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A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

BY
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TRANSLATED BY
RUTH KENYON.

WITH A PREFACE BY SIDNEY WEBB, LL.B.

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PREFACE.

It can hardly be considered a credit to England that it should have been left to a foreigner to write the history of the English agricultural labourer, and to trace out the sequence of events which have so completely divorced him from any proprietary interest in the land that he tills or in the produce of his labour. In spite of the facts that the materials for such a history were abundant and easily accessible, and that the subject has for thirty or forty years been one of social and political interest, none of the schools of history of our Universities has produced a student with the necessary zeal and capacity to do the work that lay to hand. Such a fact inevitably leads to the questions: Was it the student who was lacking, or the zeal and industry; was it the training in historical method; was it the capacity; or was it the idea? The nation to-day stands in need of much more disinterested investigation of the social problems that perplex our statesmen, and waste the money of our philanthropists. But such labours need funds, industry and intellectual initiative. Will no rich man provide the endowment; will no student devote his or her energy; will no head of a history school suggest the subjects for serious historical investigations of this kind?

Meanwhile we owe no little gratitude to Professor Hasbach for bringing down to date this elaborate and painstaking *History of the English Agricultural Labourer*; to Miss Kenyon for so conscientiously translating it; and to the London School of Economics and Political Science for arranging for its publication. For the position into which English Agriculture has got is, taken as a whole, remarkable, and practically unique. Disregarding minor exceptions, we have the ownership of the soil divorced alike from the direction and from the performance of agricultural operations. We have a class of farmers directing agricultural operations as capitalistic profit-making ventures: having no proprietary or permanent interest in the soil, and no community of interest with landlord or labourer. We have a class of agricultural labourers, working always under orders, unconcerned either with the improvement of the soil or the profitableness of the farmer's venture; and possessing no more claim or attachment to the land they till than the factory operative has to the mill in which he works. And whether or not we are satisfied with the results of this organisation of the nation's agriculture upon the social and economic conditions of the countryside, or upon the lives of the landlord, the farmer and the labourer, it must strike us as remarkable that under this organisation as we see it around us, none of the parties concerned has any pecuniary interest in getting the utmost possible yield from the soil. The pecuniary interest of the landlord is in getting the utmost possible rent—

which may (and often does) come from such a use of the land as involves its producing positively a smaller quantity of foodstuffs than some other use. The farmer's pecuniary interest lies in getting the highest possible percentage on the capital he employs —which may (and often does) lead him positively to restrict the intensity of his cultivation and the amount of the product of his farm. And the unfortunate labourer, employed at weekly wages which bear no relation either to rent or profits, has plainly no pecuniary interest in whether the product of his toil is large or small, or whether the land is being improved or deteriorated.

Such an organisation of the nation's agriculture is, speaking broadly, peculiar to this country. Though other communities may have, here and there, landowners who are agriculturists only as rent-receivers, farmers who are nothing but capitalist *entrepreneurs*, and proletarian agricultural labourers, no other nation but our own has left practically the whole of its agriculture to the pecuniary self-interests of such a combination of classes. Nor has it always been so in England. Concentrating his attention on the gradual evolution of the proletarian agricultural labourer, Professor Hasbach shows us, from contemporary records, how the peasant owner of the scattered strips in the great common fields of the manor passed gradually (and, as some may say, inevitably) into the landless, propertyless wage-labourer of the nineteenth century.

To Professor Hasbach, familiar with agricultural

organisation in other countries, it seems impossible that such a class as the English agricultural labourer —such an organisation of agriculture as characterises the England of to-day—can possibly endure. With the intellectual detachment of the denizen of another country he describes the social and political movements of the past forty years, which have had for their object the settlement of the labourer on the land. We shall not all concur with Professor Hasbach's political "values" or with his sketch or recent Parliamentary history. We may not even agree with him in thinking it ultimately inevitable that the re-organisation of English agriculture should in the main, take the form of a great multiplication of small peasant holdings. There may possibly prove to be—perhaps in connection with the development of the future provincial enterprises of water-catchment and supply; of the county educational establishments of all grades; of the municipal sewage farms; of the public "recreation reserves" to which our moors and mountain ranges will be primarily devoted; and of the whole array of State and local government residential colonies inhabited by the various kinds of defectives, persons under treatment, and incurables —a much larger proportion of the soil under collectivist administration, and much more scope for collectivist agriculture on a large scale than Professor Hasbach at present visualises. In short, the cultivation of the soil and the raising of foodstuffs, once the most fundamental of all occupations, may be destined, in the highly evolved state, more and

more to become a subsidiary occupation and a by-product. Even the small holders of the future, interspersed among the municipal farms and county institutions—using their superior intelligence and special personal attention to grow exceptional crops under intensive culture—may not improbably combine with agriculture, in the person of one or other member of the family, some such independent occupation as literature or an artistic handicraft.

SIDNEY WEBB.

41, GROSVENOR ROAD, WESTMINSTER,
October, 1908.

INTRODUCTION.

If we look at the working classes of the present day, and leave out of account certain sections of handicraftsmen, who are as it were still vigorous ramifications pushed by an older social system into our modern conditions, we shall notice three essential characteristics of this great body of men living on the fruits of their labour. They are personally free. They have no share in the business on which they are engaged, owning no part of either the capital or the land employed. They continue in this position all their lives long. The comparatively few workers who either in Europe or America do draw rent or interest from the enterprise in which they work, or who do pass up into a higher class, are of the exceptions which prove the rule—prove, that is, why the majority of their fellows necessarily present the characteristics I have named.

Therefore, in tracing the development of the working classes or of any section of them, it has to be shown how numbers of persons came to be at once free and propertyless, and hence obliged to live upon the proceeds of their labour, and what circumstances prevent them from rising to a higher social grade.

Accordingly, the first chapter of this book attempts to tell how the agricultural labourer rose to personal freedom; the second chapter, how he lost his property; the third shows his degradation; and the later chapters recount the endeavours made to improve his position and to raise at least a part of his class into the class of undertakers.

This explains why the present work is only in part a translation from the German original which appeared in the year 1894. For though the latter did not altogether neglect the history of the development of a free labouring class, it laid its main stress upon the story of the proletarianisation of the labourer. Moreover, in the last twelve years American, English, French and Russian scholars have thrown much new light upon the period of transition from unfreedom to freedom. And for these reasons the first chapter has been almost entirely re-written.

The other chapters have required less revision. Some of the conclusions expressed in the second had to be compared with those of articles by Hermann Levy in *Conrads Jahrbücher* and by J. D. Rogers in the *Dictionary of Political Economy*: and this the author has done in an article published in January, 1907, in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, entitled *Der Untergang des englischen Bauernstandes in neuer Beleuchtung*. He has, however, thought it well to go through part of his material, and especially through the *Agricultural Surveys*, once again.

In the last place, the period subsequent to 1894 had

to be glanced at, since it was naturally not included in the original edition. Unfortunately, however, it is a period of which there is little to be said.

The revision of the manuscript was completed in September, 1906, so that neither the Act of 1907 nor the literature published since that date have come under consideration.

Here and there it has been necessary to depart very far from the immediate subject in order to make clear the underlying causes of the position of the labourers. For they are a passive class, whose history has for the most part been made by other classes. Their activity has been limited to rick-burning, the formation of trade unions, and an exodus from the land: and only the last named has had important results. Consequently, their history has a special interest, as showing not merely the close connection in which all classes of society stand, but also, in the clearest possible way, the responsibility of the governing classes.

At best the reader will hardly find such digressions pleasurable, and some are almost inevitably wearisome. For questions arise which must necessarily be dealt with, but which in the present state of economic history are treated in no published work, so that the author has had to undertake the necessary researches himself. He has been in the position of a workman who has to make his tools before he can use them. However, it has been possible to relegate some of these digressions to appendices.

A work of this kind of course demands exact

references to the sources and literature on which it depends. But some of these are accessible only with such difficulty that few readers will be able to check the author throughout. For this reason the foot-notes sometimes contain quotations at some length from works which exist in a few libraries only. Sometimes, too, even works easily obtainable have been quoted where the statement referred to is particularly notable, or where a judgment of some importance has been expressed and appears to require immediate justification.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that in my view of the early social history of England I have followed Professor Vinogradoff. I also gladly take this opportunity of thanking him sincerely for having drawn my attention to various points in the first chapter which needed correction, on the occasion when I ventured to read him a great part of it.

I owe my thanks also to my publishers, Messrs. Duncker and Humblot, of Leipzig, for so readily and courteously giving their permission for the translation of the original into English.

W. HASBACH.

October, 1908.

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FREE LABOURING CLASS.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE West German peoples (as also the Keltic tribes who dwelt in England) are found at the beginning of their history to be divided into slaves, serfs, freemen and nobles. These classes arose as considerable portions of the rapidly-multiplying Teutonic folks, unable to produce adequate returns from the lands (often poor lands) on which they were originally settled, were obliged to migrate to other countries, where they found older inhabitants in possession. Some of these they reduced to slavery and others to serfdom: the first when their conquest was sufficiently complete to admit of it and they had food and work to hand for slaves, or when they could sell them to other countries. Thus the Saxon and Danish conquests respectively left the west and east of England in very different circumstances. In the west, even as late as the date of the Domesday Commission, the existence of a considerable number of slaves is recorded; while in the east, where the victorious Danes either massacred the Anglo-Saxon population or sold them into foreign slavery,[1] the number was small. But besides the slaves belonging by descent

[1] See Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, 4th ed. (1905), I. 87. He quotes the witness of Thorkelin.

to alien peoples, there were some, as criminals, debtors, and men who under pressure of necessity had sold themselves, who were enslaved by their own folk. And yet a third section consisted of persons who had been slaves of the conquered people. The slaves, being always at their masters' disposal, would be set to such work as needed to be regularly performed day by day, whether in the house or on the farm.

The serfs were distinguished from the slaves by the fact that in return for their performance of certain obligatory services they were allowed to remain settled on their old holdings. It is said that a small part only of the population conquered by the German invaders remained on the land on these terms ; only those to whom bog or forest had offered shelter and a comparatively safe existence till the return of more peaceful times. If this is true of the Kelts, however, it is probably not true of the people whom the Kelts on their conquest had found in possession and reduced to serfdom under them. It is hardly likely that they took up arms against the invading Germans : and if not, it seems probable that they continued to hold their accustomed position under the new settlers. If so, the non-Germanic population cannot have been inconsiderable.

The conquering people formed the class of the freemen. The noble class probably grew out of the originally equal mass of the free, and the royal family out of the nobles. The latter would be families gifted by nature, and distinguished generation after generation for bravery and capacity. Justice would seem to require that on the division of the newly-conquered territory they should be allotted more land, more cattle and more slaves than the ordinary freeman. They thus became the largest landowners after the king ; while on the conversion of the English to Christianity the Church also acquired considerable landed property. It is conceivable, however, that the division of the spoils was not conducted simply according to the invaders' idea of justice, but that the Roman model, which was before the eyes of the Germans all over Western Europe, was a contributory influence.

This older hereditary nobility gradually disappeared, in England as in Germany, to be replaced by an official class by no means always descended from the ancient families. While this new nobility, what with the dues of its serfs and the labour of its slaves, could afford to occupy the great posts of court and state, the ordinary freeman, to whom land and a smaller number of dependents had been allotted, would have to live for the most part on the products of his own husbandry. So far he had nothing to complain of; but gradually his position altered very much for the worse.

For centuries the Germanic peoples lived in a state of constant struggle, against Arabs or Avars, Magyars or Slavs, Danes or Northmen. In England as on the Continent the freemen, as they came to settle down to agricultural employments, found themselves unable to keep up this struggle. It became necessary to create a class of men who should be always armed for war; and they had to be paid by dues and services rendered by the freemen and serfs of a given district. Again, as the centuries passed, the freemen's position deteriorated as their holdings became smaller and smaller through successive divisions among numerous heirs: many even became landless; others had not the necessary cattle to stock their land. Hence arose a new form of dependence. The great landowners, secular or ecclesiastical, gave land to some and stock to others, who in return undertook to render dues and services, so that their position approached that of the serfs. Another cause tending to produce this same form of dependence was that weakening of the tribal bond which had been consequent on the invasion with its varying fortunes. The members of the clans lost what had been a very real and effective protection. The consequent insecurity of the individual did indeed result in the foundation of gilds for mutual defence; but it was not everyone who could belong to them, and here again many were forced to put themselves under the protection of some powerful personage, thus lowering their status and again making themselves liable to render dues and services. Yet

a fourth factor in degrading the standing of the freemen was the rise of a local jurisdiction alongside of the ancient methods of administering justice; a jurisdiction to which freemen as well as the unfree were subject, and which was a source of income to the lord in whose hands it rested.

While the differences between noble and freeman were thus increasing and those between freemen and serfs decreasing, serfs were being freed, and the slave was gradually rising to the position of a serf. This is to be attributed to the humanising influence of Christian principles: while the fact that the great landowners of the Saxon period were accustomed to allot lands and capital even to their slaves tended to the external assimilation of the position of the two unfree classes. Manumissions, too, diminished the number of actual slaves.

Even before the end of the Saxon period these historical forces had profoundly altered the structure of society; and the borders of the country, where it was threatened by enemies, were covered by a socio-political organisation of an aristocratic character. The Norman conquest tended to extend this form of organisation over the whole country and to unify its type, since everywhere the conquerors found themselves face to face with a discontented and restless population.

Thus the causes depressing the free population were of very various kinds, and individuals became dependent in different ways and for divers reasons. But after the Norman Conquest we find established almost everywhere [1] men exercising a politico-economic headship over all persons settled within a given district, so that both serfs and freemen are subject to them, though in different degrees. They are called lords, and the sphere of their lordship is the manor. We are not here concerned to explain how

[1] Mr. T. E. Scrutton has pointed out that in the fifteenth century there were freemen who belonged to no manor. See *Commons and Common Fields*, 1887, chap. I. And Nasse gives a good many instances of pastures which were the common property of those having rights of pasture, and under no manorial lord. *On the Agricultural Community of the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., 1872, p. 60.

dependence on a variety of persons came to be transformed into dependence upon one.

In proceeding to describe the manor as it stood at about the end of the twelfth century I am perfectly conscious of the abstractions involved, as pointed out, e.g., in Pollock and Maitland's *History of English Law.*[1] I am sketching merely the typical manor; and, moreover, it would lie outside our scope to deal with the peculiarities of manors of ancient demesne,[2] or to glance at the special circumstances of the county of Kent,[3] or to show the influence of Keltic modes of settlement upon agricultural conditions in the West.[4]

I.—The Manor as an Organisation of Labour.

If we suppose ourselves to enter a manor of the end of the twelfth century, we shall first notice a cultivated area, having in its midst the manor-house, and near that barns, stables, and other buildings which are the dwellings of the steward and manorial servants; behind, a stretch of ploughland in one continuous block. This is the home-farm. At some little distance lies the village, inhabited by the lord's tenants. They too hold land, but it lies, not in continuous blocks, but in strips scattered over several large fields surrounding the village. One such field will contain some dozens of strips, to be worked by various tenants. But the lord, too, often owns some of the strips, which are sown and harvested together with those belonging to the villagers: and thus his land, in many cases, consists of two parts, blocks and strips, while that of the tenants consists entirely of scattered strips on the great fields. The village community has meadow and pasture at its disposal, as well as ploughland, but of this we shall have to speak in detail later.

[1] 2nd ed., 1898, I., p. 594.

[2] Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*, 1892, chap. III., and *Growth of the Manor*, 1895, pp. 354 f., and Pollock and Maitland, op. cit. I., pp. 383 f.

[3] Vinogradoff, opp. cit. passim.

[4] I would, however, refer here to Dr. Seebohm's well-known works *The English Village Community* and *The Tribal System in Wales*, and to Meitzen, *Siedlung und Agrarwesen.*

Lord and tenants, however, were not merely bound together by neighbouring ownership on the common fields, but by dues and services which, as we have already seen, had to be rendered by the latter to the former, though they were graded according to the class and holding of the tenants, who by no means formed a homogeneous mass.

Some of them were personally free; and these fell into several classes.[1] Some, in return for their land, rendered dues of relatively small value, of the nature of a mere acknowledgment, as, for example, a pair of gloves, or a pound of wax or of pepper. Others, on the contrary, paid a not inconsiderable rent in money. Others again paid in military services, or were charged with the duty of representing the township before the royal courts. Still others rendered small services in addition to rents, due at times when more labour than usual was needed, i.e. at spring seed-time and in harvest. But very often the duties of free tenants consisted not of actual manual labour, but of superintendence.

The unfree population bore the main burden of the work to be done for the lord, which was in the first place agricultural labour, whether upon the home-farm or the lord's strips in the common fields, and secondly, carrying work. But the unfree tenants, again, were divided into various sections. There were the tenants of a normal holding, which consisted on an average of about thirty acres, and there were tenants of half-holdings of say fifteen acres. Tenants of the first class, the so-called virgaters, worked about three days a week upon the demesne, with their teams, unless they were liable to do carrying services. Tenants of the second class, or half-virgaters, did correspondingly less. That is to say that these were the proportions according to which the work was distributed. But it is not to be concluded that the holdings actually remained at this typical size. The lord allowed the virgates to be divided in fact, so long as the dues and services customarily rendered by the theoretical unit were properly performed. It should also be noticed that the services

[1] Pollock and Maitland, op. cit. I., pp. 291 f.

due from the tenant might be done by a suitable proxy, whether the holding were free or unfree.

Other workers, doing less for the lord than virgaters or half-virgaters, were the *bordarii* and *cottarii*, who held perhaps five to two acres of land. They worked as a rule only one day in the week, without teams, but with hands and tools. Their land did not lie upon the common fields (which, we may here remark, were known in later times as open fields, because they were not permanently fenced in).

Lastly, there were persons in the village owning house and garden only, who obviously must have worked for wages if they were to live. The greater number of them were the village artisans—smiths, masons, carpenters and others. For the most part they were descendants of villagers, free or unfree, who as the population increased had been unable to find either work or maintenance on the paternal acres, but had to remain in the village until some better opportunity of earning a living offered there or elsewhere. They provided the material out of which a labouring class might be formed, and formed a reserve army of labour for the occasions of the lord of the manor.

But the freemen and villeins, at all events, were only bound by the custom of the manor to certain definite services: whereas some of the farm work needed uninterrupted attention. Hence we find on the home-farm a number of servants, from a technical point of view the successors of the slaves of earlier days. Their duties had almost exclusively to do with the live stock: they were shepherds, swineherds, foresters, dairy men and women, and also carters, though the tenants, too, had carrying work to do. They were none of them ploughmen, a fact which tells much as to the history of the manor. The ploughmen occupied an intermediate position between the tenants and the servants. They were drawn from among the villeins, and freed from the services due from them as tenants of land in villeinage so long as they were at work upon the demesne.[1] The servants were paid in

[1] Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, p. 147.

kind, chiefly by certain allowances of provisions and cloth, though some of them had a share in the fruits of their labour, and others had also the products of a small holding.[1]

Passing over the domestic servants (porters, cooks, butlers and the like), with whom we are not here concerned, we come to a fourth class in the manorial organisation. This consisted of the persons who organised the work, supervised the labourers, noted the expenditure and receipts, kept the accounts, and so forth. The head of the manorial husbandry was the bailiff. If the lord had several manors, there was often under him, and over the various bailiffs, a seneschal or steward, who in early times might be a knight and later on was in many cases a lawyer.[2] Accountants, as well as the steward, appeared on the manor from time to time. They satisfied themselves as to its financial position, made up the books from the accounts rendered by the inferior officials, and received whatever money-payments had been made and took them away. Members of the village community, however, were also concerned in the administration: there was the reeve as representative of the peasantry, there were rent-collectors, and on large manors one or more messors as overseers in harvest.[3] Such occupations were part of the services due from certain lands. But services were not all that the tenants were bound to render. There were also dues in kind to be paid, as eggs, cheese, honey, salt, fish and fowls. Besides, on the death of an unfree father the family had to return to the lord some part of its movable goods, on the theory that the unfree man received his provision of capital from the lord. This payment was called the *heriot*. And a villein's son on taking over his holding had to make a payment in proportion to the value of the land. This was the *fine*.

Lastly there were various dues of the nature of rates

[1] Ibid. p. 321.
[2] Pollock and Maitland, op. cit. I., p. 592.
[3] A good description of the organisation of a manor is given by Miss Davenport in Chapter II. of *The Economic Development of a Norfolk Manor*, Cambridge, 1906.

and taxes: while the receipts of the manorial courts were not seldom an important source of income. It will be easier to understand these clearly if we remember that the lord was in the first place a person charged with certain public duties (*eine Person des öffentlichen Rechtes*), who was to be paid for his services by certain definite fees. Hence his right to direct taxes (*tallage*), indirect taxes (*bann rights*: e.g. payments for the use of his oven or mill), and taxes on trade (as the *gersuma* or market dues). Moreover the fines paid in his courts came into his coffers, though as they are of little significance for our purposes we need not specify them here, only noticing that the one original court of the lord of the manor was ultimately divided into the court baron (for the affairs of the free tenants), the customary court (for the unfree tenants) and the court leet (for matters of police). But in the second place he was a person with certain private rights (*eine Person des Privatrechtes*), an owner of land and capital who received rents, services, dues in kind, heriots and fines in return for the use of them. In the third place, he received certain payments depending on villeinage as an institution of immemorial antiquity. These we have not yet mentioned. The villein paid *merchet*,[1] a payment on the marriage of his daughter, and *leyrwite*, if she misconducted herself. His freedom of movement was limited, and he therefore had to pay for permission to leave the manor (*chevage*). Without the lord's leave he might neither send his son to the university, sell cow or calf, not cut down oak, ash or peartree on his holding, unless to mend his house. He could not refuse the office of a reeve, and either his eldest or youngest son must succeed him on his death. These payments may be classed under the head of fees: and they all offered opportunities for increasing the income of the manorial lord.[2]

[1] Merchet was also sometimes paid by freemen and by socmen on ancient demesne. Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, pp. 157, 201. For its origin see Pollock and Maitland, op. cit. I., 372, and Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, p. 347.

[2] For the classification of the lord's rights cp. Roscher, *Nationalökonomie des Ackerbaues*, Vol. II., chap. IX. In France, on the abolition of manorial rights, a three-fold classification was accepted, viz.: "*Droits de*

If, however, the system of dues is to be wholly comprehensible, there is another consideration to be taken into account: namely its historical development. Originally the tenants paid in kind. Later on the lord acquired his own home farm. This may have come about as some of the unfree tenants died out, and others were got rid of, justly or unjustly, and their strips on the fields fell to the lord. The remaining tenants were obliged to work them, thus adding to their dues services: and the lord found it necessary to build barns and stables in addition to the barn which held the dues brought in. He would want more servants, who originally were probably slaves. Finally he might have a block of land cleared for his own use, and so increase his demand for services.

At any rate it will be clear by this time that towards the end of the twelfth century the manor represented a highly developed organisation of labour, but that agricultural labourers in the modern sense were non-existent. The majority of the villagers did not work exclusively for others; the well-to-do villeins worked for themselves half or two-thirds of their time, and the freemen were mainly occupied on their own holdings. Almost all of them had land and capital; and most of them were personally unfree, and were therefore incapable of concluding a labour-contract as understood in modern law. Here and there possibly a freeman may have hired himself out for wages, in which case he would become what we mean by a labourer.

Having thus described the fairly uniform foundation of the society of that day, we may in conclusion just glance at the superstructure built upon it. This gives an impression of greater variety. For the manorial lord was sometimes a knight, and sometimes a monastery or cathedral, sometimes the king himself, or one of his serjeants, or a tenant-in-chief. It was also more changeable, for by subletting one lord not seldom replaced another. Accordingly the surplus value came to be applied to the most diverse

justice (représentatifs des droits de souveraineté), *droits de mainmorte, et droits féodaux.*" Janet, *Origines du Socialisme Contemporain.* With this Prof. Vinogradoff's classification in the main agrees. *Villainage*, p. 151.

ends. It might go to carry on a war or suppress a rebellion, to provide for feasts and tournaments, to maintain a retinue of men-at-arms, to provide hospitality for pilgrims and great personages on their travels, or again to support a monastic institution devoted to learning and its propagation.

II.—The Transition to an Organisation Based on Rent.

In the next hundred and fifty years—A.D. 1200 to 1350—the two great points to note are the increase of population and the growth of trade. These induced changes of very far-reaching effect. They were possible because the strong Norman dynasty had checked the devastating invasions of foreign peoples, and the quantity of coin in the country increased as commercial intercourse with Flanders and France developed. Now in England up to and into the fourteenth century any increase of population [1] must have been much more sensibly felt on the land than it is in modern times. At the present day the superfluous rural population migrates to the towns, there to find employment in trade or manufacture or in connection with some of the great transport industries; or it may emigrate to other lands. But in the thirteenth century the towns were still small, manufactures and trade were in their first beginnings, and emigration was hindered by obstacles both legal and economic. England's principal exports were wool, cattle, lead, tin and cheese, and her principal imports were spices and wine. It was not till the fourteenth century, under Edward III., that the foundations of an export trade in manufactured goods were laid; and our concern in this section is with an earlier period, and more particularly with the thirteenth century.

At that time it would be necessary for the greater part

[1] The following figures are intended merely to set limits to the imagination, as will be understood by any reader acquainted with mediæval statistics. The population of England was about two millions in 1066; at the accession of Edward III. it may have been some two and a half millions. At this point it probably remained (in consequence of epidemics and foreign and civil wars) till 1485; then it gradually rose, till at the end of the seventeenth century it was about five millions. The census of 1801 showed it (including Wales) as 8,892,536.

of the population to find, if possible, work and subsistence on the land and in the neighbourhood of their own homes. Nor was this very difficult. For in many parts of the country, especially in the north, the common fields were surrounded by uncultivated tracts, serving as pasture, which, according to the law of the feudal period, belonged to the lord of the manor, though the village community had a right to a share in their use: necessarily so, since their stock could not draw sufficient food from the common fields, especially as the three-field system still ruled, nor even from the meadows which were used as pastures after the hay had been cut. Then there were sometimes woods, where the pigs could feed and wood could be got, and very often natural pastures where both the lord's beasts and those of the villagers might be driven at such times as neither fallows, stubble nor meadow were available. There were marshy lands, too, sheltering various wild-fowl and offering opportunities to sportsmen, as indeed did the commons and wastes. On either waste, wood, heath or bog squatters' huts could be planted, and were planted, with or without permission from the lord. Or the lord might order some of his servants to clear a part of the waste, or change some of the ordinary tenant-services for service of this kind. Then, as the woods resounded with the blows of the axe, wastes and commons were transformed into ploughland, and marshes were drained or turned into fishponds, squatters, stag and wild-fowl departed to quieter neighbourhoods, and new settlements arose on the reclaimed land. The newly-settled tenants paid the lord dues and services in the earlier period, while in the later—if we may anticipate for a moment—they paid money-rents. If the land were let to them for life, free tenements arose: if for a shorter time, the land was let on lease.

But cleared land cannot have disposed of the whole landless population. We have too much evidence, even as early as the end of the thirteenth century, that a large population was pressing upon the means of subsistence to allow us to suppose that. And moreover cleared land

was also wanted to enlarge the holdings of the smaller landholders, and sometimes to increase the size of the home-farm. It is significant, too, that clearances circumscribed the common rights of the village community to such an extent that the legislature had to interfere. By the Statutes of Merton (1236) and Westminster II. (1285) it was laid down that any diminution of common-land must leave sufficient pasture to satisfy the claims of the free tenants of the manor concerned, and of neighbouring manors, according to the needs of their husbandry.[1]

We have already been led to touch upon the second great factor in the changes of this period, namely upon the effect of the increase of trade. We have noticed that while on the older settlements services were rendered, on the newer money was paid. The reason was that the growth of commerce, especially the export of wool, had brought more money into the country, and the use of money was slowly extending outwards from the port-towns and other places with a vigorous trade. In such neighbourhoods a villein could sell goods for money and so could offer money to his lord instead of his services and dues in kind. The offer was accepted by the lord where and so far as the increase of population enabled him to get his work done by hired labour. For, as we shall see, it was to his advantage to have money at his disposal, both in his dealings with merchants and in his relations to the king, and also it was no small gain to him to exchange the compulsory labour of his tenants for the labour of men hired by contract. It set limits to many of the dishonest practices and arbitrary dealings of his bailiffs,[2] quite apart from the fact that farming through officials was an expensive method, and remains expensive to this day, as may be seen in Austria and Germany. And it meant that religious festivals and bad weather would no longer curtail his profits by the loss of labour they

[1] On these Acts see Scrutton, *Commons and Common Fields*, chap. III., and Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, pp. 272 f.

[2] Even in the thirteenth century the legislature had to concern itself seriously with dishonest officials of this class. See Pollock & Maitland, op. cit. II. 221.

involved. Probably, too, in the England of the thirteenth century as on the Continent in the eighteenth, the enforced services were badly done in spite of all supervision; and there are regulations which suggest that the lord had to protect himself against the rendering of dues in goods of bad quality. Lastly, the food and drink which had to be provided in harvest had made harvest labour very expensive.[1] And (a point of no small weight in the scale), as a rule when money payments were substituted for dues and services the tenants' burden was increased.[2]

On the other hand the tenant's position was improved. He was now protected from the annoying incidents of the labour economy, and could devote himself entirely to his own holding.[3] The rents, too, became lighter as the value of money fell and prices rose. At any rate the tenant felt himself a freer man, though the change concerned only the regular dues and services, not those which recurred irregularly, as fines and heriots, which still had to be paid. Nor did the villein acquire personal freedom, though some of the most hated marks of servitude, such as the payment of merchet, were redeemed by the substitution of money-rents.[4]

Of course this advance did not take place in all parts of the country at the same time. If it could be exactly traced it would perhaps be found to have come about most rapidly in the neighbourhood of the large towns, of harbours, places of pilgrimage and markets, and of monasteries; in fact, wherever people congregated and there was opportunity of selling goods for money. Nor even on any one manor could it as a rule take place all at once, though here and there we do come upon cases in which a whole village together was put on a rent-paying basis. For the manor as a labour-economy was as we have seen a work of art,

[1] Cp. Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, pp. 287, 297 f.

[2] "Indeed the demand for money-rents was considered rather as increasing than decreasing the burden incumbent on the peasantry." Ibid. p. 342.

[3] Ibid. p. 181.

[4] "Buying off the services in money took partly the shape of getting rid of some of the more hateful and cumbersome duties, such as merchet, for instance, and thus appeared as a kind of emancipation by instalments," Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, p. 358.

binding together numbers of workers of different kinds and classes, and bringing them to work in harmony. Virgaters and cottiers, be it emphasized once more, could only be freed from their labour-dues when other labour-power had been found. But as in this period a surplus population was rapidly multiplying this condition was relatively easily fulfilled.[1] Even so, however, the step was a very serious one for the lord to take, and demanded his most careful consideration. And therefore he did not as a rule release his bondsmen entirely and unconditionally, but allowed a part of their labour-obligations to remain still standing. Sometimes, evidently desirous of trying experiments, he would even reserve the right to re-introduce the labour economy.[2] Usually the method which he took was to sell the services to the persons bound to perform them. He would sell for one year such services as he did not then need, and perhaps the next year find that he needed all his customary rights and demand the services again.[3]

According to the result of Dr. Page's enquiries,[4] the services " with team " were the first to be sold. The work done under this obligation admitted of no delay and demanded special skill, and a servant was much more at the bailiff's

[1] The information which Miss Davenport gives on this point (op. cit. p. 46) is most instructive. On the manor described by her there were between 1270 and 1307 about 100 persons who were not tenants, and were therefore considered as *nativi manentes extra manerium*. She writes :—" It is somewhat surprising that, while the number of bond tenants was only 135, so many bondmen should have been *extra manerium*. But the bond tenements were extremely small, and there was little room for additional servile tenants. There must have been many younger sons of full age, who, though resident in Forncett vill, were not tenants of Forncett Manor, and might therefore be considered *extra manerium*."

[2] Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, p. 307.

[3] Here again Miss Davenport gives important concrete data. The lord of the manor of Forncett could claim 2,973 working days. Of these he sold in

A.D. 1273	..	605
,, 1278	..	299
,, 1284	..	1,097
,, 1286	..	699½
,, 1304	..	1,659
,, 1306	..	1,357½

Although these figures seem to indicate a gradual increase in the number of services sold, Miss Davenport considers that the causes were " local and temporary." Op. cit. p. 46.

[4] Page, *Die Umwandlung der Frohndiensten in Geldrenten* (Doctoral Dissertation in Leipzic University), 1897, p. 26.

disposition than a tenant. Not till later were the purely manual services sold too. The released villeins were replaced by the propertyless offspring of freeholders, virgaters or cottiers, but also by such tenants as had holdings too small to maintain them. And so we see the class of agricultural labourers beginning to form. From a technical point of view the change might be regarded as an increase in the number of farm-servants employed on the estate. Such servants still received a considerable part of their income in kind, but part was now paid in money in accordance with the extension of a money-economy.[1] Alongside of the servants, however, from even the thirteenth century, there are to be found on English manors labourers proper, paid by the day or piece. The day-labourers were the harvesters, who came from the towns.[2] This need not surprise us. As in the thirteenth century the surface under cultivation was increased, while at the same time the country lost a part of its inhabitants to the growing towns, the ordinary workers of a manor must often have been too few to get in the harvest satisfactorily, and special assistance would become necessary. Possibly the lord, when allowing some of his bondsmen to migrate to the nearest town, laid upon them the condition that they should return in harvest-time. But by the middle of the fourteenth century labour came from more considerable distances, as we learn from the Statute of Labourers of 1351. By this Act the "gentz des countes de Stafford, Lancastre et Derby et gentz de Cravene, et de la Marche de Gales et d'Escosce et autres lieues" were allowed to come "en temps d'Augst de laborer en autres countes et sauvement returnir, comme ils solaient faire avant ces heures." Wales and Scotland excepted, it is noticeable that the parts specified are those which even in the Middle Ages were predominantly under grass or forest. According to Denton, the corn-producing district of England, even in the fifteenth century, was limited to

[1] Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, I., 56, 287, 18, II., 329. Dr. Page, whose sources are of the period 1325–1451, confirms this. Op. cit. p. 22.
[2] Rogers, op. cit. I., 252.

the comparatively narrow belt of land bounded by the sea on the south, and on the north by a line drawn from Suffolk to Gloucestershire so as to include the southern parts of Staffordshire and Leicestershire.[1]

But we should not have expected to find nineteenth-century achievements existing in the thirteenth; and it is surprising to find a class of specially skilled piece-workers who, being unable to find employment for their special skill throughout the year in any one place, were migratory. Such, however, were the harrowers, marlers, sheep-shearers, tilers, slaters and cabinet-makers,[2] though, as will be noticed, some of these are industrial labourers.

The movement of the hundred and fifty years we are discussing, then, was first of all towards the emancipation of some small but gradually growing part of the rural population through the development of a beneficent cash-nexus; and secondly towards a new organisation of the work of the manor, by the slowly increasing employment of a class of agricultural labourers, who may be divided into the two sections of farm-servants, and wage-earners on time wages, the servants greatly preponderating.

But the effect of our two causes was not yet exhausted. Already in the thirteenth century a new phase of the development appears. The lord limits his home-farm, or even gives it up altogether, and becomes more and more, or even exclusively, a simple rent-receiver. That is to say that first part of the demesne land, and then the whole of it, was let out to farmers. What had first taken place in connection with cleared land and tenants' land now occurred on that part of the soil which was most closely bound up with the lord's existence. For the number of would-be tenants was increasing, and probably competition among them made itself felt in the lord's favour. "All such facts increase in number and importance with the increase of population; under its pressure the area of direct cultivation for the lord is gradually lessened, and

[1] Denton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 1888, p. 144.

[2] Cp. the chapter *On the Price of Labour* in Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, I., 252 ff.

in many surveys we find a sort of belt formed around the home-farm by the intrusion of the dependent people into the limits of the demesne." At first such tenure was "precarious," but "the rights thus acquired tended to become perpetual . . . . and as they were founded on agreement and paid for with money-rents, their transformation into permanent tenures led to an increase of free tenements and not of villeinage."[1] Even in the twelfth century there are some few examples of demesnes let to farm with all their services and dues,[2] and in some cases it was the villeins who rented both demesnes and services. The lord let to the farmer not only land and buildings, but also the whole capital belonging to them. This is what has been called the "stock and land lease." That no other method was possible in the beginning can easily be seen: for no capitalist farming class had yet appeared.

In the next century came a new development. According to Dr. Petrushewsky, villeins in some cases sub-let their holdings; and the practice seems to have been so common that agents were employed in arranging such affairs. It is a significant proof that the bond which had held the tenants together in one whole was either broken or on the point of breaking.

Thus by the middle of the fourteenth century England already offers in many respects a picture of a well-developed "commercial society" (to use the language of Adam Smith) whose main bond of union is the cash-nexus. This is the more evident when we glance once more at the receivers of the surplus value, now frequently paid them in hard cash. By its aid they were enabled to go to the wars in Scotland, Ireland, and France, to fight the infidel in the Holy Land, to rebel at home and wring charters out of their king, to send contributions to the Holy Father at Rome, or to build strong castles and exquisite cathedrals. With it, too, they bought wines, spices,

[1] Vinogradoff, *Villeinage*, pp. 329 f.
[2] Ashley, *Economic History*, I., 36.

jewels and costly fabrics, and so quickened trade and commerce, till it was possible for Edward III. to contemplate a development at home in England of manufactures such as the demand had hitherto been too small to support. And all this meant growing opportunities of employment, attracting the superfluous rural population, promoting competition between town and country employers, and a further development of the towns.

Meantime, as the wants of the upper stratum of society were refined and multiplied, a process had been going on there very much like that which we have seen going on among the lower classes. Military services had been exchanged for scutage, and with the scutage-money the king had hired soldiers with whom to carry on his wars beyond seas. And no doubt, anticipating the principles of the political economists of a later day, he rejoiced when he found that the sum so gained would buy him more services than he had formerly received, or that, the services provided, he still had something over. Fines, too, came to him as to the manorial lords, and were indeed an instrument very lovingly perfected by the Angevin kings. Tenants-in-chief, for example, were amerced when they failed to perform their military services in person.[1] At the same time the king endeavoured to convert tenure by serjeantry into the more profitable tenure by free socage or by knight's service,[2] to exploit his feudal dues to even greater advantage, and to develop his system of taxation. The great lords, groaning under this fiscal pressure and under the demands of their new standard of comfort, acted only in the spirit of the age when in their frequent sub-infeudations they reserved to themselves more services than they were pledged to perform,[3] and, together with their king, found themselves deeply interested in maintaining freedom of commerce with those foreign merchants whom the English merchants, wanting the profits for themselves, desired to exclude. The class

[1] Pollock and Maitland, op. cit. I., p. 269.
[2] Ibid. p. 334.
[3] Ibid. p. 277.

war was present in the later middle ages: and regarded in this connection the expulsion of the Jews and the fate of Lombards and Templars are very significant.[1] It was not in the nineteenth or twentieth century that the upper ten first discovered how limited is the quantity of economic goods in existence at any one time.

Sooner or later the working of these economic forces made itself felt in the villages. The lord possessed the right to impose taxes, and therewith the power to throw the whole weight of taxation off his own shoulders. As Pauli says,[2] all state and feudal burdens fell in the long run on the unfortunate peasantry. Further, as we have already seen, the highest possible rent was as a rule demanded on the commutation of services, so that the villeins' obligations were increased. It is even probable that this increase was the very object of the later commutations, in the interest of the lords' rents.[3] The demands made in connection with the Peasants' Revolt show that these were felt to be too high.[4]

The plague, by carrying off large numbers of the population, gave these tendencies full time to develop in the period next following: i.e. from the middle of the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century, or say from the battle of Crecy to the death of Queen Elizabeth.

III.—The Break-down of the Manor.

Pestilence had appeared in 1315, 1316 and 1340, and dearth had ruled from 1308 to 1322 with the sole exceptions of the years 1311–13 and 1318–20.[5] But the horrors of these times were thrown into the background by the Black Death, which in 1348 and 1349 devastated the country and left only about half the population living. A new outbreak of plague came in 1361–2, and the male sex and the upper classes more especially were swept off by it,

[1] Cp. Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, ed. 1905, I., 274, 285, 288.
[2] Pauli, *Geschichte von England*, IV. 524.
[3] Pollock and Maitland, op. cit. I., 378.
[4] Pauli, op. cit. IV., 530, and Lingard, *History of England*, Paris, 1826, IV., 202.
[5] Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, I., 290.

though, the population being so much smaller, the absolute number of deaths was less. With it came a terrible cattle-plague; and the same was the case with the third outbreak, which lasted from 1368 to 1369. New epidemics raged in 1370 and 1381–2, again accompanied by dearth and cattle-plague; and these were followed by yet others in the last decade of the fourteenth century and throughout the fifteenth.[1]

Now manors at various stages of development were struck by these epidemics, and persons of all degrees were carried off by them; servants and labourers working on the demesne; farmers and freemen paying rent only; freeman bound to boon-works in addition to their money payments; virgaters and cottiers whose services had been commuted; others whose lords had tentatively introduced the new fashion of money payments; and finally yet others who continued to perform their services or some of them. Knowing this, it would be easy to picture the state of things which followed the Black Death, even if we had not contemporary accounts to go upon. The lord would first of all be concerned to obtain servants and labourers for his home-farm at the wages hitherto customary; and here he would be acting in the interest of his rent-paying tenants as well as in his own, since only if such labour was forthcoming could they afford to pay: for many of them had lost their wives and children. Such landlords as had only tentatively allowed the redemption of services very probably attempted to enforce their performance again: and those who had commuted them in part sought to enforce those which remained uncommuted. It is clear, too, that the lords would seek to find new tenants: and in both these respects they were in a much stronger position as against the unfree population than against the free. For the former could be compelled to render the customary services, or to take up a vacant holding and perform the services due from it. But the landlords competed among themselves

[1] Cp. Denton, op. cit., pp. 96 ff.

for labour, and moreover found their projects hindered by the small number of the villeins and their poverty and refractoriness and by the ineffectiveness of existing methods of compulsion, such as eviction and fines. It was both easy and profitable for a villein to turn his back upon an unwise lord and escape to another manor or to a town. Only in very few cases does it seem to have been possible to get labourers, servants or tenants under the old conditions. The great point of complaint was the rise in wages. In very many cases villeins were compelled to take up vacant holdings.[1] In others the lands were let on lease to free tenants.[2] And, as the supply of land was much greater than the demand for it, villeins were able to compel the lords to consent to the commutation of services.[3] Moreover it appears that the rents paid were frequently lower than before.[4] Thus the Black Death resulted in an increase of free tenements and a decrease of the lord's income.

Perhaps a still clearer insight into the landlord's difficulties in these times is given us by the legislation which the pestilences and their results called out. In 1349 Parliament could not meet, and therefore the king on the advice of a small council of magnates put out an Ordinance of which the most important provisions were the following. The preamble stated that "a great part of the people, especially workmen and servants," would not work, and that great "incommodities" resulted from the deficiency of

[1] Page, op. cit. p. 30.
[2] Ibid. p. 31.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Dr. Page says that before the Black Death the conditions on 78 manors were as follows:—On forty the villeins did practically all the work; on twenty-one they did half of it; on ten they did some; and only on seven had the services all been redeemed. During the decade 1371 to 1380, on a total of 73 manors, the villeins did all the customary work on fourteen, half of it on fifteen, a small proportion on twenty-two, and on twenty-two all services had been redeemed. Thus in the first case the services remained unredeemed on about fifty per cent. of the manors, and in the second on only about twenty per cent. (Op. cit. pp. 24 and 39). Miss Davenport says that on the Manor of Forncett two hundred and fifty acres had fallen to the lord in 1378, and that in 1406 of the three thousand two hundred and nineteen day-works due to the lord only one hundred and ninety-five were available. For the year 1409–10 the manor was let to farm. From 1273 to 1306 the profits of the manor had varied between £70 and £127: it was let to farm for £60. (Op. cit. pp. 52 f.)

ploughmen and the like ; and it was therefore ordered that " every man or woman free or bond " who was not otherwise employed and had no income from land must serve when required, taking no higher wage than heretofore. The lords were to have a preferential claim on their own tenants but were not to employ more than was necessary. Refractory labourers and such as left their services before the proper time without reasonable cause were threatened with imprisonment. Anyone giving a higher rate of wages than that which was customary was to be fined three times the sum so paid or promised.

A year later the celebrated Statute of Labourers of 1351 (25 Ed. III.) was passed, from which we learn that " the said servants, having no regard to the said ordinance, but to their ease and singular covetise do withdraw themselves to serve great men and other, unless they have livery and wages to the double or treble of that they were wont to take " in the king's twentieth year. Among such servants were named carters, ploughmen, drivers of the plough, shepherds, swineherds, " and all other servants." They were ordered to appear, tools in hand, in the market towns, there to be publicly hired. It is very significant that the preferential claim of the manorial lord was thus still further limited, and a labour-market created which is probably the origin of the hiring fairs. No higher wages were to be paid than those of the twentieth year of the king's reign. Labourers were to take an oath to observe the ordinance, " and none shall go out of the town where he dwelleth in the winter to serve the summer," so long as he can find work where he is. The disobedient were to be put in the stocks. The free tenants are no longer specially named as liable to do services.

But the statute seems to have produced the desired effect as little as the ordinance, for the Act passed nine years later, 34 Ed. III. (1360–1), provides that fugitive labourers should, if re-captured, be branded in the forehead, and that such as had escaped into towns, whether labourers, servants or craftsmen, should be given up. In 1368 the Statute 43 Ed. III. ordered that the Statutes of

Labourers should be duly observed, and made regulations intended to facilitate their execution. In the next reign the 12 Ric. II. c. 3. (1388) again confirmed them, and provided "that a pair of stocks be in every town to justify the same servants or labourers." No one might leave his hundred at the end of his service "to serve and dwell elsewhere," or to go professedly on pilgrimage, "unless he bring a letter patent containing the cause of his going." Disobedience meant the stocks. Further, "artificers, servants and apprentices which be of no great avoir and of which craft and mystery a man hath no great need in harvest time, shall be compelled to serve in harvest." Everyone who has served in husbandry up to the age of twelve years was to continue in that calling. The statute goes on to complain that tenants cannot pay their rents owing to the high rate of wages, and therefore proceeds to assess wages. But the difficulties in the way of a general regulation proved too great; and an Act of the following year (13 R. II.) required that they should be assessed by the Justices of the Peace for their own districts according to the price of provisions. Almost forty years later a statute of 6 Hen. VI. (1427) tells us that the two Acts of Richard II. had been found impracticable owing to their severity and the inadequacy of their provisions; and the regulations are more clearly defined. This Act was allowed to expire, but was revived and made permanent by 8 Hen. VI.

We have now reached the culminating point of this series of statutes, and it becomes evident that the Elizabethan legislation is directly connected with them. They were obviously ineffective so far as the attainment of the objects specified is concerned, so that we need only remark further concerning them that they were continued right through the fifteenth century. The two last Acts of the series are 11 Hen. VII. c. 22 (1495-6) and 12 Hen. VII. c. 3 (1496–7), which repeals the former.[1] On the other hand

[1] The petitions presented to Parliament are also valuable evidence as to the character of the times. It was prayed that villeins might not be admitted to towns, there to become artisans, mariners, or clerks: and that their children might no longer be allowed to go "to the schools," nor to

it is desirable that we should arrive at a clear idea of the position which this legislation holds in the history of the working classes on the land. And it is an important one. The statutes, as may easily be seen, had two results. They are not simply the legislative reflex of the break-down of the manor; they contributed to that break-down. For in the first place the right of fixing wages was taken away from the lord of the manor and given to officers of the State. This does not, however, necessarily mean that the position of the labourer was improved; for the Justices of the Peace belonged to the landlord class and the legislature now united them into a kind of employers' association, which could set the price of labour untrammelled by local considerations. Similar considerations apply to the second result of the statutes, as set forth by Dr. Petrushewsky[1] in his study of Wat Tyler's rebellion. They restricted the labourer's freedom of movement; but at the same time they contained elements which made in the direction of increasing his freedom: for they deprived the manorial lord of his exclusive right to the labour of his tenants. From this time forward labour becomes a commodity which may be offered in the market to various employers.

Turning to another aspect of this struggle between employer and employed, we have to explain the progress of the labourers towards greater personal freedom. We have clearly pointed out that the position of the unfree man, as against the manorial lord, was worse than that of the free man. As a consequence of his status he was obliged to do various things which could not be enforced upon his free neighbour. And it is very probable that at this period of decreasing incomes the landlords became severe in insisting on opening up whatever sources of profit were left to them, among which would be the dues

attain their freedom by admission into the town. Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, 5th ed., III., 622. It is true that these petitions refer exclusively to villeins, of whom we shall have to speak in particular later on: but as regards the subject they aim at, they belong to the general history of the labouring class.

[1] Cp. the review of his book by Mr. A. Savine in the *English Historical Review*, for 1902.

arising from the status of unfreedom, and that they imposed exorbitantly high fines on villeins who ventured to overstep the limits set them.[1] Probably the numerous cases of villeins taking to flight[2] are to be attributed to this cause. Hence a very bitter state of feeling would be gradually produced; and this was most likely fostered and turned to definite ends by educated men who had risen above the general level of their class. Comparing the history of other countries under similar social conditions we shall conclude that these men were secular clergy, monks, and in some cases lawyers.[3] In 1377 things had come to such a head that according to the statute 1 Ric. II. c. 6, "Villeins and land-tenants in villeinage, who owe services and customs to their . . . . lords" are incited to declare themselves "to be quit and utterly discharged from all manner of service, due as well of their body as of their . . . . tenures, and will not suffer any distress or other justice to be made upon them, but do menace the ministers of their lords of life and member, and which more is, gather themselves together in great routs, and agree by such confederacy, that every one shall aid to resist their lords by strong hand." Accordingly penalties were provided for such offenders, as well as for their "counsellors, procurers, maintainers and abettors." But the statute expresses a fear that worse may yet betide; and its forebodings were justified. Four years later the Peasants' Revolt broke out. It has long been known that its occasion was the imposition of a poll-tax: but it was not understood why this particular poll-tax should have called out so strong a movement. Professor Oman, in *The Great Revolt of* 1381, has shown convincingly that the bad grading of the tax was the spark which fired the

[1] Ashley, op. cit. II., 565 f. (4th ed.).

[2] Page, op. cit., p. 38.

[3] It was formerly supposed that the movement was favoured by the Wycliffites; but there are many objections to this view, as for example the sympathy of the villeins with the begging friars, and their hatred of John of Gaunt. Lingard (following Knighton) takes John Ball to have been a precursor of Wycliffe, and so does Pauli. The whole theory, however, has become impossible since the researches of Mr. Powell (*The Rising in East Anglia*, 1896, pp. 58 f.), Mr. G. M. Trevelyan (*The Age of Wycliffe*, 1899, pp. 198, 200) and André Réville with his editor, M. Petit-Dutaillis.

tinder already brought together by a variety of causes.[1] An unlucky foreign policy brought with it a social revolution, as twenty-three years earlier in France, and five hundred years later in Russia. We are even reminded to some extent of the causes of the Civil War of the seventeenth century.[2]

The very heart of the movement is manifested by the first three of the four petitions of the villeins to the king. The first was for the abolition of serfdom, the second for reduction of the rent of land to fourpence,[3] and the third for liberty of buying and selling in the markets. The request for a free pardon comes in the fourth and last place.[4] These petitions are in consonance with the facts that during the rising the villeins sought to destroy the documents which proved their status, to extort recognitions of their freedom, and to re-appropriate confiscated hand-mills, and that after the rising had been put down they fled to the towns, and, as the statute 9 Ric. II. (1385) witnesses, "feign divers suits against their lords, to the intent to make them free by the answer of their lord" whence the Act provides that the lord who answers such suits shall not be held thereby to recognise the freedom of his villein.

So far as any answer can be given to the question whether the Peasants' Revolt did effect the personal

[1] Op. cit. Oxford, 1906. See especially chapters II. and III.

[2] Dr. Cunningham (I., 401) believes that the Peasants' Revolt in England is favourably distinguished from the revolts on the Continent by the fact that the leaders "succeeded in restraining their followers from wild acts of cruelty." Lingard (IV., 199) describes it thus:—"In all places the insurgents regularly pursued the same course. They pillaged the manors of their lords, demolished the houses, and burnt the court rolls, cut off the head of every justice and lawyer and juror who fell into their hands." The lords were not treated in the same way, because "the nobility and gentry sought security within the fortifications of their castles" (Ibid. p. 204). Also "many local magnates with their retainers were absent on foreign service" (Powell, op. cit. p. 58). Pauli (IV., 526 f.) agrees with Lingard. The newest description, that of Prof. Oman, speaks of "clemency," but only on the part of the Government for the sake of filling its coffers.

[3] The average rent per acre in Forncett was 10d. Davenport, *The Decay of Villeinage*, in *Transactions of the English Historical Society, N.S.* Vol. XIV. p. iii.

[4] Parliament attempted to lay all blame on the shoulders of the Government. It declared that the people "had been incited to the rebellion by (1) Purveyors, (2) rapacity of the royal officers, (3) banditti, (4) repeated aids and taxes." Lingard, op. cit. p. 20.

emancipation of the villeins, it seems that, within limits, it must be in the affirmative. Many villeins fled, could not be traced, and returned no more; and so acquired their freedom. Others bought their manumission from their lord by a sum of money. But three hundred years later villeins still existed in England, though their number gradually grew smaller and smaller, until villeinage itself died out with the death of the last villein. To adduce only one or two of the most interesting proofs of this survival, the *Angliæ Notitia*, towards the end of the seventeenth century, states that a few instances were still to be found; not till the 1704 edition of the work is it claimed that villeinage was extinct.[1] At the beginning of the seventeenth century, in 1618, complaints against villeins still occupied the attention of courts of justice.[2] In the sixteenth century, when Fitzherbert made his complaints and Kett's rising took place, Elizabeth gave freedom to all villeins on royal demesne.[3]

Here we have the broad outlines; and Mr. Savine's researches[4] entirely confirm them, while filling them up by the addition of many new facts. Of these the following are the most important. First, many examples of the persistence of villeinage can be traced in the sixteenth century, and some even in the seventeenth; but as compared with the free population they were so few even in the sixteenth century, that "in this sense" villeinage "may be called antiquated." Secondly, the manorial lords made no difficulty in allowing such villeins as were fairly well off to buy their freedom: it was the richest and poorest who found it difficult to escape from their status; the latter because they could not afford the necessary money, and the former because the lords found their advantage in keeping them in a squeezable condition.

This much at least is certain, that villeinage was

[1] See eds. of 1684, p. 363: and 1704, p. 310.
[2] Hargrave, *An Argument in the Case of James Sommersett*, 1775, p. 33.
[3] Leadam, *The Last Case of Bondage in England*, in the *Law Quarterly Review*, 1893.
[4] *Bondmen under the Tudors*, in *Transactions of the English Historical Society*, 1903.

abolished neither by law, nor altogether by manumission, nor yet through decisions of the courts of justice, though these did in individual cases affect the freedom of persons appealing to them. It can therefore only be supposed that, as in the fourteenth century so again later, many villeins attained their liberty by disappearing into the towns, where trade or commerce needed their labour: and that when once the services with hand and team had been redeemed the lords allowed such of their rights as depended upon the status of villeinage to lapse, whenever they did not find them particularly profitable. And it is probable that the movement was favoured by those Christian ideas of the equality of all men before God which were so powerful in the sixteenth century, and by the ideas of liberty which guided the political revolution of the seventeenth.

To sum up: the Black Death was instrumental in bringing about an increase of free holdings and free men. But these economic and social consequences do not seem to have been uniformly the same in the different parts of the country. In some it was possible to manage without the villein services by giving up arable in favour of pasture-farming: or to reduce the need for them by adopting the system of convertible husbandry. But both these methods of farming were in a greater or less degree dependent on dampness of climate, and were therefore more suited for the west of England than for the east. Therefore the eastern counties (where moreover the flourishing state of industry probably increased the scarcity of agricultural labour) had the strongest interest in maintaining the status of villeinage. This seems to be proved by Mr. Powell's book, which shows how there the personal services were energetically enforced after 1381. These indications of different results in different parts of the country are confirmed when we find that in the north-west conditions very much like those of the southern counties in the thirteenth century endured right up to the end of the eighteenth. Of course at the latter date the tenants had their personal freedom: but conditions

belonging to the old natural economy may be traced in the leases of various counties, as e.g. Cheshire, Lancashire and Westmorland. Thus, in some parts of Cheshire, although "the ancient custom of paying rents in kind is now almost entirely abolished," the lord of the manor retained "the liberty of choosing a cheese at Xmas, in other instances he receives a goose or a couple of fowls." And though personal services had almost entirely given way to money payments, "in some cases, however, the landlord requires from his tenant a few days' team work," or, if no team was kept, "two days' harvest work as a labourer."[1] Of Cumberland we read that "by far the greatest part of this county is held under lords of manors by that species of vassalage which is called customary tenure, subject to the payment of fines and heriots, on alienation, death of the lord, or death of tenant, and the payment of certain annual rents, and performance of various services, called boondays, such as getting and leading the lord's peats, ploughing and harrowing his land, reaping his corn, haymaking, carrying letters, etc., whenever summoned by the lord."[2] The survey of Lancashire even distinguishes, besides freehold, (1) customary tenure, as in Cumberland and Cheshire, (2) copyhold and (3) old feudal tenure. Of the latter it says:—"About Coniston there are some remains of the old feudal tenure, as the lord has there still his boondays, and is strict in requiring his tenants to perform suit and service. The lord must keep a good bull and boar, and as he does very seldom do so, the tenants occasionally avail themselves of the circumstance, in order wholly to avoid such services."[3] Quite in consonance with all this is the fact that compulsory services existed in the Isle of Man right into the eighteenth century. "The Deemsters, or common law judges, the coroners, the serjeants, appear . . . . to have been in possession

[1] Holland, *Agriculture of Cheshire*, 1808, p. 103.

[2] Bailey and Culley, *Agriculture of Cumberland*, 1794, p. ii.

[3] Dickson and Stevenson, *Agriculture of Lancashire*, 1815, pp. 93 f. The report from Northumberland also mentions "customary tenure" in two or three manors; Bailey and Culley, *Agriculture of Northumberland*, 1815, p. 25.

of a privilege, of compelling to enter into their own service, for one year, a certain number of servants of both sexes, by a ceremony called yarding." And in Quayle's time it was still remembered how the "jury for servants" "possessed the power of compelling the service in agriculture of persons whom they considered as unemployed."[1]

But while the north-west had not entirely got rid of thirteenth-century conditions even in the eighteenth century, a very different development had taken place in other parts as early as the fifteenth century.

Sheep-farming had been common in England from very early times, first pursued, as it seems, by the monasteries.[2] At first the wool was sold; later, protective measures effected a certain working up of the material at home. After the great social changes of the fourteenth century, sheep-farming proved, as we have already noticed, to be very profitable to the lords in districts where the population was thin, or difficult to keep upon the land. It was a good use to which to put such lands as had fallen in to the lord either through the pestilences or by the flight of the villeins; and what had appeared as an evil now proved to be a benefit. Certain other lands, too, were very hard to work as arable in the later middle ages, namely those on the Scottish border, where the incessant wars and consequent ravages made the lesser risks of sheep-farming naturally preferable.[3] Again, the recurrent pestilences made corn-growing risky, as sometimes the consumer and sometimes the producer found to their cost.[4] Meantime wool had become a commodity in demand at

[1] Quayle, *Agriculture of the Isle of Man*, 1812, p. 30. Dr. Cunningham (I., 534) thinks that the imposition of these conditions of a natural economy is to be traced to contracts of comparatively modern times, but gives no evidence for this view. Professor Gonner (*Die Bauernbefreiung in Grossbritannien*, in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, 2nd ed., II., p. 391) says that services were rendered even in the nineteenth century, and refers to the *Report of the Select Committee on the Enfranchisement of Copyhold*, Qu. 1553, 1554.

[2] Cunningham, I., 198, 210, 423.

[3] Denton, p. 139. He does not prove that corn-growing was abandoned owing to the exhausted condition of the fields.

[4] For figures as to the diminution of the area sown see pp. 35, n. 22, and 40, n. 34.

home as well as abroad, and it was more durable and more easily transportable than corn, the latter point being one of considerable importance in view of the bad condition of the roads at this time.[1] But the chief factor in the extension of sheep-farming seems to have been that whereas the price of corn had risen as wages rose, and great discontent had resulted, a Proclamation in 1355 and a statute in 1360 attempted, by restricting export, to bring back the price to the point at which it had stood previous to the Black Death. At first the statute was badly administered: but as it came to be strictly observed rents fell so low that in 1371 the Commons demanded freedom of trade as their right by common law. The king granted their petition, but the Council would only allow of the export of corn under licence till renewed complaints from the agriculturists at last resulted in the grant of permission to export freely by the Act 17 Ric. II.[2] This again, however, was so effectively nullified by the arbitrary action of the Government in its lust for the fees paid for licences, that Parliament had recourse to the expedient of a sliding scale, so arranged that export was allowed without licence when prices reached a certain height (6s. 8d. per quarter for wheat, 3s. for barley). The period for which this scale was established expired in 1439, but owing to the complaints of the cultivators it was re-introduced in 1441–2 and made permanent in 1445. So far, importation of corn (from Prussia and Poland) had been left free. To complete the policy a new Act had to be introduced applying the sliding scale principle in this case also. Importation was thereby prohibited while the price of wheat was below six shillings, rye below four shillings, and barley below three shillings per quarter. The favourable conditions thus established were enjoyed by agriculturists for about thirty years. But during this period the power of the nobles was broken, and with the victory of Henry VII. the middle classes came into a position to make their

[1] Denton, pp. 171 f.

[2] See the illuminating yet brief description of English corn-law policy in Schanz, *Englische Handelspolitik gegen Ende des Mittelalters*, 1881, I., pp. 638, f.

interests dominant. And what they required was cheap provisions and cheap raw material. Hence a return to corn laws of the old hampering type.[1]

The consequences which might naturally have been anticipated followed. Pasture farming and convertible husbandry[2] were still further extended, that is to say even to districts where the pestilences and Statutes of Labourers had not created the difficulties already noticed. Manorial lords aimed at obtaining the use of larger areas, and therefore at driving out the population settled on their lands. Enclosures and evictions began, and in their wake came laws against enclosures and evictions, clearly showing the ignorance of political economy under which the times laboured. The date of the first Act of the kind is 1490. Then followed those of 1515 and 1516; in 1517 a Commission was appointed to enquire into the question; and the Proclamations of 1526, 1528 and 1529 lead on to the Acts of 1534 (restricting sheep-farming) and 1536 (for the maintenance of husbandry). In 1548 we have a new Proclamation, followed up by the Commission of 1549. Then came a further Proclamation in 1551 (Kett's Rebellion having intervened in 1549) and new Acts in 1552 and 1553. Next the Act of 1563, repealed by that of 1593, and replaced by another Act in 1601.[3] We need not minutely describe the later legislation; our concern is only to show in the mirror of the Statute book some picture of the ravages to which the agricultural population was submitted in the Tudor period.

Houses and even whole villages were pulled down. Teams and ploughs vanished from the fields, which were left to go down to grass; parts of the waste, and even

[1] "Agricultural interests were thus in various ways subordinated to industrial interests. In order to provide the manufacturers with cheap provisions and cheap materials . . . land-owners and cultivators had to make sacrifices." Schanz, op. cit. I., 479.

[2] Convertible husbandry had this advantage over the three-field system, that it could better respond to the demand, pasture or arable being extended as occasion required.

[3] Gay, *Zur Geschichte der Einhegungen in England*, 1902 (a Berlin Dissertation). For such points in the history of the English enclosures as cannot be treated in a history of the agricultural labourer the well-known works of Prof. Ashley, Dr. Cunningham and Mr. I. S. Leadam should be consulted. Cp. also Appendix I., *On the Meaning of the word "Enclosure."*

the common itself, were taken away from the villagers, and the areas so obtained hedged in and given over to sheep-farming. In other cases, in order to get rid of the necessity for preserving the commons, the ground in certain enclosed fields was divided into several parcels, which were made to serve by turns as arable and grass-land. There is no need to point out what numbers of unfortunate men must thus have lost their whole means of subsistence; and how many more must have been injured by the lessening or disappearance of the commons, or by the mere loss of their harvest earnings. The question arises, however, whether these changes were or were not possible without breach of law.

It is clear that the lords attained their ends and yet remained well within their legal rights when they gave notice to quit to the farmers of their demesnes and cleared lands, separated out their shares in the open fields, perhaps rounded them off by way of exchange, and bought out some of the neighbours: that is to say, "consolidated" their lands; or when they hedged in a part of the waste under the Statute of Merton or Westminster, or came to an agreement with the freeholders and copyholders as to the division of the commons. In these various ways masses of men could be driven off the land without any illegality; while it must be remembered that the transformation of villeins into farmers facilitated enclosure, a reverse to the medal which not improbably gave as much joy to the lords as it caused sorrow to their tenants.

It does not follow that no injustice was done. There can be no doubt that among the crowd of dispossessed men were some who had rights in law. But the movement is incomprehensible if it is assumed that it was simply illegal, that is to say that it was a mere series of actions contrary to law. The fact that the judges under the Tudors found themselves unable to cope with it by means of the existing law speaks clearly to the contrary. A new road had to be opened up if the evil results of the destruction of the peasantry were to be modified; a policy in defence of the peasantry had to be adopted. We

have already seen that statutes were passed with the object of keeping in being the small farmer and his team, and of putting limits to the development of the system of the large farm. As Bacon has it in his *History of the Reign of Henry VII.*, the problem which faced that monarch was to effect a compromise between reasons of State and the progress of agriculture, which last in itself he had no desire to oppose. And neither he nor any other man of this and the following period who knew agricultural conditions could avoid the conviction that separation and consolidation meant technical progress.[1] Fitzherbert, Tusser and John Hales all admit it. Only the process could not be allowed to depopulate the land.

Everything goes to show that it was the turning out of farmers at which the men of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were chiefly concerned. "Firmæ et tenementa ad Terminum Vitae, Annorum et ad Voluntatem Domini (in quibus Coloni complures habitabant) versa sunt in Dominicum," says Bacon.[2] The point was to protect some at least of these people by the creation of a new legal principle, since they had no existing claim to protection as a matter of personal right (*privatrechtlich*). But copyholders too fell victims to the enclosures, though it would appear that they had legal rights. Here, however, a distinction must be drawn. There were hereditary and non-hereditary copyholds. A lord withholding succession from the son of a copyholder of the latter class broke no law. The question of rights can only be raised in the case of hereditary copyholds. These again fell into two classes, according as the fine due on succession was fixed or unfixed. Where it was unfixed the lord could take

[1] The cultivator lost much time when his land, instead of lying together in the neighbourhood of his house, was scattered and often far from the village. He had to follow the same system of cultivation as his neighbours, and progress was dependent on common consent. The strips being unfenced, disputes often arose between neighbours. Only if all the cultivators could come to an understanding could extensive improvements be undertaken. Infectious diseases were more liable to spread among the stock on the commons than in private fields, and improvement of breeds was difficult. These reasons are sufficient to show why enclosures were calculated to increase production: and others might be added.

[2] *Historia Regnir, Henrici Septimi*, Lugd. Batav., 1647, p. 128.

advantage of his position to demand an exorbitant fine, and so induce the copyholder to remain on at the old rent indeed, but as a farmer. Then, when once his copyhold had been transformed into leasehold, he could of course be turned out when his lease came to an end. Many farmers, however, were got rid of even before this happened; for right into the sixteenth century their legal position remained very uncertain, in spite of the writ *quare ejecit infra terminum.*[1]

Such were (so to say) the small skirmishes of the war between lords and copyholders; but there were pitched battles, too, though not in connection with the enclosures. A later and quite independent event, namely the secularisation of monastery lands, brought about a deterioration in the tenant's position. The new owners, as the *Supplication of the Poor Commons* recounts, gave copyholders no choice but to leave their holdings or to become leaseholders, on the ground that their rights had been extinguished with the rights of the church.[2] Since it is calculated that monasteries had held one-fifth of the lands of the kingdom,[3] the number of persons affected must have been very large. Another attack on a large scale is reported from the Isle of Man in the seventeenth century. The Earl of Derby tried to convert "customary tenure descendible from ancestor to heir," then the usual form of tenancy on the island, into mere lease-holding: and the struggle between him and the islanders lasted sixty years, peace being finally concluded on the basis that there should be no change in the rights of the tenants, but that the yearly dues should be doubled, and a fixed payment made on the entry of a new tenant, which had not previously been the custom.[4]

We are wandering, however, from the enclosures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and two points in connection with them still remain to be noticed. In the first

[1] Cp. the very clear account in Digby, *History of the Law of Real Property*, fifth ed. 1897, pp. 176 f. and 243 f.

[2] Op. cit p. 80.

[3] So Gneist, *Englische Verfassungsgeschichte*, 1882, p. 488.

[4] Quayle, op. cit. p. 17. Cp. also for similar complaints *Greevous Grones for the Poore*, 1621.

place, their motive is often sought in an alleged considerable rise in the price of wool, a view with which I am unable to agree, for the reason that no evidence of the rise in question is brought. It is true that from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards wool-prices share in the general revolution in prices: but by that time very many enclosures and evictions had already taken place. As to the earlier period the facts are uncertain. The figures collected by Rogers[1] show the precise opposite to a rise, but they cannot be taken as proof, since Nasse has shown in his well-known work[2] that they are not altogether trustworthy. In the *Drei Volkswirtschaftlichen Denkschriften*, edited by Pauli, it is stated that the Staplers had driven up prices; but the document in question was not written till 1556.[3] And it should be remembered that, as we have already shown, the economic policy of the Tudors aimed among other things at bringing down the price of wool, partly in the hope of counteracting the current social and political development.[4]

The second question which remains is why the numerous laws and proclamations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were ineffective.[5] The answer is that the necessary administrative machinery was wanting. Some Continental monarchies, founded on new political principles, supported as they were by standing armies and a paid bureaucracy entirely dependent on the monarch, might perhaps have been able to enforce the laws against enclosure; but in the England of aristocratic self-government, the officials who should have carried them into execution were the very persons interested in their remaining a dead letter. Henry VII. and Henry VIII., who might have ventured to abolish the Justice of the Peace or put limits to his power, and to create a new organ

[1] *Agriculture and Prices*, IV., 328.
[2] Nasse, *On the Agricultural Community of the Middle Ages*. (English trans.) p. 89.
[3] Pauli, op. cit. p. 22.
[4] Schanz, op. cit. p. 642.
[5] "We have good statutes made for the commonwealth, as touching commons, enclosures—many meetings and sessions, but in the end of the matter there cometh nothing forth." Latimer, *Works*, (ed. Watkins) I., 93.

of administration, left it undone; and later monarchs were too weak to do it.

Thus the enclosures went their way with little hindrance, and almost always resulted in an increase in the number of free proletarians: that is to say of men possessing nothing but their labour-power.[1] Some of the expropriated cultivators remained upon the land as labourers, and some found employment in the towns, but the proletarianisation went on at such a rate (and it should be remembered that the bands of retainers were also broken up at this time) that many could find no work at all, and the problem of pauperism becomes a serious one for the English nation from this time forward.[2] When the mediæval institutions for the care of the poor were for the most part abolished under Henry VIII., it became necessary for the State to charge itself with their management. The Statute of Queen Elizabeth of the year 1601, following on a similar but ineffective provision of 1597–8, laid the task, as everyone knows, upon the parish.[3]

In the meantime agricultural enterprise was left almost entirely to men of the peasant class, since the great landlords had given up personal farming and administration, and let out their estates. Those who took them came for the most part from the class of peasant freeholders[4] or yeomen.[5] Alongside of these worked small farmers

[1] In many cases, of course, where commons had simply been enclosed in whole or in part, the small farmers or cottiers had not disappeared. But they suffered by the decrease of pasture for their cattle. And in villages which had been entirely enclosed such cottiers as remained lost their gleanings on the stubble-fields, and often too their harvest earnings or almost all of them.

[2] Miss E. M. Leonard emphasises the point that already crises in the clothing trade were partly accountable for the problem of pauperism. *English Poor Relief*, 1900, p. 16.

[3] Leonard, op. cit. p. 133. And cp. the account in Ashley's *Economic History*, Vol. II., chap. V.

[4] Cp. Sir Thomas Smith, *The Common-Wealth of England*, 1589, chap. I., 20.

[5] *Yeomen* originally meant only such freeholders as had an income of forty shillings from hereditary property. But as the freeholders began to farm the lands of the gentry, and in this way very often attained wealth, so that their sons became gentlemen, the conception was gradually extended so as to include tenant farmers and gentlemen farmers. Some writers even reckoned well-to-do copyholders among the yeomen. So Bacon, for example, wrote that "Yeomanry" or "middle people" "are of a condition between Gentlemen and Cottagers" (*Historie of the Raigne of*

(where they had not been driven out) and copyholders, i.e. the successors of the villeins, now for the most part personally free, and paying a money rent.[1]

These facts must have had a far-reaching influence on the social position of the labourer, for the conditions which would hold in the economy of the yeomen, copyholders and farmers, would be very different from those which had held on the home farm. The new cultivators of course themselves boarded and fed those of their children who worked with them: and if they took servants, these naturally took their place with the children. To provide them with house and land was out of the power of most, if not all. It is true that farmers of demesne land seem to have had the right to sublet small portions of it,[2] but the evidence adduced by Professor Vinogradoff does not seem to prove that the sub-tenants were labourers.

The substitution of leasing for manorial administration must have made predominant that type of organisation of labour which ruled on the farms of peasant employers. The wages assessments ordinarily assume that the servant receives "meat and drink": for harvest labourers they provide two rates of pay, according as they receive board or not, and even the ordinary day-labourer may, if he or his employer wishes, be boarded in the farmhouse.

It is a most important fact that in this period the employment of day-labour increased. In the Statute of Labourers, servants are mentioned in the first place (as carters, ploughmen, shepherds, swineherds, milkmaids and so on), and day labourers only in the second, and then chiefly as harvesters—mowers, haymakers, reapers and threshers. The Statutes of 1444 and 1495 indicate similar economic conditions, the latter dealing first with the annual wages of farm-servants, and then with day-wages,

King Henry the Seventh, 1622, p. 74). Sir Thomas Smith, on the other hand, excludes copyholders from the yeoman class. As regards the etymology of the word philologists say that the syllable "yeo" is connected with the German word *Gau* (county, district), and point to the Frisian word *Yaman*.

[1] For the meaning of Copyhold cp. Digby, op. cit. pp. 288 f. The legal conception was determined when the royal courts gave the villein a right of action against his lord.

[2] Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*, p. 331.

but almost exclusively in connection with industrial employments, harvesters appearing merely incidentally, added on at the end of a long list. Contrast with this the later preoccupation with day-wages, as shown by the Wages Assessments of the J.P.s, for example in the Rutlandshire Assessment of 1563, and the East Riding Assessment of 1593, both of which treat first indeed of "Servants and Artificers of Husbandry" and then of "Harvest Work," but then, besides, of Labourers of Husbandry."

Obviously we have to look for the causes of this change in the organisation of labour to the events of the sixteenth century; and I venture the following conjecture.

