids quite dry, and having got enough of them from the trough, will begin to refuse them in the milk, and suck it from among them. So much the better. They are the best feeders that prefer their solids dry; but take care not to mistake their good sense for bad digestion and inflict them with medicine which they do not need. Their behaviour and appearance ought to settle that, not to mention the necessary observation of their attention to the trough. I give them, through the milk, less than they would have, rather than more, because I want them to go to the trough and to know their business at it long before they are weaned. I have never given a calf what they call a "mash," at any age, and I never will, though it is the general rule, an extremely bad rule, because generally overloading the unfortunate calf with water beyond his needs and depriving him of his solids on any other terms. Give the calf his solids dry, and never a liquid but his milk. He knows better than you what quantity of water to add. The only calf of mine

that I ever heard of going wrong after leaving me was killed by abundant "mashing," the more injurious after my dry bill of fare; and when I examined into the particulars, I found that every day for five months, they had forced him to swallow at least three times the quantity of water he required.

As I do the work, it is obviously lessened to a very large extent. In addition to the saving in calf-health, food-stuff and money, I can feed a dozen calves in the time the neighbours take to feed three, and this part of my preaching at least ought to be popular, in a country where effort is so objectionable. If they do not increase the result by the same effort, as I do, they can take the more probable course of maintaining the result and lessening the effort. If I cannot make their work more productive, I can at least make their laziness easier. In any alternative, they stand indebted to my economy in working power, and they have the farther choice to acknowledge the benefit either in gratitude or outrage, according to direction. Could an indispensable teacher be more accommodating at his own expense?

In my scheme, there is yet another factor. The calf does not live by milk and meals alone. No matter what the treatment in milk and meals, no calf of mine ever depends for the rest on pasture only, however ample. At every stage in the nursery, and at every time of the year, I provide something more; from May to September, vetches; from September to January, rape and

cabbage ; from January to May, mangolds ; all given as fully as eaten, and from the moment the young thing feels inclined to eat them. These stuffs, grown at home, come at the lowest cost, and they can often take the place of bag stuff quite successfully, saving much expense. For instance, during summer, the high albumenoid proportion in the vetches makes cake of all kinds quite unnecessary, and an addition of India meal alone completes a well balanced food, at least for the older calves. It seems, too, that through the green vetch, the albumenoids must be conveyed in an ideal form. At least, the calves inform me to that effect every year. In so far as I can see, any animal of the cow kind can be made as fat as possible on green vetches and India meal properly proportioned ; and seeing that I can produce a statute acre of good vetches for £3 10s., I submit it to my masters whether any more economic method of meat production has yet been found in our little islands. Calves, not beef, are my main work, and it is not good to have your eggs in too many baskets ; but I believe that my £3 10s. in vetches, plus about an equal cost in India meal and a little linseed cake in the last month, will finish the fattening of the two biggest bullocks in Ireland, assuming fair condition at the start ; and this is a result which ought to give a profit of 50 per cent. on the cost of production. Yet our land lies comparatively idle, our ample capital is exported at 5 per cent. or less, our labour emigrates, the war rages, and the price of beef goes

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up. Have such a useless race of men been ever before permitted to occupy such a fertile area of the earth for such a length of time? Our peasant proprietor, now pampered to atrophy, must some day try to answer this and nastier questions of the kind, and he will never find the answer until he enters on private property in himself, instead of remaining a mental and moral instrument under alien direction.

When the great war broke out in the autumn of 1914 and the cost of foods suddenly ran so high, I stopped all bag stuff for every animal in the place but a few of the younger calves. The following weeks were an anxious time. At the prices of food and of calves, the calves could not possibly pay for the food. On the other hand, without bag stuff, they might decline, perhaps die, and the loss would be greater still. I had plenty of vetches, with some cabbage, and the calves went on growing. I never had them better grown, stronger or looking more healthy, and the only difference I could see was a little less meat on them, which was promptly recovered later in the season, when the food prices fell. The provincial vetch and the Imperial Navy had enabled me to do it, and I doubled my production of vetches for the following year. I have never seen finer crops of vetches than I can grow, on land at a purchase annuity of 3s. 7d. an acre, and the soil is left nearly half manured by the aerial nitrogen fixed through the leguminous roots for a following crop of rape or mangolds. Who would spend his life quarrelling about the

3s. 7d. to lose £20? Only the Irishman, and he has done it systematically for several generations, as an approved policy imposed in the name of economic wisdom.

Our Department of Agriculture has done more than take one man's money to teach another how to farm at a loss. There is a little world of commerce in calf meals, and I have never been able to get one as good as that recommended by the Department:

1 part ground flax seed,
2 parts oatmeal, and
2 parts India meal;

all ground fine and boiled together, in a minimum of water, twelve hours before feeding. When the calf is five weeks old, it is quite enough to pour *boiling* water on the meal, stir it to water every particle, renew the boiling for a few minutes, and leave it to simmer by the fireside as long as convenient. Knowing my countrymen, I can never lose an opportunity of showing them how to shorten work and lengthen leisure. One little boy, under my direction, can, and does, produce more from a given area of land than a whole big family of them, working harder than he does.

During March and April, 1915, our local prices for some farm produce ran high above the prices in Dublin, Liverpool and Birmingham. I sold mangolds for £1 10s. per ton, and hay for £5 10s., which is fully twice the feeding value in both cases. One twenty-fourth part of my

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mangolds paid for the manuring of the whole plot. From less than a statute rood of hay and mangolds, I sold twice enough to pay the purchase annuity on the whole 32 acres for one year. Yet the political cult of incompetence keeps these people occupied with the purchase annuity of the rood, which is under eleven pence, and ignoring the possible production, which is more than £11. If I sold the whole of my mangold crop in the spring of 1915, it would make more than £60 per statute acre. My cattle are much more profitable than any others in the region, but they have by no means paid the local market prices for the roots and hay consumed during the winter of 1914-15, and this time I mean to vary the programme, wintering no beast but my own breed, and selling the stuff when the prices rise to double the feeding value, which is likely to be the fact in spring, so long as the prices of imports remain so high. I notice that the cost of artificial manures has not risen to anything like the increase in the market price of their produce, and I am always ready to sell when my neighbours are anxious to pay me twice the real value of the commodity. I know how to maintain the fertility of the soil at a fraction of the profit.

CHAPTER X.

PREVENTIVE PATHOLOGY

ABOUT ten years ago I began a big building, with sections, subsections and interior walls, and the people wondered, for the like had not been seen among them ; and the secret spread, that I was building a convent, to be worked in a way of my own, under modern administration. That was the theory of a local expert who, having seen something of ascetic architecture, could not otherwise account for the numerous " cells " in my ground plan.

At that time, I had not yet outgrown the Irish longing for popularity, and I was rather pleased with the flattering interpretation of my project. So lately returned to my own country, after such long and varied experience in a wicked world, I was still a comparatively simple and innocent man, by no means aware of the fact that only unpopular men could be of much use to Ireland.

The fame of my foundation spread so far that I had some tentative applications on behalf of possible postulants—but I noticed that each applicant seemed to imply that I could not entertain more than one, a restriction ill according with the final necessities of such a scheme. With only one postulant and Father Superior, I could not hope to make much of a convent.

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In the circumstances, at the time, the popular estimate of my spiritual perspective was reasonable enough, the people knowing my instinctive reverence for religion. The older among them could remember how I had been brought up as a pagan, and the more intelligent could explain to the others how my early escape from Irish education must have preserved the mind quite free to value the Christian virtues. They could see no unfitness of things in a holy place put up by me, and I could see nothing abnormal in their view of the intention. Since my time, the moral freedom afforded by Paganism has been diminished, making Christianity practically impossible.

The building rose and the roof went on, but the postulants proved to be neither numerous enough nor rich enough to start me respectably in that line, and my convent became an admirable Cow-house, the cells for Stalls, the calefactorium for Nursery, the oratory as a centre of distribution for Provender, and every detail fitting as if specially designed for Cows and Calves.

This building has meant much to me, and it has been "lucky" (as one should expect), but I reinforce the luck with three or four whitewashings every year; for though I am the last man to deny anything rationally supernatural, I believe also in newly burnt lime, which has an effect on microbes, and is much cheaper in our district than prayers. After ten years' practice, I can hardly see how I could improve on the system of government for my community of calves.

The Nursery is in two divisions, known as the House of Commons and the House of Lords. At the right stage in their career the occupants are translated from the Lower House to the Upper. To complete the constitution, with the Lords and Commons, I am King, but with prerogatives somewhat improved. For instance, not one member in either House can take his place without passing my examination of his fitness, with the result that, in all its estates, my realm is always free from the most dangerous kinds of nuisance. It is but fair to confess that I learned to see the room for some of these improvements through my work in connection with two other Chambers under the same names, where there is practically no safeguard against the dominion of the unfittest.

The House of Commons has a shallow trough along one wall, high enough from the ground to prevent the members dropping anything of their own into it, and low enough for them to eat their dry meals, roots and cabbage out of it. Above the trough is a rack for fodder. It is the same in the House of Lords, but on a larger scale, and with the trough removable, up or down, according to the size of the members. The upper part of the rack is sheeted off with thin boards to prevent anything getting into their eyes; and to make sure against draughts, every opening for ventilation in every wall is above the back of the biggest member.

I have no doubt that the plan of bedding does much for the success. It is the same in both

Houses, but renewed more often in the Lower. The bed is 18 inches to 2 feet deep, of "turf," that is, dried peat, in pieces about the size of bricks; over these, a thinner layer of the same stuff, broken fine. The "white" turf is best, and it is nearest the top of the bog. The liquids go down, as into a dry sponge, and a bed like this will absorb them all from a dozen of the Lords for six months. The solids, remaining on the surface, are removed daily. There is no waste, and never a smell. Towards the end, the bed is dug over, bringing the driest again to the top. The House is emptied twice a year (once during the long vacation). The stuff seems good to grow anything. The saving in labour is great, and the House is always clean. Everybody admires the arrangement, but nobody adopts it. The peat is abundant, and costs next to nothing, but it has to be dried and housed at that time of the year when it is most pleasant to lie down and bask in the sun. How did this Oriental indifference to needs and seasons reach Ireland, in the blood of the race or in the making of the mind? Some say it is the climate, but the whole Empire has no more strenuously efficient life than we find in one part of our island.

From May to September, every member of either House over a fortnight old is out all night and in, on vetches, during the heat of the day, away from the flies, so that we escape warbles in the first year, when the young skin is most attractive to them. From September to May, all are out in the day and in at night. The only excep-

tion is unusually severe weather or a case of indisposition. Serious illness we never have—unless when I make the mistake of assuming a conscience in a man and trusting him to earn his wages honestly.

I do not believe that uniformly rich pasture is the best pasture for calves. They often prefer a bite of something which seems better adapted to the discipline of the stomach, as if for the reason that we take cheese to finish a good dinner. Their normal taste in differential botany cannot be without significance in the physiological scheme, and I am prepared to learn even from sucklings. One thing suggested to me by their sagacity of palate is that the growing stomach, unlike the matured one, has a dual function; first, to digest food and to assimilate nutrition; second, to develop the sound strength of the stomach itself, which may be the sounder and the stronger for acting on a percentage of herbal substances poorer in food and harder to digest. There are times in the twenty-four hours when calves, in the pink of health, will prefer a bunch of heather to the best clovers and grasses in the country. One must guard against generalising from the individual vagaries of a diseased appetite, but one cannot ignore the uniform evidence of a hundred healthy stomachs. Should the expert deny my inference, I can quote to him the selective talent of the calf, informed by an intimacy of experience to which neither the expert nor I can pretend. The feeding needs of the young calf must be very different from those of the fattening adult.

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In any case, I think enough of my inference to prefer for paddock the five acres plot of which four acres were cut away bog, almost wholly covered in bent and heather a few years ago. There are still outer corners and faces of fences where my leguminous transformation has not reached ; and there, at certain times in the day, the calves will go to feed, apparently with increased relish. For the present at least, I must continue to believe that in this behaviour they are but acting in obedience to some necessity of their nature, and the necessities of their nature have taught me more about them than I have been able to learn from expert knowledge. Besides, short of the laboratory, what means of closer study can the expert have than this intimate opportunity of my own ?

In earliest spring, when the calves are young and small, the grass grows ahead of them, but while the area is fixed, the collective appetite is steadily enlarged, so that the paddock is eaten bare in the back end, as I want it to be, because "hoose" comes out of long grass in the autumn dews. To make doubly sure, I house the calves at night from the second week in September. Since I arranged things in this way, I have not had one case of "hoose." Before that, I had some experience of it, with several of the stock heifers plagued all through the winter by that wearing cough in the throat. It left them six months late in maturing, which meant six months' food lost, and I mean to have no more of that. The dry feeding is a farther

antidote to this pest, but no young animal of mine is ever at any age without a large proportion of its food dry. Excess of liquids is ruin to calves.

