

HELP FOR IRELAND

BY AN "ANGLO-IRISHMAN"

OF FORTY YEARS' FARMING EXPERIENCE IN IRELAND.

"Circumstances are the rulers of the weak; they are but the instruments of the wise."—LOVER.



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TO THE

Lords and Commons of Great Britain and Ireland,

IN THE HOPE THAT SOME LIGHT MAY HEREBY BE

THROWN UPON THE SUBJECT OF OUR

AGRICULTURAL DIFFICULTIES,

THIS BROCHURE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

Houses of the Oireachtas

P R E F A C E.

MY object in writing this paper is twofold—first to lay before the British public the result of fifty years' experience of Ireland and Irishmen, and of forty years' practical experience of agriculture in that country. The details furnished actually came under my own observation. Hundreds of newspaper articles have been written telling us that Ireland is in a bad state, but none of them point the way with sufficient minuteness to feasible remedies. I trust those now suggested will not prove altogether utopian.

I have also ventured to draw attention to the probability that some very serious injury may accrue to the State in connection with our present agricultural system, unless earnest attention be directed in time to these particular points.

Mere literary critics, I feel, will not find any merit in these pages; they are not written for that purpose. Never should I have taken up the pen but for the earnest solicitations of many friends. I lay it down with the hope that what is herein written may in some measure point the way to reform to those inclined to take it up.

Houses of the Oireachtas

HELP FOR IRELAND.

THE present unhappy condition of Ireland is a prominent cause of anxiety and solicitude to every one who has relations with that country, whether as owner or as occupier of the soil, or in any other capacity. In an age so advanced in civilisation as this, it is an anomaly to find so bright and intelligent a race as is the Irish subject to constant political and social vicissitudes. But such is the fact. This peculiarity is exhibited at recurrent periods in a more or less decided form. Volumes have been written giving quasi-explanations of the origin of the existing social, religious, and political disquiet supposed to lie at the root of this eruptive peculiarity of the race. History, poetry, Parliaments, religion, law, and equity have, one and all, added their quota of explanations, protests, teaching, law-making, and so forth; but still the enigma is unsolved, the country is unsettled, and at this moment a million or more of its inhabitants are in a state of incipient revolution. Their advocates and leaders openly state that poverty, misery, and degradation occasion these tumultuous outbursts. They tell us the sole cause of this unhappy and dangerous condition amongst the Irish peasantry is to be found in the law of land tenure. Now the most gifted and intelligent political doctors of the present century have been honestly and patriotically occupied with persevering endeavours to provide a cure for this festering sore. But the sore is still uncured. Numbers of self-opinionated fools are ever ready recklessly to step in where legislative "angels fear to tread;" but it would be hard to convince any practical farmer, who was neither a

political partizan nor a religious fanatic, that the cure for the present Irish agricultural distress is to be found exclusively in law-making. We doubtless require some simple legal enactments and amendments, but our chief requirement is fine weather, aided by honesty, industry, intelligence, and liberality between all classes of the people ; and unless these latter elements are exhibited practically, the Irish can have but a meagre chance of surmounting their difficulties, even should Parliament overload them with a plethora of legislation, or heaven grant cycles of fine weather.

Into the legal or the political question of the existing land tenure of Ireland it is not my intention to enter. We have had quite enough of this style of thing. Every thoughtful man must be weary of newspaper articles and political harangues on the wrongs of Ireland. What I propose to do is to show the *causes* which led to the chronic antagonism of tenant to landlord in Ireland, the chief evils resulting therefrom, and, as far as I am able, to point out some practical remedies.

The historic causes of this antagonism are too well known to need more than the briefest enumeration. The various invasions, the religious feuds and persecutions, the penal laws, the Tithes' Act, the Rebellion of 1798, the barbarities of the insurgents, and the ruthless severities characterising their repression, were alone sufficient to lay the foundation of deep and undying mutual hatred in the breasts of the opposing sections of the Irish people. But the evil was not so to end. The fever of these unhappy discords and discontents was to be fearfully aggravated by a new cause. A piratical mode of farming, beginning on a small scale in the middle of the last century, assumed gradually such gigantic proportions that the people and the land they operated upon were brought to the verge of ruin. Every legal hindrance to its spread that could be brought forward was tried, but all to no purpose. And it was solely by the potato blight in 1846 that this destructive system of agriculture was effectually paralysed.

In reading the statistics of farm produce in Ireland no one can fail to be struck with the smallness of the average

yield of turnips, barley, and oats. The last report I read, published about five years ago, set down turnips at 17 tons, barley at 12 barrels, or 6 quarters, and oats at about 9 barrels of 14 stones each, or about $5\frac{1}{2}$ quarters to the Irish acre. This yield is miserably poor, and further on I hope to explain its two main causes. But why does *wheat* not now hold the prominent place it formerly held in the grain produce of Ireland? Why has its growth declined so alarmingly? From 1790, all through the period of the continental war up to the year 1846, we exported enormous quantities of wheaten flour to England. The quality of that flour was so superior, that an English miller, who made a large fortune in the trade, told me a few years since that his firm used to mix the Irish flour with the English, to improve the quality of the latter. So great was this difference that he went to Ireland on purpose to find out the reason. After careful investigation, he decided that the superiority of the Irish flour was due to two causes—the great amount of phosphate it contained, and the judicious mixing of white and red wheats. Now comes the question—Whence came a larger proportion of phosphatic residuum in Irish wheat than in English? I am not a chemist, but, as a practical farmer, I know that if I put a large quantity of phosphate manure on to my fields I can grow a finer wheat, and a more abundant crop. But it is upon the existence of suitable phosphatic nutriment that the growth of wheat mainly depends. Surely, then, if we have the phosphates we can grow the wheat. But, alas, we have not the phosphates! We killed the goose that laid this golden egg; and now, with wheat at sixty shillings a quarter, we virtually can't grow as much in Ireland as would feed our five and a half millions for six weeks in the year. The great flour mills that sprang up like magic between 1803 and 1842, are now useless, as far as grinding Irish wheat is concerned. But, during the period I mention, the production of this magnificent cereal was so extensive that there was not a single mill-site, of any intrinsic value, to be found unoccupied; and enormous fortunes were realised, both by millers and exporters. There were only

two crops—potatoes and wheat, no turnips worth mentioning, very little oats (save on the mountain farms, where they formed the exclusive crop), and less barley. But on every perch of ground where wheat could grow it was put down, to the prejudice of other varieties of corn. I have actually seen wheat of fair quality grown on a bog moor. But how were these enormous crops grown? By precipitating, or rendering soluble, the phosphates. How was this done? By burning into ashes the cream of the grass-lands—the upper two inches of the surface—where for years, aye, for centuries in some cases, all the vegetable matter had accumulated. Here lies the solution of the enigma of this wonderful growth of wheat. Here, too, we must look for the cause of the vast and unhealthy increase in the cultivation of the potato, and the consequent over-growth of population. The unhappy discovery of the suitability of the ashes thus obtained for the growth of potatoes and wheat first tempted the people to this pernicious practice. Hence originated nearly all our agrarian misfortunes. Here was a ready way of becoming a farmer, and making money. There was no capital needed, no skill, no cattle to make manure, no houses or stalls to feed them in, no elaborate machinery. The only thing required was possession of the land, a pair of old horses, and a plough of the rudest make, furnished with a “skinning sock.” This was an ordinary plough sock, well steeled, to the depth of 3 inches, all along the cutting edge. Special ploughmen were found in every parish, and practice had made them perfect at this kind of grass-skinning. The mass of them became so expert in this style of ploughing, that I have often seen them skin a sod, 10 inches wide, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ thick, from one end to the other of a 20-acre field without a break or tear of this carpet, or rather, cream of the land. I must mention that, when a farmer had a field ready to burn (that is, ploughed or skinned as named), he advertised it on all the neighbouring chapels to be let on a certain day, at from two to three guineas per rood, according to the quality and richness of the ancient pasture land he thus operated upon. At this rate of letting, he would make from eight to twelve guineas

per acre; his total outlay was never more than ten shillings an acre for ploughing, which was all the trouble he took with it. Every other expense of cultivation was paid by the parties who rented it. He thus put into his pocket about eight pounds per acre, as there was more land let off at ten pounds than at twelve guineas the acre. As tenant, he had to pay his rent, say thirty shillings; taxes, one shilling and sixpence; and survey of this burnt land, at one shilling per acre. When the day came for letting the land to be burned, a great concourse of people assembled, and the fiercest competition ensued as to whom a rood should be let. Tickets were made, numbered 1, 2, 3, &c., up to 40 if a 10-acre field, and up to 60 if a 15-acre field. These were all thrown into a hat, and then a girl, blindfolded, put in her hand and distributed them to such of the candidates as were selected by the farmer. Never shall I forget the scenes I have witnessed at these land-lettings. Little did I know what germs of future mischief were then being developed, and what a dark history of crime here had its initial movement; what feuds, discords, and hatred; what protracted lawsuits, wholesale ejectments, and prosecutions for murder; what fines, imprisonment, transportations, and hangings! No words that I am master of can convey an adequate idea of the evils which followed. Two crops of potatoes, with alternate crops of wheat, exhausted the wheat-growing properties of the soil. But these four crops were so abundant, and the wheat of so magnificent a quality, that fortunes were rapidly realised. When I say fortunes I mean fortunes in a peasant's eye. More than half the so-called farmers in my neighbourhood are sons of labouring men, who by various means got possession of an old grass field or two, skinned them, and then let them out to be burnt for potato growing. Some of this land was planted by speculators, who sold the produce on credit, on usurious terms, to their poorer neighbours. The greater part was planted by young couples engaged to be married, who only waited to get a rood of potatoes ripe before they went to the priest. During this disastrous period of land-burning I have

known the banns of marriage published for thirty-seven young couples in one day in a local chapel, one of three in the same parish. Doubtless the others had as many worshippers at the altar of Hymen. Thus Malthusianism went to the wall, and more than a hundred marriages were solemnised in one week in the same parish. Ninety of these rash unions would have been impossible but for the thirst for excessive potato-growing, rendered possible by the rich manure obtained from the burning into ashes the turf of our ancient pastures. In every other department of life the increase of population results from the successful development of special industries. But in Ireland the very reverse obtained. The country was being rapidly ruined, the land in most cases hopelessly deteriorated: yet the population was increasing enormously. Late in the night I often stood at my own hall door during this season of destructiveness, and admired the gorgeous appearance of the horizon, lit up over an arc of thirty miles by the reflection from countless fires blazing on all sides. One would have imagined some great national rejoicing was being celebrated, and that the enthusiasm of the people found vent in universal conflagration. As a boy, I thought the fun immense. A number of us used to visit the fields that were on fire, and, in our mad joy and recklessness, dared each other to jump over the blazing heaps of sods. The renters of conacre lands remained up all night to keep these burning heaps dressed with fresh sods, never stopping until all the turf or skin was reduced to ashes. It was, alas! in after years a sore discovery for owners of land, and for occupiers also, that at the time these reckless creatures had not been celebrating a legitimate joy, but, on the contrary, more like lunatics, had been waving funereal torches over the grave of Irish agriculture. I dwell on this point perhaps too diffusively, but it must be apparent to any one that if we had had no land-burning, we should not have had that excessive production of potatoes which was the immediate cause of the pernicious increase in population. In corroboration of this statement I point to the remarkable decrease of marriages amongst

the lower classes immediately after the potato blight, when also ceased, with equal abruptness, this ruinous system of land-burning.

To grow potatoes on a large scale legitimately is a most expensive operation, unless near a large town. No one but a skilful farmer, with plenty of land and capital, could attempt it with any hope of success. It takes eighty loads of farm-yard manure to an acre, worth say four shillings per load. Manure alone, then, would cost sixteen pounds. Eight pounds more for rent, labour, and seed would raise his outlay to twenty-four pounds per acre. Now, the acre covered with the ashes furnished by the burning needed little more than four pounds' outlay to raise a splendid crop; so that the manured acre at twenty-four pounds was overwhelmingly handicapped, when the ashes' acre cost but four pounds. The result can be seen at a glance. Competition for land without burning lay amongst farmers who had capital. But, as there was virtually no capital required if crops were to be grown on ashes, of course competition was only to be measured by the population of the district, not by skill or capital, since neither was required. The agriculturists of those days no doubt considered themselves "burning and shining lights," and they were so with a vengeance. A whole century of liberal and intelligent farming will hardly remedy the mischief done during that mad and destructive period. The selfish fury of the people knew no bounds; land they must get at all hazards. Some of the poorer gentry, too, were infected with this fever of covetousness. Many a handsome lawn have I seen ruined past recovery. A perfect mania seized the whole people, high and low, rich and poor, farmers, labourers, aye, and women too. I can only compare the craze to that which seized England, and the inhabitants of Paris in particular, when John Law introduced his "heroic" finance, that culminated in the bursting of the South Sea Bubble. In the famine in 1846 our land-burning bubble was burst; and, since, we have had almost hopelessly to attempt the work of restoration.

As I deal with facts—and facts are telling things—I

will give as an illustration a case which occurred on my father's property. A tenant burnt thirty acres of the feeding parks, and when the land was skinned, he let it off in roods at ten pounds per acre for potatoes. Next year he sowed white lammas wheat, and sold eighteen sacks to the acre, at forty-four shillings per sack of twenty stone. When the wheat was removed, he simply gave the stubble land one ploughing and one harrowing; it lay fallow all the winter, and then in spring it was let in roods as before, for potato growing, at the original price. Not an ounce of manure used, and with no further tillage! When the potatoes were removed, he sowed red wheat, and sold fourteen sacks to the acre at thirty-seven shillings per sack. Here was a falling off already. He then manured the land, and planted potatoes himself. Then wheat was sown; but only *two and a half* sacks were reaped, and this so poor in quality that no flour miller would buy it; and it was only at last got rid of to a starch maker, who lived at a considerable distance. From that day to this no wheat has ever been sown in that field; nor would any intelligent farmer attempt to do so, except after a wholesale application of phosphates. Well, this shows there was an immediate profit to the farmer of fully £2300 on thirty acres in *four* years, after paying all rent and expenses. The various lettings on this farm for a period of eighty years were as follow:—first, £3 5s. per acre; next, £3 3s. per acre; next, £2 14s. 7d. Then this burning occurred, and when the farm, containing nearly 200 acres, was scourged to the utmost, it was given up, only one bid being made for it of thirty shillings per acre. This being ruinously low, I farmed it myself for over twenty years, treating the land with the utmost liberality, sinking £1500 in manures and other expenses; and then my health failing, I let it on lease for thirty-one years for £2 10s. per acre to a first-class farmer, who has received this year an abatement reducing the rental to 37s. 3d. per acre. This is one of thousands of instances which have occurred all over the country. Is it any wonder, then, that this competitive fury to get possession of land seized the people,

and that *possession* became the most significant word in what I may call the legal vocabulary of the Irish farmer? Possession was everything to him. It was not only nine points of the law; it was the law itself. This style of tillage farming in Ireland, which existed for a period of nearly eighty years, from about the year 1764 up to 1846, could in the main be only compared to that of a man who, having taken a well-furnished house by the year, began the moment he got into possession to sell the furniture, in order to support himself and his family and pay his rent, and follow up this system by accusing the owner of the house of tyranny and cruelty when he prosecuted him for the loss of his property.

