

THE
PRIZE SYSTEM

AS APPLIED TO

SMALL FARMERS IN IRELAND.

BY

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IN most parts of Ireland the agricultural practices of the small farmers are very defective. In some places they they are quite primitive. Vast numbers of the occupiers are very poor, while wide areas of land are not yielding a fourth of the produce which could be obtained from them.

While many large farmers and graziers partake of the general progress of the kingdom, little or no improvement has been effected in the condition of vast numbers of the occupiers of the small holdings.

The increase in the price of store stock and of butter has enabled many of them to pay their way much better than they used to do, but in their dwellings and social condition there has not been a corresponding improvement. In the more backward districts they have not been influenced by the action of Agricultural Societies. Thousands upon thousands of them have never seen a cattle-show; and as a class they have come to the conclusion that cattle-shows are rather inimical to their interests. It is wholly unnecessary to discuss this view. It is sufficient for my present purpose to state that every person conversant with the state of Ireland knows that the feeling has prevailed and retarded the progress of the country. Even if this feeling did not prevail, it must be borne in mind that the action of the existing Agricultural Societies could not reach down to the small farmers in remote districts where cattle-shows are never held.

Lord Spencer, K.G., while Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, saw all this, and sought some means of creating among this class a taste for progress. The scheme he adopted, and the result of which I shall set forth in this paper, aims at creating among the small farmers of a limited district a spirit of emulation. Lord Spencer found in the department with which I am connected a ready-formed machinery for carrying out his views. The readers

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of the 'Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society' are aware that there are in Ireland a great many small agricultural schools; that is, National Schools to which school-farms are attached. Lord Spencer made eight of these schools, two in each province, the centres of eight districts, in each of which he gave prizes for the best managed small farms. My colleagues and I have been the judges. In each district the agricultural teacher has been the local agent or secretary. The competition has been limited to farms which did not exceed 8*l.* valuation; and, subject to this one condition, every small farm within five miles of the agricultural school, or centre, was eligible to compete.

The adjudication has been made according to the following scale of marks:—

	Marks.
1. For the cultivation of the land, including the system of cropping, the productiveness of the crops, and condition of the land, a maximum of	300
2. For the live-stock, taking into account the quality of the animals, their suitability to the farm, and the number maintained	100
3. For the farm-offices, embracing the plan, the construction, and state of repair	50
4. For home-made manure, taking into account the position of the site of the manure heap as regards the dwelling, &c., the mode of collecting and preserving it, and the quantity made ..	50
5. For the cottage-garden	50
6. For the dwelling	50
Total	600

This, like every scale of the kind, is artificial. On the whole it has answered very well. Throughout the entire competition, which has lasted for five years, not a single objection has been made to the awards. Whenever and wherever it was possible to do so, the competitors were called together in the school-room after the inspection, the marks given to each in the several sections were read to them, and the good and bad features in their modes of management pointed out. In this way a spirit of inquiry and rivalry has been engendered, the advantages of which it is impossible to describe.

A few additional words of explanation appear to be desirable before I state the results of Lord Spencer's experiment. Englishmen and Scotchmen who have been accustomed to large farms cannot realise the condition of the small farmers in many parts of Ireland. In England the average size of the holdings may be said to be about 200 acres; in Ireland it is about 30. In round numbers, the total number of holdings in Ireland is about 600,000, of two-thirds of which (or 400,000)

not one is above 30 acres. In England the farmhouses are, as a rule, good. The dwellings of a vast number of small farmers in Ireland are wretched. In this age of progress it is unsatisfactory to find that there are in Ireland very many small farmers with large families whose dwellings consist of one apartment, in which cattle and pigs are housed.

In order that the reader may realise the field for improvement in many parts of Ireland, I recapitulate some of the defects in the agricultural practices of the country.

There are four millions of acres of medium land now growing poor herbage, which often contains more weeds than grass, and which would pay far better in tillage. At present the gross return from those four millions of acres does not amount to twice the rent; if put under a proper system, the yield would amount to five times the rent, and the wealth of the country would be increased to the extent of several millions sterling a year, which would be available for distribution among labourers, farmers, manure- and seed-merchants, and shopkeepers of all kinds. In due time, too, the landlords would obtain an increase of rent, for it is a law of agricultural progress that anything which increases the farmers' profits tends to advance the rent of the land.

Besides the four million acres of pasture referred to, there are some seven million acres of land in permanent grass in Ireland, the average yield of which could, by the application of correct knowledge, be increased very considerably.

There is not, perhaps, in small farm management a greater defect than the usual mode of producing grass. Sometimes the farmer does not sow any grass-seeds at all, but allows the land to cover itself with whatever herbage it throws up naturally. Again, thousands of small farmers put their land into grass when it is reduced by corn crops and bad management to such a state of poverty that it will no longer give even a middling crop of grain.

The state of the cultivated land of Ireland is also very defective, as is well known to all persons of experience. Throughout the country we meet a great many farmers who till their land in a very creditable way; but it is notorious that on the vast majority of small farms the tillage is shallow and imperfect, and that the general management is extremely defective. As a rule, Irish farmers do not follow any systematic course of cropping, or observe any of the principles which modern science suggests for maintaining the land in a productive state. When a proper system of husbandry is adopted on a farm, all the tillage parts of it are manured in a certain number of years and equally

enriched; and if the land be well tilled and kept clean, all the crops are heavy and profitable.

Manured root-crops form the backbone of improved husbandry. A great many of the small farmers of Ireland do not grow any manured crop but potatoes. They ought to grow turnips or mangels, or some of both, for feeding their cows in winter and spring.

In many parts of the country little or no artificial grass is grown; and the want of this is perhaps the greatest defect in the management of the small farms. On thousands of these farms there is no hay for wintering the cows; and the result is that the animals are dry during winter and spring; and at the opening of the dairy season in May they come out in a half-starved state.

Tillage is done in a slovenly fashion. By good, early, and deep tillage alone the annual return from every acre of arable land in tillage could be largely increased. Sufficient care is not taken to keep the land clean. In some parts of the country weeds are permitted to grow freely, and to shed their seed; this causes a heavy loss. The yield of the crop is greatly reduced, as the weeds take up the food which would go to feed the crop if the land were kept clean. It is no uncommon thing to find ten tons of weeds and upwards in an acre of potato ground.

The collection and preservation of farmyard-manure do not receive the attention they deserve. The manure made in the "bawns" of thousands of the small farmers of Ireland is not, in reality, farmyard-manure at all, but indifferent compost. A quantity of clay is carted from the headlands or old ditches, and thrown into yards or pits in front of the dwellings; and on this is thrown, daily, kitchen refuse, giving rise to effluvia which poison the air that enters the dwellings. Again, in thousands of cases, manure is left to rot in small loose heaps, by which a good deal of its substance passes into the air; and, in an equally large number of instances, the rain-water is permitted to drain away its substance into the nearest rivulets. It is not quite easy to estimate the loss of manurial matter annually incurred in this way by Irish farmers; but the loss to the farmer is, in reality, far greater than the value of the manurial constituents dissipated, for deficiency in tillage or manure may reduce the crop one-half. The value of the deficiency in the crops of Ireland, arising from bad manures, amounts to several millions sterling per annum.

In the treatment of all farm crops there is bad management in every county. In illustration of this, I may take the hay

crop. First, it is often too much exposed to rain, which washes away a large quantity of its nutritive matters. 2nd. It is often too much exposed to the sun, which also lessens its value very considerably. 3rd. By too much exposure, or by fermentation, it suffers loss of fragrance and of colouring matter. We know by experience that there is an enormous difference in the feeding value of hay, according to its colour and fragrance. 4th. The hay is commonly allowed to remain so long in cocks in the fields, that the surface of these cocks becomes drenched by rain and bleached by the sun; and the part in the bottom not only becomes unfit for use, but causes a loss of aftergrass. Putting these several sources of loss together, I estimated some time ago that, on an average, the hay crop of Ireland is deteriorated to the extent of one-fifth of its value. About 1,500,000 acres are meadowed annually; the average yield is two tons per acre; the total produce is, therefore, 3,000,000 tons, which, at 2*l.* 10*s.* per ton, amounts to 7,500,000*l.*; and one-fifth of this, or 1,500,000*l.*, is lost.

The Live-stock of Ireland is not made as profitable as it ought to be. The quality of the animals kept in many places has improved very much of late; but there is still great need for further improvement, especially in the stock kept by small farmers. Evidence of the enormous loss suffered in this way by our small farmers is afforded in the fairs and markets held throughout the country.

Dairy business is badly managed in many parts of Ireland. In butter-making alone there is room for improvement to the extent of 1*l.* per cwt. or about 1,000,000*l.* a year.

The want of drainage is a crying defect in Irish agriculture. In Ireland at least 6,000,000 acres of land are in need of drainage. This work could be effected at a cost of 5*l.* an acre, which, at 5*l.* per cent., would give a rent-charge of 5*s.* an acre; while the increased value of the land consequent on drainage would, on hundreds of thousands of acres of bog and wet cold clay, after a few years, be 1*l.* an acre and upwards. Taking the average at 10*s.*, the annual letting value of the land of the country would be increased by 3,000,000*l.* a year. Many persons will ask, Where is all the capital to execute this work to come from? I answer, that the greater part of it is in the labour of the people. The working farmers of Ireland have a great deal of labour in their families which could be most usefully employed in draining their land.

The want of proper fences is another serious impediment to the progress of improvement on the small farms of Ireland. There are several other defects which need not be specified in this paper.

Every experienced agriculturist who carefully considers the foregoing category of defects, and who has had any experience of Ireland, will agree with me when I say that the small farmers of that country could, by adopting modes of management which are within their reach, double their incomes. The facts adduced in this Report will, I believe, confirm this view. And what a happy solution of many existing difficulties would be effected if the small farmers of Ireland—who form the very backbone of Irish society—could be induced to double their incomes!

I do not say that the Spencer prize system would be a panacea for the evils of Ireland; but, with a knowledge of the wants of the country, which few men have had the opportunity of studying as closely as I have had, I do not hesitate to assert that the application of Lord Spencer's prize system for a sufficient number of years in a sufficient number of districts, under men capable of commanding public confidence, would revolutionise the agricultural practices of the small farmers.