A permanent stream runs by the end of the paddock, outside the fence ; and inside it, I have sunk a well, deeper than the bed of the stream and guarded against dirt. A gullet runs across under the fence, so that as the animals drink, the water runs in from the stream to them. In any weather, they know exactly where to go when thirsty, and they have given up their attacks on the fence to get at the clean water outside it. The whole thing was done by one man in half a day, at a cost of 1s. 6d., and yet it had remained undone through all the generations before I came. Irish farming is so full of such big effects producible by small means that one cannot but marvel at the strong men who look on in their idleness during three or four months every year. I know family homes where the dung pit is kept from generation to generation on the sunny side of the house, within a few feet of the door, while a suitable place at a proper distance on the other side could be prepared at the cost of a single day's work by the family.

For purposes of health, the two most critical stages in the early life of a calf are, first, during the three days after birth, when the alimentary process is put in motion in its new condition, subject to the necessity for voiding waste products ; and second, the week after cudding, when, for the first time, the constitution adapts itself to solid food. At the first of these stages, I have never

had a moment's trouble with any calf suckled, for which reason I think it is well worth while to suckle all calves until the fourth day, even at the risk of some disturbance to the dam on separation. These four days make a big difference in favour of the calf for weeks to come, and possibly for his whole life. If you cannot let him suck, keep him as near as you can to the conditions, by feeding him often, in small quantities, and at the normal temperature of his own body. Given that, he will seldom need medical assistance, and then only a mild aperient, such as castor oil—one to two teaspoonfulls in the warm milk according to the case and the age of the calf. The neglect of these simple precautions may lead to the milk "curding" in the stomach, which is always injurious and often deadly. Against this, nothing better has been found than a pinch of common bread soda in each meal, about as much as can fit on a sixpenny piece; but after a bad case of "curding," I question whether it is not more profitable to see the patient dead than alive. From careful experience, I can say with general certainty that I have least to expect in profit from the calf that costs me most in expenditure. Indeed, the difference in favour of the one that costs me least is very large, and those from which I have most to expect in the present season have cost me practically nothing beyond home products.

Attention through the first stage will save time and money at the second and afterwards, but otherwise, the trouble increases its complexity,

because all the ills of the first stage may be continued through the second, with new ones arising in the enlargement of function. *The start* in feeding solids with the milk in a bucket is quite a delicate business. At meal time, a healthy calf is hungry ; yet offer him the solids alone, and he will not touch them, which shows that, in taking them with the milk, he does so, not because he desires them or feels fit for them, but because he cannot have his milk without them. I need hardly insist on the foolish cruelty of thus cheating him into indigestion against his own sound taste by an excess of solids, but that is exactly what many people do. This morning, the stuff for twelve calves is in a pot, prepared from last night, to be shared out at the rate of $\frac{1}{12}$ to the average calf. Give twice as much to a small one as to a big one, and you are only making more trouble for yourself—in the Infirmary. When I do the work myself, I never have a single case of serious ailment at any of these stages. For two or three days after starting the solids, watch the calf closely, and he will let you know whether you are giving him too much. Far better too little at this stage, with the dry mixture in the trough to supplement it. My average is $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. per day now, but some get less and some get more, according to size and constitution. Many people like to see their porridge a bulky mess, which means an excess of water and an injury to the calf. The best possible measure of water is the minimum required uniformly to boil or scald

the meals, and I should make it even less if I could.

I mix the dry meals for a month at once, and to every pound I put half a teaspoonful of fine salt, well blended.

Ill health consequent with the introduction of solids is nearly always from the stomach, and initial symptoms become evident through the eye, which, in health, is clear, lively, wide open, and with the white of it well in view; but when the aspect droops, the look growing dull and the eyelids narrowing over the white, then—look out. Neglect it now for a day, and the diminished blood supply, due to digestive derangement and its deficient nutrition, begins to recede from the peripheries, the mouth and feet growing colder as the circulation declines. A little more neglect, and you may as well dig a new grave in the orchard, though the sufferer might easily have been saved without injury two days ago, at the cost of ten minutes and a penny. For the ten minutes and the penny, a little thoughtful observation might give you £4, which is not a bad return on the investment.

I had been trying to think out a digestive tonic for cases of the kind, something on the principle which induces men and women gladly to give £10 for half a crown's worth in Harley Street. The mixture, I thought, ought to include an alkali against acidity; a dual stimulant, cardiac and stomatic; and an ingredient aimed at the nervous system to rouse it into prompt co-operation with

the rest. Preceded by an aperient, such a dose as this might be good, in the conditions described.

One day at the Swinford fair, I mentioned my idea to Mr. Hamilton, the chemist, and he took to it at once. A fortnight later, I had my tonic—and I have never since been without it. The prescription is as follows:—

℞ Pulvis Rad Gent . . .	℥iii
Sodii Bicarbonas . . .	℥iii
Nucis Vomicae . . .	℥ip
Pulvis Rad Zingiberis . . .	℥ip
Ammonii Carbonas . . .	℥ip
Fiat Pulv.	℥
Tales vi	

One to be given night and morning on gruel.

I bought a group of calves the same day, among them an invalid, but “on the virth (virtue) of his solemn oath,” the seller assured me that it was merely “short of grub.” “Is id sell a sick calf to *me* he’d do?” “Never!” and I believed him! There is a sort of pleasure in trying to believe a liar, because it scores one for human nature should he happen to tell the truth. The invalid came home, about three weeks old, and next morning in the paddock I told the man to take 5s. for him if he could get it. The hair stood straight over the spine. The skeleton was clearly traceable everywhere. The lower joints of the four legs were badly crippled forward, and the calf could not stand up many minutes

at a time. His belly was big enough for twice the age, and there was an internal rattle when he moved. There was acute indigestion, as long standing as it could be, and complicated by an advanced stage of gravel, with a taste for rubbish and a distaste for proper food. In the house, he resumed the hunt for rubbish. Having secured a mouthful, he laid down, and would not rise for any other purpose. On the hunt, he would not leave a nook or corner without nosing into it, and for his inquisitive talent, we named him Dominick.

I decided to experiment on Dominick with the Hamilton mixture, but first gave him a big dose of castor oil, followed by strong whiskey, which set him blind drunk. He stretched his legs, stuck out his tongue, rolled his eyes, breathed more fully, and began to sweat. In due course, he discharged a small cargo of foreign produce, and without allowing time for reaction, I started him on the tonic, at the same time dieting him as from birth, on milk only, a pint three times a day, increasing daily, and, after a few days, resuming the solids, also at the baby rate. For two days after his drunkenness, Dominick was unable to put a leg under him, but, for all that, I could see by his eye that I had "got" him. On his feet again, he touched rubbish no more, but throve rapidly. It was as if I had found in him a new stomach to replace or supplement the old one—and I question whether the discovery is not more a fact than a figure, for a large region at least of Dominick's interior must have been out of action when he

came to me. He made a great bullock, and the seller was disappointed, because he had not expected Dominick to live three days after selling him. The fact that I could not get 5s. for him showed what was thought of him. He had his tonic at least once a day for a month, except when I dropped it experimentally for a day at the end of the first week and saw a distinct set-back as the result. I suppose the value of the time I spent on Dominick would buy six like him, but then, there are many poor men in Ireland who would like to know how the life of a sick calf can be saved.

I never have a case of white scour, because no calf is dropped for me without having its navel cord bathed in an antiseptic solution and tied up with a string steeped in the same stuff.

Since the intention of this book is to raise healthy calves on sound treatment rather than sickly ones on physic, I shall proceed no farther in pathology; but in our Western conditions, one must be to some extent a quack, since we cannot profitably pay the veterinary surgeon for a single visit more than the market price of the patient, in health, which has happened to me more than once, even with the vet. receiving a handsome salary from the public funds, and holding his appointment on the condition that he must attend for a few shillings. He makes quackery inevitable, damaging the public interest from the start, and ultimately his own profession. The very last bill I paid a veterinary surgeon shows that, with us, the medical treatment of your cow costs more

than twice as much as the medical treatment of your wife.

I will never again venture on a calf that has not had several meals of its mother's "beastings." I have succeeded in rearing such calves, but never without trouble, and always for a poorer result in the end. Without the mother's milk for a day or two, the calf seems to remain at a big disadvantage for the whole of his life, as if the constitution were hurt in some way beyond complete recovery.

Whatever the number of calves, I use only two buckets, which makes it a small business to give them a dash of boiling water before hanging them up; and I can feed any two calves together in a pen of a dozen without interference from the other ten, simply by slapping the intruders on the ears. They hate it, and it cannot injure them. After an attempt or two, they will stand looking on and waiting for their turn; and in a few days, they will come up like trained soldiers, two by two, and the same two together every time. While two are fed, the others will pair off in twos, each seeking out and standing side by side with his chum at the last meal, and often this companionship is kept up until the animals are a year old.

While writing these chapters, I take a rest and a walk among the calves in the paddock, when they come galloping up to me, and then there is a scramble to get nearest. While one is gently butting at me from behind, another has thrust his head between my legs, and two others are pulling at the corners of my jacket. Those that cannot

get into the circle set out in pairs for a sham fight, which is continued in the finest instinct for acting, clearly for my entertainment ; and when the fight is over, they all start a wild gallop in a wider circle, of which I am the centre, ending up again in a cluster around me. I have but to stand at the gate and call them at any hour of the day or night, and in less than ten minutes they are all in their respective houses—but I have never brought them in without giving them something on arrival.

I have never known a beast of any kind, however vicious, that could not be made more friendly by one simple trick—scratch him where he cannot scratch himself.

Perhaps the most interesting fact I have been able to verify from all this practice with calves is that in feeding from the bucket, as compared with suckling, a full third of the milk is lost. In other words, two gallons sucked, have more feeding value than three gallons from the bucket. In order to make sure about this I have suckled as many as four calves on the same cow at the same time, and though the attempt was for information rather than for profit, I found it as profitable as it was instructive. The suckling took less time than the milking and the feeding, and the calves were better, on a total of a gallon per day less than the bucket minimum. The difference does not end there, for the suckled calves took the whole of their solid food dry from the trough, saving the time to prepare and feed it. In short, we can raise three calves at the cost of two, and have

them better calves; and though the cow has something to say to it, I have not known her to fail once so long as her own calf was one of the number. When, at the end of three months, she has finished with four, she will accept a fresh lot of three, provided her own is continued with these for a few days before finally dropping out. Whether these things can be done in the field I do not know. I have done them in the house, with the cow tied up, and I think this is much better for the cow than to have them out with her all day or all night. In the wild state a cow feeds her own calf quite well, and I question whether she has a fifth of the milk yielded by one of mine. Considered from this standpoint of Nature, the achievement ceases to be strange, and there is money in it.

PART III.

VISIBLE PROOFS

CHAPTER XI.

MY VISITORS

OF all my distinguished visitors, the one who interested me most, and whom I appear to have delighted least, was Mr. T. W. Russell; the only one who took pains to arrive in my absence, coming the way, inquiring and going past on previous occasions, when he knew he could find me on the place. In fairness to him, I think his fear to meet me was not merely personal. We had met before, not unpleasantly, on neutral ground, and I could remember him as a man who, with his back to the fire in a club and a look of Knoxian self satisfaction in his face, could talk down any number of the most eloquent men on any subject, with the sole exception of Professor Oldham. A distinction like that makes one remember a man.

It was soon after Mr. Russell had secured his post as head and front of our offending agriculture, at a time when, entirely to his credit, he had set out to get some knowledge of farming, unlike the unconscionable class of men who are prepared to take State pay without taking any trouble to

qualify themselves for their appointments after they get them. Elementary classes in agriculture were conducted by the Department at the expense of the State, but Mr. Russell was in a position to know that he could learn more, at less expense, by coming to me, where all the books were fields and all the lessons work, in a school dependent on its proficiency for its profit and on its profit for its proficiency. Anybody could teach any industry at a loss, assuming the paymaster sufficiently rich and the pupils sufficiently stupid.

People have wondered at Mr. Russell's way of coming, when I was out, but I do not believe that he would be discourteous by preference. Consider the need he had to come, and the risks he ran in coming. His new post was worth keeping, at least to himself, and that meant need for knowledge. On the other hand, it might not be discreet to resume any sort of relations with a man like me, made already "dangerous" by the deadly quest of fact, in a country where success depended on popularity and popularity on falsehood. I had written books. I might write more. Nobody could tell what I might put in them. Yet no other man in the world could teach Mr. Russell what he had to learn from me. Afraid to approach and unfit to abstain, he came, and let us observe the delicate difficulties of his peculiar position before denouncing his behaviour as a vulgar intrusion into my personal affairs behind my back. Yet he might have dropped me a line in confidence and asked me to go away for a few days, so that he

could come here in safety and learn something about his business. That would not be more than was due to me, and I should have readily consented, feeling, as I did, that we ought, if we could, to advance the usefulness of an expensive official apparently inclined to get some little acquaintance with the duties of his position. During his presence on the place nothing was stolen.