But great efforts were made to stem the mischief. At the instance of indignant and intelligent landowners an Act of Parliament was passed, which imposed a penalty of £10 an acre on every tenant who pared and burnt his land without the landlord's consent in writing. The law was peculiar. If the land were burnt defiantly, as was generally the case, for the first six months after proof of the offence it was open to the head landlord to take proceedings. But as, in most instances, the head rental was four or five shillings an acre only (as in the case of the Duke of Buckingham and others), the head landlord took no trouble about it. Thus the first six months went by quietly. Now we come to landlord No. 2, the immediate lessor of the tenant, who, letting this land at twenty-five or thirty shillings an acre, found his whole interest in immediate jeopardy from the unlawful acts of his land-burning tenants. When his turn came, he instituted proceedings, and focussed in himself and in his legal proceedings all the hatred of race, religion, law, and self-interest. Such swearing and counter-swearing, such recrimination, such devilish devices, such legal ingenuity, subterfuges, evasions, and perjuries were never, I believe, equalled in any age or country. A race of Sessions' attorneys existed at that time who were the very essence of litigious acuteness, and there was not a flaw or weak point in the title of any landlord's property, or in his own character or that of his relatives, that these men were not

intimately acquainted with. Their cross-examinations of plaintiffs in these land-burning suits were conducted with such malevolent acerbity that the decree, if pronounced in their favour, was too dearly purchased at the price of social and personal humiliation; and when they left the court, howls of derision, threats, and anathemas were hurled at them by multitudes of men and women, who thus openly manifested their sympathies for the tenant, and their animosity to the landlord. The history of one such suit will convey to my readers some idea of the terrible results arising from competition for land, the value of which was artificially raised by this land burning system.

A wealthy farmer, living within a few miles of my residence, had fierce disputes and very acrimonious litigation with some tenants as to the possession of land near his home farm. This led ultimately to his assassination, for he was shot late one evening on his return from the neighbouring town. Within six months of the murder, in open day, in the presence of vast numbers of people of all ages, six of these tenants were hanged on one cross beam, erected on the top of a hill close to where the murder was perpetrated. Imagine the scene. Four companies of Highlanders, with bayonets fixed and muskets loaded, guarded the prisoners on their march from the county prison, distant sixteen Irish miles. The melancholy cortège was accompanied by a vast multitude, shrieking, praying, condoling with, and encouraging these unfortunates. It was an awful sight in all its bearings—awful in the lesson of swift justice that overtook the murderers; but, perhaps, more awful still, in the terrible seed of undying hatred that day sown deep down in the hearts of the 20,000 sympathising spectators. It is a question whether an intramural execution would not have been wiser. Some will think one way, some another. But, as I am not writing in any party spirit, I pass no opinion. I leave the picture before the reader's eyes, who can draw his own deductions from it. I myself, then six years old, was taken by one of my father's servants to the avenue gate to see the people going to witness the execution. A great

concourse converged from all sides. Strings of country cars, filled with women of all ages, horsemen, and footmen in hundreds, dressed in their best, passed before me; and, although the execution took place at three o'clock on a summer's day, and the spot was only three or four miles from my house, it was eleven o'clock at night before the last of the shouts and execrations of the people returning from the fearful spectacle were heard. What a stirring tale a Charles Lever could write of the great social, political, and agricultural evils consequent on land-burning! The barony in which this crime was committed was well known as the most fruitful in agrarian crime of any in Ireland.

An old workman of my brother's, who lived close by the scene of the execution, told him that he was privy to, and knew most of the principal actors in, forty-seven murders, all agrarian in character, and all more or less springing from this dreadful system of land-burning.

Here, then, we see the origin of the vicious increase in the cultivation of the potato, the consequent increase of population, and all the mischiefs that accompanied and resulted from it. The land was impoverished, and famine only put the finishing touch to what ignorance and imprudence, lawlessness and recklessness, initiated. A wide, a very wide gap opened between the owner and occupier of the soil—a gap which has now become still wider, from the unfavourable climatic conditions of the seasons, and from the incapacity, recklessness, and folly of nearly all classes of the sufferers.

But let us draw a veil over this picture, and endeavour, if possible, to help landlord, tenant, lawmaker, and administrator—in fact, to help all who will honestly join hands, and try to do their duty to themselves, their country, and their God. The present condition of Ireland is a matter of grave anxiety, and it is wise not to waste time in lamenting past mistakes and bygone mischiefs. But I cannot help expressing my astonishment that neither in the Parliamentary debates, nor in any of the voluminous writings or speeches on this land question, is any mention made of the incalcul-

able mischiefs created by this wholesale land burning, the very “fons et origo mali” of all our Irish land tenure and land agitation troubles. It is like the play of “Hamlet” with Hamlet omitted. This is curious to a degree, as every man over sixty years of age, whose first thirty years were passed as a rural resident, must know how unexaggerated is this version of the facts, and how painfully true are the arguments and deductions.

However, as verbal evidence of this nature cannot be made available in the pages of a paper such as this, I copy the preamble of one of the numerous Acts of Parliament passed to prevent this ruinous land-burning system. This Act is entitled: “54 George the Third, chapter 15—An Act of the Parliament of Ireland for preventing the pernicious practice of burning land, and for the more effectual destroying of vermin; and which was amended and made perpetual by an Act made in the Parliament of Ireland in the first year of the reign of his present Majesty, and by *several* Acts since made in the Parliament of Ireland.”

My readers will now see how unexaggerated were my statements as to what a fearful condition the land of the country must have been reduced, and how enormous was the injury when the Legislature had to interfere and interpose the entire strength of the Government in order to stem, if possible, the mad career of these land burners. How the petty attacks upon landlords, as to their oppressions and tyrannies (nine-tenths of which were provoked by this wanton destruction of their property), fade away and are almost lost to memory in presence of the vast injury done by the tenants, not only to landlords, but also to the nation at large, by thus wantonly, illegally, and idiotically using up the resources necessary for the proper support and *defence** not only of the then existing population, but also of the generations yet unborn!

The first of these Acts of Parliament is of very early date. It is entitled the 17th George II., but neither this

* See pp. 62, 63, 65.

Act nor the amended Act of the 54th George III., chapter 115, were found to be sufficient, for the latter Act goes on to recite: "And by several Acts since made in the Parliament of Ireland," that is, Acts passed by the native Irish Parliament, then sitting in College Green, in the city of Dublin, the chosen representative of the native Irish. No imperial influences could possibly intervene here, or over-ride or influence legislation in a spirit antagonistic to what were in truth and in fact Irish necessities, convictions, and desires. One of these several Acts of the Irish Parliament increased the penalty for land burning of 40s. per English acre, set out in the 17th George II., to £10 per Irish acre—the words "several Acts since made" proving incontestably that from a considerable time previous to the 17th George II., and for some time after the accession of George IV. to the throne, that the Parliament of Ireland, and the United Parliament also, were almost unceasingly occupied in the promulgation of measure after measure, the urgency being so great, and the destruction of the land of the country so imminent, that the fine had to be advanced to a point which, if in Irish currency, would amount to about £11 per acre, more than half the then fee simple value of landed property in Ireland. Yet on went this piratical practice, for, as far back as the year 1828, I remember distinctly the whole country round exhibited, unhappily, too numerous evidences that neither common prudence, nor the law, with all its executive power, nor a consideration as to the rights of others could for a moment deter these tenant farmers from indulging in such acts of covetous destructiveness. And so it continued in all its ruinous and demoralising magnitude until the potato blight in 1846, an act, promulgated from the Throne of High Heaven, providentially putting an end to it. There was no particular section of the farming class especially addicted to this practice of land burning. Protestants and Roman Catholics were almost equally to blame, with this difference, that the former, for the most part, were destroying their own property, but the latter the property of other people. Much of the mischief was done in igno-

rance of its baneful results, and under the impulse of that happy-go-lucky thoughtlessness, recklessness, and incapacity which lies at the root of all our Irish agricultural troubles. But even now, although this land-burning system has ceased, we find the mass of Irish farmers are wedded to a number of injurious habits, and their style of husbandry is so defective, that unless a radical change takes place, Ireland can never improve. I know of hundreds of farms, at a low rent too, where a sum equal in amount to the full rental is annually lost by mismanagement. To remedy this sad state of things is the main purpose of these pages. After careful consideration I venture to enumerate the following changes and improvements as those which I consider most advisable and necessary:—

FIRST SUGGESTION.

A proper system of making, preserving, and applying manure.

NOTE.—The plan generally adopted in Ireland is, to cart home a quantity of bog mould, if available within a radius of five miles, throw it into a dunghole full of putrid water, mix clay with it, and leave it. To this is added daily the manure from cattle and pigs, ashes from the house fires, and refuse of all kinds. The rain has free access to the upper portion, so that when the sun shines, evaporation commences, and the fertilizing gases are all carried off. I have seen experiments with manure made in large cowsheds, which was never stirred from under the cattle until carted on to the turnip and mangold drills. The result of comparisons fairly carried out, between this manure and that left exposed, was, that the latter did not in any instance, with equal quantities supplied, produce half the weight of roots the former did. You might as well boil a spring chicken for six hours, and then serve up the carcass to a hungry navvy, and expect it to satisfy his enormous appetite, as expect manure, left exposed in this fashion, to satisfy the hunger of exhausted tillage land. This exhaustion is aggravated by the almost universal system of sowing two white or corn crops in succession without any manure.

SECOND SUGGESTION.

The establishment upon all large estates where water power is available of bone crushing and bone manure factories.

NOTE.—The benefits of this suggestion are so palpable, that I need not enlarge upon it.

THIRD SUGGESTION.

The deepening by the Government of all the great arterial or geographical rivers ; and that the minor streams be placed under the control of the several Grand Juries of Counties and the Sanitary Boards, conjointly with the various County Surveyors.

NOTE.—Arterial drainage is surrounded by so many preliminary obstructions and difficulties, aggravated by such selfishness and indifference on the part of many of the local proprietors, that the result is seen in the number of rivers still untouched. I only know of three great geographical rivers in Ireland which loudly call for drainage—the Barrow, the Shannon, and the Suck. But there are innumerable streams and tributaries of the larger rivers which ought at once to be taken out of the category of national arterial drainage. These should be placed under the control of the Grand Juries and Sanitary Boards in each county, aided by the County Surveyors, whose salaries should be augmented in proportion. Here is a body with all the necessary machinery on the spot. The lowering and cleansing of these smaller rivers and rivulets should be presented for, as a portion of the necessary business of the county, just as the roads and bridges are. But a separate assessment should be made, by which the expense should be thrown upon the properties benefited—the money to be raised from the Board of Works under the usual provision for arterial drainage. Were this plan adopted, in three years the climate of Ireland and the resources of the peasantry would be immensely improved ; and the expense would be about half of the cost of the present dilatory and vexatious system.

FOURTH SUGGESTION.

To apply some of the money borrowed, or to be borrowed, by landowners as premiums to their tenants for autumn

tillage, such as obtains in the South of Scotland, and over all England.

NOTE.—By applying money borrowed in the above manner, an immediate benefit will accrue to the crops of the ensuing season. Under the present system, if March be wet, the farmer cannot harrow, roll, or crosscut the tillage land intended for green crops. The result is, late crops from bad seeding. But by ploughing, harrowing, and drilling in October, November, and December, all spring tillage is anticipated. There is then nothing to do but to grub the drill furrows, manure, and cover at once with a double mould-board plough, at the rate of two and a half acres per day. In the year of the cattle plague I travelled from Edinburgh to Ipswich on the 4th of January, and on all that extended line, as far as I saw, all the stubble land was drilled for green crops. I at once adopted this system upon my own farms, and the result was a saving of thirty-four per cent. in horse labour and other expenses, and a dry, pulverised, enriched seed bed, which told its own tale of benefit in many ways. I would make it a condition in all new leases or lettings, or temporary reductions in rent, that the tenant should adopt this system. A pleasant surprise would be the result on both sides.

FIFTH SUGGESTION.

To instruct small farmers how to fold sheep on green crops, and to aid them, on the co-operative system, in purchasing the necessary number. We have an example in the method adopted by the Canadians and Americans in cheese and butter making.

NOTE.—I do not know of any method of restoring worn-out land so good or so cheap as the following:—If land be much exhausted, oats should be sown upon it early in spring with artificial manure—4 cwt. bone phosphate, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of nitrate of soda. Upon these oats, whilst green, and about 15 inches high, sheep should be folded, with the addition of a small quantity of cracked oats daily. After the folding, plough the land and harrow it. Then spread 4 cwt. powdered bone, 5 cwt. of salt, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of Peruvian guano to the acre; and put down white Norfolk, or stone turnip, or any other good early variety. This crop should be sown on the flat, drilled, and spaced with the hoe, thinned, &c. Then sheep should be again folded on it, giving

them this time oilcake and oats. A crop of bere or tawny oats should be sown in December on this land ; this would be ripe in the following July, and ought to be very heavy. When reaped, plough the ground lightly, apply a small dressing of powdered bone, say 4 cwt. per acre, and lay down the field with rape and rye-grass, for ewe and lamb feeding in the ensuing March. It should be pastured for three years, and after that tilled, if required, on the six-course rotation system.

SIXTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage on all proper soils the growth of clover, suitable for raising a heavy second crop, which should be ploughed down as manure. This plan is successfully pursued by the Americans in restoring exhausted cotton lands.

NOTE.—This may be varied by growing mustard, and ploughing it down while still green. All English farmers are aware of the great advantages of so doing, so I need not go into details.

SEVENTH SUGGESTION.

Endeavour to diminish the number of half-employed horses, which eat up the profit on small farms, and substitute good deep spade husbandry for the superficial plough-scratchings now so much in use.

NOTE.—Below I give details of a case, one of hundreds I know, and which will illustrate the value of this suggestion. Light ploughing in deep soils leaves no protection to root crops in over-dry sunny weather. They wither and droop. Neither does it give facilities to the spreading out of their fibres in search of nutriment. Corn requires the land to be consolidated ; green crops should have the opposite treatment.

EIGHTH SUGGESTION.

To establish the weed law as existing in England. By this a farmer can be summoned, and is liable to be heavily fined for allowing the weeds on his fields or fences to seed, as the first high wind carries this seed all over the country.

NINTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage poultry farming, by supplying farmers' wives with brood eggs of the best breeds, and by issuing manuals of instruction as to the housing, feeding, and general management of poultry.

NOTE.—This subject is beginning to rise into importance. Ladies who live in the country would find most interesting employment in working out its details. Other benefits would accrue. When visiting cottages and farm-houses, cleanliness and order might be favourably inculcated.

TENTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage the formation of small fish ponds where practicable, and to assist landholders in procuring the best and most easily-cared-for varieties of fish.

NOTE.—In cases where a sufficient outfall cannot be commanded, a great deal of boggy wastes can be reclaimed by sinking drains, 25 feet wide and 6 feet deep, through the marsh, throwing up the stuff on both sides. Then measure off a piece 45 feet wide, and sink another drain the same width as before, and so on over the whole piece to be operated upon. Let the land and stuff lie untouched for a month until both have soaked as much as possible; then spread the excavated stuff evenly over the untouched—this will raise it considerably over its original level. Cultivation can now begin. Cabbages and many other kinds of vegetables can be grown, also hemp, flax, rape for seed, soft turnips, and if it can be clayed or gravelled it will be able to produce bere or black oats. It will then consist of alternate strips of land 45 feet wide, and of drains or ponds 25 feet wide. Thus nearly two-thirds of what was formerly waste has been turned into useful, crop-bearing land. The drains can be turned into fish ponds, which, if intelligently looked after, ought in five years to pay three times as much as the reclaimed portions. These ponds can be stocked with pike, perch, eels, roach, bream, tench, and perhaps some other varieties; a casting net can be used to catch them, as it will not injure those fish that may be too small to kill for use. The ponds can be further utilised as water-ways upon which, in wide flat-bottomed boats, manure can be conveyed on to the cultivated strips, or the crops grown thereon carried to the

homestead. The Americans are now devoting the most earnest attention to fish culture. The last report of the Fish Culture Society shows extraordinary results. Professor Baird, a member of the society, states as follows:—"The fish that we are having the most special success with is the German carp ; it is one of the most valuable food fishes known, and it is a domesticated fish. It bears the same relations to other fishes that ducks and barn-door fowls do to the birds of the woods ; it has been kept in confinement for so many years that all its instinct of wildness has disappeared ; it is now as tame and as easily managed as poultry. These fish are easily taught to come at the sound of a bell or whistle, and to feed from the hand," &c. Here we have ample encouragement to induce us to adapt our drains, ponds, and dykes to this very productive system of fish culture.