In this paper, and in all that I have written, I have studiously avoided all reference to the relative merits of small and large farm systems. In offering to endow his prize system, Lord Spencer guarded himself against the expression of any opinion on that vexed question. He took Ireland as he found it, and honestly sought the best means of ameliorating the condition of the people.

With these introductory observations, I proceed to describe the working of the system in the several districts; and I shall take them in the order in which they were inspected last year, viz. :—

- ULSTER Parkanour, Dungannon, County Tyrone.
Cornagilta, County Monaghan.
- LEINSTER Ballinvally, County Westmeath.
Garryhill, County Carlow.
- MUNSTER Mungret, County Limerick.
Grange, County Waterford.
- CONNAUGHT . . Killasolan, County Galway.
Loughglynn, County Roscommon.

PARKANOUR, DUNGANNON, COUNTY TYRONE.

In Tyrone the average size of the holdings is 24 statute acres. The Poor-law valuation is under 10*l.* on two-thirds of them.

Throughout this county, as elsewhere, the farming is far behind what it ought to be.

Parkanour was selected as one of the districts in which to apply Lord Spencer's prizes for several reasons. The Parkanour school is on the estate of John Y. Burges, Esq., D.L., a wealthy

proprietor, who has taken a very active part in the improvement of his property; and the school is on every side surrounded by small farms.

That Mr. Burges approved of the system from the outset I can testify. Unfortunately he confined his pecuniary aid to his own tenants. He believed that the rule by which competition was limited to persons whose valuation did not exceed 8*l.* was injudicious. If any of his tenants won a Spencer prize, he doubled the amount, and he offered prizes to his own tenants whose valuation did not exceed 15*l.* The number of competitors has not been as great as was expected.

The first Spencer prize was won two years in succession by the same person, and the first of the Burges prizes was won in 1873 and 1874 by another. As both dropped out of the competition at the close of 1874, I expected that the number of entries would have increased largely in 1875. Three new competitors did come forward, but four of the old ones declined to enter. In 1876 they remained about the same.

It may be asked why a system so immediately addressed to the wants of the people has thus failed to excite competition? In answer to this question I would add to the drawback first stated, that *in this and in some other districts* a feeling has spread among the less intelligent of the small farmers that their rents might be raised if they succeeded in winning these prizes.

It is unfortunate that this or any notion of the kind should be circulated in connection with this system. I believe such a notion never entered the mind of Mr. Burges. It is not to be disguised that the system, if useful to the tenants in the first instance, must in the course of time benefit the landlords. The person who objects to the Spencer system on this ground, to be consistent, would oppose all means of promoting agricultural progress.

Another and a more powerful cause will be found in the fact that as there have been only three Spencer prizes, those who have been disappointed three times have been discouraged, and the knowledge of their failure has deterred others from coming forward. It will be seen in the Report on the Loughglynn and Grange districts, that when local subscriptions have enabled us to increase the number of prizes considerably, the scheme has developed itself in a remarkable manner, and been followed by most gratifying results.

In 1875 the first of the Spencer prizes was won by George Frizelle, who holds about six statute acres from the Earl of Charlemont. Frizelle manages his farm most profitably. His land and his house and offices present a great contrast to those of some of his neighbours.

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In 1876 James Delvin, who holds 6 acres, 3 roods from Mr. Burges, scored as many marks as Frizelle. In the earlier years of the competition Delvin did not feel that he would have any chance of a prize. In 1874 he entered for the first time, and scored 302 marks; in 1875 he obtained 379 marks; and in 1876 he scored 415.

In 1875 the first of the Burges prizes was won by Mr. Henry Hall. Through some cause or other there was only one entry for the Burges prizes in 1876. I have, however, gone to see Hall's farm, which, on the whole, presents a better appearance than it did in 1875. I give a brief notice of the cropping of the land. He holds $11\frac{1}{2}$ statute acres, at a rent which is a fraction under 1*l.* an acre. The crops were:—

A.	R.	P.	
1	1	0	turnips and mangels.
1	2	0	potatoes.
4	0	0	oats, viz.:—
			$\frac{1}{2}$ acre laid down with seeds after potatoes.
			$1\frac{1}{4}$ acre laid down after manured roots.
			$2\frac{1}{4}$ acres under lea oats.
2	2	0	meadow, viz.:—
			A. R. P.
			1 2 0 upland.
			1 0 0 lowland hay.

The remainder of the land was in permanent pasture.

The live-stock consisted of 1 horse, 3 dairy-cows, 2 heifers, 2 pigs, and 46 poultry.

The horse is used for farm work, and for conveying Hall and his wife to market, and to prayers on Sundays.

My estimate of the returns from the farm during the year is as follows:—

Produce of cows	£	s.	d.
Oats (exclusive of feeding of horse)	35	0	0
Profit on beasts sold, or to be sold	21	0	0
Two calves reared	19	0	0
Potatoes, $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons at 3 <i>l.</i>	9	0	0
Profit on pigs	16	10	0
Eggs and poultry	6	0	0
	6	10	0
	113	0	0

From this is to be deducted:—

Rent and taxes	£	s.	d.
Wages and keep of servant	12	18	4
Seeds purchased	22	0	0
Labour in spring and harvest	1	1	0
Hand-feeding for cows	5	0	0
	1	12	0
	42	11	4

This calculation leaves for the maintenance of Hall and his wife, for casualties, and for profit, 70*l.* 8*s.* 8*d.* I asked Hall what weekly wages would have been equal to the income from his holding. He seemed astonished at my question, but soon made it plain that no rate of wages which could be named would have been an equivalent. That the man has worked very hard there can be no doubt; but he is enjoying the fruits of it. He has a commodious and comfortable house; he is surrounded by every comfort required for a man in his rank of life; and that he saved out of the produce of this piece of land a good deal, I was afforded the most convincing evidence. Yet there is nothing extraordinary in his farming. There are tens of thousands of small farmers in Ulster who would, however, double their incomes, and add largely to their happiness, if they farmed as well as he does.

What he has accomplished is the result of industry, of skill, and of frugality. His landlord has dealt with him on the good old principle of "live and let live," and there is between them the feeling that ought to be universal throughout the land.

The Spencer system has had the merit of bringing this man to the front, and of holding him up as a model farmer.

Among the competitors in 1875 and 1876, there has been one man, James McGinn, who deserves a special notice. Up to November 1873, he lived exclusively by working as a labourer on Mr. Burges' home farm. He then got from Mr. Burges a field containing 1 acre and 1 rood (statute), which became available; to which he added 1 acre 3 roods in November 1874, by purchasing the interest for 14*l.* He borrowed 8*l.* of the purchase-money from a local loan fund, for which he has paid interest at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* per pound per week. He got time to pay the remaining 6*l.*

Soon after obtaining possession of the first plot he commenced to build a cottage, which he completed in due time. This cottage consists of two apartments—a kitchen, used as a living-room, and a bed-room. Each apartment is 13 feet by 13 feet in the clear. The walls are built of mud, which is plastered over. The thatch consists of wheat-straw. The floor is made up of a mixture of clay and lime-rubbish. It makes a warm, comfortable home, and is fit, so far as the accommodation goes, for an ordinary labourer or the occupier of one of the smaller holdings. The walls being rough cast, and the windows mullioned as in English cottages, it rises, in its appearance, out of the category of "mud cabins."

A rude but warm and suitable piggery, and a temporary

cowhouse, have been added. These will, in due time, be replaced by permanent structures.

The situation being much exposed, the poor man has planted alders and poplars to break the blast; and I am glad to find that they are all doing well. There is an approach, which he has made more passable than the roadways leading to thousands of large farms in Ireland.

I am satisfied that there is no class in the community which deserves more encouragement and countenance than men of this stamp, who evince an honest desire to provide for old age by lifting themselves out of the grade of the dependent poor. If single-handed, he may fail; for in that case a few casualties, or the loss of health, may crush his efforts. But he did not begin until he had two stout sons to take his place if needs be.

The debt has been paid off, and the position of the family greatly altered.

I put it to any one who may read these remarks, whether this man is ever likely to become an object of workhouse relief. The spirit of independence and self-reliance which he has displayed is the best guarantee that he will not.

Mr. Burges sees that his interest, both as a ratepayer and as an employer of labour, as well as his legitimate influence as a proprietor, will be promoted by giving every man like McGinn a legitimate opportunity of establishing for himself a home in which he may spend his old age.

This is not the place to go into this subject more fully. McGinn's farm is undergoing improvement, and need not be described at present. In 1875 he got a prize of 1*l.* from Mr. Burges. This year he gets 1*l.* from the Spencer Fund.

I made on the spot an estimate of the cost of the cottage. The figures have been revised by Mr. Moutray, agent to Mr. Burges, who has had ample means of checking the time which McGinn gave to the work.

	£	s.	d.
Building mud-walls, 45 days of his own time, at 1 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>	3	15	0
Straw for thatch	2	15	0
Thatcher	0	15	0
Timber for roof	0	7	6
Putting on roof, 3 days	0	5	0
Bricks for fireplace and for wall opposite door to protect fireplace from draughts, viz. :—			
300 hard, at 2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>	7	6	}
300 soft, at 1 <i>s.</i> 3 <i>d.</i>	3	9	
2 cut stones for fireplace	1	0	0
Lime for plastering, &c. :—			
12 barrels, at 1 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i> each, and 6 <i>d.</i> per barrel for carriage	1	2	0
Carried forward	10	10	9

		£	s.	d.
Brought forward		10	10	9
Mason, laying foundation	2 days at 3s. 4d.			
„ building fireplace	2 „ „			
„ „ windows	1 „ „			
Total		0	16	8
Cost of windows		0	12	6
Plastering		0	12	6
		<hr/>		
		12	12	5

Of the cottage itself I will say that it can be kept quite as clean as, and will be warmer than, many of the show cottages which I have seen erected at a cost varying from 70*l.* to 90*l.* To prevent any misconception, I may add that I do not hold up the materials used in the building of this cottage as the best, or anything approaching to the best; but I do say now, as I said several years ago, and as has since been better said by a very high authority, that mud walls may be used, at all events provisionally, with great advantage in many districts in Ireland in providing decent, though cheap, accommodation for our agricultural labourers.

CORNAGILTA, COUNTY MONAGHAN.

The average size of the holdings in county Monaghan is 15 statute acres. In the district in which Cornagilta School is situated the average is under 10 acres. It was, therefore, a good place for trying the Spencer prize system. It was selected for the purpose, for the additional reason that local co-operation was expected; and it was obtained from Miss Rose, on whose property the school is built.