I have been visited also by many official experts, including one placed very high in the Department, high enough to personify its influence and to commit its authority. Curious to know the effect of his first lesson in my school, but unwilling to compromise him by calling on him, I went down to the smoke-room of the House of Commons, met some of the Members in his confidence, and set them talking of agriculture. I cannot pretend to reproduce with verbal accuracy here everything which this expert had told them, though they said he had told them much; but I can safely give the following description as their own, though they could never have achieved it without assistance from the Department.

“Pat’s little farm is the dirtiest I have ever seen, even in Ireland. . . . Yes, the plot of heather is there, right enough, but for all that, I do not believe a word that ‘Pat’ writes about it. He has the best bit of land in Connaught (though so ‘dirty’), but the clever scoundrel has gone and planted a plot of heath in the middle of it to make people believe that the area around was reclaimed. In buying the fee-simple under the Land Act, as

he has done, he could make the heather plot of great value to himself. The Sub-Commissioners sent down to report on values might believe 'Pat's' story of reclamation, and if they did, they would be bound to assess both the purchase value and security on the heather basis rather than on the rich fields around it. That could bring 'Pat's' purchase annuity down to 3s. 7d. an acre instead of being over £1, as it ought to be."

I must not say that these were the expert's exact words to his friends. They were his friends' words to me, "on his information," and they had received no farther information; not a word about the value in stock compared with the acreage and valuation, nor about the rate of crops per acre, nor about the genus and quality of herbage in the meadows and pasture as compared with the sedge and heather across the fences in other people's land. In the minds of the expert's immediate confidants in Parliament, I had planted a sample half-rood of heather in highly fertile soil (where it could never grow), and by means of the trick, perpetrated a desperately clever fraud on the vendor and the Treasury, pocketing a considerable sum of tangible wealth in capitalised values at their expense; and not only was I a consummate knave, but the successful consummation of my knavery must imply also that the Treasury, the Estates Commissioners, the Sub-Commissioners, the judges of the Land Court and the vendor himself were all consummate fools. The expert's legislating confidants, though so

elaborately "informed," were not even aware that a highly fertile soil was necessarily rich in the particular agents which would kill an acid organism like heather from the day it was planted among them ; but the stuff was good enough for the "information" of Radical M.P.s. A strange fact that, in spite of their intimate association with the expert, they were completely ignorant of the truth about the agricultural things to be seen on my little farm, and this is how the politicians make the Department so useless to the farmers.

At the time of his visit, we were building, and doing little or nothing else. Old buildings had been pulled down. The debris lay about in heaps. Foundations for new buildings were getting carted out, and there were large piles of stones collected for masonry. Add rainy weather, and the place could indeed be "dirty." In this part of the description, the expert would be telling no more than the honest truth, and then, what if he should have honestly mistaken the architectural for agricultural operations ? One of the workmen might have told him that the stones were turnips, that the mortar was farm-yard dung, that the sow in the yard was a new kind of horse specially bred to cart building material ; and in my absence, he would be bound, as an official expert and as a gentleman, to take the word of the intelligent workman for any information he might ask. Having come to learn, he must ask questions, while the workmen were free to tell him anything they liked, and the more likely to temper instruc-

tion with entertainment if he asked questions of a very elementary kind.

When Sir Horace Plunkett came, he was frankly glad to see the work I had done, and generous enough to acknowledge it as a contribution of value to the solution of the agricultural problem. The questions he put to me while we sat inside the heather plot showed that he knew something about farming, but it is only fair to others to add that Sir Horace was not at the disadvantage of being an Irish Member of Parliament, which is always more than enough to unfit any man for the post of our Agricultural Vice-President, a post which, probably more than any other in the State, requires a man to be beyond the reach of popular applause and perverse censure. In a choice of the two, I would have the Vice-Presidentship even hereditary rather than elective and Parliamentary, at least until such time as it is possible for the Irish elector to say what he thinks. Democratic sham can be much worse than absolute monarchy, and the Department must remain useless in proportion to the increasing ecclesiastical control over it. Its finance and its patronage are already quite at the will of a majority made up of ecclesiastics and their nominees.

Mr. Russell has the honour to be a Scotchman, and I have never been able to see the full depths of meanness with which his countrymen are commonly credited, but I have found in them an incomparable capacity to get themselves estimated

above their value, where an Irishman in every way superior has not the smallest chance, especially in the Irishman's own country. I have found them in many instances astonishingly ignorant of their work, but able to manage their managers so skilfully that they enjoyed a high reputation in it and a practically indefinite fixity of tenure. The whole world has found in them a genius for informal but effective combination among themselves to "help each other on," at the neighbour's expense, while the Irish temper, on the other hand, keeps us quarreling among ourselves, and advertising our vices to the world; so that a foreigner knowing worse than nothing about Ireland might come among our factions, play one of them off against another, and get himself made the official head of our only great industry, in a country over endowed in university education, and where something like three-fourths of the population depends on the products of the soil.

This Irish Department has at least one aspect of strength: it can sometimes get things done in spite of those at its head, and it employs many men as good as could be found anywhere, though I regret to confess that the best of these have come to us from other countries, and that we were incapable of producing the like of them at home. I have no sympathy with the "Irish idea" of a prohibitive tariff against imported character, a notion the more silly so long as the Irish will not allow each other leave to think, and can raise native talent for export only. Like all native races de-

prived of the use of their wits by superstition, we must continue to import and to pay for free wit until we learn to tolerate the growth and freedom of our own.

We had a Royal Commission on Congestion, and a delightfully Irish contrivance it was, charged to tell us why the Congested Districts Board could not cure congestion, and with members of that Board sitting on the Commission as their own judges! Attracted by the curiously Irish constitution of the tribunal, and noting the hospitable breadth of its general invitation, I naturally determined to give evidence. The Commissioners naturally determined that I should not. A pretty play followed, I full of interesting information to be disclosed, the Commissioners as fully afraid to hear the most valuable evidence they could possibly get. In *Paraguay on Shannon*, Mr. O'Donnell tells the rest of the story, and how I gave my evidence in spite of the Commissioners, giving them five minutes to decide in the end whether they would have me in their Court to-day or by wire in the London Press to-morrow.

Some of them I found to be very offensive persons, but their position was provoking. One called me constructively a liar, though he had better opportunities than myself to know that I was speaking the truth. The general effect was a row of distinguished gentlemen arching up their backs in an attitude of official dissent from facts they knew as well as I did, which amused me much, but my amusement did not increase their courtesy.

Some of them were normally civil. The whole of my evidence has been in official print now for years, and nobody has ever ventured to question a word of it. The Commission naturally succeeded in suppressing or discrediting the most valuable information which they were chartered to establish, and the Congested Districts Board fell deeper into the mud from which Parliament had attempted to clean it. The Anglo-alien conspiracy has ever since been persecuting those who moved for the commission and occasioned the exposure.

Part of my purpose was to show that a living could be made by land, and how. A fairly obvious quest, one might think, among a people who had no other means to live; but another Land Act was then in preparation, and, to accommodate its intentions, the Commission was expected to prove that the people could not possibly live by the land, in which case, rent was impossible, and the landlord a monster fat on misery, to be deprived of his estate for as nearly nothing as could be. In short, we had Royal Charter for a scheme to confiscate one class for the accommodation of industrial incapacity in another. My own idea implied that if a living could be made rent could be paid, and that the selling landlord was entitled to his capitalised value. As an Irishman, I have always been at the serious disadvantage of disliking robbery in any form, even by Royal Charter; but the question of landlord and tenant was no direct affair of mine,

and what interested me was the central fact that the life on the land could be made immensely better, without loss to anybody. The tenants appeared always delighted to lose £1 in the land so long as they could make the landlord lose 5s. in the rent. By my way, both classes could be raised; by the Royal Charter way, both must go down, destroying one another, and the Legislature accommodating the scheme by statute at the taxpayers' expense. Such was part of the conflict between the Royal Commissioners and myself. The rest had to do with the ecclesiastical control of the Congested Districts Board—then effective and now triumphant.

They flatly challenged my visible facts on the little farm. I challenged them to come and see. They came, including a bishop, who was a subject of a foreign State, a member of the Congested Districts Board and a member of the Royal Commission inquiring into its evil ways! Then a brace of baronets, and so on, with a small battalion of camp followers, and a special agent of the United Irish League, whom I should certainly have ordered off the place had I been aware of his presence. Some of the Commissioners having seen, took me aside in turn, saying: "I want you to know it is my opinion that you have proofs here for everything in your evidence about land, but, please, do not tell the other Commissioners that I have said so"—a Royal Commission conducted as a conspiracy.

So **unlike** a Scotchman, I had so far remained

quite in the dark as to my own importance, with first rate Statesmen in terror of me, the greatest of all Parliaments in danger of believing me, seeing the truth and adapting its behaviour to my bit of bog. The Royal Commissioners were out admittedly to provide Parliament with the preamble for a statutory fraud. What if they should believe what they had seen, and assert officially what some of them had admitted to me privately? The Westminster fat would be in the Mayo fire, and "the Holy cause of Ireland" must cease to depend on confiscating any class of Irishmen for the incapacity of another. My little farm must be "explained," and the "explanation" makes history.

How had I made my bit of Ireland so productive? How could a man of ink and paper, fresh from the Strand, be so much a better farmer than those who had spent their lives at farming? If they could be set doing the same, what need was there for the Congested Districts Board? If, in cattle alone, apart from other products, I could produce more than seventeen times the amount of my purchase annuity, who could honestly say that rent was impossible? Terrible questions all, but they were—"explained." The Royal Commissioners were relieved from the dreadful embarrassment by the agents of the United Irish League: "'Pat' had borrowed the cattle he had on show from his neighbours for the day. He had borrowed the gates from the railway company. Everything on the place had been arranged as a

landlord's dodge to keep up rent and to destroy the Land Bill" (1909). That was the "explanation," as produced to me directly by a member of the Commission when I next met him in London, and I found plenty of independent corroboration, including that of an editor for whom I wrote. Observe how closely the explanation of the gates and the cows coincides with that given of the heather plot by the Department's expert in the House of Commons. When the Commissioner, with a twinkle in his other eye, asked me why I had "imposed on them" with cows borrowed from the neighbours and gates from the railway, I asked him from whom I had borrowed the haystack, measured and estimated by Sir Francis Mowatt at seventeen tons. He saw through the fraud, of course—and yet consented to it as a basis for Imperial legislation. The Land Bill went through, and "the Holy cause of Ireland" triumphed once more on the stock policy of "fooling the British"—for which the British themselves are as much to blame as anybody. In the natural and necessary course of things, it is certain that the British, sooner or later, must either give up governing the Irish or take the trouble to know something about them. And from like necessity, on like grounds, they must have to give up a great deal more along with Ireland, unless they can alter some of their present ways. England at present, is just like a business that has grown too big for the mind of its owner, who cannot see that the only hope of further safe

growth is in social differentiation and delegated subdivision. The results already reveal themselves everywhere, but probably most of all in Ireland, where the business is most complex and least in view. The real danger to England to-day is not the "German menace" but rather the internal atrophy of overgrowth, which may at any time kill a State that has flourished on the adversities.

Without the facts, who could imagine the motive power and the central machinery of a great empire racking the wheels and straining the gear in Imperial alarm at the sight of practicable prosperity on a bit of cut-away bog among the outer areas of spoonfed inefficiency? With the facts, who could imagine the same empire and the same machinery co-operating in official falsehood to discredit the bit of cut-away bog for a policy of palpable fraud, imposed by the will of organised incompetence? I confess that I could not have imagined either as anything but absurd until I had by patient attempting brought both within the focus of undeniable fact. It is far more than an Irish matter. In a simple but essential way, it involves the problem of Imperial vitality, and it would be well for England to know that there are many more Irishmen prepared to share in the spoil than to confess their wish for it. The policy of "fooling the British" goes far beyond the boundaries of party strategy, but I can neither share the wish nor accept the method, the good of both peoples being more to my mind, and more easily accom-

plished, than any good which could come to either from the evil of the other.