ELEVENTH SUGGESTION.

To prevent the over-seeding of corn land, and to provide on each estate a proper fan and separator with which to blow out and remove all light and undersized grains, and to get rid of weed seeds.

NOTE.—Great carelessness and ignorance are exhibited by most farmers in this very important department of farming. A small light grain will no more produce a good strong bud, or a flourishing plant, or full ear of corn, than will an ill-formed, thin, half-starved cow produce and rear a good calf. At the lowest estimate, five stone of seed corn in every twenty sown are utterly unfit for such a purpose. This quantity of poor seed is not only useless as a propagator, but it overcrowds and encroaches upon the room and nutriment necessary for proper development of the good, and a most uneven crop is the result. Mr Mechi has often written cogent letters to the agricultural journals, warning the farmers against this pernicious system. Besides, the five stones of poor corn would be worth sixpence per stone for feeding hens. Imagine the millions of eggs additional we could produce, if this twofold saving were effected. The drill machine, when used, partially remedies the over-seeding, but not the use of unsuitable seed.

TWELFTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage in Ireland the planting of pollard willows

on the banks of rivers, streams, drains, and waste places suitable to such useful timber.

NOTE.—The Americans, chuckling, no doubt, over our apathy and negligence, have an agency in Liverpool for the sale of willow and other kinds of timber hoops. What a commercial slap in the face this is! Scarcely a pollard is to be seen in Ireland, where vast quantities could be grown without cost, save that of the slips from which to grow them. In England they abound in many counties, and are a great source of revenue.

THIRTEENTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage small farmers to utilize their cow or cows, as they do in Spain, Belgium, Germany, and France. Nearly all the carting, ploughing, and drilling is in these countries performed efficiently by self-supporting and economical animals, at less than half the cost, and half the risk from disease, as compared with the “nobler quadruped.”

NOTE.—In Belgium, especially, I found the milch cattle performing nearly all the farm work. They bring loads of timber also into the towns and villages, and while the drivers are cutting the trees into logs fit for firewood, the cows are being milked, and the milk sold to some of the townspeople. These cows with the cart (like an inverted sheep rack), full of manure bought in the town, were driven home, performing thus a double journey which did not cost their owners one farthing.

FOURTEENTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage the growth of small patches of flax upon every farm, sufficient to provide shirts, sheets, table-cloths, sacks, and winnow sheets for household and harvest purposes.

NOTE.—This is merely an attempt to revive an old domestic industry. Fifty years ago, I remember, wool and flax spinning was a constant household custom amongst the families of both farmers and labourers. A shirt made from home-spun flax would be worth a dozen from Cottonopolis. This may appear a violation of one of the rules of political economy, but adherence to

this doctrine has given us cotton fabrics adulterated with size and China clay, and broadcloth manufactured from shoddy.

FIFTEENTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage the growth of the dwarf early long-pod pea; to save farmers the cost of buying bran, pollard, and sharps for pig feeding.

NOTE.—Pea-growing deserves the most earnest encouragement. All the money the farmer's wife receives for eggs, butter, and fowls, has to be sent off weekly to the corn mills to purchase feeding stuffs. A strained and irritating feeling of poverty is thus occasioned in almost every home. This pea, if properly cultivated, will give an immense yield, up to and sometimes exceeding twenty sacks of twenty stone each (fourteen pounds to stone), per Irish acre, a much larger average than any other crop will yield. In addition, the straw or haulm, if carefully saved and stacked, is an admirable food for cattle, and the pea-growing gives a useful break in the rotation of crops, a much required change on small farms in Ireland.

SIXTEENTH SUGGESTION.

To give instructions as to the manner of rearing and fattening pigs on soured food, so as to save the present enormous and unnecessary expense for fuel used in cooking for these animals.

SEVENTEENTH SUGGESTION.

To promote the system of joint-stock butter-making, so as to ensure equality of make, avoid the loss now caused by inferior quality and many varieties, and the great expense of separate churning establishments.

NOTE.—This is one of the most important points to which I would call attention. I copy the report of butter sales in the Cork market from the *Standard* of the 22d November last :—

CORK BUTTER MARKET.

Firsts...128s. Seconds...119s. Thirds...105s. Fourths...95s. Fifths...61s.

Here are five descriptions of butter with very startling differ-

ences in value and quality. No doubt all the makers style themselves dairymen ; from what I know of Irishmen, not one of them would assert his right to this designation with such an unblushing effrontery as the maker of brand No. 5, at 61s. per cwt. If this man and the makers of samples at 95s. and 105s. can live and pay rent as dairymen, the two butter-makers who sell at 119s. and 128s. per cwt. must, if they have large farms, rapidly accumulate fortunes. At this moment I am not prepared to say what percentage of butter-makers belongs to each of these five classes ; but there must be great losses to both landlord and tenant in Ireland if much of the dairyland be in the possession of the representatives of brands three, four, and five. Obstinacy, love of dirt, and stupidity must be the chief points in the character of number five. No doubt some farms are much more fitted for butter-making than others ; but an intelligent man would soon find out if his land were unfitted for dairy purposes, and be ready to adapt it to other uses. There should be a milk tester to investigate the butter-making properties of each consignment of milk, which the partners should forward to the central factory. The fact of the above discrepancies in the value of butter proves the necessity for the change.

EIGHTEENTH SUGGESTION.

To give instructions in house-feeding cattle, and to distribute manuals containing information as to the rotation of soiling crops of the best and most easily cultivated varieties.

NOTE.—Upon this point (in connection with manure-making and autumn tillage) hangs the hope of improvement in Irish farming. The ordinary grass land (that is, not meadow, dairy, or feeding land) is in a wretched state. It had been exhausted by the burning process, perhaps two or three times repeated ; and in such hands as now possess it, never can or will recover, unless through the aid of a great increase in the quality and quantity of farm-yard manure, and a much greater expansion as to a varied rotation of crops.

The poorer class of Irish farmers scarcely ever top-dress their grass lands, and not many of the richer ones either. Any manure, worth calling by that name, is chiefly used for the Historic Potato. Compost, made up of clay and bog-mould, aided by highly-adulterated bone manure, is generally used for turnip growing ; so that an immediate resort to the system of house-feeding adopted in Belgium seems absolutely necessary. The winter feeding of milch cows at present offers more hope of profit than summer

feeding, as the Canadian and American supply of butter falls off rapidly at that season. Butter, that was 1s. per lb. in October of this year, in early December rose to 1s. 8d. I should like to pursue this subject, I feel it to be so very important; but enough has been said to fix the attention of those who intend to give practical direction to the matter.

NINETEENTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage the planting and replanting of orchards in Ireland, with information as to varieties of fruit trees best suited to soil and climate.

NOTE.—In the present condition of foreign trade it is our duty to curtail, as far as possible, the vast pecuniary outgoings which have now assumed such startling proportions. Keeping this in view, every home industry should be encouraged. This will increase our independence and save our pockets. Unfortunately, most of the ground in this kingdom is unfit for fruit, but all along the South Coast of England and in the south of Ireland, there is good opening for great increase of production.

TWENTIETH SUGGESTION.

To encourage the planting of French furze on inferior land, and to supply machines for bruising and chopping the same, as it is a most admirable and economical food for horses and milch cattle.

NOTE.—Every sign in the farming horizon points to the absolute necessity for great increase in our winter dairy system. The ordinary soiling crops are chiefly of summer growth. In French furze we have, or can easily have, an inexhaustible supply of the richest milk-producing winter green food. The prices of milk and butter being much higher in winter than in summer prove the value of this suggestion.

TWENTY-FIRST SUGGESTION.

To improve labourers' cottages, and to see them properly ventilated, and furnished with decent appliances; and in all cases, where practicable, to add a garden of at least half an Irish acre on which to raise some oats and vegetables.

NOTE.—This subject has been repeatedly pressed upon the attention of the landlords and the Government. I only allude to it to keep it before the eyes of those who, under the pressure of the present crisis, might act energetically if earnestly reminded of its utility. The garden would be a most valuable addition, as numbers of Irish labourers are only employed for about seven or eight months in the year. To have a small home-supply of food and employment for the other four months, would materially increase their comfort and happiness, and also help to prevent discontent, which is nearly always a winter crop in Ireland.

TWENTY-SECOND SUGGESTION.

In limestone districts, to encourage the erection of small kitchen lime-kilns, whereby the cost of boiling food for horses, pigs, and cattle can be reduced to a minimum. In addition to this, a bushel of lime per day, or more, should be supplied according to the size of the kiln—most useful for manure, mortar, or whitewash.

NOTE.—The exhaustion of the vegetable matter of the soil by skinning and burning the surface prevents the use of lime on such land, as it would have nothing to act upon; burning lime, therefore, for manure (which had attained enormous proportions fifty years ago) is now almost universally discontinued. The farmers have thus unconsciously corroborated my statements as to the incurable injury the tillage land sustained by burning. Small kitchen lime-kilns air and warm the whole house, and disinfect byres. Lime makes manure for any land, if mixed with clay and allowed to lie over for a year, when it will be found to have lost any injurious property it possessed as quicklime. It can be used in this state most advantageously for any crop or any land. Lime is as valuable as ever as a fertilizer, if used on land that has never been skinned and burnt. A load of stone coal refuse (culm) costing about 6s. will keep an ordinary kitchen lime-kiln going for four months.

TWENTY-THIRD SUGGESTION.

To encourage the system of housing sheep and cattle in winter, over earth deposits.

NOTE.—The rigour of our winters and the increasing delicacy

of our sheep, from the use of artificial food and high pressure breeding, require corresponding care to protect them from these adverse influences. Store sheep especially are liable to succumb to disease if left without shelter, as they rarely get carbonaceous food; this is usually given to sheep in fattening. Lambs particularly are liable to great depreciation, from that very common ailment known as scour, or greentail. This is quite preventable, as it results from allowing the constitutional vigour of the animal to decline at a crucial period of its existence. When born the lamb lives on its mother's milk. As it grows older it begins to nibble grass, so that by the time it is weaned it is able to live exclusively upon this food, if it be abundant and nourishing, such as after-grass, upon which they are chiefly fed at this season. But when this rich succulent food is all consumed, they are generally allowed to roam about the whole farm, living on much less nutritious and less easily digested grass. The result is, irritation of the mucus membrane of the stomach, which extends to all the bowels, and ends in diarrhœa. The remedy is—never permit a lamb, or any animal upon which you intend to make a profit, to descend from rich to poor food, or from a high animal or climatic temperature to a low one; if so, the continuity of heat and nutrition is interrupted. So, when the after-grass exhibits signs of being used up, begin to supplement it by cabbage and early turnips, planted in May. A few heads of the former should be stripped of all loose or decaying leaves, and cut down close to the ground, leaving as long a stalk as possible. Stick these down firmly in the sheep run, in holes made by a small crowbar. In a day or two the lambs will begin to eat them; then increase the quantity, and add a few early turnips, giving more and more as the grass fails, and so keep up their system in a progressive state of improvement. They will thus be prepared and fortified for winter; and Swede feeding, with oilcake and oats—small quantities of the two latter—should be given as early as the 15th of August, so as to have them ready for folding without running the risk, which would otherwise occur, from subjecting them (when in a weakly condition) to a sudden use of unlimited turnip feeding. Malt combs, being both astringent and nutritive, are a valuable substitute for hay in lamb feeding. For many years I housed at night all my young sheep and brood ewes, and on an average I lost only 2 per cent., while the average loss on other farms, naturally better sheltered than mine, ran from 7 to 25 per cent. Unsheltered and ill-fed sheep droop and die off in dozens in the month of March and up to the 15th of April. Houses for sheep should be built two storeys high, floored with slats (narrow boards) three inches wide, and three-quarters of an inch deep, and

nailed upon a movable frame that a man can easily lift up and replace on the joists. This floor should consist first of joists at two feet intervals, strong enough to support movable frames with the sheep standing or lying on top of them. The joists should be eight feet, or more if possible, above the bottom of the floor of the manure-house, and this vacancy underneath should have a water-tight floor and walls, and be filled with dry earth taken from the stubble fields, by digging up and carting into these houses the soil contained in a trench eighteen inches square, excavated right up from one end of the field to the other. When the trench is cleared, dig another at a distance of forty feet, or less, according to the quantity of earth required, in a line with the first ; and so dig these trenches and remove the earth at similar distances all across the field. The plough fills all these trenches when working. When the cavity under the sheep is filled with earth, stop up the doorway properly so that no liquid manure can ooze out. Each morning let the floors be swept ; and as no litter is used this must be done daily, and the solid manure let fall upon the earth underneath. The slats should be placed within half-an-inch of each other. If the solid manure cannot be swept through the interstices lift a frame here and there, so as to divide the solids as evenly as possible over the earth. The fluids get through at once. Thus the most fertilising manure, fit for all farming purposes, can be collected and preserved until the day it is wanted. There is no limit as to quantity, as this rich compost goes back again to its own field, greatly increased in bulk. Another advantage in housing sheep is that at fifteen months old they will average two lbs. of wool more than if not sheltered. Their constitution too will be so improved that they can be fattened more easily. The same system applies with greater benefits to cattle. Housed thus they need no litter ; so there will be the animal manure of two beasts instead of one, as one two-and-a-half year old ox will trample down as much straw as, if chaffed, would, with a little oilcake, be sufficient for two animals, or even three, if the straw were supplied in a yard in a plentiful manner. The clay acts in lieu of straw, and when all ferments it is impossible, for double the cost, to get as rich a fertilizer. On some soils corn can be grown every year with this home-made compost. If cattle sheds were built on the slope of a hill this system could be worked with greater economy, as two floors very accessible, also two entrances, could be made somewhat on the plan of a field lime-kiln, details of which I shall be happy to give to any farmer who may desire them. When the manure is being removed, it should be carted on to the field the clay was taken from, thrown down, and the load of stuff tightened up neatly and then covered over with the clay all round,

2 inches deep. When fermentation takes place scrape off this 2 inches and spread the compost and cover rapidly. If a trench 2 feet wide be excavated to fill the manure-house at 30-foot intervals, in fifteen years the entire field will be sub-soiled, and all the surface will have been fertilised to the depth of 15 inches, and be actually all manure. In building these manure and shelter houses, nearly half, or one-third, of the floor where stall-feeding cattle is intended to be carried on, should be boarded closely, in order to prevent any direct exhalations reaching the animals from the deposits underneath. The danger of this is very slight in winter, and can be prevented by keeping a spare supply of clay (or earth) at hand, and spreading an inch or two twice a week over the manure below. In summer this should be done oftener, as fermentation will be more likely at that season; but the more clay the better. When the earth or soil is first put in, leave a space sufficient for these bi-weekly additions. The manure-house should be emptied when the liquid ceases to be absorbed by the clay. All the heap should be fairly mixed in the act of filling the carts, otherwise some loads will contain more animal manure than others. All the corn, flax, and hemp we require, and sufficient beetroot to supply the whole kingdom with sugar could be easily grown by this plan, as it is merely an expansion, on a large scale, of the earth-closet system.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUGGESTION.

To encourage the erection of wind-engines in suitable places on large farms, to save expense of steam-engines and horses in threshing corn, and other labour.