On the beginning of the dissolution of the manorial economy two important movements followed. First, with with the limitation of feudalism and the secularisation of the monastery lands, the great mediæval domestic organisations of consumption were enfeebled or disappeared. Hence many of the domestic servants formerly retained became superfluous. Secondly, as the enclosures proceeded, numbers of little farmers, cottiers, and handicraftsmen were swept away. Now farm-servants had probably been drawn for the most part from the families of these men; and hence agricultural employers may have found it difficult to keep up the old system of depending mainly on servants' labour.[1] Hence the employment of day-labourers. The only roof which could be provided for them would be a cottage, or a tenement in some larger house. Here we come upon the well-known Statute of Elizabeth (1589) ordering that no more than one family shall dwell in any one house, and that four acres of land

[1] This hypothesis rests on a comparison of the conditions of enclosure in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. As they agree in so many points, it is likely that they agreed also in this. Now in the latter period there was frequent complaint that good servants were hard to find, and Mavor explains it by saying that the best servants had been the sons and daughters of small farmers: but this "valuable order of men" were "generally reduced and almost annihilated in some places." *Agriculture of Berkshire*, 1808, p. 416. And Arthur Young bears witness to the same fact:—"Small capitals, the offspring and the parents of industry and frugality, can no more find employment from the want of small occupations. This thins a fruitful nursery of well-principled servants." *Annals*, XXXVI., p. 116.

shall be attached to every cottage. If the early Tudors had sought to maintain the team-owning peasant-holder, Elizabeth endeavoured to guard against the development of a proletarian class of day-labourers. And her efforts to establish on the land a class of cultivating cottiers appear to have met with more success than her predecessors' campaign against enclosure in the interests of the small independent agriculturist.

For the rest, it cannot be said that the Elizabethan legislation in regard to agricultural labourers is marked by any great humanity. The Act of 1562, which sums up the labour legislation whose rise and development we have already traced, provides that any person between the ages of ten and eighteen may become an apprentice in husbandry, and when so bound must serve till the age of twenty-one or twenty-four. The wages of servants and day-labourers are to be assessed by the justices of the peace, with the assistance of the sheriff "if he conveniently may": and it is made punishable either to give or to take higher wages. No labourer is to leave the place of his abode without a certificate from the authorities, which he must show whenever he attempts to obtain work. Contracts between servant and employer are to be for one year; and employers dismissing servants, or servants leaving their masters, within that period, are punishable, unless they can show just cause. Persons might be compelled to serve in husbandry under certain conditions; and artificers might to compelled to assist during hay- and corn-harvest, while during harvest, if labourers could not find employment in their own neighbourhood, they were allowed to seek it elsewhere.

Thus by the beginning of the seventeenth century free labour had come to be the predominant factor in the organisation of labour on the land: but the legislature still put its freedom of movement under considerable limitations. The labouring class falls into two sections, namely servants on the one hand, and day-labourers on the other: and as compared with the preceding period there was a change in the numerical proportion of servants to

labourers. The labourers were not, however, propertyless. Where the villages were yet untouched by enclosure they still held house, garden, stock and rights of common, and in many cases land also. Where enclosure had occurred it is true that a proletarian class had appeared; but even they had had their connection with the land re-established by the Act of 1589.

As this free labouring class formed, the manor broke up. Manorial lords gave up their economic activity and became mere rent-receivers. Yeomen, copyholders and farmers, with their servants and day-labourers, cultivated the land and paid the customary dues. And from the fourteenth century onwards, the legislature invaded the manorial boundaries, and withdrew the tenants from the authority of the lord and his courts, till the latter dwindled and gradually disappeared. A competent writer says that "The customary court ceased to be held with the decay of villeinage. . . . The court leet fell into disuse with the beginning of the eighteenth century." The court baron, according to our author, could still be held, but practically never was held.[1] The same gradual disappearance, however, awaited the wages assessments of the justices of the peace, though they dragged on into the eighteenth century.

That the abolition of these various institutions was gradual, and extended over long periods of time, instead of happening at one stroke, follows from the fact that the rise of modern England was not for the most part the work of law. This may be attributed partly to the character of the English State, but partly also, probably, to the way in which the rapidity of economic development varied in different parts of the country.

Among the few legal measures which did sweep away once and for all a centuries-old development was the abolition of military tenures. This meant the legal death of feudalism. But it will fall to be dealt with in our next

[1] Cp. the articles *Manor* and *Freehold* in Palgrave's *Dictionary of Political Economy*. The customary court, however, continued to be used for the transfer of copyholds.

section, not in this, as it did not occur till within our next period.

IV.—The Transition Period.

After what has been said in the preceding section, it is easy to define the beginning of the period which may be called transitional; it must be taken to begin with the year of the death of Queen Elizabeth. It is not so easy to say precisely when it ended. For the end came with the development of the three great characteristics of the eighteenth century, namely the enclosures, the system of the large farm, and the revolution in prices; and these did not all appear at once, nor everywhere at the same time. We are therefore reduced to taking an arbitrary date somewhere about the beginning of the reign of George III., or the outbreak of the American Revolution.

The period so defined we call transitional, because in it were implanted the germs of the great changes which turned a predominantly free and property-owning class into one entirely free, but for the most part propertyless.

In order to understand these changes fully, we must return for a moment to the period we have just left. It is well known that the old aristocracy, already weakened by the Wars of the Roses, was still further depressed, as regarded both its economic and its social position, by the confiscations of Henry VII., and the attempts made to dissolve the family settlements. Not to speak of the fictitious process of common recovery, the abolition of fines made it easier for them to sell their estates; and the great sixteenth-century revolution in prices (the same that in the seventeenth proved so dangerous to the two first Stuarts), forced many of them to make use of this liberty. For the rise in prices increased their expenses, while it was difficult, if not impossible, for them to raise their incomes in proportion. This probably explains many apparently arbitrary and grasping acts of the landlords in the sixteenth, as of James and Charles in the seventeenth century.[1] Commutation rents, it should be borne in mind,

[1] The only writer, so far as I know, who has given due weight to these difficulties is Hallam. See his *Constitutional History*.

were fixed, and therefore all that landlords could do by way of increasing their incomes was to enhance fines and leasehold rents. The knight in John Hales' celebrated *Compendious or Brief Examination* complains that "In all my life I looke not that the thyrde part of my lande shall come to my disposition that I may enhance the rent of the same, but it shalbe in men's holding, either by leases, or by copy graunted before my time. . . . . We cannot rayse all our wares as you may yours." Moreover, the nobles were further impoverished by the luxurious, spendthrift life of the court of Henry VIII. As Harrington puts it in his *Oceana*, "their revenues, never to have been exhausted by beef or mutton, were found narrow, whence followed racking of rents, and at length sale of lands." This continued under James I., as we learn from the *Itinerary* of Fynes Morison, published in 1617. Yet more land was brought upon the market by the confiscations consequent on the Civil War; and even as late as 1692 the author of the *Angliæ Notitia* writes wrathfully:— "Estates are oftener spent and sold than in any other country"; so that not merely "cooks, vintners, innkeepers," but even "taylors, dancing-masters and such trifling fellows arrive to that riches and pride, as to ride in their coaches, keep their summer houses, to be served in plate, etc., an insolence insupportable in other well-govern'd nations."

Thus from the second half of the fifteenth century up to say 1660 great changes were taking place in the ownership of land; and they were favourable to the middle and lower classes. Sir Thomas Smith, writing towards the end of the sixteenth century, says that it was yeomen who bought the lands of "unthrifty gentlemen." Morison says that the "buyers (excepting lawyers) are for the most part citizens and vulgar men"; and with this the passage just quoted from the *Angliæ Notitia* may be compared.

But while under a strong monarchy the landowning class was thus becoming democratised, social forces were at work which were to render it once again of an aristo-

cratic complexion, and that under a weak monarchy. It is true that even Henry VIII., in so far as he enriched his favourites with confiscated estates, had created a new and wealthy aristocracy, dependent indeed on himself, and therefore not inclined to rebellion like the great lords of the middle ages, but otherwise representing the old interests in more modern and capitalist form. The means which that king applied to the purpose, however, were from the nature of the case not always available, and could not greatly influence the course of events; and it is not till the reign of Charles II. that we reach the real turning-point in the history of the English aristocracy.

Four causes combined to raise the land-owning class to considerable wealth in the two hundred years which followed. First, the abolition of military tenures, to which we have already referred; secondly, the reappearance of the family settlement, in the form given to it by Orlando Bridgeman; thirdly, the continually increasing absorption of commercial wealth by the upper classes; and lastly the changes in the national agricultural policy.

The abolition of military tenures freed landlords from the feudal burdens which since the erection of the Court of Wards and Liveries by Henry VIII. had been profitable to the Crown, but intolerable to the gentry. Two statesmen of the seventeenth century, Clarendon and Bulstrode Whitelocke, have left it on record how abhorrent this institution was to the upper classes. It was only to "the wisest fool in Christendom" that it occurred that logically this abolition ought to carry with it the abolition of all feudal dues, and therefore of those incumbent on freeholders and copyholders, while the loss of income to the Crown ought to be compensated by a general tax.[1] The landlords, at all events, were freed from their burdens, and their social power was still further increased by

[1] Efforts in the direction of the abolition of military tenures had been made as early as the reign of James I.; in 1645 a resolution in favour of abolition passed both Houses of Parliament; and in 1656 by Cromwell's consent such tenures were abolished by law. The statute was of course nullified by the Restoration, but was re-enacted under Charles II. (12 C. II. c. 24).

the family settlements. About the same time they proceeded to increase their wealth by putting their sons into trade and commerce. In 1617, Morison had written :— "The Gentlemen disdain trafficke, thinking it to abase Gentry ; but in Italy, with graver counsell, the very princes disdain not to be Merchants by the great, and hardly leave the retailing commodity to men of inferior sort."[1] But the English came to change their views. In the 1669 edition of the *Angliæ Notitia*, the author writes :—"In England, as well as in Italy, to become a Merchant of foreign commerce, without serving any apprentisage, has been allowed as no disparagement to a gentleman born, especially to a younger brother." On the other hand it was uncertain whether a gentleman born might also keep a shop. In the same edition it is said that till a short time since, nobility and gentry had "judged it a stain and a diminution to the honour and dignity of their families, to seek the children's support in shopkeeping . . . . . heralds are of opinion that a gentleman thereby loses his gentility for ever, till he can otherwise recover it ; and yet to the shame of our nation we have seen of late not only the sons of baronets, knights and gentlemen sitting in shops, but also an Earl of this kingdom subjecting his son to an apprentisage and trade."[2] About half a century later it is said that "Guillim is of opinion that, if a gentleman be bound an apprentice to a merchant, or other trade, he has not thereby lost his degree of nobility. And therefore (*sic !*) the gentry and nobility of England have not disdained so to dispose of their younger children."[3]

English wealth increased so fast after the Restoration, through trade and industry, and also through the transference to England of Dutch[4] and Jewish[5] capital, that

[1] Fynes Morison, *Itinerary*, III., 149.
[2] Op. cit. pp. 493, 479.
[3] Ibid. ed. 1716, p. 158.
[4] As on the decay of Antwerp capital streamed to Amsterdam, so on the decay of Amsterdam it streamed to London. Three men of Dutch origin are honourably known in the literary history of political economy, namely, Mandeville, Decker and Vanderlint.
[5] As late as 1684 the *Angliæ Notitia* says of the Jews, who had first been

even as early as 1704 the *Angliæ Notitia* contains the proposition that "Next to the purity of our religion we are the most considerable of any nation of the world for the vastness and extensiveness of our trade."[1] And upon this the upper classes began to convey some part of these new riches to their own coffers by means of matrimonial alliances.[2] Now as the wealth of the gentry was thus considerably increased, and as men newly enriched desired to gain permanence for their families and social consideration for themselves by becoming landowners, while family settlements artificially limited the supply of land, it is evident that middling and small properties were in great danger of being swallowed up. And as a matter of fact we shall see in our next chapter that these properties, which had been formed for the most part in the previous four hundred years, did practically disappear again from English soil in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Coming now to the fourth factor in the changes, viz. to the alteration in agricultural policy, it will be remembered that since the fifteenth century English agriculture had been sacrificed to the interests of industry. Its most important article of export was wool, and the price of wool had been rising ever since about 1540. In consequence, an Act was passed in 1660 prohibiting the export of home-grown wool in the interests of the English clothing trade, which had, as is well known, made great developments since the end of the middle ages, not least as a result of the enclosures, which had put the necessary hands at the disposal of employers, and of pasture farming, which produced the raw material. The Act of 1660 was in the main

re-admitted to the kingdom by Cromwell, that they were neither "considerable . . . for number, making not above 30 or 40 families, nor for their wealth and abilities, being for the most part poor and ignorant" (p. 35). By 1704 they had "a sumptuous synagogue near Duke's Place" (p. 62). In 1735 it is added in parenthesis—"The Jews are now very numerous and immensely rich; many of the Portuguese Jews having escaped hither of later years from the Inquisition, which is very severe upon them in Portugal" (p. 38).

[1] P. 63.

[2] Cp. Toynbee, *Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. 1887, p. 63. He mentions the statement of Sir William Temple, that it was between 1675 and 1700 that "the first noble families married into the City."

simply a revival of an older Statute of 1647 :[1] but it was the first real attempt at a strict enforcement of the policy. The clothing trade, however, seems to have been unable to take up the whole supply of English wool, in spite of the assistance of clandestine exportation ; for we get at once the series of Acts (1666, 1678, and 1680) for burying the dead in woollen. No one has yet satisfactorily elucidated the economic background of this policy. But it seems most probable that the marked increase of wool prices was a consequence of the importation of American silver, and that this put difficulties in the way of the extension of the English clothing trade. It does not seem probable that the rise in price was caused by Continental demand, since the Netherlands, which had been the chief customer for English wool, had suffered an economic setback by the Spanish policy under Alva, and even the rise of the Dutch woollen manufacture cannot have entirely compensated for this loss.[2]

However, the prohibition of export aimed at effecting a fall of price, to the benefit both of manufacturers and merchants.[3] Such a measure did in justice demand that some compensation should be made to the landed interest. But a more important political move was the changed relations between the Crown and the great landowners, which made itself felt under Charles II., and still more under William III. and his successors. Distrusted though they had been by the two first Tudors, the nobles and gentlemen had with few exceptions stood true to Charles I. in the hour of danger, while the classes which Tudor policy had favoured so far as aristocratic self-

[1] I mention the Act of 1647 because Smith, *Memoirs of Wool*, lays the chief emphasis on it. Earlier prohibitions are enumerated in Cunningham, op. cit., Pringsheim, *Beiträge zur Wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungsgeschichte der vereinigten Niederlander*, 1890 (p. 38), and Lohmann, *Die staatliche Regelung der englischen Wollindustrie*, 1900.

[2] Pringsheim, op. cit. pp. 29 f.

[3] According to Thorold Rogers' calculations the price of wool per ton between 1401 and 1540 was 6s. 2½d. *Agriculture and Prices*, IV. 328. If however we follow him in taking as a starting point the average for the years 1260–1400, owing to the scarcity of figures for the later period (op. cit. I., 395) the rise will be as follows :—

1401–1540 ..	8s. 7d.	1583–1592 ..	21s. 6½d.	op. cit.
1541–1582 ..	17s. 4d. loc. cit.	1593–1601 ..	25s. 6¾d.	V. 408.

government allowed had for the most part turned against the king, and delivered him over to the executioner. According to the *Angliæ Notitia*, the revolutionary elements were "some of the worst natured and worse nurtur'd gentry, divers of the inferior clergy, most of the townsmen, and very many of the peasantry."[1] Charles II.'s agricultural policy naturally considered those loyal gentry, who had made such great sacrifices during the Civil War, and whose losses he had not been able altogether to make good. When William III. came to the throne the political motive was sharply altered, but the result was the same. Instead of a legitimate monarch rewarding the landowning aristocracy for their loyalty, and endeavouring by material means to knit still more strongly the ideal bond between himself and them, we have an illegitimate monarch who had to seek to gain the favour of a class whose consent he needed to the imposition of a land tax.

Thus throughout the next generation the production of meat and crops received point after point of legislative encouragement, in the form of alterations of corn-law policy. An old Act of 1551, passed at a time when a rising, and probably often parasitic, class of middlemen and traders was causing much disquietude, both moral and economic,[2] had sought to restrict the internal trade in corn, and so far as possible to maintain the old conditions under which the consumer bought direct from the producer. But in the next century it gradually came to be recognised that this was bad even for production. Accordingly the restrictions were modified in 1663. In 1670 Parliament laid a duty upon the importation of corn when the price was not above a certain limit; and in 1689 the export of corn was encouraged by the grant of a bounty, while everyone knows the extent to which cattle-farming

[1] *Angliæ Notitia*, ed. 1684, p. 16.

[2] "Landlords become graziers, burgesses regraters, some farmers buy up corn and sell it at a higher price . . . aldermen are become colliers, both woodmongers and makers of coal . . . there cannot a poor body buy a sack of coals, but it must come through their hands." *The Sermons of Hugh Latimer*, ed. Watkins, 1824, I., 255.

received similar favours from the legislature. Faber has shown[1] that some of these Acts were first passed under the Commonwealth, and, becoming void by the Restoration, were re-enacted under Charles II. But it remains true that in the period from 1660 to 1690 English agriculture received a strong impulse from the Government to turn from wool-growing to other branches of cattle-farming, and to the production of corn.

These measures made the national agricultural policy part of that strong general policy of protection for English industry which was begun in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and continued in the eighteenth. As this protective policy restricted or prohibited commercial intercourse with Continental nations, it naturally led England to seek to gain colonial markets for her manufactures, and so to keep her colonies in the stage of producers of raw materials. Then, when the overstraining of this policy had resulted in the loss of the United States and in ruinous wars, public opinion was gradually prepared to receive the free trade theories of Vanderlint, Hume, Tucker, and Adam Smith. But even so the kernel of the policy remained the same. Half a century later it was hoped that by mean of free trade the Continental nations could be kept in the agricultural stage of development, and so take off the products of English industries: an idea which could never have been entertained if the laws of economic development and the actual state of the facts had been better known, or even if Hamilton and List had been read. As a natural consequence agriculture was once again sacrificed to the interests of industry. A free trade policy having proved inadequate to hinder other nations from industrial development, however, the Chamberlain policy is to return to the ideals of the eighteenth century, with such changes of course as are necessitated by the difference of period. But our present concern is with the consequences of the Stuart-Orange agricultural policy.

The artificial impulse which protective duties and boun-

[1] Faber, *Sie Entstehung des Agrarschutzes in England*, 1888, p. 106.

ties on export gradually gave to agriculture was sufficient to increase the production of corn, and to keep prices steady, but not sufficient permanently to raise them. From 1693 to 1714 the price of wheat, according to Tooke, stood on an average at 45s. 8d., and from 1715 to 1765 at 34s. 11d. Adam Smith, in Book IV. of the *Wealth of Nations*, where he gives the history of the corn laws, asserts that it was not the protective duties and bounties, but the mitigation of the restrictions on internal trade, which produced these desirable results. In making this assertion he was opposed to the general opinion of his time, but consistent with his own theory of the national value of the three chief branches of trade, and with his general economic principles. He brings no such evidence as would be demanded by inductive economics, but proceeds according to the deductive methods usual with the older economists. In my judgment Anderson, of whom we shall have to speak presently, better understood the real connection of events.

Cattle-farming throve as well as agriculture. As early as the reign of Charles II. a method of cultivation was announced (if rather shyly) by which turnips and clover were introduced into the system of rotation:[1] but the writers on agriculture were before their time. In the eighteenth century came a new generation of experimentalists and writers. Several of them were ruined by their reforming zeal, but the cultivation of turnips and clover made progress, though but slowly: manuring and drainage became subjects of serious study: and as the

[1] Hartlib received "several letters from English agriculturists detailing the success with which they had carried out the cultivation of clover, and the profits which they had procured from their venture." Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, V. 60. "England . . . doeth so abound in Victuals as that it maketh Laws against the Importation of Cattle, Flesh and Fish from abroad; and . . . the draining of Fens, improving of Forests, inclosing of Commons, Sowing of St. Foyne and Clover-grass (are) grumbled against by Landlords, as the Way to depress the Price of Victuals." Sir W. Petty, *Several Essays in Political Arithmetick*, 4th ed. 1755, p. 150. "By reason of the draining of Fens, improving of Forests and Commons, making of healthy and barren Grounds to bear Saint-foyne and Clover-grass . . . it is manifest, that the land in its present Condition is able to bear more Provision and Commodities, than it was forty years ago." Ibid. p. 169. Worlidge mentions "Turnip . . . cultivation . . . in some parts of England." Rogers, op. cit. V. 63.

matured result of all this effort, empirically rather than scientifically directed, appeared the Norfolk rotation of crops and rational methods of sheep-breeding. Lord Townshend, the grower of turnips, and Bakewell, the breeder of fat sheep, are the representative men of the period. The movement thus begun before the accession of George III. reached its highest point during his reign, and in spite of many difficulties gradually and steadily extended itself.

The progress of agriculture presupposes an improvement in the means of transport. In the eighteenth century rivers were made navigable, canals were dug, and the difficult art of road-making was gradually acquired. An echo of the sentiments of the times is heard in the estimate by Richardson (the later editor of Defoe's *Tour*) of the making of turnpike roads:—"This is a work of so much general good that certainly no public edifice, almshouse, hospital or nobleman's palace can be of equal value to the country with this, nor at the same time more an honour and ornament to it."[1] This extravagant language becomes comprehensible when we find in eighteenth century literature such descriptions of the conditions of the roads as might seem incredible in view of the high stage of economic civilisation then attained. In not a few districts of the west and south-west everything had to be carried on horseback; in one Cardiganshire village only two waggons existed in 1730, transport being for the most part by means of sledges; in 1814 the number of waggons in the same place had increased to fifty-three. In the south-west the roads were often nothing but the beds of dried-up streams.[2]

The improvement of the roads was a consequence of increased demand for commodities. The chief demand for agricultural products came from London, and to a lesser degree from the other great commercial and industrial towns, and also from watering-places such as Bath. The

[1] III. 249.

[2] Only two works need be adduced here: Marshall, *Rural Economy of the West of England*, and Lloyd and Turnor's *Agriculture of Cardiganshire*.

industrial population, however, did not create a demand corresponding to their numbers throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century, for the reason that several industries were still in the domestic stage, and were carried on in conjunction with husbandry; while spinning was in many parts of the country merely a by-employment of agriculturists, and there is much evidence to show that miners and manufacturers possessed small holdings which they worked in their spare time, or had worked for them.

The population of London was so great even in the seventeenth century that Graunt's *Natural and Political Observations*, published in 1662, says that "the Metropolis of England is perhaps a Head too big for the Body, and possibly too strong, that this Head grows three times so fast as the Body unto which it belongs." About the same date Petty, anticipating its future growth, prophesied in his *Treatise on Taxes and Contributions* that it would grow out towards the fresh west wind, and away from "the fumes, steams, and stinks of the easterly pile which, where sea coal is burnt, is a great matter." A hundred years later Arbuthnot explained its increase thus:—"The conveniency of trade indeed brings thither the most considerable part; the necessary calling together of the Legislature brings another part; and the attachment to courts and other amusements brings the third. These necessarily carry with them a suite of attendants."[1] He forgets, however, to count in the creditors of the State, of whom Hume says in his celebrated *Essay* that they crowded to the capital.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century perhaps a tenth part of the whole population of England was living in London. And if it be considered that the inhabitants of the capital probably consumed more in proportion than the rest of the population, and in particular created a specially strong demand for animal products[2] it will be understood why in the *Agricultural*

[1] *An Inquiry into the connection between the present high price of provisions and the size of farms*, 1733, p. 48.

[2] In the *First Report of the Select Committee on Waste Lands*, 1795,

Surveys, published by the Board of Agriculture from 1793 onwards, neighbourhood to the capital is the chief point considered, and why Arthur Young, in his *Farmer's Letters*, estimates that one-sixth of the population live in London, an estimate in which Smollett agrees.[1]

The importance of the London market was felt, according to the *Agricultural Surveys*, in most parts of England, but commercial towns like Bristol with its ninety or a hundred thousand inhabitants, and the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire, also laid a good number of counties under contribution. Bristol and Bath drew a considerable part of their wheat, malt and dairy-produce from Wiltshire. Westmoreland, Durham, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland all contributed to supply Lancashire with beef and mutton. Even eggs were sent great distances, as from Kendal and Penrith. In Leicestershire prices were ruled by the London and Birmingham markets. From Worcestershire many cattle were sent to London and the industrial districts of Staffordshire and Warwickshire: and the same county supplied much fruit, cider, perry and hops. From Somersetshire fat oxen went to Bristol, as well as to London, though the latter journey took nine days. Cheshire, even then, sent its cheese great distances, and Shropshire sent its butter impartially to a variety of manufacturing districts, while Lincoln was equally

the cattle and sheep going to Smithfield market are said to have been as follows:—

1732	..	76,210 cattle and	514,700 sheep.
1793	..	116,488 ,, ,,	729,810 ,,
1794	..	109,064 ,, ,,	717,990 ,,

But the weights of the slaughtered animals had risen vastly:—

	1710	1795
Beeves	370 lbs.	800 lbs.
Calves	50 lbs.	148 lbs.
Sheep	28 lbs.	80 lbs.
Lambs	18 lbs.	50 lbs.

[1] "The Capital is become an overgrown monster, which, like a dropsical head, will in time leave the body and extremities without nourishment and support . . . one-sixth part of the natives of this whole extensive kingdom is crowded within the bills of mortality." *Humphry Clinker*, p. 98 of the Tauchnitz ed.

impartial in its choice of markets for its corn, potatoes, timber, hemp and flax. The East Riding sent most of its horses and pigs, and a good part of its bacon and butter, to London, while its cattle, both lean and fatted, went to the industrial West Riding. England took cattle, sheep, pigs and horses from North Wales. The wheat of Northamptonshire was sold to the millers of Leicester, Nottingham and Warwick. Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex and Bedfordshire naturally produced almost exclusively for the London market, but even Norfolk, which towards the end of the eighteenth century exported in good years as much corn as all the rest of England put together, sent in one single year 20,594 fat oxen to Smithfield and Islington. And we need only refer in passing to the not infrequent mention of the sale of young stock by one county to another for fatting purposes.

These examples are sufficient to show clearly that already in the last quarter of the eighteenth century English agriculture produced very largely for the market, and that landholders' incomes were very greatly affected by a change of prices.

Up to 1730–40 English policy had made for an extension of corn-growing. Then various circumstances caused a widespread transition to cattle-breeding and the laying down of arable for pasture. The causes were partly the fall in the price of corn, probably in consequence of over-production, and the rise in the price of animal products as the wealth of the towns increased; partly the fact that pasture-farming needed less labour and therefore fewer persons who might become chargeable to the poor-rate; and partly the discovery that certain soils were better suited for pasture than for arable. Perhaps the encouragement given to corn-growing had had greater importance for those parts of the country which lay near the coast, which might help to explain why, as Lord Sheffield stated in 1791, corn-growing flourished chiefly in the eastern and southern counties, and pasture-farming in the midlands. Anderson said that the gradual dropping of the Stuart-Orange corn-laws from 1757 onwards had

determined many farmers to give up the now endangered arable farming.[1] It is not improbable that the bad seasons of the last third of the eighteenth century operated in the same direction.

It became customary to use the best land as pasture, and to grow corn on the worst. Arthur Young, in championing enclosure in 1774, says that the poor sandy soils of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Nottinghamshire, the wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, the heaths of Derbyshire and the moorlands of the northern counties were by enclosure rendered capable of producing corn and meat. And when the great movement of corn-prices during the French War led to the extension of arable, it was ordinarily done by breaking up commons and wastes. These were the facts which the political economy of Ricards and his disciples comprehended under the formula that, as economic progress took place, ever poorer lands were necessarily taken into cultivation.

The favourable agricultural conjuncture thus described set landlords on measures for increasing the incomes they drew from their land: in the first place they endeavoured to make themselves masters of the soil, in so far as the existing law allowed them to appropriate it, and in the second place to increase their profits both by better methods of cultivation and by diminishing the costs of production. The first they achieved by the division of the commons, the second by the consolidation of holdings and the transition to farming on a large scale. Of the first it is unnecessary to speak here; and the effect of consolidation has been sufficiently indicated in section iii.; so that it only remains to characterize briefly the system of the large farm. This appeared to be particularly suited to certain branches of agriculture, such as corn-growing and sheep-breeding, because the large capitals needed for these purposes did not otherwise promise sufficient return. But the land-

[1] Cp. Lord Sheffield, *Observations on the Corn Law Bill*, 1791; *An Enquiry into the Advantages and Disadvantages resulting from Bills of Enclosure*, 1780, p. 23; Young, *Political Arithmetic*, 1774, pp. 148 f.; Anderson, *A calm investigation into the circumstances that have led to the present scarcity of grain*, 1800, p. 41.

lord favoured it everywhere, because it did away with the necessity for the numerous buildings required by the small farmers, and so saved them in cost of repairs. Moreover the large farmer seemed to be in a better position to pay an enhanced rent.

Early in the eighteenth century, accordingly, an enclosure movement began,[1] and gradually increased in strength. We must be careful, however, to remember that enclosing had been going on ever since the fifteenth century; it had shown its full force in the sixteenth; and though it had slackened in the seventeenth, it had by no means ceased. The greater part of Durham, for example, was enclosed after the Restoration.[2] The eighteenth-century movement is usually dated from 1710, the reason given being that the first private Enclosure Act belongs to that year. But this involves two mistakes of fact, and tends to induce a false conception. In the first place, the first Enclosure Act of the eighteenth century belongs to the year 1709.[3] In the second place, private Acts of this kind appear as early as the reign of Charles II.,[4] and it seems that the frequency of enclosures increased at that time. In the third place, the absence of Acts does not prove the absence of enclosures by common consent, which could take place under other legal forms,[5] though it is probable that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Private Act was the usual method of procedure, and thereby the task of the historian is made easier, and his conception becomes more complete. He can view the whole process as it went on over a century and a half, and note its acceleration as the eighteenth century advanced. Under Queen Anne only two Enclosure Acts were passed; under George I., sixteen; under George II., as many as 226, making altogether 244 in fifty years.

[1] Cp. Appendix I.

[2] See the contemporary statements quoted in Scrutton, op. cit., p. 133.

[3] The Bill was introduced in the Upper House on February 25th, 1709, and appeared in the House of Commons on March 17th. An ineffectual petition against it was presented on March 23rd, and it received the royal assent on April 5th of the same year.

[4] Scrutton, loc. cit.

[5] Ibid.

But under George III. there were 3,554: and by the end of his reign 5,686,400 acres had been enclosed, whereas in the preceding fifty years the number had been only 337,876, of which the reign of George II. was accountable for 318,776.

Ordinarily, these enclosures meant both the division of the common pasture and the consolidation of the scattered arable strips,[1] though in some cases a common was divided where the open fields had already vanished, and in others holdings were consolidated where commons no longer existed, or where exception was taken, on social and economic grounds, to their division.[2] The figures thus include both arable, meadow and pasture.[3] Up to 1797 over 400,000 acres had been enclosed in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, 206,808 in Northamptonshire, something between 100,000 and 200,000 in Leicester, Berkshire, Nottingham, Northumberland, and Norfolk, 28,596 in Wales, a few only in Surrey, Essex, Hereford, Middlesex and Suffolk, and none in Devonshire or Cornwall. The

[1] "They are, indeed, generally both carried on together in the same place of inclosure." (Nathaniel Forster) *An Enquiry into the Present High Price of Provisions*, 1767.

[2] "In Monks Sherborne commons left, Maidstead and Bentworth very little common, and that left." Young, *Annals*, Vol. XLIV., p. 427. These dissimilarities were not determined only by the wishes of those interested, as appears from Vol. II. of Eden's *State of the Poor*. At the time when this book was written Houghton Regis, in Bedfordshire, still possessed a common, while various other parishes in the county had none. When enclosures were undertaken in Winslow, Bucks, in 1744 and 1764, they were limited to the amalgamation of holdings, no common then existing.

[3] Some examples from Cambridge will illustrate this. In Weston Colvill there were enclosed

248 acres 1 rood of heath.
110 acres 0 roods of common.
1,547 acres 2 roods of common field.
30 acres 1 rood of waste.

In Connington 1,400 to 1,500 acres were enclosed, of which 1,000 were common field and the others down, sheep common, waste and other common for sheep or cows. In March 3,400 acres, all common: in Barrington 2,000, all ploughland. In Little Wilbraham 900 acres of ploughland, 500 of common, 300 of heath. In Milton 1 378 acres, of which 937 were common-field, 213 enclosed pasture (*sic*), 228 common and waste. Elsewhere also we find that "old enclosures" were enclosed anew, for which reason all calculations of the extent of the enclosures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are somewhat untrustworthy. E.g., in Long Stow, of 1;500 acres enclosed, 1 300 were "old enclosure, small part of it arable." Gooch, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cambridge*, 1813, pp. 57 f.

remaining counties were among them responsible for some 300,000 acres enclosed.[1]

The third process, the "engrossing of farms," went on alongside of the enclosures, and often in close connection with them.[2] It meant the consolidation of a number of small farms to form one larger holding. Already in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these processes had gone on alongside whenever the introduction of pasture-farming was attempted; and the social policy of the Tudors was directed against the large town. But it must be emphasised that in other cases consolidation and division of commons were possible without materially changing the size of the holdings, and that the size of the holdings in a village could be increased without consolidation and separation. It even happened that the same farmer rented several farms situated in different localities.[3]

In modern times the observation has struck many economists that the average size of English holdings is not so very great as one might suppose on reading the description of engrossing given by contemporary authors. This may perhaps be accounted for by two facts: first, that the "engrossing of farms"[4] has not always consisted in the consolidation of small farms; and secondly, that England

[1] *Second Report on Waste Lands*, 1797.

[2] "The rise of the rates is chiefly ascribed to the enclosure of common fields, which, it is said, has lessened the number of farms." Eden, II. 30.

[3] Vancouver, in his *Survey of the Agriculture of Essex*, reports that there are big farmers who "monopolize farms." One farmer, he says, had "only" nine farms, "each of which upon further enquiry was found to be equal to the care and capital of the same number of equally skilful and respectable altho' not such wealthy and imperious families." At the same time he says: "These farms lie frequently detached and very wide of each other." Op. cit., 1795, p. 167.

[4] The following few figures are meant to give an idea of the effects of the engrossing of farms. In Durweston in 1796 there were only two farms; twenty years before, there had been thirty. "The town of Abbey Milton, which in the ancient times of abbatial grandeur was the central market of the country, is now converted into a fish pond." Eden, II. 148. In Holt, in Sussex, there existed during the middle ages, a great number of small farms, from 1400 the number decreased, in 1520 there were only six left, in the time of James I. there were two, and under Charles II. "the whole became the property of one man." Tuckett, *History of the Past and Present State of the Labouring Population*, II. 514. Arthur Young reports in his *Minutes of Parliamentary Inclosures* that at Southoe (Huntingdonshire), fifty years back, there had existed only small farms; in 1742 they had dwindled down to ten, and at the time of his report to three big farms. *Annals*, Vol. XLIV., p. 43.

had still at the beginning of the eighteenth century an exceedingly great number of small farmers. All reports seem to agree in this, that, as in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was principally the small and very small farms which disappeared.

The enclosures and the large farm probably caused the shortening of the duration of leases towards the end of the eighteenth century. It is evident that the landlord could not consolidate several farms before the leases had run out, nor could he dispose of the soil for the purpose of enclosing.

These measures in themselves often meant economic progress,[1] but they were not seldom transformed into a national curse, because for the most part they were not undertaken with pure motives; because the richer classes ordinarily swept the interests of the small man and the poor ruthlessly on one side; because the large farm was often introduced where small farming would have been perfectly in place, and so thousands of little farmers were

[1] In the year 1773 an Act was passed (13 Geo. III. c. 81) which aimed at securing the progress without enclosure, and which seems to have been effectual in individual cases. By it a three-fourths majority of the "occupiers of . . . open and common fields" were given the right to decide how they should be "fenced, cultivated, improved." In this way clover and turnips were introduced on the light soils of Rutlandshire (Crutchley, 1794, p. 8); a four-years' course was to be found on the best open fields in Huntingdonshire (Maxwell, 1793, p. 14); two-field, three-field and four-field systems were pursued side by side in Oxfordshire (Davis, 1794, p. 11), though the writer of the Survey thought that separation would be found necessary there (Ibid. p. 43). In Bedfordshire, on the lighter soils, four fields were to be found here and there, and considerable parts of the fallow were planted with turnips, to be followed by barley with clover (Stone, 1794, p. 18). Still, there can be no doubt that the transition would have taken place much more slowly if it had been dependent on the goodwill and intelligence of the farmers. On the other hand, to avoid mistaken conclusions, I would remark that technical progress was often attempted or attained without any correspondent economic progress. The author of the *Agriculture of Leicestershire*, at the end of a by no means flattering description of the slovenly condition of a parish where the open field and the three-field system still obtained, wrote that he did not doubt in the least that this parish produced more provisions and more employment than did the great average of enclosed parishes of the same size and soil in the county; it is as regards net profit for farmer and landlord that he considers enclosure to have the advantage (Pitt, *Leicestershire*, p. 76). A little lower he adds that "even the common field system is capable of improvement . . . But as enclosures have generally been a good speculation, and enable the proprietor to raise the rent, so as to pay him a good percentage, who is to prevent it, or to compel him to forego his advantage?" (Ibid. p. 79).

unnecessarily dispossessed; and lastly because the improvements were not seldom badly carried out. The ill effects of all this were aggravated by the great and sudden rise of prices, unparalleled in England since that of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: and I shall attempt to show that enclosure and engrossing had their share in producing that rise.

I have said that the motives which led to enclosure and engrossing were for the most part not pure. In the eighteenth century the standard of comfort had risen considerably among the rich landowning classes, and a large part of their income was devoured by the claims of London and watering-place life, and by the expenses of travel. And we shall see that the imitation of this more luxurious standard proved ruinous to gentlemen of smaller fortunes, and even to the middle and lower classes. For the thoughtless egotism of the upper stratum of society never troubles itself to consider that its conception of life determines the aim and object of those who stand below it in the social scale. The landlord, at any rate, found it necessary to appropriate the commons and raise his rents considerably if he were to keep up, or perhaps to improve, his position in society. We need not particularise the methods by which rents were raised; but it is tempting to describe how enclosures were brought about.

A landlord proposing to make an enclosure would in the first place buy up as much land as possible in those parishes which were possessed of common pastures, and get all the manors, supposing more than one were concerned, into his own hands. Next he would have a Bill drafted, of course providing for his own interests, and nominate surveyors and commissioners. So far he would proceed quietly. After that, such landowners as were by reason of class or sex more or less ignorant people would be prevailed on to put their names to a petition in favour of the Bill, the hearts of the more obdurate being softened by a good dinner, with significant threats to follow if that failed. Then a circular would inform the remaining persons concerned that the more important owners of

property had agreed to join the great man in laying a petition before Parliament.[1] Here again the pill would be sugared to begin with, but in the last resort the landlord threatened the refractory with all the evils in his power "as a magistrate, as a lord of the manor, as an impropriator of the tythes."[2] Few would have the courage to stand in opposition, and to claim that the majority, though their names might be subscribed to the petition, were in fact against the proposal. Even if someone were found with the requisite spirit, how were the very considerable expenses of opposing the Bill to be provided? And the whole matter was regarded as one of private concern only. No Member of Parliament not directly interested would take any notice of the Bill in its passage through the Houses. The Crown, now become the servant of the governing classes, had no longer even the wish to interfere.

So the Commissioners of Enclosure would get to work, and their decision would be practically final. If appeal were made to Quarter Sessions, the prime mover, against whom the appeal was directed, would be on the bench, and even if he did not vote on this particular question, the complainant's chance of an impartial decision would be small.[3] The Commissioners were as a rule attorneys, nominated by the man or men most interested in the measure. They had to take an oath, but it was too general in its terms to withhold them from prejudicing the weaker parties in face of the interest they had in obliging their patron. The appointment was a profitable one, and if they gave satisfaction they might hope to be recommended

[1] Addington, *An Inquiry into the Reasons for and Against Inclosing*, 2nd ed. 1772, p. 34; *An Inquiry into the Advantages and Disadvantages resulting from Bills of Inclosure*, 1780, pp. 29 f.

[2] "Coaxing, bribing, threatening, together with many other arts, which superiors make use of, will very often induce the inferiors to consent to things which, they are convinced, will be to their future disadvantage." *A Political Inquiry*, p. 108.

[3] The author of the *Political Inquiry* is of opinion that this will be obvious to every one acquainted with "the disputes, canvassings, associations and oppositions which too often prevail in that court from friendship or animosity to persons of a particular family, character, fortune, connection or party." P. 37.

for similar employment in the future. And the Bill would go through its stages practically unregarded.

Not only the landlords, but also the clergy, were interested in these schemes, which raised the value of tithe: a fact which many people found particularly annoying, as the Church gained without having made any contribution to the improvement.

Squires, parsons and lawyers thus found their account in the enclosures,[1] and it was said that when these three pulled together no power on earth was strong enough to withstand them. Rents, tithes, the profits of the large farmers and the fees of attorneys and land surveyors grew and increased; but the land-tax and the ordinary farmer, cottager and consumer profited not at all?[2]

In the result, the landlords had to repay themselves liberally for the costs of enclosure, which were so considerable (often amounting to several thousand pounds) as usually to eat up a good part of the value of the land. Official accounts show that the parliamentary expenses

[1] "But what would become of the poor but honest attorney, officers of Parliament, and a long train of etcs. who obtain a decent livelihood from the trifling fees of every inclosure bill?" W. Payne, on p. 14 of the *Appendix* to the *Report on the West Riding*, by Brown, 1799. The author of the *Political Inquiry* names as chiefly interested first the squires, aiming at larger rentals, secondly the clergy, desirous of an increase in tithes, and thirdly the lawyers, who hoped for "a multiplicity of business resulting therefrom." P. 107.

[2] Arthur Young himself gives an account of the methods by which enclosures were brought about which fully confirms those of the two anonymous writers, and shows how everything worked together to the damage of the small man. "The proprietors of large estates generally agree upon the measure, adjust the principal points among themselves, and fix upon their attorney, before they appoint any general meeting of all the proprietors. The small proprietor . . . has little or no weight in regulating the clauses of the Act of Parliament." Of the Commissioners he says:—"Thus is the property of the proprietors, and especially of the poor ones, entirely at their mercy; every passion of resentment, prejudice, etc., may be gratified without control, for they are vested with a despotic power known in no other branch of business in this free country." *A Six Months' Tour through the North of England*, 1771, I. 222. Similarly Addington, *Inquiry into the Reasons*, etc., citing the view of another writer, says that "the whole plan is generally settled between solicitor and two or three principal proprietors without even letting the rest of them into the secret, till they are called upon to sign the petition." They do not see the Bill at all until they are to sign it, and then they are "taken separately." Even those who are made use of to sign the petition get nothing out of it but "leave of the legislature to take a cow apiece from 20 persons who had only two and to give ten more to one or two wealthy neighbours who had twenty or thirty before." Pp. 21 f.

alone ran on an average to £183, and in some cases to £300, £400 and more,[1] and to this had to be added the fees, sometimes extraordinarily high, received by surveyors and commissioners.[2] Their ordinary charge was 10s. a day; but as much as one or two guineas was sometimes given. The writer of *Cursory Remarks on Inclosures* gives an example of the effect of the cost of enclosure on the landlord's pocket:—

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Annual rent of the estate, 60 cottages included, previous to enclosure	1137 10 0	
Subtract land-tax at 4s. in the £	110 0 0	
Net rent		1027 17 0
Rent after enclosure	1801 12 2	
Subtract land-tax	110 0 0	
Net rent		1691 12 2
Annual increase ..		£663 15 2
Enclosures of Enclosure Bill, Surveying, etc...	924 14 0	
Cost of hedging and ditching	312 12 6	
Cost of fencing with posts and rails	927 17 6	
Cost of gates and stiles	147 18 0	
Incidental expenses	56 15 0	
Total cost of enclosure ..		£2369 17 0
Interest on £2369 17s. 0d. at 5 per cent ..	118 9 10	
Loss of the rent of the 60 cottages	120 0 0	
	238 9 10	
The rents of the Commons enclosed	510 0 0	
Total ..		748 9 10
Subtract the net increase of rent		663 15 2
		£84 14 8

[1] According to the third report on *The Impediments to Inclosures under the Authority of Parliament*, 1800 (Vol. IX., p. 237), the cost of the 707 private Bills brought into the House of Commons between 1786 and 1799 was £59,867 6s. 4d., or an average of £84 13s. 6d. To this must be added £84 13s. 6d. for expenses in the House of Lords, making the total £179 7s. Add further an average of £4 4s. for gratuities, and the whole comes to £183 11s. It is to be noted that the expenses to individuals varied according to the number of parishes joining in the Bill. "Single Bills" cost £70 6s. 2d., whereas a "four double Bill" was £483 0s. 4d.

[2] The following account (from Young's *Annals*, XLII., 30) gives a clear idea of the expenses involved:—

Thus the landlord would positively have lost, to the extent of £84 14s. 8d., if he had not included the common in his enclosures; and the same writer concludes on this evidence that the sole reason for enclosing the open fields was to gain control over the soil which lay round the scattered strips, and withdraw it from the hands of the poor. No land-tax was paid on the increase of rent so obtained.[1]

At any rate, on these various pretexts rents were as a rule raised considerably, and sometimes to an incredible extent. In numerous cases they were doubled, trebled, and even quadrupled.[2]

However, contemporary authors not merely absolved the landlords for these proceedings, but even offered to prove their absolute necessity. The richer the farmers became, the more would population increase; and the higher rents were driven, the greater the spur to the farmer to improve his methods of cultivation. These are two of the main principles of Arthur Young's earlier agricultural policy.

	£	s.	d.
Surveying 1,206	72	9	0
Map	84	0	0
Five Commissioners at 10s. a day ..	105	0	0
The Act	324	15	9
Expenses of Commissioners	55	6	2
The Rector's Fence	46	3	6
Clerk	23	2	0
Smaller Items	65	1	7
	£775	18	0

The *General Report on Enclosures*, Appendix XVII., entitled *Expenses of Enclosures*, contains plenty of material. Marston (1,999 acres) cost £2,286, Dunton (2,200 a.) £1,803, Great Catworth (2,033 a.) £3,070 12s. 5½d., Spaldwick (1,450 a.) £2,462, and so on. In Gloucestershire one enclosure of 1,000 acres in 1795 cost the enormous sum of £4,500! See Marshall, *W. Department*, p. 426. See also *An Inquiry into the Advantages and Disadvantages*, p. 60:—"In one case where open fields were enclosed as well as commons, a very able commissioner likewise told me, that they had then actually eaten up all the commons and half-year lands, that they had just begun upon the whole-year lands, and before they made their award, should consume a considerable part of them."

[1] It might seem that only prejudice could suggest that without enclosure of the common the landlord would have absolutely lost on the transaction. But even the *General Report on Enclosures* admits that "cases may be shown, where the landlords have not received 5 per cent. on the enclosure of the best land from extreme cost of commission, solicitor, contest and enclosure." P. 11.

[2] Any number of examples can be found in the *Agricultural Surveys* and in Appendix IX. to the *General Report on Enclosures*.

Besides, many people were now convinced that it was best for agriculture that the farmer should not own his land, and that the labourer should be neither owner nor occupier, but entirely dependent on the work of his hands.[1] We may charitably hope that this conviction was an honest one, and that it explains the indifference with which the disappearance of the yeomanry and the entire separation of the worker from all property were regarded; as the belief in the economic value of the large farm, also defended by not a few writers, modified the regret felt at the ruin of the small farming class.

Having shown the motives which led to the enclosures, it remains for us to explain this disregard of the interests of the lower classes of the community; but this must stand over till the outlines of the village community of the eighteenth century have been sketched in our next chapter. The unsatisfactory way in which the enclosures were carried out, and the revolution in prices, are aspects of the problem on the one hand so remote from the history of the agricultural labourer, and on the other exercising so profound an influence upon it, that they can neither be treated as part of our subject, nor left entirely out of consideration. Some discussion of them will, therefore, be found in an appendix.[2]

During this transition period the conditions of life of the lower agricultural classes were on the whole not unsatisfactory. The Act of Settlement (14 C. II. c. 12) had limited their freedom of movement, and so thrown some shadow of coming injustice before. But there is no doubt that the abuses complained of in the preamble to that statute did actually exist:—"By reason of some defect in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best

[1] The earlier writings of Arthur Young are so well known that I need not refer to them by name here. Further, see Robertson, *Outlines of the General Report on the Size of Farms*, Edinburgh, 1796; Sir John Sinclair, *Code of Agriculture*, 1st ed. 1817, 5th ed. 1832, and W. Marshall, who besides his five volumes of excerpts from the *Agricultural Society* published several descriptions of English agriculture, and other works.

[2] See Appendix II. on *Enclosures and the Revolution in Prices*.

stock, the largest commons or wastes to build cottages, and the most woods for them to burn and destroy." And we shall later have to quote well-known writers to prove that the Settlement Act, at any rate up to the end of the eighteenth century did not entail so much evil as was supposed by the two Scots, Adam Smith and Lord Kames. For our purposes it smost important result seems to have been that yearly contracts with servants coming from another parish became less common. It may perhaps have contributed also to the extension of day-labour.

The labouring class on the land at this time falls, as we know, into two sections, first the farm servants, hired for some considerable period, and receiving a large part of their wages in kind; and secondly the day-labourers, who found themselves in relatively comfortable circumstances. They mostly had holdings of their own, and in many parishes could also draw an income from the commons. They produced many of their requisite implements for themselves. Manufacture was in the domestic stage, or was pursued at home as a by-employment.[1] Even in winter the labourer found no lack of employment; work was to be had in the woods[2] as well as in the barns.[3] Wages were low, but when working for a farmer the men were often well fed in his house. The following table[4] shows that wages did not rise with the price of provisions; as well as that compared with those of an industrial labourer they were very small:—

	1541–1582.	1583–1642.	1643–1702.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Wheat	13 10½	36 9	41 11¼
Barley	8 5¾	19 9¾	22 2¼
Oatmeal	20 10¾	37 9¼	52 11
Agricultural labourers	3 3	4 10	6 4¾
Masons	4 9	6 5¾	9 10¾
Carpenters (on the average)	5 0	6 2¾	10 2¾

[1] Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, V. 659, 799. Cp. the description of the Golden Vale in *Work and Wages*, p. 454.

[2] "The unskilled labourer . . . was a good deal occupied in the numerous woods and coppices which formed a very important source of income to the landowners in the 17th century." *Agriculture and Prices*, V. 468.

[3] "In 1671 a Wiltshire labourer in a barn works for more than four months at 7s." Ibid.

[4] Ibid., pp. 787, 792.

But this does not really tell us much as to the circumstances of the agricultural labourer, who produced for himself a considerable part of the goods he consumed. And thus even Rogers, whose conclusions are based on a comparison of money-wages with the price of wheat, a commodity which the labourers for the most part did not consume, recognises that "at a time, too, when there was much open country, on which fowling was practised, when most peasants had their plots of ground, and there were considerable and valuable commonable rights of pasture, the spoliation of which was only just begun (*sic*), the regulation of money-wages might not seem so great a hardship. It is conceivable, in brief, that working for money-wages was a by-industry, and that in general the labour of the peasant was occupied about his holding and other incidental but important industries."[1]

Such was the position of the labourer up to the end of this period. In the next, the proletarianisation of the small holder began, and what with enclosures, engrossing, and the rise of the great industry, it went on apace. The last meant the disappearance of industrial by-employments for agriculturists, and the partial disappearance of domestic industry. Finally, in 1775, the Act of 1589 was repealed. Chapter II. will be concerned with these events in detail. Through them the labourer lost his land, the commons were divided up, his earnings from industrial employments decreased or vanished, less work was to be had in the woods, threshing went with the three-field husbandry, and he became a mere labourer, without land or capital, dependent almost entirely on money-wages, the system of payment in kind having gradually decayed. For the large farmer was neither inclined to pay a great part of the wages of his men in kind, nor to board them; the first because he produced for the market, and the second because he often stood far above them in the social

[1] *Agriculture and Prices*, p. 615.

scale. He even disliked boarding and lodging his farm-servants, and a further development began by which servants were put as far as possible on money-wages.

But if the economy of the large farm necessarily led to an ever more pure and simple cash-nexus, and to the formation of an ever-growing class of irregularly employed day-labourers, it must in justice be remembered that the large number of hands required on such a farm would have meant a quite unprecedented number of persons to be provided for in the farmhouse, if the servants were to be in anything like the old proportion to the labourers. Besides which, no such proportion of servants could have been found sufficient steady employment ; the new methods of cultivation made a considerable demand for irregular labour.

And so it soon became the grand aim of the farmer to find hands which would be at his disposal at all times, and at a low wage. It was not that labour was lacking : what was lacking was labour of a particular kind. Farmers laid claim not only to the cottiers, but to the squatters who had maintained a penurious but independent existence on the commons. Later, the time came when even these proved insufficient, and the labour of women and children was also requisitioned ; not, be it repeated, because the supply of labour had become inadequate, for the superfluous population of the country was migrating to the manufactures and the towns.

Previous to the development of the large farm, women had seldom done day-labour, except in harvest. There was, in fact, no class of women working by the day. Maids were, of course, employed on both arable and pasture farms, and women did all kinds of agricultural labour on the family holding, as they almost always do where there are small farms or freeholds. Pringle could not refrain from an expression of pity for the fine servant-maids of Westmoreland whom he found following " the harrow and the plough, when they are drawn by three horses ; nay, it is not uncommon to see toiling at the dung-carts a girl whose elegant features and delicately proportioned limbs but

ill accord with such rough employment."[1] Similarly farmers' wives in the North Riding did a great deal of the farm work. "Their industry is not exceeded by that of the women of any country, equalled by few."[2] Women of the lower classes would as a rule first go into farm-service, and then marry some cottager or small farmer and occupy themselves on their own holding and in spinning, only going out by the day in harvest-time. But this was a type of life the foundations of which were already undermined.

It is among the deepest convictions of the English middle classes that the sixteenth-century struggle for the purity of religion and the seventeenth-century struggle for personal liberty are among the greatest achievements of their nation. It is remarkable that the lower classes should also have accepted this conviction. For the Reformation robbed them of the institutions which had helped them in their times of need, and parliamentary government produced a class domination which took their land from them, threw on them a great part of the burdens entailed by trade wars and colonial wars, and pitilessly abandoned them to the storm which broke over them with the rise of the great industry.[3]

[1] Pringle, *Agriculture of Westmoreland*, 1794, p. 41.
[2] Tuke, *Agriculture of the North Riding*, 1800, p. 325.
[3] Yet the more the lower classes were ill-treated and exploited, the more was the question of their importance to the State and to society discussed, till in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, under the great and growing authority of Adam Smith, it was determined in their favour. Cp. Appendix IV., *Some Theories regarding the Social Value of the Working Classes.*

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL PROLETARIAT.

I.—The Village of the Eighteenth Century before the Enclosures, the Engrossing of Farms, and the Revolution in Prices.

As compared with the village of the present day, the village of the eighteenth century, before the changes described in the next section, was more continuous in its history, and had a greater variety, or rather a different kind of variety, in its component parts. The suburban element so common in the village of to-day was absent, speaking roughly and excepting the neighbourhood of the capital; while the properly rural classes were much more markedly differentiated and graded. The great landlords, it is true, often spent two-thirds of the year in London and at various watering-places, or abroad; but still many of them were renewing and strengthening their connection with the land by devoting themselves to agriculture and becoming the champions of every kind of improvement. The smaller gentry, partly descendants of the yeomanry and of men from the towns who had bought landed estates under the Tudors or Stuarts, were rooted to the soil perforce by the smallness of their incomes: and they shaded into the well-to-do yeomanry, as these did again into the poorer. The yeoman class was still very numerous at the end of the eighteenth century, as the *Agricultural Surveys* show;[1] and it is important to remember that it

[1] The following citations will clearly prove the extent and diversity of the yeoman class at the end of the eighteenth century. They mostly date, as will be noticed, from its last decade; but some belong to a rather later time.

Bailey and Culley reported that in Northumberland there were "small estates" of £20 to £200 in the "southern and midland parts, rarely in the northern" (Bailey and Culley, 1794, p. 11). The smaller would, it may

included men of very different economic and social standing. This the reader will be at no loss to understand after what has been said in Chapter I. There were yeomen in the midlands and south whose holdings were so large that their incomes were equal to or exceeded those of the gentry; there were others, especially in the north, who were in the position of small peasant proprietors, or who were forced to supplement the produce of their lands by pursuing domestic industries in their spare time;[1] and finally there was a class of freeholders who owned nothing but their cottage, and perhaps a scrap of land, and apparently had to go out as wage labourers.

Upon the yeomanry bordered the copyholders, who were to be found in most parts of the country, though their number in proportion to other tenants varied. Their dues were paid in money. There were "copyholds of inheritance" and "copyholds for lives"; and the former were again divided according as they passed "with arbitary fine" or "with fine certain." Copyhold of inheritance by fine certain, where no additional relics of feudal burdens, such as the heriot, remained, was esteemed almost as freehold, and moreover had the advantage of

be supposed, belong to the smaller yeomanry. Part of Durham belonged to "small proprietors" (Granger, 1794, p. 33), and one-third of the North Riding of Yorkshire to the yeomanry (Tuke, 1794, p. 19). In the West Riding "a considerable part of the landed property" was "in the hands of small freeholders": and again, "much the largest proportion in the dales on the moorlands is in the possession of yeomanry, in estates generally below £150" (Rennie, Arown and Shirreff, 1794, p. 15). In the East Riding we are told that in 1812 the freeholders had only cottages and small gardens (Strickland, 1812, p. 32). The freeholders of Lincoln were a thriving race; there were yeomen with £300 to £700 a year, "keeping entirely to the manners and appearance of farmers." In the neighbourhood of Reevesby they had decreased; but on the other hand in South Holland they were on the increase, and held one-fifth of the

[1] "Some of them (the statesmen of Westmoreland) particularly in the vicinity of Kendall, in the intervals of labour from agricultural avocations, busy themselves in working stuffs for the manufactures of that town." Pringle, *Westmoreland*, 1794, p. 40. The statesmen of Cumberland were in a still older stage of economic development, for "their little estates, which they cultivate with their own hands, produce almost every necessary article of food, and clothing they in part manufacture themselves." Bailey and Culley, *Cumberland*, 1784, p. 11. But, as I shall have occasion to show, these were not all freeholders.

" the greater certainty of its title, and the cheapness of its conveyance."[1] The best kind of copyhold was even sometimes known as " customary freehold." On the other hand, some copyholds very closely resembled the ancient villein tenure. These belonged to the north ; and perhaps the best description of them is that in Bailey and Culley's *Agriculture of Cumberland* :—" By far the greater part of this county is still held under lords of manors by that species of vassalage which is called customary tenure, subject to the papment of fines and heriots, on alienation, death of lord, or death of tenant, and the payment of certain annual rents, and performance of various services, called boon-days, such as getting and leading the lord's peats, ploughing and harrowing his land, reaping his corn, hay-making, carrying letters, etc., whenever summoned by the lord." About two-thirds of all the Cumberland tenures were of this type. It was " a great obstacle to improvement " ; for the small copyholders had " a laudable anxiety . . . . to have their little patrimony descend to their children. These small properties (loaded with fines, heriots, and boon-days, joined to the necessary expenses of bringing up and educating a numerous family)

soil, while in the Fen district half the land was in their hands. " In the hundred of Skirbeck property is much divided, and freeholders numerous." " I know nothing more singular respecting it than its great division in the Isle of Axholme " (Young, 1799, pp. 19–20 and 17–18). In Staffordshire there were " estates from that of the great nobleman or opulent commoner of £10,000 per annum to the humble freeholder of 40s. a year " (Pitt, 1796, p. 16). Shropshire had " an infinite number of freeholders' and yeomen's estates of all inferior sizes " (Bishton, 1794, p. 31) ; and in 1803 Plymley writes of it :—" In the parochial visitations of my archdeaconry, I have inquired the number of proprietors in a parish, and generally found them more numerous than I had expected." This he explains by saying that wealthy landowners had been obliged to sell their estates, which had been bought in small lots by manufacturers and farmers. He puts the total number of freeholders and copyholders in this country at 3,000. (Plymley, 1803, p. 90). In Worcestershire, landed property was still in 1805 divided between peers, tradesmen and " the independent but less opulent freeholder and yeoman " (Pitt, 1813, p. 17). Of Gloucestershire we are told in 1807 that " the number of yeomen who possess freeholds of various value is great, as appears from the Sheriff's return at the poll " (Rudge, 1807, p. 34). Somerset had " a most respectable yeomanry " (Billingsley, 2nd ed. 1798, p. 31). Derbyshire landowners in 1794 were (1) peers, (2) small landholders, (3) tradesmen,

[1] Cp. the discussion of the subject in Kent, *Norfolk*, 1796, pp. 28–30.

can only be handed from father to son by the utmost thrift, hard labour and penurious living, and every little saving being hoarded up for the payment of the eventful fine, leaves nothing for the expense of travelling, to see improved methods of culture, and to gain a knowledge of the management and profits of different breeds of stock. The customary tenure is allowed on all hands to be a great grievance and check to improvement."[1] We need look no further for an explanation of the gradual ruin of the little statesmen.

A still older form of copyhold was that known as "old feudal tenure": but with this we have already dealt in Chapter I. (see p. 30). It should be briefly noted that the copyholders, like the yeoman, belonged to very various classes as regarded their wealth. In Dorsetshire "the few copyholds consist chiefly of a mere cottage and a garden."[2]

The copyholding class formed the connecting link between freeholders and farmers. The farmers themselves

and (4) "occupiers of another description, very properly styled yeomen, men cultivating their own estates with a sufficient capital, or employing a considerable capital in the occupation of the ancient hereditary estates of the gentry" (Donaldson, 1794, p. 12). In Northamptonshire "part of the county" was in the possession of yeomen, who "either occupy their own estates, of the value of from £300 per annum downwards, or who rent extensive farms from gentlemen of large property" (Pitt, 1809, p. 21). In Oxfordshire "there are many proprietors of a middling size, and many small proprietors, particularly in the open fields" (Davis, 1794, p. 11). In Nottinghamshire "some considerable as well as inferior yeomen occupy their own lands" (Lowe, 1798, p. 8). In Berkshire there was still in 1808 "everywhere a respectable number of yeomanry," who held one-third of the soil and of whom in one district it is noted that "their residences have an air of gentility, and frequently of elegance" (Mavor, 1808, pp. 40, 114, 62). Cambridgeshire had even in 1813 numerous farms of from £20 to £50 or £100, many of them worked by their owners. (Gooch, 1813, p. 29). In Surrey, on the other hand, the yeomanry are said in 1813 to be "by no means so numerous as they are in the adjoining county of Kent" (Stevenson, 1813, p. 73), where they were even "on the increase," a statement which Hasted fully confirms. "The yeomany," he said, "which in most other parts of the kingdom is confined to the common people only . . . . is extended much higher in Kent; for it here likewise comprehends the principal farmers and leaseholders, who, either from their education or intercourse of life, are not esteemed by the gentry of equal rank with themselves, and yet in point of

[1] Bailey and Culley, *Cumberland*, 1794, pp. 11 and 44.
[2] Stevenson, *Dorsetshire*, 1812, p. 74.

held by various kinds of tenure. The leasehold for lives (often for three lives) was still common on lands belonging to corporations; and it was valued by not a few of those interested in social policy, as forming an obstacle to the engrossing of farms, and also as for that reason offering opportunities for the investment of small capitals in agriculture. Landlords, however, preferred tenancy at will, mistakenly supposing that it served their interest best. Agricultural reformers of the period often favoured long leases under such agreements as should harmonize the interest of both parties.

Farms varied greatly, too, as regarded size. Almost every manor contained one large farm—the home-farm of the middle ages, through leasing which yeomen had attained to wealth. But at the time we are now considering middle sized and small farms were still in the majority. And the economic position of the small farmer approached that of the cottager, since, according to the Elizabethan statute already mentioned, every cottage had to be provided with land to the extent of four acres. Whether this statute was still generally enforced or not I do not know; but at any rate the polemic directed against it in Arthur Young's *Political Arithmetic* shows that it was no dead

wealth and possessions they are frequently superior to many of them" (Boys, 1796, p. 32; Hasted, *The History and Topography of Kent*, I. p. cxxxvi., 1778). Suffolk, too, had a rich yeoman class, who "carry agriculture to a high degree of perfection" (Young, 1794, p. 14). Of Essex, Howlett writes:—"There never was a greater proportion of small and moderate-sized farms, the property of mere farmers, who retain them in their own immediate occupation, than at present" (Young, 1807, I. pp. 39–40). The north-west of Wiltshire could show many small freeholders in 1813 (Davis, 1813, p. 176). In Devonshire the yeomanry were very numerous, particularly in the South Hams, according to Fraser; and in Vancouver's *Survey*, published twelve years later, we still hear that a great deal of land was "in the hands of a respectable yeomanry" (Fraser, 1796, p. 16: Vancouver, 1808, p. 80). Freeholders were numerous in the west, as also in Wales and in the Isle of Man. Davies, in his *Agriculture of South Wales*, published in 1814, says that there were very many proprietors, varying between £2,000 and £2 per annum, "where ends the character of yeomen invested with the right of elective suffrage. From £200 a year downwards most of the proprietors occupy their own lands" (I. p. 120). In the report on North Wales, which appeared a year earlier, he states that he only found two copyhold tenements, all the rest were freehold (p. 78): and though he does not tell us very much on this subject, the *Surveys* of the various counties, which had appeared in the 'nineties, confirm what he here says. On the Isle of Man in 1812 "the largest portion of cultivated land is possessed by yeomen, farming from one to one

letter in 1774 : and there is other evidence to the effect that day-labourers rented several acres.[1]

Thus there was a really practicable ladder from the lowest to the highest stage in the village of the eighteenth century. It had no gaps. The upper and lower classes of the community were really connected with one another by a series of mediating members. As Mavor said of Berkshire, "the gradation of society has here no broken link."[2] This state of things is reflected in the common speech of the period. No sharp social line was drawn

hundred and fifty acres, their own property" (Quayle, 1812, p. 25). Westmoreland, too, had a yeomanry "who occupy small estates of their own from £10 to £50 a year, either freehold or held of the Lord of the Manor by customary tenure, which differs but little, if at all, from that by copyhold, or copy of court roll" (Pringle, 1794, p. 18). Of course we are only counting the former of the two classes here noticed among land-owners. Similarly in Cumberland there were some small freeholders, but the great mass of the people were "statesmen."

[1] "Men renting two or three or even five acres are frequently to be classed among the most industrious and constant labourers." Davies, *N. Wales*, p. 85. "There are few mere cottages in the county (Westmoreland), the labourer and mechanic generally reside in a small farmhouse and occupy more or less land." "Small farmers (in Cumberland) are also . . . . agricultural labourers." Marshall, *Northern Department*, pp. 182, 303. Addington, whose pamphlet is based on his experience of the midland counties, writes :—"But the disadvantages of inclosing good corn fields, great as they are to these tenant farmers, are by no means confined to them ; many small proprietors of land are hereby greatly injured, and most of the labourers in every parish that is inclosed, are deprived of the means of support in almost all such open parishes, who have houses and little parcels of land in the field, with a right of common for a cow, and three or four sheep, by the assistance of which, with the profits of a little trade, or their daily labour, they procure a very comfortable living. Their land furnishes them with wheat and barley for their bread, and in many places with beans or peas, to feed a hog or two for meat, with the straw they thatch their cottage, and winter their cow, which gives a breakfast and supper of milk, nine or ten months in the year, for their families. These almost universally disapprove of inclosing, and their number is considerable in many open villages." *An Inquiry into the Reasons*, 2nd ed. 1772, p. 33. In parts of Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire at the end of the century there were still 753 labourers in 48 parishes "renting land sufficient for one or two cows" and owning 1,194 of the latter altogether. Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., pp. 503 and 637. See also Crutchley, *Rutland*, 1794, p. 87, and Young, *Lincolnshire*, 1799, p. 411, where several examples of cottagers owning land are mentioned. Also Eden, I., 569 (Leicestershire) and Marshall, *Midland Department*, p. 170 (Nottinghamshire. He speaks of cottages "with a few acres annexed"). "This parish abounds with gardeners, many cultivating their little freeholds, so that on the inclosure there were found to be 63 proprietors." Young, *Annals*, XLII., p. 28. See also Eden II., 723 (Walton-on-Thames, where 40–50 acres of common were enclosed) and Young, *Oxfordshire*, 1809, p. 23.

[2] Mavor, Berkshire, p. 50.

between the wealth yyeoman and the gentleman : [1] and the better-situated copyholder, the leaseholder for lives, and the rich farmer were not seldom reckoned among the yeomanry. Again, it is often hard to say whether those who are lumped under the general designation of cottagers were properly little farmers or day-labourers ; though in general we may take it that a cottager was a person whose social standing was defined by his tenancy of a house, and not by his cultivation of a holding ; so that it was necessary for him to work for others.

We have seen that the cottagers rented their houses, and as a rule a small piece of land as well. But we have also seen that there were little yeomen or copyholders in the same position economically, though in a different one legally. They too were under the necessity of putting their labour at the disposal of some employer. These three lowest classes of the village community were the material of the agricultural labouring class. They provided the necessary day-labour, and their sons and daughters were servants until they were able to buy or rent a little holding or at least a cottage for themselves.

Outside of the community we have described there was a class occasionally known as cottagers, but ordinarily as squatters. An author of the seventeenth century calls them borderers. They lived at some distance from the village, near, in or upon the commons and woods, where they had built themselves huts, and perhaps cleared a little piece of land. The reader will remember that we have evidence for their existence even in the middle ages. Arthur Young gives some very vivid descriptions of their manner of life in various actual cases.[2] For example, in the parish of

[1] To give only two examples :—Stevenson in his *Surrey* (1813) proceeds from the statement that "the yeomanry in Surrey are by no means so numerous as they are in the adjoining county of Kent," to say that nevertheless "there are some gentlemen that farm their own estates of from £200 to £400 per annum," p. 73. And Hasted, speaking of the Kentish yeomen, remarks :—"Though they write themselves yeomen, yet they are usually very properly styled gentlemen farmers." I., p. cxxxvi. But he carefully distinguishes them from the gentlemen who farm their own estates.

[2] Young, *An Inquiry into the Propriety of applying Wastes to the better Maintenance and Support of the Poor*, in *Annals*, XXXVI., 1801, p. 497.

Blofield in Norfolk, which was as yet unenclosed and had 700 acres of heath, the lord of the manor, Mr. Burrough, had by silence given his consent to the building of cottages on the waste by many poor people. As a rule these cottages were good; some of them must have been worth from £40 to £60. The people had besides appropriated and cultivated 39¾ acres. The settlement consisted of thirty families, and they held together 23 cows and 18 horses, though the cows were the property of sixteen persons only, and eight had neither cow nor horse. Eleven had less than an acre of land. But their stock also included donkeys, pigs, geese, and poultry, and Young does not forget to mention their well-cared-for gardens, their fruit-trees, pigsties, and sheds. Moreover, he notices that the colony gave a certain impression of prosperity. When he visited it most of the people were at harvest-work: the owner of the cottage he entered mostly worked for a farmer. The squatters helped one another with their work, and were little burden to the parish. The 150 souls in the village on the heath had only claimed £24 of poor relief, while 110 others in the village by the church had received £150. Also the income of the church had been increased; for twelve of the squatters had been assessed to the tithe, and had paid. But the enmity of those of the neighbouring villagers who had common rights was such that they had more than once pulled down the squatters' fences, though the latter asserted that no one else made use of the heath.

Squatters were also to be found in the neighbourhood of the capital. Middleton says that in Middlesex the poor settled themselves on the borders of commons, where they found land, material with which to build a cottage, firing, and pasture for pigs and poultry, "for nothing." These little privileges, he states, were due to the carelessness of the landlord and his silent consent, and they made the people lazy.[1]

Cp. also p. 597, where he says that one farmer, on the mere suspicion that one of these families had stolen some hop-poles, had "pulled down a cottage, set it on fire, and turned the inhabitants adrift."

[1] Middleton, 1798, p. 42.

Things were much the same in the west. Bishton describes the cottages and fields of the Shropshire squatters as extremely miserable. They paid sixpence or a shilling a year to the landlord. Taking "their loss of time" into account, their holdings only made up a small part of their income, but they gave the men "a sort of independence" of disposition. They lost many working days, and became idle; while their daughters, instead of going into service and becoming useful members of society, were kept at home to milk a half-starved cow, and rapidly went to the bad. Thus, according to him, the farmers of the district could get neither servants nor industrious labourers, and the commons with their cottages became a heavy burden instead of a profit. He proceeds to point out how much better it would be if the labourers lived under a farmer in comfortable (*sic*) cottages, holding a quarter of an acre of land only, and so were obliged to work every day in the year, while their children learnt to read, and were early accustomed to labour.[1]

Duncombe's *Herefordshire* (1805) shows that there too squatting on commons was permitted;[2] and Davies' *North Wales* tells us that squatters swarmed on Rhos Hirwen, a great waste of 3,000 acres, where they so entirely considered themselves as proprietors that their opposition had hitherto hindered its division. They made their living partly by fishing, and were always ready to work for the farmers "in the labouring seasons."[3]

These instances are sufficient to show that at the end of the eighteenth century there were squatters in both the improved and unimproved parts of the country. It may be noted, however, that this was nothing new. There is copious evidence for their existence in the seventeenth century; and if they were to be found then and at the end of the eighteenth, we need not doubt that they were there in the first half of the eighteenth century as well.

To quote one or two of the earlier witnesses:—Mr.

[1] Bishton, 1794, p. 24.
[2] Duncombe, 1805, p. 30.
[3] Davies, op. cit., p. 270.

Scrutton gives the following from Norden's *Surveyor's Dialogue*, which appeared in 1602. "It is observed in some parts where I have travelled, where great and spacious wastes, mountains, woods, forests, and heaths are, that many cottages are set up, the people given to little or no kind of labour, living very hardly with oaten bread and sour whey and goat's milk, dwelling far from any church or chapel, and are as ignorant of God or of any civil course of life as the very savages."[1] From the middle of the same century we have a very interesting pamphlet by Adam Moore,[2] which is most illuminating as to these particular conditions. The preface (which like the book is full of the religious cant of the times) tells us that the world was now big with discoveries which were to open the treasuries of Nature, and that one way to these secret chambers was the enclosure of the wastes. It was well known that nowhere were the people poorer than where there were large commons, since those who lived there "account it a sufficient trade to be only a borderer: and so many stratagems (forsooth) have they to get thrift there, that to seek other mysteries of gaining, were to incur the danger of sweat and a laborious life."[3] The advantages they claimed to have from the commons were (1) the possibility of keeping a horse or cow, or, if they were not rich enough for that, then geese and pigs, which brought them in many a good penny: (2) free firing, consisting of furze, fern, "green bush," and dried cow dung; so that in cold weather they always had a fire to sit by, which the townsman had not, or, if he had, he had to pay for it;[4] (3) the snaring of snipe and other birds; and (4) a secure position for their posterity, who had the land as an inheritance.

[1] Scrutton, op. cit., p. 139.

[2] Adam Moore, *Bread for the Poor and Advancement of the English Nation promised by Inclosure of the Waste and Common Grounds of England*, 1653.

[3] Op. cit. p. 67.

[4] In 1611 appeared a pamphlet by Arthur Standish, *The Commons' Complaint*, concerning the "general destruction and waste of woods in this kingdom," and stating that "the want of fire is expected (!) without the which man's life cannot be preserved." We are reminded of present-day anxieties respecting the exhaustion of the coal-mines.

The demand for labour at the present day comes chiefly from the tenant-farmers. In the eighteenth century it came also from yeomen and copyholders. But the demand of these different classes varied in intensity. The small cultivators needed no regular labour but that of their wives and children.[1] The middling class employed besides some farm servants drawn from the families of the cottagers and little farmers;[2] while the few large farmers, whose numbers increased as the century went on, made regular use, in addition, of day-labourers, also drawn from the same class. In winter day-labour was also sometimes employed for threshing by middling cultivators working on the three-field system.