Unfortunately a feeling soon arose in this, as in some of the other districts, that the co-operation thus accorded on the part of the owners of property was the result of a settled desire to use the system as a cloak for raising rents. This created a formidable difficulty. In the system itself the small farmers and their advisers have from the commencement expressed the utmost confidence; but feelings of the kind indicated, when they arise, are not easily dealt with. At one time it was feared that it would be necessary to withdraw the prizes altogether; but by prudence and perseverance we have been able to continue them.

That the system has succeeded under the difficulties referred to, will be rendered evident by the facts I shall now adduce. And this success is, I submit, the very best proof of its inherent merits.

Compared with districts in the south and west, the number of competitors has been small; but the actual amount of improvement effected on several farms has been very remarkable.

In these Reports it is neither possible nor necessary to give the entire details of every farm inspected. It is enough to take a few typical cases, and to point out the good which has been done. I shall notice, first of all, an upland district on the property of Miss Rose, close to the school. In 1872, the first year of the competition, the first prize was awarded to Patrick Connolly, who scored 340 out of a total of 600 marks, and whose farm was in that year a model for neighbouring small farmers. It forms part of a tract of sloping ground, through which a public road runs. In 1872 a neighbouring farmer, John McAree, scored only 260 marks. For the management of his land, that is, for his mode of raising crops, he obtained only $112\frac{1}{2}$ out of 300 marks. In 1876 this man ranked first, scored a total of 510 marks, and obtained 260 marks for the management of his land, as against $112\frac{1}{2}$ in 1872.

McAree is an old man, who has spent his life in the district. In 1872 neither roots nor artificial grass were raised on his farm, and there was no trace of any principle of cropping.

In 1876 his holding was as well managed as any reasonable man could expect. And all this had been accomplished in five years.

Patrick Connolly is dead, but his family have continued to manage the farm very well. They have enlarged their dwelling, and made other improvements. In 1876 they scored 505 marks; but McAree, who ranked only eighth in 1872, excelled even them.

I come next to another typical case, namely Peter McKenna, who lives in one of the poorest districts in the county Monaghan. He holds 17 acres of what is commonly called "mountain land," the greater part of which has been reclaimed from the state of heather. His land runs up to the top of a hill; on the other side of which, but at a lower elevation than McKenna's farm, the heather can still be seen.

The natural character of the soil will be appreciated when I state that the rent is 5*l.* 1*s.*, and that the Poor-law valuation is 5*l.* Without any pretension to the rank of a model farmer, McKenna has managed his farm in a way which does him credit. It will be seen from the tabular return that it bears a heavy stock. The house and offices attracted my attention as I approached them; and all I saw satisfied me that he is prosperous and happy. The position he has won in this competition will

stimulate him to make additional improvements, and his example cannot fail to influence others.

I may say that the land in the district in which he lives is wretchedly farmed. For want of correct knowledge of tillage and manures, too large a proportion of the soil is burned. The cattle are of a very unimproved description, and many of the small farmers are sadly in want of decent house-accommodation. Indeed, some of the houses are in a truly shocking state.

No person appears to take any interest in improving either the agricultural practices of the district or the conditions of the people. I passed tract after tract of land, which is not yielding a fourth of the produce which might be extracted from it. The rents are low.

In some cases neither landlord nor agent has been on the land for years. Yet a land-agent on an extensive property, to whom application was made, wrote to the applicant, saying he thought the money could be better expended! One of the tenants in whom this gentleman is interested, who got his name entered on the list of competitors, and whose holding is one of the worst managed in the entire district, told me the agent had never been on the farm. Now if this tenant were induced (and I affirm that he could be easily induced) to imitate the system pursued by any of the Spencer prize farmers of the district, his annual income would be increased threefold. At present he is steeped in poverty. I will add that it would be incomparably better for him to farm well at double his present rent, than to continue his present system without any rent.

In making these remarks, I desire to guard myself against offering any opinion on the adjustment of rent. I am simply indicating that, according to my experience, persons engaged in the management of landed property in Ireland would best consult the interests of their employers by creating among the tenants a spirit of emulation. If this were done in the district now under consideration, tenants, landlords, and all classes of the community would be greatly benefited.

There is another and more remarkable farmer in this district, to whom I shall next refer: namely, Peter Connolly, who ranked second on the prize list this year, and who ran a dead heat with Patrick Connolly for the first prize in 1875.

He holds 24 statute acres of land from Sir Thomas Foster, Bart., at a rent of 8*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* Part of the land is reclaimed bog and part cold and very poor upland. In the first year of the competition he scored only 290 out of 600 marks. In 1876 he obtained 490 marks. Since 1872 he has reclaimed 4 statute acres of heath land; and only a small plot now remains to be improved.

This year the land is apportioned thus :—

A.	R.	P.	
2	3	0	manured crops—potatoes and turnips.
2	0	0	meadow.
7	0	0	oats.
10	2	0	grazed.

The remainder is under roads, buildings, and waste.

One peculiarity of his management is that he does not sell any corn. His sales consist of the produce of his cows, of pigs, and of poultry and eggs. His family consisted last year of himself, his wife, and seven children. One of the sons has this year joined the Royal Irish Constabulary. Connolly keeps five cows, a brood sow, and a large number of poultry. A calf or two are reared every year, and the produce of the sow are sold as slips. There were at the time of my visit eleven of these for sale, worth about 25s. each. Two litters are sold in the year.

After supplying the wants of the family, 6 firkins of butter were sold last year. And the return from poultry may be estimated from the following figures :—

The sale of eggs exceeds 5*l.* a year. Six dozen of chickens were sold last year, at an average of 1s. each; 13 turkeys and 5 geese were also sold.

The food purchased for the live-stock costs between 2*l.* and 3*l.* a year.

The house presents all the appearance of a happy home. It is not too much to say that if all the improvable small farms of the county Monaghan were improved to the same extent as those described above, the incomes of their occupants would be doubled, their comforts and happiness would be increased in a still greater degree, and the entire aspect of society in the district would be permanently improved.

BALLINVALLY, NEAR CASTLETOWNDELVIN, CO. WESTMEATH.

The greater portion of the land of Westmeath is divided into large holdings, which are occupied by graziers.

In several parts of the county there are a good many small farms. This is the case in the neighbourhood of Ballinvally National School, which is on the property of the Right Hon. Col. Tighe, of Woodstock, county Kilkenny, and is within a mile of Castletowndelvin.

Ballinvally was accordingly deemed to be a good district in which to try the Spencer scheme.

For want of local aid, the system has not been as beneficial as elsewhere. From the outset, Col. Tighe was good enough to encourage his own tenants to compete by offering to give to any of them who might win a prize the same sum as Lord Spencer.

As nothing was done to increase the number of prizes beyond the three originally endowed by Lord Spencer, those who failed in the earlier years became disheartened.

The working of the system in this district has, however, proved its capability of effecting the objects which Lord Spencer had in view. As an illustration, I instance the case of James Johnston, who holds 6 a. 3 r. 20 p. (statute), from Lord Greville, at a rent of 6*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* a year. This man competed for the first time in 1873, when he scored 272 marks out of a total of 600, and got third prize. At the time he appeared to me to be a most industrious and deserving man. The system of cropping he pursued was, however, so defective, that for cultivation of the land he got only 100 out of 300 marks. There were neither roots nor artificial grass. The advantages of these crops were quietly explained to him. He seemed to understand and appreciate the suggestions offered. One of the Judges offered to make him a present of as much grass-seeds as would sow a piece of ground which was suitable for them. In due time he reminded the Judge of his promise: the grass-seeds were sent down and produced a fine crop the year after.

In 1875 and 1876, Johnston bought grass-seeds himself, and now his farm is cropped so judiciously that I have given 250 marks for the cultivation of the land.

In the "offices" several changes and improvements have been made. The manure-heap used to be in front of the entrance to the dwelling, and the piggery used to be next to the bed-room. A very suitable piggery was erected in 1875, in the most remote corner of the yard, and a nice wall was built in front of the house, and the manure-heap was removed to a site in front of the piggery. Johnston's holding and premises will bear comparison with those of the prize-takers of the other districts. His circumstances are greatly altered. A few days before my last visit he lost two pigs, worth about 10*l.*; but he can bear the loss very well, large though the amount be to him.

This man was easily led into pursuing an improved system of management. If all the small farmers of Westmeath, or even a large number of them, were encouraged in the same way, the amount of good done would be incalculable; and that it is desirable to effect a radical change of some kind is well known

to all persons who know the wants and feelings of the people of that county.

The other competitors who deserve a passing notice, are Widow Anderson, Widow Paterson, and James Kavanagh, all of whom in 1876 ranked equal in the sum-total of marks. The holding of each of them now possesses a good deal of merit. Widow Paterson has the best field of artificial grass in the entire district, and the winter culture which is given by the Widow Anderson to her stubble land in preparation for roots and potatoes is everything that could be desired. The following figures will show the progress made by them since 1873:—

	Marks obtained.	
	1873.	1876.
Widow Anderson	325	} Each 400 marks.
Widow Paterson	273	
James Kavanagh	271	

GARRYHILL, COUNTY CARLOW.

The Garryhill National School is on the Carlow estate of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Bessborough, whose efforts to improve his property are well known.

As there is a very large number of small farms in the district, the school was selected as one of the centres for Lord Spencer's prize system. Lord Bessborough has co-operated in promoting it, not only by avowing his approval of the principle, but by subscribing to the fund. He distributes among his own tenants who appear on the merit list a sum equal to Lord Spencer's contribution.

In each of the past two years we had for distribution 20*l.*, viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
Lord Spencer's contribution	7	10	0
Lord Bessborough's contribution	7	10	0
Irish Peasantry Society of London	5	0	0

The interest which the system has excited in parts of this district is very great indeed. In one part of it the influence of the competition has been fully equal to anything I have seen elsewhere. I refer now to Coolasnaugh, which is a valley surrounded by mountains.

The name is of Irish origin; in English it relates to snow. True to its name, the background was covered with snow on the day of my visit, while the country all round was free from it.

In this valley all the competitors can be seen at once. Each can see daily the farms of the others, and observe improvements as soon as they are commenced.