The two kinds of visitor in whom alone I can see hope are the man from a foreign country, frankly in search of fact, and the local peasant, suspiciously escaping from falsehood to get at the terrible truth about the better dinner awaiting him in the soil. Very often, the less "educated" the better. - The man who thinks he knows is the most hopeless of all, and his fields bear witness to it in every townland. They come to me impelled by motives pathetically mixed, chiefly terror of the truth and greed for its results. They are all quite prepared to take the truth from me in farming. What they fear is that they might hear the truth from me in anything else, and there are other things, even of more profound importance than farming, in which I am still more competent to tell them the truth. It is desparately suspected, perhaps with reason, that my attack on the soil is merely to reveal the higher things through it, in a community held unfit to see anything at the top unless through the lowest medium of vision. Men at once sagacious and friendly have often begged me to restrict my mental interests absolutely to the soil, suggesting that I might become "a great man" by strictly ignoring everyhting higher than the ground. I have not done so, but the lesson is not lost. See how eloquently it reveals the inwardness of Irish "greatness."

Just outside the face of our limestone escarp-

ment, on an irregular plane, inclining gently west, my little farm is originally a bit of mixed drift flung accurately across the middle of a river valley ; and on such a site, it is easy to infer a prehistoric abundance of rank and acid vegetation, before the impounded waters had cut their way through in the stream now watering my calves. The brown-gray cavity above me is an emptied lake ; below me, a double slope once kept bare by denudation, still dependent for economic production on a thin and uncertain stratum of organic surface. Here, on the north of the stream, the slope looking south was a waste gathering-ground and social centre for derelict asses. Now it is profitably tilled, admittedly through me. How can any man help Ireland while he cares a rap what the Irish think of him ? "The national impulse," they say, will change all that. If so, the nation must first be created. I can find little to indicate the existence of a nation but a corrupt commerce in diseased sentiment paraded by professional patriotism, and a collective character lacking all the vital inspirations of nationality. Nations are not made out of moral cowardice. I believe that some of the peasants who gain so much by my work would cut my throat to please the professional moralist who makes the altar of God an instrument of murder.

CHAPTER XII.

TENDENCY AND ACCIDENT

As I have said, my main working asset is the cow, and for reasons peculiar to Ireland, she is likely to remain a large asset in our farming by wage labour, even in preference to forms of production more profitable in themselves. An animal that can convert grass into human food and into better animals of her own kind remains practically indispensable in a situation where theft prohibits more intensive production and robs labour of its increased share in wages. I have fattened the cow profitably at 32s. per cwt. live weight, and she is not less reproductive now, with beef running up to 60s. Yet the comparative form of the circulating capital on a farm is a most important matter, full of counter calculations.

Other things being equal, the man who works in cows only can make more of them per cow than he could by dividing his means and attention between cows and many other products. His arrangements for his cows are likely to be more suitable and more complete, while their place in his mind also is likely to be better accommodated. On the other hand, he has "all his eggs in one basket," and we have seen Irish cows practically unmarketable quite lately, while other forms of

farm production stood increasingly profitable. The selection of his alternatives is a matter which each farmer must decide for himself, and the only safe rule I can suggest is this: We can foresee tendencies, but not accidents. For instance, foot and mouth disease is in the nature of the case an accident (however intentional in fact), but the relative increase in the consumption of the products of the cow by the expanding cities of America implies a tendency, and can readily be anticipated for increased prices at home by the cow man of Connaught. We cannot tell on which dark night an Irish rancher may go out and inoculate cattle with this disease, to cheapen stores for his increased profit, but we know that the American city and the German factory consume increasing quantities of what might otherwise be exportable to us, and that every unit less imported of farm produce goes to advance the price of the home producer. Because of the tendency and in spite of the accidents, the cow remains still one of our most steadily profitable and most regularly marketable products, more easily raised than crops and less easily stolen. In addition to studying the tendencies and the accidents, the Irish farmer must adapt the media of his production to the ethics of his neighbourhood, and the cow has an additional claim where it is no longer the correct thing to steal cows.

The pig, a much more intensive form of production than the cow, and not more subject to the effect of tendencies, is yet much more

subject to fluctuation in both price and profit. I have seen the price of the young pig at ten weeks vary from 13s. to 45s. in my neighbourhood within twelve years; and the price of the pig matured and fat may vary now by 25 per cent. between two monthly fairs in the same town, while a still farther factor of variation operates as between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. The Ulsterman sells pork, killed and cleaned, so that he knows exactly what he is doing. The other man, exactly as I should expect, sells live pigs, subject in the sale to additional elements of speculation, which are obviously preferred and maintained because they result in favour of the buyer and at the expense of the farmer. Why do our bacon curers not start establishments in Ulster? It is not for lack of good pigs there. It is for no reason that anybody can see but because their gambling method of purchase gives them cheaper stuff at home, which means smaller profit for the producer of the pig. I have no doubt whatever that the pig would be as free from fluctuation as the cow if it were equally free from Irishmen blocking his way to the British consumer; and I should expect to see the Irish cow equally crooked in her current values if her fatally clever countrymen could command her freedom of access to the final market. Here again, on the national scale, we find the same destructive spectacle, of mind at cross purposes with muscle, as described in the individual case on my own little farm; the same irresistible delight of Irishmen to cheat and play upon each

other, to their common loss all round in the end ; the same shallow greed of unconscionable acuteness to strip the strong back naked, making it the less able to provide the means and subject of the sharp practice another day ; the same unnaturally ruinous conflict between the ethics of distribution and the economy of production which prevents capital from venturing to employ Irish energy and talent in the land of their birth and nurture. We finance " education " to make ourselves unemployable, and wonder why rich people will not " start factories " for us. Meantime, the Department sends round Commissioners to " take evidence " which nobody dares give on these things ; to-day about the want of milk for the creameries, to-morrow about the want of pigs for the factories ; but the official foolish enough to put a line of the plain truth in the report could not hope to hold his post for a month. So useless can great and costly institutions be made by those for whose good they are chartered and endowed. " Holy Ireland ! " What a sight !

I will stick to the red cow for the present. Should more intensive products, involving more wages, become equally safe from theft in my time, I may try some of these. Ireland is prepared for prosperity at a bound the day Irishmen permit it.

While the man who keeps " all his eggs in one basket " must take the risks, the man is probably in still worse case who runs his farming into a too great variety of products. For instance, cattle, pigs and poultry make a strong combination, one

or other of them picking up the trifles otherwise lost in the feeding of the rest. Cattle, sheep and horses, on the other hand, may damage each other badly and bring down the total result. I know many farms of rough and smooth, such as mine was before reclaiming, where the sheep and the horses are enough to prevent the cows getting a fair mouthful of anything but the inferior pasture from one end of the year to the other. The sheep, though a weed killer, will touch none of your "rough bottoms" while a pick remains on the uplands, and she can make out a fair living on grass so short that the cow cannot catch it at all. Yet we have too many farmers who keep this state of things going year after year, and wonder why their cows cannot do so well as other people's, where sheep, if kept at all, are limited to numbers that will permit the cow standard of pasturing.

The same, or worse, holds good of young horses kept as store animals and not for work. I question whether the great bulk of these in Connaught can pay even for their food after they reach the age of two, but they can keep the best of the pasture without a bite for animals much more profitable. The really sound horses in my part of the country are estimated at not more than 10 per cent. of the whole, and only that small fraction of them, at most, can have it in them to pay for prolonged maintenance without work, as store animals. I avoid the horse, unless for work. Like the pig, he is too speculative for me, though for that very reason, the more attractive to many farmers.

We had in our neighbourhood a horse that deserved to be famous. He was a working horse, a "very nice" horse, apparently perfect in everything, except that he could not work. It was not that he wouldn't; he couldn't. Subject to that slight defect in a working horse, he was bought, for something over three pounds, by a very clever man, who knew all about him and how to manage him. I took much interest in the transaction, as I do in all actual facts that I cannot understand. I wanted to make out from experience under observation what was the correct management for a working horse that could never work. The clever man brought him home, took great care of him, took him again to the fair, and sold him at a great profit, this time to a buyer who did not know the most money making peculiarity of the horse. The new owner brought him home, but it soon became plain that he did not understand how to "manage" him. Lacking the intelligence to see how a working horse incapable of work could, by his incapacity, be made the more profitable, he regretted his bargain and demanded the money back. Now, do not imagine for a moment that there was anything either legally or commercially wrong in the sale of the horse. He was sold "as he stood," not as he worked. There was no surety or guarantee of anything. It was what the horse men would call "perfectly straight," and a man cannot be accused of going wrong while he acts up to the legal and moral standards of his time, place and associations. It ended in returning the

horse, without returning the price, and the clever man was free to sell him again, which he did in due course, at a farther great profit, again on the same honest terms as before, without warranty "as he stood," and not as he worked. I cannot now remember exactly how many times in two years he sold him in this way, got him back, and kept the money, as he was entitled to do by the law of the land and the approved morality of horse dealing; but I can remember meeting him one day, and saying to him: "Dominick, how's the horse? In so far as I can see, you have the best paying horse with any farmer within three thousand square miles of us." A great, silent smile widened over his face, and from that day forward he looked on me as a man of sense. In serious fact, Dominick's "management" of the horse was the most frank and honest that I have seen in the sale of defective horses in Connaught, and as I have said, about 90 per cent. of them are seriously defective. I have known many such horses since then "managed" in a like manner, but not one with more intelligence and honesty than in Dominick's case. Yet this method of management, like all others, has its own limits, and Dominick's horse had his interesting career cut short in the end, by having made himself too well known to buyers, after which, he was kindly shot, and a bottle of bad whiskey was merrily drunk to celebrate his burial.

CHAPTER XIII.

WASTE

I HAVE referred to waste and failure. Let me submit two typical and common instances out of many. On finding out that the Department had money to spend, a "religious" institution promptly "qualified" itself for a technical school, on a "qualification" made easy by not permitting anybody else to qualify, like the Chinese Viceroy who entered his horse for a race and came in first because everybody else was afraid to run against him. There is no need to name a particular institution, and it would not be fair to attack one among so many to which this applies. The young peasants came into the institution, but not in overwhelming numbers. They were carefully selected, and this made each feel so much better than the neighbours, which is always precious in Ireland. The whole cost of keeping and "educating them" came out of public money, with a substantial contribution from the parents also, though the public money was enough, and estimated on the principle that the parents should have to make no sacrifice beyond giving up the help of their young folk at home. Officially, the scheme undertook to prepare them in a year or two, for yet higher privileges, in a

still greater institution of the same sort, where they would be "finished" off, then to become Government officials and be happy ever after, teaching everybody how to do everything, at the expense of everybody else. The scheme has now been at work more than twelve years, but not one pupil has yet been put through to the alleged purpose. They all came out "qualified," but the bulk are now in America, while the rest are here and there, at anything but the purpose for which the public money has been spent. The institution continues to flourish. The subsidy is increased. The young folk continue to go in hopeful and to come out useless. The parents continue to contribute, and they still provide the human machinery to "qualify" for capturing the public purse. The pupils are still carefully selected, and the number is always exactly the number required permanently to provide the ecclesiastics with a full staff of domestic servants and farm labourers, fed, housed and remunerated at the expense of the taxpayer. The remuneration is in the training which is not given and in the Government posts which are never secured. The parents appear to be quite satisfied, industrial public opinion quite dumb, and not one man of the "fighting race" dares say a word, though I think the bulk of them will be glad of one to say it for them and to take the risks which they so bravely dread. I am not going to blame the religious institutions, but rather to congratulate them on their financial genius. It is most curious how those good people,

having "left the world," can always re-appear when money is going. This kind of "Agricultural and Technical Instruction" has made great strides since the convenient removal of Sir Horace Plunkett.

The other instance is provided by the Congested Districts Board, in which the law of the King is now openly set aside and the law of the ecclesiastic substituted. Under the civil law, the administrative unit is the District Council, but, under the ecclesiastical law, it is the parish, and thus we get the "Parish Committee." The head of it is an ecclesiastic, and he nominates the rest of the members, who "represent the people." "The people" are supposed to elect the Committee, but should a man oppose the ecclesiastic's wish, he can put an end to the scheme altogether, and then set the mob at the undesirable man for "keeping the money out of the parish." The Congested Districts Board hands over the taxpayers' money to this little secret society, and the alleged purpose is to stimulate "improvements." A peasant proposes to build a piggery, and the ecclesiastic is delighted to hear that he means to "put out the pigs," which have up to now shared the family sitting-room with their owner. A "supervisor" goes round to examine the plans, and assuming the work is executed to his approval, the Committee make a free grant towards the cost of the edifice. The supervisor is controlled by the Committee (that is, by the ecclesiastic), but he is paid by the taxpayer. One

man is not supposed to get a grant twice while another has got none, and those most in need are supposed to come first ; but, after years, we find a comparatively rich man who has got the grant several times while his poor neighbour has not been able to get a penny. Inquire into this and you will find that the rich man has handed back part of his grant in the form of increased subscriptions to ecclesiastical funds. He is in a position to do so, and he gets the grant, but his poorer neighbour is not in a position to do so, and he gets no grant. The lay members of the Committee are also the parish tools, and, of course, they vote the money to one another and to one another's relatives before any outsider can be heard ; but before everybody comes the ecclesiastic's own list. I knew a man who ventured to differ from the ecclesiastic in politics, and no relative of his nearer than a third cousin could get the Board's grant after that. Members of the Committee told them so quite openly, and then the numerous relatives were expected to persecute their kinsman for having "deprived them of the money." Most of the slaves are under the impression that the ecclesiastic is the real money finder. Being very much afraid of him themselves, they assume that the Government also is afraid of him, and that the Treasury must hand over any sum he desires. In substance, they are quite right. He may not fix the sum, but he can coerce Government in handing it over, and God help the poor grantless man who dares to put him any questions.

about the disbursement. The taxpayer has to find all the money, and the ecclesiastic must have all the credit. There is no need to mention a particular parish since the facts apply broadly to most of the parishes in which the Parish Committee Scheme works.