NOTE.—The necessity for such engines arises from the change recommended in the method of feeding milch cows, especially in winter. All work done by horse or steam power can be as well done, and at much less expense, by one of these engines. The cost of a six-horse power would be about £100. The wind would be sufficiently strong for the greater part of the year to drive them. Horse gearing should be attached, so that if a long calm took place the cattle could have straw chaffed, furze chopped and bruised for them without losing a feed. Wood-sawing, oat-bruising, and all such work can be cheaply performed in this easy manner.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUGGESTION.

To improve the system of saving hay in Ireland.

NOTE.—At present the great majority of the Irish peasantry does not know how to save hay. In the first instance they allow it to become too ripe, then, when cut down, they dry all the sap out of it by exposing it to the sun and wind until it becomes more like straw than anything else. They also give too much of this over-dried hay to their horses, hence a large percentage is broken-winded. A load of this hay, apparently large enough in bulk to weigh 15 cwt., will not scale more than 11 cwt. The price of Irish hay is generally a little over half that of English. I have seen Irish farmers dry hay until it would crackle and snap across in the hand. Hay and sheep houses, if erected by landlords on large farms on their estates, would pay far better than trying to reclaim bogs or unsuitable mountain land.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUGGESTION.

To give instruction to small farmers as to the best method of stall-feeding cattle.

NOTE.—Great loss occurs to small farmers who, hearing so much of the benefits of stall-feeding, often make a plunge into it, and then get disgusted from their want of success. This arises chiefly from want of experience and judgment. They contrast the advance a pig makes after six weeks feeding with the apparent non-advance of the cow—who eats as much as four pigs; seeing the heap of turnips diminishing with alarming rapidity the animal is sold before it is half fattened, and so no profit results. Failures like these supply contractors with so-called beef to re-sell at 4d. or 4½d. per lb. to public institutions and the Army and Navy Commissariat departments. Messrs Ganley are always complaining in their circulars of the terrible losses farmers sustain in sending half-fed beasts to the Dublin Cattle Market.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUGGESTION.

To discourage the excessive use of bog mould, and such artificial manures as are manifestly unsuited to the varied soils and climate of Ireland.

NOTE.—The use of bog mould is carried to a most mischievous excess in some parts of Ireland, and has deteriorated the “corn” and grass growing properties of many districts to an alarming

degree. To grow corn healthily and abundantly a rich, firm, cohesive, well-drained clay soil is requisite. The fact that the rolling of young corn is so universal, points to the necessity for this compression to solidify the earth and give the roots of the corn plant firm grasp of an unyielding surface. The benefit is proved from the fact that the finest heads of corn and the strongest straw are always found on the headlands, where the repeated transit of the ploughs, rollers, and horses and men's feet perfect this necessary pressure. It follows, therefore, that every system of manuring which tends to disintegrate and weaken the cohesion of the soil must be injurious to the corn crops, and I have no hesitation in affirming that thousands of acres of good corn land have been hopelessly ruined by overdoses of bog mould. I am personally acquainted with some districts where, for forty years, at least forty carts of bog mould have been applied every alternate year upon the same acre of land, *i.e.*, eight hundred cart loads of this worse than useless stuff to the acre. This gives about 3 inches all over each acre, thus absolutely changing the original character of the land from upland to semi-bog, and hopelessly injuring it. When I first began to farm, I enclosed a large yard, 30 yards long, and 14 yards wide. I covered this space with bog mould to the depth of 3 feet; I then mowed an acre of alluvial meadow and carted it home while green, and spread it evenly over this heap of bog mould. Forty heifers were turned in upon it at eight o'clock every night, from middle of July to middle of October. More green fodder was added from time to time until September 20, when straw was used; turnips were given in winter, and early in March the cattle were taken off, and the whole heap turned up and allowed to ferment. I thought at the time I had a mine of wealth; I did not discover my error for five years, and then by accident, for passing over a turnip field where a number of women were weeding, I was struck by the immense size of the weed heaps. Stooping down, the mystery was solved, for in one heap I discovered five strange weeds all of bog growth. The corn, too, had begun to lodge with unusual frequency, and in a very injurious manner, and my gang of weeders and hoers had increased from twelve to twenty-six in this five years with the same quantity of green crop. I at once discontinued the use of bog mould, and the next year I found a most comforting change in the reduction of weed pickers, and in four or five years a great improvement in the corn crop. As to artificial manures, they are rapidly ruining our tillage farms. It requires great experience and ability upon the farmer's part to find out what sort of artificial manure, not only each field, but the different parts of it, require. Often there are three varieties of soil and sub-soil in

the same field, and if the same kind of manure be applied to the whole, two-thirds must be comparatively thrown away. It follows, therefore, that poor, ignorant farmers, who know nothing of the variety of soils or the effect of manures of this class upon them, are working completely in the dark, and have to depend entirely upon the word of the merchant whose sole object is to sell this compound. The outside world imagine any blockhead can farm, but there is no industrial or professional pursuit which, in my view, requires more intelligence, discipline, industry, and versatility. No wonder, then, failures abound, when few of such necessary qualifications exist amongst our Irish tillage farmers. This artificial manure, if used constantly, has, I fear, the effect of diminishing the depth of the soil. Unless this be the case, how can we account for rocks and stones cropping up in fields, where they were never seen before? There may be over-stimulation with genuine Peruvian guano if applied in large quantities. This might, in some measure, account for the facts as above stated, but still it requires close observation, and should be looked after most carefully. At present poor tillage farmers are overpowered with disabilities and disadvantages. It is miserably dispiriting to write in this condemnatory style, but look where you will, an experienced eye can detect cause upon cause for the non-success of these poor creatures, who never should have occupied the position of farmers, but that of labourers in the employment of men of capital and skill who could cope with all the vicissitudes of farming. But I must now close this part of the subject, as these notes have swelled beyond my original intention, reiterating on paper an opinion often expressed verbally, that it is the cultivation of the potato which prompted this injury to the corn land, thus adding another mischief to the vast category of ills produced by over cultivation of this national esculent. We are not without parallel proof in other countries of the evils arising from extraordinary facilities in growing food at once inexpensive and yet sufficiently nutritive to support life. In India and China we have abundant illustrations, in the enormous production of rice at little or no cost of money or labour; and to this system the frequent recurrence of famines in these countries may be easily traced by any intelligent person open to the influences of reason and the power of facts.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUGGESTION.

To have an analyst for every county in Ireland to test artificial manures.

NOTE.—Of course, one analyst could not be fully employed in the small area of one Irish county ; four or five might be included in his supervision. Most of the so-called artificial manure is adulterated with sand, chalk, plaster of Paris, pulverised bath stone, powdered clinkers, and other substances. There are some honest makers who supply a fair article, but the majority of Irish farmers are not able to exercise a sound judgment as to which of these manures is best suited to their land.

TWENTY-NINTH SUGGESTION.

To organise a system of instruction in medicine and surgery in all the degree-conferring colleges, where divinity students should be required to exhibit a fair practical knowledge on these subjects ; and that instruction in agricultural chemistry should be given to all students who were intended for country life.

NOTE.—There are some parts of Ireland so distant from a doctor's residence that many lives are lost from want of immediate aid. Clergymen qualified to give such aid in ordinary cases of fever, fracture, hæmorrhage, or dislocations, might thus afford temporary relief before a regular practitioner could attend. In the same way, if all country gentlemen were skilled agriculturists, the instruction so much required in Ireland could be easily afforded to the poor farmers who are so much in need of it. Thus in both cases a mutual benefit would arise, and the links of friendship and usefulness drawn closer between the upper and lower classes.

THIRTIETH SUGGESTION.

To form a national emigration fund, to assist intending emigrants, and to employ a trustworthy agent in New York, to take charge of them as they arrived, and see them forwarded to their destination, with protective care and economy.

THIRTY-FIRST SUGGESTION.

To encourage the rearing of bees, and to exhibit at the

national schools models of improved hives, with printed papers of instructions as to markets and management.

NOTE.—The same remark applies to this as to poultry in No. 12.

THIRTY-SECOND SUGGESTION.

To establish a small model farm in each county, as near to a large poorhouse as possible, and to give instruction in husbandry to farmers' sons, who should be fitted to fill the position of stewards. They should pay costs incurred for their board and stationery, and work on the farm, raising crops of various kinds to help to maintain the poor in the adjoining poorhouse.

NOTE.—No greater want is felt in Ireland than that of capable conscientious stewards. Those we have, have not an all round knowledge of farming. Some can buy stock well, but can't manage or control a gang of men so as to get through their work with either economy or despatch. Others are fairly clever at tillage work, but know nothing of buying cattle or sheep. Thus, the owner of the land rarely makes money by employing a steward.

THIRTY-THIRD SUGGESTION.

To add to each national school a small kitchen, where a competent travelling instructress, attached to the School Board, could twice a year give four days' lessons in cookery.

NOTE.—The great attention now paid by ladies in England to this subject is a proof of the necessity of this suggestion, as the Irish are, if possible, worse cooks than the English.

THIRTY-FOURTH SUGGESTION.

To issue to each national school a sufficient number of handy, instructive pamphlets on agriculture, and to make it a subject of prominent importance in the teaching, in suitable localities.

NOTE.—As most scholars in the national schools are sons of farmers, and are intended for the same pursuits in after life, it is essential they should get the instruction most necessary to fit them for their future mode of life and industry.

THIRTY-FIFTH SUGGESTION.

To prevent adulteration of artificial manures, sugar, flour, oilcake, and other articles in general use by agriculturists.

NOTE.—It was to afford poor farmers a way of escape from the great losses resulting from adulteration that I suggested the erection on large estates of a bone crushing mill ; or, failing this, to give instruction as to the best mode of making bone manure at home. On many farms it has already been carried out. A friend of mine erected one of these mills, and his crops are, on an average, twice as fine as those of his poorer neighbours on an equal outlay. If bones be well broken up with hand sledges first, and hammers afterwards, they are very easily dissolved by being placed in a large metal or iron pot, and then throwing vitriol over them. When reduced to pulp they can be disintegrated by dry ashes, or clay artificially dried, so as to prepare it for spreading evenly. One trial will convince an experimentalist of the great value of this method. But a better plan is to erect the sheep and cattle manure-making houses pointed out in Suggestion Twenty-three ; for if this system be properly adopted a farmer need never buy artificial manure of any description, thus saving the enormous outlay for these rather “varied” compounds.

THIRTY-SIXTH SUGGESTION.

To take more vigorous measures to suppress shebeen houses, where the vilest whisky, tea, and tobacco are sold unblushingly, and where in most instances are hatched the conspiracies which disturb the peace and well-being of society.

NOTE.—Attempts to reclaim land and improve agriculture should be accompanied by efforts to improve the habits and morals of the poor, and to repress modes of living alike dangerous to society and pernicious to the frequenters of these centres of mischief.

THIRTY-SEVENTH SUGGESTION.

To remodel the loan funds, and so to enable a poor, industrious farmer to obtain a loan for six months, without slavish and burdensome rules, and at a moderate interest.

NOTE.—At present, if a poor man wants a loan of 20s for two months, he has to take a friend with him, who is required by the manager of the bank to be security for the borrower. Thus the borrower loses a day's work, value 1s 6d. The surety loses another day, *i.e.*, both 3s. Then the borrower has to treat his friend to a dinner, and the inevitable whisky follows. Here, without any charge for interest, we have at least 5s. gone out of the 20s, which is generally borrowed for a period of two months. But further loss accrues to the poor borrower. He has to deposit the first week's instalment of the repayment on the spot, and every week either come to the bank in person or send one of his family with the weekly instalment. If this should not be paid on the day he is mulcted in progressive pecuniary penalties. Another disadvantage is that farmers' stock or crops do not mature for several months, and thus a loan for a month or two has little or no beneficial effect in aiding him in his industry. A loan of £10 or £20 for a month or two will help a cattle or horse dealer; but is of no use to assist an agriculturalist, as it does not tide him into the smooth water of his cattle or corn market.

THIRTY-EIGHTH SUGGESTION.

To inflict progressive fines for drunkenness up to the fourth offence, and afterwards to punish with hard labour and imprisonment.

NOTE.—The increase of drunkenness is so painfully evident on all sides that every repressive measure which the existing law allows should be unsparingly enforced. Reformatories for drunkards are needed as much as they are for young thieves or social scapegraces of both sexes.

THIRTY-NINTH SUGGESTION.

To facilitate the purchase by tenant farmers of their holdings, provided they are known to be both well-conducted and WELL-SKILLED in agriculture.

NOTE.—The provisions of any bill that may be passed to make tenant farmers owners in fee of their holdings will certainly be misused and misapplied, except under these conditions. What more could be expected if lazy, penniless, and ignorant land occupiers are assisted to attain a position in life which neither their character nor abilities would enable them to fill with advantage to themselves or to the community at large? Mistakes on this point will be fatal to the experiment. There must be the test of good conduct and ability.

FORTIETH SUGGESTION.

To pass an act requiring the removal, within three months of its coming into force, of all dung heaps from before the doors or windows of sleeping apartments in all farmhouses and cottages.

NOTE.—Marked improvement in agriculture ought to be evidenced by increased refinement in the habits and manners of the peasantry. Will the Irish farmers give their friends and well-wishers a little hope of this wholesome advance in civilisation by voluntarily removing these dangerous nuisances? Or will they treat it as a great national grievance if the local Sanitary Boards compel them to do so?

On reading the foregoing Suggestions, specially those relating to agriculture, the reflection naturally arises that the writer must either have taken a most erroneous view of the state of agriculture in Ireland, or that the mode of cultivation and the actual condition of the land must be very alarming, if so many changes and improvements are still necessary. These new requirements would not be so startling had not free trade, rendered necessary by the overgrowth of our manufacturing population, flooded us with such an amount of foreign agricultural produce as almost to paralyse our own agriculture. Cheap steam communication, cheap iron for ship-building, a fall in wages, and corn-carrying competition on American railways, coupled with the disastrous state of the weather in Great Britain, all combined, precipitated an agricultural crisis. But this must not be the herald of defeat. Let it rather be made the start-

ing-point for new combinations of a defensive character, and, as there seems no chance of our old ally Protection coming to our aid, we must meet our enemy with such old troops as we have that are fit for service, and seek fresh auxiliaries to strengthen our ranks, and fit us for our duty in "the field."

The suggestions, and the other portions of this paper, are my contributions to this national defence fund. More hints could be given, and more suggestions made, but it is unwise to set too long or too difficult a task before a very juvenile school-boy. If the suggestions already given be wisely, vigorously, and economically carried out in practice, wherever circumstances permit of their adoption, the result must be an immediate and general improvement, not only in land culture, but also in the social condition and character of Ireland and its inhabitants. Many of the suggestions, too, I trust, are not below the consideration and attention of some of the higher class of gentlemen farmers, as in many essentials they are far behind the corresponding class in either Scotland, England, or Belgium. These suggestions in some respects may not be fully in accordance with the strictest principles of political economy, but it should be borne in mind that the present condition and circumstances of the Irish people are of no ordinary kind, and therefore measures of an exceptional character are urgently called for. The pressing difficulty is the want of money. The Government have given some assistance, but the necessities of each district cannot be provided for by the sum at present named as available from Government sources of supply, therefore private enterprise must be looked to as the chief means of accomplishing improvement. And here, perhaps, I may be allowed to say a few practical words on three schemes which have been prominently put forward, and looked upon as perfect cures for all the ills that Irish land is heir to. But before entering upon them, I must solemnly repudiate even the most remote suspicion that political or religious intolerance, party spirit, or class antagonisms warp my judgment, or bias my arguments in any, even the smallest particular. I am guided solely in what I write by actual

conviction, matured and nourished by fifty years' close and intimate observation of the habits and manners of the people, and of forty years' practical experience in the agriculture of my country, my chief object being to rouse public attention and personally to give all the aid I can to improve our farming system.