In going to this valley in 1876 we had to ascend a sharp hill; after the ascent we reached a point from which the entire valley can be seen. To me, who had seen it several times before, it presented on this occasion an improved appearance which I cannot adequately describe. I saw it first in 1873. Since then the dwellings and offices have been improved; more grass-seeds and roots have been raised, and the area of arable land has been increased.

Knowing that Lord Bessborough, to whom this valley belongs, has been actively engaged in promoting improvements, it became necessary for me to inquire how far the Spencer prizes had aided his efforts. In prosecuting this inquiry every facility was given to me by his Lordship's under agent, Mr. Henry Nolan, of Garryhill. No man could know better than Mr. Nolan the improvements effected by Lord Bessborough himself, and he stated in the most emphatic manner that the Spencer prize system had aided powerfully not only in the valley of Coolasnaugh, but in the entire Garryhill district, in promoting among the people an increased taste for improvements. And it must be gratifying to Lord Spencer to find that Lord Bessborough takes the same view of it. The success of the system in this valley goes to show that the smaller the area of competition the more direct and powerful is the effect. Indeed the success of the system in this valley appears to me to suggest that its scope ought to be expanded in some such way as the following:—

Let a large area, say a county or a number of baronies, be subdivided into a number of small districts, give a great many small prizes in each, and let there be a few sweepstakes for the best farmers in all these districts. Let there also be a number of sweepstake prizes for all Ireland. In this way a spirit of emulation would be created among small farmers who are personally known to each other, while a useful spirit of rivalry would be promoted among the different groups of districts throughout the entire country.

I now proceed to give brief notices of some of the small farms in this district for which prizes were awarded.

The first in point of merit is that of Charles Doyle, who, having previously won three prizes, was disqualified.

In 1873 he scored	440	marks.
In 1874	496	”
In 1875	505	”
In 1876	525	”

He holds 7 a. 1 r. 0 p. statute from Lord Bessborough. The holding is divided into four fields. In 1876 one was cropped with turnips and mangolds; one was under oats, with which grass-seeds were sown; a third was cropped with lea-oats; and of the fourth one-half was under potatoes, and one-half in grass, which was cut and given to the cow in the house. The stock consisted of a cow and heifer, two brood sows and nine store pigs, about 60 poultry, and a pony. The land is clean and well cultivated; indeed, the farm will bear comparison with a well-managed small farm in Belgium. Among the "rolling-stock" I observed:—

	£	s.	d.
(1.) A cart which cost	6	0	0
(2.) A plough	2	2	6
(3.) A convertible grubber	1	10	0
(4.) A harrow	1	12	6
(5.) A stone-roller	0	11	0
(6.) Sundry small implements	1	0	0

His neighbour, Patrick Ryan, who scored 505 marks, and whose farm is also a *bonâ fide* model, was also disqualified under the same rule as Doyle. On his holding of 5 a. 2 r. 36 p., there are implements to the value of 12*l.* 10*s.* The implements on our large farms do not on an average amount to more than 20*s.* per acre, if so much.

Doyle lives exclusively on the proceeds of his holding. Ryan deals in cabbage-plants in spring. Ryan's receipts from the sale of pigs in 1876 were close on 40*l.* He also sold twenty-five couples of poultry at 6*s.* a couple. Most of the eggs were used by the family. Both Doyle and Ryan are in very comfortable circumstances. Doyle has a good slate house and suitable farm offices. Ryan made an addition to his offices during the year. Each had at the time of my visit a large quantity of well-made manure, which was kept away from the front of the dwelling.

Widow Doyle and Patrick Nolan scored the same number of marks (505) each as Patrick Ryan. The progress of improvements in the farms of both is very interesting, and aptly illustrates the good effect of the Spencer prize system. In 1874 Mrs. Doyle scored 410 marks; in 1876 she obtained 505. She holds 19 a. 1 r. 30 p., at the rent of 11*l.* 14*s.* In 1876 the crops were:—

	A.	R.	P.
Mangolds and turnips	2	0	0
Potatoes	3	0	0
Oats with seeds	3	0	0
Lea-oats	3	2	0
Grass grazed	3	3	20
Grass meadowed	3	2	0

The remainder was under garden, buildings, roads, &c.

The live-stock at the time of inspection consisted of 1 draught animal; 2 cows; 2 heifers; 1 calf; 1 sow in young, and 3 fattening pigs; also 9 sheep.

The cash receipts during the year included 18*l.* for two heifers, 3*l.* for one weanling bullock, and 23*l.* 6*s.* for five fat pigs. The reader can estimate from data given elsewhere the probable income derived from butter, eggs, poultry, and oats. The gross return from this holding during the year was very large. The family consists of the widow and six children. The house was clean and comfortable.

The case of Patrick Nolan, of Coolasnaugh, is still more remarkable. In 1873, when I first inspected his farm, he scored 381 marks; in 1876 he got 505. He holds about 30 statute acres at a rent of 10*l.* 16*s.* He has since reclaimed and improved several fields, added to his buildings without asking aid from Lord Bessborough, and adopted an improved system of cultivation. The crops in 1876 were:—

	A.	R.	P.
Potatoes	4	0	0
Turnips	1	3	0
Mangolds and cabbage	0	2	0
Oats with seeds	3	3	0
Lea-oats	4	3	0

The rest of the land was in grass.

The stock consisted of 4 cows, 2 heifers, 3 weanling calves, 1 sow and 6 store pigs, 100 sheep, of which 40 were breeding-ewes. In summer the sheep are grazed on Lord Bessborough's mountain, at the rate of 1*d.* per head per week; and in winter grazing land is hired for them. At the time of my visit the old sheep were on a piece of grass, hired until April, at 12*l.* 7*s.* A few pounds more will have to be paid to bring them through April and a part of May. The income of the family is far above the average of the small farmers of the district.

The sales in 1876 included:—

	£	s.	d.
3 young heifers	13	0	0
2 young bullocks	10	0	0
20 sheep, at an average of 29 <i>s.</i>	29	0	0
(Owing to the state of the market, the lambs were held over.)			
Wool	28	6	0
Pigs	31	17	8
(There were 6 fine stores on hand, which were reared during the year.)			

I would next advert to the holding of James Dixon, the history of which, since I first saw it, is most suggestive. The

progress effected in one year will be understood when I state that in 1875 he scored 404 marks, and in 1876 he obtained 505. The farm contains 9 a. 2 r. 35 p., statute, and is held at the yearly rent of 6*l.* 7*s.*

The crops in 1876 were :—

								A.	R.	P.
Manured crops	..	{	Potatoes	..	..	..	..	1	2	0
			Mangolds and turnips	..	..	..	..	0	3	20
Oats with seeds	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	3	0
Lea-oats	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	0	0
Pasture	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	0
Garden	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	0
Buildings, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	15
								<hr/>		
								9	2	35

During the year a new apartment was added to the dwelling-house at a cost of about 20*l.*, towards which the landlord contributed 4*l.* 10*s.* It is roofed with slate and lofted; the apartment downstairs being used as a sitting-room and the one upstairs as a bedroom. New fences have been put to some of the old fences, and one very good new fence has been erected and provided with a double row of quicks. The headlands have been made to incline towards the fences to facilitate the escape of surface water. One or two other improvements have been suggested, and when these shall have been effected, the holding will be in as good a state as could be expected.

Peter Fox holds the next place on the merit list. He occupies 10 a. 2 r., at the yearly rent of 7*l.* When I first inspected the farm it was very fairly managed. Sundry improvements have been effected since, in buildings, in fences, in the cropping of the land, and in the management of manure. The family consists of Fox and his wife, three sons and one daughter. The eldest son is a "handy man," and earns a good deal as a mason; the second spends part of his time working on the farm and devotes the remainder to dealing in sheep and "springers." The holding consists of a paddock, which contains two roods, a garden which contains one rood, and four fields, which are in very good condition.

The crops in 1876 were —

								A.	R.	P.
Potatoes	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	35
Roots	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	26
Oats	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	19
Meadows	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	26
Grazing (including paddock)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	3	30

The stock consisted of :—

2 cows (the calves of which are reared).
2 heifers.
1 sow (part of the produce of which are sold as stores and part fattened.)
1 pony.
50 poultry.

As the farm does not produce straw enough to meet all the requirements of the system pursued, two or three acres of oats are purchased every year on "foot," from which, after paying 9l. an Irish acre last year, he did not derive much advantage beyond getting the straw cheap. The oats raised on the farm are ground into meal and used by the family.

Two sets of pigs of five each are fattened in the year, and as many more are sold as "slips." The total receipts from pigs in 1876 exceeded 60l. The heifers are sold at 18 months or 2 years old, grazing being generally hired for them for six months of the second year.

That a large quantity of milk and butter is used in the family is made known by the fact that although in 1876 two good cows were kept, only one firkin of butter was sold.

For want of space I cannot notice any of the other competitors, but the tabular statement of facts (Table I., pp. 24, 25) appears to me to be so interesting, that I give it *in extenso*.

MUNGRET, COUNTY LIMERICK.

The Mungret Agricultural School is within three miles of the city of Limerick. There are many small farmers in the district, and the state of agriculture is more backward than could be expected.

I was unable to take part last year in the inspection of the farms which were entered for the Spencer prizes, but in the preceding years I found that the system had been productive of the most beneficial results. Indeed, I do not know any place in which it could be carried on with greater advantage. I have found a laudable desire among persons in the district to cooperate in furthering it; among whom I may mention the Hon. Hugh Massy and the late Mr. Michael Robert Ryan, J.P., of Temple Mungret.

GRANGE, COUNTY WATERFORD.

Considering its proximity to towns and cities, there are few districts in Ireland more backward than that through which runs the public road that connects Youghal with Dungarvan.