The prettiest curiosity of all is that we have grave Statesmen pretending to oppose Home Rule after they have shaped, fixed and financed these immoral methods in the "Government" of Ireland, which are continued to-day, on an increasing scale, more immoral and more expensive than ever. How can sane men have respect for law while they see its makers thus corrupting its administration? Of course, the Irish themselves are to blame, but why must the British always prefer and finance the methods which most degrade Ireland? As a form of official strategy, it is pertinent, if despicable; in the name of civilised Government, it is an outrage, and the British are to blame for the outrage.

CHAPTER XIV.

EMERGENCIES

A WORKING farm is full of little puzzles, each with its own solution, and often original. We had to boil a quantity of potatoes—the only food we ever cook for cattle. There was a boiler in the yard to hold 8 cwt., but it was too big to set up for the amount of work we had just then in view, and our only other vessel was a three-legged pot, for which there was no accommodation in the kitchen fireplace. What were we to do? The mouth of the pot was narrower than the belly. I laid it mouth under on the grass, cut the earth round close to it, and dug out the round hole 18 inches deep, widening to the bottom. It was two feet from the face of a little bank, and I cut a narrow way between for air to the fire in the hole. The pot sat tight, an exact fit, in the mouth of the hole, with another little opening in the grass behind it, on the side opposite to the first airway, so that the combustion could be oxidised by a through current. Once my novel furnace had been well fired up, with its earth surfaces an ash non-conductor, I found that the potatoes could be boiled in a much shorter time and at much less cost in fuel than on the kitchen fire, not to mention the disturbance avoided there. With the pot

fitting the hole so accurately, the whole of the flame played on its bottom, and the waste of heat was very much less than in an open fireplace. Might not this little plan bear development for the greater ease in work, the greater economy in fire and the greater convenience in the kitchen? Finding that it took more fire to boil the first pot than any two after it, we kept the pot going for half a day at a time, and got our supply of boiled potatoes twice a week.

One day we had two big men trying to put a heavy roller across an earth fence into another field. The fence was rather a bank, and pretty high on the outer side, with a young hedge of thorn in the face, which I did not wish to disturb. After much engineering, the two men announced that the only way was to "dig a gap," and then they went to dinner. On returning, they found the roller in the field, without a gap. I had done it alone, and quite easily. First, I pushed the roller on to the top of the fence, but anybody could do that. Then I drove a stake in the field behind it, and fastened a rope between this and the frame of the roller. Two planks inclined on the steep side beyond, and the roller moved down on them quite nicely, with the rope "paid" out from the stake to control the descent. The two big men thought I was very clever. I thought I had merely escaped being very stupid. Still, it does show the waste of working power from want of light in the upper storey. It was the kind of work at which they had spent their lives, and my life

had been spent at work as far from that as it could be.

Here is a kind of problem which occurs everywhere. "It is time to wean that calf, Tommy." "Yis, sir," and Tommy puts him into the top field among the older calves. The cow starts calling him, and he replies. The breadth of a whole field is between, with two good fences, and yet that calf will find his way to that cow. I have known a calf go out into another farm, from that into a third, then across a river, and then back into another part of my own pasture, where he found the cow, among a family celebration of the reunion. That was in daylight, but see what a calf of three weeks can do at night. Last year, one came nearly a mile through hedge and dike, fences and crops, bogs and swamps and marshes. I know the way. It was more like a feat for a dog, but he found his mother in the dark. The best plan that I have found to stop mothering is as follows:—Having taken him from mama and put him among the other calves, I watch him for a time. His efforts to get out increase every hour. When he begins to be desperate, I open the gate and let him come, but into the house, where good food awaits him. When he is tired of that, back again into the field, and out of that, only to come indoors. Presently, he finds that he can leave the field only for the house, which he likes less, and the work begins to be easy when you find him gladder to go out than to come in. Meantime, his palate has been adapting itself to the new menu, and the craving

for milk is over in a few days ; but let him once escape to his mother, and it may take weeks to control him.

A neighbour of mine lent his horse to harrow oats, and sent oats for the horse's dinner, to make quite sure that he would not be worked hungry. Having sown his own seed, our " farmer " sowed the horse's dinner also, and set the horse to work on an empty stomach. After a time, the horse stopped in the field, and then the family gathered round to beat him with sticks. In this way the rest of the day was spent, and the ground covered somehow. Next day, the horse stood up in the owner's field. He brought him home, put him up until dinner time and then gave him plenty of corn, but the horse refused to move after dinner. He took him out and whipped him steadily for twenty minutes, after which that horse never refused to go again. My solution for this puzzle would be to whip the man who had sown the horse's dinner and leave the rest to the magistrates.

The most original bit of agriculture I ever saw was quite near me. A man here has only one horse, and two of them joined for ploughing. The usual thing, but it was not the usual result. One of the horses persisted in kicking the other, and our two farmers put their heads together to solve the problem. They could not well dissolve partnership. All the neighbours had already paired off, and apart from that, the man with the kicking horse could not expect to find a fresh partner. In addition, they were old friends.

My Little Farm

They put what they called a "sidelang" on the kicking horse, a rope tying two of his legs, the fore leg to the hind leg, on the side next the other horse. The animal had been accustomed to that sort of discipline before, as a means of reconciling him to pasture on which he could find nothing to eat, but this was his first experience of the "sidelang" at work, and though it made his kicking harmless, it did not improve his temper. Ploughing two horses was work for only one man, but a team so interesting as this required at least two, and, together smoking, up and down our two farmers travelled all day and day after day, one horse limping in his hobbles, the other pulling and stopping to accommodate his mate's manner of progress. Interested in the new style of ploughing, I visited my two friends at work, and what do you think was their conversation? Criticising the defects of their neighbours and indicating their own thankfulness that they were not as other people. They regarded themselves as superior farmers, and both their farms were certainly above the average. A puzzle like this of the "sidelang" brings its own solution sooner or later: one of these two farmers is now in another country and one in another world. Let us wish them the happiness of their respective spheres, and congratulate the land they have left behind them. I have an idea that Ireland may begin to be a prosperous and pleasant place some time after the last of the present population lies dead, and a nation that spends life learning only how to die cannot reason-

ably quarrel with me for wishing her rapid success towards the goal of her dominant ambition. Yet one cannot but be sorry for the children, born in "sidelangs" and bred to the choice of death or export.

I remember an unusually clever man we had in our part of the country, now, I hope, in a sweeter place. Ned knew everybody's business better than anybody knew his own, and though it was by no means conscious altruism, he always certainly gave twice as much attention to other people's affairs, always with a sneer at the other people. During the summer, when the weather was warm enough for comfortable conversation, he occupied himself so much with the interests of his neighbours that he could find no time to make hay, and we could generally find him mowing about November, when one big shower might create an emergency to last all winter, if not permanently. Sometimes the "hay" remained in the swaths, sometimes half "saved," sometimes collected in lumps on a meadow near the house, where he could "let it out" again in spring, before the new grass had grown inconveniently long. Cycling past on a sunny day towards the end of April, when we had nearly eaten up last year's hay crop, I found my old friend haymaking, and said to him: "Why, Ned, you are earlier than I am with the hay this year. I will have none fit to cut for six weeks yet." I forgot his reply, but after that, he and I could never quite agree. Perhaps I had taken advantage of him in an emergency, but then, Ned

was such a clever man, and so ready to take advantage of others. He had a farm that might afford a living for a gentleman, and he let his horses die of hunger in the fields, but he had his farm for 2s. 6d. an acre. While an excessively clever man can have an excess of good land for 2s. 6d. an acre, what need for character, work or any other of the industrial virtues? I can hardly imagine anything that could do more for our agriculture and its agrarian character than a graduated land tax, in inverse ratio to the efficiency of the farmer, so that the biggest sloven would have to pay the biggest sum, and be the first to relieve us of his presence on the soil. If the resulting revenue made an average of £1 for every tenant farmer in Ireland, that would be more than enough to finance the Department, and set a large sum of money free every year for other purposes.

I could enlarge my emergencies indefinitely, but we need only a few typical cases to show how the head and the hand, mind and muscle, are at cross purposes in our chief industry; the head trying to live without work, the hand trying to work without the head, the whole dragging along in a blind survival, protected from sheer chaos by organised violence and its fruit in fixed charges at a small fraction of the economic value. What must happen to this cult of incompetence and its helpless millions should they find themselves forced by the necessities of taxation to hand back under their own laws all that they have forced from the

former landowners under the immoral statutes of Westminster? Then we have another land problem, harder of solution than the last, if not bloodier, and made the more distressing through the funds now "administered" by the Congested Districts Board in fixing congestion instead of relieving it. Under a long elaboration of statutory fraud, dictated by political fallacy and designed to penalise the efficient, we are yearly creating for our children inflictions worse than our own, and at the same time making them still more unfit to bear them. The day of the competent may come, before chaos, and that would solve all our problems, but it can never come while the school remains an instrument to set mind against muscle and man against his normal destiny. There is hardly an Irish problem that has not its secret in the school, and the school has its secret far from Ireland, and entrenched in a garrison which could not be successfully assaulted by anything less than a combination of King Henry VIII. and Mr. John Dillon.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WAGES OF SIN

ETERNAL gratitude is expected of us for half a century's barbarism, imposed by professional politicians, accommodated by Imperial legislation and financed by the British taxpayer, while it is assumed that we must remain blind to the real sources of improvement in our position, which are not only different, but also quite opposite. I ask what I must do to be saved, and find that the first article in the new Faith is salvation by crime, not by good farming. To keep up the creed of crime, good farming must be put down, and discredited where it occurs in spite of the master criminals. Let us examine this at close quarters. Take my own area, which is, I think, quite close to the average. Under ordinary letting, without either land agitation or reductions, the rent would

now remain at	£9 18 0
Deduct Purchase Annuity	5 13 10
	£4 4 2
Balance from Barbarism	

I cannot calculate the precise amount of murder in securing it, but, for this bloody little balance, the price of a small pig, or the increased market value in a cow, I am to ignore the big advance in market values and to give up the eighty pounds

a year or more by which I have increased my honest production ; and I am to throw away the honest eighty pounds for the four guineas in blood money merely in order that the peasants may continue to believe in the professional politician as their sole saviour. Because I dare to refuse, the professional politician gets control of the Agriculture Department, and makes it the instrument of his revenge against me, again assisted by the British. Has history another such illustration of crime as folly ? The vicious fallacy is still abroad and still dominant in districts, though slowly yielding to sanity. Let me drive this little pen for more light through a few additional holes in it.

In addition to the loss of increased production, we have half destroyed the farm labourers, whose numbers are now less than half what they were when we started the Land League in 1879, with the Department officially confessing the increased inefficiency of the survivors ; and we have much more than half destroyed the educated class, whose position in the country was the mainstay of the wage earner, and afforded the sole prospect of any farther investment for industrial production generally. For my share in the shame and ruin and blood, I get £4 4s. 2d., but on the condition that I throw away £80 of my own honest money to save the face of the professional politician. Has the world anything so despicable imposed for "national policy" on a civilised people ?

Put aside the value of special improvements in

production, as realised in my own case, which is not typical, and let us try to balance for the ordinary peasant his wages of sin against his gain from increased market prices, which are settled for him abroad, quite beyond the range of his politicians. For the United Kingdom as a whole, we have statistics of price by which we could compare 1879 with 1913, but they are based on the British level, ignoring the substantial difference between this and the Irish. I have thought it better to interview a large number of men old enough to remember 1879, to average their estimates, and to check the average by comparison with commercial documents of the time. Worked out in this way, the rise in prices reveals an increase well over 20 per cent. in the Irish farmer's income, while organised crime can no longer offer him 20 per cent. on his rent, which cannot be more than a third of his income. In other words, the man who had £100 a year from farming has it now increased to more than £120 by the advance in prices alone,* and apart from any improvements in his productive economy.