The larger farms were, at the time of Young's *Tours*, chiefly to be found in the counties of Northumberland, Worcester and Norfolk. On one Norfolk farm of 1,100 acres he found in 1767 six servants and six day-labourers regularly employed, while forty additional men were taken on during harvest. 600 acres were under corn and root-crops (100 of winter-corn + 250 of oats and barley + 50 of pease + 200 of turnips), 400 sown with grasses, and 100 were sheep-pasture. Another farm of 300 acres employed three servants and eight labourers, two-thirds of the area being arable and one-third pasture. The stock

[1] This appears very clearly in the *Cumberland Survey*. "Very few (labourers) . . . wanted in this county, as the farms are so small, the occupiers and their families are generally sufficient for the work without any foreign aid." "From the number of small farms there is an uncertainty of a day-labourer meeting with constant employment, as the occupiers want assistance only on particular occasions." Bailey and Culley, *Cumberland*, p. 37. So in Westmoreland:—"Labour is dearer in Westmoreland than it is in almost any of the counties either to the north or south of it. This probably is owing to the great number of small landholders or statesmen above mentioned, who doing the work upon their own estates, with their own hands and those of their families, are, perhaps, disinclined to work for other people." Pringle, *Westmoreland*, p. 30. So also in the west of England, where small holdings were numerous. "No inconsiderable share of farm-labour is done by farmers themselves, their wives, their sons and their daughters." Marshall, *Rural Economy of the West of England*, 1796, I., 107.

[2] "Great part of the work performed by annual domestic servants." "In general they (farms) do not exceed £100 or £120 per annum." Walker, *Hertfordshire*, 1794, p. 13. "Small capitals, the offspring and the parents of industry and frugality, can no more find employment, from the want of small occupations. This thins a fruitful nursery of well-principled servants." Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., 116. Cp. the quotation from Stone in n. 2 on pp. 82 f.

kept on this farm was 30 cows, 10 oxen for fatting, 200 sheep and 10 horses. A third holding of 220 acres (180 arable and 40 grass) employed three servants and four labourers, and kept 20 cows, 80 sheep and 10 horses. On a Surrey farm of 300 acres, 240 being arable, there were four upper servants and two boys, besides ten labourers.[1]

In harvest-time, however, additional labour was practically always required. Women and children were employed to a greater extent, labourers came from neighbouring counties, and industrial labourers left their workshops in the towns for the healthier work of the country, as they had done from time immemorial. Kent writes of a certain part of Norfolk, in 1794, that it was found very difficult to get in the harvest, because there was no considerable manufacturing district in the neighbourhood. In many places Scotch, Welsh and Irish labourers made their appearance, the Scotch in the northern counties, the Welsh in the west, and the Irish over a great part of the country. They were as a rule supplied by a contractor. The annual Irish immigration has survived even the famine of 1845–6, and the rapid depopulation of Ireland which followed it. Besides the harvesters, Welshwomen came to the market-gardening districts round London, summer by summer, and Welsh cowmen came from the hill-country to the lowlands during winter.[2]

[1] *A Six Weeks' Tour*, 2nd ed., 1769, pp. 25, 79, 252. Cp. also the computations of the number of servants and labourers on pp. 302 f.

[2] "In hay and harvest time it is inconceivable what numbers of tradesmen and handicraftsmen flock into the country." *An Inquiry into the Present Price of Provisions*, etc., 1773, p. 50. In Herefordshire grain was "cut by persons who come from the mountainous parts of Wales annually for that purpose, mostly from Cardiganshire. A foreman generally agrees for a whole farm at a stated price per acre, who finds the requisite number of hands to fulfil his contract, at whatever price he can." Clarke, *Herefordshire*, 1794, p. 29. "In the East Riding, a corn country, with few manufacturers, the farmers . . . depend much on West Yorkshire for harvest labourers." Marshall, *Northern Department*, p. 375. "Irishmen do most of the reaping in Hertfordshire." Young, *Political Arithmetic*, p. 104. In south Wilts, "in the corn-districts, the resident labourers are seldom numerous enough to get in the harvest. 'Taskers' or 'labourers by compact' from the more populous parts of the county, or from Somersetshire, or other neighbouring counties, take the wheat by the acre to reap." Davis, *Wiltshire*, 1794, p. 83. In the Isle of Wight,

The farm servants would include a bailiff or foreman, a ploughman, cow-keeper, shepherd, carter, and dairy-maids, and some young lads and girls as assistants. They were all hired for some length of time, and received board, lodging and washing in the farmhouse, besides a fixed yearly wage. We have seen that memories of a state of society in which persons could be compelled to become "servants in husbandry" seem to have still lingered in the Isle of Man even at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[1] And in the south-west of England, where many peculiarities survived, we find that parish children of seven and eight years old were apprenticed to the farmers, who treated them badly and set them to the lowest and most unpleasant tasks. Many of them absconded, since they did not legally attain their freedom till they had completed their twenty-first year.[2]

"during the last harvest there were near 700 Dorsetshire and Somersetshire men employed." Warner in A. and W. Driver's *Hampshire*, 1794, p. 65.

Stone, in his *Suggestions*, p. 29, is very full on this point; and, as he shows the casual connections, I give his account only slightly abbreviated. "The occupation of a common field farm is," he says, "generally managed by servants hired into a farmer's house; and the necessity of this is, that the labour attendant on the farm is early and late; young men, immediately under a farmer's eye in his house, who are unencumbered with any connections abroad, are preferred; such is the practice, and such the reason generally and truly assigned for the measure. As there are no quicksets to plash, weed or mould up, trees to preserve, wheat, peas or beans to drill, or in many situations no considerable quantity of turnips or beans to hoe, *labourers on these accounts are unnecessary*, and the chief employment . . . is to thresh out the farmer's grain. In some counties (Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, and other counties, even northern counties) labourers proceed down to the fen counties to take mowing . . . . And if the farmers in the most unenclosed counties . . . . where there are no manufactories, could get no further assistance during their harvest than from their own inhabitants, their grain would frequently be spoiled . . . they are therefore dependent upon both the friendly aid of our brothers of a sister kingdom, and the manufacturers of this . . . Several parts . . . the most cultivated in corn, and most enclosed, are so very populous, that the harvest can be got in without any extraordinary aid."

As to migrations other than in harvest, the *Middlesex Survey* tells us that "the number of women, mostly from North Wales, who are employed by the farmers and gardeners round London, in every summer season, in weeding, and making hay, in gathering green peas and beans, in picking fruits, and carrying strawberries and other tender fruit to market is astonishing." Middleton, *Middlesex*, 1811, p. 382. And Davies, *N. Wales*, p. 356, that "men (40 to 60 years of age) have from time immemorial come down from Merionethshire into the lowlands of Denbigh and Montgomeryshire as professed feeders of cattle during the winter."

[1] Cp. Chapter I. pp. 30 f.

[2] Marshall, *Rural Economy of the West of England*, 2nd ed., 1805, I., 113.

Servants were generally hired at hiring-fairs. Where none such were held they had to go from farm to farm seeking a new situation. Marshall preferred this latter system, arguing that it was degrading to servants to exhibit themselves at the fairs, and that these unsettled them and inclined them to change their situations.[1] This disadvantage to the employers may account for much of the dislike of hiring-fairs expressed in the eighteenth and even the nineteenth[2] century. On the other hand the fairs had, and still have where they are held, the effect of bringing wages to a greater equality. Probably the most important "Statute" in England was that at Polesworth in Leicestershire, though most towns and many villages in that county had their own. Marshall says that on September 27th the servants streamed into Polesworth on foot from all quarters within twenty-five or thirty miles, the number in the market being estimated at from two to three thousand. Every servant in the district regarded himself as freed for this one day "from servitude." In earlier times the fair had been a gathering place for noisy and disorderly crowds, chiefly because gaming-tables had been allowed: but this had recently been stopped by the authorities. Now, however, the fears of prudent persons were directed to the troupes of ballad singers, who were said to "disseminate sentiments of dissipation" in minds which should have been bred in principles of industry and sobriety. Popular songs were held to have much influence in forming the morality of the agricultural population; and it was pointed out that if instead of the "trash" set before them whenever they came together they heard songs in praise of conjugal happiness and country life the most beneficent results might have been anticipated. But besides this, the fair meant the interruption of all work in the district for several days every year, and a distaste for labour lasting for a considerable time longer, and that in most parts at a time when work was pressing.[3]

[1] Marshall, *Rural Economy of the West of England*, I., 110.

[2] Cp. Kebbel, *The Agricultural Labourer*, 2nd ed., 1887, under head *Hiring*.

[3] Marshall, *Rural Economy of the Midlands*, 2nd ed., 1796, II., 19 f.

Further south, in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Wilts and Berks, the servants appeared at the fairs wearing badges: the carter with a bit of whip-cord in his hat, the cowman with a strand of cow-hair, the milkmaid with the same in her bosom. In the north the men fastened a nosegay in their coats. In the same way men of the building-trades were to be seen every day at the Cheapside and Charing Cross markets with their various emblems.[1]

Till turnips and clover became common crops the chief duties of day-labourers were the spreading of manure, sowing, weeding, threshing (which however on small farms was done by the servants), draining, thatching cornstacks and haystacks, and the various operations of setting and maintaining hedges; then the work required by the sod-burning which was still customary in many parts of England;[2] and in the last place, harvest-work. I have found no trace of any system or organisation for supplying labour of this kind at all comparable in importance to the hiring-fairs for servants. The labourers regularly employed on a farm mostly came from the village itself. Harvesters, according to Davies' account, were hired by the day in the market-places of Wrexham, Ruthin and Denbigh, but in Rhuddlan they contracted on Sunday morning for the whole week.[3] The daily hiring he considers a senseless custom, handed down from days when much less corn had been grown. Its only advantage was that the harvester found his own quarters; but this was far outweighed by the waste of time involved in going to the market every morning. Elsewhere the contract was for fourteen days; but ordinarily it was for the whole time of harvest or "till the song of harvest home be over."

The hiring-fairs did not take place everywhere at the same time. In the south-east of Wales they were held in April or May, in the south-west in the autumn. The roughness of the markets in the early eighteenth century may be seen from Defoe's *Tour*, I., 115. At the "Horn-Fair" at Charlton in Kent "the mob . . . take all kinds of liberties, and the women are eminently impudent that day."

[1] Eden, I., 32, note.

[2] Cp. the description given by Marshall, *Rural Economy of the West of England*, 2nd ed., 1805, I., pp. 142 ff.

[3] Davies, *N. Wales*, p. 354.

In Durham, however, we again meet with a sort of daily auction of harvesters, resulting in an undue forcing up of wages by the competing farmers.[1] But the scarcity of information on this whole subject is an indication that farmers found labourers in their own neighbourhoods without any great difficulty, supplementing the labour so obtained by that of the village artisans and manufacturers as well as of those belonging to the nearest town: while regular traditional relations existed with the contractors who supplied Scotch, Welsh, and Irish labour, as with the cowherds who came from those parts.

Day-labour was paid partly by time and partly, as in mowing, reaping, threshing and draining, by the piece. So far as conclusions can be drawn from the scanty evidence available for the early eighteenth century, wages were not then paid exclusively in money. Not only was drink supplied during working hours (beer in most places, cider in the south-west) but part of the actual wages was received in kind. The Essex Wages Assessment of 1661 defines the pay of day-labourers according as board was or was not given: and so does the Lancashire Assessment of 1725, though here the money wage appears in the first place.[2] In Cumberland, about 1735, day-labourers received from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week "with board." An old labourer from the neighbourhood of Carlisle said that about the same time the daily wage was 3d. "and victuals" in winter, and 4d. "and victuals" in summer. In Northumberland at the same date it was 4d. "and victuals," whereas in 1795 it was 10s. a week, house and fuel, but "no board."[3]

Throughout the eighteenth century, however, payment in kind was gradually dying out, though even at the end of the century relics of the system were still to be found and almost throughout it farm servants regularly boarded and lodged in the farmhouse. For harvesters all cooking was usually done in the farmhouse, because during harvest every minute was valuable, and often no fire was lit in the cottage kitchens, man, wife and children being all in the

[1] Bailey, *Agriculture of Durham*, 1810, p. 263.
[2] Eden, III., p. cii.
[3] Eden, I., 568 f., and II., passim.

fields, while others of those employed had no home in the place. Sometimes the farmer provided the materials only; and during harvest the allowance of drink was considerably increased.

The labour-system of Northumberland,[1] a county where there were very large farms, showed two peculiarities. In the first place, farmers there kept few servants in the farm-house; at most there might be two men and two women, very likely domestic servants. The ploughmen, carters, shepherds, etc., had each his own house and garden, and were as a rule married men. They were hired by the year. They had each to provide a woman to do certain work, e.g. weeding and hay-making, at fixed wages; and when corn was threshed (a piece-work job) a woman [2] must be there to see to the winnowing of the grain. In the second place, the greater part of the wages was paid in kind, the men receiving a free cottage, the keep of two cows, and a certain quantity of wheat, oats, rye, barley, peas, and wool, besides which their coals were drawn free, and so on. As many sheep were kept for the shepherd as would bring in an annual profit of from £4 to £5; and if the flock were very large, so that an under-shepherd had to be employed, the number of sheep thus allotted was increased accordingly. In the upland parts there were shepherds owning hundreds of sheep. Of Westmoreland, too, we are told that "a hind may be hired by the year at £20 a house, a garden, and a patch of ground to grow potatoes, and an unmarried man at from ten to twelve guineas a year, and board and washing." [3] Here as elsewhere day-labourers of both sexes were employed in addition to the regular servants and the women whose labour they were bound to provide; but the number appears to have been relatively smaller here than in other counties. Northumberland had preserved the labour system of the mediæval home-farm.

[1] Bailey and Culley, *Agriculture of Northumberland*, 1794, p. 53.

[2] So in the Middle Ages: "winnowing, it appears, was generally performed by women." Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, II., 273; cp. also I., 261.

[3] Pringle, *Westmoreland*, p. 291.

In Wales, survivals of primitive conditions were still common at the end of the eighteenth century. Cottages were still sometimes built by the co-operative labour of the neighbours, who assembled on a day appointed and set themselves vigorously to the work. At the beginning of the nineteenth century (so that we must suppose they had continued at least into the first third of the eighteenth) there still lingered in South Wales memories of the "love-reaps," where the harvest labour was a return for services of all kinds, and where many even came and worked without any obligation simply for the pleasure of it, and to have their share in the good living provided for the harvesters.[1] And even in 1814 the remote and mountainous districts of South Wales still contained little farmers whose lives belonged to the patriarchal age when the division of labour was still unknown, and when every family produced for itself whatever tools or utensils it needed, whether of iron, wood or leather.[2] Here too in many parts the labour system was peculiar. In Cardigan, Pembroke, and Caermarthen it was still not uncommon to find a sort of feudal dependence, "where labourers and their families may be considered as heirlooms or appendages to the farms, to work all the year round, and one year after another, at a fixed low rate per day, without victuals. The advantages to the labourers, counterbalancing this low rate of wages, are a house, garden and keep of a cow, at a low rent, the setting of a quantity of potatoes in a fallow, and bread corn at a fixed rate per bushel all the year round, which is considerably lower than the market, but these perquisites are far from being general." [3] In another case we hear of similar payments in kind being made to threshers.[4] So on the Isle of Man the custom obtained of "assigning to each labouring family a cottage and a few acres of land, without payment of rent . . . . on a compact that the individuals of that family

[1] Davies, *S. Wales*, 1814, II., pp. 285, 286.
[2] Ibid. I., 183. And cp. *Wealth of Nations*, I., 3 (on the Highlands of Scotland).
[3] Ibid. II., 283.
[4] Ibid. p. 285.

shall work for their landlord, and receive . . . . wages somewhat lower than at the ordinary rate. Sometimes for the harvest labourer a small quantity of land without a cottage" was allotted.[1]

Such then was the labourer's position in the village community, and such the system under which he worked. We have next to make enquiries as to his income. We have seen that the peasantry—the small freeholders, copyholders and farmers—did their own work with the assistance of their families, the middling cultivator made use chiefly of servant-labour, day-labour being added only in harvest time: but the larger occupiers regularly employed both servants and labourers. The former received a fixed money-wage in addition to payment in kind in the shape of board and lodging in the house of their employer. Our present concern is with the economic position of the day-labourer. We know that as a rule he had a small holding of his own, and that he also had incomings from the commons, where these still remained.

The species of commons and common-rights which existed in the parish of the three-field husbandry and the common fields were as follows. There was first the fallow pasture, and next two kinds of stubble pasture, namely on the shack-fields and on the lammas-lands. On the shack-fields only those had rights who owned land in the village fields. A larger number, often every inhabitant owning or renting a house in the village, had rights on the lammas-lands, which included the meadows after the hay had been carried.[2] A third class of common-rights

[1] Quayle, *Isle of Man*, 1812, p. 122. Cp. also *Wealth of Nations*, I., 10, on the Scottish cottiers:—"In countries ill cultivated and worse inhabited, the greater part of landlords and farmers could not otherwise provide themselves with the extraordinary number of hands which country labour requires at certain seasons."

[2] "(Lammas lands) are open arable and meadow lands. The commoners upon lammas lands are sometimes the inhabitants of the parish; sometimes a class of inhabitants, as freemen of the neighbouring town, or even the householders and perhaps more generally the owners or occupiers of ancient tenements within the parish usually termed tofts . . . Shack land is open arable land, held in severalty during a portion of the year, namely, until the crop has accrued. After the crop has been removed, these lands become commonable to all the parties having a severalty right, but to no others." G. W. Cooke, *On the Laws of Rights of Commons*, 1864, pp. 47, 50.

applied to that part of the manor which was neither arable nor meadow. This was the common proper, the arable and meadow being "commonable lands," and the common or "common lands," being defined as "uncultivated wastes upon which no severalty rights attach."

Leaving out of sight as comparatively rare common rights in the royal forests and exclusive rights granted (more often in the north than in the south) to individuals in return for particular services, as e.g. sheep-heaves, we have to distinguish between stinted pastures and the ordinary common pastures. On the former certain persons were entitled to run each a certain number of cattle; and some jurists held that they were not true commons, which involved "a right of feeding one's beasts upon another's land." [1] On the common pastures the right of pasture was not limited to certain individuals, and the number of cattle to be run was determined by quite a different standard.

The economic distinctions, however, are more important for our purposes than the juristic. As runs for young cattle there were the "grass yards," already mentioned, lying close to the houses. In the meadows, or "ings," hay was grown. The best pasture, used for milch-cows or draught oxen, was that afforded by the stinted pastures or "hams" lying on such borders of the ploughlands as were suitable for the purpose, or on wet valley lands, or dry, gravelly soil not fit for hay. Pasture for the more ordinary stock—horses, breeding cattle, sheep, pigs and geese—was found on the common pastures, consisting of the more out-lying parts and worse soils of an estate, left in their natural condition, and useful also as producing wood and fuel.[2] In hill or mountainous districts these commons were divided into upland and lowland, the

[1] Cp. Cooke's observations on the point, op. cit., p. 43. He refrains from expressing any judgment on the matter. Cp. also Elton, *Observations on the Commons Bill*, 1876, p. 36:—"It depends upon minute points respecting the title to the soil apart fom the herbage, whether the persons with grazing rights are to be treated as commoners or as partners in a land estate."

[2] Marshall, *On the Appropriation and Enclosure of Commonable and Intermixed Lands*, 1801, pp. 3 f.

latter being often damp or marshy. Adam Moore, whose pamphlet was quoted above, and who was a Somersetshire man, divides the "wastes" into "uplandish" and "marish." And so Billingsley, in his *Agriculture of Somerset*, opposes "upland commons" to "moors," a distinction which the *General Report on Enclosures* accepts as applying over the whole country. Eden incidentally makes a similar division, noticing that Castle-Carrock, in Cumberland, had 600 acres of "low common," and 1,500 acres of "mountainous common." [1]

According to Moore the upland commons served in the seventeenth century for the breeding and feeding of horses, oxen and sheep, and for the cutting of furze, fern and fire-wood. At the end of the eighteenth century, according to the *General Report*, they served chiefly as sheep-walks—a view with which the author of the *Political Enquiry* agrees in all essentials. He says that "commons on a chalk rocky soil" could only be used by farmers, who bred sheep there, and found that they produced better wool than other lands, while the sheep manured their arable by being folded on it at night.[2] Adam Moore said that the horses and oxen bred on upland commons were of little value, "and the sheep only finde a little better entertainment than the greater cattell"; while the "marish" commons he cannot paint in too dark colours. Cold, sour, bristling with weeds, and often under water, their ground everywhere trodden by the beasts into deep pits, he calls them pest-holes for cattle. "Hither come the poor, the blind, the lame, tired, scabbed, mangie, rotten, murrainous and all kinds of diseased and scurvie cattell," to infect sound animals. The beasts strayed and were stolen, and the gain of six years might be lost in the seventh. The *General Report* also says that the "moor commons" were often flooded; and even if the weather was favourable, the profits on them were very small owing to the number of animals depastured. Moore adds the well-known objections to the commoning of geese and

[1] Eden, *State of the Poor*, II., 65.
[2] *A Political Enquiry*, p. 50.

swine. And finally, eighteenth century writers frequently note that sheep cropped the grass so close that very little was left for the other beasts.

Such was the view of the commons taken by influential writers: and I have given it as they put it purposely to allow the reader to come under its influence. But in my opinion it is in part an erroneous view. The reader will probably have been led to conclude that the commons can have been of little use to the smaller people, and that their enclosure must have been an unmixed benefit to the nation. Many contemporaries certainly fell into this mistake; but they were those who saw things from a distance only. In fact, our authors give with great ability and firm conviction a quite misleading description. They always leave us under the impression that commons and wastes were identical, that they lay at the extreme outskirts of the village lands, and were marshy or otherwise objectionable.

But the facts of the case were otherwise. The author of *An Enquiry into the Advantages and Disadvantages resulting from Bills of Enclosure* (1780) strongly denounces this identification; and both he and the author of *Cursory Remarks on Inclosures* (1786) agree, conditionally or entirely, to the enclosure of wastes, while they object to enclosure of commons on the ground of their great economic importance. There is no question but that swampy commons did exist in mountainous districts and in the neighbourhood of rivers and lakes; but all commons were not of this kind. In 1893, in order to get some clear idea of the facts, I visited the village of Soham in Cambridgeshire, then still unenclosed and so giving a good notion of the English village of the old style. Here I found four well-used commons still existing, which, as I was told, kept the parish from being so "poverty-stricken" as the other parishes of the neighbourhood. They were all of them partly surrounded by cottages crumbling with old age. They were neither on particularly bad soil, nor marshy, nor overgrown with gorse and heath, nor falling into the condition of mere wastes, nor at the extreme

bounds of the parish; on the contrary, they were in a fairly good condition. One of them was separated only by a ditch running behind a row of houses from a pasture field which was in private occupation, and the private field and the common were evidently on the same soil; in fact, one could not avoid the suspicion that some lord of the manor once cut this piece off the common for his own use. One may ask, too, how the eagerness to enclose commons could be explained if they had all been in such a bad state and such unfavourable positions as our authors lead us to suppose. Their condemnation of upland wastes, as distinguished from their description of the commons, we may accept, since it is supported by the author of the *Political Enquiry*, who was no enemy of the small holder.

Besides these various kinds of common, we have also to distinguish between the various kinds of common right. English jurists speak of common appendant, common appurtenant, common in gross and common *pur cause de vicinage*.

Common appendant is the right necessarily bound up with the three-field system of the ancient village, and to take it away would have meant severe injury, if not actual annihilation, to the husbandry of the individual members. It was naturally, in strict law, limited to the cattle necessarily used in tillage,[1] so that it was only by an extension of the right that commoners came to be allowed to run as many cattle on the common as they could fodder through the winter. Swine, goats and geese were not admissible under this right, and it was legally construed as being necessarily bound up with the possession of ancient arable. Where it was apparently connected with a house, it was assumed that the word "messuage" included the land attached, of which every cottage must have had at least four acres.[2]

[1] "The cattle turned upon the common by virtue of the common right appendant must be the cattle which plough and compester the land to which the right is appendant." Cooke, op. cit., p. 11.

[2] "Where common has been held to be appendant to a messuage or cottage, it appears to have been upon the ground that a messuage means not only a dwelling-house, but also the land attached to it, and that a cottage must necessarily have had (when this case was decided) at least four acres of land attached to it." Ibid. p. 13.

Common appurtenant, on the other hand, was not an economic consequence of the three-field husbandry. It was any right of common connected with essart land, or with a holding not lying within the manor, or which admitted the running of stock not strictly belonging to the traditional husbandry, as geese, pigs and goats. The lawyer construed it as resulting from a gift by the lord of the manor, which must be proved by deed of gift or by long usage; and it was therefore almost as unlimited in character as was the donor's power. Although it appears as pertaining to definite holdings, it need not necessarily be connected with agricultural land.[1]

We need not here discuss *common in gross* and *pur cause de vicinage*,[2] nor certain legal questions which do not immediately concern us,[3] as to do so would only introduce complications without adding any information of real importance.

Coming back to our proper subject, it will be recognised at once, when the extent and content of these rights of common are considered, that the cottager class (leaving the squatters out of account for the moment) must, by reason of the varying grades it included, have shared in almost all these advantages. Of course this is not to

[1] "A right of common appurtenant may be for a certain limited number of cattle, and it would appear that, when their number is once certainly ascertained, the right may be attached to a dwelling-house or cottage without land." Cooke, op., cit., p. 21.

[2] For the sake of completeness I append Cooke's definitions. It will be seen that common in gross is a personal right not related to the possession of land, while common *pur cause de vicinage* relates to mutual rights on the boundary lands between two or more villages. "Common of pasture in gross is an integral right which enables a man, without connection of tenure, to depasture his cattle in the ground of another person. It may depend upon prescription, or may be at the present day created by grant. A common in gross can only be prescribed for by parties capable of taking by grant; inhabitants or occupiers as such cannot so take, and cannot therefore so prescribe." "Common of pasture by reason of vicinage. This is said to exist when the inhabitants of two or more townships or vills lying contiguous, or the tenants of two or more manors adjoining to each other, have been accustomed to intercommon out of mind; the commonable beasts of either straying into the other's fields without molestation." Ibid. pp. 27 f.

[3] Cp. the discussion between Mr. Scrutton, op. cit., Chap. II., and Professor Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, pp. 265 f. I am glad to find that the conception of common rights at which I arrived on economic grounds is confirmed by the Russian jurist. Without the support of his opinion I should not have ventured to express myself so certainly.

say that every member of the class had rights of common, nor that any member enjoyed all the different kinds of right. And it is often quite impossible to discover from the existing evidence on what particular right a given use of the commons reposed.

Certainly a large number of cottagers shared in the stubble-common on the lammas-lands, generally by right of their occupation of a house, that is to say as members of the village. There is also one indication that occupiers exercised rights on the stubble-common of the shack-fields,[1] but this is not unequivocal. On the other hand, I do not remember any case in which they are named as sharing in the stinted pastures. At any rate, the right which was most important to them was the right to use the common proper. Some could prove rights of common appendant [2] or appurtenant, claiming either by long prescription or, in the great majority of cases, as occupiers of cottages or small holdings.[3] Further, the fact that commoners had power to sell their rights for a limited period, and at the end of the eighteenth century often did so, was in favour of the cottagers ; [4] and in order to estimate properly the importance of the commons in the economy of cottagers and squatters, we have to remember that common rights included the right to cut turf or gather firewood, furze and fern, etc. This was of considerable value. The right of cutting timber seems to have been unimportant in most districts during the eighteenth century.

Concerning the squatters little need be added to what has already been said. It is clear that while some of them

[1] "In relation to any change in the system of husbandry, the poor have no other concern with it than what results from a loss which in some places is sustained of the right of common shackage, or the feeding their geese and pigs in the stubbles after harvest." *General Report on Enclosures*, p. 35. But the tone of this sentence makes it conceivable that the author is speaking of stubble-common in general as shackage.

[2] "Most of the stocking cottagers have rights appendant to the cottages without land, under the denomination of auster tenements." Ibid. p. 7.

[3] "In other cases they kept cows by hiring their cottages or common rights." Ibid. p. 13. In Elsworth there were 62 claims upon the common, "but not more than two belonging to real cottagers." Young, *Annals*, XLIII., p. 43. In Morden Guildon, "some cottagers have a right to keep one cow, some two, and some three." Ibid. XLII., p. 497.

[4] A summary of the evidence on this point will be found in the *General Report*, pp. 3 f.

could show a title by prescription most were possessed of no right at all.[1]

To both cottagers and squatters the profit they made on their stock was very important. They depastured live stock of all kinds on the commons; a minority of them horses, the majority cows, sheep, pigs and geese. As regards the sheep, pigs and geese this is undisputed; but that the majority of them kept cows was sometimes denied.[2] Some at least of our authorities, however, lay great stress on the fact,[3] and both the *General Report* and Young's enquiries into the results of enclosing show that cows were very commonly possessed before the enclosures. Tendency, it would appear, played a greater part in inducing these denials than even the lack of the faculty of observation. It was desired to prove that the poor would not suffer by enclosure; and therefore the assertion was made that they had profited little by the commons. I do not think that the description of the value of the commons to the cottagers given in the *Political Enquiry* [4]

[1] The proposition of the *General Report* (p. 12) that "in some cases many cows had been kept without a legal right, and nothing given for the practice," appears to refer to this class.

[2] Kent states that in general "cottagers who live at the sides of commons neglect the advantage they have before them. There is not, perhaps, one out of six, upon an average, that keeps even a cow." *Hints to Gentlemen*, p. 100.

[3] The author of the *Inquiry into the Advantages* asks what anyone must think of propositions of the kind, "who saw the poor man's cow passing by his gate from the common to furnish the numerous family with a delicious meal . . . . or sees the cackling geese marching in array, which annually pay more than their owner's otherwise hard-earn'd rent?" p. 64. The Earl of Winchilsea wrote: "When a labourer has obtained a cow and land sufficient to maintain her, the first thing he has thought of has been, how he could save money enough to buy another." Young, *Annals*, XXVI., p. 228.

[4] Pp. 43 f. This evidence is supported by that of the author of the *Agriculture of Yorkshire*. In the North Riding "the labouring classes of both sexes generally set out in life as servants in husbandry. In this occupation they are liberally paid, and many are able to save in a few years sufficient to enable them to marry, and start as housekeepers." The cottagers were helped by their wives, whose "industry is not exceeded by that of the women in any country." Marshall, *Northern Department*, p. 474. Similarly we are told that the Lancashire farmers were *quondam* labourers, who when they had saved something "enter upon small farms, and afterwards, in proportion to the increase of their capitals, enter upon larger concerns." Holt, *Lancashire*, 1795, p. 13. Young, again, says that small farms (20–30 acres) were "the first step which those labourers, servants, and others in general take, when possessed of money enough to begin business." *Farmer's Letters*, 3rd ed., I. 94.

is of universal validity. The author was a practical agriculturist; but I conclude from certain indications that his description applies only to the cottagers of the north and midlands. Within these limits, however, his information is very important. The commons, he says, were most useful to the cottagers, manufacturers and small shopkeepers, but especially to the former, who as a rule worked for the farmers. The common rights were a spur to industry, and an encouragement to young people to marry, because they provided a means by which they could bring up their children decently and respectably. These children would become farm-servants, and when a lad and girl had in the course of years saved some £20 or £30, and had found a house in the neighbourhood of the common, they would marry. Their small capital would be laid out on as many cows, calves, sheep, pigs and poultry as possible; and while the husband went as day-labourer to some farmer in the district, the wife looked after the stock, and by this means together with the wages she earned at hay-making and harvest made as much towards the housekeeping as her husband did. The writer goes on to say that he knew personally many cottagers in his neighbourhood who were possessed of two or three milch cows, two or three calves, forty or fifty sheep, two or three pigs, and fifty to a hundred head of poultry, including chickens, geese and turkeys. For all of which they only had to pay the rent of their house and vegetable garden, together with that of a bit of meadow from one to three acres in extent.

Some of the enemies of the cottagers, while not going so far as to deny that they kept stock, claimed that they lost many beasts on the moors, and, in especial, that they were unable to fodder them through the winter, being therefore obliged to leave them on the commons, where they often perished miserably. Also they said that little pasture was left for the cottagers' stock, the farmers enjoying the chief benefit of the commons.[1]

[1] "Upland commons are principally depastured in the summer with sheep, and if a cottager were able to stock ever so largely, the winter

The author of the *Political Enquiry* in no way disputes the existence of these drawbacks, but points out that on the other hand the cottagers paid nothing for their privileges. Nor was their stock always left out all the winter. Many of them agreed with some farmer to feed it for a certain payment; and Sunday visits from the owner and his family to the beasts thus boarded out were a recognised institution. Further, it was not true that the farmers were the chief users of the common pasture. They only needed it for a short time in the year; though here we must distinguish between the old-fashioned farmer on the three-field system and the new man with his pasture-farming or four fields. Both of them valued the commons because they got their use for nothing. But the farmer of the old style had no need to look so jealously on the cottager's stock as did the new man, who kept a larger number of beasts. For though the old farmer had more per farm and per area, the new farmer worked on the large scale, and often devoted himself exclusively to pasture-farming. Hence to him the cottager's rights were extremely inconvenient.[1] The small farmers, says the *Political Enquiry*, only used the commons between spring and hay harvest.[2] It was the large farmers and the

keeping, and his total inability to furnish them with food between the 5th of April and the 12th of May (before which times the commons ought not to be stocked) would be such a drawback, as effectually to exclude every idea of profit. On the moors, cottagers within a moderate distance from the common generally turn out a cow or two, perhaps a few geese, and I believe the latter are the only profitable stock. Not one in ten rent land to buy winter subsistence. In summer the moor commons are frequently inundated, the cattle must be removed, and temporary pasture hired on extravagant terms. On the other hand should the season be favourable, the redundancy of stock, from an unlimited right of feeding, by reducing the produce of the cottager's cow so much below what it ought to be, deprives him of every real advantage." *General Report*, 1808, p. 5. The passage is taken word for word from Billingsley's *Somersetshire*, p. 50, and applied generally.

[1] "There have been cases in which one or two great farmers whose lands were conveniently situated adjoining a large, dry and valuable common . . . . might possibly make a greater profit by sweeping off the food, and starving all other stock, by flocks of folding wethers." *General Report*, p. 9. "Our commons . . . . are advantageous only to the most considerable men of the parish." Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 82.

[2] By which means he has all his first grass crops in barns or stacks, instead of a great part of it being eaten off by his own live stock." *Political Enquiry*, p. 41.

cottagers to whom they were of serious importance. The latter, though they sometimes grew corn and vegetables on their acre or two of arable and in their gardens, bought most of their provisions from the little farmers out of the money they made on their stock and its products.

Thus where they still had the use of the commons, or where they could rent a bit of land, they would fat a pig, and, as we have said, keep geese, sheep and a cow or two. So that they had milk, which served to eke out their own frugal meals, as well as for their children; and now and then a bit of meat. With what they made on their butter, eggs, pigs, and poultry they bought not only their provisions, but also the few tools they did not make themselves. For, like the small farmer, they did much of their own work. They built and repaired their own cottages and little farm-buildings; and in many parts of the country both flax and wool were spun by the women and children, the latter being knitted into the family stockings and socks. Very often they spun for the market as well, that domestic industry being still common throughout the country.[1] The commons also, as we have seen, provided the fire which burnt on their hearths in winter.

Evidently, therefore, the cottagers were as a class in no uncomfortable position. They were at any rate better off than the agricultural labourer of the present day, and than many industrial labourers. For most of them had something, namely their live stock, to call their own: they were independent of the fluctuations of the market, and were not very hard hit even by occasional unemployment.

But they were obnoxious to many interests. The rent-hunger of the landlord and the tithe-hunger of the parson fell in with the views of the large farmer (who wanted the

[1] "The general employment of the female part of a labourer's family . . . . in most parts of Cumberland is spinning . . . . when they are not otherwise engaged." Eden, II. 84. "In Rodmarton (Gloucestershire) the men are wholly employed in agriculture, the women in spinning wool, and the children in carding it." Ibid. p. 207. See also p. 902 (South Wales) and p. 139 (Devonshire, where six or seven hundred women are said to be employed in spinning). These conditions were of course survivals from those common at the beginning of the century. The *Agricultural Surveys* contain many similar notices.

whole common for his own cattle, and found the land-holding and stock-owning day-labourer too independent),[1] and with those of the land-agents, who disliked the trouble of dealing with a number of small tenants.[2] They were all agreed that the cottager must be sacrificed in the interests of the community. Hence the bitter way in which this class and the little farmers were harried. After Adam Smith, their extinction was held to be a necessary condition of progress. Men hesitated at no means which could serve this end. One of their bitter enemies alleged that it was only just that the commons should be taken from them.[3] The measure might seem cruel, but it was no more cruel than to make a poor devil pay his debts, and it was equally proper: for "the bite of the commons

[1] "The great farmers dislike them (cottages near the commons), because they consider them as infringements on their own rights of common; and I know many farmers who for that reason will not employ any cottager who is possessed of any kind of beast, altho' he may have a just right and conveniency to keep them." *Political Enquiry*, p. 48. To this dislike was added the (ungrounded) fear that the labourer would be too independent, and that he would steal to feed his cows. "Where now are your objections, gentlemen who have opposed this idea" (of giving the labourers land)? asked Arthur Young, when he had convinced himself of the groundlessness of the indictment. "Where is your agrarian law—your apprehended independence—your dreaded disquieting the minds of the poor—your making thieves for the support of cows—your entailing misery on the poor?" *Annals*, XXXVI., 640. "The generality of farmers have a dislike to seeing the labourers rent any land." For in the first place they wanted the land themselves, and in the second place they wanted "to have the labourers more dependent upon them." *Letter of the Earl of Winchilsea* to *Sinclair*, in Young, *Annals*, XXVI., 242. It was written in 1796.

Any desire to work for himself is always ascribed to idleness on the part of the cottager. He is only industrious if he works for an employer, "A cottage with a few acres of inclosed land gives the occupier a right to turn stock to those common hills . . . . The profit of that stock is expected to supersede the necessity of labour." (*sic*) Clarke, *Herefordshire*, p. 28. It does not appear to enter the writer's mind that men with so much land and pasture would have enough to do in working for themselves. They are supposed to have the advantage of the farmer in that "they can be idle for a day when they please": which leads to the moral observation that "it remains to be proved that idleness contributes to the happiness of man . . . . the man who feels obedience (i.e. to the farmer) unpleasant, is not likely to have it soon in his power to command." Ibid. p. 75. Boys is equally naive: "When a labourer is put into the possession of three or four acres of land, his labour is, in a great measure, lost to the community"! in Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., 370.

[2] Young, *Annals*, XXVI., p. 243.

[3] *Observations on a Pamphlet entitled "An Enquiry into the Advantages and Disadvantages resulting from Bills of Enclosure."* Shrewsbury, 1781, pp. 4 f.

belongs to the landowners." The right of common was said to correspond only to "the ability of each occupier to maintain in winter upon his old enclosed land the same stock as the common supported during the summer"; though, as we have seen, this was not the case. Moreover, cottagers were mixed up with squatters; and, as interests not seldom mask themselves under moral pretences, it was claimed that "instead of schools for virtue" the cottages were "most fruitful seminaries of vice . . . . habitations of squalor, famine and disease." [1]

Later, when enclosures had made considerable progress, it was asserted that villages which possessed commons had to pay as large a poor-rate as the enclosed parishes. This was true in many cases; [2] but it did not prove what it was adduced to prove, viz. that commons made the poor lazy and idle. For the great increase of the poor-rate in unenclosed parishes resulted from the immigration into them of small and often impoverished people from the enclosed parishes.[3] The conditions were similar to those described in the passage already quoted from the Settlement Act of 1662. "Poor people . . . . endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best stock, the largest commons or wastes to build cottages, and the most woods for them to burn and destroy." The commons, of course, could not support unlimited numbers.

The reader will now understand why war was waged against the cottages in the eighteenth century even where no enclosures were planned. They were a thorn in the side of the large farmers, a burden to the estate agents (who had to collect their rents, provide for their periodical

[1] To this the author of the *Political Enquiry* replies :—"Tho' this may be sometimes the case, it is by no means general; and when frequent, I attribute the abuse more to the bad magistracy in the neighbourhood, than as an evil *naturally* arising from such detached cottages." Op. cit., p. 48.

[2] For Young's witness to the fact that landowning cottagers meant lower poor-rates see *Annals*, XXXVI., pp. 497 f. Cp. also Crutchley, *Rutland*, p. 8.

[3] "Full half of the labouring poor (in Hothfield, Kent) are certificated persons from other parishes: the above mentioned common, which affords them the means of keeping a cow, or poultry, is supposed to draw many poor into the parish." Eden, II., 288. "They would not have had these people, nor so many other poor, if the common had not attracted them." Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., p. 560.

repair, and hear the grievances and complaints of their tenants), and good citizens, motived by virtuous indignation, set themselves to abolish these supposed nests of thieves.[1] The whole wholesale destructions, however, were due to the enclosures.

Thus the political, social and economic conditions were changing, and the changes made in the direction of uprooting the people from the soil. The old common-field husbandry, with its commons and small holdings, had kept them on the land, because it had offered a fairly certain if modest subsistence to the surplus population. It had, however, meant that population increased only slowly. "Moral restraint" (to use Malthus' phrase) had been really operative.[2]

Before going on to trace the break-up of the old village community, it will be well to glance at Gregory King's estimate of the number of families belonging to its various classes, in order to arrive at some approximate idea of their relative proportions. According to him there were, in 1688, 16,560 families of nobles and gentlemen (the bishops not included), 12,000 of them coming under the latter category; 160,000 yeomen (40,000 greater, 120,000 smaller); 150,000 farmers, and 400,000 cottagers and poor. Besides these he mentions 364,000 "labouring people and out-servants"; but it is impossible to say how many of these should be counted as belonging to the agricultural population. The number of families of

[1] "It has been the fashion for many years past to destroy the cottages in the neighbourhood of commons, on the pretence of their being injurious to the public, and serving only to harbour thieves, etc." *A Political Enquiry*, p. 48. As early as 1727 Laurence had written: "The Wastes and open fields draw to them the poor and necessitous, only for the advantage of pilfering and stealing." *A New System of Agriculture*, p. 47. Cp. also *A Consideration of the Causes*, etc., quoted in Cunningham. II., 702; "The Nurseries of Beggars are Commons."

[2] "The practice of consolidating farms . . . . operates as a check to matrimony, tends to licentiousness of manners." Duncombe, *Herefordshire*, p. 33. "In the last ten years we see a high price of corn and a great multiplication of births . . . . as the labourer has no advancement to hope." Young, *Suffolk*, 1797, p. 260. The reader who desires to pursue this important point further is recommended to go through Eden's *State of the Poor*, and also Young's *Minutes concerning Parliamentary Enclosures*, and Howlett's *Enquiry into the Influence which Enclosures have had upon the population of England.*

gentle blood is thus to those of the yeomen and farmers put together as 1 to 20 ; the number of yeomen is rather larger than that of the farmers ; and the cottagers are about one-third as many again as the yeomen and farmers together.

The reader will perhaps grant that the proposition with which this description of the eighteenth century village began has been justified. Its great characteristic was completeness of gradation, social and economic. The smaller gentry connected the great landlord with the wealthy yeoman ; and the yeomanry were intermediate between the gentry and the large copyholders and farmers. These again shaded into the little men, whether yeomen, copyholders or leaseholders. And as yet there was no proletarian class, solely dependent on wages and in particular on money-wages, and expecting to leave its children in the same position. The day-labourers as a class had stock, land and pasture, or at least pasture ; and the farm-servants looked to attain a modest independence : though here and there in the south individual proletarians may already have existed. The small man had not yet lost his hope of rising in the world. Having saved something as servant or cottager, he could take a little farm, and so pass on to a large one, and by thrift and industry might perhaps attain the position of a small freeholder.[1]

II.—The Break-up of the Village.

Most of the factors in the change which came upon the structure of rural society have already come under consideration in Chapter I. They were, first, the more luxurious standard of life adopted by the landlord class, and their consequent need of a larger income ; secondly, the enclosures, for the most part results of that need ; then the increased price of provisions, to which the enclosures

[1] It is instructive to note what Rudge, the author of the *Gloucestershire Survey* (1807) understood by the term "gradation of society." He writes : "The greatest of evils to agriculture would be to place the labourer in a state of independence" (i.e. by allowing him to obtain land) "and thus destroy the indispensable gradations of society." In spite of this he denies any desire to "prevent his rise in the scale of society." Op. cit., p. 48

contributed; next the system of the large farm, pioneered about this same period; and finally the new method of cultivation, which demanded men of a different class and larger capital. But besides these there were other forces at work. There was the attraction which the great industry, then just developing, exercised on capacity, enterprise and capital. And there were the indirect taxes, imposed to pay the interest on the growing national debt rolled up by trade wars and colonial wars, which of course increased the cost of living.

The smaller gentry were among the first to fall victims to these forces; and for two chief reasons. First, they liked to imitate the luxurious habits of the richer members of their class, and their incomes were not sufficient to enable them to do so. And secondly, they were in many cases possessed of neither the intelligence nor the capital necessary to enable them to adopt the new methods of husbandry. The increasing burden of taxation made their struggle for existence still harder. With the exception of the few who succeeded in making their way into the upper ranks of the squirearchy, they became clergymen, attorneys, shop-keepers, large farmers, army officers or civil servants, or sought in the East Indies the wealth they could not find at home: and their estates were bought by manufacturers, merchants, artisans, lawyers and farmers.[1]

The yeomanry had in certain counties been tending to disappear even in the eighteenth century: though all that can be said for general statements like those quoted in note 2 below [2] is that they would not have been made without some kind of foundation. The note given at the

[1] Arthur Young, himself descended from this class, says of his grandfather that "with only a part of the present estate (Bradfield) he lived genteelly and drove a coach and four on a property which would in the present time only maintain the establishment of a wheelbarrow." *Travels in France.* Lecky, in his *History of the Eighteenth Century*, also deals with the fate of the smaller gentry. See VI., 170 f. and II., 557.

[2] "By the influx of riches and a change of manners they (the yeomanry) were nearly annihilated in the year 1750." *A Letter to Sir T. C. Banbury, Bart., ... on the Poor Rates and the High Price of Provisions*, p. 4. "I most sincerely regret the loss of that set of men who were called yeomen." *An Inquiry into the Connection*, 1773, p. 126.

beginning of this chapter shows that they were entirely false. There are, however, certain indications as to both the causes of this tendency and the sphere to which it was limited. Stone says that "where a spirit of improvement first broke out" the yeomanry sold their land in order to acquire sufficient capital to rent a large farm.[1] Now the counties in which agricultural improvements originated were Norfolk and Leicestershire. As regards Norfolk, Stone's theory is confirmed by Marshall;[2] and Leicestershire had no considerable yeoman class at the time when its *Survey* was made, though "sometimes" breeders and graziers were "owners of the occupations."[3] The same quick response to economic stimulus was shown by the yeomanry when opportunities of profit-making were offered by trade or industry. Thus in the *Agriculture of Cheshire* (1808) we are told that "From the advantages which have been derived from trade, and from the effects of the increase of taxes, which have prevented a man from living with the same degree of comfort, ... many of the old owners have been induced to sell their estates, and new proprietors have spread themselves over the country, very different in their habits and prejudices."[4] And as early as 1794 Holt reports from Lancashire that the wealth to be made in industry was leading men to invest their capital in it, so that "the yeomanry, formerly numerous and respectable, have greatly diminished, but are not yet extinct."[5]

[1] "It has been a common circumstance in counties where a spirit of improvement first broke out, that the yeomanry . . . . have been induced to sell them, to purchase a stock sufficient to improve larger tracts of land, the property of other persons, which they have hired upon improving leases." *Suggestions*, p. 42.

[2] Marshall, *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, pp. 6, 9.

[3] Pitt, *Leicestershire*, p. 212.

[4] Holland, *Cheshire*, p. 79.

[5] Holt, *Lancashire*, p. 12. So also Dickson and Stevenson's *Lancashire*, 1815, p. 90, where it is said that the yeomanry were "on the decline, yet far from being extinct." They still held a great part of the soil, especially in the northern part of the country. Gaskell's theory of the *rôle* played by the yeomen in the development of modern methods of production (*The Manufacturing Population of England*, 1833), is not improbable, but he does not prove it. He thinks that, unable to meet the competition of the large farmers, they bought spinning-machines, and though ruined in many cases, yet in many became successful manufacturers.

These were not, however, the sole causes of the decrease of the yeoman class. The influence of the high taxation has just been referred to, and it was felt by the yeomen as well as by the little squires in other counties besides Cheshire. And Marshall, in his account of Norfolk, mentions the more pretentious manner of life adopted, a change which, it is very remarkable to notice, was injurious even to the statesmen of Westmoreland. Remembering the wretched economic position of these last it will be easily understood that even a small addition to their expenses might so upset their budgets as to result in a "daily" decrease in their numbers.[1]

Dr. Rae, in an article entitled *Why have the Yeomanry Perished?*[2] notes as among the causes of their economic depression that as the means of communication were developed they lost the carrying trade, the greater part of which had been in their hands; while as the factory system grew up they also lost the income thay had made by domestic industries. But these factors do not seem to me to have counted for much. I think that Dr. Rae drew his conception of the yeomanry too much from the single instance of the Cumberland and Westmoreland statesmen, who moreover belonged only in part to the yeoman class. He makes a more valuable point in ascribing their downfall to the period after 1815, and to the speculation in landed property consequent on the high corn-prices of the war period. Many yeomen had mortgaged their land in order to buy more, or to introduce improvements, or to provide for some member of their family; and they had become accustomed to such an expensive way of living that when the peace brought prices down again many went bankrupt.[3]

How great was the loss to the community involved in the decline of this class may be seen in the lament of an anonymous contributor (whom Marshall takes to be

[1] Pringle, *Westmoreland*, 1794, p. 40.
[2] *Contemporary Review*, 1883.
[3] For confirmation cp. the *Report on Agriculture* of 1833, and for a closer description see my article on *Der Untergang des englischen Bauernstandes in neuer Beleuchtung*, in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, 1907.

Stanley) to Holland's *Cheshire*.[1] He says that the yeomen stood too little above the poor to provoke their envy, and were the connecting link between the gentleman and the farmer. They gave unity and harmony to the village community, making each acquainted with all and interesting all in what concerned any, and bringing the welfare of each class to be the affair of the whole body.

I have designedly left unnoticed, so far, two factors in their decline. The first only concerned the richer members of the class. These, from the sixteenth century onwards, were continually passing up into the ranks of the gentry; and in this way the peasantry gradually and unremarked lost their natural leaders—a point whose importance has so far as I know never been properly estimated. The second has only to do with the lesser yeomen, and is entirely overlooked by Dr. Rae. I refer to the fatal influence of the enclosures on all small holders, which will be best discussed in connection with the fate of the remaining classes of village society. But in considering this we have to distinguish very clearly between four entirely different processes: first, the engrossing of farms; secondly, the consolidation of holdings; thirdly, the division of the commons; and lastly, the raising of the money required to pay the expenses of enclosure.

The engrossing of farms drove thousands of small and middling farmers off their holdings. They went to swell the ranks of those we have already mentioned as unequal to the demands of the new forms of tenancy and methods of production, and after a hard struggle were obliged to give up their farms.[2] Those who were able to get a small

[1] Holland, *Cheshire*, p. 80, and Marshall, *Western Department*, p. 125.

[2] "In almost every common-field parish, the number of farmers has been considerably reduced within 20 or 30 years." Stone, *Suggestions*, p. 41. "There is however one class of farmers which have undoubtedly suffered by enclosures, for they have been greatly lessened in number; these are the little farmers . . . . That it is a great hardship suddenly to turn several, perhaps many of these poor men, out of their business, and reduce them to the day-labourers, would be idle to deny . . . . but it is doing no more than the rise of the price of labour, tithe, rates and taxes would infallibly do, though more gradually, without any enclosure. These little arable occupiers must give way to the general improvement of the kingdom and the burthens which have accompanied it." *General Report on Enclosures*, p. 32.

farm in some other village tried to carry on their accustomed way of life;[1] but the times were not favourable to an increase of small tenancies, and most of them had to earn their bread as agricultural labourers,[2] while others settled in the manufacturing districts,[3] or emigrated to America.[4] In consequence of the decrease of small farms their rents rose, which meant a new difficulty in the way of the little farmer.[5]

Even the cottagers who rented an acre or two of land had to feel the effects of engrossing. Their land was taken away from them and added to the acreage of some large farm; and the farmer's land-hunger was so great that in many places even the cottage-gardens were thrown into the bargain. They were particularly desirable on account of the thorough cultivation they had received.[6]

The consolidation of holdings directly concerned only freeholders and copyholders. The larger of them found

[1] "Many small farmers . . . obliged, either to turn labourers or to procure small farms in Deddington, or other parishes that possess common-fields." Eden, II., 591. "He (the farmer) is, nevertheless, so bigotted to the ancient mode of field farming, that, was an inclosure of the lands in his parish to take place, he would look out for another open-field situation, rather than subject himself to deviate in the least from the beaten track of his ancestors for the means of subsistence." Stone, *Suggestions*, p. 25.

[2] "The engrossing of farms has increased our labourers 250,000 by that diminution of the farmers it has occasioned." Howlett, *The Insufficiency of the Causes*, 1786, p. 46. This figure, though not statistically accurate, shows the impression made upon a capable judge.

[3] Cp. Addington, op. cit., p. 35.

[4] "Those that could pay their passage having transported themselves to America; and many of those who could not pursue that method for want of money, having actually sold themselves for three years to supply that deficiency." *Cursory Remarks on Inclosures*, p. 5. "The diminution of the specie which those emigrants take with them . . . . cannot be less than . . . . . £2,500,000 . . . . . within 50 years last past." Ibid. p. 8. The small farmers sold their possessions for from £50 to £500. Ibid. p. 6. "Call but for any of the country newspapers—look at the numerous advertisements for the sale of farming stock and implements of husbandry, and—in them—you will read their history." *An Inquiry into the Advantages*, p. 24.

[5] "It must be admitted that where, in consequence of inclosure, the number of farms has been reduced, and the land let out in large farms, it has been productive of raising the rents of small farms in uninclosed parishes, and thereby dispossessing the most useful set of men." Stone, *Suggestions*, p. 40.

[6] "The labourers have been dispossessed of their cow-pastures in various parts of the midland counties. The moment the farmer obtains his wish, he takes every particle of the land to himself." Young, *Annals*, XXVI., 243. Cp. Ibid. XXXVI., 506, and Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, pp. 56, 33.

their profit on it when once they had got over the heavy expenses entailed by the process; and the largest of all probably rose into the class of the gentry. But to the little men, whether yeomen or copyholders, it was rather injurious than otherwise. They certainly got a bit of land in place of the strips they had previously held; but not infrequently the commissioners favoured the great men at their expense; and they lost the use of the fallow and stubble pastures. Indirectly the position of the cottagers was also affected, as in many cases they lost the opportunity of gleaning.[1]

But for the little farmers, yeomen and copyholders, and the cottagers and squatters—that is to say for the mass of the village community—by far the most serious of the changes was the division of the commons. Only the yeomen and copyholders could clearly prove rights of pasture;[2] and though they did receive their share in the division, the scraps of land allotted to them could not feed the stock they had been accustomed to drive upon the commons: so that the small freeholders were, as will be remembered, almost universally opposed to enclosure.[3] To the little farmer division was still more injurious. Even if after it the landlord still allowed them to keep their holdings, they were short of pasture. It is a well established fact that the relative number of beasts kept tends to increase as the size of holding decreases: and this tendency has been accentuated by the old three-field and common-field husbandry. Thus on the division of the

[1] In Rode, Northants, agriculture was said to be in a miserable state "from the land being in common-fields"; but "the poor make a great deal by gleaning here, several families will gather as much wheat as will serve for bread the whole year; and as many beans as will keep a pig." An opposition of interests indeed. Eden, II., 547.

[2] As for the way in which the rights of villagers were dealt with by by the juristic practice of even the nineteenth century, the following may be cited:—"These rights are held by lawyers not to be sustainable at law, notwithstanding that parties have been in the enjoyment of them for an infinite period of time . . . These rights are held not to be strictly legal and valid, and great difficulties have arisen in consequence." *Report of the Select Committee on Commons Inclosure*, 1844, Vol. V. qu. 300.

[3] "Many, indeed most who have allotments, have not more than one acre, which, being insufficient for the man's cow, both cow and land are usually sold to the opulent farmers." *General Report*, p. 158. In Barrington, "one acre allotted for the right of three sheep and two cows." Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., 513.

commons the traditional methods of farming became impossible. "Strip the small farms of the benefit of the commons," said a judicious observer, "and they are all at one stroke levelled to the ground."[1] As for the great mass of the cottagers and squatters, it is obvious that to them division meant simply that the very backbone of their economy was broken. They had few friends, and many bitter enemies, and were unable to get their case represented in Parliament. They could do nothing, and went empty away.[2] The squatters were for the most part driven off the commons, their cottages pulled down, and the bits of land they had cleared and cultivated made over to those who could prove common rights. In some places they received compensation if they had lived in a house of their own and driven cattle on the common for more than, e.g. twenty years.[3] The unequal treatment they received is explained by the fact that each enclosure was an isolated measure, and the way in which it was carried out depended on the character of the great landowner who desired consolidation and separation, chiefly, if there were several freeholders, and entirely, if the whole village were in the hands of one man.

At the end of the process of enclosure, supposing the small holder to have been allotted a little land, and not cheated out of it by some piece of knavery, he had to contribute his share to the very considerable expenses, which

[1] *An Inquiry into the Advantages*, p. 14.

[2] "Numbers in the practice of feeding on the commons cannot prove their right." *General Report*, p. 158. "In some cases many cows have been kept without a legal right, and nothing given for the practice." Ibid. p. 12. "In 29 cases out of 31 noted, the poor, in the opinion of the ministers were sufferers by losing their cows and other stock." Ibid. p. 14. In 1796, the Earl of Winchilsea wrote: "Whoever travels through the midland counties, and will take the trouble of inquiring, will generally receive for answer, that formerly there were a great many cottagers who kept cows, but the land is now thrown to the farmers; and if he inquires still further, he will find that in those parishes the poor's rates have increased in an amazing degree more than according to the average rise throughout England." Young, *Annals*, XXVI., 243.

[3] "This man lives in a house built on part of the waste, but the lord of the manor not having demanded his due for many years, it may now be considered freehold." Eden, II., 797. Many Acts contained the following clauses:—"All encroachments which at any time within 20 years last past have been made upon the said commons and waste grounds shall be deemed part of the lands and grounds to be divided . . . and shall be divided and allotted accordingly." Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., 564.

it will be remembered were high enough to affect even the landlord's rents. The reader will not be surprised to learn that these costs sometimes amounted to the whole value of his land, and sometimes even exceeded it. If he surmounted this difficulty, he had next to face the question of fencing. The smaller the holding, the more, naturally, did this cost in proportion; and not infrequently it swallowed up what little capital remained to him, or put him under the necessity of borrowing money.[1] Many holders were forced to sell their land in order to pay their expenses;[2] and to them separation and consolidation meant impoverishment. Their money went to Parliament and to the surveyors and attorneys employed, and their land to the neighbouring landlords.[3] To the majority of the little men it was all the same whether they had possessed property before the enclosures or not.

One consequence of all this was that the total stock kept was considerably diminished, quite apart from the fact that improved farming led to the keeping of a smaller stock per acre. The men whose claims to common rights were not recognized, or those whose little farms were thrown into the large ones,[4] or those again who found themselves obliged to sell their land in order to cover the cost of enclosure, drove their beasts to the nearest market, and sold them there, dear or cheap as the competion of cattle dealers and farmers determined. The money they got was of no use to them: they could not buy another cow.[5] They were followed to the market by the men who, as we have seen, were now obliged to reduce the

[1] Addington, *Inquiry*, p. 35, and *Cursory Remarks*, p. 7.

[2] "In other cases, where allotments were assigned, the cottagers could not pay the expenses of the measure, and were forced to sell their allotments." *General Report*, p. 12.

[3] "In Alconbury they could not enclose, and sold, and with those that hired, the allotments thrown to the landlords, and the poor left without cows or land." Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., 566.

[4] "In others they kept their cows by right of hiring their cottages, or common rights, and the land going of course to the proprietor, was added to the farms, and the poor sold their cows; this is a very common case." *General Report*, p. 13.

[5] "The money is dissipated, doing them no good, when they cannot vest it in stock." Ibid. p. 158.

stock they held.[1] Here we have the last act in the drama of proletarianisation. After their centuries-old connection with the soil had been severed, the lower classes on the land lost also the best part of the capital they had acquired by hard work and anxious thrift.[2] And I must beg the reader to notice once again that the smaller yeoman and copyholders suffered almost as much by the enclosures as did the landless cottagers.

The *General Report on Enclosures* speaks here and there of an improvement in the condition of the cottagers. This was where considerable areas of pastures were placed at their exclusive disposal,[3] and made inseparable from their cottages.[4] In Cheshunt, Herts, however, jobbers got hold of these cottages and exhausted the land, as reported by Young in his *Survey* of 1813.

One last point in the expropriation of the masses must be briefly touched upon. The wastes being divided, shelter [5] and firing were no longer to be had for nothing. Men must either pay or go without. And in very few places [6] was any compensation paid for this loss.[7]

From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards,

[1] "The causes were in this manner various, but the result the same." *General Report*, p. 13.

[2] "In most of the enclosures he has known the poor man's allotment and cows are sold, five times in six, before the award is signed." *General Report*, p. 158. Young strikes out the picture in one brief sentence: the poor, "deprecating the measure while in operation, selling their cows when finished, and pouring into the vestry, clamorous for relief." *Annals*, XXXVI., 529.

[3] E.g. "In Heachem little allotments assigned of 2–10 acres, they keep cows and are very comfortable." *General Report*, p. 156.

[4] "Many bettered, their allotments can neither be let nor sold from the cottages." (Northwold). Ibid.

[5] In Stapleton, after the division of the wastes, "labourers find great difficulty in procuring habitations." Eden, II., 209.

[6] E.g. in Northwold. *General Report*, p. 162.

[7] In cases where good results are reported the impartiality of the observer is sometimes doubtful. I give two examples. Mr. Jobson, the Vicar of March, reported "the poor much benefited." (*General Report*, p. 151.) But when Young visited the parish he gave a different account: "Those who had property in their cottages were benefited: those who were tenants were ruined." (Ibid. p. 154). Mr. Billingsley, who, however, tells us frankly that the enclosures "have meliorated his condition," admits that the cottagers have lost all that they had, but says that it had done them good, "by exciting a spirit of activity and industry, whereby habits of sloth have been by degrees overcome, and supineness and inactivity have been exchanged for vigour and exertion." *Agriculture of Somerset*, 2nd ed., 1798, p. 50.

therefore, a new grouping of rural society was in process of formation. The landlord began to take a less important part in village life. Even if he had been inclined to live upon the land, many villages would have been left without a resident squire, in consequence of the concentration of property in few hands involved by entail.[1] Next the smaller squires disappeared, and the yeomanry followed them. Thousands of farmers went the same way: and at the end of the procession there departed also those numerous cottagers and village artisans to whom enclosures had meant the loss of their living.[2] It should not pass unnoticed that in the eighteenth as in the nineteenth century the exodus from the land to the towns was ascribed to the vanity and pleasure-seeking of the rural population, roused by their acquaintance with the servants of the wealthy. So Arbuthnot, and Smollett in *Humphry Clinker*. The exodus was at all events a fact, and injured the little market towns as well as the villages.[3] In place of all these various classes there remained the large farmer, often of town origin, with town customs and a townsman's taste for trade and profit-making, unhampered by sentimental traditions and hereditary relations to the proletarianised masses to whom he gave employment.[4] The cottager class had been transformed into two separate groups: one composed of those few who had made good their claim to some small property; the other of the many who were now exclusively dependent upon wages. The large farmers in their short-sightedness were well content with this result; they had their wished-for labouring class, bound to work for them if it was to

[1] This is well described by Mr. G. C. Brodrick, *English Land and English Landlords*, 1881, p. 123. "In short, absenteeism is the inevitable consequence of a system which concentrates landed property in few hands."

[2] "All these are hereby thrown out of their livings, and with their families and many other families, who are chiefly employed and supported by them, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights and other artificers and tradesmen, besides their own labourers and servants." Addington, op. cit., p. 38.

[3] "Drapers, grocers, butchers, indeed tradesmen and manufacturers of all sorts, as well as innkeepers . . . . are greatly injured by the decrease of the villages." Ibid. p. 47.

[4] See the description in *Cursory Remarks*, p. 20, and *Political Enquiry*, p. 7.

exist, and with no land of its own on which to expend any part of its labour power But even as early as 1813 Stevenson was asking "whether a mere increase of wealth may not be purchased too dearly."[1]

Where the process of development had fully worked itself out the old graded society of the village had disappeared. Equality or similarity of social standing had given way to the opposition between capitalist employers and proletarian labourers; it had become hard to rise in the social scale; and the farm servant when he left his situation had before him no prospect of anything beyond the uncertain daily bread of a propertyless day-labourer.

The extinction of the domestic system of industry meant the disappearance of another class of little farmers and freeholders; though on the other hand, as industry developed and the manufacturing towns expanded, a new class of small property-owners grew up out of successful industrial labourers, little manufacturers and shopkeepers.

Of course the economic and social revolution described in the foregoing pages was not completed all over England at one and the same time. Enclosures and engrossing went on into the nineteenth century, though with gradually diminishing force. Nor was even small farming absolutely swept away. The Reports of the Royal Commission of 1867 show that it had maintained itself in some parts, chiefly in the Western Counties and in pasture districts, but also elsewhere, e.g. in Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Yorkshire and Durham. Again, villages may still be found where neither separation nor consolidation have taken place. Thus, impoverishment did not come upon the agricultural classes all at once; new victims were added to the list year by year. We are not to suppose that in the last hundred years or so a perfectly homogeneous class of agricultural labourers has passed through a perfectly uniform process of development. Still, there are certain great events, such as the rise in the price of provisions, the changes in the Settlement Acts, the reform of the Poor Law, the transition to Free Trade, and others,

[1] Stevenson, *Surrey*, 1813, p. 87.

which have been felt over the whole country at approximately the same time.

Under these conditions the history of the agricultural labourer in the nineteenth century cannot be written by the simple process of taking certain periods and recounting such events occurring within them as concern that class. We are obliged to content ourselves with bringing out as clearly as may be the various factors in the general development and their influence on the labourer. Among such factors enclosure and the system of the large farm remain dominant in the period next following.

The large farm was so closely connected with the economic conditions of the times that no immediate retrogression in that matter was conceivable. But the enclosures, if they could not be stopped, could at least be freed from their worst excrescences. And, in fact, in the nineteenth century the legislature, under the pressure of public opinion, aimed at two main points in this regard, namely at lessening the expenses of enclosure and at securing greater justice for the cottager class. The Act of 1801 (41 Geo. III., c 109), worked for by Sinclair and Young, extracted a number of clauses from various private Acts and enacted that they should hold good in all cases where the special Act did not expressly provide to the contrary. Bills could thenceforward be drafted at less length and therefore more cheaply. Omitting various other Acts passed with the same object[1] we come to the General Enclosure Act of 1845. This introduced many new principles. Enclosure business was entrusted to a Commission instead of to a Parliamentary Committee: the Commissioners were to see that all proposals respected the provisions of the Act, and then to lay them before Parliament in one Bill once a year. Gneist says that the Act brought down the expenses of enclosure to less than a tenth of what they had been.[2] Its promoters had hoped that it would also help the cottager to come by his own:

[1] For an account of the various Acts, see Scrutton, op. cit., pp. 155 f., and for the Acts themselves Chitty's *Collection of the Statutes*, III., 334, f.
[2] Gneist, *Englisches Verwaltungsrecht*, 3rd ed., p. 1036.

but they had reckoned without their Commissioners. For when in 1869 a Committee of the Commons took the statistics of enclosures made since 1845, it appeared that out of 614,800 acres enclosed or in process of enclosure the Enclosure Commissioners had only assigned 2,223 to the poor.[1] Later Acts, that of 1876 in particular, consequently aimed at putting the Commissioners under such regulations as should force them to have some regard to the interests of the poor: and it was said that these provisions accounted for the fact that enclosure came to a standstill. Attempts were made, besides, to preserve commons in the interests of the health and recreation of urban populations: and distrust of the Commissioners called into being a Commons Preservation Society.

III.—The Position of the Labourer, 1760 to 1800.

In the last third of the eighteenth century the effect of the economic and social changes which have so far occupied us was intensified by an accompanying phenomenon already touched on, namely a rapid rise in the price of provisions. This fell with special severity upon the labourers, who, having lost land, common, stock, and free firing, had now to buy all they consumed, and that out of insufficient wages. Contemporary writers are in the most complete agreement on this point. Howlett writes in 1788 that "the price of labour has not advanced in proportion to the advance in the price of provisions";[2] that the price of the quarter of wheat, which from 1746 to 1765 had been only 32s., had risen between 1765 and 1776

[1] The following figures were given in the *Report of the Inclosure Commission* made May 6th, 1869. They refer to enclosures made after the passing of the Act of 1845:—

A.—COMPLETED ENCLOSURES.

Total Acreage allotted.	Acres reserved for Exercise and Recreation.	Acres reserved for the Labouring Poor.
507,700	1,406	1,903

B.—ENCLOSURES PROCEEDING.

Estimated Total Acreage—		
107,104	336	320
Gross Total ..614,804	1,742	2,223

[2] *The Insufficiency of the Causes to which the increase of our Poor and of the Poor's Rates have been commonly ascribed*, 1788, p. 53.

to more than 45s., which by itself would raise the cost of living to the poor by some four million pounds; that to this had to be added the indirect taxes, on soap, leather, candles, etc., imposed owing to the war, and raising the price of the articles affected by about one-fifth: while in the meantime the rise in wages had in many parts of the country, as in his own county of Essex, been hardly more than 2d. in the shilling. A correspondent of his in the southern counties gave the comparative agricultural wages of 1737 and 1787 as follows:—

	1737.	1787.
Labourers in the country	10d.	12d.
Labourers in the neighbourhood of the great towns	16d.	16d.
Threshers	9d.	12d.

In Suffolk winter wages[1] had risen from 10d. to 14d. a day, and harvest wages from 10s. to 12s. a week.

Kent, writing as much as twelve years earlier, in 1776,[2] had said that the price of land and of agricultural products had risen by 60 per cent., but the wages of labour at most by 20 per cent. His experience was in the southern and eastern counties. He said that wages were on an average only 1s. 2d. a day, "taking one place with another." Assuming that the extra wage earned in harvest time covered the house-rent, and that the wife could earn 3d. a day, then the total income would be 8s. 6d. a week. 5s. 3d. of this would have to go for bread alone, so that only 3s. 3d. would remain for all other expenses. While the present high prices lasted, it would be impossible for such families to eat anything but bread, which seemed cruelty to a poor man whose whole life was spent in hard manual toil. Labourers ought to have 1s. 6d. a day, which would about correspond to the rise of prices, and the total income would then be 10s. 6d. In this case they could clothe themselves decently and enjoy perhaps eight or ten pounds of meat with their bread, "which

[1] Arthur Young understands by winter wages the wages commonly paid for forty-one weeks in the year. The other weeks fall under the head of harvest.

[2] *Hints to Gentlemen*, pp. 273 f.

they are surely entitled to by the laws of nature, and the ties of humanity."

Davies, whose comprehensive work[1] appeared in 1795 (though the materials had been gathered earlier), is equally of opinion that "the most effectual measure for giving them immediate relief is to raise the price of labour. It is obviously reasonable and right that the pay of the labourer should keep pace with the general advance in the prices of those things which are necessary for his support."[2] He reckons that in Berkshire the labourer earned—

	£	s.	d.
35 weeks at (say) 7s.	12	5	0
17 „ „ 10s. (piece work)	8	10	0
Per annum	£20	15	0
The wife at 6d. a week „	1	6	0
Total	£22	1	0

or about 8s. 6d. a week. Two household budgets show him that the wage of the husband moved about the point of 8s. In another place he says that the labourer's income was on an average 14d. a day.

Thus we may conclude, on the authority of Kent and Davies, that from 1775-1790 the average daily wage in the southern part of the kingdom was 1s. 2d., while before the revolution in prices it had been 1s.

For the years 1767 to 1770 we have the notes made by Young on his tours through the country, and the statistical averages which he drew from them for districts classed according to their distance from London. The figures are an average of winter, spring and harvest wages, or of winter and harvest only. As to the result of his Northern Tour he reports as follows[3]:—

[1] *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry stated and considered*, 1795, p. 106. According to Davies prices had risen by one-third in the last forty or fifty years, and wages only by one-sixth or one-seventh: for the ordinary wage had gone up from 5s. to 6s., or in some places from 6s. to 7s.; seldom more. Op. cit., p. 66.

[2] Ibid. p. 14.

[3] *A Six Months' Tour through the North of England*, 2nd ed., 1771, IV., 296.

	Miles.	s.	d.
Average wages at a distance from London of ..	50 ..	7	1
„ „ „ „ ..	50 to 100 ..	6	9
„ „ „ „ ..	100 „ 200 ..	7	2
„ „ „ „ ..	200 „ 300 ..	7	0
„ „ „ „ ..	over 300 ..	5	8

According to this the wages of 1770 did not differ from those of 1775 to 1790, except in districts distant more than 300 miles from London.

His tour through the southern counties extended from Suffolk to Wales. He found the average wage to be[1] :—

	Miles.	s.	d.
At a distance from London of	20 ..	10	9
„ „ „	20 to 60 ..	7	8
„ „ „	60 „ 110 ..	6	4
„ „ „	110 „ 170 ..	6	3

so that the average was 7s. 9d. But as a good deal of piece work was done in these southern counties, and when it was done increased the earnings by about one-fourth, Young considered that the true average might be about 8s. He takes this occasion to remark that the average industrial wage was 8d. above the 7s. 9d. average, i.e. was 8s. 5d.

Finally, we have the results of the tour through the east of England. The wages were[2] :—

	Miles.	s.	d.
At a distance from London of not more than..	50 ..	8	7
„ „ „ „ ..	50 to 100 ..	7	10
„ „ „ „ ..	100 „ 170 ..	7	4

Looking at these figures as a whole, there can be no doubt that the average wage between 1767 and 1770, leaving out of account the neighbourhood of London and the extreme east and west of the country, was about fourteen pence a day. In the neighbourhood of the capital it was sometimes considerably higher ; and in the more distant parts of the country it fell to one shilling a day and even less.[3] Further, Young seems to be right when he

[1] *A Six Weeks' Tour through the Southern Counties of England*, 1768, p. 266.

[2] *A Farmer's Tour through the East of England*, IV., 316.

[3] Young himself recognizes this. "Labour in some parts of the Kingdom is certainly too low ; in the West of England, for instance, to have it at several places so low as 5s. or 6s. the year round bears no proportion to the price of necessaries." *A Six Weeks' Tour*, p. 275.

says in another place that there was no change in the price of agricultural labour between 1767 and 1793.[1]

Going back now for a moment to compare earlier conditions, we may cite first a Lancashire wages assessment of 1725[2]:—

	Wages without Board.	Wages with Board.
The best labourers from the middle of March to the middle of September	12d. ..	6d.
The best labourers from the middle of September to the middle of March	10d. ..	5d.
Ordinary labourers from the middle of March to the middle of September	10d. ..	5d.
Ordinary labourers from the middle of September to the middle of March	9d. ..	4d.

According to this, wages varied from 9d. to 1s. a day; which tends to confirm the estimate of Howlett's correspondent, who put them, as the reader will remember, at 10d. in 1737. In 1682 the Suffolk justices assessed summer wages at 1s., and winter wages at 10d., or with board at 6d. and 5d. respectively.[3] According to Thorold Rogers the average wage from 1643 to 1702 was 6s. 4¾d. per week.[4] It does not seem desirable to go further back, because the changes in the value of money make comparison difficult. But from these particulars we may at least conclude that for a century before the rise of prices wages stood at an average of from 10d. to 1s. a day, while from 1767 to 1793 they were about 1s. to 14d.[5]

The year 1793 marks the beginning of a period in which the movement in prices took on an unprecedented rapidity. Just at this time the *Agricultural Surveys* began to appear. Some of them ran into two editions, others were supplemented by the work of new corrrespondents: and for the 'nineties we have also Eden's *State of the Poor* and Young's *Annals*. It is possible, therefore, to trace the movement of money wages, at least for certain coun-

[1] *Annals*, XLIII., 38.