TABLE I.—RESULTS of the SPENCER PRIZE

Names.	Landlord.	Rent.	Poor Law Valuation.	Tillage.	Grass.
Charles Doyle	Lord Bessborough	£ s. d. 7 11 0	£ s. d. 3 0 0	A. R. P. All except paddock.	A. R. P.
Patrick Ryan	Ditto	3 14 0	1 10 0	4 1 36	1 1 0
Widow Doyle	Ditto	11 14 0	7 10 0	12 0 10	7 1 20
Patrick Nolan	Ditto	9 16 0	5 10 0	14 3 0	15 1 0
James Dixon	Ditto	6 7 0	5 0 0	6 1 3	3 1 0
Peter Fox	Ditto	7 0 0	8 0 0	4 1 24	6 0 16
Thomas Lawless	Ditto	13 5 0	7 10 0	10 2 0	8 3 30
John Fenlon	Ditto	10 10 0	7 10 0	10 2 0	10 3 9
Michael Hogan	{Philip Newton, Esq., D.L. ..}	16 13 0	6 15 0	9 0 25	7 1 15
James Fitzpatrick	Lord Bessborough	12 0 0	6 15 0	17 2 10	22 3 29
Michael Neill	Ditto	9 8 0	6 0 0	9 3 9	11 1 0
Widow Hickey	Ditto	3 8 0	2 0 0	2 2 0	1 0 0
James D'Arcy	Ditto	3 16 0	3 5 0	5 1 2	0 3 9
Widow McDonnell	Ditto	3 5 0	3 0 0	5 3 9	1 1 2
Widow Fitzgerald	Ditto	5 10 0	3 15 0	7 0 4	1 0 11
John Caulfield	{Philip Newton, Esq., D.L. ..}	7 14 4	5 15 0	5 2 15	2 2 0
Patrick Fleming	Ditto	2 8 0	2 5 0	2 2 14	1 0 0
Moses Connor	Lord Bessborough	11 16 0	5 10 0	12 1 21	20 0 0
Philip Cavanagh	Ditto	4 7 0	3 5 0	7 2 0	1 2 0
James Spruhan	Ditto	5 0 0	5 10 0	3 1 36	3 0 0
Bart Brien	Ditto	3 0 0	2 5 0	3 1 0	1 1 0
John Fitzpatrick	Ditto	3 10 0	2 10 0	3 1 17	1 2 0

COMPETITION in the GARRYHILL DISTRICT, 1876.

Total Area.	LIVE-STOCK KEPT.							MARKS ALLOWED FOR MERIT.							
	Draft Animals.	Cows.	Heifers.	Calves.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Foultry.	Farm Management.	Live-Stock.	Offices.	Manure.	Garden.	Dwelling.	Total Marks, 600.	
A. R. P. 7 1 0	1 p.	1	1 w.	..	..	11	60	285	65	45	45	40	45	525
5 2 36	1 p.	1	..	1	..	3	60	265	70	45	45	40	40	505	
9 1 30	1	2	2	1	9	4	100	265	85	45	45	20	45	505	
0 0 0	1	4	2	3	100	7	60	275	85	45	40	20	40	505	
9 2 3	1 h.	1	1	..	4	4	30	280	75	30	40	30	45	500	
0 2 0	1	2	..	2	..	1	50	260	75	45	45	30	45	500	
9 1 30	1	2	1	1	8	4	40	270	75	35	40	25	45	490	
1 0 9	1	1	..	1	6	5	40	250	75	35	40	45	45	490	
6 2 0	1 ass	2	1	2	8	2	50	255	80	35	35	40	45	490	
0 1 39	1	3	2	3	..	..	50	265	80	48	35	20	40	488
1 0 9	1	4	3	1	50	{ 4 stores, 1 sow and young. }		40	265	90	35	30	20	40	480
3 2 0	1	1	..	..	..	2	40	235	75	45	45	35	45	480
6 0 11	1 j.	1	..	..	9	2	12	258	70	30	35	40	45	478
6 0 11	1 j.	1	..	..	2	1	40	250	70	35	40	30	40	465
8 0 15	1 j.	1	1	1	3	3	40	230	80	40	40	25	48	463	
8 0 15	1 ass	2	1	1	..	4	40	230	70	40	35	35	40	450	
3 2 14	1 j.	1	1	..	..	4	15	240	65	38	35	25	38	441
2 1 21	..	2	2	..	15	2	30	240	65	38	38	25	30	436	
9 0 0	..	2	..	1	14	4	60	245	80	35	30	10	35	435	
6 1 36	1 j.	1	1	..	18	..	30	230	70	30	35	25	40	430	
4 2 0	1 j.	1	1	1	12	2	40	240	50	30	40	25	35	420	
4 3 17	..	1	..	1	6	Sold.	20	200	65	30	30	25	45	395	

It is bounded on the south and east by the sea, on the west by the Blackwater, and on the north by the ridge of land which at Dungarvan overhangs the canal.

The Irish language is still spoken in this district by the greater number of the old, and by a large number of the young people.

The district comprises an area of some 50,000 acres, which are occupied chiefly by small farmers, whose agricultural practices have hitherto been of a primitive character.

The Grange National School is situated in the western part of this district, about six miles from Dungarvan and four from Youghal. The school is on the property of Sir Richard Musgrave, Bart. Finding that the rudiments of modern agricultural knowledge were little known among the small farmers, the late Sir Richard Musgrave, as manager and patron of the school, in 1863 determined on engrafting elementary instruction in agriculture on the ordinary school curriculum. A piece of land, containing two statute acres, which was then attached to the school, has been cultivated since as a school-farm.

The seeds of agricultural knowledge thus sown must in due time bear fruit. The boys acquire useful information on soils, manures, crops, and live-stock. But the benefits of agricultural education will be more felt in the next than in the present generation. Lord Spencer's letter to the Commissioners of National Education showed that he saw the advantage of using the primary schools for conveying agricultural knowledge to the future small farmers in Ireland; but he evidently saw also that something more was required to bring a taste for improvement immediately home to the doors of the present generation of small farmers. It is manifest that it was with this view that he established the prize system on which it is now my privilege to report, and which I have watched with no ordinary care during the five years it has been in existence. For reasons which it is unnecessary to state here, I have studied its effects in this district with especial care; and after having done so, I am in a position to state that if any intelligent person entertains a doubt as to the great public utility of exciting among our small farmers a spirit of improvement, it would be completely dispelled by such inspections as I have made of the small farms of Grange since 1872.

The competition has evoked an extraordinary amount of enthusiasm among the people themselves. It was warmly espoused by the late Sir Richard Musgrave and by the late parish priest, the Rev. P. Wall. The zealous curate, the Rev. J. Walsh, has been equally earnest in supporting the system. The present Sir Richard Musgrave has promised a subscription of 5*l.* a year; and I believe I am right in thinking that the present parish

priest, the Rev. J. Shannahan, accords to it his hearty approval. Lord Stuart de Decies contributed 5*l.* to the fund in 1874. No other proprietor has manifested an active interest in the scheme. This may arise from the fact that its objects and advantages have not been made sufficiently known.

In a circle of ten miles' diameter surrounding the Grange National School there are several districts which differ so much in soil and other circumstances, that a really meritorious small farmer in one cannot show the same striking results as a man of equal merit in another. To illustrate this point I mention two of these districts, namely,—First, the tract of warm sandy ground close to the town of Ardmore; second, a large tract of very poor mountain land, which is situated in the "old parish." Many of the competitors in the old parish occupy the "mountain" land of Gortane, and are the tenants of Lord Stuart de Decies. Throughout this part of the district the land, which is naturally wet, cold, and unproductive, is undrained and badly managed, and the dwellings of the small farmers are very bad indeed. The rents are low: at all events, the want of prosperity cannot be ascribed to high rents.

If the landlord would establish a system of prizes in this peculiarly backward district, on the basis of the Spencer plan, he would, in a few years, quietly and silently effect a radical improvement in the condition of the people.

I shall now make a few remarks on the farms of some of the prize-takers.

In the first year of the competition, John Wynne obtained first prize and scored a total of 365 marks. In 1876 he obtained 497 marks. He has held his ground in the interval very well; but others, in whose farming there was more room for improvement, have made greater progress. He holds 6 a. 0 r. 12 p., divided into five fields, which in 1876 bore the following crops. One field of 2 a. 0 r. 0 p. was in permanent pasture. The tillage crops were:—

1. One piece of potatoes, 1 a. 3 r. 0 p.
2. Wheat, 1 a. 0 r. 0 p. Last year, the crop being lighter than usual, the produce was 6 barrels, which were sold at 23*s.* 6*d.* each. In 1875 the yield was 9 barrels per acre.
3. 1 a. 3 r. 0 p., of which 1 a. 2 r. 0 p. were under potatoes, and 0 a. 1 r. 0 p. grazed by a jennet.
4. Manured roots, viz.: turnips, 0 a. 2 r. 0 p.; mangolds, 0 a. 1 r. 0 p.; carrots, 0 a. 1 r. 0 p.

The remainder of the holding is occupied by the garden, house, offices, and roads. The live-stock at the time of my visit con-

sisted of a very good jennet, a very good milch-cow, an excellent yearling out of her, two pigs, and a large number of poultry.

The potatoes are used by the family, which consists of Wynne, his daughter and son-in-law, and their two little children.

In 1876 the sales included the wheat above referred to, butter, pigs, and a yearling heifer, which was sold in February for 9*l.*

Of butter, twelve "rolls" of 15 lbs. each were sold at an average of 1*s.* 1*d.* per lb.

From 1 lb. to 1½ lb. of butter was kept for home use out of every roll. The greater number of the eggs having been consumed by the family, the receipts from this source did not exceed 30*s.* in the year.

The following figures show that a considerable income was derived from pigs. Six were sold fat during the year 1876, viz. :—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
2 bought in January for	3	0	0	} net	7	10
Sold in March for	10	10	0			
2 bought in March for	4	17	0	} net	7	3
Sold in June for	12	0	0			
1 bought in June for	2	0	0	} net	3	0
Sold in September for	5	0	0			
1 bought in September for	1	5	0	} net	3	9
Sold in November for	4	14	0			
					21	2
Deduct cost of 5 sacks of Indian meal, at 21 <i>s.</i> each ..		5	5		0	0
Leaving to the credit of farm		15	17		0	0

It will be seen that the net cash receipts amounted to 41*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.* which was available for buying flour and other necessary articles of diet, for paying rent and taxes, and for putting by something for the "rainy day." The son-in-law, John Kennedy, earned, outside the farm, a sum of 4*l.*, not accounted for above.

The return from the labour applied to the farm is very satisfactory. What a happy country this would be if all the small farmers were as prosperous as this man!

I should like to give similar details regarding every small farmer in this district, who has won a prize; but if I did so, this paper would run to too great a length.

John Fitzgerald, who is at the top of the list, was a farm-labourer until 1873, when he got into possession of his holding, which he has already improved very much.

John Troy, who scores the same number of marks, has made very great progress since 1872. In that year he scored 310 marks; in 1873, 337 marks; in 1874, 438 marks; and in 1876, he scored 497 marks, and ranked equal to Wynne. Troy's holding is now admirably cropped.