Take the same man in regard to rent and his gain from reductions in it. What would be the rent of a farm on which the family can live at the rate of £100 a year? This is a matter in which the farmers themselves will be able to check my calculation. I know that, in the average case, the rent cannot be quite so much as a third

* Not including the war inflations.

of the income. It is probably much less, but I will not depend on probability. To be on the safe side, let us take it at £30 a year. A reduction of seven shillings in the pound on this is only £10 10s., while the gain from increased prices on the same farm is over twice that amount. With the growth of American towns and German factories consuming the agricultural produce otherwise exportable to us, the supply in our market is relatively diminished, and the Irish farmer has his prices increased for him while he sleeps, increasing his income from this alone by a total more than twice his utmost gains from agitation, but the agitator does not want him to know this. The tendency in prices continues to work still farther in his favour, and there is not the smallest sign of it stopping. The advance in the market value of his produce is calculated at the rate of 1 per cent. per annum for the last fifteen years, and the causes of it in the international economy of agricultural supply are still increasing their activity, even in normal conditions, and apart from any inflations following war. In so far as our farmers awake to their real opportunity, the professional politician must take a back seat, and I must infer his hostility for a compliment. He would have no such need to attack me if I had no effect in helping to open the farmers' eyes. There is a difference between restoring a man to sight and preserving his blindness to make a profession of leading him blind.

CHAPTER XVI.

BULLS

THERE are three kinds of bulls : (1) ill bred and ill fed ; (2) middling, both ways ; and (3) well bred and well fed. Out of the total, only a minority can “ arrive ” satisfactorily. No. 1 ought to be put to death, at the expense of the owner, for he (the bull) is worse than foot and mouth disease, if not as bad as those who cultivate it for a ranching profit. No. 2 is, like life itself, a compromise between good and evil ; therefore, to be “ tolerated,” but kept under observation, his result being as uncertain as his origin. No. 3 can make sure, other things being equal, and nothing else can. Then, why not make sure ? I would exclude the factor of uncertainty, even at the expense of liquidating what the insurance men call “ risks ”—that is, I would pay to be rid of the “ risks ”—and a better investment the farmer can hardly make. I have sent cows long distances, and cannot remember my money better spent. One shilling in the bull is at least twenty in the calf a year old, and I am prepared to invest at 2,000 per cent. Yet there is no need to pay for the “ risks.” It is done for us with “ Saxon gold ” through the Department. The official who first thought to save Ireland by bulls must have been a

man of genius, and this is corroborated by his absence in the front rank of officials, who get there by the German gift to appropriate other men's ideas rather than discover any of their own. Like other public institutions, the bull is potential in the future of Ireland, good or bad, but most of us persist in preferring the nondescript, even at the same cost.

There are three kinds of farmers : (1) those who cannot see, and may have their eyes mercifully opened for them some day ; (2) those who think they can see, and must remain permanently blind ; and (3) those who can see and know it. I know men who have kept bulls for twenty years, have never known the breeding of one of them, and have never bred a good cow of their own, even by accident. In the case of these, the factor of risk is eliminated in the other way, for uniform badness.

Breeding implies a very wonderful power for improvement vested in us free of charge. The means are in our hands for a transformation, complete and profitable. By taking advantage of the opportunity, I can, and I do, have about £5 in each cow, as compared with the careless, apart from pedigree values, and assuming the same scale of cost in consumption. The neglect, however, is but part of the larger problem : the Irish have not yet come to see the vital value of acting on environment for its reaction on themselves. They are taught rather to assume that, in the nature of things, environment is a matter permanently out of their power, dependent on something for ever

beyond them. Yet the expenditure of the Department provides them with pure sires at the same fee charged for the cur bull. In a country three-fourths agrarian, and becoming rapidly pastoral at that, the bull is no small part of the environment within our power. I need not touch here on the vexed question of locality and species, which is fully discussed in the chapter on regional necessity.

Considerable numbers of our bulls, including many well bred, are wholly or comparatively unproductive, and the rate of failure, advancing rapidly in recent years, is made still worse by the addition of communicable diseases. The latter is a case for treatment, but I am convinced that the initial unproductiveness is in the main the unnecessary fault of those who breed and rear young bulls. A common practice is to let the calf take "pot luck" until he begins to know himself a bull, and then to change suddenly from underfeeding to overfeeding, which forces forward the process of maturity at an unnatural rate, on a constitution the more unfit for it because of the previous neglect. In my own case, this scheme of treatment is reversed from the start and at every point. I get the constitution as highly developed as I can *before* the stage of conscious maturity, and at that stage the bill of fare becomes both simpler and cheaper; as much as the calf can eat of sound home grown stuff, with concentrates gradually reduced to a minimum. The condition may go off a little. Let it. What I want is a sound bull,

not a lump of diseased beef. The young bull gets time to enter on his new world with his eyes open and to assume its responsibilities in a normal manner, instead of driving him to his destiny half mad. The high reproductive power of Irish seed is attributed to the slow gentleness of the climate in maturing the grain, and the animal organism is not more likely to escape the ills of violent haste in the process of maturing. One of the best young bulls I ever had, but badly overfed at this critical period, behaved in such an extraordinary manner that one might expect to get a pedigree calf out of every bush in the neighbourhood next season, and he continued this until he looked a complete wreck; but once relieved of his capacity to make himself incapable, he began to thrive at once, and made one of the handsomest bullocks I ever saw, though somewhat undersized for his breeding.

That is largely how the young bulls are destroyed, and even the seller has not a penny by it, while the buyer is badly injured. The seller has paid his money out of his pocket to destroy his bull, and the buyer stands to lose more, while the loss to the public is much the greatest of all. During the three months of transition from infant to adult life, my bulls look somewhat below par, but so far, I have never sold a bull that has not turned out surprisingly satisfactory. There can be no doubt that the bulk of the destruction is due to the greed of underfeeding the calves when they ought to be well fed, and then trying to make them marketable by the over-

feeding short cut at the very time in their lives when gradual and natural treatment is essential to their success.

I will finish with one more of our blindly destructive characteristics. In farming especially, we stand to gain rather than lose by our neighbour's prosperity. Poor, he is no use to us; rich, he could be a better neighbour. Our power to help each other is very great, and we lose all this because we prefer to hurt each other. Many among us would willingly lose to hurt his neighbour rather than gain by helping him; how many I cannot say, but certainly a large majority of all within my acquaintance. Their neighbour's ill gives them more pleasure than even their own good, which ends in ill all round. We wish to pull each other down, even at the cost of sinking ourselves a little lower.

In a business like shopkeeping, the savage scramble for contending shares in a fixed and limited total is reasonable enough; in farming, there is no need for it at all. I cannot lose by showing my neighbour how to get fifty tons of mangolds out of that plot instead of fifteen. I gain by it. Have I not done him a service? That alone is a pleasure to me, and such a pleasure is a very great gain to me; for it is in the mind, neither in the field nor in the pocket, that all the really great gains and losses take place. The life of the man who can get no pleasure from his neighbour's good is very pitiful, and the bulk of Connaught is very pitiful, because the bulk of the

people prefer the neighbour's ill to their own good, which is an essentially savage preference.

My plot produces not one mangold less because the produce of my neighbour's plot is more than tripled, and my pleasure is wholly to the good. He and I alike suffer from under-production, neither of us from the over production of the other. Let either of us increase his production tenfold this year, and the other gets not a penny less for his own, because the wide world, and not merely the local market, is competing for our produce in its final form. I shall put no material value for myself on the service I have done my neighbour, because I have not done it for any such gain to myself; also because I know that my neighbour, in at least nine cases out of ten, will prefer to deny the obligation, lest his admission of my service to him should react to my credit or to my advantage in any way. I am concerned with my neighbour only in my wish to see him a better neighbour, knowing, as I do, that we can have a better country only in better men.

There were two neighbours, one of them keeping very bad bulls, the other breeding very good ones, and year after year, the man who bred the very good ones offered them to his neighbour at smaller prices than his neighbour paid for the very bad ones, which were bought time after time without any knowledge whatever as to the rubbish in their parentage. This went on for nearly a generation, and in that time, the man who kept the very bad bulls had never once

succeeded in breeding a good cow for himself, while the other man could not breed a bad cow. The man who kept the bad bulls knew very well all the time that, across the fence, he could have better value, for himself and for his neighbours, at less cost ; but he paid the higher price for the inferior value rather than help his neighbour to extend the better value to the advantage of all the neighbours and his own. When, in the end, the contrast had become too plain for the neighbours to tolerate it, the man who kept the very bad bulls sent some of his bad cows across the fence, so that he could say he had raised the better breed himself, and still deny the credit of it to his neighbour.

Merely because one man, who keeps bulls, hates the prosperity of another man, who breeds bulls, the bull-keeper actually pays money for nothing but to prevent the prosperity of his neighbour ; and in doing so, he pays also to inflict a serious injury on his other neighbours, forcing them to rear bad calves when they could be rearing good ones at the same cost. Now, this is the Connaught character, as nearly as I can describe it after long and intimate study of it. How can a country prosper on it ?

CHAPTER XVII.

AT THE SHOW

I WENT to one of those provincial bull shows which are subsidised by the Department and approved for the selection of premium bulls. It was an instructive day.

Most of the bulls were yearlings, and nearly all these were fat beasts. I saw only three or four in a natural condition, and these were passed in contempt. So young, they could not be so fat without being permanently injured as sires, and this is how so many of the Department bulls come to be distributors of disease among the cattle, not to mention the infertility due to over-feeding.

It appears the judges have no standard to judge a beast in a natural condition, and in any other condition the bull is unfit for breeding.

Most of the people looked hungry, but this appears to be less injurious than fattening them. Why must an underfed people have their beasts so overfed? Man and beast alike are injured, but this derangement in the distributive process is evident in every aspect of Irish life. Take for instance the Dublin horse show. Any intelligent stranger would take it to represent a solvent and sane community.

Our bull show had been advertised as a "Show

and Sale," but I saw fourteen go through without one sold. The sales were few, and the premiums very few. Exhibitors from all the four provinces looked at each other saying: "Catch me coming again to a Department bull show." Yet the fiction runs from year to year, and I suppose as many will be duped next time.

In "a dairying country," one naturally looked to that section, but I saw no dairy premium awarded. I heard of "one or two," but the report in the *Farmers' Gazette* came out without one at all.

The Department had two experts there to judge the bulls and award the premiums, and one of these gentlemen gave me this amazing information: "In awarding the dairy premiums, we do not take into account either the milk yield or the butter fat of the dam,"; this in reference to the bulls specially bred under the Department's own rules, from cows selected, tested and registered by the Department itself—in a dairying country. It is plain, even in bulls, that the underlying fallacy of the Department, the Agricultural Organisation Society, and all such is the assumption that industry may grow and that public money ought to be expended for it without regard to any development in industrial character or to the mediæval scheme of primary education which works behind it and controls it.

One of the unfortunate exhibitors at the bull show was known to have severely criticised the Department, and his bulls were beaten with sticks and pelted with stones in the show ground

by the corner boys. I saw this. The beating and the stone-throwing continued from one side of the ground to the other, while the owner and his two men tried to hold the beaten animals by the halters. The attack did not stop even when one of the animals was knocked down, entangled in the rope. It was done openly in view of the police, the show officials, and the Department's experts, but not one interfered. No other of the exhibitors was known to have criticised the Department, and no other was attacked.