These three subjects are chiefly connected with Ireland, viz., Peasant Proprietorship, land reclamation, and the "small holding" policy. A fourth scheme has been prominently recommended by newspaper writers, that is, the advice to turn our tillage lands into pasture. The first three apply mainly to Ireland, the latter to the whole kingdom. Now let us take the first recommendation, Peasant Proprietorship. Suppose, for instance, that a man required to build a new house, the first thing he would find himself obliged to consider was, where is the money; next, where and of what quality are the materials; and then where are the architect, the masons, carpenters, and other tradesmen and labourers? The money part is easily disposed of. And as the farmers have not got the money, they have called upon the Government to supply it. The question to ask is, will the financial condition of the country bear such a monetary strain as this? The balance of trade represents our ability or our inability to undertake great financial speculations, and if the payments for corn and other imports have to be continued on the present enormous scale for any length of time, the drain of gold from this country must be immense; unless we can establish an equipoise between importation and exportation, the rate of interest must rise to a point which would render such a gigantic loan as this plan requires utterly impossible. If trade recovers sufficiently to restore the old style of preponderance of export, then the money difficulty would be modified; but at this peculiar juncture, carrying out this purchase plan is beset with great difficulties. Where two or three people contract to undertake a joint business, the first element to set the thing going, next to the possession of the necessary capital, is a good promise of general success, the profits to be divided equally between "all" the parties. We have in this case

three parties, the Government, the landlords, and the peasants ; the hands of the Government will be tied by three chains, the monetary, the legislative, and the political ; but as the legislative must wait the removal of the monetary handcuffs, there is no use just now in discussing that part of the subject, particularly as the legislative part of it has been already treated in a most able and comprehensive manner by Mr J. Boyd Kinnear in the *Fortnightly Review* of September last (1879), whose article "The Coming Land Question," is a masterpiece, the scope of which is, however, quite outside my purpose or my department of the subject.

The next case to be considered is that of the landlord, whose first question naturally is, what right has a particular section of the community to demand from me the compulsory surrender of my property on the plea of their inability or distaste to pay my rent ; this inability and distaste he considers and believes to arise from the want of intelligence and capacity in the conduct and management of the property, which by solemn contract has been hired from him ; or by want of both reason and justice in the tenant's views as to what is or is not his property. On the other hand, the tenants say, we were born on the soil and have an inalienable right to live on it and out of it, and supply a number of arguments of the same character. This is the usual way the advocates of this measure attempt to justify their demands. But I will not waste time in the argumentative department of this question. The plan might succeed in some few instances, but I feel certain it would fail in most. For example, round my own immediate neighbourhood, say within an area of fifteen miles, I could count up, some thirty-five or forty years ago, a great number of small proprietors, whose fathers were tenant-farmers, the latter having made large sums of money during the period of the French war (the greater part of it in the manner before detailed), purchased for their sons all the land they could lay their hands upon. These were apparently the very men the country seemed most in need of, and corresponded exactly with the best of the class who are

now pointed out as fit persons to promote to ownership. These men doubtless would have proved the means of great and lasting benefit to the country, if they had happened to be born without some of the hitherto ineradicable characteristics of Irishmen. But the strong desire for social advancement, the love of sport and conviviality, and their general boyishness and hilariousness, intensified by the extraordinary profits of land burning (to which mischief, prior to the famine, they were enthusiastic contributors), drove them into extravagance, idleness and recklessness, so that they became, not the heroic regenerators of their race, or the beneficent improvers of their national agriculture, but most injurious obstacles to its prosperity and development. These men were the squireens ; men who neither as farmers nor as citizens evidenced the advantage of land ownership. They kept race horses, harriers, and sporting dogs innumerable. They entertained a rabble of idle, smoking, drinking, rollicking, young men—the younger sons of some of the local gentry—who, being overwhelmed with debt, were unable to educate or provide for them, either in business or professions. Thus they hung on the skirts of a mixed society ; one day clinging to the sparse pleasures to be found in the tottering fabric of domestic life, and the next varying the insipidities of this common-place existence by a glorious carouse with a newly-fledged proprietor. These latter aped the manners of the real gentry, and preserved none of the dignity, industry, shrewdness or morality of their hard-working and self-denying parents or relatives. It was laughable to see their style of living. I can vividly recall to mind their exhibitions in the carriage-driving line. As an actual illustration, I remember a great number of yellow post-chaises were owned by these novices in gentility. When all this folly and extravagance had done its work, these little properties were either let under the Court of Chancery, or, after great delay and litigious obstruction, peremptorily sold by the creditors. In most cases a chancery receiver was appointed, and the land let to tenants who took the trouble of going to Dublin, to the court lettings, where no enquiry worthy the name was made as to their

ability to farm the lands, for either their own benefit or that of the owner or his creditors. Save in a few instances, these tenants had neither skill nor capital. What use, then, was a large farm to a man who possessed neither requisite? Hence "arrears of estates in chancery" became a phrase too well understood all over the centre, south, and west of Ireland. Immediately after a chancery letting, the tenants got possession of all the land, save the lawn, which, along with the garden, house, and offices, were generally let to the poor squireen at a mere nominal rent (this he scarcely ever paid), and there, shorn of everything he considered dignified, polite, and enjoyable he passed a wretched existence, living from hand to mouth, saved from actual starvation by the generous assistance of his more prudent relatives. The famine and its outcome, "the Encumbered Estates' Court," completely obliterated the rest of them.

But the "race" is still the same, and social ambition, bad farming, and love of fun will always claim their quota of victims, no matter how ingeniously attractive the advocates of this measure of peasant proprietorship try to make it. I have no hesitation in saying, that not one in twenty of the men who failed as "squireens" would have succumbed, if they had been restrained by the (to them) wholesome discipline of rent-paying. The percentage of those who failed as small proprietors was, man for man, four times as great as were the failures of tenant farmers; and the extent of moral mischiefs the former accomplished during the periods between their inauguration and collapse was simply indescribable. At this moment I know hundreds of poor tenant farmers in Ireland, whose moral tone is as high as that of any aristocratic family I was ever acquainted with. Their women are models of chastity, modesty, and propriety, and, save for a tendency to get into rows at fairs, and to keep greyhounds for poaching purposes, the men are equally irreproachable. There are some black sheep in every community, and the preliminaries which lead to agrarian murders are not always hatched in farmers' houses, but often in remote villages where the Ribbon Councils sit, fifty or a hundred miles away from the place where the crime is perpetrated.

But let us follow up the details of the plan more closely. Suppose this case surrounded and characterised by the most ordinary probabilities. A tenant farmer buys up his holding by the aid of the government, who, for thirty-two years is to be his future landlord. At the end of that extended period if no hitch occurs in his periodic payments, he becomes absolute owner. A present purchaser will be a very old man by that time. The payment of the instalments (or rent) has kept him poor, and in most cases he has scarcely been able to set up his sons in farms, or provide marriage portions for his daughters. He comes near his end, and makes his will, dividing his property share and share alike between all his children. Now, let us try and administer this will. The "*farm*" was originally say, forty-two Irish (about one fourth or a little more larger than the English) acres, divided into nine fields, with only one house, and one set of offices upon it. "The estate" is now the very same size, and, notwithstanding its change of name, not a whit more valuable. But this constant flourish of fee simple ownership has dazed and dazzled the whole family. If the acres have not increased there has been a wonderful expansion of family pride and expectancy. The proud boast, of "I pay rent to nobody" has, in thousands of cases, heralded the total loss of "the family property." Neither does this particular mode of acquiring or dividing property point to happier consequences. The deceased "proprietor" leaves, say two sons and four daughters. This gives seven acres to each, half the ready money and stock are left to the widow, with "a" (not "the") right to live in the house, and have the use of the furniture—only one house, mind. But this fee-simple of nine little fields is of uneven quality; half of one field is very good, the other half bad or indifferent. The next field is all good, the next all bad, and the next indifferent. Another contains the family well in the middle of it, another is next the bog or the wood (full of rabbits) or too much sheltered, or with some great advantage or disability attached to it. I imagine my readers are beginning to think they would not like to be family-friend, or administrator to this estate

under these rather ordinary circumstances. But suppose this almost miraculous achievement perfected, so far as the division of the fields and readjustment and formation of fences goes. Who is to regulate the allowance or compensation the party who got the seven acres the house stands on is to give to the other five members of the family? and if arranged where is the money to come from to pay the differences? Is each to build a house on his or her own field? or are they all to live together in the "family residence?" If the former plan be adopted, how is access to be had to each of these "residential estates" of seven acres? Each "owner in fee simple" must have a road to his or her residence, which may run right through, or partially through, the other properties. There should be gates, stiles, co-operative repairs to roads and fences, all to be kept in apple pie order, an evidence of high farming not often found in Ireland, otherwise there would be interminable quarrels, assaults and lawsuits. It is admitted that family feuds as to trespass and right of way are amongst the most prolific causes of breaches of the peace and agrarian crimes in Ireland. The Assize records furnish, unfortunately, too numerous an array of proofs as to the correctness of this statement. But there still remains the other alternative, of living together in the family home. Here we must borrow millennial imagery. Our suppositions as to concord must be magnificent; and ideals of patience, forbearance, and brotherly and sisterly love, and all the virtues, receive ample corroboration of their uninterrupted existence in this angelic family.

Now, let us look at a different disposition of this property. In this case the testator leaves the whole estate to his eldest son, and charges it with legacies for his other five children, with a jointure to his widow—the furniture of one room, and some other necessary articles. Thus, the eldest son and heir becomes the bailiff of the family. Unless he marry a rich wife, and with her fortune discharges the legacies, he must either sell the property, or struggle on, paying instalments of the principal to some, heavy interest to all, and end by a mortgage, finding himself ultimately far worse off than if he had been tenant to the original proprietor. I

could give twenty illustrations, not one of them out of the range of real family incident or accident. There would be no end to the variations in the constitution of joint heirships, which would necessitate a recurrence to the old, aye, very old system of tenancy; and thus new tenants and new landlords would spring up, fresh from the almost warm ashes of the late proprietors. I am convinced that in thirty years after the disestablishment of the present landlords—and landlordism will not be thoroughly swept away until all instalments of purchase are repaid to Government, three-fourths of these properties would either be mortgaged up to the hilt, split up into minute holdings, or occupied by a fresh tenantry, much worse off, and more disagreeably landlorded than is the great mass of the present occupiers. For it is beyond dispute that no parts of the country suffer so much in scarce or dear years as the outlying districts, where there are no resident gentry. Local bankers, shopkeepers, and usurers will be in most cases the landlords of the future,—a class who will have no sympathies but those arising from the unpitiful and unpoetic source of pounds, shillings and pence.

There are some fixed peculiarities in the character of these Celtic farmers. One that is very prominent is the feverish desire to settle the girls of the family. Under the tenancy system a farmer will sell nearly all he has to make up a fortune for his daughter. If he sees a good opening for her, his parental love and ambition are both fired. He will scourge his farm and almost pauperise the rest of his children for the time being, provided he can settle Kitty in a rich farm, or with a prosperous shopkeeper. The rule generally obtains that all the daughters must be married first before any of the sons can follow their example. Hence in every household you see “boys” of fifty or more, who have passed their whole lives in a condition of little less than slavery, with their dispositions soured, and their hearts broken by procrastinated hope and perpetual disappointment. This I know from actual observation in hundreds of instances. They are too old to enlist or to emigrate. No wonder if these poor fellows, restricted to burdensome celi-

bacy, lend a willing ear to the communistic romances of illogical agitators.

There are, however, a goodly number of dairy and grazing farmers who are much more likely to succeed as peasant proprietors than are tillage farmers. These men, never ploughing up or running out their land, and at no extra expense as to its management, generally amass money sufficient to settle their younger children. They have a wholesome horror of sub-dividing a good grass farm, and thus all the disabilities enumerated as most likely to happen on tillage property are minimised. All through the famine, and for ten years afterwards, I was hardly ever free from the worry of rearranging, reclaiming, or resettling tillage farms. But I had only one case of this nature with dairymen or men who were purely cattle-feeders. They paid their rents with the utmost punctuality and cheerfulness, thus affording another proof that nearly all agrarian crime, and all other annoyances, disagreements, money losses, poverty from overcrowding and antagonisms between landlord and tenant, followed in the wake of the "land burners."

But viewing this proposed measure more closely, we discover that the demand for it is not accompanied by any explanation as to particulars. Is it to be a wholesale enfranchisement? Do the advocates of this agrarian emancipation expect to obtain the sole control of the handle of the broom of land reform? Will they start at one end of Ireland and sweep away right through to the other end, until they have gathered the whole tenant class, good, bad, and indifferent, into one vast legislative crucible? Is Parliament, aided by "Simon Magus" as Attorney-General, expected (out of these most discordant materials) to re-create a skilful, happy, prosperous, self-respecting, industrious, religious, and law-abiding body of peasant proprietors? And if they do not indulge in this style of "prodigious" hopefulness, where are, and what are the limitations they place to their expectations? Is a tenant, half-starved on two acres or three acres, or even ten acres, ignorant and thriftless, utterly unable to discharge the usual functions of respectable citizenship, and overwhelmed with debts due to local shopkeepers,

is he to be made a local proprietor, and elevated to the "parochial peerage," "Lord of his tatie patch, 'that heritage of woe?'" Or, is the tenant of a large farm, equally ignorant of his business, with a bad character from the local police-officer into the bargain—is such a man to be placed in a position where he will be able to do more harm than before?

If recruits are wanted in the army, the regimental authorities will not accept every man who may present himself, nor, indeed, any man at all, until they have made a very close inspection of his physical condition. He must be 5 feet 8 inches in height, 36 inches round the chest, have free respiration, and good hearing and eyesight, no scrofulous symptoms, no varicose veins, nor any other blemish or disability. The same close scrutiny is necessary if you want to buy a horse, or, indeed, anything at all. Good plain common sense, free from all romantic, passionate, or sentimental excrescences, must guide every man in the conduct and management of the daily affairs of life, if he means to win success. Surely, then, in a gigantic movement like this the same common sense should guide our deliberations. Suppose a competent jury of inspection was formed, aided by the local police-officer, this body could examine the farm, and also inquire into the character of the aspirant for promotion; if, after close yet not too rigid scrutiny, they considered that he gave fair promise of being able to fill his new position with advantage to himself and the community, then let them unhesitatingly recommend him as a fit and proper man. But decisively reject a tenant who gave no proof that he was the right sort of man upon whom to confer this important privilege.

But this plan will cause other most serious difficulties, as a portion only of the estate will be occupied by experimental peasant proprietors, and the rest of it by ordinary tenants. How are the latter to be managed? The State is now the landlord, for we cannot suppose the original landlord sold pet portions of his property here and there. He must either sell all, or none. If he sold part it would be impossible to manage the rest of the estate, as the new

proprietors might prove very antagonistic neighbours, and in various ways might seriously interfere with the homogeneous management of the residue of the property. Well, the Government must own the land. But for how long? Is it until all the tenants furnish proof of their capacity, either financially or industrially, to fill the position of probationers in the corps of peasant proprietors?—for they will be nothing but probationers until all the instalments are paid.—Is the State, then, to remain in the position of landlord until all are fit? or how otherwise? Then, if the instalments for purchase fall into arrear, is the British taxpayer to make good the difference? We see several defaulters have already appeared amongst the purchasers of church lands. No doubt it was an unlucky time to try the experiment. Three bad seasons in succession furnish a reasonable excuse for non-payment of a portion, but not for complete default. Suppose a great number of these new peasant proprietors die, say within ten years of the purchase period, how can they command such unity of purpose and unity of interest amongst their representatives as will insure the uninterrupted continuance of payments of instalments for the remaining twenty-two years; and if they fall into arrear, will the Government recur to the old abomination of ejecting them and reselling the property? They must do so, for if they allow one man to remain in default, a great number of the others will follow his example.