In the management of Flynn's farm, who obtained fourth place, there are several features of merit.

John Bumster, who took the fifth prize, affords on his holding a very fair model for many farmers in his district, which is several miles from the centre of either of the two districts referred to above. He holds 8 a. 3 r. 27 p., for which he pays a rent of 9*l.* 16*s.* There are seven fields, three of which, containing 3 a. 1 r. 0 p., are in permanent pasture; and four, containing 4 a. 3 r. 27 p., are in tillage. Roads, gardens, and buildings occupy 3 roods. The crops in 1876 were:—

	A.	R.	P.
Potatoes	1	2	0
Turnips	1	0	0
Wheat	1	2	0
Oats with seeds	0	3	27
	4	3	27

The live-stock kept during the year consisted of 2 cows, 1 calf, 1 pony, 3 sets of pigs, and a large number of poultry. The sales during the year were:—

	£	s.	d.
9 barrels of wheat, at 22 <i>s.</i>	9	18	0
8 barrels of oats, at 12 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>	5	0	0
Pigs: 3 sets of two each, less cost of Indian meal ..	17	5	0
1 calf	0	9	0

The cows calved in spring. For the first month they produced 15 lbs. of butter per week; after which the quantity went down to 12 lbs., and gradually decreased. One pound (1 lb.) per week was kept for the use of the family. The entire butter sold realised 18*l.* 15*s.* One very good calf was reared. The sale of eggs exceeded 12*l.*

All the tillage of the farm and the feeding of the cows, pigs, and fowl are done by the family, whose prosperity and happiness are very apparent.

Finally, I would refer to Thomas Hennessy, who holds three acres of land opposite the entrance to the residence of the late Father Wall. Of this little holding, which adjoins the public road, I was able to say, in the Report of 1874, that it formed quite a feature in the district. The land has been always clean and well cropped. The fences have been well kept. Year after year I found some progress effected. Last year (1876), among other improvements, a pair of gate-piers were erected, which on this little farm present a most imposing appearance, and which will long remain a monument to the spirit of emulation engendered by the Spencer prize system.

In Table II. (pp. 30, 31) I give in detail the merit list.

Maurice Lacy ..	8	0	0	1	15	0	..	5	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	1	..	5	2	2	2	28	210	65	30	35	32	25	397
John Deacon ..	7	1	0	13	12	0	7	12	0	4	1	0	3	0	0	1	2	..	4	4	4	6	200	60	35	30	35	35	395
Thomas Cotter ..	7	0	0	8	10	0	7	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	..	2	2	2	16	210	55	32	32	25	40	394
Thomas Kelly ..	3	1	0	4	5	0	3	5	0	2	3	0	..	..	..	1	..	..	4	4	4	45	215	50	40	15	40	42	432
Thomas Morrissy ..	5	2	0	4	3	9	3	5	0	2	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	..	7	7	7	14	200	75	40	35	35	30	415
Patrick Coghlan ..	8	0	0	4	0	0	4	15	0	5	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	..	7	2	2	60	200	65	40	40	40	40	425
Richard Lincoln ..	2	2	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	..	1	1	6	1	1	50	210	80	30	30	25	42	417
John Foley ..	18	0	0	2	7	0	6	10	0	4	0	0	14	0	0	1	2	1	16	3	3	66	195	55	28	35	28	30	371
Widow Mulcaby ..	2	0	0	2	0	0	..	..	..	2	0	0	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2	2	24	200	25	35	25	35	35	355
Catherine Foley ..	13	0	0	2	7	0	5	10	0	9	0	0	4	0	0	1	2	1	3	..	25	170	60	20	20	42	40	40	352
Patrick Foley ..	6	0	0	6	5	0	4	5	0	4	2	0	1	2	0	1	..	..	2	2	30	190	35	30	25	25	28	333	
Thomas Lynch ..	3	0	0	2	10	0	..	..	..	3	0	0	..	..	..	2	..	..	4	1	1	25	200	40	10	32	30	20	332
Richard Carey ..	3	0	0	12	5	0	..	..	..	3	0	0	..	..	..	1	2	..	..	..	10	165	60	15	20	25	40	40	325
Patrick Brien ..	2	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	18	180	20	35	10	38	10	38	318
John O'Leary ..	9	2	0	1	1	0	..	..	..	2	2	0	7	0	0	1	..	..	3	2	25	205	35	15	15	22	25	25	317
John Harty ..	4	0	0	8	0	0	..	..	..	3	2	0	0	2	0	1	..	..	2	4	27	160	25	35	38	25	32	315	
Widow Troy ..	3	2	0	5	0	0	6	15	0	..	..	..	3	2	0	1	3	1	..	..	20	100	65	35	35	25	45	305	
Patrick Ross ..	2	1	0	3	17	0	..	..	..	2	1	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	35	150	15	25	30	15	42	277	
Peter Cuddy ..	3	2	0	6	0	0	..	..	..	3	2	0	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2	20	150	20	15	32	25	30	272	
Maurice Fitzgerald ..	6	2	0	6	10	0	5	5	0	5	0	0	1	2	0	1	..	..	2	..	22	180	25	5	25	20	15	270	
Decian Connors ..	14	0	0	9	0	0	8	15	0	4	0	0	10	0	0	..	..	..	5	..	26	160	15	20	15	40	20	270	
Patrick Gorman ..	1	2	0	3	0	0	..	..	..	1	2	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	1	26	150	20	10	30	30	25	265	
James Burke ..	4	0	0	6	0	0	4	10	0	4	0	0	1	3	1	29	160	40	10	20	10	20	260	
James Flynn ..	7	0	0	7	7	0	3	5	0	1	2	0	5	2	0	1	1	..	15	..	30	120	25	30	10	25	40	250	

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KILLASOLAN, COUNTY GALWAY.

The Killasolan School is on the estate of Lord Clonbrock, who has subscribed to the Spencer Prize Fund. His agent, Charles Filgate, Esq., J.P., has also encouraged it, and has expressed to me the opinion that he wished the Local and other Agricultural Societies would expend in some such way the money now spent on dinners and in other useless ways! I regret to say that I was unable to take part in the adjudication in this district last year; but from what I saw in the preceding years, I am in a position to state that the system worked there most satisfactorily.

LOUGHGLYNN, COUNTY ROSCOMMON.

The Loughglynn School is on the estate of Viscount Dillon. It has for years been connected with the National Board. An idea of the extent to which small farms prevail in this district may be gathered from the fact that on Lord Dillon's estate, of which the rental is about 24,000*l.* a year, there are 4500 tenants, which gives an average rental of less than 5*l.* 10*s.* per tenant. The circuit of five or six miles radius selected by Lord Spencer does not contain the whole of Lord Dillon's property, and embraces a large part of the estate of Lord De Freyne, and a small part of the estates of the O'Connor Don, M.P., and of Mr. Sandford, D.L. The names of several other proprietors appear in the tabular return appended to this Report.

In 1872 the Judges had for distribution the sum of 7*l.* 10*s.* contributed by Lord Spencer, which was given in three prizes, viz. :—

	Marks.
First, 3 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> , to John Jordan, a tenant of Lord Dillon's, who scored	} 423
Second, 2 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> , to Charles Lampey, a tenant of Lord De Freyne's	} 355
Third, 1 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> , to Peter Crawley, a tenant of Lord Dillon's	} 350

There were thirteen competitors; and a few of those who did not come out well were discouraged. In 1873 it so happened that a small sum was added to Lord Spencer's contribution, and with his approval I divided the whole into five prizes, as follows:—

	Marks.
First and Second. { John Jordan }	} 453 each.
{ Peter Crawley }	
Third. Charles Lampey	} 398
Fourth. Thomas Conway, a tenant of the O'Connor Don's	} 260
Fifth. Martin Malony, a tenant of Lord Dillon's	} 258

Several very striking results were observable in that year. While Jordan improved his position, Crawley advanced to a level with him.

In the Report for 1873 statistics of only seven farms were tabulated; the total marks for the seventh being 225; and on the face of the return it was observed that the others were so low in the scale of merit as to render it unnecessary to fill up the particulars regarding their farms.

Very soon after the result of the competition for 1873 was published, the O'Connor Don, M.P., visited Thomas Conway's farm. That he was pleased with the industry and merits of the man, and convinced of the soundness of the Spencer prize system, is evident from the fact that he made Conway a present of 10*l.* on the spot, and that he has since contributed 5*l.* a year to the prize fund.

Mr. Strickland, J.P., on the part of Lord Dillon has done the same thing.

This led to an increase in the number of competitors in 1874, a further increase in 1875, and in 1876 the entries were so numerous, that the teacher, Mr. Fallon, had to make a selection for me. I inspected 31 farms.

In my remarks on the effects of the scheme in Parkanour, Cornagilta, and Grange, I was able to give several illustrations of the progress made; but in the Loughglynn district every farm I inspected in 1876 afforded some evidence of the beneficial effects of the system. The whole district has been leavened. In 1872 and 1873 farms which were full of weeds, and without any freshly sown grass-seeds or roots, were in 1876 clean and well cultivated, and had a fair proportion of both classes of crops. Farms which in 1873 were so low in the scale of merit that it was useless to give statistics regarding them, were in 1876 very fair models of good cultivation.

I shall briefly describe some of the prize-farms; but, before doing so, I may state that there is not in the Loughglynn district the diversity of soils to which I referred in my remarks on the Grange districts. As a rule, every farm contains some reclaimed bog and some upland. In the west, or Mayo, side of the district the huge stone walls which inclose small fields bear testimony to the enormous amount of labour expended by the occupiers on the reclamation of the upland. There is equally strong evidence of the amount of labour expended on the bog-land, which in its original or natural state was not worth 1*s.* an acre for agricultural purposes, and a great deal of which, in its present condition, pays 1*l.* an acre. All this has been accomplished by spade labour, the farms being too small, the upland too stony, and the bogs too soft, for horse-labour. With the

exception of a few farms which lie along the public road, the farms I visited are approachable either by bridle-roads, on which a wheeled vehicle of any kind cannot travel, or by pathways.