At the close, an exhibitor from Galway discussed the day with one of the Department's experts, and wound up the argument in these words: "You know as much about a bull as my dog knows about playing the piano." That may be overstating it, but it remains still to be explained why dairy premiums are awarded to the other breeds, while dairy premiums are denied to Irish animals specially bred for dairy purposes under schemes and rules elaborated by the Department. Quite a considerable number of Irish farmers, and generally the most capable in the country, have co-operated with the Department in this attempt to found an Irish dairy herd-book. Can they be expected to continue the trouble they take while their results are ignored and the premiums given to breeds that are admittedly inferior for dairy purposes? To qualify their calves, the registered cows must breed from sires specified by the Department, and in my own case at least, the result of these sires is to diminish the milk in proportion to the cost of producing it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAGANISM IN AGRICULTURE

WHEN their hens die of a contagious disease, they carry them at night into the neighbour's flock, and leave them there, in order to get rid of the disease by passing it on to the neighbour. Before taking them they pluck them for the feathers, making sure to keep the disease at home while distributing it. Not long ago I saw five dead hens newly plucked and put down among a fine, young flock, of which three out of four were dead in the next six weeks. It may take several years to stamp out the plague thus propagated in that flock, and the same thing has often happened before on the same farm. The idea is that the disease is supernaturally derived, and that, to secure its departure from one place, a suitable reception must be secured for it at another. Meantime we pay our poultry experts out of public money, and the Department controlling them dares not say a word against the industrial character which makes it a virtue to spread the disease. The Department can only spend the money on the experts, hold its official tongue as to industrial character, "recognise" the microbe, and ignore its supernatural derivation, since any infringement on the supernatural would be contrary to "Irish ideas"

When a cow gets indigestion, probably from the weeds in the "hay," they go to a witch to cure her. The witch fills a bottle with natural water, knots a piece of twine over it, pulls the knots out, and repeats the process, mumbling an incantation. According as the knots come loose or tighten, the case of the cow is simple or complicated, and the measures to defeat or to conciliate the hostile spirits at work must be taken accordingly. Sometimes the struggle is so desperate that the owner of the cow, having defeated the spirits, may lose a child or even his wife as compensation to the nether world for the loss of milk. The incantation over, our farmer comes home with his bottle of water, pours a little of it down the cow's throat, and flings the remainder on her back, in three dashes, "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." I have seen this solemn ceremony performed by a "farmer." The pathology by prayer is often varied by "performing a station" for the cow, saying specified prayers before twelve pictures representing twelve scenes in the life and death of Jesus. In a case of indigestion, I have no objection to prayer, provided it is preceded by physic, but by depending on the prayer and deferring the physic, the cow is often killed. We pay veterinary surgeons for public service under the Department's control, but the Department dares not say a word against the pagan pathology which has precedence of the veterinary work. "Irish ideas" must be respected.

When the electrical state of the air or the dirty

state of the dairy turns the milk and cream into "clabber," the "knowledgable woman" is again consulted, and she undertakes to restore the butter, which "comes back" when the weather changes; and since the weather in Ireland is never long without changing, the witch is generally prompt in justifying her wisdom. A thunderstorm is her best opportunity. It seldom lasts more than a day, and the clear calm of the next is accompanied by the triumph of supernaturalism over agricultural efficiency. We have our dairy experts in every county, paid from the public purse and controlled by the Department; but neither they nor their controllers dare offend "Irish ideas" by opposing paganism in agriculture. The Department has not as yet appointed an official witch on its paid staff of experts.

I give only three from the scores of popular examples with which I am personally acquainted. A nation cannot prosper by consigning its soil to pagan superstition, and when the nation is three fourths agricultural, the case is worse.

CHAPTER XIX.

FARMING AS A PROFESSION

AGRICULTURE is an industrial pursuit in which a man of honour may still engage with self-respect—perhaps there are others. Like science and poetry, it deals in no trade secrets ; at least, there is no need. It does not require the gain of one by the loss of another, as happens so commonly in commerce. Its gains are primarily a matter between the man and the soil, and though some “rob the soil,” it is better than robbing the neighbour. Besides, the robbed soil always avenges the crime, which cannot be said of the Stock Exchange. It keeps a man in touch with Nature, which helps to keep him morally clean ; and in so far as it implies a conflict, the conflict is between man and his enemies in Nature rather than between man and man. Its essential motive always is to increase production, not to grasp the largest possible amount of what is produced ; and though the maximum may not often transform clogs and a cottage into silks and a mansion in seven years, the sane minimum is safer than in any other pursuit,

precluding that sordid elaboration of material chance which so largely corrupts the world and often keeps a man essentially miserable on millions. Should a man love Nature, and have intelligence to study her without being a fool in business affairs, then agriculture is almost ideal and certain to be remunerative. Its competition is across oceans rather than across fences or streets, preserving the mind from the effects of direct greed and necessarily enlarging vision in anyone who comes to see the world-process in which he has his part. For instance, the clearing of Russian forests, reducing the rainfall, is said to have diminished the production of grain, which would affect the position of the barley-grower in Scotland; and such a far-reaching influence, even when operating to disadvantage, tends to raise the mind that studies it beyond the meanness of narrower issues. Farmers on either side of a hedge need no such envy of one another as shopkeepers on either side of a street, their prices being fixed by forces farther removed or at least less personal and less directly apparent at any given time. Accordingly we find peasant communities who spend the winter nights in each other's houses, while their shopkeepers, though derived from the peasantry, and meeting every day in the same street, remain really unacquainted, and never meet in the social sense. There are towns in Connaught where the shopkeepers never call on each other unless for a weak or a funeral, and then the spoons are locked up.

So much for those who can combine culture with cabbage, but what of him with six children on ten shillings a week, whose existence is valued, like that of the horse, by the length of his working days—and then the workhouse? He has done his work, justified his existence; therefore the shame of the workhouse is really not on him but on the economic and social system that ends him so. A vital defect remains in every society that leaves a good old man or a good old woman to die in disgrace when too old to work. Yet the life, apart from the manner of its end, is probably much undervalued. The real question is not the amount of a man's income in money, but rather how he can live on it; and probably the healthy man on the soil with ten shillings a week gets more out of life than the city clerk on two pounds a week and permanent indigestion. Army figures have shown us the difference of chest measurement between town recruits and those from the dales of Westmorland; and it is to the soil that the armies ever return to renew their strength. It is not easy to assume that life must be less where we go for our strongest men.

Probably those above Hodge have not considered how much a little might be to him, and to themselves indirectly; and it is certain that they have not applied themselves to make the most of him with any such efficiency as we find in the employers of other industries. The return to skill and capital is probably not less on the whole in agriculture, but the industry is less

adaptable to that centralisation on the grand scale which tempts a master mind to increase wages by economising energy. In his own lifetime the late Lord Armstrong got about ten thousand workers organised on a bank of the Tyne, with the total supervision within two miles, and vast possibilities of invention and economy from so many minds operating so closely; but the supervision for as many agricultural workers would spread over 100,000 acres, with the lives less associated for the developments that arise from close play on one another. Perhaps there is not much use appealing to the farmer in this connection, but there are many landlords who might profitably apply more of their educated faculty to the labour problem on their estates, by direct employment if they cannot raise their tenants to the higher efficiency which would enable them to pay better wages; and I believe a day is coming when the owner of land must either make it useful or lose it. Badly boycotted, on a bad tract of Galway, Lord Ashtown makes a much better return on his capital invested in this way than he could get from stocks and shares; and because he employs his tenants and their sons, they have decided by resolution not to purchase the land from him, seeing that they have more from it in wages, because the owner applies knowledge and capital beyond their means. This example at Woodlawn ought to be studied everywhere, and it is long past the stage of experiment, having now been at work for more than ten years, with the results

more encouraging every year. The problem created for the Galway landlord by the agrarian agitator to-day may be created for the Yorkshire landlord by the socialist agitator to-morrow, and Lord Ashtown has already demonstrated the only apparent solution. Spencer argues the matter to this effect: "If the individual have a valid right to the earth, it follows that nobody else has any right to it, and a single owner may with equity evict the whole human race from it." Of course, the law of ownership does not interpret "valid right" in any such sense, but the responsibility remains for the owner to see that his land supports his fellow-man or to lose it.

While this responsibility grows more exacting, educated faculty deserts the soil more and more. The literature of agriculture is extensive, and yet I know of only one agricultural writer in Europe with a literary style. It cannot be that the subject precludes style, for Huxley made himself delightfully readable on the mud of mid-ocean bottoms, even with his conclusions all wrong; and Grant Allen told the tragic life of the garden spider with impressions that can never leave my mind.

With all the generous possibilities of agricultural life, we find its current expression often painfully mean, and the agricultural press actually denying the proved productiveness of the soil, as if it were the business of the editors to discourage production and to multiply poverty. Take an example regarding a recent article of my own in the *Saturday Review*. Every fact in it is denied

by the *North British Agriculturist*, on the faith of "an Irish correspondent," and yet we know how Irish correspondents are organised to discourage production in order to destroy the landlord. The Scotch paper has published many columns of "criticism" on this article in several issues, and an editorial attack is based mainly on a misprint, not from the *Saturday Review*, but from the report of my evidence before the Royal Commission on Congestion. "Tritro-culture" is printed for "nitro-culture," and the Scotch editor revels in the slip, as if he were a Mayo moonlighter. Such is the literature of agriculture, and it could not be without having removed culture from the soil; but the absence of education is an invitation to the educated, who may find still in the fields a fair remuneration for talent, more free from the corrupting influences of modern life than any other pursuit called business.

CHAPTER XX.

A STUDY IN CONGESTION

GIVEN a fence with congested peasants on one side, prairie bullocks on the other side, and the same natural quality of land on both sides, to replace the bullocks by the peasants—and do no injustice. Here are no sentimental difficulties about migration, and as both sides of the fence are in the same parish, there is no danger to the ecclesiastical income by relieving congestion. The problem could scarcely be in simpler case, and if it can be solved at all, this is the place.

The land occupied by the peasants is good enough, but the area is not large enough, and we must find them farms, say thirty acres each, on the other side of the fence. Though the natural quality of the soil is the same, the actual qualities differ vastly, the people having exhausted the fertility, whereas the bullocks, not being politicians, have comparatively increased it. Besides, the bullocks are pleasanter neighbours and better tenants for anyone to keep on his land, which tends to increase its value. By removing the Irishman to make room for the beast, about 50 per cent. is added to the value of the land.

Such is the contrast, and given freedom, it tends to perpetuate its extremes with widening

effect, so that we may take the Irish as a people getting evicted from their own country by their own cows. The Department of Agriculture has found the bullocks capable of improvement, which increases their profit and their hold on the land; but the Anglo-Roman conspiracy fails to improve the people, and will permit no one else to try, so that the peasants on one side of the fence remain increasingly incapable to compete against the bullocks on the other side. Hence the need to "drive" the bullocks.

In these typical circumstances, if the land occupied by the peasants be at 20s. an acre, the land occupied by the bullocks must be at least 30s. This is the actual assessment of an expert employed to value such land for the Estates Commissioners, and from my own knowledge, it cannot be far wrong. On official estimate, the bullock is thus 50 per cent. higher than the Irishman in economic efficiency.

Let us now take one of our peasants across the fence, and see what must happen. He was paying £4 a year for rent, and now he has to pay £45. He was working with a spade, and now he must work with horses and implements. He was unable to organise, unless for politics, and now he must organise for industrial production, because he must have implements, and cannot well have a complete set on a farm so small, not to mention the need to organise his buying and his selling, now extended in a proportion at least as forty-five is to four. With such increased opportunities, his

productive proportion ought to increase more than that, but let us make generous allowances for one who has been so unfortunate. The peasant has no capital. If he had he might have acquired land for himself. He has worse than no knowledge, because he must unlearn before there can be the least hope for his success; and no capitalist in the world, unless a Chancellor of the Exchequer, will undertake to finance a man who has neither capital of his own nor efficiency to use the capital of others. However, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already set the precedent, and we must take it at that or start a controversy on Socialism, complicating the problem which we have undertaken to simplify. Every Chancellor of the Exchequer is a Socialist in Ireland, but without the virtues of Socialism.

As we have seen, the productive or earning power of bullock land is 50 per cent. more than that of peasant land, and the purchase value must follow; but here comes an additional complication. Peasant land is under "dual ownership," the landlord's interest and the tenant's interest; but the bullock land has in it the same dual value vested in one owner. For instance, the Duke of Abercorn has sold the tenant's interest in his untenanted land, creating new tenancies, and getting handsome prices for these, and having established the new tenants, he has sold to them the landlord's interest also, under the Land Purchase Act. A Land Commissioner tells me that by proceeding in this way the Duke

has got a dual total of forty years' purchase in all ; and as we have it announced in Parliament that the present average for the landlord's interest is twenty-two years' purchase, it follows that about eighteen years' purchase has been got for the tenant's interest in the hitherto untenanted Abercorn estate. In this instance, however, crime does not appear to have been organised with the usual care to "facilitate" the operation of the law ; but on the other hand we have undertaken to cure congestion "without injustice," and so we are bound to take something like eighteen years' purchase as to the honest value of tenant's interest in untenanted land in addition to the landlord's interest. With these facts before us, let us now return to our "emancipated" peasant across the fence.

His purchase-money in respect of landlord's interest at twenty-two years' purchase is £990, and in respect of tenant's interest at eighteen years' purchase it is £810 more. The building of a moderate house will be £300, and £200 will be wanted for working capital. This makes a total of £2,300 to be provided by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who in Ireland has already conceded the central principle of Socialism, namely, State capital. For interest and sinking fund, at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., the peasant's annuity is now over £70 a year, and local taxation brings his total annual liability up to about £80, which will be £2 13s. per acre, as against £1 3s. in congestion, on land naturally the same, with the fertility of the new farm sure

to fall, unless the efficiency of the farmer can be raised to the level of the beast, which is out of the question, since all Governments avoid the education question as a matter too dangerous for Government. If Government touched education to raise efficiency, the peasant might soon find a way to do things for himself; but in that case, the Anglo-Roman conspiracy might attack the Government, which would impede the policy laid down for all future Governments by the late Lord Randolph Churchill. For the peasants, there is no self-dependence without efficiency, and there is no efficiency without education; but education is controlled by those who keep "the moral centre of gravity fixed in a future existence" where no notice is taken of our fence or the kind of land on either side of it. To get our peasant over that fence will require a regiment of soldiers.