Another course is for the Government to buy and resell to all the present occupiers, no matter of what type, class, or character, providing the full capital for all those who have not or will not supply the fourth part originally required to be furnished on the tenant's part. Does any sane man imagine any Government will commit itself to such an enormous social and financial speculation as this, in the teeth of overwhelming evidence of the fact that the mass of these would-be peasant proprietors possesses little or no capital, are very indifferent farmers, and the greater part of them over head and ears in debt? All Government could possibly accomplish at present would be to purchase a few small estates, sell their holdings to

any eligible tenants found on the property, and then assist all the extremely poor and incapable to emigrate ; then consolidate their little holdings into one or more farm or farms, and sell to outside purchasers, who should come and live on the land as peasant proprietors. Thus the sale could be made complete, and the land would be relieved from an unmanageable crowd of semi-pauper and unprogressive occupiers. Some of the more advanced "Property Revisionists," however, have suggested that the London Companies who hold large estates in the North of Ireland should be compelled to sell, no doubt adopting as their motto—" *Experimentum fiat in corpore vili.*" A solution of their present position, so far, more philosophically despotic on the adviser's part, than, perhaps, agreeable or acceptable to the said proprietors.

But an impartial critic might say, Who is to look after the landlord? Poor man, he seems destined to furnish the feathers for other people to pluck and line their new nests with. It is like going to a dissecting room, where the body of a splendid old man, supposed to have died in hospital, is laid out for dissection. A rollicking group of medical students is clustered round the body, laughing, jesting, and exhibiting every temper but that of reverence for the dead. A senior student opens the body, and affords the lookers-on an opportunity for "scientific verification" of the fact that this noble wreck actually possesses a heart, lungs, liver, and stomach. This is like the case of the landlord, who represents the subject upon which this novel mode of dissection is to be tried. His chance of being buried without mutilation seems small. But his case is worse. These buoyant land anatomists do not wait for death to quiet the subject, but proceed to the more serious demonstrations of vivisection. His heart has the usual feelings of humanity. It loves the old ancestral home, the fields, the streams, the rivers. The younger hearts, too, his children, are fond of their home, where centre all their affections. But, alas ! in revolutionary periods noble hearts have no right to feel, and covetous experimentalists are relieved from uncourteous and burdensome despotisms in

the tenth commandment. A lawyer, pleading for landlords, might say all this and more, and still not exaggerate a description of the pain they and their children suffer in being thus compulsorily improved from off the face of their property.

The establishment of peasant ownership and cultivation of small holdings in England or in the South of Scotland, is not surrounded by anything like the same difficulties which make it so hazardous and so difficult of accomplishment in Ireland. In England and the South of Scotland the great majority of the farming classes are thoroughly acquainted with their business. I passed more than a year in Scotland, and over five years in England, studying the cultivation of the land in both countries, and can safely affirm that the style of farming in the Lothians is second to none in the world; and the same may be said of all the great agricultural counties in England, where abundant evidence exists of the great skill, industry, and success of English agriculture. The English, and most of the Scotch farmers, are a pains-taking, deliberate, unexcitable body of men. The glamour of proprietorship will never overshadow their prudence, nor induce them to indulge in sacrifices for sentiment. Neither will they hurry to exchange the palpable solidities of fair and equitable tenancy for the social and monetary burdens, disquietudes, and novelties of experimental ownership. In order to test the value of ownership, let us place it in contrast to that of tenancy. Suppose a tenant is enabled to purchase 80 acres of land, and become owner of it in the manner proposed, he commences to farm it, and finds at the end of the year that he has cleared £4 per Irish acre, this gives him a profit of £320, less the interest on the purchase money, that is £40 an acre, or twenty years purchase at £2 per acre, this amounts to £3200, say at 4 per cent., or £128 per annum, deduct this from £320, the balance is £192 per annum net profit on his 80 acres of freehold. Now, let us see how the account will stand if this man should rent 300 acres at £2 per acre, his profits will be the same per acre as in the freehold, subject to the rent and the interest on the additional capital

required on 220 acres, which is the excess of 300 over 80 acres. Here is the account :—

Profit on 300 acres, at £4 per acre,	£1200	0	0
Deduct rent and taxes,	£600	0	0
Interest on £3000 capital at 4 per cent.,	120	0	0
	<hr/>	720	0 0
		<hr/>	480 0 0
Deduct the freeholder's profit,		192	0 0
		<hr/>	£288 0 0

This leaves £288 per annum more profit on a tenanted farm of 300 acres than on a freehold of 80 acres. In addition, the character and capacities of a tenant, both as a man and an agriculturist, are more usefully and beneficially developed on the large farm than on the small freehold, which furnishes many injurious temptations to idleness, and cramps and represses the mental and physical energies. Then if tenants to 300 or 400 acres be made proprietors at the termination of the payments of the instalments, they will be landowners worth six or eight hundreds a year if they let these lands; but will not this condition of affairs be a direct recurrence to the "statu quo ante" which advanced Property Reversionists describe as the most injurious and tyrannical hindrance to healthy and profitable farming? But in Ireland I feel confident any experienced farmer would much prefer to see his son tenant to 400 acres than absolute owner of even 100 acres, so dangerous to all genuine success in life do I consider the residential ownership of small properties to be in this country. The children of these petty property owners are in a most annoying position; they are, generally speaking, too proud to resort to manual labour, and their parents are, for the most part, either too poor or too extravagant to be able to educate them to fill the higher sphere to which they imagine themselves best suited.

On the other hand, the occupation and cultivation of small holdings is greatly helped in England by the number of large towns scattered all over the face of the country.

We may safely say, that in relation to population, there are ten large towns in England to one in Ireland, and that the purchasing power of ten thousand inhabitants of an English town is at least four times in excess of that of the inhabitants of an Irish town possessing an equal number of inhabitants. Hence, the increased consumption of the products of small farms in England, and the higher prices obtained for them, with markets at their doors, will most materially help the experiment of establishing these small fee simple properties.

The plan seems deserving of encouragement in a tentative form. This is a very favourable time to test the supposed existence of wide-spread desire of the English and Scotch tenantry to become owners of their holdings, as farms in all parts of the country have been given up ; if these, or some of them, were at once offered for sale, a decisive evidence would be supplied to guide us as to the present and the future. These lands are chiefly part and parcel of settled estates. Some trouble might be experienced with the heirs-at-law, many of whom, however, take a broad and unselfish view of the national interests, and might agree to join the life-owners in such sales. We have several indications that such convictions are not matters of theory, and that there really exists at this moment in the minds of many influential landowners a sincere desire to meet the supposed necessities of the case, and to offer their estates for public sale as indicated. A voluntary concession at the present time might, under certain contingencies, occasion the avoidance of future compulsory sacrifices. The very painful fact must stare every landowner in the face, that the present reduced value of land in the United Kingdom would suffer a further and very much more marked depreciation than at present threatens it if we became a sober, temperate race ; for the present value of arable land is mainly kept up by the competition between brewers and distillers, who could not buy our barley and oats at the present high price, unless the national vice of drunkenness continued in its present most appalling proportions. But there are other grounds which give the system of tenant purchase of small holdings in

England a more hopeful aspect. There you have the great coalfields, the basis of nearly all the huge national industries, and an ever-present outlet for over-grown families ; so that neither sons nor daughters need remain a perpetual drag nor absorbing sponge, sucking up the whole earnings of "the home establishment." Besides this, the English do not make it a personal or national grievance if family pressure obliges them to emigrate, for they see their landlords have to suffer the same heartrendings and sorrows when their younger sons depart to foreign lands to seek a sustenance. But in Ireland we have no steam coal, and, in consequence (save the flax trade in Ulster, supported by imported coal), no national industries. A number of corn and woollen mills, breweries, and distilleries are scattered over the face of the country, worked for the most part by water power, but they afford no grounds for classing them as factories, not possessing any features common to such centres of industry.

There remains, therefore, no legitimate means of providing for the overplus of the Irish population except emigration. Further subdivision of the land is admittedly impossible, it having already attained most mischievous proportions. And here, perhaps, I may be allowed to say a few more words on this multiplication of "small" holdings. I will give an illustration by describing the condition of a small property I am acquainted with. It consists of eighty Irish acres, occupied by five small farmers, who have sixteen acres each, less than half of it being arable. The actual amount of the arable land is thirty-seven acres, two of which are attached to labourers' cottages. This leaves seven acres of arable land to each of the five farmers, as they call themselves. Now each of these men possesses a horse, which costs him, in food, farriery, and wear and tear, at least £25 per annum. Each family requires at least £6 worth of fuel. To the priest, for dues on marriages, christenings, confessions, visitations of the sick, chapel subscriptions, funeral rites, masses, and ceremonies, 30s. each. To the doctor, for his fees and medicines, one guinea each. For repair of five farm houses and offices, and wear

and tear of furniture and farming implements, £2 each. For the support and clothing of five families, with five members in each family, £125, including charities and hospitalities. Now let us draw out this account—

Five horses, at £25 each, - - - -	£125	0	0
Rent, 20s. per acre, £80; taxes, £7, 10s., - -	87	10	0
Fuel for five fires at £6, £30; doctor, £5, 5s., -	35	5	0
Clerical dues, at 30s. each, - - - -	7	10	0
School fees (omitted above) at 10s. each, - -	2	10	0
Repairs of five houses and offices, and wear of furniture, - - - - -	10	0	0
Clothing and support of five families, at £25, -	125	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£392	15	0

Supposing this farm were occupied by only one of these farmers and his family, let us see how the account will stand—

Saving effected by large farm :—

Keep of three horses, two being sufficient, -	£75	0	0
Four fires saved, at £6 each, - - - -	24	0	0
Four dues to clergy, at 30s., - - - -	6	0	0
Repairs to four houses and offices, &c., - -	8	0	0
Doctor's fees and school fees, - - - -	6	4	0
Support and clothing of four families, at £25, -	100	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£219	4	0

Here we have a most remarkable saving of £219, 4s. in favour of the large farm, but out of this we must deduct the expense of one extra labouring man and two women, which the man farming all the land would have to hire; also, deduct £5 extra labour at harvest. The additional labourer will cost 8s. a week, say £20 a year; the two women, £12 each, £24; and extra harvest expenses, £5 per annum; that is, £49 a year to be deducted from £219, 4s., leaving £170, 4s. per annum in favour of the large farm. This, you see, amounts to more than “double” the rent of the whole farm, taxes included. The chief loss, the reader will observe, is in the keep of three unnecessary horses, but here the social element dominates the merely agricultural, for possession of a horse the small farmer believes to be neces-

sary to his respectability, being the test of rank and position amongst his friends and neighbours ; for the peasant who rides on horseback to mass or to a funeral, or whose wife drives to these places in a cart drawn by a good strong farm horse, holds his head much higher than those do who are obliged to fill the humbler role of pedestrians. The result is, the landlord must suffer from insufficient rent, and the tenant must pay for the gratification of his vanity by feeling pecuniary pressure in matters which wiser men consider to be absolutely necessary. But I know numbers of other cases which tell far more strongly against the small holdings ; one especially, where, upon thirty-two acres of wretchedly poor upland, attached to ninety-five acres of moorland, there were forty-two large families, and no town, mill, brewery, distillery, or any other centre of employment within ten miles of them.

The newspapers abound with theories, recommendations, and advice. Many writers parade the example of "the small culture" in France, and insist on its adoption in Ireland. But Irishmen are not Frenchmen ; neither, happily, are Irishwomen, in some respects, like their Gallic sisters. The potato is not the vine ; neither is the moist, cloudy atmosphere of Ireland like the joyous, sun-lit provinces of France. The cultivation of the vine is an education in itself, and contrasts most favourably with the culture of the dominant root in Ireland. The Frenchwomen are excellent cooks, and their skill in poultry-rearing and egg-farming is verified by the great exportations of these articles to this country. The French will rear vines all round the walls of their houses, outhouses, and in every possible spot, sufficient to pay the rent of a good garden, which is cropped with the most nutritious sorts of leguminous food. Their "pot au feu" emits a nourishing odour, which, to a hungry man who knows what it heralds, is the very essence of domestic bliss, and also another proof of a high state of civilisation.

But with all these advantages in favour of small farms and peasant proprietors in France, there remain some strong doubts in my mind as to its social and national benefits. It cannot tend to the beneficial enlargement of the intellect,

to have it narrowed by the constant exercise in, and contemplation of, small objects. If a man spent most of his life in gazing down a mousehole, we might naturally assume that his power of vision would thereby become contracted, and all his other faculties correspondingly dwarfed and attenuated. This intensification of the soul must bear fruit as peculiar as the habits which generated it; and it may not be wide of the truth to contend that the admitted incapacity of the French as colonisers is mainly due to the absence of all enterprising expansiveness, fostered and ingrained in their nature and character by this national habit of busying themselves with small objects, and never lifting their mental eyes beyond the narrow boundaries of a mischievously circumscribed and monotonous industry. Why is it universally acknowledged that "Paris governs France?" It is because the rural population, entirely absorbed in the cultivation of their few acres, scarcely ever give even a glance at the politics of the nation, but leave the destinies of their country altogether in the hands of the Parisians; the ill effects of such sectional government being painfully apparent in the number of revolutions and communistic *emeutes*, which may, for the most part, be traced to the political fevers which rage like epidemics in that city.

Again, it may be urged that the general character and capacities of the rural population in France are injuriously cramped and deteriorated by this "*petite culture*." This is evidenced by miserly and money-grubbing habits, resulting in a penurious style of living, which acts as a complete barrier to the spirit of healthy enterprise. Our Colonial Empire would be but a miserable fraction of what it now is, if our rural population had been imprisoned and blindfolded in such a manner. So it may be said of nations as of individuals, that one prominent blemish injures the whole character.

In addition to these objections there remains another, which, as far as we are concerned, I am proud to believe is morally and nationally insurmountable—I refer to the non-increase of the French population. "*La petite culture*" would most certainly have collapsed long ago, if no un-

natural and immoral checks to maternity had been resorted to. God says, "Increase and multiply and replenish the earth," but "*la petite culture*" cries out, "Do not increase and do not multiply." Will the advocates of small holdings in Ireland face the possibility of hearing our peasant mothers—than whom a more virtuous or more modest race of women does not exist—instructing their newly-married or marriageable daughters as to the methods necessary to prevent a burdensome increase of their families? For had not this villainous system been introduced into the domestic economy of French life, and had not the cream of the male population been destroyed in hundreds of thousands by the desolating wars that country had been almost perpetually engaged in, the present enormous population would have been doubled—an ethnical problem more interesting for Von Moltke and Prince Bismarck to contemplate strategically than for us agriculturally. But even in France this most objectionable habit of repressing maternity is beginning to show marked signs of abatement in the rural districts. What has produced this moral improvement? Whether from the spread of education, or a more conscientious religious supervision by the local clergy, or from some other cause or causes as yet undetermined, I cannot say; and there would be a genuine reason for congratulating the people of France in this respect, had not the increase of the practice in Paris and all the large cities neutralised our satisfaction in regard to it.