It will be seen from the tabular return (Table III., pp. 36, 37) that the four persons who head the list are equal in merit. I give the premier place to John Jordan, of Crenane, to whom I have referred already. He lives within $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile of Ballaghaderin. His farm is approached by a wretched "bohreen." He holds 19 acres 2 roods from Lord Dillon. The present rent (7*l.* 19*s.* 4*d.*), which was fixed eighteen years ago, when the land was "striped," must be regarded as a fair measure of its value at the time. There are about 8 acres of upland, and $11\frac{1}{2}$ acres reclaimed bog. At my first inspection in 1872, part of the bog was in a rough state. The whole of it is now bearing crops. It is divided into twelve sections, which are separated by open drains, and connected by temporary bridges thrown across the drains at the angles. The drainage-water finds its way into a river which flows through the bog, and bounds the farm on the north side. Two years ago the river was deepened by Jordan and his brother, but as the work benefits a great many neighbouring farms, Mr. Strickland, on the part of Lord Dillon, paid them for it. Two of the sections adjacent to the river are now in permanent grass. Of five other sections, also in grass, two were top-dressed with clay at the time of my visit. Two sections were cropped with potatoes in 1876; one, the largest, was under oats, with which the seed of Italian rye-grass was sown; one was in lea oats; and one, also a large one, was cropped with mangels and turnips.

The roadway separates the bog-land from the upland. The house and offices are on the upland, which was cropped as follows:—

	A.	R.	P.
Garden	0	1	10
Paddock, which bore a luxuriant crop of "forced" } grasses chiefly Italian rye-grass	0	2	0
Potatoes	2	0	0
Oats with grass-seeds	1	2	20
Pasture	3	2	20

A plot of the artificial grass contains a large proportion of clover, which Mr. Jordan finds better for "soiling" than either rye-grass or clover alone. His potatoes are very free from disease, and are the produce of seedlings raised by himself. The garden is divided into six squares, and is managed with great skill. All the ordinary vegetables are raised. There are several fruit-trees, and a plot at the back of the house is devoted to flowers. A

large quantity of vegetables is sold. The return from the garden is fully 10*l.* a year.

The farm is now capable of carrying more stock than when I first saw it. At present there are 4 cows, 2 year-and-a-half old heifers, 2 weanlings, 4 pigs, 75 poultry, and 1 donkey.

I give an estimate of the return from the farm in 1876:—

Dairy produce:—	£.	s.	d.
Butter sold	22	8	6
Value of milk and butter consumed by family ..	10	0	0
Value of weanlings reared	9	0	0
1 calf sold	0	5	0
1 heifer sold	5	0	0
1 cow, whose place in the dairy has been supplied by one of last year's heifers	12	0	0
Notwithstanding these sales, the value of the stock on hand at the close of the year was rather more than it was at the beginning.			
Oats (deducting seed), 25½ barrels, at 12s.	15	6	0
Return from 4 pigs:—			
Actual receipts	17 <i>l.</i>	0 <i>s.</i>	0 <i>d.</i>
Cost of pigs	4 <i>l.</i>	4 <i>s.</i>	0 <i>d.</i>
½ cwt. Indian meal each,			
= 2 cwt., at 8s.	0 <i>l.</i>	16 <i>s.</i>	0 <i>d.</i>
		5 <i>l.</i>	0 <i>s.</i>
		12	0
Potatoes, close on 3 statute acres, for use by the family or for sale, 12 tons, at 3 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> per ton	42	0	0
Eggs and poultry, a low estimate	10	0	0
Garden, a very low estimate	8	0	0
	145	19	6

If from the gross return we deduct rent and taxes, cost of seeds, and other necessary articles, the balance represents what was available for the wants of the family. Every practical man will admit that the case has been understated; yet there would remain a net income of about 120*l.* a year to recoup Jordan and his brother for their labour and skill; and this result has been achieved on a small farm, two-thirds of which have been reclaimed from a state of absolute sterility, by a very unpretending man in a remote part of Connaught. The improvements on Jordan's house and offices have kept pace with the improvement of his land.

The next place on the prize sheet is assigned to Charles Sampey, who holds about 9 statute acres of arable land, and a piece of turf-bog from Lord De Freyne, at a rent of 3*l.*, which may be assumed to have been the fair letting value of the land when it was "striped," about twenty years ago. The farm is a strip, one field in width, bounded on the south by a rivulet, and on the north by a turf-bog. In 1872 the management of the farm was far in advance of that of any neighbouring farm. That there were then manifest defects, however, is evidenced by the fact

John Gilligan ..	Ditto ..	24	0	0	7	6	0	7	5	0	10	0	0	14	0	0	1	jennet	2	..	..	..	215	75	40	45	40	455
John Heyden ..	Ditto ..	14	0	0	7	17	0	5	15	0	8	2	0	5	2	0	..	..	2	..	2	30	220	75	40	48	25	448
John Talbot ..	Mrs. Gibbons	9	0	0	4	5	6	4	0	0	6	1	0	2	3	0	1 ass	1	2	2	2	40	245	70	35	40	25	447	
John O'Byrne ..	Lord De Freyne	17	1	0	6	6	0	6	5	0	10	1	0	7	0	0	..	..	3	2	2	..	250	75	35	30	25	447
Andrew Hanly ..	Lord Dillon ..	19	0	0	9	9	0	7	7	0	7	0	0	12	0	0	..	..	4	3	2	2	230	80	32	36	25	445
Michael Horan ..	Ditto ..	20	0	0	10	6	0	10	15	0	15	0	0	5	0	0	1 ass	2	2	2	1	40	210	70	35	45	35	440	
William Scally ..	Ditto ..	9	2	0	4	2	8	5	0	0	4	1	0	5	1	0	2	1	1	2	250	70	30	35	25	30	440
Michael Friehill ..	Ditto ..	11	0	0	5	18	6	4	10	0	7	1	20	3	2	20	1 ass	3	1	..	4	220	80	40	32	30	25	437	
John Kelly ..	Ditto ..	6	2	0	4	10	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	1	2	220	75	30	30	45	35	435
John Flatley ..	Mrs. Gibbons	7	0	0	4	12	0	3	10	0	4	0	30	2	3	10	3 asses	3	1	1	4	225	75	35	40	25	32	432	
John Rush ..	Lord Dillon ..	13	1	0	3	2	0	2	10	0	5	3	0	7	2	0	1 ass	3	1	2	..	220	80	30	35	28	35	428	
Martin O'Donnell	Ditto ..	8	0	0	1	14	0	1	18	0	5	2	0	2	2	0	1	20	1	2	..	220	70	25	35	40	30	420	
John Higgins ..	Ditto ..	16	3	0	6	1	0	6	0	0	5	3	20	10	3	20	1 mule	2	1	..	2	240	65	35	25	23	25	418	
Widow Brady ..	Ditto ..	6	2	0	4	13	0	3	2	0	3	2	0	3	0	0	..	..	2	1	2	30	230	80	25	32	25	417
Stephen Kelly ..	Ditto ..	10	0	0	5	16	0	5	13	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	60	210	70	30	30	40	415	
Thomas Conway	{ O'Conor Don, } { M.P. }	5	2	0	1	10	0	3	2	0	3	2	0	2	0	0	1 ass	1	1	..	..	100	230	65	30	30	25	415
Dominick Finan ..	Ditto ..	5	3	30	1	5	0	4	5	0	4	2	30	1	1	0	..	..	2	..	1	40	230	70	25	30	25	405
Thomas Molony ..	Lord Dillon ..	9	0	0	4	19	8	4	0	0	2	0	0	7	0	0	2	1	1	26	200	65	38	28	40	32	403
Martin Kelly ..	Mr. Sandford ..	13	0	0	6	0	0	5	15	0	6	3	20	6	0	20	1 ass	2	1	1	3	60	220	75	20	35	28	25	403
Martin Tarpey ..	Lord Dillon ..	16	0	0	9	14	0	8	15	0	4	2	0	11	2	0	1	1	2	..	2	40	180	80	38	32	30	392	

that Sampey obtained only 365 marks out of a total of 600. Sundry improvements have been effected since. Three fields have been broken up and enriched; and of these two have been relaid down to grass. In 1876 a field of coarse pasture was tilled and manured; and now the entire farm is under a judicious system of "convertible" husbandry, and presents a creditable appearance. In common with the practice of a vast majority of the small farmers of the district, the cows used to be housed in the end of the dwelling. In 1876 a very suitable cowhouse, 16 feet by 14 feet, was erected, at an outlay in cash of 5*l.*, together with the labour of Sampey and his son in attending tradesmen.

The offices now consist of a barn, piggery, cowhouse, and poultry-house.

The manure-heap, too, used to be close to the door. In 1876 it was removed to the rear of a yard which was inclosed, and which will be further improved. This year the end of the house hitherto occupied by cows is to be cut off by a partition, and subdivided into a dairy and small bedroom. With an additional slight improvement, Sampey's farm will then be as well managed as any man could reasonably expect.

The garden is smaller than Jordan's. In 1876 it was admirably cropped.

The farm is divided into six fields and a paddock, which in 1876 bore the following crops:—

	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
Manured crops: Potatoes and Turnips	..	..	..	2	3	0
Oats on lea	1	2	20	}	1	3
Oats with grass-seeds	0	1	10			
Old grass pastured	1	2	0			
„ meadowed	2	0	0	}	3	2
Paddock grazed .. .. .	..	..	..
Garden .. .. .	..	..	..	0	0	30
House, yards, offices, &c. .. .. .	..	..	..	0	0	30
Total .. .. .	..	..	..	9	0	10

There is also a turf-bank, which supplies fuel.

From data already given, the income from this little farm may be estimated. I would gladly go into the figures were I not afraid of making this paper too long. It is enough for me to say, that while a large family has been reared, Sampey has been able to save money.

The present fertility of the land may be said to have been the creation of his labour. Five feet of turf have been taken away from the entire surface, including the site of the house and offices. And all this has been effected in a backward district by one of the most unassuming of men, whose house is a quarter of a mile from the public road, and is approached

by neither roadway nor "bohreen," but through fields and over ditches. It must be admitted that the Spencer system has conferred incalculable benefits on Sampey; and to it belongs the merit of having raised him to the rank of a model farmer.

I am glad to be able to say that his immediate neighbour has made several improvements in his holding since I first saw it in 1872.

John Kearns is third on the list. He holds 11 statute acres from Mrs. Gibbons, at a rent of 6*l.* 8*s.* He saved some money out of his earnings in England as a labourer, and paid a fine for this farm in 1870. He has since built a good slate house, and converted the old farm residence into temporary offices, which will soon be replaced by a new set.