So far we have "cured" congestion honestly, but without success, and now it remains to find some other way. The United Irish League may have been guilty of unusual oversight in permitting land to reach near its honest price on the Abercorn estate, but such negligence may not occur again, especially under a Home Rule Government, and in a problem of such difficulty, let us grasp at any hope we can. With a sufficiently close understanding between the Chief Secretary and the organisers of agrarian crime, there is no reason why the price of tenant's interest in grass land should not be brought down from eighteen years' purchase to five years' purchase, which is

near the current figure wherever we have enough crime for the required assistance to the Government and its Purchase Programme ; but even at that, our peasant's annuity, with local taxes, brings his annual liability to about £60, and his land to £2 an acre, which will require the regiment of soldiers permanently on the fence to prevent the peasant coming back into congestion, while no one has considered the necessary addition to the Army Estimates.

We have seen the peasant before "relieved" on far easier terms than can be secured now, and he is often cursing the day he left the four acres for a farm requiring agricultural intelligence. No Government authority can ever hope to be more successful than the Congested Districts Board in getting land below its value as a necessary consequence of crime ; but the experts now in charge of the Board's work assure us that the migrants grow increasingly tired of being "improved," as it continually requires in them a standard of efficiency which cannot possibly be achieved on an education designed solely for "a future existence." The man now paying £4 a year rent can earn it in England as a migratory labourer, but he could not hope to save £80 a year that way, and he does not see how to find £2 13s. per acre on land which can be no better than his own after a few years of his ignorant treatment. A man accustomed to finance an annual budget of £25, with his family income at £15 or £20, is frightened by a budget of £350 a

year, because he does not know how to raise the family income to such a scale. His peace of mind has been founded on the smallness of his total liability, and a higher liability has more terror for him than an occasional famine. He dreads losing what he has for what he cannot keep, and in his circumstances there is more wisdom in his fear than in the statesmanship which attempts to finance his inefficiency.

The peasants are really labourers, on a low standard of efficiency at that, and the statesmen assume them to be men of business. A farm bearing a total liability of £80 a year means an annual turnover of £350, assuming proportionate production; but £350 frightens a man who has never had more than £25 passing through his hands in one year. His mind is not large enough for the prospect, and no Government dares to enlarge his mind. Where "relieved" already, he regards it as a grievance that he cannot keep the pig in the drawingroom, and sometimes he has done so despite all regulations to "improve" him—because the essential part of him, the mind, is left unimproved. Set the man free, with his faculties at his own command, as when he succeeds in America, and then give him land. In the meantime, the statesman who proceeds hurriedly in this congestion business is likely to regret it, or at least to leave a legacy of regret. On the statutory basis at work, the choice is between present confiscation and future bankruptcy. Deal honestly with the landlord, and the

position of the "relieved" peasant is impossible; make his position possible, and the landlord must be plundered by statute. Crafts of Parliament may modify shocks and compromise conflicts from time to time, but the essential problem remains until the Irish agrarian learns how to make land productive, which can never be without educational reform and possibilities of free mind inside Ireland. This is the fundamental difficulty with all Irish problems, the essential reason why the processes of progress, elsewhere effective throughout the world, remain impracticable to most of the agrarians in Ireland.

After all the State expenditure, congestion remains. The statistics of acreage show no substantial enlargement. Yet the plea for pity is dropped. We hear no more of the "and not fit to rear snipe." Now that the special pleaders control the Imperial purse, the less said about the victims of congestion the better.

CHAPTER XXI.

FOOD PROBLEM INDIVIDUALISED

THE beginning of the war found me on my little farm in Mayo, and our prices ran suddenly high, often far above those in England, especially for imports. In our part of Ireland flour is displacing potatoes as the staple. The normal profit on the bag of seven stones is 9d., but the shop keepers sold it for 18s. to 20s. at a time when they could buy it for 11s., and the multiplication of profits at the rate of 1,000 per cent. was not confined to flour. The "law" of demand and supply had to be suspended, and our local sergeant of police took the place of Adam Smith, but with power to punish extortion. I had consulted no authority beyond the stomach, the palate, and the purse, but the war has made me a food reformer. It is quite certain that an enormous amount of our expenditure on food is to injure us.

My mutton had been supplied on a standing bargain at 8d. Now it rose to 1s. 3d., at which consumers could not be found. The butcher had to shut up shop and take to tilling the soil. Our alternative was to pay even more than 1s. 3d. for any rubbish a distant stranger might choose to put on the railway, and beef was unprocurable, the cow being too big a quantity for the economy

of our market. Pig remained more reasonable, but a little pig goes a long way with me in hot weather. In short, I could not get meat, and I did not think then that I could live without it.

During the winter we had met the case mainly, with chicken, the local product at the initial price; but chicken disappeared early in spring, and we must either adapt ourselves to a "lower" standard of living or live beyond our means. The question of actual hunger could hardly arise on a farm intelligently conducted, for there was always something to eat, if only roast potatoes. We decided to attempt a bill of fare as far as possible out of our own products, at least for an experiment, and the result is that, in search of a lower standard of living, we have found a higher, at less than half the cost.

We had plenty of milk and cream, convertible into butter, plenty of rhubarb, strawberries and other garden stuff. I began breakfasting on stewed rhubarb, followed with a new laid egg, a cup of tea and a hot cake made with milk instead of water—which seems to be an ideal way of making milk a food. The mid-day meal starts on strawberries and cream, then a glass of milk, another egg and another hot cake. Dinner was the great terror. It was at seven. One evening at that hour I found a smoking dish of oatmeal porridge and looked it over. The housekeeper smiled, and I did my best to follow her example. "You'll like it better than you think," she said, and I set to work, supported more by courage than conviction.

The porridge was boiled in new milk instead of water, and after a little training I found the thing delicious. This dinner, costing less than threepence, is better (for me at least) than the dinners for which I have so often paid five or six shillings in the West End ; but I have to confess that its proper appreciation implies an amount of moral discipline which, at any time of life, is rather trying in the initial experience. It is like turning an Irishman into a Scotchman after forty.

Such is the main dietary, but still varied by an occasional chicken—we do not eat on principle, and I must admit that the dreadful virtues of the new scheme have been forced on us by necessity. It costs me less than a shilling a day, and I could never get my modest meals in London at less than ten shillings a day. After three months of it, the taste for meat has diminished ; so has the need for tobacco and tea, as if an improved state of nerve were steadily raising me to independence of stimulants and sedatives alike. For the first time in twenty years I can sit down and write a chapter without the pipe. My health is consciously better, I am more than a stone heavier, and the housekeeper expands at a rate more rapid still. The “improvement” in us, coincident with the war, is a subject of local comment.

I can do more work. I am much less tired after it. I can get out of bed an hour earlier. The world appears to me a better place. To the working man in the English town, dependent on the foreign producer, and menaced by the German

Submarine, my facts may excite envy rather than afford a practical example; but there is plenty of idle soil in the United Kingdom, and if it lies unproductive, this is mainly the fault of the townsman himself. He has not yet come in sight of the three acres and a cow, because he has dictated policy for a hand-to-mouth existence in the town alone, forgetting that the soil was the last resource between him and starvation. He has insisted on "cheap" food from abroad until his scheme threatens his access to food from anywhere. My own plot of the United Kingdom is not more than thirty-five acres, and its annual value is only £6; but most of the home products which have enabled me to solve the food problem come out of one rood, and the other 139 roods, producing at the same rate, would make more than £500 a year. If the townsman has not the life for porridge, and cannot produce his own milk, that is his own affair. There is no lack of land, and I have for more than twenty years been a townsman, in the intensest sense of the term. A healthy life gives a man an appetite for healthy food, and it costs much less on the whole. The real question is not the money income, but the kind of man you can maintain on it.

Our feeding for the cattle and the horse was a still more serious item, commercially considered. Nobody about us could keep cattle without concentrated foods, chiefly imported, and the prices of these had advanced at least 50 per cent. In the market value of the cow and of her products,

there was also an advance, but the "aisy goin'" farmer dependent largely on foreign food for his cattle, stood to lose on the whole by the change in values, even with the price of cattle increased by 30 to 40 per cent. Bullocks and "dry" heifers might live, if not improve, on the usual products of the farm, but it was not so with milk cows and their calves. Even on the best of soil, a calf must have something more than ordinary fodder and pasture until he is at least a year old, and unless we raise calves to-day we can have no cows to-morrow.

I decided to produce at home also my concentrated foods for cattle. The war began just early enough to sow winter crops, and I have been cutting out these from May to October, buying next to nothing for stock food, while my animals are in much better condition than those of the neighbours, who are now buying at prices increased by 40 to 50 per cent. They will probably pocket not one cent in advanced prices of cattle that has not already been more than cancelled by the advance in imported cattle food.

This method of dispensing with imports for farm animals is probably worth description in some detail, since the prices of meat, milk, and butter are largely affected by it. The prices of imports at any time are practically beyond our control, and more so now than ever, subject, as they are, to a hundred influences and chances which no man living can foresee; but not so our idle soil, which is at our will, ready to give us at

My Little Farm

any time the equivalent of our imports, and certainly at less cost for the present. We must have a large body of urban labour now displaced. Is there no way to organise it for food production? Agriculture is the one craft in which productive energy from other crafts can most easily be adapted on a large scale: a tailor can be taught to pull weeds more easily than a farm labourer can be taught to make trousers.

Importation for feeding is mainly to attain what experts call the "albuminoid ratio," but this can be obtained from our own fields, at least in the main. For six months of the year it can be done by a plant now in cultivation with us—the common Vetch. Its advantages do not end there. It holds the land only for about three months of the year, and another crop, such as rape, can be produced from the same area in the same season. It leaves the soil richer instead of poorer by its production, and if it cannot all be consumed in the green state, the remainder makes excellent hay. In August of last year, just after the war started, I sowed rape and vetches. The result is the abolition of the food bill since February, and my cattle have never been in better condition. The cultivation for these "catch" crops is nearly all horse work, and so I make the horse feed the cows instead of buying imports at prices so high above their feeding value. Meantime, rape and vetches cost no more to produce than they did before the war, and when the vetches precede the rape, our manuring will do

for the two crops. There are other leguminous things, but in the soil and climate of Connaught I have found the vetch more suitable than any of them. Its cultivation is simple, and the production of rape is simpler still. Given plenty of these, we can produce meat and milk in abundance, even on "bad" land, at least from May to November, and the rape stands good for winter also. To be ready for winter feeding, it can be sown in July, in land from which the vetch crop has been taken. The fuller detail of the process will be found in another chapter.

To the educated agriculturist my facts are elementary, but how many of our agriculturists are educated? In England, they sometimes do the right thing, but without knowing why. In Ireland, they nearly always do the wrong thing, with a reasoned defence for it. The man who wants meat, milk and butter in the towns may wonder why, with such a simple solution of the food problem before us, we have to pay prices so unnecessarily excessive to the rich and practically prohibitive to the poor. The British working man is no longer in a position to eat British beef, and the tendency is to deprive him of meat in any form, while we have a Departmental Commission to discover, among other things, why the children cannot get milk even in the agrarian villages of Ireland. The Irish Department of Agriculture had recently a commission to discover why the lack of pigs, and now they start their third commission of the kind, to find out how Ireland may

advance in food production. They will not find it out, and if they did, they would not dare to mention it. These commissions discover nothing to us but the old fact of Irish industrial incapacity, and this must continue as long as primary education is permitted to pervert the collective mind into mediævalism. The Irish are people pretending to go forward with their faces turned backward, and I have already shown that their Department could not touch this problem without an upheaval like that which dismissed Sir Horace Plunkett. In proportion as Englishmen run short of food, it is possible that they may take an interest in Ireland as one of their essential providers. Were it not for Ireland we should have additional millions of Englishmen at this moment deprived of first class meat at any price; but this Irish provision arises from the kindness of Nature rather than from the competence of man. There can hardly be another country in the world where a little advance in industrial character could give us such results in increased food production. As it is, Irish cattle have to be taken from some of the richest soil in the world to finish their fattening on the comparatively barren hill sides of Scotland. Meantime, the Scotchman looks forward to the London meat market, while the Irishman looks back to Brian Boru.

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