[2] Eden, *State of the Poor*, III., cvi.

[3] Ibid. p. 103. Gregory King, towards the end of the seventeenth century, reckoned the income of this class at £15 a year, or 5s. to 6s. a week.

[4] *Agriculture and Prices*, V., 615.

[5] I do not know what leads Arthur Young to conclude that the average wage in the seventeenth century was 10½d., and that in the eighteenth century, up to 1760, one shilling.

ties. According to the calculations I have made on the evidence thus given, Arthur Young seems to be right in saying that "from those years (1790 and 1793) to 1803 and 1804 labour rose about 40 per cent." ; though of course in particular counties the percentage was more, and in others less. But the rise seems to me to have begun earlier in some places. Between 1804 and 1810 it continued, but I am not in a position to trace these later changes in detail.

The following figures will give some idea of the movement as it took place in various parts of the country. I have not included any data taken from Eden, for the reason that they do not admit of comparison with those of earlier times.

HEREFORDSHIRE.[1]

1794.		1805.	
Servants ..6 to 9 guineas	With board & lodging.	Carter ..10 to 12 guineas	With board & lodging.
Boys ..2 ,, 3 ,,		Bailiff or Dairyman 8 to 10 ,,	
Maids ..3 ,, 4 ,,		Dairymaid 6 ,, 7 ,,	
		Second Maid 2 ,, 3 ,,	
Day-labourers— 6s. and 1 gallon (Summer) 5s. and 3 quarts (Winter)		Day-labourers— 7s. and 2 dinners (Summer) 6s. and 2 dinners (Winter)	
Harvest labourers— 14d. and board		At harvest time wages are twice as high.	
Women— 6d. and 2 quarts, and during harvest board also.			

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.[2]

1788.	1794.	1807.
12d.	Winter 12d.—14d. and beer. Summer 18d.—20d. and beer.	18d. and one gallon, not including harvest.

LINCOLN.[3]

1794.		1799.	
End of harvest to hay-making	12d.—14d.	Winter	10s. 0d. (20d.)
Hay-making to harvest	18d.	Spring	10s. 9d. (21½d.)
Harvest.. ..	2s. 6d. to 3s.	Summer.. ..	13s. 6d. (27d.)
		Harvest.. ..	20s. 0d. (3s. 4d.)

NORFOLK.[4]

Wages rose from 15 to 20 per cent. between 1782 and

[1] Marshall, *Western Department*, pp. 279, 327.
[2] Ibid. pp. 407, 451.
[3] Marshall, *Eastern Department*, pp. 56, 142.
[4] Ibid. p. 371.

1796; between 1790 and 1804 day-wages rose about 40 per cent., and wages generally (including those of farm servants, and piece-work earnings) about 50 per cent.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.[1]

1793.		1811.	
Day-labourers—			
Harvest to hay-making	12d.—14d.	Winter	11s. 3d. (22d.)
Hay-making to Harvest	18d.	Summer	13s. 8d. (27d.)
Harvest	2s. 6d.		

BERKS.[2]

1794.		1813 (materials collected 1807–8).
Winter	12d.—15d.	9s. to 12s.
Summer	14d.—18d.	

NORTHUMBERLAND.[3]

1793.	1796.	1804.
Farm-servants—		
Men .. £8 to £12		£15 to £18.
Women.. £3 to £5		£6 to £7.
Day-labourers—		
Summer 14d.—16d.	2s.	One-
Winter .. 12d.—14d.		third
Harvest 18d.—21d.	2s. 6d.	more
Women—		than
Harvest 12d.—15d.	21d.	1793.
Other labour.. 6d.— 8d.		

DURHAM.[4]

1794.		1810.	
Farm-servants—			
Men	£10 to £14.		£21.
Women	£4 to £6.		£8.
With their entire keep.			
Day-labourers ..	12d. to 18d.	Winter	2s. to 2s. 3d.
At harvest up to 2s. 6d. or more.		Summer	2s. 6d. to 3s.
		Harvest	2s. 6d.
Women	6d.		
Hay-making	8d.	Women	10d. to 1s.
Harvest up to 2s. or 2s. 6d.		Harvest.. ..	2s.

NORTH WALES.[5]

Between 1793 and 1799 wages rose about 30 per cent., especially during harvest; and "since the year 1799 another percentage advance has taken place."

[1] Marshall, *Midland Department*, pp. 411, 422.
[2] Marshall, *Southern Department*, pp. 53, 82.
[3] Bailey and Culley, *Agriculture of Northumberland*, 3rd ed., 1813, pp. 165, 166.
[4] Marshall, *Northern Department*, p. 19, and Bailey, *Agriculture of Durham*, 1810, p. 262.
[5] Davies, *Agriculture of N. Wales*, p. 353.

SOUTH WALES.[1]

Up to 1790 the wage was about 6d. throughout the year: in 1793 in Cardigan it was 7d. in winter, and 8d. in summer; in 1814, 1s. to 1s. 6d.

On looking through these lists it must be admitted that an important rise in wages took place between 1793 and 1812. But Tooke seems to exaggerate when he says "The wages of agricultural labourers and artisans had been doubled or nearly so,"[2] though it is true that in some parts of the country they had doubled since the beginning of the eighteenth century. In any case, the rise was still inadequate to meet the rise in prices, as Tooke says himself:—"The wages of agricultural labourers and of artisans had been raised in a considerable, although *still inadequate* proportion to the increased price of necessaries."[3] The following figures attest this inadequacy. The first table is to be found in Duncombe's *Herefordshire*,[4] and shows that the prices of most provisions had risen from fifty to three or even four hundred per cent. between 1760 and 1804, and that wheat, oats and meat went up to a particularly high figure.

TABLE I.	1691.			1740.			1760.			1804.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Wheat (per bushel of 10 gallons)		3	0		3	0		3	0		10	6
Oats			10			11		1	0		4	0
White Peas								2	6		8	0
Barley								3	6		6	0
Malt								4	0		8	0
Butcher's Meat (per lb.) ..						1			1½			7
Bacon (per lb.)									4			6½
Geese (each)						10		1	0		4	0
Roasting Pig									10		3	6
Fowls (per couple)						6			7		2	4
Pigeons (per dozen)								1	6		4	0
Fresh Butter (per lb.) ..									4½		1	3
Fresh Salmon			1			2			4½		1	3
Coals (per ton)					11	0		14	0	1	4	0

Kent[5] compares the Norfolk prices of 1773 and 1793:—

[1] Davies, *Agriculture of S. Wales*, p. 284.
[2] Tooke, *History of Prices*, I., 329.
[3] Ibid. p. 330.
[4] Marshall, *Western Department*, p. 305.
[5] Marshall, *Eastern Department*, p. 309.

TABLE II.	1773.	1793.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Butter (per pint of 20 oz.)	7	1 0
Cheese (per lb.)	3	6
Fowls and Eggs, about double in 1793		
Pork and Butcher's Meat	3	5
Meal (14 lbs.)	1 0	1 6
Malt (per quarter)	1 12 0	2 8 0

They show that within a period when the rise in prices had indeed begun, but not the marked scarcity of the last ten years of the century, goods were already from fifty to one hundred per cent. dearer. Marshall adds that similar changes had taken place in other counties.

A valuable confirmation and extension of this information is to be found in Young's report on Essex,[1] which shows that between 1767 and 1805 there was an increase in prices of from seventy to one hundred per cent. (cheese not included, as its prices may not be strictly comparable).

TABLE III.	1767. (Young)	1794. (Vancouver)	1805. (Young)
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Butter (per lb.)	6½	10½	1 1½
Mutton ,, ...	4½	4½	7¾
Beef ,, ...	4	4½	8
Veal ,, ...	4½	5½	9½
Cheese ,, ...	3½	6	8

The change in prices in Berkshire[2] may be given as follows, showing an increase of from fifty to eighty per cent.

TABLE IV.	About 1750.	About 1794.
	s. d.	£ s. d.
Flour : per bushel ..	3 4 to 4 0	6 8 to 8 4
Bread : half peck ..	7 to 8	11 to 1 2
Bacon : per lb.	5 to 6	8 to 9
Beef and Mutton : per lb.	3 to 3½	4½ to 5
Pork : per lb.	3½ to 4	4½ to 5
Cheese : best quality, per lb.	3 to 3½	5½ to 6
,, second ,, ,,	2½ to 3	4½ to 5
Malt : per bushel ..	3 0 to 3 6	5 3 to 6 6
Fresh butter	5 to 6	10 to 1 0
Salt Butter	4 to 5	7 to 8
Soap and Candles ..	5 to 6	8½ to 9
Pair of Men's Shoes ..	4 6 to 5 0	6 6 to 7 6
Pair of Women's Shoes ..	2 6 to 3 0	4 0 to 4 6
Wool : per 28 lbs. ..	14 0 to 15 0	1 5 0 to 1 10 0

[1] Marshall, *Eastern Department*, p. 504.
[2] Davies, *Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, p. 65.

I might add still further figures, but will be satisfied with those given above. They show that the increase of prices was most felt in the districts farthest from London, which had only lately been drawn upon to serve the consumption of the capital. It will be remembered that wages were lowest in just these districts. The figures further show that the price of provisions rose between 1760 and 1805 by from fifty to one hundred per cent., and in the more distant parts even by several hundreds per cent.: while wages in the same period did not rise on an average more than sixty per cent., and, between 1760 and 1793 in particular, rose very much too slowly.

For the next period, up to 1813 or 1814, I have no data at my disposal which would justify me in hazarding an opinion of my own. I must therefore limit myself to stating the results of two enquiries made by Arthur Young, one of which extends up to the year 1810, and the other to 1812. The first is to be found in a publication entitled *An Enquiry into the Progressive Value of Money in England*, 1812, and I give the abbreviated form of its tabular summary appearing in Tooke and Newmarch, *History of Prices*, VI., 391. It makes possible a rapid survey of the changes in wages and their purchasing power for various periods from the beginning of the eighteenth century,

The prices of 1804 to 1810 are indicated by the figure 20, which is the base to which the other figures relate.

TABLE V.	Wheat.	Oats and Barley.	Meat, Cheese and Butter (average).	Day Wages (agricultural).	Day Wages (Industrial, Greenwich Hospital).
1600–1699 ..	9¼	8¼	—	8	—
1700–1799 ..	9¼	11¼	10¼	12½	—
1701–1766 ..	7¾	7¼	7½	10	14½
1767–1789 ..	11	11	11½	12½	14
1790–1803 ..	13	16¼	16½	16¾	15½
1804–1810 ..	20	20	20	20	20
1767–1800 ..	12	11½	13½	14	15¾

The second set of figures is contained in the *Inquiry into the Rise of Prices in Europe during the last twenty-five years*, 1815. The author comes to the conclusion (p. 202)

that from the time of his tours in the 'sixties up to 1812 the increases were as follows :—

TABLE VI.	Increase per cent.
Bread	100
Meat	146
Butter	140
Cheese	153
Provisions on an average	134¾
Wages on an average	100

We shall learn the causes of this disproportion between prices and wages later on.

It is not to be assumed that with these figures the labourer's position has been completely set before us. For in the first place vestiges of payments in kind still existed in some parts, which are here allowed for at an estimated money value, but of which I shall have to give some data presently. And in the second place it is obvious that the cottier who could depend on products from his own holding in addition to his wages could obtain a far greater total of commodities than could the propertyless labourer of later times at the same wages: so that for this reason alone it is of little use merely to compare the wages of different periods, even when the value of money has remained constant. Nor shall I attempt to estimate the purchasing-power of wages in relation to wheat: for the bread of the English labourer was not made exclusively of wheat before the eighteenth century, and then only in the southern counties; and even in the worst of times he did not live on bread alone.[1] So that our figures only

[1] The most interesting calculation of the kind which I know is to be found in John Barton's *Observations on the circumstances which influence the conditions of the working classes*, 1817, p. 26. But it goes without saying, after what has been said above, that I consider it to have no real value :—

	Weekly wage. s. d.	Wheat per quarter. s. d.	Wages in Pints of Wheat.
1742–1752..	6 0	30 0	102
1761–1770..	7 6	42 6	90
1780–1790..	8 0	51 2	80
1795–1799..	9 0	70 8	66
1780–1808..	11 0	86 8	60

give us a point of departure in the work of estimating his general condition.

Moreover, the pamphlets of the eighteenth century show that evils were at work which could not be reduced to statistical form. We hear from the most various quarters, and from the most various parts of the country, that as a result of the changes in the methods of production and distribution there were important articles of the labourer's consumption, which he either could not obtain at all—as e.g. milk—or had to buy from retailers at exorbitant prices. "There is still another cause which greatly heightens this distress," writes Kent,[1] "and that is, the disadvantage these poor objects labour under, in carrying their dear-earned penny to market. Formerly they could buy milk, butter and many other small articles in every parish, in whatever quantity they wanted. But since small farms have decreased in number, no such articles are to be had; for the great farmers have no idea of retailing such small commodities, and those who do retail them, carry them all to towns. A farmer is even unwilling to sell the labourer who works for him a bushel of wheat, which he might get ground for three or four pence a bushel. For want of this advantage, he has to go to the mealman, or baker, who, in the ordinary course of their profit, get at least ten per cent. of them, on this principal article of their consumption. . . . . In short, they labour under every discouragement. For the very persons who have the advantage of their labour, and whose duty it is to make their situation comfortable, are often their greatest oppressors; and as the principal farmers of every parish are generally the overseers of the poor, their complaints are frequently made to a deaf ear." And what Kent says is confirmed so far as the county of Durham is concerned by the *General Report on Enclosures*.[2] But he forgot to add that in earlier times many thousands

[1] *Hints*, pp. 263 ff.

[2] "Milk has diminished, owing to the farmers finding the profits of grazing larger, and the unwillingness of too many agents and proprietors to accommodate industrious cottagers with small parcels of land to keep a cow." Op. cit. p. 152.

of cottagers had had cows of their own, which provided them and their children with milk, cheese and butter. The less milk they had, the commoner became the drinking of bad tea in the midlands and south; it was in use at all meals, and was given, unfortunately, even to children. Arthur Young notes as one great advantage of the Irish peasant over the English labourer that the former could obtain milk all the year round.[1]

The same state of affairs is again described by Davies:[2] and he emphasises more strongly that a new method of distribution had been built up along with the new methods of production.[3] "The great farmer (he says) deals in a wholesale way with the miller; the miller with the mealman; the mealman with the shopkeeper; of which last the poor man buys his flour by the bushel. For neither the miller, nor the mealman, will sell the labourer a less quantity than a sack of flour under the retail price at shops: and the poor man's pocket will seldom allow of his buying a whole sack at once."

The case was the same with the consumption of meat. Not only had it risen considerably in price, but in many places it was no longer to be had: it all went to the towns.[4] The greatest sufferers by this state of things

[1] "That the Irishman's cow may be ill-fed, is admitted, but ill-fed as it is, it is better than the no cow of the Englishman; the children of the Irish cabin are nourished with milk, which, small as the quantity may be, is far preferable to the beer or vile tea which is the beverage of the English infant, for nowhere but in a town is milk to be bought." And above he had said, "Generally speaking the Irish poor have a fair belly-full of potatoes, and they have milk the greatest part of the year." *A Tour in Ireland*, 1780, p. 22.

[2] *The Case of Labourers*, pp. 34 f.

[3] In Alcester a mill and a bakehouse were bought for the use of poor consumers. It was found that the bakers gained 6d. on every loaf. Young, *Annals*, XXVI., 59. Forster, in his *Enquiry into the High Prices of Provisions*, p. 136, says:—"Millers have indeed within a few years raised immense fortunes, and bakers in general thrive and get rich in a proportion far beyond what is seen in other trades that fairly rank with them. It has been the general practice in the country till within a few years, for a miller to fetch his grists from house to house, and return them in the same manner when reduced to meal." Cp. also *A view of Real Grievances*, pp. 223 f.

[4] A labourer, speaking to the author of the *Political Enquiry*, wondered "where all the beef and mutton went to, for he was very certain that not one-half of the butchers' meat was now consumed as formerly in poor labouring men's families in the country." P. 71. The Agricultural Surveys for the next few decades give the answer to his question.

were those labourers who had been used themselves to keep and kill beasts. And we note what small and unregarded changes may determine the conditions of a labourer's life when we remember that the necessity of buying flour increased his difficulty in keeping stock. When he got his own corn ground,[1] the bran went to feed his beasts: under the new state of things it naturally remained with the miller.[2]

Such were the consequences of taking away land and common from the labourer. It would have been something if a garden had been left him large enough to supply the necessary potatoes and other vegetables. But even this was not general, especially in the south, as we have already seen. Nor was it only the gardens which disappeared: the cottages went too. Formerly they had been allowed to fall to pieces, or had been pulled down, in order to decrease the number of those who had common rights. Now, with the increase of the poor rates, a new motive appeared, which however produced the same effects: and the system of engrossing added yet another. The labourers were huddled into the empty houses of the *quondam* farmers,[3] while the large farmer of the new style settled himself in the manor-house of some vanished small squire; and the gardens, reduced in size, were often divided up among the labourers, so that each got a mere scrap of land.[4] The

[1] On the disappearance of jobbing millers, cp. Lord Sheffield, *Observations on the Corn Bill*, 1791, p. 9, n.

[2] "A greater proportion of labourers fed a pig formerly than at present, ... Farmers who refuse to sell wheat in small quantities, act very improperly, for the labourer who can buy wheat, gets better bread than he can otherwise procure, and he has the bran towards feeding a pig." Marshall, *Western Department*, p. 242.

[3] "And this destruction (in consequence of the law of settlement) has been greatly promoted by the system of engrossing farms. For the engrossing farmer, occupying sometimes half a dozen farms, converts the farmhouses . . . . into dwellings for the poor. After taking . . . . parts of the garden . . . . for his own use, he divides the rest, as he had before divided the houses, into several portions, allotting to each . . . . about a quarter of a rood." Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, p. 35. "Three small farmhouses have each been divided into three tenements . . . . . forty-five souls will now be found to occupy the dwellings which were before inhabited by fifteen." Young, *Annals*, Vol. XXXVI., p. 115.

[4] "Formerly many of the lower sort of people occupied tenements of their own, with parcels of land about them, or they rented such of others. On these they raised for themselves a considerable part of their subsistence, without being obliged, as now, to buy all they want at shops. And this

repeal of the Act of 1589, in the year 1775, first made this legally possible: but it had long been desired, and practised, by many interested persons in the southern and midland counties.

No great stretch of imagination is required to see that a gradual lowering of the labourer's standard of life was inevitable. Forces over which he had small control obliged him to live almost exclusively on bread and bad tea, as certainly as the governor of a prison regulates the diet of those under his charge. Only in the north was a better standard maintained; and of this we shall speak presently. But would it not be supposed that the superior wisdom of the governing classes would have led them to feel some sympathy with the poor under these conditions? Yet unfortunately such sympathy was seldom to be found. Why did they not eat potatoes? asked some. Why did they not drink milk? enquired others. And was it suitable for them to eat wheaten bread only? said many reproachfully. Davies devotes one chapter of his book to a defence of the labourers under these attacks. They would gladly drink milk, he explains, if they could get it: and they would grow potatoes to feed themselves and to fatten a pig, if only they had the ground for the purpose. But as to eating wheat bread, it was their only substitute for all those articles of food which were now refused them, and moreover was absolutely necessary in the interests of agriculture.[1] These critics showed as much intelligence as the gentlemen whose marvellous acuteness discovered that commons entailed great loss on the nation, seeing that beasts fed on enclosed land could be sold dearer than those from the common pasture.

A few words must be added as to the goods of which the

kept numbers from coming upon the parish. But since those small parcels of ground have been swallowed up in the contiguous farms and inclosures, and the cottages themselves have been pulled down, the families which used to occupy them are crowded together in decayed farmhouses with hardly gound enough about them for a cabbage garden: and being thus reduced to be mere hirelings, they are very liable to come to want." Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, p. 56. Cp. the description from Young's pen of the horrible dwellings of the Suffolk labourers. "The general rent of cottages is from 40s. to £3, with or without a small garden." Marshall, *Eastern Department*, p. 429.

[1] Davies, *The Case of Labourers*. pp. 31 f.

prices were raised by the indirect taxes. All who knew the condition of the poor from personal observation are agreed that the high prices affected them unfavourably. Adam Smith is of a different opinion. He admits that soap, salt, candles, leather and spirits had been made considerably dearer, but he thinks that "The quantity of these, however, which the labouring poor are under a necessity of consuming, is so very small, that the increase in their price does not compensate the *diminution* (!) in that of so many other things."[1] This remarkable proposition first appeared in print in 1776: at a time, that is, when the rise of prices was busying the heads of writers and the fingers of printers over the whole of England. It is the more remarkable since he himself says:—"The high price of provisions has not in many parts of the kingdom been accompanied with any sensible rise in the money price of labour." But the price of provisions was the decisive point for the standard of life for the agricultural labourer.

Without land and without capital, then, the labourer had become the plaything of prices and taxation, even when he had work, and therefore wages to spend. What was his lot when he had no work, or when he was or became unable to work? Davies gives us the answer. "But day-labourers are sometimes in want of work, and are sometimes unable to work, and in either case their sole resource is the parish."[2] However, Arthur Young[3] and

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I., p. 112, 9th ed. 1799. In Streatly in 1796, a labourer spent about £2 7s. 4d. a year upon candles, soap, salt, starch, blue, etc. Eden, II., 15.

[2] Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, p. 55.

[3] "If husbandry improves, it will demand more labour." *Political Arithmetic*, p. 63. "Small farms with their universal attendant, poor farmers, can never form such a system of employ as richer farmers, for . . . . . improvements in husbandry are but another word for increases of labour." Ibid. p. 70.

So, at an earlier date, John Laurence: "So plain is it that Inclosure is the greatest Encouragement to good Husbandry and a Remedy for Beggary, the Poor being employed by the continual labour that is bestowed thereon . . . . (they) will be employ'd for many years in planting and preserving the hedges, and afterwards will be set to work, both in the tillage and pasture, wherein they may get an honest livelihood." *A New System of Agriculture*, p. 47. And before either Young or Laurence, Fitzherbert said that after enclosures "there be many new occupations that were not used before." (*On Surveying.*)

other defenders of the enclosures and engrossments were certain that there would be much more employment to be had as a consequence of the reforms. Let us enquire next whether their assurance was justified.

A broad-minded, objective judgment of the case might be stated somewhat in this way:—With the transition to the new systems of farming, more labour was required than formerly. But the cottagers had holdings of their own and could not be always at the disposal of the farmers: nor were they sufficiently numerous. The landlords and farmers thus found themselves faced by a very terrible dilemma: but at last the sense prevailed that the progress of the whole nation would be served if the small farmers and cottagers were transformed into proletarian labourers. The proletarian forces were created; and by them new realms were to be opened up to civilisation. Suffering was involved in the process; but suffering necessarily accompanies every struggle towards higher ends.

Arbuthnot, himself a large farmer, entirely supports this view. "The benefit which they are supposed to reap from commons," he writes, "in their present state, I know to be merely nominal; nay, indeed, what is worse, I know that, in many instances, it is an essential injury to them, by being made a plea for their idleness; for, some few excepted, if you offer them work, they will tell you they must go to look up their sheep, cut furzes, get their cow out of the pound, or perhaps say they must take their horse to be shod, that he may carry them to the horse race or cricket match."[1] And again: "The certain weekly income of the husband's labour, not attended with the anxiety of the little farmers, will procure more real comfort in his little cottage, and therefore will be more likely to promote population. . . . . *If by converting the little farmers into a body of men who must work for others more labour is produced, it is an advantage which the nation should wish for:* the compulsion will be that of honest industry to provide for a family, which by that

[1] *An Inquiry into the Connection between the present price of provisions and the size of farms*, 1773, p. 81.

means is less liable to become a burden to the parish than that of the little farmer, whose labours, being attended with constant anxiety and distress, seldom prosper."[1]

The italicised proposition might perhaps be admitted if it were not in company with so many false judgments. As it is it must be regarded doubtfully. And facts are against it. The actual enclosures did give extra employment, but they only lasted a short time, and after that the maintenance of the hedges, ditches and banks obviously required little labour.[2] Many farmers, for good reasons, adhered to the three-field system. But where districts which had formerly grown corn were given up to pasture-farming—and we have seen how often this was the case—much less labour was required, and an actual and considerable decrease of population was traceable.[3] Where a more intensive cultivation was introduced, and where commons and wastes were turned into plough-land for corn and root-crops, absolutely more work was required, but the transition to large farming and the consolidation of holdings were counteracting tendencies.[4] Thus if the facts and tendencies on both sides are compared, we shall hardly attain to the conviction that the new system meant an increased demand for agricultural labour over the whole country.

However, a more important consideration is that, if in some parts there was too little labour, in others there was too much: and thus the balance might be redressed. It is true that the working population was much less mobile than it is to-day, but that it was not immobile is proved by the case of the harvest labourers; and the question

[1] *An Inquiry into the Connection between the present price of provisions and the size of farms*, 1773, p. 128.

[2] Even the *General Report on Enclosures* is of this opinion: see p. 35.

[3] "In the counties of Leicester and Northampton, where inclosing has lately prevailed, the decrease of inhabitants in almost all the inclosed villages . . . . cannot but give every true friend of his country a most sensible concern. The ruins of former dwelling-houses, barns, stables, etc., show every one who passes through them that they were once much more extensive and better inhabited." Addington, *An Enquiry into the Reasons*, p. 43. *The General Report on Enclosures* confirms this: cp. p. 35. Contrast the sophistical language of the *Political Arithmetic*, p. 64.

[4] "The rise of the rates is chiefly ascribed to the enclosure of common fields; which it is said has lessened the number of farms, and, from the conversion of arable into pasture, has much reduced the number of labourers." Eden, II., p. 30.

was not of migration to distant parts, but of small movements from place to place. Enclosures were always isolated occurrences, limited to a small district; and we often read that on the completion of an enclosure migrations to neighbouring parishes took place. I shall be reminded here of the law of settlement. But (as I shall have occasion to show) its restrictions were less important than is commonly supposed. It was felt to be very burdensome, and in particular cases its effects were cruel, but it did not prevent the action of demand and supply in the labour market. Eden remarks incidentally that it was put in force in the country "where farms are large, and of course in few hands."[1] If it had been all that is sometimes said, what explanation could be given of the great growth of the manufacturing towns? In the single year 1787, five thousand Irish settled in Manchester.[2] Or how could we interpret the higher rate of wages in the neighbourhood of the towns as compared with purely agricultural districts? Stringent legislation together with mild administration has been noted as a characteristic of absolute governments: but the same phenomenon not seldom appears in the old England of aristocratic self-government.

We have to remember that the economic changes had now turned many farmers into labourers, so that the supply of labour was increased. It may have been scarce in some counties: we have reports to this effect from manufacturing districts such as Lancashire,[3] from the neighbourhood of London, and from

[1] II., p. 744. "The Poor's Rates in this neighbourhood vary from 2s. to 4s. in the pound. The difference in the several parishes, it is said, arises in a great measure from the facility or difficulty of obtaining settlements . . . . Those parishes which have for a long time been in the habit of using these precautions, are not very highly burthened with poor. This is often the case where farms are large, and of course in few hands; while other parishes, not politic enough to observe these rules, are generally burthened with an influx of poor neighbours." There is no reason against generalising this observation, for Arthur Young, too, perfectly understands that the close parishes are to be explained by the great estate and the system of large farming. Cp. *Political Arithmetic*, p. 152.

[2] Marshall, *Northern Department*, p. 259.

[3] The manufactures had induced many "to forsake the spade for the shuttle, and have embarrassed the farmers *by the scarcity of workmen*, and of course, advanced the price of labour." *Marshall, Northern Depart-*

Surrey. In other parts, where there were many small owners, no labouring class had as yet been formed, as e.g. in Cumberland and Westmoreland. But on the whole one does not get the impression that the supply was deficient. In winter, even then, in many districts no employment was to be had, and as early as the year 1788 a Bill aiming at the relief of agricultural labourers during that season was laid before Parliament.[1] The causes of unemployment differed in different neighbourhoods, but since the agrarian revolution of the eighteenth century worked itself out in thousands of independent parishes, nobody made a thorough enquiry into its causes. Just as little does anyone think to-day of an inductive enquiry into the causes of the unemployment of labourers in the towns: deductive methods are easier.

In Winslow the winter unemployment was attributed to large farming and the transition from arable to pasture. But in Maids Morton, where apparently the old conditions still continued, some inhabitants had already become "roundsmen." Perhaps the piece-wages of the capable and industrious took the bread out of other people's mouths in this case.[2] "Work is, chiefly, done by the piece," remarks Eden. Other accounts only allow of the negative conclusion that corn-threshing gave employment only to a few men or only for a short time. In some places the possibility of winter employment was explained by the mildness of the weather; and in one case (Isle of Axholme) by the fact that much hemp and flax was grown in the district.[3] In Kibworth Beauchamp the labourers had had work all the year round in the old times when corn was grown, being occupied in winter by the threshing: but since pasture-farming came in only one-third or even one-fourth as much labour as formerly was required.[4] A contrast will make this even clearer. In

ment, p. 257. For this reason the farmers grew little corn, and it was largely imported in consequence.

[1] Nicholls, *History of the English Poor Law*, II., 123.

[2] Eden, II., 30, 27.

[3] Ibid. I., 570 f.

[4] Ibid. II., 384.

North-Luffenham, a village of the old style, with two linen-weavers who worked for wages, the labourers were occupied the whole winter through in threshing, and earned thereby eight shillings or nine shillings a week.[1]

On these grounds it seems to me probable that the indignation at the laziness of the cottiers and the claim that it was necessary to transform the small farmers into labourers were simply cloaks for the land-hunger of some, and the desire of others to engross farms to themselves. It was not that more labour was required, but that labour of a particular kind was required, and above all cheap labour; to which end a great quantity must be upon the market. To those who still doubt this we commend Marshall's words:—"Farmers, like manufacturers . . . . require constant labourers—*men who have no other means of support than their daily labour*, men whom 'they can depend upon.''[2] And moreover the new farmers, basing their economy more upon day-labour, needed pliable instruments, which could be taken on and dismissed at pleasure. And as they succeeded in creating such a class, wages could remain low in spite of the rise in prices. "The great plenty of working hands always to be had when wanted," writes Davies, "having kept down the price of labour below its proper level, the consequence is universally felt in the increased number of dependent poor.''[3] Here we have the explanation of the slow rise in agricultural wages. That they did rise after the 'nineties is probably to be attributed to three causes: first to increased migration to the manufacturing districts as a result of the mitigation of the law of settlement: secondly to recruiting for the war,[4] which probably claimed a greater number of agricultural than of industrial labourers:

[1] Eden, II., 613.
[2] *Western Department*, p. 143.
[3] Davies, *Case of Labourers*, p. 57.
[4] "The demand for labour has, in general, decreased since the commencement of the war, however, as many hands have been taken off by the army and navy, those who remain and who are able and willing to work may even at present earn a good livelihood." Eden, II., 874 (Sheffield).

and thirdly to the increased cultivation of corn. And here probably we have also the key to the slower movement of industrial wages. The greater influx of labourers from the country held them back, though of course fewer industrial labourers were employed during the war,[1] and the competition of child-labour on the new machines also tended to keep wages down. At all events, whereas at the end of the seventeenth century the pay of the industrial worker was supposed to be twice as much as that of the agricultural labourer, about 1770 Arthur Young found a difference of 8d. only. Or, according to a later calculation by the same writer, agricultural wages rose as from 10 in the period 1701–1766 to 20 in the period 1804–1810, while the rise of industrial wages was only as from 14½ to 20. This phenomenon, as the reader will remember, also drew the attention of Tooke.

But though from this point of view the income of the agricultural labourer appears relatively high, it suffered a decrease on another side. Up till this time the incomes of many families in various parts of the country had received some addition (if only a moderate one)[2] from domestic industry. Spinning had been done for the factors. But with the invention of the spinning machine and the rise of the factory system, this by-employment decreased, and finally vanished altogether,[3] though certain domestic industries, e.g. straw-plaiting, glove-making and lace-making were maintained or introduced in the south.

[1] "At present, constant and regular employment cannot be procured by all who are inclined to work," wrote Eden, speaking of Manchester. Vol. II., p. 357.

[2] "The wages of spinners are, however, very inconsiderable: a woman must labour hard at her wheel, ten or eleven hours in the day, to earn 4d." Eden, II., 84. In South Tawton, however, a spinner could earn £9 2s. 6d. per annum, while her husband earned just twice as much, i.e. £18 5s. Ibid. p. 139.

[3] Before the introduction of the machines the spinners of Seend earned 12d. to 14d. per hank of yarn: afterwards they only got 5d. They could then only earn 2s. 6d. a week; and if housewives, only 1s. "Therefore her maintenance must chiefly depend on her husband's wages, which have not increased in proportion . . . . and therefore the present dear times are severely feltby all families." Ibid. II., 796. In Yorkshire good spinners made 6d. a day, and in Durham from 4d. to 6d. Young, *Annals*, XXVI., 7, 17.

Again, whereas cottiers and small farmers had been able to employ their spare time profitably on their own holdings, there was only one thing for the proletarian labourer to do; namely, to idle; unless indeed he went to the public-house. And that from the time when he lost his property he did carry more pence to the beer-shop, his smaller income notwithstanding, is proved by the unanimous opinion of intelligent and unintelligent observers. He had become more careless and more indifferent; for industry and economy could no longer secure him from pauperism.[1] So the inn-keepers flourished upon the ruins of many comfortable households: and being humane men, they founded benefit-clubs, which however benefited themselves more than anyone else,[2] since the two great benefit-clubs—the cow and the land—had ceased to exist for their clients. Besides the inn-keepers, the bakers and shopkeepers flourished: for they cheated the workman into buying bad goods at high prices, and knew how to tickle his wife's desire for little fineries, and got both of them more and more deeply into the slavery of debt. The pamphleteers of the eighteenth century often relieved themselves by voluble expressions of wrath at the "chandler's shop," the "village shop," and the pedlar, as though these had created the existing circumstances instead of being created by them.[3]

Thus the proletarian class degenerated more and more both physically and morally. Even their outward appear-

[1] So say not only Davies and Howlett, but also Eden, to whom the view taken above is very unwelcome. He says (II., 147) that the changes mentioned "obliged small industrious farmers to turn labourers or servants, who seeing no opening towards advancement, become regardless of futurity, spend their little wages as they receive them, without reserving a provision for their old age; and, if incapacitated from working by a sickness that lasts a very short time, inevitably fall on the parish."

[2] Cp. Hasbach, *Das englische Arbeiterversicherungswesen*, 1883, Introd. and Chapter II., passim.

[3] "The number of ale-houses, which are perdition to the poor, and the real cause of their distress." Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 51. *Some Hints in regard to the better management of the Poor*, 1784, and *A Principal Cause of the Miseries of the Poor*, 1787, are directed against the ale-houses. Vancouver's *Enquiry into the Causes of Poverty* finds the retail-shops to be one cause (p. 41). Similarly Wilson, *Observations on the Present state of the Poor*, 1795. And Marshall, *Southern Department*, p. 9 (Hertfordshire):—"Yorkshire bacon, generally of the worst sort, is retailed

ance showed this. "I found them in general but indifferently fed; badly clothed; some children without shoes and stockings; very few put to school; and most families in debt to little shopkeepers." The women spent as much time in tacking their rags together as would have sufficed to manufacture new clothing. The labourers were ashamed to be seen among better clothed people, and therefore kept away from church.[1]

The most fatal result of these things was their effect upon the younger generation. They grew up badly fed; they had no opportunity of becoming early accustomed to industry and to love of the land by work upon their own holdings; like their parents, they wasted their leisure hours and unemployed days: most of them had no schooling, for their parents could not afford the fee of twopence a week. Fewer servants were required as the middling farmers decreased, and domestics in great houses learnt a manner of life which they could not keep up; the old thrifty habits were lost; the prospects of independence became more and more distant; and foresight in connection with marriage decreased. Thus the young men became thoughtless and improvident like their fathers: they made early and often forced marriages, and in spite of ceaseless labour were unable to feed their families. They became accustomed to little dishonesties; the feelings of pride and self-respect were dulled like other feelings. "What signifies saving, say they. Is not the parish obliged to maintain us when we come to want?"[2] "Go to an ale-house kitchen of an old enclosed country, and there you will see the origin of poverty and the poor rates. For whom are they to be sober? For whom are they to save? . . . . You offer no motives; you have nothing but a parish officer and a workhouse!—Bring me another pot!"[3]

to the poor from little chandlers' shops at an advanced price, bread in the same way."

[1] Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, pp. 6, 28.

[2] Howlett, *Insufficiency of the Causes*, p. 28: and Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, pp. 29, 58.

[3] Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., p. 508.

And who was there to relieve the poor? The upper classes spent a great part of the year and two-thirds of their income in London and at watering-places, and when they came back to their country seats they wanted to bring their finances into order again. The large farmers had equally little humour for giving; though the old-fashioned small farmer had on occasion found something to spare for his poorer neighbours, in spite of his smaller income.[1] However, it would be unjust to admit that the evil increased with such fearful rapidity that charity could no longer have mended matters. Hence the increase of the poor rate, which became still greater during the war, as a result of unemployment and the enlistment of husbands and fathers. Since almost every writer upon the eighteenth century has noticed this, we may content ourselves with a few approximate figures. The rate was something between £600,000 and £900,000 in the last quarter of the seventeenth century: in the middle of the eighteenth it was about £700,000: by 1776 it had reached £1,500,000: in 1786 it was over £2,000,000, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century about £4,000,000. Even if the population had doubled since the beginning of the eighteenth century the increase of the rate would have been enormous: but as a matter of fact the increase of population had only been from five and a half to about nine millions. For our purposes, the statistical evidence that the rise in the rate was not limited to manufacturing districts is still more important. It has often been said that the increase went along with the development of industry. But it took place equally in the agricultural districts. The following table shows the sums actually spent on the poor in counties mainly agricultural: i.e. it shows that part of the poor rate which remains after the amounts allotted to bridges, prisons and churches, etc., have been subtracted[2]:—

[1] Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, p. 57.

[2] *Abstracts of the Returns made by the Overseers of the Poor for* 1783, 1784, 1785: and *Abstract of the Returns relative to the Existence and Maintenance of the poor*, 1804.

	1776.	Average for 1783, 1784, 1785.	1803.
	£	£	£
Bedfordshire	16,662	20,977	38,070
Cambridgeshire	18,079	26,175	56,073
Cumberland	8,029	11,687	29,668
Essex	74,067	94,569	184,428
York (East Riding) ..	11,036	15,499	44,335
Westmoreland	2,834	5,616	14,296

Compare with this the rise in certain purely industrial counties and certain others with a mixed population :—

	1776.	Average for 1783, 1784, 1785.	1803.
	£	£	£
Lancashire	52,222 (52,372)[1]	73,363	161,035
York (West Riding)	50,688	66,695	197,097
Norfolk	64,296 (64,171)	94,670	175,764
Surrey	49,743	66,155	142,411
Kent	80,150	113,061	215,396
Middlesex	80,226 (174,274)	94,012 (195,526)	367,284

If the percentage of the rise for the first class of counties be compared with that for the second, a close agreement will be found. If the period 1776 to 1783, 1784, 1785, the poor rate rose on the whole by about 25 to 50 per cent. : in the second period by about 90 to 100 per cent., in the majority of cases by more than a hundred per cent.: and these cases also are equally divided between the two classes.

The figures are confirmed and explained by the household budgets published by Davies and Eden[2] about the middle of the 'nineties. We add some data from these.

Davies, who was Rector of Barkham in Berkshire, gives the following summary of the expenses, incomes and deficits of six families in the year 1787 :—

	I.	II.	III.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Expenditure	29 4 9	28 15 0	25 17 7
Income	22 2 0	23 8 0	22 2 0
Deficit	£7 2 9	£5 7 0	£3 15 7

	IV.	V.	VI.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Expenditure	24 0 9	25 18 8	24 0 9
Income	23 8 0	23 8 0	22 2 0
Deficit	12 9	£2 10 8	£1 18 9

[1] The figures in brackets are those given in the Report for 1803.

[2] *Case of Labourers*, pp. 131–200 : *State of the Poor*, III., cccxxxix. f.

We will glance at the particulars of weekly income and expenditure in the case of two of these families, whose incomes were similar: viz. No. I. (7 persons), which has the larger deficit, and No. VI. (4 persons), which has the smaller. It will be evident at once how unfavourably the expenses of the first family are affected by its larger number of children.[1]

Expenses.	No. I. s. d.	No. VI. s. d.
Bread or meal	6 3	4 2
Yeast and salt	4	3
Bacon or other meat	8	1 0
Tea, sugar and butter	1 0	10
Soap and starch	2¼	2¼
Candles	3	3
Cotton and wool	3	3
House-rent, clothing, firing, etc.	2 2¾	2 3¾
	11 3	9 3
Income.		
	s. d.	s. d.
The man, on an average	8 0	8 0
The wife, ditto	6	6

Eden's account comes from some time in the 'nineties. I omit his estimates for Bedfordshire, because in them harvest earnings are not taken into consideration, and they, as the author himself says, "go a great way to make up the deficiency." I therefore take the annual budgets of two families in Buckden, Huntingdonshire; and they give rise to the same reflections as the Barkham budgets. One family (I.) consisted of four persons, the other (II.) of six. The incomes had remained the same since 1792, the expenditure had increased.

	1792. £ s. d.	1795-6. £ s. d.
I. Expenditure	25 13 11	26 1 2
Income	22 12 4	22 12 4
Deficit	£3 1 7	£3 8 8

This family covers its deficit by the sale of two pigs and work in a small garden: but it is slightly in debt.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
II. Expenditure	26 7 9	27 6 5
Income	21 17 8	21 17 8
Deficit	£4 10 1	£5 8 9

[1] "Labouring families are generally in real distress, when they come to have more than two children unable to earn their living." Davies, p. 28.

The debt of this family was increasing rapidly, although they lived almost exclusively on barley, water, and a few potatoes. In the last year they had received one shilling a week from the parish. Eden mentions a third family, consisting of three persons only, which had at the end of the year a surplus of £2 9s. 8d.; but only because their house belonged to an uncle, to whom they paid half its proper rent, while they had spent very little on clothing.

In Hinksworth, Hertfordshire, six family budgets show the following deficits :—

		£	s.	d.
I.	A family of 4 persons ..	18	15	0
II.	,, 4 ,, ..	21	3	7
III.	,, 6 ,, ..	27	2	3
IV.	,, 6 ,, ..	25	6	2
V.	,, 7 ,, ..	39	15	0
VI.	,, 8 ,, ..	41	9	3

We will analyse the expenses of three of these families, viz. of Nos. II., IV. and VI. They paid weekly for :—

	II. £ s. d.	IV. £ s. d.	VI. £ s. d.
Bread, wheat-flour and barley meal	8 1 ..	10 5 ..	12 7
Fuel for the oven	3 ..	4 ..	6
Yeast and salt	4 ..	4 ..	5
Bacon and pork	2 6 ..	3 4 ..	(?)4 4½
Tea, sugar and butter	1 5½ ..	1 9½ ..	2 7
Soap	5 ..	5 ..	7½
Cheese	6 ..	7½ ..	1 0
Candles	3½ ..	4 ..	4
Small beer	5½ ..	6¾ ..	6¾
Milk	3½ ..	4 ..	6
Potatoes	9 ..	1 3 ..	2 0
Thread and yarn	3 ..	4 ..	6
Total ..	15 7 ..	1 0 0¾ ..	1 1 11¾[1]
			1 5 11¾

Their annual expenses are :—

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Board (as above)	40 10 4 ..	52 2 2 ..	67 10 11
House-rent	2 0 0 ..	2 0 0 ..	7 5 0
Clothing	5 15 10 ..	6 5 10 ..	8 12 10
Fuel	3 15 3 ..	3 15 3 ..	4 6 0
Birth or funeral expenses ..	1 3 6 ..	1 3 6 ..	1 3 6
Total ..	£53 4 11 ..	£65 6 9	£88 18 3

[1] There are several little errors in the tables which are easily corrected, but here the source is not apparent. The addition makes £1 1s. 11¾d. Eden makes it £1 5s. 11¾d. His figures give only 4½d. for bacon and pork; and it seems to me most probable that by a printer's error "4s." has been omitted: for all the families pay a sum increasing by so much per head for this item.

The weekly incomes are :—

	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
The man (on an average) ..	8	4	9	2¾	8	9¾
The wife (,, ,,) ..	1	9	1	6		7¼
The children (,, ,,) ..	2	3	4	8	5	0
Net income from a cow		—		—	3	10
Total	12	4	15	4½	18	3
Annual Total ..	£32	1 4	£40	0 7	£47	9 0

Thus these three families were only able to earn about 60, 61 and 63 per cent. respectively of the cost of their maintenance. For bread, flour and meal, fuel for the oven, yeast, salt and potatoes, they paid respectively 9s. 5d., 12s. 4d., and 15s. 6d. per week, or over 50 per cent. of their total incomes. To compare wages with the price of wheat is therefore a doubly false method. And finally this evidence shows once again that the working classes spent a by no means unimportant part of their income on commodities which were subjected to taxation.

All these families give the impression of obtaining a normal maintenance in spite of the bad times ; probably out of the poor rates. Where the father attempted to make his income cover his expenditure, or even to save something, the food necessarily became very poor. In Diss, Norfolk, a family of only four persons still had a surplus of £4 3s. 5d. in 1792, which shrank in 1794 to £3 14s. 2d. ; but they consumed neither meat, sugar, nor beer.[1] Another, consisting of six persons, and paying 3d. a week for meat and 9¼d. or 9½d. for tea, sugar and butter, had a surplus of £2 8s. 6d. in 1793, but in 1795 a deficit of £6 13s. 4d. The weekly expenditure on bread and meal alone had risen from 4s. 7½d. to 8s.

Further analyses would increase the bulk of this volume without really increasing our knowledge : we therefore turn to another point.

Already in the eighteenth century comparisons were drawn here and there between the condition and character

[1] Similarly in Clyst St. George, Devonshire. " Before the present war, wheaten bread and cheese, and, about twice a week, meat were their usual food : it is now barley bread, and no meat : they have, however, of late made great use of potatoes." Eden, II., 137. In Yorkshire at this time stinging-nettles were frequently eaten. Ibid II., 815.

of the labourers of different districts. The northern population did not rouse the unmixed admiration which has been expended upon it in the nineteenth century. Marshall, who himself came of an old family of Yorkshire farmers, praises the Norfolk labourers in particular on account of their quickness and their honourable character.[1] The southern men he considered heavy and slow: in the midland counties they were moreover wanting in any sense of honour in regard to their work: [2] and in Devonshire they were "below par, many of them drunken, idle fellows, honestly dishonest."[3]

But even then the lot of the labourer was held to be best in the north. The numerous farm-servants of Northumberland receiving wages in kind; the high wages in Cumberland; the influence of mines and factories; the greater opportunity offered there of renting land and keeping a cow, in consequence of the less advanced enclosure; but above all the more rational choice of food and the better housewifery were adduced as the grounds of this opinion. Eden remarks that there was not merely a notable difference in income, but also in the methods of preparing food, between the north and the south. I shall not enter further upon the first of these points, since it seems to me impossible to obtain any really valuable comparative wages statistics for the eighteenth century. We have no accounts covering the whole country: wages were changing rapidly, whereas one author refers to this year and another to that; vestiges of payment in kind remained in some counties and not in others,[4] and where they did exist varied so greatly that even when they are reduced to terms of money the position is only imperfectly

[1] "A Norfolk farm-labourer will do as much work for 1s. as some two men in many other places will do for 18d. each. There is an honesty, I had almost said an honour, about them, when working by the day, which I have not been able to discover in the day-labourers of any other county." *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, 1787, I., 41.

[2] Ibid. pp. 77, 78.

[3] Ibid. p 107.

[4] In Gloucestershire in 1796 the custom still was to give the labourer two meals a week. At Rode (Northamptonshire) they got breakfast, and so at Leighton Buzzard (Beds) and Winslow (Bucks); at St. Albans (Herts) one meal in winter; at Cockington (Lincolnshire) their whole board in winter; at Sutton Colefield (Warwickshire), provisions. Eden, I., 566 f.

reconstructed. We shall therefore content ourselves with the sketch of the general movement of wages already given. But as to the standard of living, Eden says[1] that the labourer in the south lived almost exclusively on bread and cheese, to which the better-to-do added beer, the others drinking tea, and that at all meals and in great quantities. They considered it a sign of uncommon comfort if they were able to eat meat once a week. In the north, and in Scotland and Wales, the poorest day-labourer could get milk or butter-milk, and could regale himself on a variety of dishes quite unknown to his southern contemporary. In the first place Eden mentions cheap and savoury broth, which the use of barley and barley bread made it easy to prepare. Then the cheapness of fuel made hot meals possible. Eden, holding that it was important to raise the purchasing power of wages, wished to see barley, oatmeal and broth introduced in the south, and laments the fact that wheaten bread was there considered more wholesome and nourishing and that a prejudice existed against rye-bread. In Nottinghamshire well-to-do farmers ate bread which was one-third wheat, one-third rye and one-third barley: but their labourers had lost the taste for it. In Gregory King's time the cultivation of wheat had been less extensive; he estimated the annual produce of barley at 27 million bushels, oats at 16, wheat at 14 and rye at 10. It was since the beginning of the eighteenth century that wheat had gradually been introduced among the working classes; and it was as recently as 1764 that over half the population had come to eat wheaten bread.[2]

For Yorkshire wages were calculated with or without board. Ibid. 574. In Cumberland there was still "an universal custom of giving the labourers victuals, both men and women." See Bailey and Culley, *Agriculture of Cumberland*, 1797, p. 217. Pearce reported from Berks in 1794 that "some farmers pay their labourers in kind (wheat and barley) where they choose to take it." In Herefordshire, according to Duncombe (1801) two dinners a week were given. For Wales cp. p. 88 above. In regard of payments in kind to the harvest labourer, no changes had been carried through up to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

[1] Eden, I., 496 f.

[2] The great effect of the standard of living on the whole circumstances of the labourer may be seen by comparing two labourers' household budgets, one for the north and one for the south. A labourer in Streatley, Berks, spent rather less than £63 18s. 8d., £36 8s. of which went in bread. His income was only £46. Another in Nent Head, Cumberland, spent

Eden also recognized the absence of garden and cow as an important cause of the melancholy conditions in the south, and moreover the scarcity of fuel, which obliged the labourer to have his hot Sunday dinner cooked by the baker who baked his bread in the week. He was, in fact, entirely dependent on the baker and the shopkeeper. From the latter he bought his clothes, except near London, where he got them from the old-clothes man. The women did not know how to make a single article of dress, even for the children.[1] In the north, on the contrary, almost everything, boots and shoes excepted, was made at home, the woollen and linen yarn spun by the women being sent to weavers and dyers.

This description is confirmed on most points by the *Agricultural Surveys*. But Wedge, we may note, says of Cheshire in 1794 that the farmer, "fearful of robbing his calves or pigs," put difficulties in the way of the labourers buying milk: and the labourers of Kent, according to Boys, had large gardens, and in many cases kept cows.

IV.—Contemporary Opinion.

We have now quite sufficient material to justify us in forming a judgment as to the causes of the serious disease from which English society suffered in the second half of the eighteenth century; a disease whose symptoms were on the one hand an increase of the rents, profits, tithes and professional incomes going to the upper classes,[2] and on the other starvation, misery and crime[3] among the

£44 only, £9 10s. of which went in barley bread and oatmeal. His income was £48. The first could only afford £3 5s. for meat and bacon: the other gave £10 for "butcher's meat." The first had four children at home, the second six, one of whom earned £18. Eden, II., 15, 88. At Kibworth, Leicestershire, a labourer's family consumed 6 lbs. of bread per day. It used to cost 10d., then for some time 2s.; later it was 18d., when it cost them £27 6d. per annum out of an income of £31 10s. 6d.

[1] A description of Hothfield shows how the shop-keepers flourished in consequence. "The grocers and chandlers' shops have only been opened a few years, the articles they deal in were formerly sent for to Ashford, which is about three miles distant." Eden, II., 286.

[2] "Landlords have trebled their rents, the clergymen . . . . doubled their tithes, the farmer increased his property, but the poor rates increased enormously." Marshall, *Northern Department* (Yorkshire, W. Riding), p. 376.

[3] The author of *Considerations on the present state of the Poor in Great Britain*, 1775, wrote that during the past nine months 80 persons had been sentenced to death, and 244 to transportation. Op. cit. p. 10.

thousands of the labouring population. But our judgment will be confirmed and we shall be better able to understand what were the appropriate remedies, if we give some attention to what at least the more important contemporary writers had to say on the subject, though unfortunately in doing this it will not be possible to avoid a certain amount of repetition.

No one with any knowledge of human nature will be surprised to find that many who considered it necessary to express themselves upon this question attributed all blame to the poor themselves. Their miseries were produced by their own idleness and improvidence, their own pleasure-seeking and tippling and in short self-indulgence.[1] The inquiry after cause and effect, antecedent and consequent, is a late product of human development, and most people even now ask no questions on the subject in the case of moral phenomena. For them, the rough, dirty, poverty-stricken drunkard they see staggering through the streets is such because he has willed to be such. They are unable to take into account or to appraise the thousand educative influences which have worked upon themselves from their youth up; otherwise they could not but feel the deepest sympathy for a man who in all his life has known no such influences, and who in a pitiful and starved existence has *become* what they now see.

So Howlett felt when he wrote:—"Whatever their vice and immorality, I must again maintain, it has not originally been the *cause* of their extreme indigence, but the *consequence*, and therefore should only be an additional motive to an eager concurrence in any wise and judicious plan for bettering and improving their condition. This accomplished, everything else will follow of course." And again:—"There is, indeed, I cannot help thinking, something peculiarly ungenerous in our complaints of the burdensomeness of our poor. Within the last forty years the rent of our houses and land are increased eight or ten millions; the wealth of our farmers and tradesmen is aug-

[1] See these complaints exhaustively set out and discussed by Howlett, *Insufficiency of the Causes*, pp. 3–30.

mented in similar proportion; that of our merchants and leading manufacturers in a degree infinitely greater. And shall we grudge to allow of this abundance two millions a year towards the support of those from the labour of whose hands and the sweat of whose brows we have derived the whole? Shall we grind their faces, and squeeze them to death, and then have the cruel absurdity of ascribing their fate to their increasing vice and profligacy?"

Davies takes the same standpoint. He too makes no attempt to conceal the fact that the labourer had deteriorated morally: in fact, he emphasises it much more strongly than Howlett[2]: but he cannot avoid the conclusion that the essential causes were not moral, but economic.

For if these causes were not to be found in the moral corruption of the working classes, then they could hardly be sought elsewhere than in the economic changes of the eighteenth century: the consolidation of holdings, the division of commons, the enclosure of wastes, and the transition from small to large farming and from corn-growing to pasture-farming. And if we could take the votes of the most prominent writers of that day, we should probably find that the first three of these innovations would have a majority in their favour, but that the two last would be condemned by the same majority.

The disadvantages of the common fields and rights of pasture were so obvious that we should not expect to find any great difference of opinion as to the advantage of consolidation in the interests of production. And in fact there were numerous complaints of the old system; the owners of neighbouring strips quarrelled: the balks wasted ground: land could not be thoroughly worked owing to the narrowness of the strips: it was difficult to keep down weeds, or to undertake drainage or road-making: a third part of the land had always to lie fallow: the crop had to be the same whatever the varieties of soil: fodder was scarce in winter: it was impossible to improve the breeds of stock: loss of time was entailed: and a variety

[1] Pp. 30, 75.
[2] *The Case of Labourers*, pp. 58 f.

of other grievances were felt besides. Still some objection was taken against consolidation: in many cases because it was so often followed by the introduction of large farming and permanent pasture, and because many mistakes were made in the process: also it was said that corn which lay open to the fresh winds throve better than that grown in enclosed fields: and complaints were made of a lessened demand for labour and the disappearance of stubble-pasture and gleanings, both so valuable to the poor.[1] That is to say that the objections were chiefly socio-political in character: consolidation seemed to occasion a decrease of population. The difficulty of introducing new methods of cultivation in the open fields was seldom disputed, though it seems to me to have been exaggerated: and we should also remember that many things which were bad for the large farmer were unfelt, or comparatively unfelt, by the small man.[2] However, the best writers never resented the disadvantages entailed, or would hardly touch upon them in the course of a general discussion. The *General Report on Enclosures* only notices the loss of stubble-pasture, and is of opinion that compensation was generally paid for it, though this is not correct so far as the farmers are concerned. For the rest, the question passes over in the writer's mind into the more general question of the system of cultivation adopted after enclosure, and he mentions the increased demand for labour occasioned by enclosures of common,[3] a point which has been discussed above.

On the question of the commons and wastes opinion was much more deeply divided. There was fairly general agreement that the upland pastures could not be taken into cultivation, and that therefore it was useless to enclose them. They were hardly used except by large farmers

[1] "The general objections to the inclosure of common fields are, that it tends to diminish the growth of corn, throws the land when thus parcelled out into fewer hands, and renders a lesser quantity of labour necessary to the management of them. Circumstances these which, it is urged, inevitably tend to depopulation." N. Forster, op. cit., p. 117.

[2] "In many parts of this district, these advantages (separations and division) apply much more forcibly to the case of the great farmer than of the small one." Marshall, *Southern Department*, p. 191.

[3] P. 35.

as runs for young cattle, and had no economic importance for the smaller men; so that they are really outside the question. As to the other pastures, several writers draw a distinction between wastes and commons. Even the champions of the small men held that the waste uncultivated lands, with their marshes and bogs, would be best enclosed, since only then could they become serviceable to the public, and the profits accruing would compensate the cottiers and little farmers for their loss.[1] Thus issue was only joined on the question of commons lying near the villages and regularly used for the feeding of stock. The two anonymous writers on the one side, and Kent, Nathaniel Forster and Howlett on the other discussed this part of the problem very thoroughly. Of the anonymous writers, the author of the *Political Enquiry* is most decided in rejecting the proposals for enclosure as being a great economic loss both to small farmers and cottiers and to the community. The other is an equally strong opponent of the measure, and therefore makes suggestions for overcoming the disadvantages of the existing system. He would limit the number of beasts to be depastured, and the times at which the commons might be used, and establish fixed payments for improvements. But whether he was really equally penetrated by a sense of their importance in the national economy, I will not undertake to say. He is revolted by the immense cost of enclosure, and by the selfish way in which small men were dealt with; he recognises that to them the commons were indispensable; and on these grounds he objects to the enclosure of commons of less than 100 acres. Where the area exceeds this, then on enclosure the cottiers should be given at least one acre, and in some circumstances more.[2] He meets the objection that this "would deprive the farmers of labourers by converting the labourers into farmers," by pointing out that

[1] "Many wide, sandy wastes, many extensive and boggy moors, which in their wild and uncultivated state yield no advantage to the public, that bear the least comparison with the benefits they have imparted or would impart, when in an inclosed and improved condition, is a position too evident to be disputed." *An Enquiry into the Advantages*, p. 8. And so *A Political Enquiry*, pp. 51 f.

[2] *An Enquiry into the Advantages*, p. 60.

the cottiers who were in such a position at the present time were a proof to the contrary: and that "by the multiplication of the children of such cottagers, great numbers of labourers would be added to agriculture and trade, and vast supplies of recruits furnished both to the army and navy."[1]

Kent was an estate agent, and evidently the part of the country which he knew offered him no opportunity of becoming acquainted with land-holding cottagers. It will be remembered that he asserted that few cottagers possessed cows, and that those who used the commons had to pay so much more in house-rent.[2] Nathaniel Forster, a warm friend of all agricultural improvement, treated the matter superficially but generously. He does not see the distinction between commons and wastes, and seems to have believed that commons were only used as runs for young stock. "By inclosing heaths, commons, etc.," he says, "we make these lands, which before were fit for little else but running young cattle, now useful to many other purposes." But enclosures ought not to be allowed to injure the cottagers: "I would not propose to injure a poor cottager though to fill the coffers of the nation. . . . . An acre or two of land near the respective cottages would certainly answer all these purposes."[3] Howlett, also a zealous champion of enclosure, brings together what has already been said as to the small value of the commons.[4] But we do not hear any of these more important writers complaining that they engendered idleness. That was reserved for Stone.[5] His opinion is that the commons ought to be drained; and that they profited the farmers more than anybody else, because they, having other pasture, could use them to the greatest advantage, while the cottager could not feed his cow through the winter and could therefore only keep sheep, which might be left upon the common.

[1] *An Enquiry into the Advantages.*
[2] *Hints to Gentlemen*, p. 112.
[3] *Enquiry into the High Price of Provisions*, p. 124.
[4] *Enclosures a cause of Improved Agriculture*, 1787, p. 38.
[5] *Suggestions*, p. 76.

If we are to form a judgment on these arguments and counter-arguments, we shall come to something like the following result. The cottier's poultry were entirely passed over in the discussion; and to a great extent the advantages offered by the commons in regard of other stock were overlooked. On the other hand it seems to be proved, first, that the commons were often in a bad state, secondly, that they were overstocked by large farmers, and thirdly that many cottiers were much damaged by lack of winter fodder. It would follow that they ought to have at their disposal land sufficient to feed their beasts through the winter, and that a special common should be set apart for the poor, and the stock to be driven upon it limited.[1] And further, the commons should have been improved.

Thus even as regards the commons there was no very serious difference among those who understood the subject. The majority approved of enclosure provided that the cottiers were compensated; a minority thought that the cottiers' economy would become impossible without a common, and as they desired, on economic and social grounds, to maintain this class, demanded that the small commons should be kept up.

But when we turn to our last point, the system of the large farm, then the majority in favour of the new methods of production is turned into a minority. Forster, Kent, Stone, one of the two anonymous writers so often quoted, Davies, and above all Price, oppose the "engrossing of farms" with most unusual unanimity.[2] It is in some sense a continuation of the fight of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with its motto "Ingrossinge being truly the disease, and not convertinge which may be justified for."[3] But the new system finds strong defenders in Arbuthnot, Young and Howlett; and the controversy on

[1] Such an arrangement was in force at Soham; see p. 92 above.

[2] Marx ought to have distinguished much more clearly between the various measures in question. Forster, Addington, Kent and Price were by no means united in condemning the enclosure of commons. They agree only as regards engrossing. Cp. Marx, *Kapital*, I., 3rd ed., 750 f.

[3] Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, II., 702.

this point is conducted on higher levels of thought than had been the case with the others.

Forster is not clear as to the advantage of large farming. He did not believe that the large farmer was able to pay a higher rent because he obtained a greater product. The small farmer, in his opinion, was much the more assiduous, industrious and thrifty of the two. "I am indeed inclined to think from the little I have been able to observe of these matters, that the gross produce (of the large farmers) is very considerably less."[1] But the objection which seems to him most important is the destruction of the old equality. "Instead of a hardy, free and intrepid race of men, contentedly enjoying the sweats of labour and alternate ease, and its best soldiers in war, we are presented with the horrible picture of a few *tyrant planters* amidst a crowd of *wretched slaves*." He describes the moral evils proceeding from this change: the covetousness and greed which replace the old simple manners. He dwells upon the depopulation brought about by engrossing, and emphasises as a particularly bad result the migration from the land to the towns:—"An universal eagerness soon shows itself to leave a situation, in which there is no hope, scarce a possibility of advancing a step higher than that of being a common labourer under a master who is little less than a petty tyrant."[2]

These views are not a little astonishing in one whom we have learnt to know as so convinced a champion of enclosure. Nor does he in any way blame the introduction of pasture-farming, though it contributed more than anything else to produce the migration. "But," he says, "in a country full of trade and manufactures this evil is perhaps more in appearance than reality. The hands spared by these improvements are not thrown upon the country, but may be employed in a manner equally beneficial to it, and to themselves." Arthur Young himself could not preach that doctrine more zealously. And in

[1] Quoted by Marx, op. cit., p. 111.

[2] Addington knows nothing of "eagerness." "They *must* leave them (their houses) soon; want of food, and indeed of comfortable shelter, *oblige* them to flee." *Enquiry*, p. 42.

other respects also he knows how to estimate the enclosures from the standpoint of the actual and concrete interests of England. She is a manufacturing country, and needs the greatest net product which can be set free to be sent into the towns. "Here therefore whatever tends to lessen the quantity of labour in the cultivation of lands, and in consequence to advance, not so much the gross as the nett produce, seems rather to merit attention." It is quite otherwise in Switzerland, which has little trade or industry: there, "the gross produce is chiefly to be considered. The more hands employed in procuring it, the better."[1]

The apparent contradiction is solved when we realise that he did not recognise the economic advantages of large farming. Otherwise, if we may argue from his attitude towards the fundamental questions involved, he would have broken a lance for engrossing also.

One of the anonymous writers says almost the same thing as Forster; but he puts it more briefly and incisively:—"If circumstances which tend to lessen the abundance of provisions—to annihilate the spirit of industry—to increase the number of the poor—to eradicate every encouragement to 'wedded love, true source of human offspring, of relations dear, and all the charities of father, son and brother'—if these be evils—these are evils consequent upon laying farm to farm."[2]

But the strongest English champion of small farming in the eighteenth century was Nathaniel Kent. He had lived for three years in Flanders, and had seen with astonishment the multitude of people and the quantity of provisions on the market in the Austrian Netherlands.[3] And there were no large farms in that country: holdings were very small, the cultivators worked for themselves and lived on a footing of equality. He found English conditions very different: farmers were proud, labourers were

[1] Op. cit., p. 120.
[2] *An Enquiry into the Advantages*, p. 13.
[3] *Hints to Gentlemen.* Cp. the chapters *Advantages resulting from small farms*, and *The great benefit of Church and College tenures*, pp. 217 f.

miserable, the land was being depopulated, the poor-rate was rising, and prices were rising too. "This seems a presumptive proof," he writes, "that agriculture, when it is thrown into a number of hands, becomes the life of industry, the source of plenty, and the fountain of riches to a country; but that monopolized, and grasped into few hands, it must dishearten the bulk of mankind, who are reduced to labour for others instead of themselves; must lessen their produce, and greatly tend to general proverty."[1]

He goes on to ask what the arguments against the small farms were; and replies that it was said that a great number of farms and farmers entailed extra trouble on the landlord, or rather on his agent; that the cost of repairs was greater, and rents less secure. We have already heard some of his views on these subjects. According to him, the cost of repairs was 3 to 4 per cent. higher than on large farms, but rents were 15 per cent. higher;[2] consequently the landlord's income would be more and not less. Moreover, he says that looking a little farther the shortsightedness of such arguments would become even clearer. If the "little schools of industry" are abolished, the small farmers must become day-labourers, and in sickness and old age they will come upon the parish. Then too a quantity of poultry, pork and other "small" provisions will cease to be produced, for the large farmer cannot, and his wife and daughters will not, be occupied about them. "He must, when he has a great deal upon his hands, neglect many small objects, partly for want of time, and partly because they appear trivial in their nature: and many trifles added together, make a large deficiency upon the whole." It was quite otherwise on the small holdings. "Trifles" are the very objects of the small cultivator; he has everything near him and under his eye, makes use of every small advantage, cultivates every corner, does his work himself, has the help of his

[1] *Hints*, p. 218.

[2] Young claims that it may be "established as a maxim, that the gain by rent is often lost in repairs in these very small farms." But he admits that if the buildings are small and cheap "their (landlords') profits from them (small farms) is greater than from large ones." *Farmer's Letters*, 3rd ed., I., pp. 120 f.

wife, and brings up his children to be "the most useful people the country produces."

As to practical application, the very small holdings, as from twenty to thirty acres, which were common in Flanders, were not in Kent's opinion possible on English soil. We wait for him to suggest that the whole country should be covered with small farms of a size that was suitable to English conditions. But he does not draw precisely this conclusion, though why he deviates from his model he does not explain. He wishes to see holdings of various sizes, some large, many middling, and still more small, but the smallest to bear a rent of not less than £30. On a property of £1,000 value he would observe the following proportion :—One farm of £160, one of £100, two of £80, two of £60, two of £50, three of £40, and four of £30.

His main reason is not that he thinks that such variety would be favourable to productivity ; he speaks of this only in the second place and quite in general :—"Farms varied in their size . . . . would play into each other's hands . . . . for they would have, almost every one, somewhat of a different object in view." What is really most important, to his mind, is to awaken economic aspiration. The small holdings would make it possible for capable and thrifty servants and the children of large farmers to become independent, and the large farms would cause emulation and reward men of special ability.[1] We may probably conclude from this that the Flemish system had two faults : that it failed in variety of production and failed to attract men of large capital into agriculture.

No one got beyond Kent. Stone adopted his proposals, which he said were necessary "from the general poverty of the farmers, which I cannot but attribute to the great prevalency of letting the lands in too large allotments for many years past ; whereby farmers in general have, as

[1] The idea that a gradation of size in farms was necessary was shared by the greatest contemporary authority on the theory of agriculture, namely Marshall. Cp. *Rural Economy of the West of England*, second ed., 1805, p. 106. Thus Kent, Marshall and Stone agree on this point.

before observed, been induced to take more land than they had property to stock and manage to the greatest advantage, which has reduced their capital, and rendered a greater number of small farms necessary."[1] Davies, who wrote during the French Revolution, introduces us to a new idea : as many persons as possible " should possess an interest in the soil ; because this attaches them strongly to the country and its constitution, and makes them zealous and resolute in defending them."[2]

Price's views demand a place to themselves.[3] There is small trace of economic considerations in his work : he regards the agricultural changes mainly from an ethical, social and political standpoint. He is far from distinguishing between enclosures, large farming and pasture farming ; he speaks only of " the engrossing of farms " which " eases landlords of the trouble attending the necessities of little tenants," and decreases population. The transformation of England from an agricultural to a manufacturing and trading nation, which was going on with increasing rapidity before his eyes, is opposed to all his dearest convictions ; whereas Forster regarded the process with perfect satisfaction. Price dwells lovingly on the earlier stages of civilisation when agriculture produced plenty of provisions, property was equally divided, and it was easy to marry and bring up a family. Now, property is in fewer hands ; equality is at an end ; great towns have sprung up, and have produced looseness, luxury, vice, disease, venality and oppression. Luxury has increased even among the lower classes, for " tho' starving," they will not do without " tea, fine wheaten bread, and other delicacies." If society continues on this road all liberty, virtue and happiness must disappear. And along this road it is being driven ever farther by the engrossing of farms. When country cottages are pulled down, the inhabitants flee to London and other towns, " there to be corrupted and perish " ; and the result is the deterioration

[1] *Suggestions*, p. 83.
[2] *The Case of Labourers*, p. 56.
[3] *Observations on Reversionary Payments*, fifth ed., 1792, II., 273 f.

of the people. They had been small undertakers; they have sunk to be labourers and hirelings, who must work for large farmers or manufacturers, at wages lower than when labourers were fewer, "and who will be under a necessity of going to market for all they want." They do more work than of old, because necessity drives them. They feel the rise in corn-prices (itself an effect of luxury and of taxation) very severely, because they can now afford few other kinds of food; but meantime the towns, the manufacturers and the large farmers flourish, and the latter are able to pay high rents to the landlord, because they have drawn to themselves the profits of many small men, and "speculate and command the market," although they bestow "less culture" upon their fields. Similar social evils had attacked England before; but in those days the rulers had known how to meet them with strong measures. "Such was the policy of former times, modern policy is more favourable to the higher classes of people."

It might seem surprising to hear a Radical thus glorifying the old semi-absolutist monarchy if we did not remember that Tudor policy had favoured the lower orders; and that democracy cannot exist without equality of property, or at the very least unless independence and an assured economic position be secured to the lower classes. But Price is extremely inconsistent when, in proposing remedies for the evils he has described, he writes:—"Drive back the inhabitants of the towns into the country. Establish some regulations for preserving the lives of infants. Discourage luxury and celibacy, and the engrossing of farms": and yet adds, "Let there be entire liberty, and maintain public peace by a government founded, not in constraint, but in the respect and hearts of the people." Only a despot could have carried through such measures as he proposes, and he himself would probably have admitted it. Probably, too, they could not have been made effective without the application of force, which perhaps he might have admitted also if the point had been thoroughly discussed.

Turning now to hear the other side, we will briefly consider Arbuthnot's position, and then go on to describe the attitude of the chief representative of this view, Arthur Young. It must be remembered that at this period of the first development of the great industry in general and large farming in particular,[1] very few people understood its advantages. Tucker in his *Four Tracts and Two Sermons*, Arbuthnot in his *Enquiry into the Connection between the present price of provisions and the size of farms*, and Arthur Young, were, between 1770 and 1780, foremost in making its economic importance understood.

Arbuthnot is not altogether fair. But part of what he says is very significant when we remember that it was being said for the first time. His view is that the large farmer has the advantage of the small one in being able to do all work exactly at the right moment, in economy of tools and machinery, in the greater capital at his disposal, the better division of labour which he can carry out, and the use he can make of persons and things from which the small farmer can never get their full value. Thus a shepherd can watch three hundred sheep as well as a hundred ; the man who has only a hundred sheep will not employ one ; the owner of three hundred will, and the flock will thrive the better. He defends on well-known grounds the fact that the large farmer holds back his corn from the market. He does not admit that small farming has any advantage over large in the production of pork, poultry, butter and eggs ; everything is produced best when produced on a large scale. The only rivals of the large farmer are the small dairy-farmer who makes butter and cheese, and the cottier ; the latter because he lets his stock feed on the road-side and in his neighbour's fields. For the rest, the scarcity of poultry, pork, veal and lamb seems to him of small moment, because they cannot be produced so cheaply as beef and mutton, with which the large

[1] The economist will note with interest that in the West Indian colonies of England complaints had already been made in the first half of the previous century of "the decay of small proprietors and the consolidation of all classes of society into two, the wealthy planters and the slaves." Merivale, *Colonization and Colonies*, 1861, p. 81.

farmers are occupied. That engrossing had any tendency to decrease population he denies; but his argument is here of the weakest description. Using figures which there are no means of checking, he calculates that the large farmer employs more labourers, and in particular more married labourers, than the small. He does not or will not understand small farming at all; he regards it as nothing but large farming on a small scale; and on those terms he finds it easy to confute his opponents. He attributes no value to the untiring industry of the small farmer, to the never-ending and poorly rewarded work of his family, or to the fact that it requires no strict supervision. He succeeds admirably in showing the excellencies of the intensive application of capital on the large farm; but he is not honest enough to recognise the advantages of the intensive application of labour on the small. He is perfectly right in saying that all pasture-farming (cattle-fattening, or sheep-breeding) needs large areas and a thin population; but just for that reason it is most interesting to notice the acrobatic agility with which he evades the indictment of Price and others against the introduction of pasture-farming in corn-growing counties, as accounting for the decrease of population. For the rest, Arbuthnot is no more doctrinaire than Kent. He does not conclude that great farms only should be laid out, but that "there should be, as there are now, farms of all sizes, to suit the different capitals of those who engage in farming."[1]

In particular, as opposed to Price, he takes the position that nothing could prevent the transformation of England from an agricultural to a manufacturing country, and that therefore the question of the evils involved was at most of academic interest. The regulations of Licinius or Romulus, which Price admired, might have been very wise in those ancient republics, but were not to be recommended "in a commercial nation, whose very commerce depends upon agriculture." There Arbuthnot is in agreement with Forster. He admits that the accumulation of

[1] *Enquiry into the Connection*, p. 35.

property in few hands is bad; but this should not be identified, as Price identifies it, with the system of large farming.