The next point I should like to make a few remarks upon is, "The reclamation of waste lands." Our waste lands mostly belong to three varieties—mountain, bog, and alluvial, or semi-alluvial flats. No doubt it would benefit the country if these wastes were reclaimed. There are long ranges of mountain land upon which you can operate beneficially by planting, particularly near the seaboard, as the demand for mine-props by the Welsh coalowners must soon increase immensely. For the last twenty-five years they have been supplied from woods which are now nearly exhausted of such timber. In addition to this demand, there must be, within the next thirty years, a great increase

in the general demand all over the country ; for the great timber lands in Sweden, Norway, Canada, and the United States are being rapidly deforested. Already restrictive measures have been adopted in Norway, and they are now being discussed in the United States, so that it is reasonable to suppose that timber planted now will arrive at a saleable size in thirty years, when the declension in our foreign supply must have assumed very marked proportions. In fact, had it not been for the discovery of the suitability of iron for shipbuilding and other purposes, and the wonderful improvements in the science of its manufacture, this growing deficiency of timber would have become most alarming. The English Royal Navy, if oak built, would very soon use up all the timber of that description in the country, and the general necessities of our trade all the other varieties. But besides the mountain land, there are thousands of acres of so-called tillage land, which are so run out and exhausted that it will never pay to continue the hopeless effort of cultivating them on the present system and by present occupiers. These, if they can be made available, will pay a good rent to a patient waiter for profits ; but at present I do not think it advisable to attempt the reclamation of waste lands in a merely agricultural point of view. No practical farmer would expect it to pay, present prices being so very unremunerative. If a landlord possesses mountain land suitable for planting, money borrowed for such a purpose is sure to pay if the work be done properly, and if the selection of the trees be wisely made. But at present planting is impossible, as the security of ownership, which is absolutely necessary, is threatened. This is an investment for posterity, and therefore it requires every element of certainty as to present and future proprietary rights. So money borrowed to improve a tenanted estate must mean either an increase of rent to the tenant (which, under present circumstances, he will not be likely to pay), or a total loss of the money by the landlord, or by the Government who lent it to him. No doubt it would be wise to lay out money in drainage, or in the formation of the manure-making and shelter-providing houses referred to in the twenty-third suggestion, on a large tenanted estate, for

this returns an immediate benefit to the tenant ; but if he refuses to pay an advance of rent for such genuine help as that of fertilising an exhausted farm, he is not entitled to any assistance. But when this land agitation subsides, and when tenant-farmers are permitted to judge for themselves, a mutual good-will may spring up between landlord and tenant, and waste lands may then be reclaimed. But these lands are not the "*feræ naturæ*" of wild bogs. The reclamation of such wastes as these, presupposes that we have nothing else left to do. A man who is able to reclaim mountain or bog land, and make it pay, is an agricultural expert of the highest type. With such markets and such weather to contend against as we now have, he would be a worker of a miracle. What a prosperous condition our agriculture must be in, if the only outlets for our energies and our money are such as reclamation enthusiasts point to ! But what about the land at present actually in nominal cultivation—land occupied as farms, and yielding only nine barrels of oats, twelve barrels of barley, or seventeen tons of turnips to the Irish acre ? If these farms are not "waste lands," they have a most disagreeably close relationship to them. It is utterly impossible that they can be properly cultivated and show such returns ; and if the occupiers are not skilful enough to make their land produce more than this amount of crop, landlords, agitators, and legislators must begin and teach them to do so, or they will fail as tenants, and much more quickly as peasant proprietors. The produce as named will only pay cost of cultivation—then where is the margin for rent for the landlord (or instalments for the Government, which is the same as rent) and a comfortable and civilised support for the farmer and his family ? A stranger hearing these advocates for reclaiming "waste lands" would imagine that Irish farmers were so skilful, energetic, industrious, such agricultural enthusiasts, and possessed of so much capital, that they could find no other vent for all these capabilities but by attacking nature in her wildest strongholds. But you may often see a poor tailor industriously mending another man's coat while his own is ventilated with many holes he never

cares to put a patch upon. The only hope of success lies in at once establishing just relations between landlord and tenant, and in inducing conditions of mutual trust, honesty in dealing, and of loyalty, liberality, and industry. God knows, we have quite enough to contend against in unfavourable seasons—bad yield, bad prices, and bad management—without aggravating such disadvantages by demoralising an excitable and unreasoning section of the tenant-farmers, who are taught that there is little or no difficulty in subverting ownership of property, and no limit to gratification of the most fantastic covetousness, but who were not taught with either sufficient earnestness or energy, that there cannot exist, under any circumstances whatever, a moral link uniting patriotism with manslaughter.

Rents must be abated, and that seriously, if we should be visited with a chronic condition of weather like the last three seasons through which we have so mournfully struggled. There are thousands of acres of land now occupied as farms, and crowded with half-starved human beings, which never should have been tilled or occupied, being altogether unfit for such purposes. Remission of the entire rent of these so-called farms would not relieve the occupiers from casualties which were courted, and mischiefs engendered, by the gross imprudence and recklessness of having attempted to cultivate them. It was the old story of land burning. Facility for growing potatoes from ashes was too strong a temptation for these unfortunates, who, having obtained at a merely nominal cost, the four usual crops—potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats—found their surface-mine exhausted and themselves reduced to beggary and its handmaid discontent—the inevitable consequences of the first false step so thoughtlessly made. What to do with these poor people is a very serious question. They are generally found located along the base of mountain ranges, or in little derrys or oases (islands of upland), surrounded by bogs or semi-alluvial moors. Some of them are found in now remote villages which, previous to railroads, were great provincial cattle or pig markets; but their attractions as markets were lost when the iron road rendered other centres of business more con-

venient and accessible. More of them are found in the islands along the coasts of our western and north-western shores, where famines ebb and flow according to the migration of the fish which visit these shores, in greater or less numbers, at uneven intervals. Here the worst phases of distress always appear. Thus, nothing remains possible in such distressing cases except wholesale emigration, a drastic measure, distasteful to both poor and rich ; but these people were left to themselves *without* landlord interference, and the result is over-population and poverty. Had this over-population been prevented or checked by the landlord, by sternly repressing subdivision of the farms, he might have been shot ; in any case he would be certain to receive the most unsparing abuse and denunciation by all classes of his political antagonists—so it seems almost impossible for an Irish landlord to sail safely between Scylla and Charybdis. There are so many local and personal varieties in the character of this Irish difficulty and distress, that we may find the prescription suggested as a cure for the maladies of one district might be totally inapplicable as a remedy in others.

There is one other point I consider as perhaps the most important of “ newspaper recommendations,”—that is, the advice “ that we should turn our tillage lands into pasture.” I believe that more unsound or more reckless advice was never given in a great national crisis to any community. In any business expected to prosper, there exists paramount necessity for preserving the balance of supply with the exact requirements of demand. If this be not carefully attended to, a crisis is produced in the markets with the now unhappily familiar consequences. The cotton and iron trades give sufficient proof, at all events, of “ over ”-production ; and the same rule which applies to producing too much iron or cotton applies, with equal force, to over-production in any other industry. Now, if British farmers, either frightened by the difficulties or novelties of their present position, or influenced by newspaper articles, or unpractical advice of any kind, resort to any extreme and wholesale mode of supposed relief, there will be a farming

crisis. If all, or the greater portion of, our tillage lands be turned into pasture, you will have, within the next three years, an overwhelming over-production of store sheep and store cattle. Up to the present the healthy balance that has hitherto been maintained is entirely owing to the absorption of our store cattle by straw yard feeding and stall feeding, and of our store sheep by turnip folding, or feeding on rape or other green crops. An acre of good Swede turnips will fatten three six-hundred-weight beasts, or twenty-five sheep, when skilfully aided by a fair supply of corn and oilcake. An acre of such turnips, aided by straw, will winter seven store cattle, or thirty-five young sheep, the latter getting a little hay to help them; so that every acre of turnip land turned into pasture means cutting off the demand for five store cattle (the average of three and seven), or thirty store sheep (the average of twenty-five and thirty-five). Now, multiply all the turnip land in England by five as the index for cattle, and thirty as the index for sheep, and you find the total represents the number of store sheep and store cattle which this turnip culture enables present producers of store cattle and sheep to dispose of profitably. Cut off this demand, created and maintained solely by turnip growing, and then tell me who is to buy these animals hitherto absorbed by that branch of agricultural industry. But worse follows under this new system; for the tillage farmers would no longer be purchasers, but would be producers of store sheep and cattle.

Several very serious consequences arise. First, farmers well know that the constant and extensive supply of old meadow hay, and the fertility of a great portion of our grass lands in England, depend in the main upon top dressing with farm-yard manure; but if farmers cease to grow green crops, they cease to grow corn and straw, and thus so far cut off the supply of farm-yard manure for top dressing. Thus the old meadow hay crop is seriously diminished, and all chance of being able to winter an alarmingly increased number of animals is endangered. You cannot go on mowing the same fields every year without top dressing; if so, you run them out rapidly.

In the neighbourhood of towns, sewage might, to a limited extent, neutralize this evil, but the area is small, and present experience of results is not very encouraging.

Again, an immense multitude of labourers would be thrown out of employment. These should, with their wives and children, emigrate *en masse*, or fly to the larger towns to find employment in factories; but factory labour, with bad air, bad water, over-crowding, and the social evils of city residence, is fast eating into the very vitals of British manhood and morality. These man-destroying centres of industry have year by year absorbed a certain percentage of the rural population supposed to have been an overplus. These fresh victims intermarry with the town's-people, and impart, through the agencies of fresh blood and constitutional vigour, a momentary renovation, just sufficient to keep the semblance of delicate humanity from collapse. But after this final rush from country to city the future supply will be cut off, and no more fresh food for that "Sacred Crocodile," "The Factory," will be forthcoming.

Prepared for this deteriorating mass, you have in the towns a vast educational system and a great number of children to educate, but they will not be healthy. On the contrary, they will be, for the most part, physically weak, precociously indoctrinated with city slang, city pertness, restlessness, and other not very reassuring characteristics. As grown composites, they may be very fair weavers or minders, but not very good citizens. The sound body is necessary to the sound mind; it cannot be expected that we can have the full benefits of education, if we have not a strong, vigorous population to educate.

Another danger from laying down lands wholesale in pasture is, that then we should be entirely dependent upon foreigners for our winter and spring supply of meat, as, having given up tillage, there would be no roots wherewith to fatten our own animals. How very odd it would look, if our American cousins, seeing us overpowered with lean stock, bought them from us, and used them as ballast and return cargoes to America, and in six months re-shipped

them to us when they had fattened them! Remember, the area of cattle-feeding grass land in England and Scotland is very small, and not more than one-fourth of the existing production of stores would ever have been absorbed by mere graziers, had not stall feeding and straw yard feeding come to the rescue, and taken the other three-fourths of this overplus.

Again, all profits from farm-horse breeding would be given up, and the new hay and clover crops forming very serious items in the list of disadvantages. Besides, you would be sure to have an over-supply of butter in the summer when it is cheap, and hardly any supply in winter when it bears a very high price; for with little or no hay, and without any roots, milch cows would all run dry; in fact, if this system, so gaily recommended, were carried out to the letter, there would be a general collapse of all our industries. One hangs on the other, and the system of social life in England is so firmly fixed on the foundation of its ancient habits and customs, that we cannot run the risk of such a rapid and wholesale revolution in a great national industry. Then, again, we should have another most serious result: if this system were adopted, we should have no corn of our own to live upon. This presents such a suicidal picture, that its consideration is almost superfluous. A Royal Army Commission is soon about to sit, in order to devise the best means for national defence. No doubt the military experts in that body are full of strategic ability; they will recommend fortifications suited to a first, second, and third line of defence; they will dilate upon reserves, entrenched camps, bases of operation, lines of communication, and quote Vauban, Marshal Burgoyne, Sir Harry Jones, and the Duke of Wellington. But what about the commissariat? Where is not only the food of the sailors and soldiers to come from, but that of the whole population also? If your enemy be that "brother offended who is hard to win," of what use are your lines of defence? Paris succumbed from starvation, and under even existing circumstances it would not surprise future historians if, in our own mismanagement, they found the cause of such an actual

catastrophe. No system of defence is worth one straw *"until you first place the supply of food for the nation beyond all danger of being cut off."* Your navy will not be able to accomplish this. Five millions of armed men are not kept ready harnessed, within a few hours' sail of you, without suggesting possibilities of employing them. If Denmark, Holland, and Belgium were anything else than baits for annexation and plunder, we might limit our apprehensions; but on every side we see reasons for distrust. There is growing all over Europe a general distaste for honest labour, which distaste nourishes many vices, foremost of which stands covetousness; and covetousness of one sort or another is closely allied to large armaments. *People nearly always regard as impossible that which is most near its accomplishment;* and it will be a poor consolation for defeat and destruction if all we could say was, "Oh, who could have thought of it?" Are English statesmen about to furnish another occasion for the reproach, that they are oftener debating how to remedy costly mistakes, than intelligently devising the means of preventing them? The very first thing the Military Commission ought to do is to send a report to the Government, saying, "We see no use in discussing any defensive plan in a purely strategic spirit, until this question of a sure supply of food for the nation is debated." But is the subject worth debating? It is well worth it, because it is quite possible to grow, within the limits of this kingdom, abundant food for every soul of our thirty-five millions of people. All that is necessary to perfect this "first line of defence" is, to begin to grow and consume our own food, and to pitch all our follies to the winds.

Why can't we all live on plain food? The Scotch live mainly on milk, oatmeal porridge, and barley bread; and, man for man, they are a stronger, cleverer, and finer race than English, Welsh, or Irishmen. More oats are wasted on superfluous pleasure-horses, and more barley and oats are worse than wasted in producing intoxicants, than, if mixed with what wheat we can grow, would more than feed all our people. Every year one-fourth of the wheat prepared for

man, manufactured in the United Kingdom, is wasted as food in the injurious habit of eating white bread. Twenty stones of prime wheat only make thirteen stones of first flour, and two stones of seconds. The rest is all given to the pigs—some day or other, I hope it will “please the pigs” to give it back to us, as this five stone, the chemists will tell you, contains the most nutritious parts of the wheat, one of its most useful constituents being enamel. Why do dentists abound in such astonishing numbers? Because we eat too much meat, and not enough of brown bread, oatmeal porridge, milk, and vegetables. Our bodies represent reproduction of the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe; and if, from our daily food, we eliminate the most nourishing portion, we have not far to go to find the reason why dentists and doctors abound, why hospitals are a great feature in our national architecture, why the army is filled with pale, thin, delicately-formed recruits, and why a change of wind to the east increases tillage in the graveyards. In short, unless a rapid revolution takes place in our mode of life, an over-refined and delicately-organised civilisation will, “*without*” a disastrous invasion, soon make a serious change in our position. How long is this state of affairs to last? This agricultural crisis will be a great benefit to the nation or the reverse: and while we are busy with endeavours to rehabilitate relations between landlord and tenant, we ought to extend the field of operations, and embrace the very important question, not only of national food supply, but also our modes of life in eating, drinking, and every-day household management. We grow more and more delicate, more subject to disease, and consequently present less resisting power to its attacks; and Macaulay’s New Zealander may find abundant causes for decay and disappearance in the fact that we used the corn God gave us as food in the soul-and-body destroying manufacture of intoxicants, and that luxury and its concomitants had so corrupted and enervated us, that we were not able to eat or digest the fine, plain, wholesome bread that so efficiently nourished our heroic ancestors.