The approach to this farm is too narrow for carts; but it has been greatly improved by Kearns.

A good garden has been inclosed.

I first visited this farm in 1874, and found it in a very fair condition. One "bottom" field was yielding very coarse herbage. At my suggestion it was drained, broken up, and manured in 1875, and sown with corn and grass-seeds in 1876. It has now an improved appearance, and so has the entire farm.

Last year the under-agent of the estate visited the farm. More recently Kearns has obtained an appointment on the estate.

Michael McDermott, of Cloonaf, holds 19 statute acres, close to the town of Ballaghaderin; and is one of the most prosperous small farmers in the entire district. He held under a middle-man until very lately, at a rent of 12*l.* a year; but the lease having expired, Lord Dillon reduced the rent to 10*l.* 10*s.*

There are about 9 acres of bog-land, of which one acre is retained for fuel, and eight are cropped as follows:—

	A.	R.	P.
Potatoes	2	0	0
Oats with grass-seeds	0	3	0
Oats alone	1	1	0
Artificial grass	1	0	0
Permanent pasture	3	0	0
	<hr/>		
	8	0	0

All the upland is in permanent pasture, except half-an-acre, which is occupied by the garden, house, and offices.

The stock on hand at the time of my inspection was 3 cows,

3 year-and-a-half-old heifers, 2 weanlings, 3 sheep, 2 sows, 60 poultry, and a donkey. Being a good judge of cattle, this man deals in "springers" during summer.

His income in 1876 was something like the following:—

	£	s.	d.
5 firkins of butter of 6½ stons each, and at 17s. a stone	27	12	6
Milk and butter consumed by family	10	0	0
Increased value of the 3 year-and-a-half-old heifers ..	12	0	0
2 weanlings	7	0	0
15 young pigs, at 1l. each	15	0	0
2 fattened, less cost of purchased food	7	5	0
Eggs and poultry	12	0	0
Potatoes for family use (diseased and small ones being used by the cows and pigs), 6½ tons, at 3l. 10s. a ton	22	15	0
The oat-crop is given in sheaf to the cows			
About 15 cows were changed at periods varying from a week to six weeks, at an average profit of 1l. 5s. each	18	15	0
	<hr/>		
	132	7	6

From this should be deducted the rent and a sum of 11l. 5s. 6d. paid for grazing, as well as the few incidental expenses that a farmer of this class incurs. The remainder will be the reward of his own labour and skill, and of such assistance as he gets from his family.

The conditions of this man's land and the appearance of his house testify to his prosperity. There is in the family every indication of happiness. I asked him why he did not compete for the Spencer prizes until 1876; and he replied by saying that he did not wish to try until he would be sure of getting a good place. The improvements effected in the land and offices during the past two years confirm this statement. Thus we see how a man who has been unusually successful comes to be stimulated to further exertions by a prize system in which he has confidence.

Of all the competitors, Thomas Conway of Clonrea, to whom a brief allusion has been already made, deserves the most credit. In 1873 he scored only 260 marks, of which 200 were for the land. I give the marks in the several sections in that year and in 1876:—

	1873.	1876.
1. The cultivation of the soil	200	230
2. Live-stock	5	65
3. Farm-offices	10	30
4. Management of manure	25	30
5. Garden	10	20
6. Dwelling	10	35
	<hr/>	
	260	410

His holding now consists of $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres of reclaimed bog, and of a tract of the bog in its original or natural state.

When he got into possession, an acre and a rood of the bog had been reclaimed; and the rent at the time appears to have been fixed by putting 1*l.* on the reclaimed part of the farm, the unreclaimed part having been given free. The rent has not been raised since. The moral security of tenure which has prevailed on the estate induced him to reclaim, piece by piece, $4\frac{1}{4}$ acres of the bog at a heavy application of his own labour. He divided it into squares by cutting deep open drains. He dug a large quantity of clay from the subsoil of the cut-away bog, and applied it to the surface of the peaty soil.

He made a pathway, or what he calls a road, by putting a layer of branches of trees and bogwood on the bog. In reclaiming the bog he cropped it first with potatoes, and, as a rule, the second crop was also potatoes; after which it was sown with oats and seeds, or oats alone, according to circumstances. He thus literally created a fertile soil on the top of 20 feet of bog.

At the time of my visit in 1873 he had neither a cow nor a heifer. He has now a suitable cow, and a heifer 18 months old.

In 1873 his dwelling was in a wretched state, one end of it being used for a cow when he was able to keep one. There were no farm offices, except a rude piggery. He has been improving ever since, and now there is a suitable cowhouse which was erected in 1876, and which is built of stone walls and a wooden roof. A piggery has been built at the end of it.

The part of the kitchen which used to be occupied by the cow has been separated by a nice wooden partition, and used as a dairy or store as required. A new chimney has also been put into the house.

The crops last year were:—

	A.	R.	P.
Potatoes	1	2	20
Turnips	0	1	0
Oats	1	2	20
Grass	2	0	0
Total	5	2	0

The oat-crop is given to the fowls, of which about 100 are kept; and the return from which in the twelve months was £ s. d.

(I do not take into account the eggs used by the family.)	21	12	0
2 pigs sold for 12 <i>l.</i> 0 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>	}	9	4
Cost 2 <i>l.</i> 0 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>			
Indian meal 16 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>	}	10	0
Milk and butter from the cow, say			
Carried forward	40	16	0

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	40	16	0
1 calf sold	0	6	0
Increased value of heifer	4	0	0
Value of potatoes consumed by the family, say 4 tons, at 3 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i>	14	0	0
Earnings elsewhere as a labourer	6	0	0
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	65	2	0

It may be said that this man would have been happier as a mechanic or as a well-paid labourer in England than he has been in this holding of bogland. As this paper is intended to describe the effects of an attempt made to improve the condition of the small farmers who now occupy so large a portion of the land of Ireland, I feel that my duty is to narrate facts rather than discuss theories. I cannot, however, forbear remarking that a small farm, always assuming it is not too small, provides for sickness and old age in a very different way from the savings of a mechanic or labourer.

It will also be said, perhaps, that it might be better for this man's offspring if he and his wife had settled on a tract of free ground in some foreign land. With this aspect of his case I am not concerned. He has chosen to settle where he now lives.

Lord Spencer, evidently regarding him as an existing unit in society, would wish to make him more useful to himself and to society. The man previously barely possessed the necessaries of subsistence. He is now in a fair way of enjoying for the future the necessary comforts of life according to the standard of his class. The improvements he has made have increased his income; and they have not only raised him in the estimation of his neighbours, but added to his self-respect. His landlord has a pecuniary interest in his improved condition, arising out of the law of progress, to which attention has been already directed, and he can derive a higher satisfaction from every case of the kind, owing to the improvement in the aspect of society towards which it tends. It is needless to say that the progress of agriculture among this and every other class benefits the trading and commercial classes of society. It increases the demand for seeds, manures, groceries, and all the wants of life. Every improvement in the circumstances of Thomas Conway, and of every man who produces wealth, increases even the receipts of Her Majesty's Treasury, by increasing the consumption of articles on which duties are paid.

The example of Conway, the way he was dealt with by the O'Connor Don, M.P., and the general feeling created in the district, has had a beneficial effect on his neighbour, Dominick Finan, to whose management in 1873 it was deemed unneces-

sary to attach any marks; but who obtained a total of 405 marks in 1876. On the day of my visit this man was actively engaged digging "clay" from the subsoil and carrying it over his bogland. Another neighbour, Martin Kelly, who holds under Mr. Sandford, D.L., scored 403 marks, and, by carrying out a few improvements suggested to him, he would come out very high at any future competition.

As this paper would run to an inconvenient length if I dwelt on each of the competitors who made any improvement during the year, I must conclude with a few general observations on the remaining parts of the district.

I refer first to Driney, which is not far from Loughglynn, and in which five of the competitors live: namely, William Lally, who scored 440 marks, and ranked eighth; Michael Horan, who scored the same number of marks; John Kelly, who ranked ninth, and scored 435 marks; and Stephen Kelly, who scored 415 marks.

Lally is a young man who, single-handed, has effected a great deal of drainage, and who promises to become one of the best men in the district. In 1873 the farms of the Kellys and of Horan were so indifferently managed, that we deemed it unnecessary to give them any marks. In 1876 the land was remarkably clean and well cropped.

I would next refer to several farms in the neighbourhood of Kilmovee, in which, as already explained, the upland was originally rough and stony. This is indeed the land of small farms. It would have ruined large or capitalist farmers to make the improvements which these people have effected by their own labour. This work is still going on. I give one instance—that of Michael Higgins—who has lifted huge stones, which, standing on their ends, looked at a distance like tombstones in a graveyard. This man's house and offices do him great credit. I gave him full marks for the large quantity of well-made manure he had. One of the best-managed farms I have visited is that of Dominick Roddy, whose son is the most likely man in the entire Spencer circuit to advance to the front. This man scored 504 marks, and obtained the sixth place. The widow Duffy came next to him, with 492 marks. She was closely followed by Pat Rush, who scored 472 marks. A description of the holding of either of these would be as interesting as any I have already given.

Finally, I would refer to John Talbot, of Rathnacassan, who holds 8 acres 3 roods from Mrs. Gibbons, at 5*l.* 5*s.* The farm is approached by a bridle-road, which is as hilly as it is uneven. There are 5½ acres of upland in very good condition, and the rest is reclaimed bog, separated from which by a simple boundary

the natural bog, in its original state, can still be seen. This man appeared in 1876 for the first time among the competitors. Seeing so much merit, I asked him why he had not competed before; and his reply was that, as soon as he heard of the system, he determined to work for a prize. The influence it has had in stimulating him may be understood, when I state that in 1876 the cows were expelled from the dwelling, and a suitable byre fitted up for them; that a good chimney was put into the house; and that a wall was built cutting off the manure-heap from the front of the door.

Since the foregoing statement was sent to press, I have learned, with great satisfaction, that the Irish Peasantry Society have expressed a desire to continue the Spencer Prize System.

Their subscription could possibly be made the nucleus of a fund for carrying out the system on a comprehensive plan. Unless I am much mistaken, a large number of the gentry, clergy, and other classes would gladly co-operate in promoting a system so eminently calculated to advance the material interests of the country.