Young's argument[1] contains much that we have already had more than one occasion to mention, and shall therefore now touch upon very briefly. He too emphasises the fact that large farming has economic advantages. It is, he says, stronger in capital, better able to introduce improvements, can employ more labour, and is more productive. Small farming keeps greater numbers on the land, but that was only good so long as the superfluous labour could not be better employed in the towns. Migration to the towns is not to be confused with depopulation: population will always increase while there are provisions for it, and provisions are now produced more abundantly than in the days of common rights and the three-field system. Nor need the question of national defence be brought in; modern wars need money, and money is more plentiful in a trading and manufacturing than in an agricultural state. This Arthur Young, the youthful Arthur Young, knows nothing of social considerations or ethical interests, and he is for that reason Price's most decided opponent.

Looking back over the discussion, the absence of any balanced, moderate view becomes evident. Those who look at the matter from the standpoint of production will not see that the economic changes have their ethical and social dangers. And the representatives of the ethical and social side fail to recognise or estimate the economic advantages. One party would have kept England in the agricultural stage of development; the other was intoxicated with the riches and power which industry and commerce brought with them in the growing towns, and which fostered agriculture, and they judged the changes upon the land accordingly. The point which is put in the forefront of the discussion is the influence of engrossing upon population; but the idea of engrossing includes

[1] *Political Arithmetic*, passim. *Farmer's Letters*, especially Vols. I. and III., and *Tour through the North of England*, Vol. IV., Letter XXXIV. Cp. also Appendix III. below, *A Criticism of certain views expressed by Arthur Young.*

also the system of cultivation elected by the large farmers. The fear of having to make some admissions in regard to population is most evident in Arbuthnot's case. Arthur Young, who had absorbed the politico-economic theories of Steuart and the Physiocrats, was the first to set aside such fears with the security of a reasoned conviction.[1] Repeal the law of settlement, and the Act of Elizabeth concerning cottages, he writes, and population will grow in the natural course of things.

Turning in conclusion to contemporary views of the cottier's position, we notice again that the question was discussed almost more as one of population than as one of social justice. One of the anonymous writers denounces engrossing, and still more enclosing, as discouraging "wedded love,"[2] the other points out that the commons encourage marriages.[3] And when Kent comes to defend the cottiers, he praises the cottages first of all as "the most prolific cradles of population," and the cottiers as "indisputably the most beneficial race we have; they are bred up in greater simplicity, live more primitive lives, more free from vice and debauchery, than any other set of men of the lower class; and are best informed, and enabled to sustain the hardships of war, and other laborious services." The towns devour and squander human lives: so much the more important is it to maintain "cottages and small farms, the chief nurseries which support population."[4] According to him, the labourers were suffering not from the division of the commons or the introduction of new methods of cultivation, but from the predominance of the system of the great farm, from bad dwellings, low wages which had not risen with the price of provisions,

[1] Cp. the following passages: "As the work is done, it must be done by somebody; and whether that somebody lives in one parish or another, has nothing to do in the enquiry." "The soil ought to be applied to that use in which it will pay most, without any idea of population; a farmer ought not to be tied down to bad husbandry, whatever may become of population." "Cultivation carried on by wealthy farmers, is of more consequence to the nation than population." *Political Arithmetic*, pp. 103, 123, 269.

[2] P. 155 above.

[3] P. 97 above.

[4] *Hints to Gentlemen*, p. 231.

and finally from the impossibility of increasing their incomes, and so attaining a higher position in life, by the product of land or pasture.

Accordingly Kent recommends the landlords above all things to build warm and sound dwelling-houses and to bind half an acre of land to every cottage, so that fruit and vegetables may be grown, and a pig kept. Specially capable labourers should have larger cottages, and, in addition, some three acres of pasture. Kent was thus the first to use the cry of modern reformers, "Three acres and a cow." In his own words:—"And as it would have an excellent effect, to make some gradation among cottages, as well as farms, it would be highly proper and useful to lay (besides the half-acre of garden ground) a small portion of pasture land, of about *three acres*, to each of these last cottages, to enable the occupiers of them to support *a cow*; which would be a real comfort to their families; as milk is the natural food of children."[1]

Little holdings of this kind, and if necessary the cow as well, should be rented by the labourer from the landlord, whereas at present gentlemen usually let them with the farms, and if the farmer sublet any land to the labourers he demanded at least double the rent which he himself paid. If this were done, and the gradation of farms established, the broken bridge between the lower and middle classes would be restored; capable farm-servants and farmers' children could (as we have seen) take up small holdings. It will be remembered that in the north of England this bridge remained unbroken even at the end of the eighteenth century.[2]

Kent's views were adopted by several writers: e.g. by Davies,[3] who wished besides to see the wastes transformed into small holdings to be given to industrious families; and by Stone,[4] though he differed from Kent on certain details connected with the enclosure of commons. Of his particular proposals one deserves special attention:

[1] *Hints to Gentlemen.*
[2] P. 97 above.
[3] *The Case of Labourers*, pp. 102, 103.
[4] *Suggestions*, p. 85.

"Each cottager's right should not admit of alienation, at least in parcels." The other has to do with the establishment of a common pasture for the cottagers under certain circumstances. He too represents to the landlords "that population should increase, which can only be materially effected by upholding the lower class of people." Forster, as we have seen already, also desired that the claims of the cottagers should be satisfied. And Arbuthnot,[1] who was equally little under Kent's influence, says, "My plan is to allot to each cottage three or four acres, which should be annexed to it without power of alienation, and without rent, but under the covenant of being kept in grass, except such small part as should be necessary for a garden: this would keep the cottager in more plenty than a very extensive range of common; he and his family must then cultivate the garden, or suffer as they ought to do: and to obviate the plea of their wanting fuel, let it be fenced and planted with ash and other quick-growing trees, at the expense of those who are to have the property of the common. This would be a real benefit to him, as it would employ his wife and children, and help to support his family, whilst he is at work for the farmers in the neighbourhood, instead of depending, as they too often do, upon the supposed profit of their commonage."

But the most detailed and thoroughly considered plan of reform was that proposed by the Earl of Winchilsea in 1796; and so far as I am able to judge, it was this plan which gave the impulse to that activity of Pitt, Sinclair, Young, Bernard and Wilberforce, of which we shall have to speak in the next chapter. He distinguished eight classes of labourers according as they held more or less property, and criticised the economic position of each class:—

"1st. Those who have a sufficient quantity of grass-
"enclosed land to enable them to keep one or more cows,
"winter and summer, and a garden near their house.—
"This is, in my opinion, the best situation for a labourer;
"as, except the hay-making, the rest of the business is

[1] *An Enquiry into the Connection*, p. 83.

" done by his wife, and his labour is not interrupted.—
" This can only take place in countries where there is an
" abundance of grass land.

" 2ndly. Those who have a summer pasture for their
" cow, and some arable land, upon which they grow the
" winter provision.—This is not so advantageous as No.
" 1, because more of their time is taken up by the arable
" land; however, as they must, in order to make any
" hay, have part of the land sown with grass, the labour
" is not so much as to be hurtful to them.—This is
" adapted to countries where there is a mixture of grass
" and arable.

" 3rdly. Those who have a right of common for the
" summer keep of the cow, and a meadow, or arable
" ground, or a meadow in common, for the winter
" provision.—This would be like the two former, were
" it not that nine commons out of ten are so much over-
" stocked that the summer keep is very bad. This is a
" very great loss, and if the meadow is in common, it is
" another disadvantage.—I suppose gardens near the
" house to all these; should not that be the case, as they
" have land, they may raise garden stuff; but if their
" land is at a distance from their houses, it is not so
" advantageous; and if their take is all grass, they can
" find no ground to dig, except perhaps where a hay
" stack has been placed the preceding year.

" 4th. Those who have a right of common and a gar-
" den.—This is certainly very beneficial to them. Geese
" and pigs may be kept upon the common, and the latter
" fed with the produce of the garden, and a small
" quantity of purchased food.

" 5th. Those who have a right of common, and no
" garden.—This, unless fuel is obtained, is of no value
" to them; if fuel is obtained, it is of great value, and
" the loss of it difficult to be made up to them.

" 6th. Those who have several acres of arable land,
" and no summer pasturage for a cow.—This is I believe
" of no sort of use to the labourer, for though he may
" cultivate part of the land as a garden, the continued

" labour it would require to stall-feed a cow, winter and " summer, and the quantity of the land he must till, " would occupy so much of his time, that the task would, " upon the whole, be injurious to him, even supposing " the land enclosed and contiguous to his house; if at a " distance, or not enclosed, the disadvantage would be " still greater.—I believe that a summer pasture for cows " is absolutely necessary, to make it of advantage to the " labourers who keep them.

" 7th. Those who have a garden near their house.— " This is the best thing that can be done for labourers in " arable countries, and where there are other reasons " which prevent them from keeping cows.

" 8th. Those who have no land whatever.—This is a " very bad situation for a labourer to be placed in, both " for his comfort and for the education of his children. " When a labourer is possessed of cattle, his children are " taught early in life the necessity of taking care of them, " and acquire some knowledge of their treatment; and " if he has a garden, they learn to dig and weed, and " their time is employed in useful industry, by which " means they are more likely to acquire honest and indus- " trious habits than those who are bred up in the " poverty and laziness we too often see; for I believe " it is a certain fact, that extreme poverty begets idle- " ness.

" For these reasons, I am clearly of opinion that the " letting of land to labourers is of great utility, both to " them, to the landowners, and to the community. " . . . When circumstances will admit of it, their " having land enough to enable them to keep cows is " the most desirable thing for them; but a very great " part of the island will not, in my opinion, allow of " that system's being pursued. . . . I beg to observe, " that when I mention cow-pastures, I always suppose " there to be a sufficiency of land to enable the cow " to be kept tolerably well both in summer and winter; " if that is not the case, I believe the cow is but of little " benefit to the owner: and when I mention gardens, I

" always mean large gardens, from half a rood to a rood, " or more if the land is poor."[1]

In the new century the champions of a labouring class which should hold or own land and capital had the satisfaction of finding Arthur Young, formerly the most one-sided of productionists, fighting in their camp.

His change of opinion was not sudden. Adam Smith, though an opponent of small farming, had learnt in France that the small owner " is generally of all improvers the most industrious, the most intelligent, and the most successful."[2] And Young himself in his tour through France made the famous observation that " the magic of property turns sand into gold."[3] He made approving editorial notes on the *Letter of the Earl of Winchilsea* just quoted, and he described with great delight the life of the small peasant proprietors of the Isle of Axholme when writing his *Report on the Agriculture of Lincoln,* which appeared in 1799. When he travelled through England in 1800 in order to study the question of the wastes, his attention was turned to the squatter class. And he discovered that they were no burden on the parish, or at any rate were less burdensome than the labourer *minus* land and capital. Thus that despised class, the abhorrence of farmers, opened his eyes. He ceased to consider every measure of agricultural policy from the point of view of the large farmer and the net product. He came to recognise forces in the body politic which had hitherto escaped him. He analysed the motives which had so strengthened the hands of these people that in spite of every conceivable hindrance from their neighbours, and a poverty which might have been expected to paralyse all activity, they built houses, cleared land, and bought stock. In some cases there was only one possible motive, " the prospect of becom-

[1] Young, *Annals,* XXVI., pp. 235 f.

[2] *Wealth of Nations,* Bk. III., chap. IV., p. 320 (Lubbock's ed.).

[3] Morgan had the same experience in Cornwall. The miners had cultivated land " which in any other country or other circumstances must have remained in a state of perpetual barrenness." Marshall, *Southern Department,* p. 532.

ing proprietors of their own cottages." "The principles of property are universal," he says in another place, "he who cannot possess an acre may be the owner of a cow; and a man will love his country the better even for a pig." A cottage, an acre of land, and above all, it appeared, a cow with the necessary pasture, were the very simple means whereby the problem of uncultivated land could be solved.[1]

I said above that several writers, e.g. Howlett, Davies, and Kent, also wished to see wages raised. Davies proposed that the justices should again assess wages, only that they should determine a minimum instead of a maximum. The earnings of the unmarried were adequate. What had to be done was to raise the wages of the married men. For the purposes of the assessment, the normal family should be taken as numbering five persons, of whom three were children unable to earn; and in his opinion a suitable method of finding the proper money-wage would be to reckon it according to the price of bread.

But Davies wrote at a time when help was so imperative as to cause him to set forth, among other proposals such as the provision of work and the insurance of labourers, two fatal principles of social policy. It should indeed, he thought, be made more difficult to obtain parish relief, so that it should go only to the really deserving; but on the other hand any one who had vainly tried in suitable ways to obtain work ought to have two-thirds of his wages paid him from the poor rate; and families where there were more than five children unable to earn should receive an addition to their income from the rates for every child above such number of five. Our next chapter will show the result of these suggestions on the standard of life of the labouring class.

Government by the best and wisest has been the ideal of many. But experience shows that the evolution of society is determined by other forces than wisdom and goodness. In the eighteenth century the disease from

[1] *Annals*, XXXVI., pp. 506 f. Young returns to the same plan in his latest work, *An Inquiry into the Rise of Prices*, p. 200.

which rural society was suffering was accurately and thoroughly diagnosed; the remedy was clearly recognised; the economic and social importance of the lower classes was shrewdly appreciated. All this knowledge, however, failed to influence the course of events until it could be turned by landlord and capitalist to their own economic and political advantage, or at least to their defence from apprehended disadvantage. And if anything could increase the pessimistic impression made by the facts of the case, it would be to notice that the humanitarian sentiments which were not sufficient to impel society to reform were so far effective as to increase still further the miseries of the expropriated labourers; that is, to demoralise them. Social policy became a branch of poor law policy. Of this we shall have to speak in the next chapter.

I must point out once again that there can be no strict historical divisions in a work like the present. The period from about 1795 to 1835 will be the main subject of Chapter III.; but I shall make no apology for overstepping those limits when necessary, as I have made none for entering within them already in section iii. above, in order to follow out the movement of wages. On the other hand we shall have to lay ourselves under very strict limitations in regard to our subject-matter; for we are at the beginning of a period in which the labour question gradually passes into a poor-law question, and with the poor-law question we are not here concerned.

CHAPTER III

THE DEMORALISATION OF THE LABOURER.

In the four and a half decades between say 1790 and 1835 the condition of agriculture and the Poor Law together mainly determined the lot of the rural labourer. Not that the Poor Law was the only attention paid him. For the year 1793 marks the opening of a very well-defined era of social policy, in which the attempt was made to give legislative encouragement to mutual self-help, first through benefit societies and then through savings-banks. And in 1795 the royal assent was given to a Bill which aimed at balancing demand and supply in the labour market by a modification of the law of settlement. But neither of these attempts was successful.

In my book on the insurance of labourers in England[1] I have been at some pains to show how little the various laws dealing with the matter have affected its development. At that time the English benefit societies were too weak to make head against the difficulties which faced them, and the statutes did not succeed in raising them to a higher level. As to the savings-banks, the sums entrusted to them were often the fruits of the thrift of earlier times, then first brought to light; and they did not come for the most part from agricultural labourers.[2] Nor could the banks have any general or deep-rooted influence on the working classes while they remained so thinly scattered over the country, and while their management was still so unbusinesslike or in some cases even dishonest.

[1] Hasbach, *Das Englische Arbeiterversicherungswesen*, Leipsig, 1883, chapters I. and II. The *Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages*, 1824, also deals with the effect of benefit clubs and savings-banks on the rural labourer, and entirely confirms the opinion expressed above.

[2] "There are scarcely any agricultural labourers who deposit in the savings-banks; deposits seem to be confined, in general, to domestic servants, to journeymen, and to little annuitants." *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 40.

What we have now to investigate, therefore, is the effect on the lot of the labourer of the laws of settlement and removal, the agricultural conditions, and the poor laws.

I.—The Laws of Settlement and Removal.

The law of 1795 seems at first sight to have been more effective than the benefit club and savings-bank legislation: but sober examination leads to a different conclusion. Howlett and Eden, men who lived in England, disputed the exaggerations of the two Scots, Lord Kames and Adam Smith, who had not personal knowledge of the conditions resulting from the Settlement Act of 1663. As against their pronouncements, Howlett and Eden adduce the rapid growth of the English manufacturing towns, statistical tables on the birth-places of immigrants, and proofs that the inequality of wages was no greater in England than in Scotland. The worst consequence of the settlement laws was the greater frequency of illegitimate births. Undoubtedly, too, the cost of removals was sometimes a heavy charge upon the parishes, and sometimes they entailed hardships and even cruelties. These views appear in the main well-founded: but in order to test them further I have put together the figures concerning removals contained in the second and third volumes of Eden's *State of the Poor*, which although by no means sufficient to show the precise extent of the evil do allow us to see that it cannot have been so great as one is inclined to suppose after reading Adam Smith.[1]

In Kirkoswald, with a population of 654, there were four removals in twenty years, two out of the parish and two into the parish; in Wetheral, with 1,413 inhabitants, nine in ten years, five out of and four into the parish; in Ashford, population 2,000, two per annum; in Underbarrow, population about 300, two in every five years; in Spilsby, population 850, about one per annum, and so in Ecclesfield; in Willoughby, population 378,

[1] Eden, I., pp. 181 and 296. He is almost equally opposed to Adam Smith's views on the Statute of Apprentices, etc.; cp. I., p. 436.

one in every three years; in Kendal, population 8,089, three per annum; in Burton, population about 1,000, two or three in twenty years. In the great manufacturing towns they were more numerous; Sheffield, with 35,000 inhabitants, had twenty removals per annum. Bristol, with from 90,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, had to pay £304 (shillings and pence omitted) for this purpose in 1786-7, £268 in 1787-8, £238 in 1789-90, and £198 in 1791-2. But here there were among the removals several hundred Irish vagabonds every year—303 in the year last mentioned. And part of the remaining expenditure was upon vagrants, while part went to the attorneys. How well these last did by the removals is indicated by the fact that of the £304 spent in 1786-7, £106 went to Messrs. Osborne and Seager "for drawing passes and orders, attendance and taking affidavits." Manchester, with about 50,000 inhabitants, paid £6 a week for removals; but unfortunately we do not hear what part of the expense was due to Irish immigrants.

Considering further that at Kirkby Lonsdale removals are said to have occurred but seldom, and that in a great many places they are not mentioned at all, we can hardly think of the law of settlement as causing great economic disturbance in the period previous to 1796. We have already seen (p. 134 above) that on the land this law was applied in parishes "where farms are large, and of course in few hands."

And if the old law was not so black as it has been painted, the amendment forbidding removal before the person actually became chargeable was too mild to effect any important changes. The characteristics attributed to the law by the *Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture* in 1833 sound just as though everything had remained as it was in the days of Adam Smith. Its tendency, says the Report, "is to prevent the free circulation of labour, to chain it to the spot where it is not wanted, and to check its natural flow into the place where it is required."[1] In the following year, as is well known,

[1] *Report on Agriculture*, 1833, p. vii.

it was made impossible to acquire a right to relief anywhere but in the place of birth, the object being to get rid altogether of the tendency to regard a new-comer as an enemy. But thereupon followed ceaseless complaints that the land was being made to supplement the inadequate wages paid in the towns, in the form of pensions to the aged and infirm: and one of the chief activities of enlightened self-interest upon the land became the prevention of any multiplication of possible birth-places, and the destruction or abandonment to decay of those which already existed: a tendency which was strengthened by the fact that the Act of 1834 left the parish as the rating unit. The legislature again intervened with equal humanity and unwisdom. In 1846 it charged the place of abode with the duty of relief, removal being impossible after five years' residence. Again the results were entirely different from those which had been anticipated. All kinds of artifices were employed in order to prevent the completion of the five years' residence; and old labourers, who had worked in the place of their settlement but had been unable to find a dwelling there, were dismissed: they had only been employed to keep them off the rates. And the war against the cottages was pursued more zealously than ever.[1]

Little, however, as can be said for these measures, at least they were far from doing as much harm as was done by the corn laws and the poor law proper—i.e. the law concerned, not with the definition of the right to relief, but with the regulation of the methods by which relief should be given.

II.—The Labourer in the period of high Corn Prices.

In 1773 the traditional English corn-law policy received a severe blow. The Act of 1689 had already been suspended in 1757; but in 1773 the restrictions on internal trade were abolished, and the external policy now aimed at increasing the supply by allowing importation at a duty of 6d. when wheat was at 48s. a quarter, while a bounty

[1] *Report to the Poor Law Board on the Laws of Settlement and Removal*, 1850.

on export was only to be paid when the price fell below 44s.

Calculating the average price according to the figures given by Tooke, for the seventeen years 1774-1790, and for the fourteen years 1760-1773, it appears that the Act did not succeed in cheapening wheat, but that the price rose. For the period 1760-1773 it was 44s. 7d.: for that from 1774-1790 it was 49s. If however we leave out the cheap years at the beginning of the first period, and compare the average of the seven years 1767-1773 with that of the latter period, we find a slight fall in price, viz. from 49s. 6d. to 49s. This result could hardly have caused a return to the old policy if agriculture had rested on a tolerably secure foundation. But agriculture was not secure: and an unfavourable conjuncture set Parliament at once in motion. In 1790 the price of wheat had been 56s. 2½d.; in 1791 it fell to 49s. 4d.: and an Act was passed in that same year allowing importation at a sixpenny duty when the price was 54s., establishing a duty of 2s. 6d. when the price was between 50s. and 54s., and a prohibitive duty of 24s. 3d. when it fell below 50s.

This Act, backed by the war and the bad harvests, drove up prices, especially in 1800 and 1801. The average for the decennium 1791-1801 is 75s. 11¾d. Poor heath and waste lands were frequently broken up, and repaid the expense. In 1795 the *Report on Waste Lands* was published, strongly recommending their cultivation, due regard being had to the claims of the cottiers. Then, when at the beginning of the next century better harvests and the larger imports of a time of peace caused prices to fall, in 1802 to 67s. 3d., and in 1803 to 60s., agriculture was at once in difficulties. The sharpness of the fall appears even more clearly when we add that the price had been 127s. in 1800, and 128s. 6d. in 1801. Agriculture had accommodated itself to these prices: rents, profits and wages had all risen.

Accordingly, in 1804, a new Act was passed. The limit at which the prohibitive duty of 24s. 3d. came into operation was raised from 50s. to 63s.: and then the

renewed war, the Continental system, and bad harvests caused a repetition of the experience of 1792-1801. Prices were particularly high from 1809-1813. The average for the nine years 1805-1813 is 100s. 4d. And again rents and profits and even wages rose, and again uplands and heaths were enclosed and converted into arable. The following table gives a brief summary of the average prices, and, for comparison, some figures on rents and wages :—

Price of Wheat per quarter.		Rents on the Northumberland estates of Greenwich Hospital.[1]		Wages according to Arthur Young.	
	s. d.		£		d.
1767-1773..	49 0	—	—	1767-1789 ..	12½
1774-1790..	49 0	—	—	—	—
1792-1801..	75 11¾	1793-1794 ..	6,950	1790-1803 ..	16¾
1805-1813..	100 4	1814-1815 ..	15,560	1804-1810 ..	20

Equally instructive is a table calculated by Josiah Easton[2] for a Somersetshire farm, and it agrees in all essentials with that just given :—

	1773-1782	1783-1792	1793-1802	1803-1812
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Wheat (per bushel)..	5 11	6 2	9 5	12 6
Average price of meat (per 16 oz.) ..	2¾	3¼	7¼	8¾
Butter	6¼	7	14	16
Profit	248 10 0	260 0 0	395 0 0	525 0 0
Rent, per acre ..	19 6	1 0 6	1 11 6	2 1 0
Wages	1 2	1 3	2 0	2 4
Yearly product ..	1,725 3 0	1,831 18 0	2,830 5 0	3,683 17 0
Fixed capital ..	4,970 0 0	5,200 0 0	7,900 0 0	10,500 0 0
Working capital ..	1,892 12 0	1,945 17 0	3,023 5 0	4,098 1 1

The high prices, however, especially affected the position of farm servants. The large farmer produced for the market, and the less his household consumed, the more he could sell. Consequently he reckoned the provisions supplied to his servants at their market value. We have already seen that the farm servant, boarded and lodged in

[1] Leadam, *What Protection does for the Farmer and Labourer*, 5th ed., 1893, p. 97.

[2] *Reports respecting Grain and the Corn Laws*, 1814-15, Vol. V., p. 12.

the farmhouse, was an alien element in the economy of the large farm ; and now, as prices rose, payment in kind was largely given up in those southern and midland districts which lay near the markets. Farm-servants received a higher money wage ; that is to say, they were put on board wages[1]—which was not altogether a new thing, for Lecky tells us that in London in the eighteenth century the servants of upper-class households were often subject to similar arrangements.[2] If the Agricultural Surveys are to be believed, farm-servants were well fed even at the end of the century, so that the arrangement was expensive to an economy based on profit-making.[3] There is no need here to elaborate proof that the change was very often both materially and morally injurious to the servants, nor that it hindered them from improving their position in life ; for those who had received part of their earnings in this particular form of payment in kind had saved relatively more than others, and such savings had been the foundation of independence to the farm-servants of the eighteenth century. The prospect of independence had kept them from early marriages and from multiplying as a mere

[1] Arthur Young, in the *Agriculture of Norfolk*, reports :—" A custom is coming in (i.e. about 1804) about Waterden of allowing board-wages to farm-servants instead of the old way of feeding them in the house, 8s. a week are given." Marshall, *Eastern Department*, p. 371. Mayor says in his report on Berkshire (1813, but the material was for the most part collected in 1807) that " farmers in general keep no more servants in the house than they can possibly help." *Southern Department*, p. 32.

[2] " The servants upon board-wages and horses hired from a livery-stable preclude two principal sources of expense. The servants' hall and stable being shut up there is more chance that the estate will procure a succession of company or of public amusements." Young, *Annals*, XLII., p. 143. As regards the farmers, Middleton, in his *Report on Middlesex*, explains the system thus : " Servants who are boarded by the farmers frequently consume more food than their masters." This was " very expensive," and " this, together with their rude manners, induces most farmers to pay them board-wages, especially as this method *greatly lessens the trouble of the mistress* and the female servants of the house." Marshall, *Southern Department*, p. 131.

[3] In Hampshire " servants of the farmers generally fed with pork and pudding the greatest part of the year, except on Sundays, when a joint of meat is sometimes allowed." A. and W. Driver, *Agriculture of Hants*, 1794, in Marshall, *Southern Department*, p. 293. And Middleton says (loc. cit.) that they have " bread and cheese and pork for breakfast, coarse joints of beef boiled, with cabbages and other vegetables or meat pyes, meat puddings for dinner, cold pork, bread and cheese, etc., for supper ; and with every meal small beer."

proletariat does; whereas now all such evils made their appearance.[1]

The evidence which has been quoted shows that the system under which servants lived outside of the farm-house was already established in the south of England in the last decade of the eighteenth century. I do not know what grounds Engels had for saying that it "occurred pretty generally at the end of the 'twenties of this (the nineteenth) century."[2] The witness before the Committee on Emigration quoted in note 1 below believed that he could then (in 1827) even remark "some symptoms of returning" to the system of boarding them.[3]

III.—The Labourer in the period of low Corn Prices and the old Poor Law.

With the years 1813 and 1814 a period of continuous agricultural depression set in; but our subject does not require us to trace out its course in detail. When rent sucks up all improvements in net profits, every fall in prices must occasion serious disturbances: and this tendency of rent, aided by shortened leases and competition among the farmers, had shown itself increasingly from the 'nineties onwards. Till 1813 the war and the Continental system had kept up prices: but with the fall of Napoleon fell the ring-fence of English agriculture. "What we need is another war," said a farmer to Cobbett in 1822, as

[1] "There is another change that has taken place, and that has affected very much the character of our labouring population: the labourers no longer live in farmhouses, as they used to do, where they were better fed and had more comforts than they now get in a cottage, *in consequence there was not the same inducement to early marriage*, because if a man up to the age of 25 or 30 had been accustomed to live in a better way of life, he would consider twice, before he married and went to live in a wretched cottage upon potatoes and tea." *Report from the Select Committee on Emigration*, 1827, qu. 3882.

[2] *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klassen in England*, 1845, p. 313.

[3] Engels is equally mistaken in thinking that the board-wages system was a result of the agricultural depression. There is general agreement that it resulted from the good years. The farmer introduced it because he could sell the servants' victuals dear in the market, and because it did not suit him to board them. When prices fell again, those who lived in the more distant counties (where cost of transport was relatively high) returned to the system of paying partly in kind. A witness before the Committee on the Depressed State of Agriculture in 1821 thought that the system began in 1801 "*when the high price of corn was.*" And again he repeats that he ascribed the change "to the flourishing state that agriculture was in, people did not like the trouble of it" (i.e. of boarding the servants).

recorded in his *Rural Rides*. And he was right; no art of the legislature could hinder the fall of prices. In 1812 and 1813 wheat had still stood at 118s. to 120s.; in 1814 it sank to 85s., and in 1815 to 76s. In that year a new Act was passed, excluding foreign wheat when prices were below the exorbitant height of 80s.: but bad harvests brought large imports, and good harvests sent the price down, so that in 1822 it was 53s., and in August only 42s. The price of meat fell to half, and sometimes to one-third, of what it had been from 1815 to 1820. The *Rural Rides*, undertaken by Cobbett between 1822 and 1826, give a gloomy picture of the times: impoverished and ruined farmers, fallen or unpaid rents, uplands and heaths which had been brought under the plough left once again to nature, the land (so Cobbett believed) depopulated, the labourers transformed into paupers, and all, according to Cobbett, to enrich State pensioners, State creditors, and financial magnates such as Ricardo, to him their typical representative. Ricardo, however, he treats with mere irony. His wrath is reserved for those "Scotch feelosofers" who had invented political economy, while the name of Malthus stirs him to fury. "I have never been able clearly to comprehend" (he writes) "what the beastly Scotch *feelosofers* mean by their '*national wealth*,' but, as far as I can understand them, this is their meaning: that national wealth means, that which is *left* of the products of the country over and above what is *consumed*, or *used*, by those whose labour causes the products to be. This being the notion, it follows, of course, that the *fewer* poor devils you can screw the products out of, the richer the nation is."[1]

The Act of 1822, of course, was the measure with which Parliament tried to meet the depression; but according to Tooke it never came into operation. Six years later the sliding scale was introduced: but though beautifully thought out, and calculated to work automatically, it failed to be effective: the importers perfectly understood how

[1] Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, p. 381. Cp. Held, *Zwei Bücher zur sozialen Geschichte Englands*, passim, and especially p. 299.

to exploit its weaknesses. After 1828 the price was raised by a succession of bad harvests: but when these were over another fall followed, and in 1833 and 1836 Parliament set new enquiries on foot.

All this ill-success makes it comprehensible that as early as 1812 the *Report on the Depressed State of Agriculture*, in discussing "the derangement of the last thirty years in relation to commerce, application of capital and demand for labour," should have expressed the hope that those "general principles of the freedom of trade" which "are now universally acknowledged to be sound and true" might be realised. It must have seemed more to the purpose to leave the various branches of production each to its own fate than persistently to attempt to create among them an artificial harmony, and persistently to fail. Class recriminations, complaints and demands would then apparently be no longer possible: and even the conditions of labour, which protection and the poor law had rendered so extraordinarily artificial, must, as it seemed, necessarily resume a more natural character.

But before we can fully understand what these sad conditions were we have to study the contemporary poor law.

Gilbert, who originated several lines of a social policy partly wholesome and partly dangerous, obtained an Act in 1782 which proved a veritable curse to the labourer. The workhouses in which the able-bodied poor had been employed since 1723 had had the one sole merit of deterring those who could help themselves from applying for parish relief: otherwise they had mostly entailed a larger or smaller loss even upon the parishes. But in Gilbert's time unemployment, especially winter unemployment, was increasing, as the reader will remember; and some remedy was urgently necessary. The solution arrived at by "Gilbert's Act" was to give up the workhouses in their existing form, keeping them only as places in which to maintain those poor who were not able-bodied. For the able-bodied but unemployed, employment was to be sought in the neighbourhood by the parish officers. So far the Act was excusable: but it proceeded to set up the

fatal principle that the wages of those so employed should be received by the parish, which should however pay them a sufficient maintenance. Thus from this time forward any man out of work was secure of being employed by the parish, and of being maintained whether his work was good or bad. It is true that the parishes were left free to adopt the Act or not as they pleased; but times were bad, and it was widely accepted as a convenient means of relief; and in 1796 a new Act made it compulsory to relieve the able-bodied outside of the workhouse. It had thus become the duty of the parish to employ the poor, especially during the winter. In the north it was customary for old people and children to go through the villages soliciting work, and this was called "to be on the rounds." When in 1788 Sir William Young brought in the Bill already mentioned, for the relief of unemployed agricultural labourers during winter, he proposed among other things, "to send the unemployed labourers round to the parishioners," and also that their wages should be fixed by the parish.

His Bill did not become law, but it seems that the measures he recommended made way rapidly. Thus Eden says in his description of Maids Morton in 1795, "Here are several roundsmen in winter, who receive 6d. a day from their employers and 6d. to 9d. from the parish, according to the wants of their families."[1] A further development appears in the enclosed parish of Winslow. Here, says Eden, "there seems to be a grant want of employment: most labourers are (as it is termed) *on the Rounds*; that is, they go to work from one house to another round the parish. They are wholly paid by the parish, unless the householders choose to employ them."[2]

This system became even worse in the sequel through the influence of a new and different measure. The price of provisions, as the reader knows, rose so rapidly in the 'nineties, and wages so far failed to follow it, that not only the unemployed, but also those who had work, suffered.

[1] Eden, II., 27.
[2] Ibid. pp. 29 f.

Then, as we have seen, Davies, the rector of Barkham in Berkshire, claimed that an allowance from the poor rates ought to be paid even to those in work, in cases where their wages were not sufficient to cover the needs of their families. In the south, where bread was such an important article of diet, this allowance should be determined firstly by the price of bread and secondly by the number of persons in the family unable to earn. Davies' book appeared in 1795; and in the same year the Berkshire Justices resolved to set out a Wages Scale[1] according to the price of bread and the size of the family. The farmers were requested to pay higher wages, but if they still failed to reach the standard set by the "bread and children scale," then an allowance might be paid from the poor rates to make up that amount. Davies had even proposed that the assessment of wages should be revived. "The Speenhamland Act of Parliament," as the resolution was jocularly called, soon found acceptance beyond the limits of Berkshire. It produced pernicious effects upon the roundsman system, in so far as provision for the unemployed also came to be based upon "bread and children," as in the Maids Morton case. Where the roundsman system and the allowance system were both introduced, all classes of agricultural labourers, unable to work, out of work, or actually in work, came in bad times upon the parish.

[1] In order to give some idea of the scale, the first and last of the thirteen sets of figures are appended. The wages were calculated according as the price of bread was 1s., 1s. 1d., 1s. 2d., etc., up to 2s. Eden, I., 577.

Income should be for	A man	A single woman	Man and wife	Man, wife and 1 child	Man, wife and 2 childr'n
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
When the gallon loaf is 1s.	3 0	2 0	4 6	6 0	7 6
,, ,, ,, 2s.	5 0	3 0	7 6	10 0	12 6

Income should be for	Man, wife and 3 childr'n	Man, wife and 4 childr'n	Man, wife and 5 childr'n	Man, wife and 6 childr'n	Man, wife and 7 childr'n
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
When the gallon loaf is 1s.	9 0	10 6	12 0	13 6	15 0
,, ,, ,, 2s.	15 0	17 6	20 0	22 6	25 0

However, so far as it is possible to judge, it was not at once that results dangerous to the morals of the rural labourer ensued. Up to 1812 wages rose, though not adequately; employment increased, in consequence of the breaking-up of commons and wastes, the supply of labour had decreased, and during the period of high prices provisions were supplied to the labourers under market value or at a fixed price,[1] so that till 1813 or 1814 they were probably in a better position than can be statistically proved. Probably the unemployed came upon the rates in considerable numbers in winter; and probably too the heads of families particularly richly blessed with children were glad to let the overseers of the poor help to bear their burden. Thus in the *Report of the Select Committee on the Poor Laws*, 1817, we are told that the roundsman system "has long prevailed"; but the *Report of the Lords' Committee on the Poor Laws;* 1818, speaking of Bedfordshire, says that the allowance system has only been "occasionally" applied, and has only come into general use within the last few years. Such again is the witness of the statistics of expenditure on the unemployed in the hundred of Blything. It was significant up to 1815, then suddenly rose to an incredible figure, and afterwards fell when the price of provisions was high, rising again with the varying prices and the unfortunate crises of the 'twenties.[2] Altogether we

[1] "In some parts of England, especially in its western extreme, a melioration of that practice (paying in kind) is now prevalent, namely that of allowing farm-labourers bread-corn, at a stated price, let its value, at market, be what it may." Marshall, *Northern Department*, p. 377. And there is much evidence to the same effect in his other volumes.

	£	s.	d.
1810–11	1	3	0
1811–12	1	12	0
1812–13	3	0	0
1813–14	6	6	9
1814–15	5	18	6
1815–16	1,384	3	3
1816–17	2,704	17	3
1817–18	1,503	9	11½
1818–19	1,065	10	11
1819–20	1,623	15	3
1820–21	1,743	6	8
1821–22	2,297	5	4
1822–23	3,536	15	11
	£15,877	4	9½

[2] *Report on Labourers' Wages*, 1824, p. 58.

seem justified in concluding that between about 1804 and 1812 the rise of the poor rates was chiefly due to causes already discussed. But after 1813, with the beginning of the bad times on the land, new factors came into operation.

After that date, as profits decreased the allowance system enabled farmers to pay lower wages, and so to reduce the cost of production. Wages, which had only imperfectly followed the rise in prices, had to bear the first brunt of the depression. In addition, unemployment made its appearance. In the next fifteen or twenty years the production of corn fell off again, thousands of acres newly brought under the plough went out of cultivation, and labour was economised wherever possible. Already in 1817 (1818) the Lords' Committee on the Poor Laws was told that "many labourers are thrown out of employment in consequence of threshing machines." Later on complaints of want of employment increased, and before the Committee on Agriculture in 1833 they re-echoed from almost every part of the country.[1] The only witness who paints a favourable picture of the state of the labour market is the Liverpool corn-merchant Hodgson; and he did not know it by personal observation, but arrived at the truth according to deductive methods. And now the farmer discovered the advantages of the roundsman system. It enabled him to keep the irregularly employed labourers on the land, at his disposal, whereas without it they would probably have dispersed much more generally to other parishes or to the towns.[2] The allowance and the roundsman system were necessary conditions of any further extension of large farming and the new

[1] The *Report on Agriculture* succeeds in reporting a considerable improvement in the position of the fully employed labourer, which finds no sort of justification in the evidence. Moreover only a fractional number of labourers had full employment. See the various views given on p. ix.

[2] "The employers of paupers are attached to a system which enables them to dismiss and resume their labourers according to their daily and even hourly want of them, to reduce wages to the minimum of what will support an unmarried man, and to throw upon others the payment of a part, frequently of the greater part, and almost the whole of the wages actually received by their labourers." *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the administration and practical operation of the Poor Laws*, 1834, p. 59. "Very frequent instances have occurred

methods of cultivation. Economists will note with interest that the farmers recognised that under the new system wages must gravitate towards the lowest cost of production, i.e. towards what would cover the needs of the unmarried or childless labourer; whereas without the poor law allowance based on the size of the family, the needs of the married man would have been the determining factor.[1]

It will perhaps be objected that the advantage was a mere illusion. For the farmer had to pay his rates, and in addition he got bad work. This is perfectly true. But still the bad work came cheaper than good. For in the first place the farmer threw part of the burden of the rates upon the landlord;[2] in the second place he compensated himself for bad quality by getting a greater quantity, since labour was always at his disposal at a cost less than its value or at no cost at all; in the third place the labourers were not at first demoralised; and finally, people who themselves employed no labour were assessed to the poor rates, and this profited the farmer even when his lease had been concluded before the rise in the rates and he was therefore unable to throw his rate upon rent.

The classes who suffered were therefore the landlords, the small tradesmen and artisans, and the small farmers. As to the landlords, I do not propose to repeat here the

to me of one parish being full of labourers, and suffering from want of employment, whilst in another adjacent parish there is a demand for labour. The labourers were afraid to remove from what was considered a good parish to a bad one." *Extracts from the Information as to the Poor Laws*, 1833, p. 271.

[1] "Wages being kept so low that it is utterly impossible for him to support a wife without parish assistance." *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 3. "As soon as such a labourer becomes a married man, he is thus, as it were, identified altogether with the rates." Ibid. p. 34.

[2] The farmers were also "fearful lest, if the rates were lowered, their rents would be raised." *Extracts*, p. 60.

"They (farmers) wish that every man should receive an allowance from the parish according to his family, and declare that *high wages and free labour would overwhelm them.*" Ibid. p. 61.

"As the greater number of agricultural occupations are held on tenancies from year to year, the preponderance of interest is thought by the tenant to lie in a high rate . . . . because . . . . it falls at last on his landlord in the shape of abatement of rent in the current year, and a reduced rent for the next." Ibid.

well-known story of how in course of time the rates devoured almost the whole rents; how farms were often allowed to stand unlet; and how it was the hard case of rent which finally gave the impulse to the abolition of the whole system. It is more important for our purposes to notice the way which was found out of these difficulties. The landlord had obviously only to pull down the cottages on his estate to be free from the burden of the rates and to appropriate all the advantages of the system, since he then employed, or caused to be employed, labourers supported by the rates of neighbouring parishes. The farmers could no longer lay claims for reduction of rent; on the contrary the landlord was in a position to raise it. "He may indeed," says our often-quoted Report, "be interested in introducing them (poor law abuses) into the neighbouring parishes, if he can manage, by pulling down cottages, or other expedients, to keep down the number of persons having settlements in his own parish. Several instances have been mentioned to us, of parishes nearly depopulated, in which almost all the labour is performed by persons settled in the neighbouring villages or towns; drawing from them, as allowance, the greater part of their subsistence; receiving from their employer not more than half wages, even in summer, and much less in winter; and discharged whenever their services are not wanted."[1] In this terse description only one thing is surprising. The writer seems to consider that such cases could only occur "when the farmer is himself the proprietor": but obviously that point is quite immaterial.

The second class of sufferers, the small tradesmen and artisans, employed no labour themselves,[2] but were nevertheless assessed towards the poor-rates, or in other words towards the wages of the labourers. However, they too could often find an opportunity of shifting the burden. Since part of the maintenance was paid in kind—e.g. in house-room, boots, clothing and firing—or in orders on

[1] *Report on the Poor Laws*, p. 73.
[2] Ibid. pp. 200 f.

the shopkeepers, the better-to-do among them[1] could let or sell such commodities, and so make a profit which would be partly paid out of the rates and would exceed the amount of their contribution. "Paupers have thus become a very desirable class of tenants, much preferable, as was admitted by several cottage proprietors, to the independent labourers."[2] Vestries often consisted of those directly or indirectly interested in profuse expenditure: they were "compact combinations of numbers of tradesmen bound together for mutual local interests."[3]

Thus the most serious material danger was that to our third class, the small farmers who employed no labourers. Assessed like the rest to the poor-rates, there was no means whereby they could throw their burden upon others. "The overseer has sometimes called upon little farmers for their rates, and found that they had no provisions of any kind in the house nor money to buy any; while, on the other hand, he has not unfrequently been obliged to give relief to men who, there is no doubt, could have procured work, if they had exerted themselves."[4] So that here was a new cause militating against the very existence of the little farmer.

Such were the governing principles of the change in the organisation of labour. The high prices transformed the farm-servants into labourers hired for some considerable period; the low prices changed the day-labourers into paupers. In the good times farmers increased their income at the expense of the servant class; in the bad times they tried to guard against its decrease by making all classes contributory to the payment of wages.

Nevertheless they were not seldom ruined. And accordingly they re-organised their labour-system yet again. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it had fallen into two sections, farm-servants living in the house, and cottiers going to work by the day. Now it consisted largely of the two new classes just mentioned; and of these

[1] "Tradesmen . . . . commonly the owners of cottages." *Report on the Poor Laws*, p. 17.

[2] Ibid. p. 16.

[3] *Extracts*, p. 224. "Some of the charges were upwards of 40 per cent. above the market price."

[4] *Report on the Poor Laws*, 1834, p. 25.

the pauperised day-labourers might be divided into two sections, the regularly and the irregularly employed. The new development was to end in the multiplication of the second section. It was brought about by the methods adopted by the parishes in providing work, together with the undue multiplication of the labouring class induced by Poor Law policy.

Of the methods of providing work we know that the oldest was that of the Roundsman: but in the course of time two other methods appeared alongside of the first, namely, the Labour-Rate and Parish Employment.

The Roundsman system itself was split into three subspecies: the ordinary system, the special system, and the pauper auction. By the first and most usual, "the parish in general makes some agreement with a farmer to sell him the labour of one or more paupers at a certain price, and pays to the pauper, out of the parish funds, the difference of that price and the allowance which the scale, according to the price of bread and the number of his children, awards him." By the second, "the parish contracts with some individual to have some work performed for him by paupers at a given price, the parish paying the paupers." By the auction system the unemployed, including the aged and infirm, were put up to auction weekly or monthly, and knocked down to the highest bidder.[1]

The Labour-Rate system was an agreement between the ratepayers to employ each a certain number of paupers out of his own pocket, not according to his need for labour, but according to the amount of his rent or rates, or the number of horses he used, or the extent of land he cultivated or the like.[2]

However, in spite of all three forms of the roundsman

[1] *Report on the Poor Laws*, 1834, pp. 31, 32. The labourers to be auctioned were advertised in the newspapers, "to let out for labour, as houses are let out to hire, not having a choice of masters, work or wages (see an advertisement in the *Kentish Gazette*, 24th November)." *The Oppressed Labourers*, 1819, p. v. Cp. *Report on Labourers' Wages*, 1824, p. 38. "All the unemployed labourers were drawn up in a line on the Monday morning by the overseers, and the farmer who bid highest for any individual had his labour."

[2] *Report on the Poor Laws*, 1834, p. 42.

system and of this proportional allotment of labourers, the unemployed problem was still present. Moreover these were not in universal use, nor everywhere applied to the same extent. Thus many parishes were forced, unless they preferred the easier method of almsgiving pure and simple, to employ their poor themselves, which they did often in an entirely unproductive manner reminding one of the National Workshops of 1848. This is the method of Parish Employment. Large numbers of labourers were employed together, being known as "gangs," often under an overseer who was usually quite powerless and not seldom terrorized. "Whatever may be the general character of the parish labourers," says the Report, "all the worst of the inhabitants are sure to be among the number; and it is well known that the effect of such an association is always to degrade the good, not to elevate the bad. It was among these gangs, who had scarcely any other employment or amusement than to gather in groups and talk over their grievances, that the riots of 1830 appear to have originated."[1]

Now to the free labourer, as will easily be conceived, the supply of labour on the roundsman or labour-rate system meant unemployment, partial or total. Where subsidised labour was present in such quantity that it could meet the whole demand, the unemployment became total. Some farmers feared a still further rise in rates if the paupers were not employed,[2] because then they would have to be entirely maintained by the parish; and others had a certain number of labourers allotted to them under the labour-rate, and therefore needed less free labour.[3] Thus nothing remained even for the man who had originally been disposed to maintain his independence but to notify himself as unemployed and so acquire a claim to

[1] *Report on the Poor Laws*, 1834, p. 36.

[2] "He had been forced by the overseer . . . . to dismiss two excellent labourers for the purpose of introducing two paupers in their place." Ibid. p. 79.

[3] "The farmer, finding himself charged for a greater quantity of labour than he requires, naturally endeavours to economize by discharging those labourers of whom he has the least need and relying upon the supply furnished by the parish for work hitherto entirely performed at his own cost." *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 3.

maintenance with or without work. As in Saxon times the poor freeman had nothing for it but to give himself into unfreedom, so now the free labourer had nothing for it but to become a pauper. What chiefly caused this pauperisation was the cheapness of the labour which was subsidised from the landlords' rents and the incomes of men who were not employers. For the greatest demand for labour came from the farmers, and they relied so entirely on this subsidised labour that, as one witness said, the plough must stand still if no roundsman came ;[1] or as another put it, "Men have been discharged by farmers as supernumerary or superfluous, and have been ordered to receive a certain sum (perhaps tenpence or a shilling a day) from the poor book, some of the farmers have then taken them into employ and given them plenty of work."[2] Thus such cottiers as survived, and labourers owning property, had in many cases to become paupers before they could find employment.[3] As in countries with a paper currency the greater the discount the greater very often are the issues, so in England, with an ever increasing discount of free labour the number of parish pensioners and unemployed grew continually.

But not only was the problem of unemployment or semi-employment so serious that labourers saw no other way of salvation except that of becoming paupers : but the labouring population multiplied to an alarming extent in the forty years between say 1795 and 1835. We have already spoken of the impulse to multiplication which the farm-servant class had received. As to day-labourers, their allowance rose with the size of their families ; and marriage was the one way in which a bachelor could hope to improve his position. The income of young women increased according to the number of their illegitimate

[1] *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 36.

[2] Ibid, p. 42.

[3] In Hazelbury Brian (Dorset) "some of the best workmen, who happened to be cottagers possessing land, had not been employed since September nearly, because the employers did not take them, as they could get others for nothing. They could not be employed, because persons having property could not be put on the poor book. 'We must therefore wait till we are ruined.'" Ibid. p. 43. And cp. *Extracts*, p. 270, and also pp. 129, 379, 381.

children.[1] The shortsighted practice of taking the wages of the unmarried labourer as, so to say, the zero of the wages-scale avenged itself. Being refused more than 3s. a week, they replied, "We will marry and you must maintain us."[2]

It was in this environment that the as yet undeveloped ideas resulting from observations made by earlier economists grew up and ripened in the mind of Malthus. His premises were anything but the arbitrary choice of a deductive method. The difficulty (as I have tried to show it) of increasing agricultural returns, on the one hand, and the multiplication of a proletarianised population on the other, were matters of experience observed hundreds and thousands of times over.

When in the 'thirties the two publications resulting from the Poor Law Commission, which we have so frequently cited, made their appearance, they contributed hardly anything new to the statement of the problem before us. Their material was incomparably richer, but everything essential is already contained in the *Report on Labourers' Wages.*[3] On two points, however, they do add to our knowledge. According to the Reports of the 'twenties, it might have been thought that the disease was limited to the south, where the corroding influence of the division of labour had been present longest; for the *Report on Labourers' Wages* commended the healthier conditions of Northumberland, Cumberland, Lincolnshire, parts of Lancashire, the greater part of Yorkshire, and Staffordshire.[4] But it now appeared that all parts of the country were affected, only Northumberland and Durham remaining comparatively free, as a result of the peculiar Northumbrian labour system which has already been described, and of the opportunities of employment offered by the coalmines on the Tyne and Wear, and the public works which

[1] In Swaffham a girl with five illegitimate children got 18s. a week. *Report on the Poor Laws*, 1834, p. 171.

[2] *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 29.

[3] *The Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws*, of 1882, is so unimportant that I have left it unnoticed in the text.

[4] P. 5.

had been undertaken in Durham.[1] In the second place it became evident that the labour system which had now ruled for forty or fifty years—the system of irregularly-employed day-labourers partly supported out of the rates, while the employment of farm-servants was reduced to a minimum—had in many places already overlived itself. Land lay untilled; in some parishes the rates no longer came in; in some, about 1830, the labourers, who were left to starvation wages if the system was abolished, could only maintain it by threats and violence, and in particular by incendiarism.[2] Here and there some authorities had already understood how to get rid of it wisely and skilfully.[3] It was at last generally recognised that pauper labour was very dear, being badly done and requiring strict supervision; it was necessary to "superintend the superintendent." Some employers preferred to employ such labourers as had no settlement in the parish;[4] others would have no paupers at all; and to these and to the few labourers who retained their sense of independence, especially such as had a small income from property, it was due that free labour had not altogether died out.[5]

IV.—The Gang System.

While the system of labour-organisation created by the

[1] *Extracts*, p. 169. "Let any one of these causes cease to act in its present extent . . . . What ensues? The process of the southern counties."

[2] "The mobs generally had written forms containing their demands, ... all agreed in the amount of 'allowance' of 1s. 6d. for every child above two; that there should be no assistant overseer; that they should be paid full wages, wet or dry . . . . There were nine cases of incendiarism that winter." *Extracts*, p. 28.

"In 1830 a considerable reduction of wages had taken place . . . . a general feeling of discontent broke out. Incendiarism prevailed to a frightful extent . . . . for nearly a month hardly a night passed without conflagrations in the neighbourhood, and tumultuous assemblies demanding a rise of wages. Under these alarming circumstances the labourers obtained their demands. Ibid. p. 14. Cp. also p. 136.

[3] Op. cit. pp. 99, 38, 190.

[4] Op. cit. pp. 208, 307. An opinion was expressed before the Committee of 1824 to the effect that the labour of four to five paupers only equalled that of one free labourer employed at piece wages. *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 4. One witness said that he had been obliged to give up his threshing machine, because of "the quantity of labourers we are obliged to maintain." Ibid. p. 31.

[5] *Report on the Poor Laws*, 1834, p. 79.

Poor Law was rapidly falling to pieces, another was expanding in the eastern counties, which was due as much to enclosures as to the Poor Law, namely the Gang System. In name or in fact it has some resemblance to two of the systems already discussed. In name the "gang system" resembles the "parish gang"; and both names indicate a group of workers taken to work under supervision: but there is no evidence to show whether or not the parish gangs were models for the public and private gangs. There is an actual resemblance to the roundsman system in the fact that the workers in the public and private gangs had no lasting employment with any one employer. They went from farm to farm during a great part of the year, usually returning home in the evening. Only occasionally, when their place of work lay particularly far from home, did they remain on the farm for a longer or shorter period, sleeping in barns or stables or in any other quarters that offered, though they are not to be confused with the harvest labourers; indeed the gangs sometimes broke up during harvest. But these organised banks of nomadic workers differed from the parish gangs and roundsmen in two ways: first, they were free, i.e. they received no parish relief; and secondly they consisted of married women, young people of both sexes and children.

In the first place we have to ask where the system arose. Briefly, the answer is that it arose in those parts of the eastern counties where large farming and intensive cultivation were the rule; and where consequently every farm required many different kinds of work, but only required them irregularly: and especially in those parts of the fen district which, being newly drained, needed a great expenditure of labour on weeding.[1]

[1] "From one or two farmers cultivating their lands in a superior manner, getting their farms perfectly clear and *free from weeds*, many others have been induced to follow their example and employ more hands: and where there used to be £1 expended in the cultivation of the land 20 years since, there are now £5 expended for the same." *Report on Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, 1843, p. 274. (Norfolk.)

"I think ganging sprung from singling turnips, in short *from the highest state of cultivation*, though you might have it without: but ganging does it quickest." Ibid. p. 277. (Norfolk.)

The second question is why the system arose. The answer usually given is that no labourers were to be found in the neighbourhood. And if we ask in the third place why so unnatural a system persisted, it is answered that it was excellent from the economic point of view, and that though it might carry with it some disadvantages to health and morals these could be overcome by the aid of a little prudence.

But things will become much clearer if we trace out the rise of the gang system in detail, so far as that is possible. It developed on new land, on drained pasture converted into arable, and on old arable. Examples of the first kind are to be found in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, of the second in the South Fen district of Lincolnshire, and of the third in Norfolk. They all go back to the first third of the nineteenth century.

When at the beginning of the century the high corn prices led to the breaking-up of land then uncultivated in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, a great farm was often set down in the midst of the wolds, like a settlement in a primeval forest, having no cottages for labourers attached to it, and it even happened sometimes that the few cottages which had existed were pulled down.[1] The first labour-power applied was that of farm-servants,

"The improved system of agriculture (particularly as regards the cultivation of turnips) adopted in this country gave them an opportunity of so doing" (sc. supporting themselves). Ibid. 280. (Norfolk.)

"With improved cultivation the demand for manual labour increased." *Sixth Report*, (1862) 1867, p. 20. (Lincoln.)

"The gang system exists here to a great extent, and the only thing to be said in its favour is that I believe that the work could not be done without it, especially in the Fen." *Report*, 1843, p. 278.

"It has been adopted by a large occupier in this parish of 1,200 acres (most of the farms are extensive)." Ibid. p. 278.

"I fear, however, that the gang system will and must increase, especially upon large farms." Ibid. p. 280.

[1] "Probably stimulated by the high price of corn during the 'war-times,' the reclamation of these wilds (the Lincolnshire wolds) was accomplished very rapidly . . . . With improved cultivation the demand for manual labour increased, whilst the law of settlement deterred the landlord (generally sole proprietor of each parish) from building cottages to meet it. On the contrary, it was not unusual for them to be pulled down, with a view to getting rid of poor-rates altogether." *Sixth Report of the Children's Employment Commission*, (1862) 1867, p. 20.

So in Cambridgeshire, "The commons were enclosed and cultivated in 1809, and ever since gangs have been used." Ibid. p. 53.

living according to ancient custom in the farmhouse. As cultivation increased, these no longer sufficed; but considerations of expense and of the poor-law prevented the farmers from resolving on the settlement of day-labourers. Besides, the labour needed was only wanted for a comparatively short time, and the work was often easy, so that children, young persons and women were capable of doing it. It consisted chiefly of weeding, stone-picking, potato-setting, and pulling, sometimes the spreading of manure, hay-making, and lastly all kinds of work connected with turnip-growing.

Labour of the necessary sort was found in the surrounding parishes, and especially in the so-called "open villages." In the open villages the land belonged to more persons then one, and often to many small owners, such as shopkeepers, artisans, inn-keepers and bakers; so that they could hardly be closed against new-comers. The great landlords, on the other hand, who often owned a whole parish, for reasons which we have sufficiently discussed, not only built no new dwellings, but even pulled down those which existed, or let them go to ruin. Such parishes were, so to say, closed against settlement—"close parishes." So that all those who were seeking work were bound to crowd into the "open villages."[1] In them, therefore, the labour required was present in superfluous quantity, while for miles around there might be the greatest possible need of it.[2] The name was still unknown

[1] See for Lincolnshire, *Sixth Report*, (1862) 1867, p. 20, and for Norfolk the *Report* of 1843, p. 221.

[2] This was statistically proved in 1850. Of the six neighbouring Norfolk villages named below, the first was "open," the other five were "close."

	1801		1821		1841		1831	
	Inhabit'd houses	Population	Inhabit'd houses	Population	Inhabit'd houses	Population	Inhabit'd houses	Population
Lakenham ..	84	428	403	1,875	973	4,006	917	3,810
Caistor ..	25	206	38	164	35	147	45	193
Markshall ..	2	18	3	23	4	24	4	32
Keswick ..	11	67	14	104	21	117	21	120
Stoke Holy Cross ..	45	224	55	303	86	453	66	350
Trowse Newton	86	428	130	549	132	562	129	583

in the eighteenth century, but the thing was there, and Arthur Young already traces it back to the great landlord, the large farmer, and the Poor Law.[1]

Under these circumstances the Gang System arose so naturally and necessarily that any attempt to elucidate its origin fully is bound to fail. The gangs were there. They consisted of classes of persons who in certain industrial employments were, after 1833, protected by the Factory Acts; an undertaker—the gang-master—interposed between the labourer and the farmer living at a distance; he contracted with the latter for the work required, and when it was done received at a specified time the sum agreed upon, out of which he paid the stipulated wages to his workers. Belonging to the same social grade as themselves, he generally went with them himself, superintended them during the day, and returned home with them, as a rule on the evening of the same day. One month the gang would be employed at a certain farm setting potatoes, the next it would be weeding at another, and so, changing its place and its occupation, it would work through perhaps three-quarters of the year.

Thus in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire gang-work resulted from a late outbreak of the enclosure movement. In Norfolk it made its appearance as an effect of economic forces and circumstances which had long been present. Norfolk is the classic county of agriculture. Many large farms had already been laid down there in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and there accordingly Henry VIII had sent his Commissioners. It had been the scene of the labours of Townshend and Coke; in the eighteenth century it had succeeded to the agricultural primacy once possessed by Essex and Suffolk; and Jethro Tull had made it the birthplace of the system of rotation of crops. Its small farms had been pulled down almost as mercilessly as those a hundred and fifty miles to the west, where

Comparing the figures for 1831, which we have placed after those for 1841, it appears that the population of four of the villages decreased between 1831 and 1841. *Report to the Poor Law Board on the Laws of Settlement and Removal of the Poor*, 1850, p. 27.

[1] *Political Arithmetic*, p. 102.

Bakewell bred his fatting sheep. Scarcely anything remained but large farms lying far apart one from the other. The cottages in which the labourers so highly praised by Marshall had dwelt were largely removed or left to fall to pieces, as the poor rate ever more greedily devoured rents and profits. Even in the eighteenth century Price lashed out at the depopulation of Norfolk, and Arthur Young had correctly analysed the phenomenon. The neighbourhood seemed to be empty of men, except in a few open villages scattered over the country, where there was a superabundance of poor families with numerous children, largely consisting of immigrants from the surrounding parishes.[1] Such a village was Castle-Acre. Here the small tradesmen had met the demand for dwellings by letting building land to speculators at a high rent; so that cottages had been built,[2] but their rents stood high. And in Castle-Acre the gang system made its appearance as early as 1826,[3] spreading thence both to the neighbouring and the more distant parishes. The economic and social conditions were the same as those on the Lincolnshire wolds, and they led to the same results. The Assistant Commissioner mentions also the lack of employment owing to the ruin of hand-spinning, but it seems doubtful if this can have persisted in Norfolk up to the end of the 'thirties.[4]

Between Lincolnshire and Norfolk lies the Fen District, which had consisted of waste marsh-land, but where drainage had begun in the seventeenth century. At first, so far as I can ascertain, the drained land had been used as pasture, but in the first third of the nineteenth century corn-growing was begun in the Middle Fen, and later on, after 1835, in the Southern. There were few dwelling-

[1] In Castle-Acre in 1843, of 249 families 103 came from other parishes.

[2] Such cottages cost £5 or £6 a year, whereas better ones with gardens attached were usually let for £2 10s. to £3. *Report on the Laws of Settlement*, etc., 1850, p. 17.

[3] "System has gone on 17 years; I was at the first beginning of it." *Report on Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, 1843, p. 276.

[4] "Some years back the labouring classes . . . . were much better off, owing to the employment . . . . in hand-spinning." *Report on Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, 1843, p. 276.

houses, and no young men living as servants in the farm-houses: married men looked after the horses, but for other purposes there was a lack of labour;[1] and weeds grew in quantities everywhere. So that here also the gang system was the concomitant of enclosure. In the Middle Fen it appeared about the same time as in Castle-Acre,[2] in the South Fen somewhere about 1837,[3] and here later on it received its greatest extension.[4]

We come back now to the question how it was that so unnatural a system could persist. We have seen that it was said that the reasons were economic. On what grounds came that claim to be made?

It was, as a matter of fact, a profitable system for landlord and farmer. The landlord was at no expense for house-building, and he escaped the burden of the poor-rates, which otherwise would have been thrown upon him. The farmer got cheap labour, which worked rapidly, was always at his disposal when he wanted it and could be dismissed as soon as the work was done.[5]

That is all self-evident, with the exception of the "cheapness" of the labour, which needs to be proved a little more closely. It was cheap, first, because it was that of persons who did not attempt to economise their output; and

[1] "They have no farm-servants at all in the Fens, I mean lads. The cottagers near the farm look after the horses." *Sixth Report*, p. 21.

[2] "I have been in the habit of going out with women and children weeding for the last 41 years." Ibid. p. 33.

[3] "The first time I remember this gang system being brought to my notice here was in 1837." Ibid. p. 34.

[4] In the report of 1843 gangs are also mentioned as existing in Northumberland. But on looking through the evidence, it will be recognised at once that all the characteristic marks of the gang system are absent. The children of the Northumbrian farm-servants and day-labourers helped to increase the family income, and the thin population meant a shortage of labour. Very often the children worked with their parents, and in some parts they worked alone under supervision. But it is evident that they were not migratory labourers, going from open villages to farm after farm and replacing full-grown labourers.

[5] "He gets his work done quickly, effectually and very cheaply." *Report* of 1843, p. 223.

"The public gang system is generally found by the farmer to be useful and profitable to him, by the cheapness of the rate at which he can get certain work done, by the ready means it affords of procuring extra labour at the moment it is required." *Sixth Report*, (1862) 1867, xxi., 85.

"Each farmer can get the children he wants for a few days' work without being compelled to keep them one day longer than he absolutely requires." Ibid. p. 3, 12.

secondly, because the members of gangs, doing the same work as grown men, received a lower wage, and yet got through the same amount owing to this greater willingness, and to the oversight of the gang-master, who kept them steadily at their task.[1] Thirdly, it was cheap because the farmer escaped any payment for labour temporarily unemployed.[2] It is true that he had to pay the gang-master, whose income was in some cases higher than that of a foreman labourer receiving no share in the profits; but the difference was more than compensated by the greater cheapness of the gang labour.

Accordingly, after the introduction of free trade, farmers openly declared that the employment of gangs originated in the desire to decrease the expenditure on labour. Over other matters they had no control; the only thing they could squeeze was wages.[3]

If it be granted, then, that the gang-work was cheap to the farmer, and that nevertheless the pay of the gang-master formed part of its cost, it will naturally be supposed that the share of the workers can only have been very small, since the master would try to increase his share as much as possible. The Report of 1843 is very frank on this point. The gang-master found the system lucrative, "because it enables him to make money, not only as gang-master but as a vendor of necessaries to the members of

[1] "One reason why women and children are cheaper than men would seem to be that it is too much the propensity with agricultural labourers with the younger and weaker to put forth their strength to the utmost, and for the able-bodied to do much less than they can, so long as they are paid by day wages. . . . . Strong girls who are always hoeing can do the work as well or even better than men who are generally at horse work, and they only cost 1s. 6d. instead of 2s." *Sixth Report*, p. 14, 121.

"It is a mode of getting out of them the greatest possible amount of labour in a given time for the smallest amount of pay; for as the gang-master contracts to do a job by the piece, he makes his gang work as hard by compulsion as they would do freely were they working by the piece on their own account, while, in reality they are no more than day-labourers, receiving day-labourers' wages." *Report* of 1843, p. 224.

[2] "If it comes on to rain so that the gang cannot get upon the land, they have to walk there and back for nothing." Ibid.

"The system is said to enable employers to manage with a lesser number of persons in their permanent service, and hence to be more necessary where capital is small or the rent raised above a moderate level." *Sixth Report*, p. 79, 172.

[3] Ibid. p. 79, 171.

the gangs."[1] We have already heard the views of the Assistant Commissioner as to the way in which this money was made: the master undertook piece-work and paid time-wages. One witness (he was a clergyman) said that he "had heard" that the gang-master sometimes earned 15s. a day.[2] Considering that the gangs were usually about twenty strong, were at most forty, and that thirty may be taken as an abnormal number, this would mean that the farmer paid the gang-master 3s. a week per head as his profit. But as another credible witness[3] says that the gang-master also paid piece-wages, and even gave higher wages than the farmer, we shall be wise to suspend judgment until we find greater unanimity of opinion or a more judicial mind.

The Assistant Commissioners of the 'sixties attempted a deeper study of the question, and came to the following conclusions. Sometimes the gang-master received a definite sum, namely a halfpenny for every member of the gang he hired out to the farmer, in which case he got nothing for supervision; or he took for himself part of the lump-sum paid by the farmer.[4] Very often he received a daily wage of 2s., 2s. 6d., or 3s., which was from 6d. to 9d. more than the wage of an ordinary labourer.[5] But his chief source of profit was the payment of his gang by the piece. It was universally agreed that the gangs were urged to excessively hard work, not only by words, but sometimes by kicks and blows. The master expected to make 2d. a day on every child.[6] Further, in some cases he received 1d. as a sort of fee for arranging the work, paying the wages, and so on. The Commissioners came to the conclusion that his income was small at best, and little above that of an ordinary labourer in regular work.[7] This later Report says nothing of any increase of income by sale of provisions.

[1] *Report* of 1843, p. 223.
[2] Ibid. p. 278.
[3] Ibid. p. 279.
[4] *Sixth Report*, p. 2, 10.
[5] Ibid. This was a "very general plan," p. 68, 58.
[6] Ibid. p. 68, 60.
[7] "At best, his earnings, after paying his gang, are small, being little more than that of the common labourer in steady employ." p. xi., 33.

There can therefore be no talk of a "sweating system." And the evidence of a bookseller from Spalding, evidently an intelligent man, who had himself worked in a gang, deserves consideration. He said that the gang-master paid on an average better wages than the farmer; and that he had an interest in not allowing them to fall too low, since his own children were gang-children. He himself had never received such low wages as at the time when he was directly employed by a farmer.[1] His evidence is the more worthy of credence since he does not spare the weak points of the system; and it is confirmed by others.[2]

But if the earnings were not large, the question arises as to what was the inducement to take up this by no means particularly pleasant work. The answer commonly given mixes up cause and effect, as usually happens when members of the propertied classes pass judgment on the morals of the proletariat. For full-grown labourers there was continually less opportunity of employment: they could only get work here and there; and it was they who tried to earn their living as gang-masters.[3] It was very likely true, too, that long periods of unemployment had made them slack and less fit for work; it is also true that this again led to their receiving still less employment from the highly moral farmer. The descriptions given of them as gang-masters are simply horrifying. It is the more instructive to the objective student to read that when similar gangs were put under the supervision of a labourer regularly employed by the farmer, the results were the same or worse. "There is much testimony to the fact that the treatment of the young in the private gangs is occasionally not so good as in the public gangs. It appears to be frequently quite as bad. Where the sexes are mixed, as is almost always the case, the results are quite as demoralising as in the common gangs. It appears that the casual superintendent of the private gang is often a man

[1] *Sixth Report*, p. 35, 159.
[2] Ibid. p. 5, 23.
[3] Ibid. p. xi., 32. "There are always a good many labourers here whom farmers employ for a few weeks and then discharge . . . . Many farmers employ gangs to do work which men apply for and are refused." p. 37, 169.

less capable of exercising control than a regular gang-master, and is sometimes a man of bad character."[1]

This expression of opinion is quite sufficient to produce the conviction that the gang-masters did not stand morally lower than the rest of their class, but did possess greater capacity for organisation. It follows that their responsibility for the many dark sides of the gang system can have been but small. We are therefore led to enquire why such odium has been thrown on them. And since where moral indignation is greatest we may always suspect that material interests have been injured in the same degree (unless indeed revenge, mortified love or vanity, or frustrated ambition are in question, which can hardly be the case here), we find the only likely key to the question in the desire for gain.

The gang system, in the form in which we have so far seen it, was, it seems, still too expensive for the farmers, who had high rents to pay owing to great competition,[2] and who wanted to make large profits. The gang-master was generally no sweater, and paid no starvation wage, and if the work was paid by the piece, it was often done hastily and badly.[3] Some large farmers were therefore of opinion that " Work is not done so efficiently, and therefore in the end not so economically." Accordingly they attempted to hire gangs for themselves, putting them under an overseer of their own. These were known as private gangs, as distinguished from those working under a contractor, which were called public or common. The members of the private gangs were paid lower wages than those of the public gangs, they were kept equally hard at work, their treatment was often worse; and the farmer saved the difference between the wages of the overseer and the profit of the gang-master. Private gangs were known in Norfolk as early as 1843,[4] but the

[1] *Sixth Report*, p. xxiii., 99.

[2] " I do not think that the want of labourers' cottages near to a farm affects the rent . . . . the competition . . . . is so great that . . . . it does not affect the price he offers." Ibid. p. 16, 3.

[3] " A hasty and imperfect performance of the work." Ibid. p. 3, 11.

[4] *Report* of 1843, p. 279.

regular system was then still the public gang. In the 'sixties the former were by far the more numerous. "Where the numbers of the latter are, to use a common mode of designating them, counted by hundreds, those off the former are counted by thousands."[1] This substitution could not have taken place without a silent struggle between the farmer and the gang-master: and it was necessary to put the latter in the wrong, seeing the great influence that he exercised in his own village.[2] Even in 1843 the private gang had been commended as less dangerous to morality.[3] What the real facts were is shown in the Report of 1867.[4] The building of cottages in the neighbourhood of the farms was of the greatest assistance to the farmers in this campaign.

The economic presuppositions of the gang system persisted, and accordingly it continued to extend. Many farmers tried to dispense as far as possible with all regular labour. The gangs were not only employed as "extra labour," but "in numerous instances" did "their ordinary labour also."[5] The labour of grown men was replaced by that of children and young persons: parents were therefore the more eager to get their children into a gang in spite of the moral dangers which they had daily before their eyes. Sometimes the ganger could only obtain the older children on condition of taking the younger too. When the enquiry took place, in the middle' sixties, the gang system was found in Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Nottinghamshire, and in some parishes of Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, and Rutland. 6,399 persons were counted as belonging to the public gangs, and no figures were obtained of

[1] *Sixth Report*, p. xxxiii., 98.

[2] "It gives him great local power and an indefinite sort of patronage." *Report* of 1843, p. 223.

[3] Ibid. p. 279.

[4] I add here a few quotations bearing on this point. The Commissioners did not touch upon it at all. One farmer said, "I have often said if I could get a gang myself I would not have the ganger." *Sixth Report*, p. 37, 174. A gang-master lamented that "a great many farmers have gangs of their own. . . . . I can't get so much as I did." A neighbouring farmer tried to form private gangs, but "his men could not get the women." Ibid. p. 17, 11.

[5] *Sixth Report*, p. 20, 30A.

the much larger numbers employed in the private gangs. Something similar to what had occurred in the case of the roundsman system had occurred in the case of the gang system. A temporary expedient had become the most important feature of the organisation of labour.[1]

V.—Wages and Moral Conditions up to 1834.

Up to the passing of the new Poor Law in 1834 the material condition of the labourers as a class was on the whole not unsatisfactory where the parish gave adequate support.[2] Two classes, however, suffered badly; namely the unmarried men, and those married men who, though they had no holding of their own, would accept no parish relief. Their case was hard unless they could succeed in transferring themselves to some other occupation.

For wages were often miserably depressed by the allowance "in aid" of wages.[3] Even in 1824 they showed most marked variations; in the district of Wingham, in Kent, the lowest wages were in one parish 6d. per day, in four 8d., in eleven 1s. 6d., and in the greater number 1s. In Suffolk, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, and Wilts the allowance system was most extensively applied, and in Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, and Devon in a less degree. In some of these counties the wages were 8s. and 9s. per week, in others 5s., in some only 3s. for unmarried and 4s. 6d. for married men. In the north things were better. In Northumberland and Lincolnshire wages were 12s., and in Cumberland from 12s. to 15s. In the Oldham district of Lancashire they were 12s. to 18s.; here no allowance was paid. In the Wigan district, where an allowance was given to men with three children and upwards, wages were 7s. or 8s.[4]

[1] A favourable judgment on the gang system appears in the *Reports to the Poor Law Board on the Laws of Settlement and Removal*, 1850, p. 19. The author is of opinion that it gave ruined characters a chance of earning, and of raising themselves again.

[2] "The scale is calculated merely as to what is absolutely necessary for support and maintenance." *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 35.

[3] In one case it appeared that a pauper received £15 more per annum than a free labourer. *Extracts*, p. 149.

[4] *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 5.

The Committee of that year (1824) ordered a return of wages covering the whole country,[1] which affords some information on these points. In illustration of what has been said I give the figures for the six counties :—

BEDFORD :

7s.–8s., 8s.–9s., 8s., 7s.–12s.
Lowest day wages, 5d., 6d., 6d.–10d., 6d.–14d.

CHESTER :

9s., 9s.–12s., 10s., 10s.–18s.
Lowest day wages, 1s. 4d., 1s. 6d., 1s. 8d.
In one case it is noted that there is "no difference whether married or single."

DERBY :

8s.–12s., 9s.–12s., 10s., 12s.
Lowest day wages, 6d., 1s., 1s. 6d., 2s.

DORSET :

6s. and 7s.
Lowest day wages, 6d., 8d., 1s.

GLOUCESTER :

6s.–8s., 7s.–8s., 7s.–10s., 8s., 9s., 9s.–12s.
Lowest day wages, 10d , 1s., 1s. 2d., 1s. 6d.