But some will say, What has all this to do with agricul-

ture? We reply, They are all inseparably bound together—that you cannot cultivate on a large scale a particular description of grain, or devote yourself heart and soul to any special industry, without taking into account the benefits it confers or the evils it generates. In Ireland, seventy-five per cent. of the corn sown in the manured land, that had the previous season produced green crops, is barley, fifteen per cent. of oats, and only ten per cent. of wheat. The latter is grown mainly near the sea coast, where sea-weed and sea-fog convey silica and iodine to the soil, thus strengthening the straw, and enabling the grain to ripen properly. If a thoughtful farmer sees a fine field of wheat growing on his land, his satisfaction is reasonable, and his self-gratification natural. Every thought is pleasant; no fears of the perversion of God's goodness; it is life, and flesh, and blood personified. But turn the eye to the next field, where a magnificent crop of barley is ready for the sickle. Are the thoughts the same, or the results as promising? When a picture sale takes place in London, numbers of the finest pictures are knocked down to Mr Vans Agnew. The small dealers don't care to bid, knowing such gems must fall to an artistic leviathan. So it is with this splendid barley crop. The demon of drink outbids the miller and the baker; "and drunkards perish that publicans may dine." Thus it is, with our circumscribed area for food-growing, we are, through this drink plague, robbed of more than half our home-grown bodily sustenance, and our system of national defence most seriously jeopardised; for there is no plan of national defence reliable, as long as we are dependent for half our food upon foreigners. The courtesies of diplomacy, or the manipulations of the Foreign Office, are very flimsy defences when posed (no matter how elegantly) in front of empty stackyards and granaries; and a nation which throws away all prudence, and practically relies on "divine possibilities," may have at no distant day to act the part of Elijah, minus the ravens, or of the Israelites, minus the manna, in the wilderness. Thus it comes, that in this case you cannot escape without a decision, for you must

elect which you will have—national defence or national drunkenness.

There remain two points in connection with this universal pasture system requiring remark. Suppose the land all laid down in grass, the labourers deported to the colonies or absorbed in the factories, the villages depleted, and no evidence of healthy life in the half-empty streets. The rural smiths, carpenters, hob-nailed shoemakers, tailors, drapers, in fact ninety per cent. of the village artificers and their families—and outside this circle we find the artificial manure-makers, farm-machine makers, a vast host who, directly or indirectly, were linked with our tillage industry—all are thrown out of employment, and swell the demand for emigration, or employment in the factories. Consider for a moment, too, the fearful depreciation of railway property, as the carriage of corn, seeds, manures, and so forth, form a large item in their profits. In this event there would be no one remaining in the country but the “Universal Graziers” and their herdsmen. So matters go on for two or three years, when the “Universal Graziers” discover they have such an enormous number of lean stock that they can neither winter nor get rid of them. Already the special correspondent of the *Standard* in Ireland writes to say, “That the prominent complaint the poor Irish farmers made was, that they had no one to buy their store cattle.” If such be the case to-day, before this gigantic pasture experiment be made, what will it be in three years hence when this system has come into full activity? But what if a reaction come? as it will most undoubtedly. Then we shall see the full-blown mischief entailed by this precipitate experiment. Grasshoppers, wheat lice, tornadoes, wet cycles, a great emeute between Republicans and Democrats, or actual war between Great Britain and the United States, or other foreign complications we at present wot not of, may suddenly cut off the possibility of our necessary corn supplies reaching us in sufficient quantities for the requirements of the people. Then will come a rush at the ploughs, and a feverish haste to resume the old tillage farming. But where are the ploughmen, the farm horses, machinery, and labourers?—the smiths, carpenters,

harness-makers, and all the other hands necessary to work this enormous industry? Where? Either departed for ever into foreign lands, or swallowed up by the "Sacred Crocodiles" before mentioned. Will they disgorge them? and if disgorged will they be as fit for their work as before "the massacre of the innocents?" They will not. Three years in Manchester, Sheffield, or any other manufacturing town will not only alter their original character and tone, but their physical energy will also be materially deteriorated. The penny gaffs, the flaming gin shops, the rowdy betting rings, the low literature, obscene jests, and other ills that city life is heir to, have in most cases entered like poison into their veins. They will never again take to farm labour with anything like the same briskness or facility as before the exodus. Town life has destroyed their sense of obedience and discipline; they would be as inefficient and burdensome as we find our labourers in Ireland to be, when once they have entered the poorhouse. They become regular drags, shirking their work upon every possible opportunity; never responding to call, and never showing an interest in anything but tobacco and the match-box. Surely, if all this I have mapped out, or even half these disadvantages, occur to us, in what a fearful condition we should then find ourselves. But temperance reformers might say, "Well, there has been no barley sown, and therefore no beer or whisky made to get drunk upon." Alas! we have not even this hope to lean upon, for early in this harvest season the newspapers stated that "a ring of English brewers had bought up all the barley in the Saale district."

Another mischief will also arise from "universal grazing." We shall have no healthy recruiting ground in the country to supply the growing needs of the army; our only hope of keeping up our numerical standard will be centred in the towns, and when this sorry material has passed through the hands of the drill sergeant, and been pronounced fit for active service, you may have to hire the inevitable Chinees to carry the men's knapsacks, and increase the medical staff to double or treble its present proportions; and then, as my friend Paddy says, you will have "a rale corpse d'army."

Thus this grazing system points either to our rapid decline as a military power, or to the advent of such great national peril as will force us out of our luxurious selfishness and make us eagerly and unanimously accept the patriotic burden of universal service. And lastly, it follows that if this universal system of grazing be fully developed, all political power will be concentrated in the towns, a result pregnant with incalculable mischief.

There are many other subjects I should like to remark upon, all connected more or less intimately with our present agricultural depression. I would not have written one fourth of this paper, were there not points therein no one seems to have noticed. Writers on Irish distress and its causes in my opinion flew too high ; let me hope I have in some respect remedied this defect. There are hundreds of Irishmen far better qualified than I am to write on these subjects, but they have not come forward ; the result is, the public (particularly the English section of it) is left in the dark upon the points I have endeavoured to deal with. Vague political theorizing will not do in this case, we want the most minute investigation of the whole subject ; and if a goodly number of observant men came forward and gave particulars of their individual experiences, the result in the aggregate would be most valuable. I trust, therefore, that others of my countrymen, taking my suggestions and statements as a provocative, will come forward at once and help with their counsel and advice in this great national difficulty. In any case, the public will have an opportunity of obtaining information of the widest scope and character, as the reports of the Royal Commission will soon be published. It is to be hoped this collection of new matter will include a minute account of the present condition of the peasant proprietors in Silesia, where the famous Prussian minister, Stein, sometime after the conquest of that country, resettled the former conditions of property, and established in its stead that of peasant proprietorship. This, however, appears (according to some writers) to have been a purely political movement upon Stein's part, who determined to strip the Silesian nobility of all power antagonistic to the solidification

and continuance of Prussian rule in that country. Any desire which appears upon the surface having for its object the agricultural improvement of the new province, was considered a blind to conceal his real purpose. But it must be admitted the debasing and cruel system of villeinage, which previously existed in Silesia, loudly called for reform, so that it is more just to Stein's memory to contend that both objects animated his resolve, in the early period of his ministerial life; but later on we have undoubted evidence to prove that his convictions had undergone a complete change, for in connection with the emancipation of the peasant class in Westphalia no less an authority than Niebuhr reports him as saying: "To convert feudal service into a money rent which is to cease after a stated time, is a gross attack on the rights of property;" and further, "I reckon this law for the partition of the peasant farms, and freeing them from their connection with the proprietors, as one of the most pernicious innovations." He must have experienced some serious disappointments in his previous expectations as to the value of this change, to utter such startling condemnations of this new system of land tenure. It is a curious fact, however, that more famines are reported as having occurred in Silesia than in any other part of Germany. I have considered and examined this proposal with the utmost attention and anxiety, carefully weighing and balancing every point in the condition, character and present surroundings of the Irish tenant farmers, and my solemn and deliberate opinion is, that to give them "leases in perpetuity" would be far safer and more suited to their national and social peculiarities than "Peasant Proprietorship."

An ordinary farm lease for twenty-one or thirty-one years is of great advantage to the tenant, if he has been lucky enough to become tenant in times of agricultural depression, when land was cheap. But as the years wear out, and when the lease is nearly ended, then more mischief accrues to him than if he had been tenant-at-will. As leaseholders begin almost invariably to run out the land near the end of the lease, so as to leave it very little worth when the term expires, the result is, the landlord is exasperated, and a

change of occupancy is the general result, the owner having in most cases to farm the land himself for three or four years to restore it to a condition of fertility, so as to be able to obtain a fair rent from a new tenant. Leases are of no value whatever to landlords, unless the tenants possess property in their own right. Of what use is the covenant, "to well and truly pay," if the tenant has no means but the stock on his farm, which he can convert into money and put out of the landlord's reach. Remember, the value of land in Ireland does not depend so much upon its intrinsic worth as upon the character and ability of the man who occupies it. In England and the South of Scotland agricultural knowledge is so universal that the value of land can be tested to within half-a-crown an acre by the ordinary rule of competition, as no intelligent farmer will make a mistake in the value per acre above this figure. Often in Ireland you will see two brothers occupying a farm of 80 acres. After a while they divide the farm, equalising the value as nearly as possible; in seven years' time you go on that divided farm and you find one of these men rich, happy, and prosperous; but you find the other in the very reverse condition—rent in arrear, fences torn down, gates off the hinges, and the whole place exhibiting unmistakable signs of disorder and decay. Well, was it a rack rent that accomplished this man's failure? Evidently not, for there is his brother beyond the boundary fence in a most flourishing condition. Is a sympathising jury to compel the landlord to lower his rent, not to the level of the real value of the land, but to the level of this man's capacity to manage or rather mismanage it? This would be to give a premium to ignorance, idleness, and dishonesty. A great deal is said about the Government valuation, and statements are made that any rent over this valuation is unjust; but this valuation, as far as I can remember, was made more to test the relative values of different townlands, for the purpose of assessing the Government taxes, than as a landlord's guide to the letting of land.

But suppose it was made for the latter object; the valuation represented the net value "after" the payment of

all taxes—but this valuation was made when rates and taxes were enormously high. I know one case where a gentleman offered a large farm, for a term of years, to a friend of his, provided he would pay the taxes. The poor's rate on this townland was 20s. in the pound, and the county tax about 1s. 8d. The real farm value was about 30s. per Irish acre. The profit or net rent would be 8s. 4d. an acre as long as the poor's rate remained at 20s., and as the rate diminished the profit rent would rise, so that by the time the rate fell to 2s. in the pound the original profit rent of 8s. 4d. per acre would have increased by 18s. on that portion of land represented by a rate of 20s. in the pound. How then can any rational man quote this Government valuation as precedent for equitable land-letting? This I trust will teach some of my readers that there is a wide difference between "real" and "oratorical" value of land in Ireland.

It is astonishing that so many public speakers and writers, both in Ireland and also in England, assume the office of directors and advisers on this Irish Land Question, and who seem completely ignorant of occurrences which took place during the land-burning period, and who never exhibit a scintilla of evidence that they possess even the most remote knowledge of practical farming. How very odd it would look if an engineer assumed the rôle of writing essays upon the circulation of the blood! It seems equally curious to find these men laying down the law on the subject of agriculture. Purely subjective teaching, such as they palm off upon their hearers or readers, if attempted to be put in practice, as poor Irish farmers will find to their cost, must end by placing them objectively either in open insurrection to the Government of the day, or in the poor-house. In dealing with poor people of limited means and capacities, it is cruel, and shows an utter want of good taste and true sympathy, to rain upon them torrents of advice, and confuse and overload them with dictums which are altogether beyond their power to adopt or obey. True courtesy from the rich to the poor requires quite the opposite mode of conduct; advice as to beneficial changes in their modes of life and style of farming should always

assume more the form of sympathetic suggestion as to how best to utilise their present means, than that of intolerant fault-finding, accompanied with directions as to improvements which are to them impracticable. The Irish are a polite people, and no race understand better than they do the responsibilities and graces of the sentiment that "noblesse oblige." So no greater violation of common sense or good taste could be exhibited than that which urges the poor farmers in Ireland to indulge in expectations of independence, which, in their present condition and circumstances, they can never realise in the manner pointed out to them.

English land reformers see few signs in their own country of land impoverishment, and little evidence of want of skill, capital, or industry, so that the great mass of English and Scotch farmers present an appearance somewhat analogous to that of sergeant-majors in the army, who are fit for commissions ; but only one-fourth (if so many) of our Irish farmers are as yet out of the agricultural awkward squad, so that we shall have considerable delay and a good deal of hard work before they are all fit for promotion.

For the majority of Irish tillage farmers the discipline of fair rent is far preferable to dangerous laxities of ownership. At this moment the great hindrance to self-help on the part of the tenants arises from the painful fact that the greater number of them are over head and ears in debt to the local banks and shopkeepers ; and while they remain in this condition it is hard to see how honest legislation can possibly help them. We have abundant evidence that hasty legislation, resulting in an almost inoperative, because unsatisfying, Land Act, and in an unpacifying Church Act, has had no effect whatever in removing or abating the craving of this huge crowd of gaping expectants, taught to keep their mouths always wide open, like young thrushes waiting in hungry expectancy, until they are filled with the bread of Parliamentary confiscation. This year, no doubt, there is general suffering caused by the adverse condition of the elements, and the extension of various foreign imports. But even the most ardent agitator must see that educating

a people in this peculiar manner cannot give promise of genuine improvement in their condition or character, or fit them to fill an advanced position in society with benefit to themselves or the community. There are so many contradictory "cries;" one shouts, Exterminate the landlords, and his next breath carries forth an ardent appeal to these landlords for help and assistance of every possible variety. Feed the hungry, but take care how you feed them. Don't blindly sow tares when you meant to sow wheat, for "if you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind." Would it not be safer, and wiser, and better for all the parties concerned, to postpone actual legislation in this matter for a short period—say ten years. In the meantime let the united force, heart and soul of the people of all ranks, be resolutely and energetically directed to improve the cultivation of the soil. Give time for social and political passion and folly to subside, take stock of your surroundings, and let the people prepare and fit themselves, as far as possible, for the new position to which they seek to be elevated. While this good work is going on, let landlords select eligible tenants, and give them "leases in perpetuity" as a present earnest of future extension to others of this valuable concession. Ten years will work wonders, if the labour be earnest and directed by sympathising intelligence. The people may get out of debt, and may learn how to adapt themselves to a new style of farming which is absolutely and unavoidably necessary. A few fine seasons, with mutual trust between landlord and tenant, will restore hope, content, and confidence; and thus disciplined by trial and strengthened by success, we may at the end of this short period of probation be enabled to carry out on a large scale such measures of peasant proprietorship or leaseholds in perpetuity as will confer hope of great advantage to all classes of the people. Let the whole community pull together heartily and unselfishly, and remembering the inspiring adage of the bundle of sticks, forget not also the solemn warning, that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

But I cannot close this paper without directing attention

as forcibly as I can to the fact, that the extensive planting of barley and its conversion into intoxicants indirectly leave us at the mercy of foreigners for half our food ; and I have endeavoured to show, I hope successfully, that the proper and effective defence of the nation is most seriously jeopardised by this malversation of so many million quarters of corn. To this very startling deficit we have to add the deficiency in grain-producing power occasioned by the wholesale deterioration of the corn-growing properties of the soil by land-burning, an evil the full significance and danger of which we can never rigidly or even approximately calculate until we find ourselves face to face with our maritime foes, be they who they may. Last year we spent 142 millions upon drink. It is uphill work to labour and energise to improve our agriculture when the outcome is that the preponderance of the hoped-for increase in corn will be used, not in feeding the people or strengthening the national powers for defence, but for the purpose of further weakening our defences and national position by an extended production of drink. One is tempted to throw down the pen in despair, and say "*cui bono?*" Why try to double your cereal produce when the result in the main is adding fuel to a flame which is gnawing into the very vitals of the nation ? The squabbles of Parliamentary parties, the virulence of faction, the vapid outpourings, discontents, and seditions, harangues, quarrels, misrepresentations, and abuse heaped on political opponents and landowners ought to stand rebuked in face of the great national danger which looms with such a threatening aspect over our common country. A moderate land reform, if wisely and impartially accomplished, will be a great help in our present difficulties. But there is a greater reform than this—there is the necessity to reform ourselves. Then, and then only, we may look for God's blessing upon our endeavours to improve our agriculture, and rejoice in the consummation of our hopes, when we actually find that "there is much food in the tillage of the poor."