NORTHUMBERLAND :

9s., 9s.–12s., 12s., 12s.–13s., 12s.–15s.
Lowest day wages, 12d., 14d., 16d., 18d., 2s.

These figures, however, do not enable us to calculate the labourer's income, for we do not know for what period he drew these wages, what were his "extras" (always an important item to the agricultural labourer), to what the profits on his own holding, when he possesses one, might amount, nor what were the average earnings of his wife and children. They do not even allow of comparison with earlier figures.

Moreover, in order to realise the labourer's standard of life it would be necessary to know the prices of at least the more important necessaries. The average price of corn remained high ; and we hear from various quarters that the price of bread remained high too. The abolition of the indirect taxes on salt, leather, etc., did not of course

[1] *Abstract of Returns prepared by order of the Select Committee of Last Session*, 1825.

begin till the 'twenties, and then it was gradual. And while only small changes were noticeable in this direction, house-rent rose considerably. For paupers part of this was usually paid by the parish; but the incredible height which it reached was such that even then they often paid more than under the old conditions. "A great part of the allowance," said a witness before the Committee of 1824, "returns to the farmers and landowners in the shape of exorbitant rent for cottages; I have known many instances where the amount paid by a labourer for a cottage was greater than the amount of relief which he received from the overseer; the rent of cottages is so high, that it is one of the chief causes of the agricultural labourers being in a worse state than they ever were; before the war, the average rent of cottages, with good gardens, was 30s. a year; it is now in our own neighbourhood commonly as high as five, seven, or even ten pounds per annum; and where cottages are in the hands of farmers, they always prohibit the labourers from keeping a pig, and claim the produce of the apple-trees, and of the vine which usually covers the house."[1] This witness (Drummond by name) ascribes the high rent to four factors: the increase of population; the banishment of farm-servants from the farmhouse; the compulsion to marry resulting from parochial policy; and the destruction of many cottages. Also, the farmers were "anxious to get the gardens to throw into their fields." If the poor tried to build cottages on the commons, they were pulled down, or the owners were refused relief on the ground that they had property.[2]

A model labourer, of the name of Thomas Smart, was brought before the Committee. He was then forty-six years old, and had been married twenty-eight years. He had had thirteen children, seven of whom were living, and the only parochial relief he had received had been on the occasion of the burial of his children. By good luck he had had fairly regular employment. In 1812 his wages

[1] *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 47.
[2] Ibid.

had still been 12s., before the great depression of the 'twenties 10s., but now they had fallen to 8s. His harvest earnings were 40s. and his keep. Three of his children earned between them 6s. a week. He lived chiefly on bread and cheese, had often touched no meat for a month together, got now and then a little bacon, and sometimes a ha'porth of milk, but the farmers did not like selling it. His ordinary drink was tea. He had no pig, but he had a garden where he grew plenty of potatoes. He had to pay £5 a year for rent and firing: shoes cost 15s. for himself and £1 for the family. The fall in the price of salt had been a great help to him.

Incomparably worse was the moral effect of the Poor Law—its effect on the character of the labourer. It has so often been described that I will content myself with giving once again one or two extracts from the Reports of 1824 and 1834. "It was their having high wages and then coming down so low that broke their spirits, and then they knew that they could go to the parish for relief, and they will now go to the parish even for twopence."[1] "Under the operation of the scale system, idleness, improvidence, or extravagance occasion no loss, and consequently diligence and economy can afford no gain." "In many places the income derived from the parish for easy or nominal work actually exceeds that of the independent labourer; and even in those cases in which the money relief only equals, or nearly approaches, the average rate of wages, it is often better worth having, as the pauper requires less expensive diet and clothing than the hard-working man. In such places a man who does not possess either some property, or an amount of skill which will ensure to him more than the average rate of wages, is of course a loser by preserving his independence. . . But though the injustice perpetrated on the man who struggles as far as he can struggle against the oppression of the system is at first sight the most revolting, the severest sufferers are those that have become callous to their own degradation, who value parish support as their

[1] *Report on Labourers' Wages*, 1824, p. 31.

privilege, and demand it as their right, and complain only that it is limited in amount, or that some sort of labour or confinement is exacted in return. The constant war which the pauper has to wage with all who employ or pay him is destructive to his honesty and his temper; as his subsistence does not depend on his exertions, he loses all that sweetens labour, and . . . . he gets through his work as unwillingly as a slave." "His pay, earned by importunity or fraud or even violence, is not husbanded with the carefulness which would be given to the results of industry."[1]

Sometimes, too, especially in districts with a "surplus" population, either the relief given or the rate of wages was so low that the total income merely sufficed to sustain life.[2] If this state of affairs was complicated by unemployment, poaching, stealing, and even robbery were the ordinary consequences. A witness before the Committee of 1824 said that in most parishes from five to forty persons were unemployed, and they idled or slept away the day, stealing and making the roads dangerous to travellers by night. Gangs of thieves had been formed, which included artisans and even a few farmers; they had broken into corn-lofts and barns, and sold the stolen corn to small farmers.[3] The demoralisation reached its height when labourers revenged themselves on obnoxious farmers by rick-burning. It was not uncommon for several fires in one night to proclaim grimly and plainly to the propertied classes the destruction of the ancient concord of the village community.

Nor was it sufficient that this same law should take away every motive to persist in that "prudence and pride"[4] which had made the increase of population so slow in the eighteenth century. To prolific marriages were

[1] *Report on the Poor Laws*, pp. 77 and 87.

[2] "The principal calculation of the overseer is the amount of what will merely support existence." *Report on Labourers' Wages*, p. 34. "Employers, burdened with the support of a surplus population, endeavour to reduce the wages of labour to the lowest possible price." Ibid. p. 5.

[3] Ibid. pp. 57 f.

[4] The motives so described by Godwin seem to me more to the point than Malthus' "moral rstraint." Cp. James Bonar, *Malthus and his Work*, 1885, pp. 360 f.

added, as was indicated above, numerous illegitimate births. A price was practically offered to the woman who fell; for if a child was born, she had the prospect of relief, or even of obtaining a husband.

The influence of the gang system was more localised, but equally demoralising. However, it was too new in 1834 for its bad points to have been recognised, and they were allowed to develop for several decades more. Half-grown lads and girls worked together; the tramps from place to place often lasted for hours; now and then a night was spent on the farms; the members were free when their work was done, and appointments could be made for evening meetings; the girls most inclined to join the gangs were those who had a strong taste for independence; and all these things tended to undermine self-restraint, and contributed their share to the rapid multiplication of the lower class. Even the children could not remain morally untouched by such an environment, as may easily be imagined, although in their case much more complaint was made of the physical and intellectual evils of the system: and in fact the exhausting tramps and overwork at so tender an age, exposure to rain and cold, and the difficulty of getting any schooling, often led to physical and moral deterioration.

One wishes that these pauperised and demoralised labourers could have been shown to those fanatics of production who forty or fifty years before had held it to be a good work to transform the small farmers, cottiers and squatters into wage-labourers, taking from them land, common, and cow, in order that by regular labour in the service of a farmer they might be made useful and comfortable members of society,

Plenty of people were perfectly acquainted with the connection between landlessness and misery, and accordingly tentative plans of reforms were always coming up.[1] The *Annals of Agriculture* offers us a lively picture of the clash

[1] See a description in the *First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture*, 1868, p. xxxii., 153 f.

of opinions at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. We have already seen the beginnings of these movements and their significance in Chapter II., and therefore the reader need not be troubled here by exhaustive descriptions of numerous small and often fruitless endeavours. We shall confine ourselves to noticing the more important.

A landless labourer could be converted into a landholder in two ways: first, by having land allotted to him on enclosure, or, secondly, by renting a bit of ground. The first method and its small results we have already discussed. And even if the process had been carried out with the best of intentions it would not have sufficed to improve the condition of the labouring classes. For the only labourers who could in this way be provided with a strip of land were those living in such parishes as were still unenclosed and possessed of common pastures or uncultivated common-land.[1] The only reason why I mention it again here is that attempts of the kind were often joined with the others to which we now turn. All labourers could have land if large gardens were attached to all cottages, or, where this was not possible, if land at some distance from the cottages were parcelled out and a piece allotted to every labourer. Little parcels such as these, lying together so that they form one larger whole, are of course known as allotments. They are thus distinguished from cottage gardens by the fact that they are at some distance from the dwellings and lie, all or many together, in the fields. They were for this reason also known as field-gardens. The cottage-gardens were held to be best, but if they could not be had field-gardens were useful. And obviously there was nothing to prevent an allotment in addition to his garden being given to the labourer whose cottage-garden was too small. "Allotment" was also the name given to the share which fell to the cottagers on the

[1] The enclosure of Great Somerford in 1806 is an example of generous procedure. Each labourer was allotted from 5 to 6 acres, although they could prove no rights. The originator of the enclosure, the Rev. F. Demainbray, succeeded in making other land besides accessible to the labourers, and so gave a powerful impulse to the movement in the west of England.

division of the commons; but so rare were allotments of this kind that the word now primarily suggests the field garden.

The land to be procured for the labourers might be either arable, or pasture for a cow, or a combination of the two. Those reformers who were most familiar with social conditions on the land—Arthur Young among them—attributed more importance to the possession of a cow with the necessary pasture than to arable holdings. But to carry out plans of this kind obviously required more land than did the allotment of field gardens, and it entailed the new difficulty of providing the poor labourer with the cow itself.

Efforts in this direction might be made either by private persons from motives of benevolence, or by the State. As early as 1796 Thomas Bernard, in conjunction with Wilberforce, founded a Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, which paid the greatest attention to the question of allotments, and tried, not without effect, to induce well intentioned landlords to assist labourers to obtain property. The Reports of this society, and also Young's *Annals*, are very suggestive for those who attribute great importance to philanthropic effort towards the solution of labour problems.[1] Sinclair and Eden also contribute to our understanding of the question as it stood at this time.[2]

The first attempt to provide as a measure of State means by which the labourer might acquire stock was made by Pitt. We need not here enter upon a criticism of his celebrated Bill, though ours would be more favourable than that of the arm-chair philosopher Jeremy Bentham; we merely indicate the relation between Pitt's Poor Bill and the needs of his time.

Political agitation and the distress of the years which followed the peace led in 1819 to the passing of an Act

[1] See *Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Improving the Comforts of the Poor*, 1798 and following years.

[2] Eden wished for land and pasture "enough to maintain a cow or two together with pigs, poultry, etc., and enough also to raise potatoes for the annual consumption of the family." Preface, p. xx.

empowering the Poor Law authorities to put land under cultivation by the poor; the land might belong or not to the parish, and if not might be either bought or leased; and it might either be farmed by the parish itself, or be let out to the poor in allotments. Twelve years later the principle received a further extension. In 1819 the parish had only been authorised to rent or buy land up to the extent of twenty acres: the Act of 1831 put the limit at 50 acres, and allowed the parish also to enclose such Crown lands as consisted of forest or waste up to the same extent and for the same purpose, by consent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; or uncultivated common land by consent of the lord of the manor.

In the following year an attempt was made to put still more land at the labourer's disposal. Earlier enclosures had allotted part of the commons to the poor in order that they might provide themselves with fuel: but the land had in many cases proved unsuited to this purpose. An Act of 1832 ordered (it was the first compulsory Act of the kind) that the trustees and parish officers should let land of this description in allotments to any industrious and honest labourers who asked for it; the rents to be applied to the purchase of firewood, coal, etc.

The *Report of the Poor Law Commissioners* of 1834 gives us the first comprehensive account of the results of these measures. In 1827 before the Select Committee on Emigration, and in 1830-31 before the Lords' Committee on the Poor Laws, several witnesses had stated that allotments meant happy and industrious labourers; but the evidence did not flow so copiously as in 1834. Summarising the results from the Report we may say that the parish farms, which had been started in fair numbers, had in almost every case failed of effect. Allotments had justified themselves in a much greater degree: but Poor Law officials had proved less suited to carry out such measures than private persons who had provided allotments of their own free will and with intelligent appreciation of the policy. The Report further contains three important economic generalisations; first, half an

acre is as much as a labourer can profitably work ; secondly, if more is allotted to him he becomes a small farmer minus capital and therefore pretty certainly on the road to ruin ; thirdly, allotments are economically profitable to the landlord as well as to the labourer.

Before discussing this subject further it should be briefly noted that the administration of the Poor Law having passed in 1834 to the Guardians of the newly-created Unions under the supervision of the Poor Law Commission, the Union and Parish Property Act of 1835 made the necessary adjustments in the matters with which we are at present concerned. It transferred to the new authorities all the rights which had belonged to the old, and of which they had made so little use. One is inclined at first to regard the change as a vast improvement. But " the practical effect," says T. H. Hall, " was to put an end to the further application of the existing laws."[1] Such a result is comprehensible, since to lay out allotments successfully requires a thorough knowledge of local circumstances and of the individuals concerned, which the Guardians possessed hardly more than the Poor Law Commissioners sitting at Whitehall.

But if the labours of the Royal Commission indirectly checked activity in this direction, the favourable conclusions which they expressed, and which we have cited, swept many of the difficulties out of the way. Opinion in various circles was unfavourable to the holding of land by labourers. The farmers stuck to it that land made the labourer too independent, and that ownership made him negligent and idle ; they feared that he would expend too much of his labour-power on his own holding ; they declared that he would steal in order to feed his beasts ; they emphatically asserted that they needed all the land themselves ;[2] and they were convinced that a

[1] Th. H. Hall, *Law of Allotments*, 1886, p. 23.

[2] Marshall, who appears in his *Reviews* as an obstinate champion of the farming interest, remarks in connection with Young's demand made in his description of Lincolnshire (where he anticipates more advantage from pasture than from allotments), " Were each cottager to have even three acres allotted to him there would not be, I apprehend, in three-fourths of the parishes or townships in England, one acre left for the tenants of the arable lands."

cottier would never pay his rent, or at all events would never pay it punctually. And the interests of the farming class coincided well with the interests of other classes on the land, and with those of the shopkeepers, who were reasonably afraid that they should not sell so many of their wares if the labourers produced provisions for themselves; and also with those of the innkeepers, whose best customers the landless labourers were. All this explains not only why the provision of allotments by the Vestry on which these classes were represented had in most villages been ineffectual, but also why many landowners held back from the allotment system. For in the first place they were already in a fairly profitable partnership with the farmers, and in the second place many of them knew too little about agricultural conditions to be able to trust their own judgment. If they turned to the theorists they were met at any rate by manifold doubts. Malthus in his *Essay on Population* had attacked Young from the standpoint of the population theory. Young, he thought, was only concerned to remedy present evils; he did not consider the ultimate consequences of providing the labourers with land. Malthus was convinced that such a measure could only result in still worse overpopulation. We are not here concerned with those considerations which he brought forward in connection with the needs of England as an industrial state. If we test his arguments we notice that he did not sufficiently recognise the psychological elements in the rapid increase of population. We have had occasion to show, and it is to be hoped that we have shown with adequate clearness, that the increase had taken place because "prudence and pride," motives which had still acted powerfully in the eighteenth century, no longer bridled impulse; and this because the economic and social conditions of their activity for the most part no longer existed. Clearly, Malthus had not sufficiently thought out what he had taken over from Godwin. He did not see that the so-called moral restraint is effective even in the lowest classes when the possibility of rising to a better position in life is not altogether barred.

He believed that the poor man would recklessly indulge his desires if he were put in a better position, whereas experience showed that having been forced into a lower position he lived in the present only. Malthus held that the poor, if left to themselves, would spontaneously develop the psychological forces necessary to limit the increase of population. The error was immense; they are developed only in a satisfactory economic and social environment. In other words, favourable external conditions do not necessarily evoke an increase in population so long as the labourer knows that he has to thank his self-restraint only for their maintenance or improvement. And therefore Malthus' argument against Young fails. From what has been said it appears hardly probable that Owen made any impression upon Malthus, though he tells us in his autobiography that he believed himself to have done so. Owen drew from his own experience the proposition that men must be put into better social circumstances if they are to become better; but his materialist and communist views prevented him from seeing the effective psychological motives which are in existence in the present economic order, and which are the only powers which can bring about a change. And therefore both Owen and Malthus offer only isolated and insufficient observations, which must be brought into connection before they can form a whole.

Besides the Malthusian objection, still other apprehensions were brought to bear against the allotment system. It was said that allotments would depress wages. The labourer, having an income from his holding, would be able to content himself with a lower wage. But this argument omits to notice that such a result could only follow if in the first place all labourers were enjoying the profits of a holding of their own, and if, in the second place, the supply of labour always exceeded the demand. The first condition still at the present day remains unfulfilled, and the demand for labour has now for several decades generally speaking exceeded the supply. Nor was it considered that the strongest force in determining

the rate of wages is the standard of life of the class concerned.[1]

Up to 1834 no answer based on experience could be made to objections like these: but in 1834 it became known at least that allotments did not make the labourer idle, that his economic position had been improved by them, that new forces had been awakened in him by the hope of improving his circumstances; and that the landlord received at least as secure and as high a rent from him as from the farmer, who in fact often made an extremely good business of subletting.

[1] See Mill's strictures on the allotment system, *Principles*, Bk. II., ch. XII., 4. Cp. also Chapter IX., *Of Cottiers*.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1834, TO THE EDUCATION ACTS.

THE best clue to the history of our next period is its legislative work, which includes, besides the Poor Law and the Education Acts themselves, the abolition of the corn laws, the Gangs Act, and some legislation achieved, with more attempted, on the subject of allotments. The Poor Law of 1834 marks the beginning of a period of slow recovery in the labourer's standard of life, moral and material. But though it began the process of restoration, it was not passed primarily with a view to his interests, and it brought him not a little adversity. Almost the same words may be used of the Education Acts. They had higher ends in view than any material improvement in the lot of the agricultural labourer; but indirectly they did serve that end. For Free Trade we cannot say so much. The legislative campaigns in favour of allotments and against the gang system, on the other hand, were directly intended to improve the economic position of this class; but, as we shall see, the first was on the whole a failure, and the second did not immediately benefit the adult labourer. Thus the study of the period leaves us with the impression that such reforms as were effected were more or less accidental and unintentional. Not till towards its end do we come upon direct, purposeful and effective action definitely concerned with the problem of the agricultural labourer: and then the first method adopted was copied from one made use of by the industrial workers; trade unions were founded. But before long doubts began to occur as to the adequacy of industrial methods to solve

agricultural problems; and there was a return to ideas which had been put forward at the end of the eighteenth century—ideas regarding the necessity of reuniting work upon the land with property in the land. This, however, marks the beginning of a new period, and therefore is not dealt with in the present chapter, though as far as dates are concerned it began in 1872, four years before the Education Act of 1876. Here we have only to deal with the reforms just indicated, adding in section iv. a brief summary of the condition of the labourer as shown in certain official reports.

I.—The New Poor Law and its Effects.

For the agricultural labourer the two most important principles of the new Poor Law were, first, the principle of indoor relief—that is to say that paupers were to be relieved in the workhouse only (where husband and wife were separated); and secondly, the abrogation of the duty hitherto laid upon the parish of finding work for the unemployed and making an allowance in aid of inadequate wages. These two principles meant a complete break with the practice of the past forty years, and if they were to be carried out the various classes upon the land must necessarily revert to the natural relations artificially dislocated by that practice.

Farmers could no longer throw the payment of wages, in the form of poor rates, upon landlords, artisans and small holders. Rents, so far as they had been determined by rates, could therefore be raised whenever leases fell in:[1] but such farmers as had concluded their leases under the old Poor Law had in the meanwhile a larger capital at their disposal; for they were paying a low rent, and the overseer no longer made his frequent appearance with demand-notes for a heavy rate.

But this desirable result was counteracted by the fall in

[1] *Report from the House of Commons Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act*, 1837–1838, qu. 8,590:—"The general impression is that the rents will be raised in consequence of having fewer rates to pay; there is no question that that will be the result." And qu. 8,593:—"And have you reason to believe that notice has been given by some parties that there will be a rise of rents?—I know that there has."

wheat-prices, which began again in 1832. In 1831 the price was 66s. 4d., in 1832 58s. 8d., in 1833 52s. 11d., in 1834 46s. 2d., in 1835 39s. 4d., in 1836 it rose to 48s. 6d. Rents having been fixed for the fourteen years 1815 to 1828 on the assumption that the price would be about 80s., and from 1829 to 1843 on an assumed price of 64s., all that the new Poor Law meant to the capitalist farmer was that he could now pay out in wages what he had hitherto had to pay in poor rates. The pitiable position of the farming class, as described with unusual unanimity before the Committee on Agriculture in 1836, makes it impossible to suppose that they could have employed more labour and paid higher wages than before.

As regards the labourers, we must draw a distinction. Old people and the sick or incapable found themselves in a lamentable plight. They were obliged to go upon the parish, but to enter the workhouse was very hard to them: so that a witness before the Committee of 1836 said that if the new Act was to succeed it was of the first importance that "the aged and infirm" should be "well treated."

The able-bodied were now "entirely thrown upon their own resources,"[1] and unless they kept on good terms with an employer they could not get their living. On the other hand, farmers could get no more roundsmen, emigration began (as we shall see directly), and indoor maintenance of the unemployed cost more than outdoor had done, while it was not taken into account when leases were being concluded; so that farmers on their part found it to their interest to stand well with the labourers. Accordingly we hear on all sides of improved relations between employers and employed, and in particular of "the increased attention (of labourers) to oblige their masters." Also that the change had had a specially good influence on "the idle and profligate."

But three evils oppressed the able-bodied, and two of them had been created by the old Poor Law. First, the number of inhabitants in a parish had been kept in excess

[1] *Report on Agriculture*, 1836, qu. 11,642.

of the demand for labour, and too rapid a multiplication of the labouring population had been induced. Secondly, wages had been forced down; and under the new law this hit married men very hard. Hitherto they had received parish allowance in proportion to the number of their children. Now their scanty wages had to cover all the needs of their families. Thirdly, the new methods of farming threw many men out of employment during the winter. Thus in passing to new conditions, it was not only necessary that the aged and infirm should be well cared for, but the excess supply of labour had to be abolished, married men's wages had to be raised, and an income had somehow to be secured for periods of unemployment.

Now even though it was reported on all sides that improvident marriages decreased after the new Act came into operation, decades must pass before the consequent slower increase of population could bring down the supply of labour to a level with the demand. If the superfluous labourers were to disappear rapidly other forces must be at work. By good fortune the passing of the Poor Law fell in a period of industrial expansion. In the four years 1832 to 1836, while agriculture was suffering under a serious crisis, trade was flourishing exceedingly: and no inconsiderable part of the excess labour of the midlands and north found its way to the towns.[1] Railway construction, too, began about this time in some parts of the country: and that also attracted much labour from the rural districts of the midlands. North Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire in particular were reported to be feeling this relief in 1836.[2] Still, even so, and in the favourably-situated counties, a large surplus population remained. North Bedfordshire was said to have got rid of "the glut in the market"; but from south Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire we hear of considerable over-population. Some idea of the extent of the evil may be gathered

[1] *Report on Agriculture*, 1836, qu. 297 f.
[2] E.g. ibid. qu. 8,197, 1912.

from the statement of a Buckinghamshire witness,[1] that without the public works and the manufactures the new Poor Law could never have been carried into effect. If so, what sort of consequences must it have had in those districts which possessed neither public works nor manufactures? Upon the Poor Law authorities fell the difficult task of moving, emigrating, and so gradually dissolving, this reserve army. But the process naturally required time: so that it is not astonishing that in 1836, when distress among the farmers reached its height, the complaints of widespread unemployment remained unsilenced.[2] In some counties the unemployed were still further reinforced by the introduction of threshing machines.[3]

Under these circumstances no rise in wages was to be expected. And accordingly, whenever the Committee of 1836 put the question whether they had risen, the answer was in the negative. In north Bedfordshire, although the surplus population had disappeared, wages still only sufficed "for the necessaries, I cannot say for the comforts."[4] In Hampshire, though there were not many absolutely out of work, "employment is not sufficient to give them remunerating prices, they are obliged to work for low wages, and the farmer cannot afford to pay higher wages, from the low price of his farm produce."[5] The generally accepted opinion, for which Tooke is chiefly responsible, is that owing to the low price of provisions,

[1] *Report on Agriculture*, 1836, qu. 8,198.

[2] In the autumn of 1834 in particular, when the new Poor Law came into operation, there were great difficulties to be overcome. Eighty-three persons were moved from a single parish, viz. Bledlow, in Buckinghamshire. See *First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners*, 1835, p. 5. Cp. also the next year's Report passim. According to the *Sixth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board* the number of State-aided emigrants was 3,271 in 1852, and up to date of writing in 1853, 488.

Of 50 people relieved in one parish in 1834, only 18 were in full work some years later, and 19 in casual employment. Those fully employed were therefore only 36 per cent. Of the 13 remaining, four were "gone away," two transported, one in prison, one dead, five old and infirm. *See Report of the Lords' Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act*, 1837-8, p. 270.

[3] *Report on Agriculture*, 1836, qu. 5,636.

[4] Ibid. qu. 8,198.

[5] Ibid. qu. 11,642.

the labourers were pretty comfortably off between 1832 and 1836. On the other hand, a witness states that as the price of wheat fell wages were reduced:[1] and though it was claimed before the Committee that by riots and rick-burnings wages had been kept above what farmers could afford in these bad times, and had not fallen in proportion to the fall in prices, yet at the same time it was admitted that the labourers were in a desperate condition. That wages followed prices is further shown by the fact that when the latter began to rise, in 1837 (wheat was at 55s. 10d., 64s. 7d., 70s. 8d., 66s. 4d., in 1837, 1838, 1839 and 1840 respectively), wages also rose in various parts of the country. And a witness before the Lords' Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1837–8, makes it no secret that this rise was to be attributed to the increased cost of necessaries, the Poor Law having nothing whatever to do with it.[2]

Wages were raised, with great difficulty, in Essex, Cambridgeshire, Herts, Norfolk, and Suffolk. It was at this time that the farmers would gladly have returned to the old allowance system had not the Poor Law Commissioners in London opposed them with all their might. But in some countries there was hesitation about raising wages at all, even in those dear times. When in the winter of 1838 the price of the 4-lb. loaf rose from 6¼d. to 7¼d., and the labourers began to mix barley with their wheat, or even to eat barley bread only, many farmers, rather than give increased money wages, preferred to introduce part-payment in kind, or to allow corn to their men below the market price: for they said that if they once raised wages it would be a hard matter to put them down again. It is rather an amusing point of view; but in fact things were sufficiently serious at the end of the 'thirties. People were saying that the new Poor Law might do well enough in good times, but obviously could not cope with exceptional difficulties. In many districts the workhouses were so crowded that from sheer necessity the Guardians

[1] "Wages reduced somewhat in proportion to the price of provisions." *Report on Agriculture*, 1836, qu. 13,100. They fell from 12s. to 10s.

[2] P. 162. Cp. also p. 699.

had to revert to out-relief; and charity was strained to its utmost in the endeavour to meet the distress.[1]

These facts are very instructive. They show first that with the removal of the allowance system went the removal, or at least the weakening, of the hindrances to a rise in money wages by means of free contract. And they show secondly that the wages of agricultural labour, even when freed from their artificial restraints, tended to gravitate to a point at which they barely covered mere necessaries, so that they varied with the price of provisions. Here we may trace the after-effects of a law which had been in force between two and three hundred years, namely the Wages Assessment clauses of the 5 Elizabeth c. 4, which had expressly provided that wages should be assessed from time to time according to the price of provisions. The Speenhamland Act of Parliament had given an extended and peculiar form to the same principle; and now it had become established although its legal basis had ceased to exist. We never hear that the labourers rebelled against it: only when, between 1830 and 1844, wages and allowance together, or wages alone, fell below the minimum necessary for existence did they turn to incendiarism. The principle was too strong for them. The only force which counteracted it lay in the vast demand for labour which came from the industries of the north.

We have not evidence sufficient to show the actual rate of wages at this time. We only know the ordinary daily wage, and we have already seen how little that tells about the labourer's circumstances. The figures given below are taken from a paper by Purdy in the *Journal of the Statistical Society* or 1860 (Vol. XXIV.). He does not say where he obtained those for 1824. Probably they are averages taken from the figures given in the blue-book of 1825 from which I gave some extracts in Chapter III. If so, they deserve small confidence. Those for 1837, the year when the upward movement of prices began, are from unprinted reports made by the Assistant Commis-

[1] According to the *Fifth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners*, 1839, wages then stood at 11s. to 12s.

sioners to the Poor Law Commission. The geographica arrangement is that selected by Purdy :—

Counties.	1824. s. d.	1837. s. d.	Counties.	1824. s. d.	1837 s. d
Surrey ..	10 8	10 6	Salop ..	8 10	9 (
Kent	11 9	12 0	Stafford ..	10 8	12 (
Sussex ..	9 7	10 7	Worcester ..	8 2	9 (
Southampton	8 6	9 6	Warwick ..	8 10	10 (
Hertford ..	9 0	9 6	Lincoln ..	10 2	12 (
Northampton	8 1	9 0	Nottingham ..	10 3	12 (
Bedford ..	8 7	9 6	Derby ..	10 10	12 (
Essex.. ..	9 4	10 4	Chester ..	10 8	13 (
Suffolk ..	8 3	10 4	West Riding..	12 6	12 (
Norfolk ..	9 1	10 4	East Riding ..	11 8	12 (
Wilts	7 7	8 0	North Riding	10 3	12 (
Dorset ..	6 11	7 6	Durham ..	11 6	12 (
Devon ..	7 6	8 0	Northumberl'd	11 5	12 (
Somerset ..	8 2	8 8	Cumberland ..	12 3	12 (
Gloucester ..	9 3	9 0	Westmoreland	12 0	12 (
Hereford ..	7 1	8 0	Monmouth ..	10 1	10 (
			Wales ..	8 0	7 (

It is hazardous to draw any conclusion whatever from these figures. Granted that Purdy's calculations are correct, and that the average wage rose between 1824 and 1837 from 9s. 4d. to 10s. 4d., this does not show that the labourer of 1837 was in the better position. For it leaves out of consideration the facts that the price of corn had risen after 1834, and that in 1824 the labourer had received allowance from the rates for himself and his family, and during weeks or months of unemployment was supported by the parish. Even granted that the labourer himself now needed no allowance, what had he in place of the allowance for his family and the out-of-work relief ? Something in place of these he must have, for even labourers' fmilies must live, and he got nothing now from a the poor-rates, while the farmer neither could nor would give higher wages, and paid only for work done. What was the way out ? The labourer must sell more labour-power : and since his own was already sold, he must put that of his family upon the market. This was how the problem of the wage of the married man was solved. And, as the farmers of the gang-districts had found, the labour of children and young persons was particularly profitable. The farmers in other counties

discovered it too, and made increasing use of women and children. And as we have already seen that the expansion of the gang system took place mainly after 1834, it appears that the exploitation of child-labour and women's labour is the main characteristic of the period between Poor Law and Education Acts. When Dr. Kay was examined before the Lords' Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act, he described the astonishment of travellers at the number of women and children working in the fields, and traced their increased employment to the Poor Law. In his own words: "The extent of employment for women and children has most wonderfully increased since the Poor Law came into operation. It has had that effect by rendering it necessary that the children should be so employed in order to adjust the wages to the wants of the family. The expedient adopted by all the employers of labour in getting rid of the allowance in aid of wages consists in affording such employment to the women and children, especially in large families."[1] And a country clergyman gave expression to similar views in 1843:— "By these allowances . . . . their children were not then obliged, as now, to work for their subsistence. Their time was at their own disposal; and then they were sent more regularly to the schools. But since the New Poor Law this has been all reversed. The same means of subsistence can now only be procured by work: the necessity of providing for this portion of the subsistence of their children was a care that fell then on the parishes, but now on the parents."[2]

So when unemployment, especially winter unemployment, increased, as according to reports from various parts of the country in 1843 it had done,[3] an Assistant Commissioner writes, "If his employment be irregular and uncertain, he makes the most of the occasion which offers—and wife and child are called in, to add to the profits of the hour."[4]

[1] *Report of the Lords' Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act*, 1837–8, pp. 467 f.
[2] *Report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*.
[3] Ibid. p. 56 for the purely agricultural districts, p. 139 for the hop districts. 1843, p. 219.
[4] P. 132.

Kay, having thus laid down the causes of the extended employment of women and children, proceeded to give statistical proof of the importance of their earnings in the labourer's budget. His figures are of such significance that I print them below.[1]

Persons employed.	Average number of children.	Income.	Excess over the income of the unmarried.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Unmarried labourers	—	25 0 0	—
Married labourers with no children at home	—	30 6 0	5 6 0
Married labourers with children all under 10 years	3	32 6 0	7 6 0
Married labourers with one child over 10 years	4	35 4 0	10 4 0
Married labourers with two children over 10 years	5	40 5 0	15 5 0
Married labourers with three children over 10 years	6	45 6 0	20 6 0
Married labourers with four children over 10 years	7	50 9 0	25 9 0

The Commission of 1843 confirmed these figures as substantially correct. As regarded the south-western counties it was also remarked that there were very great variations between the incomes of different families: some earned 18s., while others only got 8s. or 10s. In Yorkshire a woman earned on an average 2s. a week, or £5 4s. a year (Kay had put her earnings at £5 6s.). In Wiltshire, Devonshire, Somerset and Dorset her daily wage was about 7d. or 8d. in winter, 8d. to 10d. in spring and summer, and during harvest ordinarily 10d. to 1s., though some made 2s., 2s. 6d. and even in rare cases as much as 4s. In Kent, Surrey and Sussex her daily wage was 8d., 10d. or 1s., according to occupation, ordinarily from 10d. to 1s., and during harvest 1s. 3d., or more often 1s. 6d. to 1s. 8d. In Norfolk and Suffolk the average was 8d.; in Lincolnshire 10d.; in Yorkshire 8d. to 10d., during turnip-hoeing and hay-harvest about 1s., and during corn-harvest 1s. 6d. to 2s. The women assistants who had to be provided by the Northumbrian labourers received 10d. a day, and in

[1] *Journal of the Statistical Society*, July, 1838 (Vol. I., p. 181).

harvest 1s., while other adult women received much more in harvest time. However, these figures do not tell us everything, for many kinds of work were done by the piece, and not seldom by agreement with a group of workers, one family undertaking a particular job. The average wage of grown women would probably be about 9d. a day

Children were not employed everywhere to the same extent. Except in the gang-districts, girls went to work less often than boys, and as a rule not till they were twelve years old. In the south-west, where, as we saw in Chapter I., the system of parish-apprentices had been in vogue even in the eighteenth century, field-labour for girls had decreased as that system gradually disappeared. They were occasionally employed when over twelve in hay-harvest, potato-setting and potato-pulling, and they certainly worked in their parents' allotments, or helped their mothers to glean. But the use of girl-labour was more developed in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, where vegetables were largely grown for sale and market-gardening was common; though even here they only did the occasional work, such as hop-picking, fruit-picking, potato-setting, etc., and then usually as members of a family group. Their wages, when they were paid, were given as from 4d. to 6d., or 4d. to 8d. per day. In Norfolk and Suffolk their work was more regular. In Suffolk, where they were employed at a very tender age, their wage was sometimes 2d. or 3d., and the maximum was 5d. to 6d. In Norfolk the average for girls of sixteen was 6d., and above that age they were paid as women; for young girls the same small wages as in Suffolk often appear. In Lincolnshire only girls of fifteen and upwards are mentioned, and they were apparently paid women's wages. In Yorkshire they received 4d., 5d. or 6d. a day, and the same in Northumberland, with higher pay during harvest. In neither of these counties were they employed very young, but on the other hand the elder girls were pretty generally put to field-work. On the whole we may take it that over the whole country the average daily wage of

girls over twelve was from 4d. to 6d., and over sixteen about 6d.

Boys went to work much more generally and much younger, in some cases in the south-west at seven years old, and ordinarily at nine or ten. In the south, corn-growing districts employed them at eight, and hop-districts at ten to twelve. In Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincoln work sometimes began at eight, oftener at nine, but in some cases as young as six years old.[1] Of Yorkshire boys it is said, "They do not go out before ten except quite accidentally to light work; about 13 they begin to work regularly"; and it was the same in Northumberland. So that here again the least satisfactory conditions appear in the eastern and south-western counties.

Where boys were employed very young, that is to say chiefly in the east and south-west, they were paid from 2d. a day upwards. At twelve, they earned in the latter district 4d. or 5d. a day, or from 2s. to 2s 6d. a week, and in the south, on an average, 6d., or 3s. a week. After that wages gradually rose, so that at fourteen to sixteen they would earn about 8d. a day, or 4s. a week, and at sixteen to seventeen 10d. or 1s., i.e. 5s. to 6s. a week, But again it must be remembered that many fathers employed their children with them when engaged on a job paid by the piece.

Altogether this Report of 1843 shows still more clearly than Kay's article what importance women's and children's earnings had in the family budget. To take a concrete example. One family in Suffolk had a weekly income of 13s. 9d., only 9s. of which was earned by the father (or less than in Purdy's calculations for 1837). The wife only earned 8d.; evidently in this case she busied herself more than was common with household and maternal duties. But of the five boys, one of twelve years old earned 2s., and two others, aged respectively eleven and eight, earned 1s. apiece. So that the children earned almost half as much as their father.

Economists are concerned to know what influence such

[1] *Report of* 1843, p. 246.

labour had on the earnings of grown men and on the labour market. In determining these questions we must distinguish between work in harvest and at ordinary times. For obvious reasons wages were on an average much higher during harvest than during the rest of the year. Neither the unusual supply of female and child labour nor the crowds of Londoners who streamed into the hop-fields of the south-east lowered the harvest earnings of the adult men. It was otherwise when women and children undertook ordinary man's work, or when they worked together with the head of the family on piece-work. One of the Assistant Commissioners thought that even the boy who worked with his father was "a competitor in the market against the adult labourers, and against the parent whose earnings and disadvantages he must equally feel. Unless there be a demand for labour much above the supply of it, his appearance in the general market must tend at once to make it more difficult to obtain, and to lower its remuneration, when got . . . . In this way the father's interests are to a certain degree impaired, and to a certain degree furthered by his son's exertions."[1] Such employment, he adds, contributed to drive out the unmarried labourer and to lower his wages, and made it more difficult even for the married man to obtain an adequate income so long as his children were too young to work, or when they consisted of girls only. He might have added further that where, as in Norfolk, women's and children's labour was employed to excess, it threw both married and unmarried men out of employment; that where women and children were employed, old men whose children had become independent were left in a still more helpless position than that in which bachelors found themselves; and lastly that unless the bachelor preferred to remove or emigrate, a premium was again put upon his marriage, though his true prospects were a decade or so of hard work and privation, then a possible sufficiency for himself, his wife and six or eight children for some fifteen or twenty years more; after that, at about fifty-five years old, with powers

[1] *Report* of 1843, p. 138.

beginning to fail, renewed privations; and finally, when he should no longer be able to work, "the house" for himself and his wife, or himself alone as a widower. Every parish can show evidence for the accuracy of this picture.

Machinery, as well as hand-labour, might supplant men's work. But in the Report of 1843 machinery is only mentioned once, and the Commissioner adds that it had only appeared to a very small extent in the south-eastern counties. It was easily superintended; women minded threshing-engines, and boys turnip-cutting machines.

But though we are thus obliged to point out that the hand-labour of women and children was the men's worst competitor, from the point of view of production it must be added that women and children did certain work better than the men, or just as well. Children, being small and lissom, were better fitted for stone-picking and bird-scaring; and women showed themselves more apt than men at hop-picking. So far, no wide-minded critic will object to their employment, granted that the work was paid according to its value and that no harm was done in matters of more importance. Unfortunately, that was not the case. A boy often wore out clothes and shoes to more than the value of his wages, and he was kept from school. Women had no time to attend to home or children. English agriculture only attained that peculiar stamp of neatness and cleanliness which used to strike the Continental observer by annexing the underpaid labour of thousands of children; and it could only exploit the children because the labourers were too ignorant to realise the badness of their bargain, and too poor to renounce any penny they could get. Again, though it is true that the demand for women's and children's labour was largely in connection with potato and turnip growing, which had formed no part of the traditional system of agriculture, or with hop-gardens, which were to be found in a few districts only, still it proved almost universally that no sharp division in this respect could be drawn between various kinds of work. Preparation of manure and loading it on the carts

was men's work, generally speaking; but in the south-west it was also done by women. Habit and custom allotted certain work to men in one district which in another would be done by women, and conversely. For example, in some places women made the binders for the sheaves but did not bind the corn, while in others they bound the corn and the making of the binders fell to the men. In some remote districts of Devonshire and Somersetshire women even acted as carters. In Devonshire, as well as in the north-east, they were employed even in winter; in Northumberland, they worked in the barns at that season. While there was thus no distinction of kind in the work, the question is whether women and children could do the same work as men without injury to themselves. If not, the labour done by them must be considered as injurious to the community.

The farmer naturally judged on the assumption that productivity was of the first importance: but already in the 'forties observers who could rise above this standpoint, and could grasp the connection between the poverty-stricken condition of the labourers and the necessity which brought the labour of their families upon the market, were attacking the exploitation of women's and children's labour. Women's place, they contended, was in the home, and children's, up to ten or twelve years of age, in the school; and girls under twenty ought not to work upon the land at all. They did not, however, succeed either in proving their case from a social point of view, or in explaining by what means they proposed to bring about the necessary changes.

Injury to health could not be proved, except in the gang-districts. The work in itself was not bad for either women or children, though it was often to be wished that they were better provided with food, clothing and shelter. That, however, was chiefly a matter of wages, and not of the work for which wages were paid.[1] The greatest strain upon them was when they were working along with husband or father. But small farmers, too, often

[1] Compare Joseph Arch's description of his youth. *Joseph Arch*, pp. 27 f.

employed their children on their holdings at a very early age; and under these circumstances the consequences of interference could not be fully foreseen. So with the moral effects of field-labour, the gang-districts again excepted. The agricultural population remained far below the standard which persons "brought up in the highest principles of propriety" held to be correct. Words were let fall during work in the fields which would not have been said during luncheon in the West End; but not because field-labour had produced an aberration of moral principle, but because the persons concerned had been so brought up as to make such language natural. Their words and actions, argued their friends, were what they were because from their earliest youth the hard struggle for daily bread had left them no time for education or culture, and because natural modesty was killed by their miserable and inadequate housing conditions. '"Let the public have *bona-fide* evidence of the labourer's condition," wrote Godolphin Osborne, "and I feel confident the wonder will be—not that this class of the community have from time to time shown a disaffected spirit—not that evidence of their immorality, dishonesty and extravagance abounds—not that they are daily becoming more and more burdensome upon the poor rates, but that they have borne so long the hardships of their condition, and have not been urged to greater crimes—that any of them can at all, at the price they have to pay for rent, fuel and food, honestly support their families out of the wages they receive."[1]

Again, if women and children had been forbidden to go out to work, some of them would have been forced to cover the loss by domestic industry, such as lace-making, button-making, or straw-plaiting, which could be proved to be injurious to health. Most labouring families would have been driven sooner or later into the workhouse, crime would have increased, and agriculture would have suffered. The evil could only be got rid of by raising the pay of the unmarried to a level with that of the married man, and that

[1] *Report* of 1843, p. 77. I am sorry not to have space to print the whole passage.

of the latter to a point at which he could maintain his family by his own earnings. And therefore the question was asked, how can the wages of labour be so raised as to suffice for the support of a family, allowing for several months of unemployment?

The raising of wages was too hard a task for Parliament; there were no organisations which could attempt it; charities like coal and clothing clubs, whose income came half from labourers' contributions and half from the subscriptions of the well-to-do, could not solve a problem like this. What the labourer gained by them he lost to the village shopkeeper and baker, who sold him bad goods at high prices, and during the winter entangled him in a net of debt from which in many cases he was never able to free himself. In many places the farmer indirectly obliged him to buy at a village shop, by paying him in cheques drawn to the shopkeeper, who indemnified himself at the labourer's cost for the money he thus lent without interest to the farmer, and sometimes the labourers had great difficulty in getting the difference between the amount of the cheque and the price of the goods supplied disbursed to them.[1]

Only a fraction of the labouring class saved anything; and they only by all kinds of sacrifices. Contributions to friendly societies were more common, but these often failed to fulfil their obligations.[2] And against the savings of the few must be set the charity received by others, whether in direct gifts, or indirectly through coal and clothing clubs or subscriptions to friendly societies: also the amount received in parish relief, and the additional income achieved by means of wood-stealing. As Godolphin Osborne remarked, the constant wonder is that the labourer could live at all. Or as a witness put it:—"Much is done to relieve their distresses by many, and it is done with judgment and discrimination; but when all is done, I could never make out how they can live with their present earnings; for after examining, with all the accuracy that much local

[1] *Report* of 1843, pp. 140 f.

[2] For an excellent objective criticism of the friendly societies of that time, see the *Report* of 1843, pp. 144 f.

knowledge both of persons and places can supply, the accounts of their necessary weekly expenditure, and trying to compare it with their weekly earnings, in all cases that I have tried without exception, their expenditure seems to exceed their earnings. This problem many of us have tried to solve, but without success."[1]

In these circumstances attention was again turned to the possibility of extending allotments and cow-pastures. These would decrease the dependence on shopkeeper and baker, provide food, and often work too, during periods of unemployment, and employ the labour of women and children, who would thus have no need to go out to work.

Experience had proved something else; namely, that since 1791 the protective tariff had been of no benefit to the labourer, so far as concerned its effect on prices. Nor had it succeeded in keeping these steadily high: when they had been highest it had been because war conditions had closed the ports, and that at a time of natural scarcity. During that period wages had been comparatively high: but they had not kept pace with prices, according to the calculations of Arthur Young. Consequently, so far as prices were concerned, the abolition of the corn laws was a matter of indifference to the agricultural labourer. The one thing which did concern him was the number of workless days he had in the year: the great question for him was whether protection or free trade provided most employment. And that only time could show. So far, the extent of unemployment had depended on the system of cultivation adopted by the farmer, together with the profit on farming capital. Farming on the great scale, in spite of its more intense cultivation, meant to the labourer that some hidden force decreased the demand for his labour and claimed that of women and children. As to profits, they were determined by prices and rents conjointly. When prices went up, rents went up; and when prices fell, rents fell too; but not to the same extent, because there was very often great competition for farms. But a fall in prices not followed by a fall in rents meant increased unemploy-

[1] *Reeport* of 1843, p. 57.

ment for the labourer. Free Trade was universally expected to bring about a fall in prices;[1] and rents, it was held, would follow them: in which case it was probably indifferent to the farmer whether free trade or protection ruled. Under free trade he would get lower prices, but his expenses of production would also be less—there would be lower rents and lower wages: so that he might still be able to employ labour at the same real wages. How far experience confirmed these expectations we shall see below.

II.—Allotments.

We saw that in the 'thirties proof of actual results obtained by the allotment system disarmed some of its adversaries; and after that it made fairly good progress, conditions under the new Poor Law, as I have just described them, helping in the same direction. As Bernard and Wilberforce had founded a Society at the end of the eighteenth century with the object of re-establishing some connection between the labourer and the land, so in 1834 a Labourer's Friend Society was founded, and published a magazine "for disseminating information on the advantages of allotments of land to the labouring classes."[2] During its ten years' existence it attempted the introduction of allotments in various parts of the country, and had no small share both in the increased willingness of landlords to adopt the system, and in obtaining the parliamentary enquiries of the 'forties, which we are now to discuss. Various other societies were founded with the same objects, but limited to certain districts. But none of them succeeded in rousing the Boards of Guardians from their torpor.

In 1836 Sir Henry Martin attempted to introduce allotments in Kent: and Sir George Strickland in Yorkshire, Lord Chesterfield, the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord John

[1] Sir Robert Peel wrote that the effect of Free Trade would be "to maintain a range of low prices in average seasons, and to prevent very high prices in seasons of dearth." See James Caird, *English Agriculture in* 1850–1851, 2nd ed., 1852, p. 246.

[2] *First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture* (1867), 1868, p. xxxvi., 185 f.

Manners in Nottinghamshire, Lord Portman, Mr. Stuart, and Lord Rivers in Dorsetshire, as well as other landlords in various parts of the country, took up the idea.

Towards the end of the 'thirties the price of provisions rose. Then with the year 1842, in consequence of falling prices, agricultural wages fell to 5s., and also employment decreased, and the labourers again resorted to the ugly method of rick-burning for the purpose of improving their position. At the same time industry was passing through a terrible crisis, which, beginning in 1837, was at its height in the years 1840, 1841, and 1842; so that the purchasing power of the industrial population diminished.[1] In these circumstances allotments appeared to be of such great importance that two enquiries on the subject were conducted in 1843. Their results are embodied in the *Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, from which we have so often quoted, and in the *Report from the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor* (*Allotments of Land*). Allotments were only of secondary importance to the Assistant Commissioners of the Poor Law Commission, whereas the Select Committee was solely concerned with them, their extent, and their social and economic significance. It was moved for by Mr. Cowper (the future Lord Mount-Temple). I shall, however, deal briefly with the former Report, since it supplements the results of the parliamentary enquiry.

Austin found allotments of a quarter, half, or three-quarters of an acre, and even more, in Wiltshire, Dorsetshire and Devonshire, and wrote that the system was

[1] See the Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners, especially the eighth (1842) and ninth (1843). The increasing distress is clearly expressed in the movement of the Poor Rates:—

	£	Per head. s.	d.
1834	6,317,255	8	9½
1837	4,044,741	5	5
1838	4,123,604	5	5¼
1839	4,406,907	5	8¾
1840	4,575,965	5	10½
1841	4,760,929	6	0½
1842	4,911,498	6	1¾
1843	5,208,627	6	5¼

"rapidly on the increase"; but it had not attained any great extension in Somersetshire. In Devonshire and Dorsetshire, especially in the latter, the farmers had frequently allowed the men potato-grounds in places where they had no allotments. Gardens, too, were not uncommon. Vaughan reported from Kent, Surrey and Sussex that there were few districts in which the establishment of allotments had not been attempted, and few in which they were universal. They had found a place, too, in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire, according to Denison's report. In Yorkshire they were not apparently in use to the same extent, but there, as Doyle pointed out, in the better-to-do districts most houses had gardens, and many cow-pastures and potato-plots. It seems that allotments were unknown in Northumberland, probably for the reason that every labourer had his garden, was hired by the year, and received part of his wages in kind, which is the best comment on their justification and significance. The old suspicion of them had vanished almost everywhere except in the eastern counties and in Yorkshire; they increased the labourer's income and the quantity and variety of his food, gave employment to women and children, and produced industry, civility and honesty. The second Report adds little to our knowledge as regards the extension of the system. We learn from it that three thousand families possessed allotments in Kent at that time, and that they had been introduced into fifty parishes of east Somersetshire. They were now for the first time taking root in industrial districts. In the exclusively or mainly agricultural counties they were everywhere to be found, "but have not become universal in any of them."[1]

But the Report enquires very thoroughly into the economic and social functions of allotments, and into their proper management. The produce of a quarter of an acre would feed a man with a large family for thirteen weeks;[2]

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor* (*Allotments of Land*), 1843, p. iii.
[2] Ibid. qu. 1,657, 1,659.

the average net profit was £4,[1] which was equal to an addition of 2s. a week to his wages.[2] This high profit was generally ascribed to spade husbandry.[3] Vegetables were the most profitable crops.[4] Nor was the income from an allotment the only thing to be considered: there was also the expenditure which it prevented. Labourers frequented the public-house less; they stayed at home, and man, wife and children worked together.[5] The thriftless were reformed; the labourer's position was raised in his own eyes; he acquired a sense of independence and self-respect; and the allotment to some extent compensated for that lack of harmless pleasures and recreations which fell so hard upon the working classes of England, and was to be reckoned among the causes of crime.[6] Moreover they counteracted that separation of the people from the soil which had taken from them all direct and personal interest in its productiveness.

Accordingly, as the Report points out, the satisfactory result was attained that more labour was expended on the soil. It was the labour which could be done in the leisure hours of the family, that is to say in the time which was at their disposal when the day's work was done, and in weeks when they were out of employment. But the Report goes further. The produce of the land was not simply increased in the ordinary proportion to work done, but in a greater proportion, because a greater quantity of any given kind of work was expended per acre than under ordinary management. Large tracts which the latter could not have brought under cultivation at all could perfectly well be used as allotments.[7]

Thus the difference of result was solely attributable to the greater expenditure of labour-power. But the lessors of the land did not draw these fine distinctions, and not

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor (Allotments of Land)*, 1843, qu. 18, 19, 20. For a still higher estimate, qu. 1,698, 1,830 f.
[2] Ibid. qu. 344.
[3] Ibid. qu. 65 f., 241, 1274 f.
[4] Ibid. qu. 36 f., 242 f., 327.
[5] Ibid. qu. 1976 f.
[6] Ibid. p. iv.
[7] Ibid. qu. 1904.

seldom, desiring to participate in a profit which they had done nothing to create, demanded a higher rent. However, it appears by the evidence that it was not the landlord who was guilty of this exploitation, but the farmers. In this connection the Report lays down what may be called its most important principle: "Though the land will yield larger profits under this mode of cultivation than under the usual method of tillage, the proprietor who wishes to benefit the poor man should not exact more rent than he should expect to receive if he let it out to be farmed in the ordinary way."[1] It should, however, have been added that the exceptional cost to the owner or farmer involved in the laying out of allotments must also be taken into consideration. The Report further confirms the proposition that the rent of allotments is as secure and as punctually paid as any other rent.[2]

But the problem of a "fair rent" being so hard to solve, the question was raised whether it would not be better simply to raise wages by the value of the net profit of a quarter of an acre. The Report of (1867) 1868 answers very rightly that in the first place wages were hard to alter, and in the second place allotments have moral advantages which no wages can supply. In my opinion it should have been added that they also rendered the labourer independent of prices and shopkeepers; to a certain extent he himself produced his own provisions.

This being so, it might seem that the larger the allotment the greater the benefit. But experience proved the contrary. The labourer had not the capital to work a large surface satisfactorily; bad harvests hit him very hard;[3] and he fell into an untenable middle position as neither small farmer nor labourer. The Report is particularly clear on this point:—"As it is desirable that the profits of the allotment should be viewed by the holder of it in the light of an aid, and not of a substitute for his

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor (Allotments of Land)*, 1843, p. iv.

[2] Ibid. p. v.

[3] According to the thirteenth Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, (1847), the potato-blight was "painfully felt in counties where the allotment system prevails."

ordinary income accruing from wages, and that they should not become an inducement to neglect his usual paid labour, the allotment should be of no greater extent than can be cultivated during the leisure moments of the family."[1] The size of such an allotment could not be positively laid down, but must be decided according to the nature of the soil and the labour and leisure available in the family; but in general the best size was a quarter of an acre. However, half an acre was not too much for a capable man, and an acre or even two might profitably be given to old people or to labourers whose employment was very irregular.[2]

But in spite of all the good reported of the allotments the farmers' dislike to them had not been overcome, except in Kent, where experience had taught that the labourers neither became too independent, nor yet stole, nor worked worse.[3] A new objection is mentioned several times; the farmers found greater difficulty in getting cheap manure, since the labourers wanted it for themselves.[4]

These are the chief points noticed in the Report; but it formulates two other principles besides the one we have mentioned, of much practical but less theoretical importance. The allotments, it states, ought to be near the dwelling houses; and the rates should be paid by the landlord, since they might be demanded from the labourer at a time when it was difficult or impossible for him to pay them.[5]

The conclusions of the Committee were so favourable that they proposed legislative measures for the extension of the system. They were specially emphatic as to the necessity of seeing that the labourers did not go empty away in cases of enclosure. And since landlords were shy of the trouble and uneasiness caused by a numerous class of small tenants, it appeared desirable to form some

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor (Allotments of Land)*, 1843, p. iv.
[2] Ibid. qu. 121 f., 199 f., 258 f.
[3] Ibid. qu. 29 f., cp. also qu. 2026.
[4] Ibid. qu. 693 f.
[5] Ibid. p. iv.

committee, not connected with the Board of Guardians, to mediate between landowner and labourer. For the evidence allowed of no doubt that sub-tenancy under a farmer worked badly. The Committee also recommended vestries to rent charity-lands, and let them out in allotments.

The impulse given by the thorough work of the Committee of Enquiry showed itself in various Bills laid before the Lower House in 1843, 1844 and 1845.[1] In 1843 Ferrand introduced a Bill which met with such opposition that it was dropped after the first reading. It was a far-reaching proposal; the twentieth part of the waste lands of every parish were to be allotted to the poor, and where the commons and wastes did not suffice land was to be bought; and an advance for cottage building was to be made from the poor-rates. A little later in the same year came Lord Ashley's Bill, which proposed to found a National Allotment and Loan Superintendence Society for the purpose of renting land and subletting it in allotments. It was thrown out on the second reading. In 1844 and 1845 the future Lord Mount-Temple brought in a Bill which in effect proposed to create the mediating Board recommended by the Committee of 1843, but leaving it free to all parishes to adopt the Act or not as they pleased. Though opposed by Liberals and Radical such as Roebuck, Hume and Bright it passed its third reading by the support of Sir Robert Peel, Sir J. Graham and Lord John Manners. In the Upper House it was read a second time and then no more was heard of it.

The Report of the Committee of 1843 had also a real influence on the provisions of the Enclosure Act of 1845, which strongly emphasised the rights of the poor. I need not repeat here what was said in Chapter II. of the unsatisfactory way in which this Act was carried out. Once again, as so often in England, great parliamentary exertions ended in insignificant results, and administrators did their best to frustrate the intentions of the legislature.

[1] Hall, *The Law of Allotments*, pp. 27 f.

III.—The Introduction of Free Trade.

The year 1846 saw the abolition of the corn-laws, the Act of 1842 having already lowered the duties and somewhat facilitated the transition to the new conditions.

In order to understand the effect of Free Trade on the position of the labourer the following facts must be borne in mind.

The *Sturm und Drang* of the agriculture of the eighteenth century (whose very blast we seem to feel in Thaer's celebrated *Einleitung*) were over by the beginning of the nineteenth. Landlords no longer farmed their own estates, but, as wages rose, again became mere rent-receivers: no new Townshend, Bakewell or Coke arose. The Duke of Bedford, Lord Somerville and others did found a Smithfield Club in 1798, but it does not seem ever to have had the same importance as Coke's sheep-shearing assemblies or the Dishley meetings, though it was the father of the Royal Agricultural Society. Sir John Sinclair and Arthur Young, who had so long worked together, grew old like Farmer George; the Board of Agriculture and Young's *Annals* disappeared; and Marshall, after summarizing in his *Reviews* the information collected by the Board concerning English agriculture, laid down the gall-dipped pen which had written so many malicious words concerning the Board's Secretary.

The years from 1814 to 1847 were gloomy years for agriculture, and the animation which had characterised it in the eighteenth century was gone. But with the new Poor Law and the redemption of tithe movement began again. The Royal Agricultural Society was founded in 1837, and took up the old traditions, working towards its ends by means of exhibitions, meetings in various parts of the country, and periodicals. It aimed at improvements in seeds, manures, tools, machinery, and breeds of cattle, and at the introduction of rational methods of drainage: and it was greatly helped by the contemporary progress in industry, the means of communication and physical science. Machines were built which may now be far surpassed, but at the time were wonderful improvements;

the railways cheapened manures and seed and brought people together, beside facilitating the transport of agricultural produce; the ingenious application of chemistry to agriculture, begun by Sir Humphrey Davy in his lectures before the Board of Agriculture in 1802, and carried on by Liebig, created a new science; Josiah Parkes discovered the proper principles of drainage, and then, in 1844, a Birmingham manufacturer produced the necessary instruments; and in 1843 to 1845 Reade, a gardener, invented clay-pipes, and Scragg perfected them.[1] As early as 1846, the State, in order to make these discoveries fruitful, put four millions sterling at the disposal of landowners, of which the Scotch were the first to make use. Much private capital was also borrowed for the purpose; and in 1856 the State took its second step on the same road.

All this meant so much added to the strength of English agriculture; and it was to the interests of landlords to apply the means thus found. Everyone was convinced that the abolition of the corn-laws meant a fall in rents; therefore any landlord who wished to secure a rising rent in the future was bound to introduce improvements. And accordingly, when Caird[2] made a tour of the country in 1850-51, he found that improvements had been or were being carried out everywhere on the estates of the great capitalist landowners. The juster and wealthier among them had both improved and lowered rents; others kept up the old rents but applied to a certain percentage, e.g. 20 per cent., to improvements. Here therefore the result of Free Trade was that money which would otherwise perhaps have been spent as income, or invested in commerce or manufacture, had been applied to increase the powers of the soil. Landlords of this class had also cancelled existing leases and entered on new agreements with their tenants. But farmers on encumbered estates, where the landlord could afford neither to improve nor to reduce

[1] See the *Progress of English Agriculture*, in *Quarterly Review*, Vol. CIII. (1858): *The Pioneers and Prospects of English Agriculture*, ibid. Vol. CLIX. (1885); and Prothero, *Pioneers and Progress of English Farming*, 1888.

[2] Caird, *English Agriculture in* 1850–1851.

rents, found themselves in a very bad position. They complained with justice that Free Trade was good for all the world except themselves; and this was especially true where they were working with borrowed capital. However, in course of time such landlords would find themselves obliged to sell their estates, or the tenants' leases, where they had them, would run out. Yet another class of landowners were slow to realise the new position; and, as in Suffolk or Durham, very many tenants had to throw up their farms before their landlords became impressed with the necessity of making changes.

The new agricultural policy certainly hit the purely corn-producing counties hardest; so that the midlands and west had more power of resistance. They kept up their rents to 31s. 5d. on an average, and produced 27 bushels of wheat per acre, while in the corn-districts proper rents were only 23s. 8d., and the product 26 bushels per acre. The average production of meat, butter and wool per acre had considerably increased since Young's tour of 1767 to 1770, while that of wheat had only risen from 23 bushels to 26½, and in Durham had even fallen from 25 to 16. Corn-prices differed little from those of 1770, and bread had fallen from 1½d. to 1¼d. per lb.; meat, on the contrary, had risen from 3¼d. to 5d., butter from 6d. to 1s.; and wool by 100 per cent. And when we add that in the counties visited by Caird rents had risen from 13s. 4d. to 26s. we see still more clearly that the main burden of the new policy must have fallen on the south and east. Otherwise it would be incomprehensible how at such a time competition among Lancashire farmers could have driven up rents by 10 per cent., without any undertaking to introduce improvements on the part of the landlord.

Where capital was to hand, then, Free Trade gave an impulse to its more intensive application, that is to the improvement of the soil and of methods of cultivation. But where landlords were in debt or where the owners of entailed estates were tied up in all directions and overloaded with obligations, so that they could not spare a

single sovereign, and had many of them no interest in the future value of the property, the abolition of the corn-laws fell very heavily. Even there, however, the transition would perhaps have been easier if the effects of Free Trade had not been intensified by a succession of bad harvests, namely in 1848, 1850, 1852, and 1853;[1] and here again of course the corn-districts suffered specially. Hence the crisis of 1849 to 1853, which was among the worst of the century. But in this time of its worst distress English agriculture found unexpected allies. Californian gold,[2] in raising prices, gave it new life. The complications leading to the Crimean war began in 1853, and the war while it lasted freed English farmers from their worst enemy.[3] Already in 1854 the large importation of corn fell off to some extent.[4] In the 'sixties the American Civil War crippled another competitor.[5] Meantime railway-construction continued, and English industry was enjoying its great period of prosperity, which of itself was good for agriculture, so far as cattle-farming, sheep-farming and dairying were concerned. Moreover the Factory Acts and the Trade Unions contributed to raise the earnings of industrial labour, and the increase

[1] Tooke, *History of Prices*, V., 55.

[2] *California versus Free Trade*, in *Quarterly Review*, 1852; and Tooke, op. cit. VI., 849 f.

[3] Good, *Political, Agricultural and Commercial Fallacies*, 1866. The author is a Protectionist.

[4] Imports of wheat (in thousand quarters) from :—

	Russia.	Prussia.	France.	U.S.A.
1851	699	696	1,193	912
1852	733	452	459	1,132
1853	1,071	1,145	341	1,582
1854	507	675	206	1,152
1855	—	540	26	441

In the first years of Free Trade the imports from France were very noticeable. While the total importation from France was only 236,000 qrs. in the five years 1843 to 1847, it was 320,000, 742,000 and 145,000 in 1848, 1849 and 1850 respectively.

[5] Imports of wheat from the United States (1,000 cwt.) :—

1861	10,866
1862	16,140
1863	8,704
1864	7,895
1865	1,177
1866	635
1867	4,188
1868	5,908
1869	13,181

was partly spent on better and more abundant food.

Since the ports stood open to foreigners, these favourable conditions produced no slackening of energetic effort. All the powers of science and invention were called in; enclosures, it will be remembered, increased the area under cultivation by 600,000 acres;[1] and the traveller who passes to-day through almost derelict districts must find himself wishing that he had seen these same places in the days when drain-pipes lay heaped upon the fields, great sacks of guano stood in serried ranks, the newest machines were busily at work in field or meadow, and the beasts, in clean and airy stables, were fattened on foods hitherto unknown. Forced by circumstances, farmers turned, then as in the second third of the eighteenth century, to dairying and meat production. "Corn fetched so low a price," writes Mr. Prothero, "that, regarded as a separate department, corn-growing ceased to pay. But the rise in the price of meat enabled farmers to grow corn at a profit in conjunction with stock-feeding. Free Trade forced them to adopt a mixed husbandry of corn and cattle, and made corn pay through the intervention of green crops and live-stock." The heavens were favourable, for "from 1853 to 1873 they were encouraged by a succession of prosperous seasons."[2]

To the labourer, on many estates, the first effect of Free Trade felt was a lowered wage:[3] for the price of provisions had fallen. Caird puts the fall in the price of the chief necessaries at 30 per cent. In 1840 a stone of flour had cost 2s. 6d., now it cost 1s. 8d.; a pound of tea had also cost 2s. 6d., and now was 1s.; sugar of the same quality as had been bought for 6d. could now be had for 3½d. In 1837, according to Purdy's reckoning, the average wage had been 10s. 4d.; now it was 9s. 7d. How-

[1] According to the Census Report of 1851 (p. lxxx.) the estimated number of acres under cultivation in England and Wales was 24,905,758. According to the Agricultural Returns of 1871 (Census Report of 1871, p. 130) it was 27,918,427. Mr. Prothero thinks the area enclosed was "counterbalanced by the growth of towns, roads and railways. The farming area remains, roughly speaking, what it was in 1845." Op. cit. p. 104. But the first part of this proposition cannot be proved, and the second is incorrect.

[2] Prothero, p. 107.

[3] Caird, passim.

ever, these figures are not directly comparable, for Caird's enquiry did not include the whole of England.

But the position of the labourer varied greatly. It was worst in the exclusively corn-growing districts of the south and east, where the revolution in prices was most felt; there many farmers gave up in despair, farms stood unlet, and so the distress deprived the labourers of employment. In the north wages stood on an average 37 per cent. higher than in the south. The boundary line might be drawn from the point where the Welland flows into the Wash, passing in a west-south-west direction as far as Shropshire, and then north-west by Chester to the Irish Sea: that is to say that the mining and manufacturing counties are those which show the more satisfactory conditions. But Caird went too far when he ascribed those conditions to the mines and factories only;[1] for, as we have seen, even in the eighteenth century causes quite independent of industry were making wages comparatively high in the north. He noted a difference similar, though not so marked, between the mainly corn-growing districts of the east, and the west with its grass and pasture-farming. The boundary started, say, between Northumberland and Cumberland, left Durham on the east, cut Yorkshire in two halves, passing through it in a south-easterly direction, went south as far as Middlesex, and then took a south-westerly direction, running down to the Channel, say on the boundary between Devonshire and Dorsetshire. He gives the following figures to make the contrast clearer:—

	s.	d.
Average wages in the North ..	11	6
" " " South ..	8	5
" " " West ..	10	0
" " " East ..	9	1

As compared with 1770 the labourer's position had, he thinks, improved slightly. The average wage in the counties visited had been 7s. 3d. in Arthur Young's time, and was now 9s. 7d. The price of bread had fallen, as we have just seen; but on the other hand the price of butter had gone up 100 per cent., meat 70 per cent., and

[1] Caird, pp. 510 f.

house-rent 112 per cent. (it had been on an average 34s. per annum or 8d. a week in 1770, while it was now 74s. 6d., or 1s. 1d. a week); the rent of farms had, as we know, increased by about 100 per cent., and in some counties was treble what it had been.

Thus money-wages in 1850 were about 34 per cent. higher than in 1770, but the increase was unequally divided between north and south; the increase in the north was 66 per cent., and in the south 14 per cent. In Berkshire and Wiltshire they were down again at the same point as in 1770, while in Suffolk they were actually lower. The difference of economic condition were expressed in the poor-rate statistics:—

Counties.	Poor Rate.		Percentage of pauperism to population.
	per £.	per head.	
	s. d.	s. d.	
Northern	1 2	4 $7\frac{3}{4}$	6·2
Southern	2 $0\frac{1}{2}$	8 $8\frac{1}{2}$	12·1
Midland and Western	1 $9\frac{3}{4}$	6 3	8·9
Eastern and South Coast ..	1 10	7 $10\frac{1}{2}$	10·9

I have stated the more important of Caird's calculations: but the nature of the subject does not warrant us in giving them any very great confidence. He takes no account of the great changes which had come about since 1770; he ignores the effect of the disappearance of the commons, and equally that of the vestiges of payment in kind (whose influence would in any case be very hard to estimate); nor does he notice the existence of domestic industries, the increasing winter unemployment, and a variety of other conditions. Certain general impressions, however, remain: the opposition between north, south, east and west; the fall of wages on the introduction of Free Trade; and the relatively small effect of the latter on the labourer's position at the time of the agricultural crisis.

The poor-rate shows no change for the worse on the introduction of Free Trade, as the following figures indicate:—

	£	s.	d.	
1848 ..	6,180,764 or	7	$1\frac{3}{4}$	per head.
1849 ..	5,792,963 or	6	$6\frac{1}{2}$	,,
1850 ..	5,395,022 or	6	1	,,
1851 ..	4,962,704 or	5	$6\frac{1}{2}$	,,
1852 ..	4,897,685 or	5	$5\frac{1}{2}$	,,
1853 ..	4,939,064 or	5	6	,,

And the evidence of the figures for the purely agricultural districts is to the same effect. According to the second Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (1850), the poor rates of 1849 showed a decrease for all counties, Middlesex, Warwickshire, the West Riding of Yorkshire and Anglesey excepted. According to the third (1851), the only increases in 1850 were in Monmouth, Northumberland and the North Riding; everywhere else there was a decrease, sometimes, even in agricultural counties, a considerable decrease. According to the fourth (1852), the only increases were in Lincoln and Brecon, and those were insignificant (.1 per cent. to 1.4 per cent.): all other counties showed a decrease. The fifth (1853, for 1852–3) notices a marked decrease of pauperism in 38 counties, and these include agricultural counties: e.g. Bedford, 3.4 per cent.; Berks, 7.6 per cent.; Bucks, 4.3 per cent.; Devon, 1.8 per cent., etc. Fifteen counties, among which agricultural and manufacturing districts are equally represented, show an increase (viz. Durham, .8; Lancaster, 2.4; Leicester, 6.9; Lincoln, .5; Monmouth, 4.0; Salop, 2.6; Suffolk, 2.5; Warwick, 2.8; York (E. Riding), 3.0; Anglesey, .6; Cardigan, 4.6; Carnarvon, 1.5; Glamorgan, 2.5; Pembroke, 2.1; Radnor, 4.9). But in 1853, for the reasons already given, corn-prices began to rise again, as the following figures show:—

Wheat prices according to the Statistical Abstracts:
(Per Imperial quarter.)

	s.	d.		s.	d.		s.	d.		s.	d.
1849 ..	44	3	1855 ..	74	8	1861 ..	55	4	1867 ..	64	5
1850 ..	40	3	1856 ..	69	2	1862 ..	55	5	1868 ..	63	9
1851 ..	38	6	1857 ..	56	4	1863 ..	44	9	1869 ..	48	2
1852 ..	40	9	1858 ..	44	2	1864 ..	40	2	1870 ..	46	10
1853 ..	53	3	1859 ..	43	9	1865 ..	41	10	1871 ..	56	8
1854 ..	72	5	1860 ..	53	3	1866 ..	49	11			

And now the poor rates rose. The Sixth Annual Report (1854) shows an increase for 1853 in 38 counties, and a decrease in 15, most of them industrial districts: i.e. Lancaster, Leicester, Glamorgan, the three Ridings of York, Northumberland, Durham, Salop, Hereford, Warwick, Westmoreland, Worcester, Anglesey and Brecon. In 1854 the rate rose from £4,939,064 to £5,282,053,

or from 5s. 4½d. to 5s. 8d. per head. The only decreases were in Cornwall, Rutland, and Glamorgan, and the increase in the agricultural counties was sometimes a very considerable percentage. The Seventh Report (1855) observes that "The increase is mainly attributable, in our opinion, to the rise which took place in the year 1853 in the price of food, and of many of the principal necessaries of life, and which has continued with little variation to the present time." In 1855 the rate rose by another £607,188, an increase in which all the agricultural counties had their share, Durham alone showing a slight decrease. And the Eighth Report (1856) says that the increase was "in a great measure to be attributed to the severity of the winter and the continued high price of provisions." Similarly the Ninth Report (1857). The year 1858 saw yet a further rise, though a small one—£114,203: "attributable to the continuance . . . . of the high price of many of the principal necessaries of life."

For the rate of wages under these circumstances, we have the returns laid before Parliament in 1861[1] in response to a motion by Villiers in the previous year, and worked up by Purdy in the article already mentioned. The table on the following page compares them with the figures given by Caird and Young, wherever parallels are possible. The comparison shows that wages only rose by about 20 per cent. between 1851 and 1860, whereas the rise in the price of provisions between 1851 and 1857 was, according to Newmarch's reckoning,[2] from 40 to 50 per cent. Prices were very little lower in 1860-62 than in 1857, so that the position of the labourers altered for the worse during this decade. I need not work out the averages for north and south, east and west, because a glance at the table suffices to show that their relations remained unchanged. But we have to enquire how the labourer's position came to deteriorate in a period of rising prices.

[1] *Returns of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers*, 1861.

[2] The author of an article in the *Cornhill* for 1864, entitled *The Life of a Farm Labourer*, is of the same opinion. The article gives an admirable description of the life of a rural labourer from his earliest youth to the day of his death.

The explanation is that rents were raised again, and therefore farmers tried to economise their work and to employ as few labourers as possible. They introduced machinery, and replaced men's labour wherever they could

County.	Young. 1767–1770.	Caird. 1850–1851.	Purdy. 1860.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Surrey	9 0	9 6	12 9
Kent	..	..	12 0
Sussex	8 6	10 6	11 8
Southampton	8 0	9 0	12 0
Hertford	7 6	9 0	10 0
Northampton	6 6	9 0	11 0
Bedford	7 3	9 0	10 3
Essex	7 9	8 0	11 3
Suffolk	7 11	7 0	10 7
Norfolk	8 0	8 6	10 7
Wilts	7 0	7 0	9 6
Dorset	6 9	7 6	9 4
Devon	..	..	9 2
Somerset	..	..	10 0
Gloucester	6 9	7 0	9 5
Hereford	..	..	9 0
Salop	..	..	10 0
Lancashire	6 6	13 6	..
Huntingdon	7 5	8 6	..
Buckingham	8 0	8 6	..
Oxford	7 0	9 0	..
Berks	7 6	7 6	..
Stafford	6 4	9 6	12 6
Worcester	..	..	10 0
Warwick	8 0	8 6	10 9
Lincoln	7 0	10 0	13 0
Nottingham	9 0	10 0	12 9
Derby	..	..	12 0
Chester	..	..	11 8
West Riding	6 0	14 0	13 6
East Riding	7 6	12 0	13 6
North Riding	6 6	11 0	13 6
Durham	6 6	11 0	14 3
Northumberland	6 0	11 0	14 0
Cumberland	6 0	13 0	15 0
Westmoreland	..	..	14 3
Monmouth	..	..	11 8
Wales	..	..	11 2
Average	7 3	9 7	11 7

by that of women and children. We have seen this substitution begun in connection with the gang system, and extending in consequence of the new Poor Law; and now,

after the introduction of Free Trade, we see it still more widely extended as a result of the high range of prices. Then, from the middle of the 'sixties onwards, a more extensive system of cultivation takes the place of the more intensive.

The evidence for these propositions lies in the following statistics. According to the Census Report for 1861,[1] the population of the agricultural counties decreased largely—much more largely than in the preceding decade—between 1851 and 1861. From 1841–51 the only decreases had been in Wilts and Merioneth (1 per cent.) and Montgomery and Radnor (3 per cent.); three out of the four counties concerned being Welsh. But between 1851 and 1861 the population of Cambridgeshire, Rutland and Anglesey decreased by 5 per cent., that of Norfolk and Wilts by 2 per cent., that of Suffolk by 4 per cent., and that of Montgomery by as much as 6 per cent.; five of these seven counties being English. The population of the industrial counties shows a correspondingly large increase; that of Durham went up, for the two respective decades, by 27 and 30 per cent.; of Lancaster by 22 and 20 per cent.; of Stafford by 20 and 22 per cent.; of Glamorgan by 35 and 37 per cent., and so on. The emigration figures, too, are very considerable. English emigrants (leaving Scotch and Irish out of the question) numbered 454,422 between 1853 and 1860, and 605,165 between 1861 and 1870. In fact, the real numbers were still higher; the Registrar-General put them, for the latter period, at 649,742; for no case was counted in which there was any doubt to which of the three kingdoms the emigrant belonged. And the figures are the more noteworthy because Scotch and Irish emigration decreased considerably in the same period. Very many agricultural labourers must have been among this million and more of emigrants, even if the number of Lancashire operatives emigrating during the cotton famine is supposed to be high; for the industrial population was increasing, and moreover experience shows that industrial

[1] *Census of England and Wales, General Reports* for 1861 (1863) and 1871 (1873).

labourers emigrate less than agricultural. But I am not laying any stress on this point.

The statistics concerning persons employed in agriculture are much better evidence. There was an insignificant increase in the number of farmers, of whom there were 249,431 in 1851, 249,735 in 1861, and 249,907 in 1871.[1] Bailiffs increased from 10,561 to 15,698 and then to 16,476. The surface under cultivation was extended by one-eighth, or from about 24 to 27 million acres, between 1851 and 1871 (see above, p. 246, n. 1). There were only 55 owners of machinery in 1851, but even by 1861 there were 236, and 1,205 persons were employed in working it. In 1871 these two classes were amalgamated, and the number of "proprietors and attendants" appears as 2,160,[2] or an increase of 50 per cent. as compared with 1861. Eleven persons were employed in drainage work in 1851, but in 1861 1,761; in 1871 the number had fallen to 1,255.

No corresponding increase appears in the number of agricultural labourers. They were as follows:—

	Total.		Labourers.	Servants.	Shepherds.
1851	1,253,786	=	952,997	288,272	12,517
1861	1,188,786	=	958,265	204,962	25,559
1871	980,178	=	798,087	158,756	23,335

Thus while the number of labourers rose by not quite 6,000 between 1851 and 1861, and then fell in the next decade by 160,000, servants decreased considerably in both periods, and by 130,000 altogether. Shepherds, however, more than doubled their numbers between 1851 and 1861, though they fell off again to some extent in the next decade.

It is in the highest degree noteworthy that the number of persons describing themselves simply as "labourers" increased largely in the period 1861 to 1871. As anyone who has assisted in taking a census knows, they are persons having no definite calling, who are employed now in

[1] On the Census of 1851, I make the number 249,378 : 226,515 of whom were men, and 22,863 women.

[2] In the *General Report* for 1871 a disturbing confusion continually recurs. The men only are taken into account. Cp. for instance the table on p. 81.

one place and now in another. In 1851 there were 324,594 of them, in 1861 306,544, and in 1871 509,456. But even if we suppose for the sake of argument that all of them were occasionally employed in agriculture, and simply represented the tendency so strong in all modern economy, agriculture included, to the employment of casual labour, still the characteristic of agriculture in the period from 1851 to 1871 would be the decrease in the employment of labour. For if we add the casual labourers to the agricultural labourers, farm-servants and shepherds put together, the totals are :—

1851	..	1,578,370
1861	..	1,495,330
1871	..	1,489,634

Therefore there can be no doubt whatever that while the area under cultivation had increased every effort was made to economise in labour. It is more surprising to find that small and medium, as well as large farming, showed this tendency. On the other hand, the number of farmers who employed no labour at all had decreased. Both these points are shown by the following table, in which the two columns on the right represent the number of farmers each employing the number of labourers given in the column on the left :—

Labourers.	Farmers.	
	1851.	1871.
0	69,349	60,762
1	45,809	35,144
2	36,259	27,946
3	27,902	21,739
4	22,260	17,389
5	17,488	14,072
6	17,743	11,735
7	12,344	9,657
8	10,893	8,207
9	9,292	6,618
10 to 14	8,209	5,641
15 to 19	4,033	2,512
20 to 24	2,465	1,331
25 to 29	1,367	690
30 to 34	930	402
35 to 39	546	241
40 to 44	413	175
45 to 49	266	104
50 to 54	201	78
55 to 59	128	57
60 and over	98	40

If we try to explain this phenomenon, our first hypothesis will be that the area under corn had been decreased. And we shall find this confirmed by the Statistical Abstracts. The amount of British corn sold gradually decreases, and from 1866 permanent pasture increases, as also the area under clover. Compare the following table :—

Year.	Price of Wheat.	1000 Quarters.				1000 Acres.								
	s. d.	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.	Permanent Pasture.	Clover.	Surface under Wheat.	Surface under Barley.	Surface under Oats.	Surface under Potatoes.	Surface under Turnips.	Fallow.
1849	44 3	4453	2099	851	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1850	40 3	4688	2235	866	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1851	38 6	4487	2333	940	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1852	40 9	4854	2389	947	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1853	53 3	4560	2474	886	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1854	72 5	3913	2267	765	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1855	74 8	5256	2608	816	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1856	69 2	5046	2678	701	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1857	56 4	5243	2262	537	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1858	44 2	5203	2434	482	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1859	43 9	5498	2410	503	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1860	53 3	4623	1787	495	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1861	55 4	4289	2392	624	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1862	55 5	3588	2281	702	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1863	44 9	4493	2487	571	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1864	40 2	4992	2599	508	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1865	41 10	3579	1768	217	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1866	49 11	3134	1723	254	11,148[1]	3694	3350	2737	2759	498	2152	964
1867	64 5	2724	1575	284	11,136	3989	3367	2559	2750	492	2173	922
1868	63 9	2679	1665	249	12,136	3960	3652	2151	2757	541	2165	958
1869	48 2	2816	1388	161	12,735	3448	3688	2251	2782	585	2171	738
1870	46 10	3398	1841	206	12,072	4504	3500	2371	2763	587	2210	610
1871	56 8	3274	1767	197	12,435	4369	3571	2385	2715	627	2163	542
1872	57 0	2582	1592	184	12,575	4513	3498	2316	2705	564	2083	647

[1] The figures do not exactly agree in the various reports. These are from No. XX (1853–1872).

The statistics also show that between 1851 and 1871 the number of small farms decreased, or in other words, that the system of farming on a large scale was extending. In 1851 there were 39,139 farms of less than 100 acres; in 1871 there were only 33,162: farms of 200 acres and over were 14,701 at the first date, and 14,661 at the second, and large farms of 1,000 acres and more increased in the same period from 492 to 582. If in conclusion we remember that the number of agricultural machines in use increased during this period, there is no further difficulty in understanding the decreased employment of labour.[1]

Information as to the proportion which children's and women's labour bore to that of men would be particularly valuable, but here our figures fail us. We have only the following:—

	Total number of labourers.	Among whom were		Total number of servants.	Among whom were	
		Male.	Female.		Male.	Female.
1851	952,997	908,678	44,319	288,272	189,116	99,156
1861	958,265	214,301	43,964	204,962	158,401	46,561
1871	798,087	764,574	33,513	158,756	134,157	24,599

Here we learn that a decrease in women's labour was general, but that women-servants were decreasing even faster than the women workers who went out by the day. But I suspect that only such child and women workers were counted in the census as were regularly employed in

[1] As regards the effect of the introduction of machinery on the employment of labour so distinguished an expert on agricultural conditions as Culley deserves a hearing. He allows that many things formerly done by hand were now done by machinery, but emphasises the point that the machines "have enabled him (the farmer) to do many things which he would have left undone if he had only manual labour to depend upon," so that in the result more work was done, and "as many hands" were employed "as were needed to do the few things which were formerly done." This conclusion, however, convinces me as little as his other opinion, that the increased area of farms, with which as a rule the increased application of machinery was connected, had had hardly any influence on the demand for labour. The labourers themselves were unanimously of a different opinion, as were several of the poor law officials. Cp. *Second Report on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture*, p. 80, 40 f.

agricultural labour and had no other occupation, i.e. the women and girls employed in the gangs, the female assistant labourers of the north, and in other counties widows. Perhaps the influence of the Gangs Act of 1867 and the Education Act of 1870 was beginning to be felt even in 1871. But if as a basis we take the numbers employed in the mid 'sixties in the public gangs alone, and remember further that the private gangs were very much stronger, and that in 1843 women's labour had demonstrably increased all over England, it will be evident that the number of women employed in agriculture must have exceeded that given in the census.

Now as to the distribution of agricultural labourers over the various age-classes of the population. The shepherd class need only be touched upon very cursorily. By far the greater number of shepherds were of the male sex, and the majority in 1871 were over twenty years old—20,050 out of 23,323. Among servants of the male sex it was otherwise. 78,766 were under twenty, and 55,391 over twenty; which is evidence that service was still for many only a stage to be passed through. Among the labourers the great majority were over twenty years of age, viz. 600,327, as against 164,247 under twenty. Of the female servants 11,061 were under twenty, and 13,538 over twenty. Among the 33,513 female labourers 6,785 were under twenty, and 26,728 over twenty.

Investigating the ages of children and young persons more closely, we come to the following classification. (A rather more detailed classification of women at the higher ages is also given, as showing that much older women were employed in labour than in farm-service):—

Age.	Labourers. (Male.)	Farm-servants. (Male.)	Labourers. (Female.)	Farm-servants. (Female.)
5–10	3,212	144	107	17
10–15	71,417	21,942	2,069	1,984
15–20	89,618	56,680	4,609	9,060
20–25	600,327	55,391	3,565	6,279
25–35			5,391	3,883
35–45			5,496	1,398
45–55			5,130	884
55–65			3,794	612

But here again our information appears to me unsatis-

factory as regards boy labourers between five and ten, and girl labourers between five and fifteen. The work done by children in harvest time obviously could not be included in a census-classification.[1]

The statistics just given are very valuable, in spite of many deficiencies and some inconsistencies, because they give an unequivocal contradiction to the traditional view that increased intensity of cultivation means increased demand for labour. That is an axiom to which the agricultural history of England has given the lie more than once in the course of the last hundred years. Intensity of capital must be distinguished from intensity of labour. The first is connected with large farming, and therefore with economy in cost of production; the second is the economic consequence of small farming. English agriculture in its most brilliant periods has so far favoured intensity of capital; the small and middle-sized holding of the future may perhaps win honours for intensity of labour.

What the intensive application of capital in agriculture effects, therefore, under conditions of free competition and tenant farming, is economy of labour in general, and of farm-servants in particular. The latter are limited to the smallest possible number; they no longer live in the farmhouse, and they are married men. The work falls more and more to be done by day labourers. But the farmer seeks to replace even this class as far as possible by casual labour, or to transform it into a class of casual labourers. It is not necessary to detail the share in this tendency taken by the decrease of corn-growing, and the transition to clover and turnip-production. Thus the eighteenth century organisation of labour was irreconcilable with the system of large farms. The small farm had been worked without assistance, and the middle-sized farm had depended mainly on servants. At times when an unusual amount of work was required the employment

[1] Perhaps it is unnecessary to point out that this enquiry is occupied with labourers only. The wives and children of many farmers were also employed in agriculture, especially where the farmers were small freeholders. But we are not concerned with these classes.

of extra hands had been necessary. But since these could not be employed the whole year round, it had been requisite that they should have land of their own. Therefore the system which included the cottier, small farmer and small freeholder was complementary to the economy of the middle-sized farm. When farming on a large scale came to the fore, the cottier-economy had to be destroyed, not because there was a scarcity of labour, but because the large farmer found farm-servants a trouble and a tie, desired to be able to resort freely to day-labour, and wanted his labour cheap: to say nothing of his desire to have all the land for himself. This becomes the more obvious when we remember that it was precisely the large farmer who sought to prevent immigration from neighbouring parishes, and therefore claimed more entire command of the labour settled in the parish. Nor was it only the cottiers who had to be proletarianised, but the squatters too. And when large farming is fully established, frequent unemployment at once begins, and so does the attempt to press the labour of women and children into the service. Of this we have statistical evidence; and the figures show that as large farms increase the number of farm-servants and day-labourers decreases, but the number of "labourers" increases. The figures, however, do not throw adequate light on the employment of women and children, though they show one noticeable point in the marked decrease in the number of maidservants. I cannot help suspecting that the statement so frequently made about this time, to the effect that women worked less on the land than they used to do, rested simply on observation of this lessened employment of women servants.

IV.—The Condition of the Labourer in the 'Sixties.

The extensive application of the labour of women and children was agitating public opinion from about 1840 onwards. As early as 1843 the great fight led by Lord Ashley against child labour in mines and factories was turned by the threatened capitalists upon the agricultural interest, and there resulted that enquiry into the

employment of women and children[1] whose conclusions we have already discussed. Not quite twenty years later, on August 5th, 1861, Lord Ashley, now become Lord Shaftesbury, moved in the House of Lords for further enquiry into child labour in factories, and his proposal was accepted fairly readily. When the Reports of the Commission began to appear, from February 18th, 1862, attention was turned once again upon agricultural children. The abuses of the gang system, which had been exposed in 1843, had in the past twenty years had time to extend over neighbouring counties. The *Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council*, published in 1865, showed the miseries of rural labour to be sufficiently glaring,[2] and Fawcett succeeded in awakening a lively general interest in the subject. On May 12th, 1865, Shaftesbury, in the Upper House, moved that the gang system should be included in the reference to the Royal Commission, and on July 18th, Tremenheere and Tufnell, the Commissioners on the employment of children and young persons in trade and manufactures, received instructions to extend their enquiries to the public gangs. On March 5th, 1867, they were able to lay before Parliament, as the *Sixth Report* of the Children's Employment Commission, the *Report on Public Gangs* whose contents have already come before the reader in Chapter III.

The facts brought to light were such as to heighten the general interest felt in the subject of child labour, as may be seen by Vol. I. of Marx's *Capital*, published that same year; though the sentiments of the manufacturers had not a little to do with the matter. And where Miss Martineau's views were still held, it appeared desirable to obtain a full disclosure of the state of affairs in Dorsetshire, Lord Shaftesbury's own country, which had long been known to be worse than any other. Accordingly a new step was taken.

[1] After Lord Ashley's great speech introducing his address to the Crown on the subject of the education of the working-classes, on February 28th, 1843, Lord John Russell "objected to its being confined to the manufacturing districts, while the agricultural districts were not better off with respect to education." *Annual Register*, 1843, p. 59.

[2] See Appendix V., on *The Reports of the Medical Officers of Health to the Privy Council.*

On May 10th (18th), 1867, a new Royal Commission was appointed for the special purpose of enquiring into the employment of children, young persons and women in agriculture. The inclusion of women is not surprising, after the information obtained concerning the gangs. The Assistant Commissioners (who had been proposed by Messrs. Tremenheere and Tufnell, and who had in some ways unusual qualifications for their task) saw that the work could not be done unless the position of the men workers were also studied; and in this way was painted for the first time a trustworthy picture of the circumstances of the working population on the land, though with special reference to the women and children. Two Reports from this Commission relate to England, and they appeared in 1868 and 1869. The third Report, which appeared in 1870, is concerned with the Welsh labourer; the fourth, published in 1871, relates to Scotland. The enquiry was not extended to Ireland. Only the three first Reports, of course, will be made use of here. The reader will find an abstract of them in Appendix VI. Here we confine ourselves to a review of their more important results.

Even a superficial study of the Reports will show that the country falls into five geographical divisions, distinguished from each other by certain economic and social forces working within them and giving a distinct character to the conditions of life of their rural labourers. The districts are the south-eastern, south-western, midland, northern, and the pasture-counties of the west.[1] But they must not be confounded with the geographical divisions adopted by official statistics: nor do they always coincide with the county boundaries. Moreover, the boundary line as traced by the economic factor is sometimes crossed by that of the social forces.

Roughly speaking, the south-eastern were the corn-producing counties; the south-western were devoted to convertible husbandry, and thus form the connecting link

[1] The conditions of labour in Wales are not here treated separately, because they do not present any peculiarity of their own, as may be seen on consulting Appendix VI. *The Reports of the Commission of* 1867.

between the former and the purely pasture-counties of the west; the most prominent feature in the Midlands was market-gardening; while the north had no one common and distinctive agricultural characteristic. There the dominant influence in determining the markedly distinct conditions of labour was the great industry, which was also felt in some of the Midland counties: while the domestic industries which were spread over the southern part of the country were not so useful to the rural labourer. The nearer to the industrial districts the better was the lot of the labourer, in consequence of the demand they offered for men, and the competition of their higher wages. Where the industrial factor was weakest, that is to say in the south, there the conditions of agricultural labour were worst: and there was the principal scene of the overwork of women and children.

The second determining factor was the organisation of labour. This no doubt was partly shaped by economic circumstances, and by the exigencies of the agricultural systems which obtained in the different parts of the country: but it cannot be wholly deduced from them. To explain them adequately we must appeal to tradition and sociology, which do not belong to our department. As a rule, in the north, where the supply of labour was small, the attempt was to increase the farm-servant class, and in the south, where the supply was more than equal to the demand, to increase the class of day-labourers. In the north accordingly the occasional work was as far as possible worked into the servant-system, either by binding the servants to provide women helpers on occasion, or by increasing the number kept. In the south, on the contrary, even the farm-servants were put as far as possible in the position of day-labourers. Farm-servants in the north were hired by the half-year: but in the south they very often received no pay during sickness. In various parts of the country, but especially in the west, from Cumberland as far south as Wales, the old system under which farm-servants were unmarried and lived in the farmhouse still obtained, for the reason that pasture-farming required

uninterrupted work. Elsewhere the servants were married. In the corn-district of the south-east, where large farms, close villages, and an extensive use of machinery were found, all regular connection between employer and employed tends to disappear. Here was the region of gangs and casual labour. But in the south-western counties where the population was as abundant as in the south-east, the employers endeavoured to secure the services of a labourer's family as well as his own. The same system prevailed in Northumberland, where the population was scanty and the agriculture different. Again, it is very hard to explain on economic grounds why the allowance-system was found in the south-west and in Northumberland, while it was absent in the south-eastern counties.

The third determining factor was the possession of allotments. This had become considerably more common in the twenty-five years between 1843 and 1868 : and though even in 1868 there were none in many neighbourhoods, broadly speaking the earlier state of things was at an end. Potato-patches and gardens, as well as allotments, were frequently to be found : but on comparison it at once becomes evident that they were most frequent and most prized where the conditions of life were least favourable, that is to say, in the south-west. The explanation is not so simple as it might seem. The obvious thing to say is that the organisation of labour was responsible : cultivation in the north depended more than in the south upon unmarried servants living in the farmhouse, and such servants had naturally no need of allotments. And this is true ; but the married hind of Northumberland, and the day-labourer of the north-west, felt equally little desire for them. But comparing both these classes with the labourer of the southern counties, we shall find three differences. In the first place, the northerners had few opportunities of spending their money in their leisure hours, while in the south beer-houses were common : and even a generation back allotments had been valued not merely for the income they brought in, but for the expenditure they prevented. In the second place the hind received a large part of his wages

in kind, and owing to the relations between employer and employed, the goods were no worse than the average crop of the year: while in the south four-fifths of the wages were paid in money, and along with this, speaking of the average employer and labourer, a variety of small goods were bartered for. In the third place, in the south a money or profit-making economy had existed much longer than in the north, and where there was no running account between farmer and labourer this fact lessened the purchasing power of the nominal wage, whereas in the north even the day-labourer working for money not seldom boarded in the house of his employer, and at any rate did not find it difficult, in buying his provisions, to get good value for his money. But under southern conditions allotments freed the labourers from the expensive services of the middleman, whether farmer, shopkeeper or baker.

There was another difference, which however did not always hold. A hind was hired for a considerable period, and therefore had no need to make up for the days and weeks he was out of work by labour on an allotment. But day-labourers in the north were not paid for days on which they were unemployed. On the other hand their wages were high: insurance against unemployment was included, owing to the scarcity of labour, while in the south it was not paid owing to the over-supply. For nowhere were there such numbers of casual labourers as in the south, and nowhere was men's labour replaced to such an extent by that of women and children, facts which I have already accounted for. And precisely there increased use of machinery and the increase of large farming was throwing labour out of employment at this particular time. For these were the corn-producing counties, and cost of production had if possible to be diminished. Labourers in the south had often to be kept by their children: while in the north the difficulty of obtaining labour led to increased employment of farm-servants, and in Lancashire and Cheshire to the employment of Irish immigrants.

A point which seems to contradict this alleged superfluity of labour in the south is the desire of Dorsetshire

farmers to keep the labour of every member of a family. But on closer inspection we find that the contradiction is only apparent. Dorsetshire farmers cannot really have found it hard to obtain labour, or they would not have dismissed their men so easily. What they wanted was to exploit the labour of a whole family to the greatest possible profit.

There is one other reason accounting for the greater frequency of allotments in the south: wages were lower there than in the north, where various causes, but especially the competition of mines and factories, tended to raise them—as indeed even in the south wages rose above the low level of the surrounding country where mines and factories bordered on purely agricultural districts, as in parts of Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Cornwall. Consequently a labourer in the south must expend more labour than in the north merely in order to live. His fellow in Lancashire might afford to chat and smoke in his garden in his leisure hours: but he, in the south, was, economically speaking, an overdriven beast of burden. It is possible, of course, that allotments may have contributed to hinder a rise in wages, a result which may be admitted even by those who are convinced that they exercised no depressing effect.

One further point is shown by the Report:—The employment of women and children was most extensive where allotments were most common, that is to say, where the position of the labourer stood lowest (on the other hand, small farmers and freeholders put their children to work earlier than anyone else). Over and over again the opinion is expressed that such employment stands in a reverse proportion to the wage of the husband and father. "The counties where the fewest children under 10 years of age are employed in farm work," says Tremenheere in his Report, "are for the most part those in which the total earnings of the agricultural labourers in permanent employ are high."[1]

Putting together without prejudice the evidence from various parts of the country, it appears that there were few

[1] *Second Report*, p. ix., 10.

agricultural operations for which women and children were so specially fitted as to make their work indispensable. Weeding would seem to be women's work. "And yet," says the *First Report*, "in a district where the land requires much cleaning, and women and children are much sought for by most of the occupiers, some of the largest farmers cultivate the land without employing females at all."[1] To go further and state that there was no work which might not have been done by women would be too bold, though the experience of the north shows that the line between men's and women's work is much more variable in agriculture than in industry. But granted the original proposition it appears even more clearly than before that the employment of women and children was simply a consequence of low wages for men. Wages may be insufficient either because the rate is low, or because they are not paid for periods of unemployment. The latter was the case in the south with both classes of labour, though the rate of wages paid to male servants was fairly high, and that paid to the day-labourer was low. "But even in those counties where the total earnings of permanently employed farm-servants are as high as they are seen to be," writes Mr. Tremenheere, "there is below that class a large proportion of farm-labourers who are not hired for wet or dry—said by Mr. Fraser to be in the counties visited by him about one-half. By Mr. Culley, in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, those who are not paid in sickness are said to be two-thirds of the whole even of those hired by the year. There are others also who are incapable, either by want of aptitude or physical strength, of earning the higher rate of wages; others who are only wanted occasionally, or who are thrown out of work in winter, and whose total earnings consequently fall short of the higher standards."[2]

I have already shown how labour of this kind diminished cost of production to the farmer: how, if it had profited the labourer himself, or at least had not harmed

[1] *First Report*, p. x., 23.
[2] *Second Report*, p. ix., 11.

him, of course there would have been no objection to it: how the harm was that the wife neglected her home duties for her field work, that the children got no satisfactory education, and that the wages received merely paid for the increased quantity of food and clothing needed; and how this was generally the case when women worked at other times than in harvest, and when children worked at less than ten years of age. All these points appear in the Report under discussion, and show that so far the labourer received no advantage from the work done by his family. Even after their tenth year, boys' wages often merely covered their expenses, but then they were beginning really to learn their work.[1]

Of course these objections are not intended to apply to all employment of women in agriculture. But field work on the husband's own holding, as for example on a small dairy farm, is better than field work done for an employer, because it can be so arranged as not to interfere with home duties. Such field work I hold to be better than employment in the various domestic industries which were so common in districts with low wages—e.g. straw-plaiting, lace-making, and glove-making. For these were less healthy, the income from them varied with the market, and they often destroyed family life.

The table on p. 254 will have prepared the reader to find that small farmers and freeholders still existed in various parts of the country, chiefly in the north and west of England and in Wales. The reasons for this persistence of the small farms were various, but for the most part they were simply survivals. When this was the case, those occupied mainly in corn-production had a precarious existence; but the greater number were in pasture districts, and here they proved equal to the requirements of the times. Another class supplied the towns in their neighbourhood with milk and vegetables, and here their size was exclusively determined by economic causes. Others again,

[1] The Reader will feel, I think, that the study of these Reports has shown increased justification for the doubt expressed at the end of the last section regarding the trustworthiness of the Census Report figures (1873) given for the numbers of women and children employed in agriculture.

were occupied by industrial labourers, and accordingly do not concern us here. Those occupied by agricultural labourers form a fourth class. Where they consisted of pasture-land they succeeded admirably, making little claim on the energies of a man in regular employment, but offering healthy occupation close at home to his wife, increasing the family income, and affording to other labourers an opportunity of obtaining milk. Agricultural holdings, as distinguished from these cow-gates, were useless to a man in full work, but were an admirable means by which the irregularly employed could get through their periods of unemployment, and tended to keep a greater number of labourers on the land: so that they solved the labour problem from the point of view of employed as well as employer. The largest holders would, it was hoped, put extra labour at the farmer's disposal at specially busy times. The difficulty here appears to be that just when this labourer-farmer is wanted his own holding also requires his attention. However, since arrangements of the kind have persisted right down from the Middle Ages to the present day, there can be no very serious difficulties in the way of their success. I am not prepared to say that small properties would work equally well. All these forms of labourers' holdings served besides to enable capable labourers or farm-servants to secure independence in their old age, or perhaps to rise a step in the social scale. It will be remembered that even in the 'forties large allotments were found to form a provision for old age.

V.—The Gangs Act and the Education Acts.

To some extent the unsatisfactory conditions on the land had been evoked by legislation and could be overcome in the same way. The Settlement Act and the Poor Law of 1834 had indeed made the Union the organ of Poor Law administration, but had left the parish as before to pay the greater part of the relief given. The well-known consequence was the close villages and so the gang system. Besides, wages, which had been depressed to so low a point by the old Poor Law, did not rise proportionately

under the new; and hence there followed an extension of female and child labour, though not to an equal degree in all parts of the country. Zeal for reform necessarily directed itself against these statutes, since many other evils were not to be touched by law, or at least not by law primarily. As early as 1861 an Act was passed which put an end to petty grudges between parish and parish. In future, residence in any part of a Union was to have the same effect as residence in a particular parish of it. Then at last, in 1865, the whole burden of the poor-rate was thrown upon the Union, and one year was made the period after which no removal was possible.

Two years later the Gangs Act (30 and 31 Vict. c. 130) brought the gang system under control. No child under eight years old might be employed: no woman or girl might be employed on a gang in which men worked; gang-masters must be licensed, and might only employ women or girls if a duly licensed gang-mistress went with the gang. No innkeeper might receive a licence. Licences were to be issued by justices of the peace in Petty Sessions, on the production of satisfactory evidence as to the character of the applicant; and they would regulate the distance which children might be taken on foot. We need not here particularise the fines to be paid by gang-masters and farmers for breaches of the law.

The reader will remember that the Assistant Commissioners on the Royal Commission of 1867 found that in consequence of the Act many public gangs had transformed themselves into private ones, and this by itself necessitated some new regulation of the work of protected persons. A new campaign against child-labour and in favour of an efficient education was fought in the years 1870, 1873, and 1876. The Act of 1870 (33 and 34 Vict. c. 75), provided for the erection of a sufficient number of schools, and organised an Education Authority; and it was followed by the Act of 1876 (39 and 40 Vict. c. 79), which established the principle of compulsory education in the words: "It shall be the duty of every parent to cause such child to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading,

writing and arithmetic, and if such parent fail to perform such duty, he shall be liable to such orders and penalties as are provided by this Act (¶4)." And since agricultural employment might prejudice school attendance, the Act of 1873 (36 and 37 Vict. c. 67) regulated all child-labour in agriculture. The official title of the Act is "The Agricultural Children Act, 1873." It provided that no child under eight might be employed in agriculture, though this regulation did not hold against a father or guardian employing a child on his own land. An employer might take a child over eight on the production of certificates by the father or guardian to show first, its age, and next that a certain attendance at school had been made during the past year. Up to ten years of age the child must make 250 school attendances per annum; after the age of ten 150; but as soon as it had passed its fourth standard it ceased to come under the Act. No certificate was necessary for employment in hay, corn, or hop harvest. A peculiar provision is that no employer was to be punishable for the employment without certificate of children over eight, if it was proved to the satisfaction of the court that no school had been open, during the twelve months, within two miles of the dwelling-place of the child, or that the school had been closed for holidays, or for other reasons, at the time of employment.

The Education Act of 1876 repealed the Agricultural Children Act, and made the regulations considerably more stringent. No child under ten might be employed, except that the Local Authority might authorise, for six weeks in each year, "the employment of children above the age of eight years, for the necessary operations of husbandry and the ingatherings of crops." The provision by which children might be employed in the absence of a school or during holidays was continued. The employment of children over ten was subject to their showing either that they had passed a certain standard or that they had made a certain number of attendances. Attendance was compulsory, generally speaking, up to the age of fourteen. Thus the principles upon which the legislature acted were

that a modicum of education should be enforced in all cases; that children under eight should be protected against all employment, and children between eight and ten from all employment except in harvest; while after the completion of their tenth year a certain compromise was to be allowed, and some extent of freedom admitted. Intelligent and industrious children could begin to earn their livings at an earlier age than backward and lazy ones.[1] Further, parents were to be allowed to employ their children in agriculture at such times as they or the employer found most desirable. They had only to show a certain number of attendances made, which were calculated with a view to the demand for labour. Accordingly regular attendance and educational progress became practically impossible; and this seems to be the weakest point in the Act. It is to be feared, too, that such scholars as did attend regularly would suffer by the irregular attendance of the rest.[2] On the other hand children were not at the full disposal of the employer, and did not so easily acquire the elements of agricultural work.

Mr. Kebbel rightly emphasises the way in which clever scholars are kept back by those of less ability. It is unfortunately a fact, but not one which many people are inclined to recognise as an evil. Accordingly, the development of intelligent children is artificially retarded in order that the rest may keep pace with them. And yet this intelligence is often the sole advantage which such children have; they are frequently below the rest in physical

[1] Mr. Kebbel seems curiously certain that the teacher alone was responsible for the different results obtained:—"The question of course turns entirely on the ability of children under 11 years of age to pass the fourth standard, which will necessarily vary with the amount of skill, patience and perseverance exhibited by the master." He is of opinion that 99 per cent. were capable of passing the standard by the time they had completed their eleventh year. *The Agricultural Labourer*, 2nd ed., 1887, p. 72.

[2] "Another difficulty in the way of such rapid progress as might perhaps otherwise be achieved is created by the "half-timers," who are allowed to make their 150 attendances at their own time, so that the master never knows when to expect them. They drop in for a few days, or perhaps weeks, and then disappear for a time, learning therefore little or nothing that is of use, but giving much trouble to the master on account of the increased attention they require, and contributing doubtless to the general delays which help to prolong the school time of bad and good alike." Ibid. p. 74.

strength, in sound common-sense, and in force of character, and so have less prospect of success in the struggle for existence. That their intelligence should be rapidly developed and formed is therefore a matter of simple justice: and our existing educational arrangements offer a premium to intellectual mediocrity. However, it is no more to be expected that we shall alter this than that we shall recognise as an axiom that no one has the right, by the bad education he gives to his own children, to infect the children of others. We do not punish him, but the parents and teachers of the better educated.

The Education Act was thus by no means perfect, but nevertheless it was a great step forward, and as it came to be put into effect it met with less opposition than must have been anticipated. Child-labour under ten or eleven years of age had not been general, and had been so poorly paid as hardly at all to increase the total income of the family after the increased expenses had been met. And where the gang system had flourished, men's labour had been replaced by children's, so that in these neighbourhoods the tendency of the new law was to afford increased employment to men. The labourers, therefore, found their account in the Act much more quickly than the farmers, who could not get over the loss of their cheapest labour-power. "The chief grievance," says Mr. Kebbel, "is that boys are kept at school, when they could do useful work . . . . . at boy's wages."[1] We saw above that to child-labour English agriculture owed that peculiar cleanliness, almost exquisiteness, which even now distinguishes it at the first glance from that of the Continent. But after the Education Act, as one farmer said, "The days of neat farming are at an end. We don't pick stones, or weed corn, as we did. The women must not work in the fields nowadays, and the children are at school. So the work is not done, and we are glad of the excuse to curtail any expense, however injurious it may prove to be hereafter."[2] Mr. Kebbel notes the work which now either could

[1] *The Agricultural Labourer*, 2nd ed., 1887.
[2] Ibid. p. 77.

not be done at all, or only at higher prices :—" Boys cannot be procured for picking stones, minding pigs, scaring birds, tenting or weeding, and the crops suffer in consequence. Men instead of boys must be employed to drive the horses at plough."[1] But it was not only considerations of economic advantage which led many labourers to be well satisfied with the statutory regulations : the farther-sighted among them were ready even to make sacrifices in order to open up a wider sphere for their children. And the migration of the more capable children of labourers from the country to the towns, where, with the education they have received, they can earn higher wages, is generally held to be a result of the Education Acts. It is also held that the delay in beginning agricultural work kills our love for agricultural life. In consequence, it is said that only the dregs of the younger population remain at the disposal of the agriculturist, who has besides to pay for the education which carries off the young people to the industrial employer. All the advantage seems to be on the side of the labourer. Still there were classes among the labouring population which suffered under the effects of the law, namely those who were badly paid or irregularly employed. For, though in course of time these Acts may have cut at the root of some of the evils under which the labourers suffered, they had not solved the great problem of the rate of wages, the abolition of the abuses of payment in kind, and the shortening of working hours. Further steps on the road of reform could only be a question of time. The seed was sown ; it only waited for the sun to warm it into life.

[1] *The Agricultural Labourer*, 2nd., ed., 1887, p. 69.

CHAPTER V

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR UNIONS AND THE SMALL HOLDINGS MOVEMENT, 1872 TO 1894.

I.—Agricultural Labour Unions.[1]

(*a*) Introductory.

THE social and political importance of the working-classes of the towns increased in the last third of the nineteenth century. In 1867 the great majority of them received the Parliamentary franchise; and the Royal Commission on Trade Unions appointed in the same year not only did not condemn the unions, but led to the Acts of 1869 and 1871, which helped them and gave them protection. Public attention had for years been directed to these fighting organisations; and now that they were to some extent absolved by the judgment of the Commission, their importance was magnified in the eyes of the unorganised workers, and especially in those of the agricultural labourers. These last had by this time, at least in the south, been educated up to a keen sense of the unsatisfactory position in which they stood, and of their right to

[1] The following are the best-known works on the history of the agricultural unions in order of publication :—

F. G. Heath, *The Romance of Peasant Life in the West of England*, 1872.

Ibid. *The English Peasantry*, 1874.

A. Clayden, *The Revolt of the Field*, 1874.

Lloyd Jones, *Die jüngste Landarbeiterbewegung in England* in Nathusius-Thiel's *Landwirtschaftliche Jahrbücher*, 1875. A short objective article, emphasising all the points of importance for the understanding of the movement.

Kleinwächter, *Zur Geschichte der Englischen Arbeiterbewegung im Jahre*, 1872, in *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statitisk*, XXXIV., 1875.

Kleinwätchter, *Zur Geschichte der Englishcen Arbeiterbewegung in der Jahren* 1873 *u.* 1874, in Supplement I. of the same *Jahrbücher*, 1878.

On some points much light is thrown by *Joseph Arch; the Story of his Life, Told by Himself*, 1898.

demand remedies. From the middle of the 'sixties onwards, public opinion concerned itself at least as much with them as with the unions. Canon Girdlestone wrote of their needs in strong terms on various occasions; he induced hundreds of labourers from Halberton in Devonshire to migrate to the north;[1] and already in 1868, before the British Association Congress at Norwich, he pointed to combination as the one hope of improving their condition.[2] Official reports drew attention to their miserable housing conditions, and the insufficiency of their food as compared with that of Scotch, Irish and Welsh labourers.[3] The evils of the gang system were thoroughly opened up. The Royal Commission of 1867 had closely investigated the standard of life of the labourer all over the country, and the newspapers, reviews and magazines found this excellent copy, and unweariedly supplied it to their readers in larger or smaller doses. Thus people knew that the labourer of the north was better off than the labourer of the south; they knew the abuses of payment in kind, as found especially in the south-west; they knew that, as a result of over-application of women's and children's labour, half-employed "catch-workers" were commoner in the eastern counties than anywhere else, and that in Buckinghamshire and the neighbouring counties machinery had thrown the grown men out of employment to a still greater degree. And the labourers themselves had been taught to know the social and political events of their own times by means of the cheap weekly papers. These are the facts which explain, first, how it was that when the labourers founded unions and became involved in the usual struggle with employers they met with so much and such valuable sympathy outside the working-classes; secondly, the rapidity with which the movement spread, extraordinary considering the character of the labourers and their natural isolation; thirdly, why the unions remained as a rule limited to the country south

[1] Heath, *English Peasantry*, Chapter V., on *The Work of Canon Girdlestone*.
[2] Ibid. p. 189.
[3] See Appendix V. below.

of the Humber ; fourthly, why the great battles were fought in the east and south ; and lastly, why the agitation had its headquarters in a neighbourhood bordering on an industrial district.

Not that the idea of obtaining better conditions by means of combination was grasped by the rural labourer for the first time in 1872. At the beginning of the 'thirties the Trade Union movement in the towns manifested a strength very disquieting to the propertied classes. Touched by it, six overworked Dorsetshire labourers, paid at starvation wages, trusting to the freedom of organisation granted in 1824, attempted to form a union in 1832. But they were arrested, and the judge, Baron Williams—no representative of the old aristocratic self-government, but a " learned " judge—condemned them, on March 17th, 1834, to transportation for seven years on the ground that illegal oaths had been administered. Only under the strong and continued pressure of all kinds of agitation, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, was a pardon obtained for the condemned men three years later.

This cruel abuse of judicial power, only comprehensible in view of the dread which had been aroused by the Trade Unions, kept the labourers from advancing along this road through one of the saddest periods of their history. Not till thirty years later do we hear of a new union, founded in Scotland at the end of 1865. Two years after that, some Buckinghamshire labourers struck for a rise of wages from 9s. to 12s. a week.[1] The movement spread into Hertfordshire,[2] and there apparently came to an end. The small result obtained is explained by the fact that, as Lloyd Jones tells us, even the friends of the agricultural labourers had not the courage to support them. It was feared that any movement of theirs would mean destruction of property and other acts of violence.[3] Only after that thorough preparation of public opinion of which I

[1] Marx, *Das Kapital*, I., pp. 222 and 757.
[2] *The Labourers in Council*, in *The Congregationalist*, 1872.
[3] Lloyd Jones, op. cit., p. 811. We need not go back to the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for an explanation ; it will be sufficient to remember the incendiarism of the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth.

have spoken above did the labourers' unions shoot forward with a sudden rapidity not explicable merely by modern improvements in means of communication. The Union movement destined to effect a real change in the condition of the labourer began in Herefordshire in 1871. In less than a year the union there started had collected 30,000 members in half a dozen counties. Its watchword was from the beginning, "Emigration, migration, but not strikes."[1] It was however thrown into the background by a stronger movement on different lines, whose history I am now to tell.

(*b*) The Period of Triumph.

A few labourers in Westerton-under-Weatherley, a village lying some few miles out of Leamington, stated their miserable condition in a letter written in 1872 to a local newspaper. This letter, read by other labourers in Charlcote, near Wellesbourne, was the means of introducing a discussion as to what could be done to improve matters; and someone proposed a Trade Union. Thereupon they formed a club consisting of eleven members, and next thought of securing the support of a very able labourer, Joseph Arch, of Barford, who had developed his oratorical capabilities as a Primitive Methodist preacher.[2] Mr. Arch complied with their wish, and on February 13th, 1872, gathered some 1,000 labourers round him at Wellesbourne. He spoke to the assembly standing under a now historical chestnut tree, and succeeded in moving them to take a decisive step.[3] A Trade Union was founded at a meeting held a fortnight later, and it was resolved to serve notices on the farmers of the neighbourhood, asking for 16s. a week, and hours limited to from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. The farmers treated the request with silent contempt; and thereupon the labourers struck. The first fight animated the courage of the wage-earners,

[1] Arch, op. cit., p. 110.

[2] *The Agricultural Labourers' Union*, in *Quarterly Review*, Vol. XL., pp. 327, f., 1873. Heath, *English Peasantry*, p. 191.

[3] *The Labourers in Council.* This article contains a very interesting description of the proceedings at the foundation of the National Union of Agricultural Labourers. See also Arch, op. cit., chapter IV.

and one union after another arose in Warwickshire, so that on Good Friday, March 29th, 1872, an organisation embracing the whole county could be found at Leamington, and soon counted sixty-four branches with 5,000 members. The movement was fostered by articles published in the *Daily News* by Mr. Archibald Forbes, the celebrated war correspondent.[1] The story of the events in Warwickshire spread from Devon to Yorkshire, and everywhere met with sympathy, roused hope, and led to the foundation of new unions. Their members felt the necessity of binding themselves more closely together; and exactly two months after the Leamington meeting a National Congress of Agricultural Labourers, consisting of delegates from agricultural unions in most parts of the country, met in the circus there. They founded, amid great enthusiasm, the National Agricultural Labourers' Union. It was to consist of district unions, but to have one central committee with its seat at Leamington. Joseph Arch was elected president, Henry Taylor general secretary. Half the speakers were preachers of various denominations, and the members were continually addressed as "my Christian friends," "beloved brethren," or "dear fellow Christians" in a manner suggestive rather of a church than of a social congress. In the evening there was a public meeting, which was attended by 3,000 persons, and which carried the more weight because it established the fact that the labourers had found friends outside their own circle. Mr. G. Dixon, M.P., Dr. Langford, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. W. G. Ward and the Rev. F. S. Attenborough were present and spoke. The next day a variety of subjects was discussed, and the list shows that from the beginning the National Union pursued ends which looked far beyond wages, hours and conditions of labour.[2] The secretary spoke on trade unions, Sir Baldwin Leighton, Bart., on allotments and cow-pastures, Mr. Jesse Collings on education for the agricultural labourer, the Hon. and Rev J. W. Leigh on

[1] Arch, op. cit., p. 83.

[2] Mr. Arch does not conceal his distrust of "the cart of agricultural reforms stuck before the Union horse." Op. cit., p. 118.

co-operative farming, and Mr. H. Brooks on the cultivation of waste lands. A resolution was passed to the effect that compulsory education was absolutely necessary in order to improve the social position of the labourer. Finally, there was an evening meeting, which took on a definitely religious character, thus showing still more clearly that the delegates, like their electors, were for the most part Nonconformists. Messrs. Arthur Arnold, Jesse Collings, Edward Jenkins and George Mitchell were appointed trustees, and the Rev. F. S. Attenborough hon. treasurer: and the funds of the union were banked in their names.[1]

So favourable was the course of the movement for the next few years that only a few foresaw its rapid decline and long stagnation. Cairnes regarded it very sceptically, because the members of the unions lived scattered over the whole country, and were very poor, very ignorant, and without opportunity of frequent intercourse.[2] But at the meeting of the Land Tenure Reform Association John Stuart Mill greeted them as important allies. He advised them to aim, above all, at better houses, better wages and better education: equality with the towns in the matter of the franchise would then follow as a thing of course.

Not that the unions were without opponents and enemies. The farmers rebelled against the claims of the labourers, which were to their minds not only attempts to lower their incomes, but resistance to their lawful authority. In various parts of the country they tried to organise, in order that, united, they might be stronger to withstand these claims. When successful, they aimed higher, namely, at the entire destruction of the men's organisations.[3] Various landlords, too, came to the help of the farmers; among them we may name the Duke of Marlborough, the Duke of Rutland and Lord Dartmouth. The Duke of Marlborough, unable to perceive the historical course of development, threw the blame on "agitators and declaimers" who had "too easily succeeded

[1] *The Agricultural Labourers' Movement*, in *The Congregationalist*, 1876.
[2] Cairnes, *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy*, Pt. II., chap. III.
[3] Kleinwächter, 1875, p. 390, and 1878, pp. 67, 73.

in disturbing the friendly feeling which used to unite the labourer and his employer in mutual feelings of generosity and confidence." It is true that the majority of landlords did not take this view: many remained neutral, or openly disapproved of the measures taken by the farmers. But those who did take it were right as regarded their own interests: for although profits might have to bear the first brunt of a rise in wages, when new leases came to be concluded it was probable that rents would fall. As to the farmers, in the middle of the 'eighties the author knew members of the Farmers' Alliance who believed that they ought to forward their own interests by co-operating with the labourers: but in the 'seventies this was hardly to be expected, for the English labourers tried to stir up hatred against the men with whom they stood in immediate economic relation in almost the same way as their Continental brethren, taking no account of their position of economic dependence.

Certain small disputes were decided by the magistrates against the labourers: but broadly speaking the unions were victorious: they succeeded in raising wages by 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week, and in some cases by 3s. or 4s.; in getting rid of the abuses of payment in kind; in working towards the limitation of women's labour; and in seeing that the work of School Board visitors was seriously undertaken, and that the Agricultural Children's Act was carried out. They also gained something in the direction of the shortening of the hours of labour.

The agricultural labour unions fought their battle and gained their victory with the same weapons as the trade unions, but they made much more use of migration and emigration. Thus the National Union alone expended £2,630 on migration and £3,367 on emigration in the financial year 1874–5. Mr. Arch, before the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1881, estimated the number of persons, men, women and children, who had so far emigrated at the instance of the unions at 700,000.[1] Many

[1] Qu. 58,422. But according to the *General Report* on the Census of England and Wales, 1881, the total number of persons emigrating between

of the emigrants went to British colonies, and the migrations were to the agricultural and industrial districts of the north. Action on such a scale would have been impossible if the wages of the agricultural labourer had not been raised, if the colonial governments had not borne part of the cost, and if the unions had not been assisted by the trade unions, and by well-to-do friends not of their own class.[1]

Like the older trade unions, the National Union tried to bind its members more closely together by means of friendly benefits. Mr. Arch justified this before the Commission just mentioned on the ground that "so many of the village clubs are rotten and going to grief."[2] The members paid a weekly contribution for the general purposes of the union, and a certain proportion of this was taken for the benefit funds. The union, said Mr. Arch, had taught the labourers that if through their organisation they came to enjoy a higher income, it was their duty to make provision for sickness and old age.

But the union did not stop there. From the beginning its leaders aimed at the multiplication of allotments with a rent not much above the ordinary, and at the revival of a peasant class by means of "peasant proprietorship"—which endeared it to J. S. Mill. Hence it was bound to be led into the agitation against the existing land laws, which, by the system of entails, occasioned the overburdening of estates with charges for the support of various members of the owner's family, thus rendering high rents necessary, and sometimes leaving owners uninterested in their estates, and further causing the introduction of unsatisfactory methods of cultivation, by which the land was starved of labour; while they also made the sale of land extraordinarily expensive, and prejudiced the position of farmers as against owners. The union

1871 and 1881 was 970,565: if those whose place of origin is not given be added, the total is 996,038.

[1] Mr. Arch, in various parts of his book, states that he was opposed to the extent to which emigration had been carried. "I wanted to keep it in the background as a last resort," p. 132. Cp. p. 122, and chapter IX. There is however no proof of this beyond his own statement.

[2] Qu. 58,414.

also talked much against the enclosures, largely depending on the mistake to which Porter had given currency, that these had been nothing but divisions of the commons. It was in this connection that G. Mitchell ("One from the Plough"), together with others, set on foot an enquiry into charitable trusts, which often consisted of land, and were not seldom withdrawn by the trustees from their original objects. The disestablishment of the Church of England, with its landed estate of 1,500,000 acres,[1] was demanded no less vehemently. Hence a sense of community of interest between the landlords and the clergy. The fact that the dissenting element was strongly represented in the leading agricultural unions makes this the more comprehensible: and also the clergy of the State church for the most part received their livings from members of the landlord class. The squire, the parson and the farmer were the three persons who seemed to the labourer to be in alliance against him, while he had continually to encounter their wives and daughters as the patronising benefactresses of his wife and children. On the land, that impersonal relation between class and class which establishes itself naturally in the towns, and especially the great manufacturing towns, is impossible; and if the labourer is ever again to love his native place, village society will have to be radically democratised, and there must be, as in former centuries, a large intermediate grade, or rather grades, of small farmers and small proprietors. Thus several motives co-operated to strengthen the demand for disestablishment; but the two greatest means for abolishing those semi-feudal relations which seem so curious to a foreigner, filled with Continental ideas of English freedom, appeared to be in the first place the extension to the agricultural population of the franchise already given the towns, and in the second place better education, which led the unions to press the demand that education should be made effectively compulsory.

All these claims undoubtedly had to do with the well-

[1] Gneist, *Englische Verfassungsgeschichte*, p. 691. The income in 1851 was over £4,000,000.

being of the agricultural labourer, but they lay outside the narrow limits which trade unions had ordinarily set themselves. Thus it struck George Howell as strange that the agricultural unions interested themselves in political movements, "such as the extension of the franchise, the re-distribution of political power, local self-government, charitable endowments, and even the relationship existing between Church and State,"[1] while the old trade unions first entered the political field in 1878.[2] The agricultural unions did considerably influence both the by-elections previous to 1880 and the general election of that year. All this proves once again that the needs of the agricultural labourer differ from those of the industrial worker, and that therefore the same socio-political measures cannot serve to solve both agricultural and industrial problems.

It would be interesting to trace the statistical evidence for the rise of wages under the influence of the unions; but the material is insufficient. On July 29th, 1869, Goschen proposed that statistics of agricultural wages should be taken, and it was done at three different times during 1869 and 1870 throughout the English and Welsh counties, and in most of them for more than one Poor Law Union. The figures were published in 1869 and 1871 respectively. On May 1st, 1872, on the proposal of Wilbraham Egerton, it was resolved that this enquiry should be repeated, and the statistics for Michaelmas and Christmas 1872 were taken, and published in the course of 1873. But the statements as to rises in wages were not continued, as they were not considered to be trustworthy.[3] As to the figures thus obtained, I may remark that what they profess to give is the weekly wages of day-labourers, while those of farm-servants, e.g. carters, stablemen and shepherds, were on

[1] *The Conflicts of Labour and Capital*, p. 174 (1st ed., 1878).

[2] "Up to a quite recent date, trade-unionists had almost necessarily confined their action to objects and measures chiefly affecting their own members, as trade-unionists, but the sphere of their action is no longer limited to their own comparatively narrow circle. . . . . The Parliamentary program for 1878 was quite a new departure." Ibid. p. 485 (2nded., 1890).

[3] Druce, *The Alteration in the Distribution of the Agricultural Population of England and Wales*, in *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, 1885.

an average from 2s. to 2s. 6d. higher, for reasons already given; that is to say, because of their longer hours and Sunday work. This must be kept in view in comparing wages in the south with those in the north, since in the north the work was largely done by servants, who however appear in the tables under the head of day-labourers.

Counties.	1869-70.	1872.
	s. d.	s. d.
Surrey	13 9	14 0
Kent	14 3	15 2
Sussex	12 2	13 4
Southampton	10 10	13 8
Berkshire	10 7	14 0
Hertford	11 3	12 3
Northampton	11 10	16 0
Huntingdon	10 6	12 6
Bedford	11 1	12 0
Cambridge	11 0	...
Essex	11 4	15 9
Suffolk	10 10	13 0
Norfolk	10 5	13 4
Wilts	10 7	11 5
Dorset	9 4	10 4
Devon	10 0	11 0
Cornwall	11 0	13 0
Somerset	10 6	14 0
Gloucester	10 6	13 4
Hereford	10 3	12 5
Salop	11 0	14 3
Stafford	13 0	14 6
Worcester	11 11	13 0
Warwick	12 0	15 0
Leicester	13 2	16 6
Rutland	12 6	16 0
Lincoln	13 11	...
Nottingham	13 4	...
Derby	13 9	...
Chester	14 0	15 9
Lancashire	14 8	15 7
Yorkshire, W.	15 10	16 9
Yorkshire, N.	15 4	15 6
Durham	16 2	20 6
Northumberland	15 8	19 2
Cumberland	15 3	18 7
Westmoreland	16 4	19 6
Monmouth	13 1	17 9
Wales	11 9	16 6
Average for England and Wales ..	12 3	14 8½

I have reckoned the averages on the basis of these official publications, and the result undoubtedly shows a considerable rise of wages. But it is to be remarked that this rise is consistently greater in the north than in the south, although no unions have been founded there.

(*c*) The Period of Defeat.

The Unions had fought with great success for two years when they suffered a severe defeat. At the end of February, 1874, the Exning and Alderton Labourers' Union (Suffolk) asked for a rise of wages from 13s. to 14s. and the limitation of hours to 54 per week. The farmers answered the demand by locking out all members of the union. But the fight soon lost its local character. Already by March 23rd 2,000 agricultural labourers, in Hants, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Bedfordshire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire, were locked out; by the middle of April the numbers reached 7,000, at the beginning of May another 1,200 were added, and Kleinwächter puts the total of those idle at 10,000.[1] Attempts to settle the quarrel by arbitration failed, except in Lincolnshire, and although both the labourers and the unions of industrial workers showed the greatest readiness to make sacrifices for the cause, and though other classes contributed and public opinion was sympathetic, the defeat of the labourers and the close of the struggle had to be declared at the end of July. In the financial year 1873–4 the National Union had paid £7,500 for strikes and other purposes; but in 1874–5 it paid out £21,365 for strikes alone and £5,597 for migration and emigration. Of the £21,365, £5,595 came from extraordinary contributions made by the agricultural unions, and £12,613 from outsiders.

This defeat turned attention upon the general difficulty of improving the lot of the rural labourer by means of combination. The landlords and farmers could often limit their demand for labour by taking up farming on a large scale, by altering their methods of cultivation, or by making more use of machines. Besides, there was, and is, much labour in existence upon which a farmer could, and can, fall back if his regular workers fail him: there are the general labourers, the Irish, the half-employed "catch-workers," and the unemployed from the towns, who had always been made use of during harvest. Much work too,

[1] See the history of this great lock-out in his 1878 article, pp. 71 f.

as we have seen, could be done by women and children, even if their labour was now not so easily obtained as formerly. So that to limit the supply of labour was a more difficult problem in agriculture than even in the unskilled trades. The farmers made use of all these means during the lock-out. James Caird, the chairman of the Commission on Enclosures, had drawn attention to them in a paper published in March.[1]

The least that could be asked was the adhesion, even if a loose adhesion, of all local unions to one national union, and the inclusion of the general labourers in the organisation. Butt he attempt to secure the first of these requisite conditions had not succeeded. Various unions would not consent to enter the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, and sought instead to organise themselves on a federal basis. Simmons, the secretary of the second largest organisation, expressed himself very openly concerning the split before the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1879) in 1881: the answer from Leamington to enquiries as to a common organisation had been so unsatisfactory that they had preferred to remain independent. And besides, they were unable to agree with the tactics of the National Union. "The policy which they have adopted has been a firebrand policy of strikes and disruption," he said: while his association had, on the contrary, tried to work by persuasion, and so far had begun no strike.[2] Nor could they approve of the political activity of the National Union, with the exception of its agitation for the extension of the franchise and the reform of the land laws.[3]

Those unions which did not enter the National Union accepted general labourers as members, aimed at securing legal protection, and joined themselves in a federation, so that from the end of 1873 there were two organisations side by side, namely, the National Agricultural Labourers' Union and the Federal Union of Agricultural and General Labourers: and if the two were not actually at enmity,

[1] Kleinwächter, 1878, p. 70.
[2] Qu. 59,322 f.
[3] Qu. 61,192 f.

they certainly hindered each other, as plainly appeared in the strike of 1874.[1] Besides, the federation was so loose, that from about 1878 three unions were working independently of one another. The first was the National Union, the second the Kent and Sussex Agricultural and General Labourers' Union, which had begun as the Kent Union and had its centre at Maidstone, and the third the Lincoln Amalgamated Labour League, which appears and disappears in the reports of the Chief Registrar, moving its centre from Lincolnshire to Suffolk, and finally to Norfolk. A lesser luminary among these great constellations, the Botesdale Agricultural Union, revolved in a wide, slow orbit, and has now for many years been no longer visible. After the 'eighties, only the two first mentioned could claim to be of general interest.

There was a split inside the National Union, too, not less dangerous than the opposition between Nationals and Federals.[2] The unfortunate outcome of the strike and lock-out caused many people to doubt whether the position of the agricultural labourer would be improved by ordinary trade-union tactics. Many were discouraged by the fact that the membership decreased very considerably. While on April 30th, 1873, it had been 71,835, and a year later 86,214, in 37 districts and 1,480 branches, in the winter of 1874–5 it sank by about 28,000, and 112 branches ceased to exist; while it was poor comfort that one new district was formed. The figures on April 30th, 1875, were 58,652 members in 38 districts and 1,368 branches.[3] Vincent, the owner of the union's organ, made himself the representative of the pessimist point of view: and the paper talked of solving the labour question not by trade unions, but by allotments and the revival of a class of small farmers, and by agricultural associations for co-operative production and consumption. Vincent found followers among the men who had left the National Union, and on September 28th, 1875, a meeting was held at Leamington to which came both members and deserters, the chair being taken

[1] Cp. Kleinwächter, 1878, pp. 89 f.
[2] The following account is from the *Beehive* and the *Industrial Review*.
[3] Mr. Arch's figures (op. cit., p. 254) differ from these very slightly.

by Professor Newman of Oxford. It was moved that the labourers must get land, "by devoting subscriptions to the acquisition of allotments and small holdings instead of appropriating them principally to lock-out pay during strikes." Henry Taylor, the general secretary of the National Union, opposed. He pointed to the increased income which the union had gained for the labourers, and described the "new land scheme" as "impracticable and delusive," and as "unworthy of the support of the people." His speech was continually interrupted by applause and counter-demonstrations: and after it the excitement increased to such an extent that no one could say to what resolution the meeting came. After much friction and various scenes Taylor had to give way, and a new union, the National Farm Labourers' Union, was founded with the object of buying land with the periodical contributions and letting it out to labourers. Other unions, too, were obliged to march with the times, so that an attempt was made to pursue, along with the old ends, the new end of helping the labourer to the occupation of land. To follow this movement further would serve no purpose: for in the first place it was from the beginning condemned to failure and has left only insignificant traces behind it,[1] and in the second place it is clear that if the movement was bound up with the Union movement it was sure to hinder the latter, and if it existed apart from that it has no longer to do with the question before us. Its only importance in the statement of the problem of the labourer is as a symptom. Once again it was proved that the problem comes back, by whatever roundabout or mistaken roads, to the land question.

Still, the National Union continued on its old way. Its agents travelled through the counties, and evening by evening, "during seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, in barns, cottages and conventicles, in public rooms, in 'pounds,' and in sheep-folds, in market-places, on village-greens, and by the road-side, meetings have been held, addresses have been given, members have been

[1] Cp. the evidence of Simmons on the "Land and Cottage Fund" of the Kent and Sussex Union, qu. 59,237 of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, 1881.

enrolled in union, and branches have been formed."[1] Strikes followed in various parts of the country, processions took place, meetings were held, and ended with the usual resolutions in favour of the extension of the franchise, the necessity of an enquiry into the administration of charitable bequests, and the other demands of the union. Among these meetings the one most worthy of remark was that annually held by George Mitchell at Ham Hill, on the borders of two counties with a labouring population of the very poorest, which at least kept the movement there from falling asleep altogether.

However, with the year 1875 the agricultural crisis began to make itself felt, and as it marks the beginning of the third period of the Union movement, we may here briefly summarise the chief results so far attained, following the article by Lloyd Jones already mentioned, both because few men had so intimate a knowledge of the facts, and because the article is an admirable example of that openness of view, freedom from doctrinarianism, and measured judgment which his friends prized in him.

If strikes and lock-outs had remained free from that violence which had been feared, the credit was due for the most part to the labour leaders. When the French Revolution broke out, its representatives were many of them little country lawyers, of abstract views and quarrelsome character. The representatives of the English agricultural union movement, to compare small things with great, were working men who were often at the same time Dissenting preachers. The trade unions of the towns, while they supported the rural labourers, exercised a moderating influence on them.[2] And so did the advisory committee, consisting of those men of higher social grade whose names were given above, which sat at Leamington.

The struggle ended without a decisive victory for either side. The labourers had not been fully united, neither had the farmers. Some of the latter did not approve of the fight at all, others disliked the means, others again had to

[1] *The Agricultural Labourers' Movement*, in *The Congregationalist*, 1876

[2] Cp. the curious passage on p. 103 of Mr. Arch's autobiography, which might induce one to form a different opinion.

respect their landlords' views. In general, at the end of the second period, wages had risen; but there were great differences between the results in different districts. On one estate the farmers had accepted the labourers' terms, on another the labourers had emigrated, on a third they had been taken on again, but on condition that they left the union. The victims were the older men, who did not get back into employment, and fell as a burden on the union funds. Meantime farmers were incited to look more closely at their relation to the landlord, and to ask for new legislation to deal with tenant rights.

(*d*) The Unions and the Agricultural Crisis of 1875–1879.[1]

An agricultural crisis had long been preparing. From the end of the American Civil War pasture-farming and large farming had been extending. Our last chapter showed how great a decrease in the number of labourers employed took place between 1850 and 1870. War conditions and the effects of the increased production of gold in raising prices had hindered the development of the economic tendencies of free trade. But the period of peace after the Franco-German War, and the fall in the value of silver consequent on the Continental transition to a gold standard, and the changes in the production of the precious metals, gradually broke down the defences of English agriculture. Free trade, backed by the improved means of communication, was able to develop its inherent forces. In this period, a period emphatically of agricultural retrogression, though that of course first becomes clearly visible when the statistics are shown, came the limitations on child-labour and the struggle of the unions for a rise in

[1] The enquiries which have been made into the agricultural crisis of 1875–1879 or 1881 have not yet penetrated so thoroughly to the bottom of the matter or examined it so impartially on all its sides, as might be wished. Nasse has summarised the essential results obtained by the Royal Commission in the series of articles published by the *Verein für Social-politik*, XXVII., 142 f., 1884 (*Agrarische und landwirtschaftliche Zustände in England*), but in his conclusions he follows the General Report too closely. Kablukow (*Die Ländliche Arbeiterfrage*, trans. from the Russian, 1889, pp. 41 f.) gets deeper into the problem, but still various factors do not come by their own in his account. Mr. Prothero (*The Pioneers and Progress of English Farming*, pp. 115 f.) opens up several new points of view in the eleventh chapter of his book, and he considers the crisis more in connection with the general economic position than do Nasse and Kablukow.

wages, and thence an increase in the cost of production. To this must be added the fact that rents had risen with the agricultural prosperity of the middle 'fifties and onwards. Mr. Prothero puts the rise between 1857 and 1878 at 20 per cent.,[1] and even between 1867 and 1877 it was 11½ per cent.[2] The farmers, in danger of being crushed between the claims of rent and wages, and exposed to the competition of half the world, knew of no other way out than to do with fewer men and to make use of less expensive labour-power. So began the starvation of English land. Cattle-plagues, together with the exclusion of foreign cattle, caused the price of meat to rise till well on in the 'seventies; but the rise drew the competition of American agriculturists into this sphere also. The crisis was intensified by bad harvests, both of corn and hay, due to unfavourable weather; but it was chiefly the corn-producing counties which suffered under this. Where pasture-farming had existed for any considerable time the losses were small; and sometimes it even paid the farmers to increase their stock.[3] As a rule, however, the rain injured the cattle, since there were not enough buildings to shelter them in bad weather.[4] Thus many farmers lost a greater or smaller part of their capital,[5] and were forced to adopt even more extensive methods of cultivation than before.

Therefore to the labourer the crisis meant lack of employment and lowered wages. The saving in labour, which had already been felt between 1850 and 1870, and had received a new impulse from the action of the unions, was pushed further. Although the land was the poorer by so many thousand men, hardly a trace of any deficiency in the supply was noticed during the crisis. Mr. Arch had to admit before the Commission of 1881 that he had not obtained his object of diminishing the supply by emigration, "because we have had that unnatural difficulty to

[1] Op. cit., pp. 106 f.
[2] Nasse, p. 147.
[3] Ibid. p. 151.
[4] Ibid. p. 143.
[5] Cp. Kablukow's excellent table on the stock held between 1867 and 1883, op. cit., p. 54.

meet."[1] Farms were given up; great stretches of ground went out of cultivation; the land was under-cultivated, being often covered with weeds; and the demand for labour was much less than formerly. A further consequence was that the wages of those who did find work were lowered. In some cases, according to Joseph Arch, they had been lowered by 1s., in others by 2s. or even 3s.[2] According to Simmons, the downward movement in Kent and Sussex had begun in 1877, and since then there had been a fall of from 10–25 per cent.[3] Besides this, the bad weather, and other circumstances which prevented work, caused the labourers to lose perhaps a third of all working days.[4] Many were unable to keep up their weekly subscription to their union, which was relatively high, because friendly as well as trade benefits were given. The unions themselves paid up the subscriptions for many members, and others had to be struck off the lists.[5] Migration, formerly adopted as a means of assistance, now failed. With the year 1877 bad times had fallen on the industrial districts also; agricultural labourers no longer found opportunities of employment there, and the contributions from industrial unions decreased or disappeared; they themselves were struggling with the greatest difficulties, as may be seen in the pages of the *Beehive* and in the Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies: the old hatred of trade unions awoke once more, and Lloyd Jones had to take up their defence in public lectures. The contributions of the public also decreased, partly because the National Union had alienated many friends by its political views and its enmity against the established church.[6] And we must remember that it had been the contributions of non-members which had made possible much of the activity of the National Union in regard of migration and emigration in particular.

[1] Qu. 58,578.
[2] Qu. 58,559.
[3] Qu. 61,264.
[4] Qu. 61,378.
Qu. 61,320.
[6] Cp. the warnings given by Canon Girdlestone in his article *The Agricultural Labourers' Union* in *MacMillan's Magazine*, Vol. XXVIII.

The fighting spirit even of the National Union now broke down. As often as the labourers were informed that their wages must be lowered, so often did Joseph Arch advise them to submit.[1] When, in 1887, Mr. Kebbel published the second edition of his *Agricultural Labourer*, wages were generally from 6d. to 1s. higher than before the strikes, but in Essex they had gone back to the position of 1870, and in Norfolk they were lower than they had been since 1851.[2] Mr. Druce, who as assistant-commissioner visited the greater part of the midland and southern counties, expresses his opinion thus at the end of his report published in 1882 :—" Wages are certainly less than they were in the good times of from 1870 to 1874, or 1875, but they are not low in comparison with the returns which the farmer has had to put up with."[3]

Numerous witnesses expressed themselves before the Commission to the effect that the position of the labourers was essentially better than formerly. The *General Report* has summarised these only, and made almost no use of the evidence of the labourers' representatives. But the evidence of Messrs. Arch, Simmons and Druce proves that there is no justification for forming a judgment based solely or chiefly on the favourable circumstances alleged. Conclusions drawn from the decrease in the poor-rates take no account of the fact that between 1870 and 1880 the suppression of out-door relief was energetically taken in hand. In 1872 there were 823,000 out-door paupers, while in 1879 there were only 625,000 ; but the number of in-door paupers had risen from 154,000 to 179,000. To try to conclude from this that the labourer was comfortably off is much like arguing that his comfort increased after 1834 because the poor-rates sank. Then again studies in the progress of money wages, like Sir Robert Giffen's, have not much value when the agricultural labourer is in question, especially when we take irregularity of employment into consideration.

[1] Qu. 58,562.
[2] Kebbel, *The Agricultural Labourer*, 2nd ed., p. 17.
[3] *Royal Commission on Agriculture: Reports from Assistant Commissioners*, 1882, p. 106.

From the farmer's point of view the matter bore quite another face. The best labourers had departed, and he had to pay a higher price to get the same quantity of work done. Mr. Druce specially mentions "the worse quality of labour performed" and "the less amount of work done by each individual labourer." Nor was the farmer of the south compensated for the higher cost of wages by the higher prices which could be obtained for some of his products in the neighbourhood of the industrial districts of the north. Thus we can see how two entirely different conceptions, that of the labour-cost of production, and that of wages, came to be confounded.

It will be objected, however, that since the price of provisions was so much lower the labourer must have benefited. The answer is that prices on an average were not lower in the decade 1871–1881, as the following comparison will show :—

	Wheat.	Bacon.	Beef.	Butter.	Cheese.	Potatoes.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1861–70 ..	51 8	50 6	38 8	101 0	55 6	4 7
1871–80 ..	51 9	44 6	44 0	110 0	55 6	5 6
(1876–80) ..	47 9					

Still, if it cannot be said that living had yet become cheaper, it is probable that wages still stood higher everywhere than they had done before the strikes. A glance at the rates of wages as calculated by Mr. Druce according to the reports of the Assistant Commissioners will show that, if they are trustworthy, such was the case[1] (see table on next page). But the weekly income must have been very small when employment was irregular. Of course, it is only as regards the south that the effect of the unions comes

[1] This calculation is to be found on p. 309 of the report by Mr. Druce mentioned above. Where he has given a maximum and minimum, I have given an average (e.g. 11s.–13s. equals 12s.). I do not know in what way his calculation was made. By comparison of his for 1860–70 with my own, I notice that we often differ by two or three pence and sometimes much more markedly, while I came to the same conclusion as Purdy for 186›.

What makes me doubtful about the statistical basis is that I notice that in not a few cases the wages of 1880 and 1881 are given as higher than those of 1872.

into consideration: in the north the crisis ran a much gentler course, and wages were determined by the competition of manufacturers and mines.

	s.	d.		s.	d.	
Surrey	15	0	Worcester	13	6	
Kent	16	6	Warwick	14	0	
Sussex	13	6				
Southampton ..	12	0	Leicester .. 13s. od.	11	6	ordinarily.
Berks	12	0		14	6	near the iron mines.
Bucks	14	0	Rutland	—		
Hertford ..	13	6	Lincoln	14	3	
Oxon	13	3	Middlesex	15	6	
Northampton ..	—		Nottingham 16s. 6d.	14	0	ordinarily.
Huntingdon ..	12	0		19	0	near the mines.
Bedford ..	12	6	Derby	16	6	
Cambridge ..	12	6	Chester	—		
Essex	12	6	Lancashire	17	6	
Suffolk	12	6	Yorkshire, E. ..	15	0	
Norfolk ..	12	6	,, W. ..	16	6	
Wilts	12	0	,, N. ..	16	6	
Dorset	11	0	Durham	17	9	
Devon	13	0	Northumberland ..	16	6	
Cornwall ..	14	6	Cumberland ..	18	0	
Somerset ..	13	0	Westmoreland ..	18	0	
Gloucester ..	13	6	Monmouth ..	12	0	
Hereford ..	13	0	Wales	—		
Salop	13	0				
Stafford ..	13	6	Average ..	14	1¾	

Simmons seems to have summarised the effects of the crisis well when he says:—"I should say that the landlord suffers least . . . . that the farmer suffers most, but that he feels his suffering less than the labourer. To the labourer it is a question really of less food, to the farmer it is not absolutely a question of bread, it is comforts or no comforts."[1]

In this state of things the chief wonder is that the unions maintained their existence as long as they did. In 1877 the National Union had still 55,000 members, according to the Report (1878) of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies: in 1878 it was 24,000, in 1879 and 1880 about 20,000, and in the following year about 15,000. Then it went gradually downhill, and in 1889 had only 4,254 members, while the Kent and Sussex Union was said still to count 10,000. The financial position long remained relatively good, probably because so many members left

[1] Qu. 59,442.

the unions, voluntarily and otherwise, that the claims upon them were greatly diminished. But here also changes for the worse inevitably took place. Mr. Arch stated in his autobiography that "the Sick Benefit Society was pulling the Union to the ground."[1] In 1878 the National Union still had £6,047 in hand, and an income of £11,226: but in 1889 it had only £1,309 in hand, and an income of £3,018, and in 1890 its funds had fallen to £420. Both the unions lived on their capital, as may be seen by the following figures for 1890:—

	KENT AND SUSSEX UNION.	NATIONAL UNION.
Income ..	£10,667	.. £4,077
Expenditure ..	£11,835	.. £4,965
Deficit ..	£1,168	.. £888

Whether the figures supplied to the Chief Registrar were altogether trustworthy is a point beyond my knowledge.

Our picture may be completed by a few figures taken from the *General Report* on the Census of 1881.[2] Between 1871 and 1881 the number of agricultural labourers fell from 962,348[3] to 870,098. Further, the increase of the general labourers is noteworthy: they rose from 506,273 to 559,769. In the same period arable land fell from 14,946,179 acres to 13,977,662, and permanent pasture increased from 11,736,298 to 13,471,238; so that the total area in agricultural occupation had increased by 4·28 per cent. It is also worth remarking that the number of owners and operators of agricultural machines had risen from 2,160 to 4,260. In 1871 there were 3·95 labourers to every hundred acres, in 1881 there were only 3·45, or a decrease of 12·7 per cent. The number of farmers had fallen from 249,907 to 223,943, while that of foremen and bailiffs had risen from 16,476 to 19,377.

[1] Op. cit., p. 380. He adds: "I had always been against it." Unfortunately, Mr. Arch does not seem to have had that preponderating influence which was due to him.

[2] *Census of England and Wales, General Report*, 1883, pp. 37 f.

[3] As will be remembered, the total for 1871 was 980,178. The Report for 1881 subtracts 2 per cent. as incapable of work, and the number capable of work becomes 962,348. As given in the Report it is 981,988.

Unfortunately it is not possible to trace out a classification according to calling, sex and age. Among the 870,798 persons,[1] 22,844 were shepherds, 807,708 labourers, and 40,346 women.[2] The servants are not given separately. The following table shows the age of classification :—

	5–15 years.	15–20 years.	20–25 years.	25–45 years.	45–65 years.	Over 65 years.
Labourers and farm-servants (male) ..	67,054	154,596	97,730	232,028	186,029	70,171
Labourers and farm-servants (female) ..	2,054	8,907	6,362	11,006	9,120	2,897
Shepherds	941	1,809	1,484	8,618	8,089	1,903

This agrees with the fact that the population of several counties had decreased since 1871. I may mention Huntingdon (8·3 per cent.), Dorset (2·1 per cent.), Rutland (1·6 per cent.), Westmoreland (1·3 per cent.), Cambridge and Shropshire (·5 per cent.), and leave out the Welsh counties. Some others show an insignificant increase: Devon (·4 per cent.), Buckingham (·6 per cent.), Wilts (1 per cent.), Oxford, Norfolk, Somerset, Suffolk and Bedford from 1 to 2 per cent.[3]

(*e*) The Revival of Unionism.

After a long period of depression the unions sprang into life again in the year 1890; and with this year begins the fourth period in their history. When from 1885 onwards the trade unions of unskilled labourers were formed, and the Dock Strike ended in a great victory, life awoke again on the land. A great number of new unions was formed, among which the most important was the Eastern Counties Labour Federation, with its centre in Ipswich. In the spring of 1892, according to the report of its general secretary, Mr. Robinson, it spread over Essex, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, and had 10,047 members in 174 branches.

[1] *Census of England and Wales*, Vol. III., p. xii.
[2] The *General Report* put the number at 63,171, p. 30.
[3] *General Report*, p. 8.

At the end of 1892 the membership stood at 17,000, but many members were in arrears with their payments.[1] At the same time the Norfolk and Norwich Amalgamated Labour Union arose. The old unions, too, felt the influence of the revival. The National Union increased its membership by about 10,000, rising from 4,254 in 1889 to 14,000 in 1890.

The new unions consisted without exception of agricultural and general labourers, a combination which according to earlier experience is almost inevitable. In the second place, they had given up the idea of a unified strongly centralised organisation. The leaders were of opinion that the difficulties in the way of educating the labourer could only be overcome "by the constant and watchful help of experienced leaders."[2] It would be difficult to get him to pay subscriptions which were to be spent by people whom he never knew personally and seldom even through his delegates. "The first requirement, therefore, for the successful and permanent organization of the rural labourer is, we are firmly convinced, the establishment within comparatively small and 'manageable' areas of autonomous local unions." But if the work of the local organisations is done thoroughly "the national organisation will come naturally by the federation of existing local unions." A specially important point is that the author from whom we have been quoting expresses himself against the combination of friendly society with trade union work, and gives convincing reasons. First, he says, the wages of labourers are too small to bear the heavy deduction necessary for the two purposes; and secondly, the difficulties caused by the loss of the young and strong were now being felt: old people remained upon the land in disproportionate numbers, which might easily endanger the funds. "That this question of 'benefit' has given rise to very serious trouble in the National Union is notorious. . . . . We understand that the recent

[1] *Annual Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies*, 1892, p. 3.

[2] A very instructive article called *The Agricultural Labourer*, apparently by F. Verinder, General Secretary of the Land Restoration League, speaks at length of the difference between the old and new unions. See *The Church Reformer*, Vol. XI., 5 (1892), p. 111.

epidemic of influenza has so heavily taxed the resources of the London and Counties Labour League as to give rise to a serious financial crisis in that body." All those who had taken part in re-founding the unions told the present writer that the friendly benefits had given rise to the greatest possible difficulties. For this reason our author answers the question why new unions should be founded instead of the old one, Joseph Arch's, being revived, by saying that "The misfortune is, however, that in most parts of the country the feeling of distrust left in men's minds by the breaking down of 'the old union' is a very real and serious hindrance to any effort towards re-organisation." Those who only saw things from a distance regarded the abandonment of insurance against sickness, accident, old age, and death as a defect, and the more so as the unions of the aristocracy of industrial workers appeared to them to be the true and typical trade union. So thought even J. M. Ludlow, though he certainly knew more than anyone else about workmen's associations in England. He says, "One feature common to many of these newly-established bodies is the narrow range of their benefits. In some cases there is not even an out-of-employment benefit: the machinery is of a purely militant character. . . . . To a certain extent this is to be accounted for by the more slender resources of the class now embarking on these combinations. . . . But the course in question, if deliberately persisted in, would appear to be little less than a throwing away the results of the experience of the older societies. Reflexion will show that both the stability and wisdom of a trade union must largely depend on the extent to which it lays hold on the life of its members. In view of some definite object to be presumably obtained, men may subscribe for a time to a trade union, but either success or failure may soon scatter them, and for the mere sake of keeping them together it is almost compelled to rash action. On the other hand, when a trade union offers not only ordinary out-of-work benefit, apart from all contests, but as the larger unions death benefits for members and their families,

sick benefits, superannuation benefits, tool benefits, etc., the staying power of the union is enormously increased. The members will not easily enter labour contests, having so much at stake, but once doing so, they will for the same reason staunchly persist in them, and the knowledge of this by the employers will often avert many such contests, through timely concession on their part, which would be refused to the purely militant unions, perhaps with the very hope of provoking a rash conflict."[1] This is an illuminating summary of the experience of the older unions of the aristocracy of industrial labour, but the experience of agricultural unions is to the contrary. The friendly benefits meant neither " stability " nor " wisdom." The mistake of the founders of the old agricultural unions was in supposing that projects of reform could be found by abstraction from history. But this is hardly a smaller illusion than the older one, that they could be discovered by the methods of pure reason. Neither the speculative nor the historical mind is sufficient for these things: the first and most important condition is that the mind should be soaked with the details of the particular circumstances; then comes in the reference to the experience of history, and the activity of reason working through the whole material and discovering the remedy. But in those days there was no recognition of the great varieties of form which must necessarily exist among trade unions.[2]

If the new agricultural unions had given up both the stiffer organisation and the friendly benefits of the old, they agreed closely with their predecessors on one point; they went still further beyond the ordinary trade union objects of wages, hours and conditions of labour. There is hardly a radical or socialistic demand which they did not make.[3] Thus they accepted the object of the Land

[1] *Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies* for 1889 (p. 114) and 1890.

[2] Cp. earlier publications by the author in Schmoller's *Jahrbuch*, Vol. XII., p. 200 (1888), and in the *Zeitschrift für Handel und Gewerbe*, 1890. At the time of their publication it was not yet possible to refer to the great works of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb.

[3] *The Annual Report of the Eastern Counties Labour of Federation*, 1892, mentions parish councils, paid members of Parliament, old age pensions, compulsory cultivation of land, land-law reforms, fixity of tenure, State

Restoration League, which was to do away with the class of rent-receivers by a tax upon rent which should progressively increase until it had absorbed the whole.

This explains why the League co-operated strongly in the foundation of new unions. And so we come to our last point. The movement was undoubtedly carried from the towns into the country. For, as I shall have to show presently, it became more and more clear that the position of the unskilled labourer in the towns was made worse by conditions on the land. The Land Restoration League sent into the counties its Red Vans, containing beds for the agitators, and carrying thousands of pamphlets of all sorts in their capacious interiors, from which speeches were made evening after evening in village after village.[1] In this way the country could be perambulated with no fear that lodgings and meeting-places would be refused, though the agitators were exposed to attacks by night, and to the danger of finding themselves together with their vans pitched into the river or down the side of the hill.[2] The League claimed to have trebled the membership of the Eastern Counties Association in the course of a six months' campaign. Later, its vans and agitators worked in Cambridge, Somerset, North Devon and Berkshire for the formation of other unions. But the unskilled labourers of the towns took the matter in hand themselves; for they and the agricultural labourers were continually competing with one another. It was easy for the town labourers to frustrate a strike in the country, and for the country men to frustrate another in the town. Thus the agents of the dock-labourers were very active in calling agricultural unions into life in Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire in 1892. And it is one symptom of the circumstances that the old Kent and Sussex Union became the

ownership of the land, arbitration in trade disputes and in place of wars, steam-tramways owned and worked by county councils, municipal workshops and work for the unemployed, county council farms, and regular employment for all working men. p. 13.

[1] See the interesting report of such a campaign in *Among the Suffolk Labourers with the Red Van*, 1891; and *Among the Agricultural Labourers with the Red Vans*, 1893. Also *About the Red Vans and Red Van Recollections*, in *The Church Reformer*, XI., 7 (1892) and XII., 3 (1893).

[2] *Red Van Jottings*, in *The Church Reformer*, XII., 9 Sept. 1893, p. 212.

London and Counties Labour League, and removed its centre from Maidstone to London.

At the beginning of 1894 the nine following agricultural unions were in existence:[1] (1) the old National Agricultural Labourers' Union (Leamington), (2) the old but re-named London and Counties Labour League (London), (3) the Warwickshire Agricultural and General Labourers' Union (Leamington), (4) the Wiltshire Agricultural and General Labourers' Union (Devizes), (5) the Berkshire Agricultural and General Workers Union (Reading), (6) the Hertfordshire Land and Labour League (Hitchin), (7) the Eastern Counties Labour Federation (Ipswich), (8) the Norfolk and Norwich Amalgamated Labourers' Union (Norwich), (9) the Herefordshire Workers' Union (Kingsland). It will be noticed that again the movement was limited to the south of England.

In the winter of 1893–4 most of the unions found that their membership was already going down again. Those which had been called into life by the dock labourers were "practically defunct." Those founded by the Land Restoration League had had unequal success. The Wiltshire Union had thriven, while the others had suffered. The Eastern Counties Federation stood highest. The majority of those whose opinion was asked considered that the cause of the set-back was the agricultural crisis of the previous year, due to persistent drought. Wages had fallen, unemployment had increased, and the winter was such a terrible one as had seldom been experienced.[2] Even in the eastern counties, many members of the Federation found it difficult to pay the few pence required as their subscription; it was almost inevitable that they should fall into arrears, and if once a man failed to pay his contribution for two or three weeks, it meant practically the same as a formal resignation or exclusion from the union. Some

[1] I have to thank Mr. F. Verinder for this list. Another is to be found in the *Statistical Table and Report on Trade Unions*, in the *Fifth Annual Report on Trade Unions* (1891), 1893, p. 135.

[2] Cp. Verinder, *The Village Unemployed*, in *The Church Reformer*, XII., 12 (Dec. 1893), p. 271. Most of the unions called upon the Government to put in execution the Acts 59 Geo. III. c. 12, 1 and 2 Will. IV. c. 42, and 5 and 6 Will. IV. c. 69. For the contents of these Acts see pp. 211 f. above.

critics, however, were altogether sceptical as regarded agricultural unions, and declared that they were already breaking up from within.

If I might express a judgment on the experience of these twenty-two years, it would be that agricultural unions have three great difficulties to contend with: namely, the insufficient wages of the rural labourer, the difficulty of preventing general, casual, or unemployed industrial labourers from being called in, and the want of culture and isolated position of their members.

But nevertheless the activity of the unions was not fruitless. If they did not succeed in permanently improving the position of the labourer, they shook him out of his hopelessness and indifference, they implanted in him the aspiration for better conditions of labour, and they educated him politically. Without the unions, he would not apparently have received the franchise in 1884. I am under no illusion as to the political value of the universal franchise, but in a country with parliamentary government there is no other means of giving effect to the just interests of the labourers. Every interest goes its own way, regardless of anything but itself, just so long as it meets no opposition. Every measure is equally indifferent to the politician; a reform only becomes valuable to him when he can hope by it to serve his party. But that it may do so those who desire it must be a force, and be able to lend force.

II.—The Small Holdings Movement.

(*a*) The Struggle over Charitable Trusts.

We have shown in the last section that the old unionism of agriculture never, from the beginning, limited itself to the ordinary trade union demands, but gave expression to the labourers' desire for land. This became still more evident after the split in the National Union. It was believed that a more practical way of spending the many thousand pounds which had been devoted to an unsuccessful strike and lock-out would have been to buy or to rent land. But the measures taken to carry out

these new objects were almost entirely fruitless, and the peasant proprietor again vanished below the socio-political horizon. The unions had to content themselves with something much more modest, namely with allotments. The value of these was very distinctly felt during the agricultural crisis, with its accompanying unemployment and irregular employment.

But the reader may now ask the very justifiable question, why allotments still remained upon the programme of the labourers and their friends when the Assistant-Commissioners of 1867 had found them in existence almost everywhere. The difficulties still to be overcome, however, were not few. It will be remembered (see above Chap. IV., s. ii.) that the attempt to obtain a board which should provide allotments had not succeeded, and that they were granted only by the friendly disposition of landowners. The land was only rented, and could easily be taken back again by the owner. The Labourers' Friend Society had indeed succeeded between about 1830 and 1840 in creating 7,400 allotments in various parts of the country, renting the land and subletting it to labourers. But, for example, out of 2,360 which it had established in Kent, only 300 remained in 1881, and in other counties the disappearance was apparently still more complete.[1] Moreover, landlords often asked certain favours in consideration of their bounty, or weighted their grants with such conditions as to make them disagreeable to the labourer. For instance, it sometimes happened that clergymen attached to the letting of an allotment the condition that the labourer should not work before breakfast on Sunday morning; or that he should go regularly to church—i.e. to the established church.[2] However, what was much more general and aroused much more bitter feeling was the disproportionately high rent which had to be paid. The labourers quite saw that allotment-rent must be higher than the farmer's rent, because it had to pay the expenses of the establishment of the allotment and of the collection of rent from so many small holders,

[1] *Royal Commission on Agriculture*, 1881, qu. 59,307 to 59,315.
[2] Qu. 59,393.

and the taxes, which were taken over by the lessor. One witness thought that an increase of 16 per cent. would be fair:[1] but evidence showed that the actual increase was sometimes as much as 200, 300, and even 500 or 600 per cent.[2] As a rule, it was from 25 to 30, or in some cases 40 per cent.[3] And this was especially felt during the bad times with their unemployment or half-employment: which were also responsible for the emphasis laid, before the Commission, on the necessity of providing larger allotments for such labourers as were able to work them.

The great defects of the voluntary system set the friends of the labourers thinking of a means whereby a regular supply of allotments at a reasonable price and without special conditions could be enforced. Dr. Stubbs, in his instructive book *The Land and the Labourers*, tells us[4] that it was Mr. J. Theodore Dodd who discovered such a means. He remembered the Act of William IV. already mentioned, and was of opinion that it applied in terms to the lands of all charitable trusts.[5] In almost every county the district secretaries of the National Union obtained reports on the local charities, and thence began a movement for the letting of the trust lands to the working classes, whereas they had so far been worked by farmers, and indeed often by relatives of their trustees. We have already seen how the agitation of the National Union reached its highest point, almost every year, at the Whitsuntide meeting at Ham Hill under the presidency of George Mitchell. But the bolder spirits went further, and applied to the trustees for the lands: the trustees however showing an unchanging indifference in face of all their endeavours. Nothing remained but to go the Charity Commission, a board which supervised the doings of the trustees, a somewhat

[1] 25s. for the farmer, 30s. for the labourer. Qu. 58,486.

[2] "There is one thing that I very seriously disapprove of, and that is, that while the farmer on the other side of the hedge pays 20s. or 25s. I should be charged £3 12s., £5 and £6 for my allotment, which is no better land." Cp. also qu. 59,390.

[3] Qu. 58,620.

[4] Stereotyped ed., 1893, p. 45.

[5] The great abuses produced by leaving the uncontrolled administration of charities in the hands of trustees will best be seen in the Annual Reports of the Charity Commission. There is a little collection of Extracts in Dodd, *The Parish Councils Bill Explained*, 1893, p. 45.

belated product (established in 1853) of the suggestions of a Royal Commision of 1818–1837. This Board was petitioned to carry out the Act of William IV. in as wide a sense as possible, and to induce the trustees to take the same line. But the attitude of the Charity Commission was as unfavourable as that of the trustees. Mr. Howard Evans next took up the matter. He saw that nothing was to be gained by these methods, and engaged a lawyer to draw up a Bill which should deal with all trust lands. This draft he put into the hands of Sir Charles Dilke, who, at the end of the 'seventies, vainly endeavoured to carry it through Parliament. When in 1880 the Conservative was succeeded by a Liberal Ministry, of which Sir Charles Dilke was a member, and the researches of a Commission had thrown more light on the subject, Jesse Collings took the matter in hand. We have seen in section i. of this chapter how he worked for the agricultural unions, though he like others was mistaken in his estimate of their possibilities. From this time on he remained as the stoutest and most indefatigable champion of all endeavours on the part of the agricultural labourers, and there are few to whom they owe so much as they do to him. His political and social views went far beyond those of Nathaniel Kent, but their practical objects were very closely akin.

Mr. Collings was more lucky than Sir Charles Dilke. The Bill which he introduced into the Lower House in 1882 found favour on all sides, and was sent to the Upper House. The Upper House, however, tried to make it innocuous. Mr. Evans said that it was as though a Chinese had bound up its feet and an Indian had pressed its nose flat. To understand how it was spoilt we must touch upon at least the most important provisions of the original Bill. Its principle was that of compulsion. The trustees of certain charities were to announce every year that they were prepared to let out their lands in parcels of not more than one acre to labourers and others. The lands of which the rents went to Church or educational purposes (including charitable expenditure on apprenticeships) were exempted: not because a decrease of rent was to be feared, but because

Mr. Collings was convinced that it would be impossible to carry a Bill "which should touch Church matters or educational matters."[1] All disputes were to come before the county courts, which were easily approached, and therefore cheap for the labourers. Here the House of Lords interposed. It dared not throw out the Bill, nor attack the principle of compulsion, but it put in the place of the County Court the Charity Commission, which had met the Bill with small sympathy. Also it succeeded in smuggling in an elastic provision to the effect that trustees need not let "unsuitable" land in allotments. The decision as to suitability was to lie with the Charity Commissioners. With these changes the Bill became law. The official name is the Extension of Allotments Act, 1882 (45 and 46 Victoria c. 80).

Thenceforward war raged between the labourers and their friends on the one hand and the trustees and the Charity Commission on the other hand. Some trustees did not wish to take the greater trouble which the Act laid upon them, and resigned their positions. Others tried to get round the Act as far as possible, to exploit all its defects, and, e.g. by demanding that rents should be paid in advance, to frustrate its intentions. The Charity Commission supported them in their opposition. But space will not allow us to go into all the petty methods and quibbles by which the Act was fought. The reader may be referred to the exhaustive evidence given by Jesse Collings before the Select Committee on Charitable Trusts Acts.[2] The result was that the rich landed property of English charities was by no means made so profitable to the working classes as it might have been. The property in 1876 was 524,000 acres, the income from land and houses £1,558,000, the total income £2,200,000, or almost half that of the Church of England in 1851. Of this sum £1,000,000 was for the ends with which the Allotments Extension Act was concerned, i.e. not allocated to Church or educational purposes.[3]

[1] *Report on Charitable Trusts Acts*, 1884, qu. 4,677.
[2] Qu. 4,647–5,258.
[3] *Report on Charitable Trusts Acts*, s. V.

(*b*) Industry and Agriculture.

The opposition which met the efforts of the labourers' friends obliged them to make further endeavours, and to look for new means whereby to provide the labourer with land. But gradually a new and much higher aim appeared beyond the modest one of the provision of allotments: it was the revival of the class of peasant proprietors.

The falling profits of agriculture and the decreased demand for labour drove wages down, and were continually causing men to emigrate, or to migrate to the manufacturing districts and to London. It was continually said that the labourers who remained upon the land were the old, the weak, the stupid, and those without energy; all who had spirit, enterprise, power and intelligence were glad to turn their backs upon the land, where there ordinarily awaited them a poverty-striken existence, insufficient food, an insanitary dwelling, and, if they lived long enough, an old age tormented by rheumatism and other painful ills, and spent in the workhouse. The result for the farmer was that the labour he got was not worth the price he paid, and the cost of production rose, even though wages fell; and so discontent took more and more hold on him. As the low prices led him towards bankruptcy he raged against the laziness and never satisfied greed of the labourers, and against the schools, which he made primarily responsible for the existing state of things. The labourers on their part declared that they could not make a living, they grew continually more negligent, and threw all blame upon the farmer. Clear-sighted observers expressed their conviction that the old agricultural economy had outlived its day.

And the towns, into which this stream of population poured, now began to feel disturbed at it. Manufacture itself had difficulties to meet; technical progress was making for economy of labour; energetic competitors well provided with capital had arisen in America, Europe and Asia; unemployment was to the national economy an ever more dangerous hydra; grim masses of proletarianism

heaped themselves together in the great towns, and purchasing power upon the land decreased. The capital which might have been applied to make home agriculture fruitful, to draw the population out of the great towns into more healthy conditions, and to create consumers, went abroad instead, to produce competitors who pressed hard upon England. If in the 'seventies migration and emigration passed as the one weapon against the social evils of rural society, ten years later the resettlement of the people on the land was held to be a far sounder policy. But allotments alone could not be supposed to effect such a task. For the old agricultural economy had, as many believed, outlived itself in two ways. First, many held that the labourers had gradually lost all motives which could induce them to spend a lifetime in conscientious, contented work for other people, and that the position of an agricultural labourer was less and less desired; secondly it appeared impossible that England should within any measurable period return to the intensive application of capital in agriculture.[1] It seemed quite possible that the intensive application of labour might produce a large net profit on land which now yielded little or nothing.[2] But no such application of labour was to be expected from men working for others; it could only come from men working for themselves and their families. This meant, however, a break with the whole development of the last hundred years: which seemed to many to be fatal. Was large farming, now that every scientific and technical means for its highest development was to hand, to give way to a comparatively

[1] Cp. Paasche, *Die Entwicklung der britischen Landwirtschaft unter dem Druck ausländischer Konkurrenz*, in Conrad's *Jahrbücher*, LVIII., 1892.

[2] Dr. Stubbs (op. cit.) came on the ground of long experience to the conclusion that even the production of wheat was greater under small than under large farming. On the statute acre the farmer harvested—

In Granborough on an average	25	bushels.
The English average	26	,,
The French average	13	,,
The American maximum	19	,,
Allotments:		
In Granborough on an average	40	bushels.
Maximum	57	,,
English maximum	60	,,

Cp. the very thorough calculations of production by J. Ashby and Bolton King, *Statistics of some Midland Villages*, in *Economic Journal*, March, 1893.

rude and primitive system? As late as the Report of the Royal Commission of 1879 the older point of view is still dominant: but about that same time the strife of opinions grew continually fiercer. For at the beginning of the 'eighties Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* became known in England, and excited an attention to which an opponent, writing in the *Quarterly Review*, bore admiring witness. Then in 1882 Dr. A. R. Wallace's *Land Nationalisation* appeared: and, as is well known, he greeted George as a fellow-worker, who had shown by the deductive method what he himself had arrived at on the inductive. But neither Henry George nor Dr. Wallace would have met with the respect which was paid to them if public opinion had not been wonderfully prepared for their statements. The terrible crisis in agriculture appeared, when traced to its root, to be caused by the land laws: and an acute German observer had already written in 1880 that "public opinion generally turned upon the land question . . . . . a heightened interest . . . . this political question has become a question of the stomach, and economists are bringing to the mills of the politician a powerful driving force which they have so far lacked."[1]

Three, or more correctly four, groups stood opposed to one another. First, the adherents of large farming and of the Conservative interest, who claimed "that small husbandry was barbarous and antiquated like the process of handloom-weaving, and agriculture, like manufactures, should be carried on on a large scale and under the most scientific conditions," and held that it was to the interest of the State "to preserve, as far as possible, the practice of hereditary succession to unbroken masses of landed property."[2] Secondly, there were the friends of independent small holdings, the representatives of Liberal ideals, at whose head stood that follower of Adam Smith and the later Arthur Young, J. S. Mill. In his *Principles of Political Economy* he had argued on social and economic

[1] Frhr. von Ompteda, *Landgesetze und Landwirtschaft in England* in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, XLVI., pp. 402 and 408.
[2] *Report on Small Holdings*, 1890, pp. vi., vii.

grounds for a class of small peasant holders. He did not demand unconditional ownership: "permanent possession on fixed terms" would satisfy him. But the rent of the hereditary tenant must be unalterable, "not liable to be raised against the possessor by his own improvements, or by the will of the landlord." And since the land laws stood in the way of the revival of a yeoman class, he recommended the expropriation of the landowners in consideration of full compensation. He rejected cottier-holdings and allotments, because his social policy rested on his wages and population theories. But the revival of a peasant class would at once solve the labour question, since in such an agricultural system no labouring *class*, dependent on wages all its life long, would exist. Among the men who fought alongside of Mill, Arthur Arnold, Bright, Brodrick, Fawcett, Kay and Thornton are best known. Their theories had been published for years, but at this time they gained a new force. Still later, one of them was of opinion that if a foreign conqueror laid upon England a payment of ten milliards and at the same time freed her from her land laws, she would be the gainer. The third, or rather the third and fourth groups were formed by Henry George, Dr. Wallace and their followers. They wished to eliminate rent, as the cause of all poverty, and with the money now paid in rent to solve the financial difficulties which arose. But Dr. Wallace is divided from George on three points. The latter wished for confiscation: he would "tax the landlord out"; Dr. Wallace would redeem rent, though only by continuing to pay it for a certain number of years; and he distinguishes between the elements of interest and true rent in the rent paid by the farmer: the capital invested must be bought at its full value. Finally, Dr. Wallace's greatest importance lies in this, that whereas Henry George hardly took any interest in the future system of management, Dr. Wallace fought against the peasant proprietor. Small property, he said, could not be maintained; it would be always being swallowed up by greater; the only thing which could reasonably be supported was

state ownership of land, the citizen farming it from the State at a moderate rent. Thus rent would become the basis of national finance.

So long as Socialism had not pointed out the inconsistency of abolishing property in land and retaining property in capital, the theories of Henry George and Dr. Wallace had no inconsiderable influence, though chiefly on theorists in the towns. People were convinced that the foundation of the evil was the existence of a class of owners who, as it was said, always had their spoon in the dish ; who could make the best conditions for themselves, do little for the land and yet draw the benefit of all improvements to themselves, limit the farmer's freedom of management, lessen the profit on his capital, make it impossible for him to pay the labourer a satisfactory wage, and yet stand above the conflict which between those two was never ended. Nor were these theories without their effect upon the parliamentary champions of peasant proprietorship. It was now held to be better to create hereditary tenants, limited in their rights over the disposal of their holdings, than absolute proprietors : and the rent which such tenants would pay to the State was seen to be an important possible source of income.

We have now glanced at the causes of the movement and the theories and views which accompanied it, and may proceed to detail its course somewhat more fully.

The recognition of a connection between the problems of agricultural and industrial labour appears very clearly in the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes*. The Commissioners had perceived that though their first concern was with the towns, their work would be incomplete if they left the country altogether out of consideration.[1] A *Memorandum* by Jesse Collings was appended to the Report, and assented to, so far as concerned conditions on the land, by Henry Broadhurst, John Morley, Lord Carrington and Cardinal Manning, which set forth the opinion that this part of the enquiry revealed the main cause not only of the bad conditions of the

[1] *First Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working-classes*, 1885, p. 24.

rural labouring poor, but also of much of the overcrowding and misery in towns. To discuss questions connected with the land, it remarks, "is no doubt to introduce contentious matter, but to avoid those questions is to ignore the remedies to which some of the most valuable parts of the evidence point. The steady and rapid migration from rural parishes to large towns which has been going on for so many years should be stayed, and if possible, turned back. This can only be done by improving the condition of the agricultural labourers by giving them facilities for acquiring a personal interest in the soil, and by opening out for them some hopeful career on the land."[1] Collings found the cause of the existing state of things in the land-monopoly of many landlords, who "have absolute power to determine arrangements with respect to dwellings and buildings on their land." Even to the benevolent and well-to-do landlord the building of cottages was generally a material loss, since few labourers could pay a rent which would secure adequate interest on the capital employed. Good houses paid ordinarily only 1 or 2 per cent. Collings says on this point: "It should be a recommendation that local authorities should have compulsory powers to purchase land at a fair market price (without any addition for compulsory sale) for the purpose of garden or field allotments to be let at fair rents to all labourers who might desire to get them, in plots up to one acre of arable and three or four acres of pasture."

It will not be expected that I should give, either here or elsewhere, the results of this Commission as to housing conditions on the land, for they offer hardly anything new: I should only have to repeat descriptions already given. The Union Chargeability Act of 1865 seems to have had hardly any effect beyond hindering the pulling down of cottages. There was nothing to show that new houses had been built to any great extent. Individual landlords, it is true, had done a great deal: Lord Tollemache had built 300 labourers' dwellings on his Cheshire property, and provided them on an average with three acres of

[1] *Report*, p. 79.

pasture apiece: the cottages on the estates of Lord Shaftesbury, the celebrated reformer, were of excellent quality, though he was by no means a rich man; and on the property of the Earl of Pembroke "the cottage accommodation was said to be almost excessive." But the lack of good dwellings was one more proof that the old conditions were out of date.

Nor could the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry avoid the conviction that the crisis was partly caused by lack of demand, and in its final Report it mentions in the first place the decreased purchasing power of the agricultural population, and "the deficient or unremunerative character of the produce of the soil." Sir James Caird calculated the loss in 1885 alone at £42,800,000.[1] Another member reckoned that the import of beasts, meat, butter, cheese and corn had increased from £73,942,000 in 1873 to £121,811,000 in 1883.[2] And in an exhaustive Minority Report by four members special weight was laid upon the fact that "whilst the amount of labour employed in agriculture has greatly declined during the years 1874–85, it is noteworthy that the number of persons employed in textile manufactures has, during the same period, not only failed to increase at the usual rate, but has for the first time diminished in proportion to the population of the country; there has therefore been no absorption by the textile industries of the labour displaced from agriculture, and we have no evidence to show that it has found employment in any other productive industry."[3] But the signatories drew no other conclusion than that the extension of free trade to all nations would at once give a great extension to industry, though it would not free agriculture from its competitors.[4]

[1] *Royal Commission* on Depression of Trade and Industry, 1886, *Final Report*, p. xix.

[2] Ibid. p. xxviii.

[3] Ibid. p. xliii.

[4] That the conditions were not altered in the succeeding decade is shown by the little pamphlet *Among the Suffolk Labourers with the Red Van*, 1893. It says: "The disturbance of population must have a serious effect upon the food supply of the country as a whole, and upon the labour problems of the town in particular. . . . . The first and most obvious was the reduction of the earnings of unskilled labour, not so much by the

(*c*) The Acts of 1887, 1892, and 1894.

Public opinion having thus been thoroughly agitated by the Commissions on the law of charitable trusts, on the housing of the working classes, and on the depression of trade and industry, Jesse Collings went to work again.

In 1887 he brought in a Bill which aimed both at the increase of allotments and the revival of the peasant class, dealing therefore with small holdings as well as allotments; the distinction being, of course, that a small holding, unlike an allotment, is large enough to employ a man all his time. Mr. Collings' Bill, however, was supplanted by another of a milder nature, which dropped the small holdings question, and was brought in by Mr. Ritchie, then President of the Local Government Board. It became law, after some unsatisfactory by-elections had applied pressure,[1] by the name of the Allotments Act, 1887 (5 and 510 Vict. c. 48).

Its most important provisions were as follows: On the motion of six parliamentary electors the Sanitary Authority might be requested to provide allotments for the inhabitants of a given district. If it found that there was need for them, and that land could not be acquired by agreement between landowners and labourers, it might rent or buy land, even compulsorily, and let it out to applicants in small parcels not exceeding one acre to any one person.

There is no need to go further in order to prove that the Act offered opportunities for hindering or preventing its own application at almost every point. The labourers were entirely dependent on the goodwill of the Sanitary Authority; the authority might demand the rent in advance; the rent must be sufficiently high to cover all

reduction of the wages per hour, as by the increasing uncertainty and irregularity of the work. In consequence of the influx of the agricultural immigrant . . . overcrowding in the slums was aggravated, rents increased, sanitary progress hindered. . . . . The failure of the . . . Gas Stokers' Strike. . . . and the recurring difficulties of the Dockers' Union . . . . proved to the working-men of London that so long as the immigration . . . . continued, the raising of the wages of unskilled labour would always be very difficult and often quite impossible." Cp. also John Burns, *The Unemployed in the Nineteenth Century*, 1892, reprinted as *Fabian Tract* No. 47.

[1] Cp. J. Frome Wilkinson, *Pages in the History of Allotments* in *Contemporary Review*, April, 1894.

expenses, in which of course the high fees of the necessary legal proceedings were included. If the authority resolved on compulsory purchase, landowners could demand 10 per cent. above the value of their land "for disturbance," and 15 per cent. "for severance," i.e. for the loss of a part of their estate. For, very providentially from the point of view of the landlord, the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, which contains these provisions, and was enacted for the purpose of protecting the landlord class against expropriation, had been included in the Act. It is accordingly generally admitted that the increase of allotments about this time is not to be ascribed to the Act, but to the force of public opinion, and perhaps also to the low rents obtainable for ordinary farms.[1] In 1890, by the 53 and 54 Vict. c. 65, the parties were given the right to appeal from the Sanitary Authority to the County Council, which might eventually take the necessary steps itself; but it was generally allowed that the appeal was not very effective.

According to a return laid before Parliament in 1893, only 56 out of 518 Sanitary Authorities had applied the Act; and Lord Carrington said in the House of Lords that it had created only one-third more allotments than he by himself had placed at the disposal of the labourers.[2]

This then was the result of the first part of the programme of the labourers' friends. Broadly speaking, the attempts to enforce a regular supply of allotments, or to facilitate it through local authorities, had failed. Mr. Collings had now to think of carrying the second part of his Bill of 1887. In 1888 and again in 1889 he had succeeded in getting a Parliamentary Committee appointed to consider the subject of Small Holdings, the chairman being Joseph Chamberlain. Twenty-three sittings were held in the summer of 1889, and some remarkably instructive material was brought together. The Report appeared in 1890, and is distinguished by brevity, far-sightedness and objectivity. Unfortunately, however, it does not distinguish between small proprietors and small holders: the words "owner"

[1] Cp. the criticism of the Act in Stubbs, *The Land and the Labourers*, pp. 52 f.

[2] Wilkinson, loc. cit.

and "holder" are used interchangeably. The explanation of this has already been indicated. The first part of the Report discusses the question whether small holdings (or properties) alongside of large holdings (or properties) are desirable. As this question has already been sufficiently discussed here I shall only note the most essential points brought forward.

A numerous and well-to-do peasantry must, it was said, be considered beneficial to any country from a national, social and economic standpoint. From a national standpoint, because they provide an important element in national defence, and valuable elements of character, and mean security of property and a contented population. From a social standpoint, because small holders, "whether as owners or as tenants," are distinguished by industry and economy; the small holding gives heart and hope to the ordinary labourer; he sees a possibility of setting his foot on the first rung of the social ladder. Without this hope "he is only a bird of passage; there is no national sentiment in his heart. In the absence of a home a man has very little to look for." And the policy has one point of still greater importance; "it is the chief means by which a remedy can be found for that migration from the country into the towns which has to some extent depopulated the rural districts, and has, at the same time, intensified the competition for employment in the manufacturing towns."

So far there was unanimity; but on the economic question opinions differed. Experience showed that small holders made use of many patches of land which were neglected by large farmers; that the secret of their effectiveness was their lavish outlay of labour; that they kept more cattle (sheep not included) on a given area; and that they had the advantage in the production of all smaller matters, such as fruit and vegetables. On the other hand it was claimed that large farming had the advantage in the application of machinery, capital, and scientific method. The Central Chamber of Agriculture settled the dispute by stating that large farming was proper where land and climate were specially suited to corn-growing or sheep-

farming, and where the surface to be dealt with was large and well formed. The Report noted as indications of the economic strength of the small holder the facts that he paid a higher rent (though this was partly the result of special conditions, as e.g. the higher cost of repairs) and had stood the crisis better than the large farmer.

The reason why small holdings, for which there was undoubtedly at least a special sphere of production, were not more common was that landlords were shy of the cost of erecting buildings. The demand was general throughout England and Wales, but was rather for small farms than for small properties. This was due partly to tradition, and partly to the fact that farms needed less capital and could more easily be given up.

The Report next turns to the question whether small holdings had increased in the course of the century, and laments the absence of any statistical foundation for an answer. It discusses the influence of the land laws in aggravating the difficulties in the way of the supply of land, and the small result of the voluntary method. And the Committee declared in favour of the local authorities, not the State, as the organ for carrying out any measure, and against allowing them any powers of compulsion.

Jesse Collings' Bill of 1887 had proposed to work on the principle of rent. One quarter of the purchase money was to be paid down at once, and instead of the other three-fourths a fixed and irredeemable rent was to be paid, which would be a check on mortgages or a division of the property, and from which the local authority, when it had paid back the money borrowed, would for the future draw part of its income. In view of the financial difficulties which might arise, however, the Committee found itself unable to approve this principle, and preferred that of purchase outright. It further pointed out that allotments and holdings ought to connect with each other so as to form a ladder; this upon social grounds.

So far the Report. In the meantime party movements were favourable to the chances of small holdings. The Liberals, as they saw their adherents in the towns vanish-

ing, tried to set foot the more firmly on the land; and the more so, as the days of the old Parliament were numbered, and a stronger electoral cry was needed than Home Rule for Ireland. In December, 1891, an important meeting was held in London, consisting for the most part of agricultural labourers. Among the four hundred or so persons present the Dissenting element was, as might be expected, strongly represented. But besides hatred of the State Church the meeting was united on very concrete demands; among others a demand for parish councils, to be elected by universal suffrage, to control the administration of the Poor Law and Education Acts, and to help labourers to become landholders. Their wish was not for ownership, but for tenancy or fixity of tenure, fair rent, and compensation for enhausted improvements.

When, on February 22nd, 1892, a Bill was introduced embodying the recommendations of the Report of 1890, it was to be expected that it would meet with a friendly reception on both sides of the house. It provided that County Councils might borrow at 3 per cent. from the Public Works Loans Commission, buy land, and let it in parcels of from one to fifty acres, one-fourth of the purchase money being paid down, while one-fourth might remain as a permanent burden on the land in the shape of rent, and half might be paid in instalments. The County Council might also make advances for the erection of buildings. Gladstone welcomed the proposals as a step in the right direct on, but regretted the absence of any compulsory clause, and held that smaller bodies would be better suited to carry out measures of the kind. In the later stages the debate turned mainly on the question whether or not powers of compulsory expropriation should be allowed to the Councils: and the decision of the majority was against compulsion. An amendment of Jesse Collings', providing that land might also be let in parcels of fifteen acres and upwards to societies for co-operative production, was accepted; and the Bill passed the Upper House without serious difficulty.

The outlines of the Act (55 and 56 Vict. c. 31) in its final

form were as follows :—It aimed at establishing in the first place proprietors and in the second place farmers who should work their own holdings, and in the third place agricultural societies for co-operative production. In case of purchase, one-fifth of the purchase money must be paid down at once, and the rest within fifty years; but if the Council thought good one-fourth might remain as a permanent rent due from the land. The size of the holdings was to be in case of purchase between one and fifty acres or a value of £50 for the purpose of the income tax; in case of tenancy betweeen one and fifteen acres, or a value of £15. For twenty years after the conclusion of the purchase, or for so long as the purchase money was not completely paid up, the purchaser had only a limited right over the disposal of the property. Precautions were taken against the use of the land otherwise than for agricultural small holdings. The administrative organ was the County Council, which had to consider the demand for small holdings on the request of one or more electors, instituting an enquiry on the spot. If it considered that the demand was real, it might acquire land, borrowing money from the Public Works Loan Commission for the purposes of the Act, and also to lend again to farmers who wished to buy their farms, to whom it might advance four-fifths of the price. When the first edition of this book was published, in 1894, only one place had made any use worth mentioning of the Act, namely a part of Holland in Lincolnshire, a county where small owners were already, of course, comparatively numerous.

Not long after the Small Holdings Act had received the Royal Assent, a general election took place, and brought a Liberal majority into the House of Commons. One of the most important measures of the new ministry was the extension of democratic self-government by the creation of district and parish councils. The Parish Councils were to have been given the right to rent land compulsorily for allotment purposes. But early in 1894 a compromise was made with the Conservatives to the effect that the latter would not oppose the establishment of parish councils

provided that the right of renting land should be limited to four acres for every person receiving an allotment, the four acres to be either all grass land or three acres of grass and one of arable. It was said that they had also required that the same limit of size should apply to allotments obtained by the councils by voluntary agreement; but some verbal mistake or slip of the pen had crept into the record of the agreement, and they were unable to insist upon this provision. Thus it was that the Act of 1894 (56 and 57 Vict. c. 73) was passed.

Many friends of the rural labourer expected that the Act would lead to the final solution of all difficulties. The Parish Councils, founded on the broadest democratic basis, would be in a position to put land at the labourer's disposal; his wife and grown-up children could take allotments in their own names; and thus there was no longer anything to prevent the rise of a class of small farmers. The earlier Acts would become for the most part superfluous, for the Parish Councils could rent land both from individuals and from trusts, and held the same powers as the Charity Commissioners and Sanitary Authorities, and most of those of the County Councils. Only when anyone wished to buy his farm, or could not get as much as fifteen acres from the Parish Council, would the Small Holdings Act have to be put into operation. This would be seldom, for few labourers had any desire for ownership: they only wanted free access to the land, fair rent, and fixity of tenure. And even the Parish Councils Act would seldom really need to be applied, since the compulsory clauses would facilitate voluntary agreements.

III.—The Labourer at the beginning of the 'Nineties.

To complete our picture of the position of the labourer we have to devote some attention to the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Labour so far as it concerns the agricultural labourer. The seven volumes relating to England and Wales appeared in the year 1893.[1]

[1] *Royal Commission on Labour, The Agricultural Labourer*, Vol. I., *England* (in six parts), Vol. II., *Wales*.
The *General Report*, by Mr. William C. Little, had not yet appeared when I wrote the original edition, and therefore is not quoted here.

We shall also consider two articles already mentioned, published that same year in the *Economic Journal*, and entitled *Statistics of some Midland Villages*, by John Ashby and Bolton King, which are more trustworthy as regards their facts and go deeper as regards their science than the majority of contemporary publications on the agricultural labour problem. The authors treat of a limited sphere with which they had both been personally familiar for many years. These publications are supplemented by the final Report on the Census of 1891, which also appeared in 1893.

Since in discussing the results of the Commission of 1867 we have already learnt the differences, social and agricultural, which existed between the various English counties, and since there was very little alteration in this respect between 1867 and 1892, I shall in the present discussion classify our matter from a different point of view. Wales we shall still consider as a separate locality: but for the rest, I propose to follow out certain general impressions arising from the report, which have no greater, but also no less value than the figures of averages in statistics. They are these:—That in the south of England the labourer's condition had improved in the twenty-five years between the two Commissions, as may be seen by comparison of household budgets; though in many parts it still remained far from satisfactory. That in the north no change of any consequence had taken place. That money wages had been on the increase, and generally speaking employment had, in spite of the crisis, become more regular. That women's and children's labour had greatly decreased. That hours were in many places more definite and shorter, and that in general the relation between farmer and labourer had become more businesslike. That the exodus from the land continued in almost all counties.

These general propositions I have to justify, to explain, and to guard by the necessary limitations.

(*a*) The Income and general Position of the Labourer.

The continued exodus excepted, the most striking point in the Report is a mild improvement in the position of the

labourers in the south. Wages were probably only slightly higher than in 1870, and lower than in 1881 according to Druce's reckoning. The average was :—

	s.	d.
1869 to 1870	12	3
1872	14	8¼
1880 to 1881	14	1¾
1892	13	5⅔

However, these figures are not very reliable, excepting perhaps those for 1892. By comparing the figures which follow[1] with those given previously the reader will see that wages still stood highest, and were least touched by the agricultural changes, in the north.

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Surrey	15	0	Gloucester	10	6
Kent	14	6	Salop	14	0
Sussex	12	0	Stafford	16	0
Hants	11	6	Worcester	12	0
Berks	10	6	Warwick	11	6
Oxford	12	0	Leicester	14	3
Hertford	11	6	Lincoln	14	6
Northampton	14	0	Nottingham	15	0
Huntingdon	12	6	Derby	16	0
Bedford	12	0	Chester	15	0
Cambridge	12	0	Lancashire	18	0
Essex	11	6	Yorkshire, W.	16	0
Suffolk	12	0	,, N.	15	6
Norfolk	12	0	,, E.	15	6
Wilts	10	0	Northumberland	17	0
Dorset[2]	10	0	Cumberland	18	0
Devon	13	6	Wales	14	9
Cornwall	14	0			
Somerset	11	0	Average	13	5⅔

But since there was, generally speaking, less children's and women's work than formerly, the total family income from wages, except in the north-east, was probably smaller than in 1867. Moreover harvest wages had fallen in all places where the use of machines had shortened the time of harvest: and the reader will remember that these had

[1] The figures have been put together from the Reports. But where these give a maximum and minimum, I have again reckoned the average. The Assistant-Commissioners ordinarily visited one Poor Law Union in each county, so that the real average wage of a county may differ from what they give. "The local variations in the rate of wages," say Messrs. Ashby and King, "are often very remarkable. In one village the rate of wages has been throughout, from 1872 at least, 2s. below the rate in the surrounding villages." Op. cit., p. 5.

[2] In addition they mostly had free cottages and potato-land.

had to serve generally, in earlier times, to cover deficits or to pay the rent of cottages. I may also mention here that the ruin of straw-plaiting had injured many districts in the southern counties. And various other home industries seem to have fallen off, e.g. lace-making: though on the other hand wood-carving had increased in one district. If then, in spite of all this, the position of certain classes of labour, in various neighbourhoods, had improved, the fact is to be traced to four chief causes. First, the purchasing power of wages had risen, in consequence of the low price of provisions; secondly, hours had been decreased on a large number of farms, so that the men had more time to work for themselves: thirdly, the incomings from allotments had increased: and fourthly, though the hours were shorter and the labourers employed fewer, yet for those employed work had become more regular.[1] In part, but unfortunately only in part, the incomes were better spent than before; the women had more time to devote to housekeeping. But in perhaps the majority of cases they did not know how to turn their leisure to the best economic advantage, and ever louder complaints of the increasing drunkenness among women came from both England and Wales, though the men were said to be becoming more sober. After the passing of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889 (52 and 53 Vict. c. 76) schools of domestic economy were set up to meet these deficiencies, but little favourable result was as yet to be observed. Women and girls were said to be unwilling to attend them. In very many cases they had not so much as roused them even to try to make the things they needed at home: more goods were bought ready-made than of old, and shopkeepers, peddling drapers and even brewers suited themselves to the demand. The old complaint that labourers lived in a veritable slavery to their creditors had not died out. In the light of these facts the gradual increase of

[1] "The general opinion among the labourers themselves was "that there has not been much improvement in their condition, and it shows that the real improvement which has taken place is due to something else than the weekly wage, either reduction of hours, decreased price of necessaries, increase in the number of allotments, or improvement of cottages." Pt. II. p. 25, 72.

rural consumers' associations was very satisfactory. Large villages offered the most favourable opportunity for their operations; and labourers in the neighbourhood of the towns enjoyed similar advantages. But even in some districts of scattered farms and little hamlets it had been found possible to draw the labourers into the movement, by means of vans filled with wares of all sorts sent through the country by some central or branch association. The Lincoln Society worked in this way.[1] And co-operative associations have, of course, other advantages besides that of merely increasing income. But their influence must not be overrated. Mr. Chapman found them only in one village out of every three (towns being left out of account). In the district described by Messrs. Ashby and King their number increased from ten to fourteen between 1881 and 1891, and their membership was 1,745. The larger ones flourished (three were branches of a town Association), but some of the smaller had "a chequered existence." On the other hand it was reported from Northamptonshire that they existed in almost all the larger and in many smaller villages, and were universally flourishing.[2] Equally satisfactory, though bad for the old people, was the dying out of the insecure little village clubs and their replacement by larger well-organised benefit societies: experience of the dangers of the former, together with the needs of a more mobile population, had co-operated to this end. But there were still rarely any benefits beyond those for sickness and burial. The Poor Law remained the sole provision for the more or less permanently disabled and for the aged.

It was frequently pointed out that the prices of shoes and clothes had fallen. But clear-sighted judges were of opinion that the advantage was only apparent. They did not last long; "cheap" really meant "dear"; the fall of price in this case had not the value of the fall in the case of the price of provisions.

[1] See Mr. Mitchell's evidence on the Lincoln Society given before the Commission sitting as a whole.

[2] Pt. IV., p. 47, 97.

Putting all this together, the conclusion is that the progress made consisted in a rise in the standard of life.[1]

But material well-being had not increased in all counties, as it had not touched all classes. The position was best in the manufacturing and mining counties; in those where the organisation of labour secured to the labourer a steady income; or in pasture districts, where day-labour was only part of the labour applied, and most of the men were in constant employment, whether they lived in the farmer's house or in cottages of their own. Everywhere the farm-servants, hired for six months or a year, were in better circumstances than the day-labourer. Many complaints were still to be heard from the east and south. Mr. Bear, who reported on Bedford, Hampshire, Huntingdon, Leicester, Nottingham and Sussex, adds to his opinion that "taking all things into consideration, the agricultural labourers were never so well off as they have been during the last few years," the qualification "I am far from saying that the condition of the labourers, and especially that of the day-labourers, is satisfactory."[2] Mr. Chapman, who reported on Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Devonshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and Shropshire, writes:—"It is only necessary to compare the weekly budgets with the weekly earnings to realise that the large majority of labourers earn but a bare subsistence, and are unable to save anything for their old age or for times when they are out of work. An immense number of them live in a chronic state of debt and anxiety, and depend to a lamentable extent upon charity."[3] A gentleman in Wiltshire was of opinion that "if it were not for all this outside assistance, the families of labourers earning from 10s. to 12s. a week would be nearly naked."[4] Even Mr. Spencer, who reported on Dorset, Somerset, Wilts, Essex, Kent, Surrey

[1] "The general condition . . . judged by appearances, has greatly improved. His standard of life is higher; he dresses better, he eats more butchers' meat, he travels more, he reads more, and he drinks less . . . All these things combined are of considerable importance, but they give an impression of prosperity which is hardly borne out by the facts when they are carefully examined." Pt. II., p. 44, 144.

[2] Pt. I., p. 12, 17.

[3] Pt. II., p. 46, 151.

[4] Ibid.

and Worcester, and says "that the condition of the agricultural labourer has greatly improved, and that he has either not suffered at all from the agricultural depression or by no means to the same extent that the farmer and landowner have done," cannot avoid seeing "that the great majority of agricultural labourers who outlive their power of work have no resource for the support of their old age, except the poor law." Nor did he question that "the hardest time in the life of the agricultural labourer is . . . . . when he has a wife and several small children to support . . . . and I think he often feels the pinch of poverty in such cases."[1]

The labourers of the eastern counties will be dealt with in another connection in the next section.

So far we have considered the incomes of the labourers. Those of the farm-servants were better. They received in most parts of England an average of 2s. or 3s. more than the labourers, or perhaps only 1s. more but also a free cottage and potato land: and no deductions were made from their wages for days when they had no work. On the other hand they worked more hours, since they had almost all to look after animals. Because for most of them there was no possibility of making extraordinary earnings, e.g. at harvest time, they often received a sum of £2 to £5 at Michaelmas. The Assistant Commissioners, however, considered "Michaelmas money" as a deferred payment, the object of which was to tie the men for a year to the farm: for if they left before the time was up, they lost their money and their potatoes; and the proceeding was necessary in places where the farmers provided bad cottages.[2] Farm-servants living in the farmhouse received in Cumberland £16 to £17 half-yearly; the less skilled had £14 to £15. The better maid-servants had £11 to £12, girls £8 to £10, boys £8 10s. to £10, and "young" boys £6 to £7.[3] The same writer reports that in Lancashire the farm-servants received 7s. to 10s. weekly besides board and lodging, and lads from 5s. to 7s.; which

[1] Pt. V., p. 20, 54.
[2] Pt. II., p. 21, 61 (III.).
[3] Pt. III., p. 145, 20.

would mean a difference of from £8 to £10 in the half-year between the wages of the older men and those of their Cumberland contemporaries. Maids received £19 a year besides board.[1]

The Assistant Commissioners also took pains to compute the weekly or yearly income of the labourer, including his harvest earnings and other piece-wages. But we will not follow them on to this uncertain ground, specially beloved of farmers. Such computations often give the year more than 365 (or 366) days, while loss of income through unemployment is not taken into account.

Finally, as concerns the housing question, things were better in most neighbourhoods than they had been twenty-five years back. A greater supply of good cottages was offered, chiefly because a large proportion of the labourers had left the land, but also because new dwellings had been built. In this way it had been possible for many of the worst pest-holes to be pulled down.

(*b*) The Organisation of Labour and the Form of Payment.

We have seen that the organisation of labour and the form in which wages are paid have considerable influence on the labourers' standard of life. Since 1867 two changes had appeared in these respects. In the first place, in many districts a stronger effort was made to carry on the work by means of regularly employed workers; and in the second place, wages paid entirely in money had further superseded wages paid partly in kind.

The gang system was also less in use than formerly, even in its legal form. Through all Norfolk and Suffolk Wilson Fox only discovered it in the Swaffham Union, and yet these counties had been the chief seat of the system.[2] Mr. Chapman only found it in the Fens of North Witchford, in Cambridgeshire, and he adds that "the system is said to be gradually dying out."[3] The continued existence of gangs at Penrith, in Cumberland, is

[1] Pt. III., p. 164, 21.
[2] Pt. III., p. 8, 11.
[3] Pt. II., p. 22, 61.

mentioned, but we learn nothing definite about them.[1] All our information leads to the conclusion that the system was becoming more and more simply a help in time of need: used vigorously on occasion. Mr. Wilson Fox says that the gangs were taken on in "busy times"; and Mr. Chapman writes: "it affords a convenient means by which each farmer can get assistance for a few days when work is obliged to be done in a hurry." On the other hand we hear from Mr. Wilkinson that "Lincolnshire is the only county where gang-work is still pretty common." But he adds "and here it is much less so than it used to be."[2]

The other forms of organisation remained as they had been, only that a certain shifting of their respective spheres had taken place. In the north especially we find that, as formerly, the system depended upon the labour of unmarried farm-servants hired by the year or the half-year, and that fewer married men were employed, for the reason that little regular work was to be found for them. But their position was not everywhere the same. "Although the engagement of the married men in Lancashire and Cumberland is by the week," writes Mr. Wilson Fox, "they are usually considered as much on the permanent staff of the farm as the hired man."[3] Tradition, the requirements of pasture-farming with its comparatively uniform demand for labour, the thin population, the absence of large villages, the nearness of the factory and mining districts, and the social position of the farmers all contributed to maintain this system. In Derbyshire and Cheshire the labourers seem to have vanished so entirely that their duties "have to be done by either Irish labour, or a temporary transfer from surrounding mineral industries."[4] Mr. Wilkinson, who had to report on Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, and a part of Derbyshire, observed that the labourers in the pasture-farming districts were more frequently unemployed in the winter than those in arable

[1] Pt. III., p. 9, 11.
[2] Pt. VI., p. 17, 36.
[3] Pt. III., p. 13, note.
[4] Pt. IV., p. 8, 9. So also, though not quite so completely, in the Southwell Union, "where very few day-labourers are employed now." Pt. I., p. 9, 5.

districts; which explains the Cumberland and Lancashire practice, and the scarcity of ordinary labourers in Cheshire and Derbyshire. The system peculiar to Northumberland still remained in the form which it had in 1867. As we get nearer to the south, as arable land preponderates, the economic and social gulf between the farmer and labourer increases, the cost of migration to the manufacturing districts become higher, and villages become more frequent, so does the organisation of labour become worse. Unmarried farm-servants hired for considerable periods are not so often to be found, and the farmer does not care to provide for them in his own house, but they are ordinarily lodged with the farm-bailiff or foreman. They may be boarded by him, or they may board themselves, i.e. buy food which is prepared by the bailiff's wife. Even the married servants, whose number is limited, are often hired for short periods, and even by the week.[1] They usually live in cottages belonging to the farm. The labourers are hired by the week, and may live either in the neighbourhood of the farm, or in the village. Besides these two classes this system employs day-labourers proper, and piece-workers (both of whom ordinarily live in the village); in the eastern counties gang-workers, and during harvest Irish and town labourers. Dorsetshire is the only exception. All labour there, except that of the day-labourers, was hired by the year,[2] as it had been twenty-five years before.

Thus we see that omitting the gang and harvest workers, and of course the farm-servants, agricultural labour was divisible into three classes according as it was paid by the week, by the day, or by the piece. And however the limit-

[1] "In Kent waggoners and stockmen are sometimes hired by the year, sometimes by the week. In Somerset and Surrey all are by the week. In Worcestershire and Essex horsemen, stockmen and shepherds are hired by the week generally, but sometimes by the month or year." Pt. V., p. 9, 13.

"The engagement is called weekly in the case of ordinary labourers, but it is in reality by the day, as it is considered that a man need not be kept on if work is impossible owing to wet weather or any other reason." (Kent). Pt. V., p. 50, 16. So in Essex, Somerset, Surrey, Wilts, Worcester, etc., Pt. I., p. 9, 15. For other parts of the south of England, Pt. II., p. 20, 60.

[2] "In Dorsetshire the terms of hiring (are) yearly for all farm-hands except men taken on casually." Pt. V., p. 8, 13.

ation of child-labour and the low prices had led the farmers to aim at decreasing the numbers of their labourers by the engrossing of farms, the extension of permanent pasture, changing the four years' course (the Norfolk rotation) into one of five or six years (by taking two or even three clover-crops successively), working with less cleanliness, and making greater use of machines, yet the increased mobility of the agricultural population forced them to set themselves some limits, and to give more regular employment to such labourers as they did desire to keep. The casually employed day-labourers were more and more pushed out, and thus an improvement in two directions took place at the expense of the half-employed or seldom-employed workers. In the first place, weekly wage-earners were employed more regularly and constantly than they had been; and in the second place many labourers who had been hired nominally by the week but in reality by the day now became in fact as well as name weekly labourers. Formerly, bad weather had meant that they were dismissed, or left free to work indeed, but given no wages for work done. But in saying that they now earned by the week we are of course speaking only of a tendency; and we have also to show the forces working in a contrary direction.

"In Wiltshire," writes Mr. Spencer, "many farmers keep on their men, wet or dry, in order to have a sufficient supply of labour in the busy season."[1] Mr. Chapman thinks that in his district about three-fourths of the men were regularly employed; "the majority of farmers, in order to prevent their labour-supply running short in spring or summer and to keep the men on good terms, make a point of employing as many as possible all through the year."[2] Mr. Wilkinson writes that in his district "an increasing number do not let their men lose time for bad weather."[3] The process of reduction had consisted "more in the lessened employment of catch or casual men than in the reduction

[1] Part V., p. 8, 13.
[2] Part II., p. 20, 59.
[3] Part VI., p. 15, 30.

of the numbers of the regular hands."[1] But even now some of the nominally weekly-earners were still in fact day-earners; and the practice seems to have been most common in the southern counties, and in those eastern ones where the gang system had made it very hard for a class of regularly employed labourers to form and maintain itself. "In Suffolk and Norfolk," reports Mr. Wilson Fox, "the engagement of ordinary labourers is in practice a daily one . . . . On some farms his engagement is not even a daily one." That is to say, that if it began to rain in the middle of the day they were sent home and only received part of the day's wages. The labourers in these counties claimed that they lost from 1s. to 2s. a week by chances of this kind, the majority putting it at a shilling.[2] If these reports from the eastern counties be compared with those from the south of England, given in the last section, it will be seen that the opinion there expressed is confirmed.

A railway contractor, who had had opportunities of observing labourers from various English counties, singled out those of Norfolk as badly nourished and somewhat lazy.[3] With this opinion Marshall's, given a hundred years earlier, may be compared.[4] The condition of affairs certainly explains the existence in this county about this time of one of the numerically strongest unions in England. Another flourished in Wiltshire, which was probably now the worst county in point of wages.

Trustworthy statistical information on the number, the income and the causes of unemployment of the two classes of day-labourers (the pseudo-weekly labourers and the day-labourers proper) would be of the greatest importance; it would show the forces which were working against the tendency we are discussing, namely that to more regular employment. But what the Report offers under this head is insufficient, though I shall attempt to put together such information as it does give.

In the north the day-labourers (the "odd-men")

[1] Pt. VI., p. 9, 8.
[2] Pt. III., p. 12, 16 and p. 14, 20.
[3] Pt. III., p. 12, note.
[4] P. 145 of this book.

earned a third and sometimes a half less than those engaged by the week.[1] Mr. Richards and Mr. Wilkinson report that in their districts the small farmers tried to do without any labourers from the beginning of November to the end of February, and during this time employment was only to be had on large farms.[2] Mr. Spencer found that most of the day-labourers came from large villages.[3] In Mr. Bear's district many day-labourers would have been out of work in winter if they had not found employment in the woods and in stone-breaking. This was especially the case in the Malton Union, where the farmers are constrained to cut down their expenses in every possible way."[4] Mr. Wilkinson found a scarcity of labour except in open villages.[5] Mr. Richards' observation, that the farmers least inclined to organise their labour on a basis of continuous employment were those in the neighbourhood of large towns, is instructive.[6] It seems to contradict another observation to the effect that the neighbourhood of manufacturing and mining districts obliged the farmer to bind his labourers more closely: but the contradiction is easily solved; for Mr. Richards was thinking of harvest-labour.[7] Still it is very probable that the neighbourhood of large towns, with their general labourers, had some effect on regularity of employment even outside harvest-time. The general labourers might well be willing to help for a certain number of days. Also we must distinguish between factory and mining districts near enough to be easily and inexpensively reached in one day, and those to which it was easy to migrate, but which were far enough off to make a choice between casual labour and agricultural work difficult or impossible.[8]

[1] Pt. III., p. 13, 16.
[2] Pt. IV., p. 8, 9, Pt. VI., p. 8, 7.
[3] Pt. V., p. 9, 14.
[4] Pt. I., p. 9, 5.
[5] Pt. VI., p. 9, 8.
[6] Pt. IV., p. 8, 9.
[7] "Where a large portion of such land is contiguous to large towns, this may be taken as modified by the circumstance, that there is a percentage of town-labourers prepared to come on the land to assist in hay-making and harvest, especially in fine seasons."
[8] Cp. Messrs. Ashby and King, March, 1893, pp. 5 f., on the "economic causes affecting the rate of wages."

The Reports carry us so far that the problem of the unemployment of agricultural labourers can be stated, but not so far as to enable us to solve it. What we know is that a set of causes co-operated in various combinations in various places: viz. the size and kind of holding, the amount of capital, the distribution of population, the distance from large villages and from towns, the opportunities of other employment, the greater or less mobility of the labourer, the after-effects of the gang system, and the individual lack of skill in work.

We have next briefly to discuss the piece-workers. There were in English villages labourers who did not seek any regular employment, but undertook work needing some special ability, such as e.g. hedge-cutting, ditching, sheep-shearing, stack-thatching, etc. They could not be fully employed on any one farm; they perambulated a larger or smaller district, often not coming home till the end of the week, sometimes remaining absent even longer. Some worked by themselves, sometimes several joined together, according to the nature of the work undertaken. They were not so regularly employed as farm-servants, but the higher wages they received made this up to them. They were by no means men who were shy of work, but stood above the average and wished to draw a higher income. Mr. Arch, the celebrated union leader, was one of these "jobbing men," a "mower, hedger and ditcher."[1] Their number seems to have increased, for reasons which we shall discuss immediately. Mr. Chapman mentions labourers of this kind who had little holdings of three or four acres, and were very proud of them, but who rarely refused employment, since they believed that work done for an employer paid them better than that expended on their own land. When he speaks of "piece-work in partnership," it is not clear whether he has the "jobbing men" in mind.[2] Mr. Spencer also speaks of "professional thatchers and shearers" who did not engage themselves as regular

[1] *Joseph Arch*, p. 41.
[2] Pt. II., p. 15, 38, and p. 22, 61 (VIII.).

day-labourers.[1] Mr. Wilkinson once mentions in passing "men who do not try to keep at work for the same employer."[2] It is a pity he did not go more deeply into the question, because closer enquiry might perhaps have shown whether the numerous men who according to him would not work were partly of the jobbing class.

Ordinary piece-workers, who undertook work which was also done, or might be done, by the day are to be distinguished from the jobbers. From of old certain work had been done in this way, as e.g. harvesting, whether of corn, grass, or hops, because the farmer wished it done rapidly: and this kind of labour was also used in the case of crops which had not belonged to the old system of cultivation, as turnips and potatoes. Thus there would be more occasion for piece-work in an arable than in a pasture district, where moreover the farm-servant element was more strongly represented; or than where, as in Northumberland, whole families were often hired together.[3] So that from the politico-economic point of view the only interesting question is, upon what factors did the amount of piece-work in the arable districts depend? The Reports do not enable us to give a complete answer, but we do learn that in many neighbourhoods the labourers disliked it for three reasons: first, the farmer tried to put the price as low as possible, or even not to settle it until the work was finished.[4] Secondly, piece-work led to greater unemployment,[5] which was the more felt where piece-earnings were low. But where the labourers had large allotments, piece-work was liked, because the labour-time could be shortened, to the benefit of a man's whole holding.[6] Thirdly, the ground was in such bad condition after years of insufficient

[1] Pt. V., p. 12, 21.
[2] Pt. VI., p. 13, 23.
[3] "Owing to the hiring system, piece-work is scarcely known in the Northern Counties . . . . the hinds in Northumberland, the hired men in Cumberland and Lancashire, and frequently the married men, receive no extra payment during harvest-time, despite the longer hours they have to work." They consider that "as part of the terms of their engagement." Pt. III., p. 15, 22.
[4] Pt. VI., p. 13, 23, and Pt. II., on *Unemployment in Winter*.
[5] Pt. II., p. 22, 61 (VIII.).
[6] Pt. II., p. 16, 48.

cultivation, that piece-work was not profitable.[1] A peculiar combination of piece- and time-work was represented by work "by the hag." A definite day's work was fixed, and after that had been completed overtime was paid.[2] The labourers expressed themselves favourably on this, as enabling the better worker to make his ability profitable and yet not depressing the wages of others. But it may be doubted whether they would continue to hold this view.

There is full agreement that women's labour in both its forms had decreased all over the country. Day-labour by women was more and more confined to harvest work, though in the neighbourhoods where it had formerly been most extensive relics were still to be found outside of harvest-time, as in Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Essex, Cambridge, Berkshire, Norfolk, Nottingham, Warwick, Northampton, Gloucestershire, Monmouth and Lincoln, where potato-growing employed many women, and in the hop-districts of the east and west. In Cumberland it still existed in its old form, but the farmers could only keep girls by paying high wages; it had maintained itself most uninterruptedly in Northumberland, but the tendency to migration was as strong among the women there as elsewhere, so that it seemed improbable that the system could be maintained for another ten years. The prettier and livelier country girls sought situations in the towns[3] and returned no more. Some saw a new danger to agriculture in the resulting necessity of employing men instead: others feared the physical degeneration of the agricultural labourer.

Turning now to the wage system, it is unnecessary to premise that we are speaking of the labourers and not of

[1] Pt. II., p. 22, 61 (VIII.).

[2] Ibid.

[3] The final Report on the Census of 1891 confirms these observations. In 1881 there were 1,286,668 servants, in 1891 1,444,694, of whom 1,386,167 were of the female sex: those who lived outside the house (coachmen, gardeners, etc.), not being reckoned. Adding these, the number would be between 1½ and 2 millions. The increase of population was 11·7 per cent.; the increase of servants 12·28 per cent. This accounts for the disproportion between the male and female population on the land between the ages of ten and twenty years. *Census of England and Wales, General Report*, p. 40.

farm-servants. In both the two districts where formerly payment in kind had been most common (though of course in different forms) the system died hard. In Northumberland it still existed, the hind receiving a dwelling rent-free and potatoes to the value of a given sum; and besides, coals were drawn for him free. But payment in corn, and the keeping of cows by farmers for labourers, had been given up at the labourers' desire. They used to receive more corn than they could use, and so were obliged to sell the overplus at low prices. Thus while employers in the south at the beginning of the century had given up payments in kind in consequence of the high prices, the labourers of Northumberland now pressed for money wages in consequence of the low prices. The Assistant-Commissioner feared that they would be worse nourished in consequence. The shepherds still preferred the old system, viz. a combination of allowances of provisions with a share in the results of stock-breeding, often without reference to money-value. But Mr. Wilson Fox was of opinion that if the price of animal products remained low they too would demand fixed money wages.[1]

In Dorsetshire the labourer was paid partly in money, partly by a free cottage and potato-land, and sometimes also partly in fuel.[2] In Mr. Chapman's district, too, we find additions to income made in kind: a cottage free or at a nominal rent, straw for the pigs, potato-land, gleanings, etc.[3] In the south drink was generally provided, especially during harvest, and objection had lately been taken to this system under the Truck Act. But payment partly in kind survived more in Mr. Wilkinson's district than anywhere else, and in Yorkshire in particular. There allowances of corn and meat were still given; the weekly labourers boarded in the farmhouse, milk and potato-land were given free, coals were drawn and allotments ploughed, and beer was provided at harvest and threshing time.

[1] Pt. III., p. 16, 23. In the south, in Mr. Chapman's district, the servants received premiums, which were almost all connected with stock, as lamb-money, calf-money, pig-money, and so on: and also permission to keep a couple of sheep. Pt. II., p. 39, 81. So in Mr. Richards' district: Pt. IV., 12, 15.

[2] Pt. V., p. 11, 19.

[3] Pt. II., p. 28, 80.

(*c*) Hours and the Quantity and Quality of the Work.

The old summer hours for day and weekly labourers, viz. from six to six, had now ceased to rule. The winter hours, viz. from daylight till dark, were apparently still maintained. But hours varied from district to district and even from parish to parish, and they were no longer ruled by custom, but (as one Assistant-Commissioner says) "were a matter of contract." So that all that can be said in general is that they were not long, and that work often did not begin till seven o'clock in the morning. In the unions visited by Mr. Chapman in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Cornwall the hours had been decreased by one and a half per day, which meant a loss of nine hours in the week to the farmer, wages meanwhile remaining the same.[1] To the labourers this meant so much the more time for their allotments. Piece-workers were even better off in this respect; they often ceased work at three or four o'clock in the afternoon. In most districts, except in harvest-time, the actual hours worked were about nine to ten and a half in summer and eight or nine in winter; the nominal hours are to be found by adding about an hour, or an hour and a half, for meal-times. But it is impossible to say how long a labourer would be absent from home, seeing that some of them lived on the farm and others at a considerable distance. Women's hours were generally shorter, while those of boys were often the same as the men's. The weekly labourers in the pasture-farming districts of the west worked rather longer; in Cumberland and Lancashire their normal day was from ten to eleven hours in summer and from eight to nine and a half in winter; and in Monmouth, Herefordshire, Cheshire and Derbyshire and on the Welsh border it was slightly longer again, viz. from eleven to twelve hours in summer and from nine and a half to ten in winter. The day of farm-servants was nominally longer by several hours; but in summer, when the cattle were out of doors, the cowman had

[1] According to Messrs. Ashby and Bolton King the reduction of hours was in compensation for reduction of wages: "The reduction of wages since 1886 has led to a wide movement for shorter hours." Op. cit., p. 5.

an easier time. Sunday labour on the small farms was what the men most disliked, as, naturally, no such agreement could be made there as was made among the servants on the large farms, that all Sunday work should be undertaken by one man.[1]

Moderate though these hours were, the men were often desirous of shortening them still further on Saturdays. In the neighbourhood of the manufacturing and mining districts they sometimes had their Saturday afternoons altogether free, like the industrial workers. In other places they were satisfied if work came to an end at four o'clock. This was the rule in Brecknock, where it was found to incline the labourers to work harder at other times. But several objections were made to any further shortening of hours. Some farmers held that the shorter the hours, the more money would the labourers demand for overtime:[2] a fear which was certainly well-grounded where the labourers held allotments, and probably too it would become difficult to pay for overtime in beer, which was still sometimes done. Others said that a concession of this sort once made could never be taken back; though one farmer in Scotland had proposed that there should be a general reduction of hours, on condition that the men bound themselves by contract to work more quickly and economically, and that if then they did not keep their contract, the old hours should be re-introduced.

This brings us to compare the quality and quantity of work done at this date with that done earlier. The material contained in the Reports is not sufficient to enable us to do so properly, and most of the Assistant-Commissioners purposely abstained from giving an opinion. We are never told that the quantity and quality remained the same in spite of the shortening hours. The only quarrel is as to whether they had decreased more than in proportion. Many farmers were inclined to say that they had,

[1] "It is the irksomeness and monotony of such labour which makes it so difficult to get younger men to take to dairy work." Pt. II., p. 24, 70.

[2] "The more leisure men have, the higher does this standard of living become, and the more money do they require to make that leisure profitable to themselves and others." Pt. II., 24, 68.

attributing this to the less skilled labour and the decreased interest taken in the work; the old men died and the best of the young people went away. Complaints were most frequent in Norfolk and Suffolk: least frequent in the north; according to the unanimous judgment of employers in the northern counties the goodwill of the men, at least, was the same as ever. But there was a fair consensus of opinion throughout the whole of the country to the effect that "skilled labour" was retrograding. Married men, who understood the care of horses, were not willing to undertake it: and everywhere it was difficult to find cowherds. The disinclination for the long hours and the unpleasant work increased. Labourers skilled in all-round agricultural work continually became scarcer. This, however, is not to be charged to the ill-will of the labourers, but in the first place to the fact that the division of labour was being more and more introduced on large farms,[1] and in consequence men skilled all round naturally preferred jobbing work to earning the day-wages of ordinary labourers.[2] We hear no such complaints from the small farms.[3] But we do hear also that the farmers and older labourers failed to teach the young men: however, it was hoped that technical education might make good this deficiency.[4] In the second place machinery often made it useless to learn the old hand-work.[5] And thirdly, the farmers in various parts of the country had preferred to

[1] "The principle of the division of labour upon large farms has been so generally adopted that each man becomes accustomed to a particular kind of work, and has little chance of learning work of another sort." Pt. II., p. 17, 50.

[2] "These men while finding work in the neighbourhood during busy seasons, take jobs all over the country at other times, and often remain idle rather than accept the wages paid to unskilled labour." Pt. IV., p. 77. "Skilled work . . . done not so often by the ordinary staff." Part II., loc. cit.

[3] Ibid.

[4] According to a Report of the Technical Education Committee of the Warwickshire County Council, 1894, committees to carry out the Technical Education Act had been established in 80 per cent. of the villages with 200 to 300 inhabitants, and in 85 per cent. of those with more than 300.

[5] "Machinery has superseded much of the old skilled work." Pt. VI., p. 13, 21. "Labourers are more skilful in the use of machines and less skilful in the use of hand tools than they were." Pt. II., p. 17, 50.

employ young lads rather than grown men.[1] The final Report of the Census of 1891 contains the following interesting calculations[2] of the age-distribution of 100,000 agricultural labourers :—

Years.	1881.	1891.
15 to 20	20,513	21,031
20 to 25	13,012	13,237
25 to 45	31,562	32,750
45 to 65	25,460	24,035
65 and over	9,453	8,974

This shows undoubtedly, as the Registrar-General says, that there was no ground for claiming " that the migration of young men from the country to the towns has left the farmers dependent either upon the very young or the very old for their labour." It shows also that a relative decrease in the age of the agricultural population had taken place : and further that men over forty-five in particular had been turned off. They had evidently fallen victims to the desire to obtain cheaper labour, and had become paupers, if not able to gain their livelihood from allotments or small holdings. For it is improbable that they either emigrated or migrated to any great extent. But there is nothing to show that men of the age classes under forty-five had not migrated to a greater degree than formerly, or that those who went were not the most intelligent and energetic. For the Report tells us also that the number of agricultural labourers had fallen from 830,452 in 1881 to 756,557 in 1891, and that of women employed in agriculture from 40,346 to 24,150 : so that the total fall is from 870,798 to 780,707, or 10·3 per cent.[3] And if we take the

[1] " The complaint is often made by the men . . . . that mere boys are engaged to do the work formerly done by men." Pt. IV., p. 8, 9. " In Northumberland . . . some farmers are employing much younger men than formerly, owing to the scarcity of labour caused by migration, and that this accounted for the complaints as to the men's skill. In Cumberland and Lancashire . . . some farmers there were employing mere lads." Pt. III., p. 10, 13.

[2] Pt. III., p. 44.

[3] P. 43. The number of " General Labourers " had increased from 559,769 to 596,075. To his no small astonishment the reader falls in the same Report upon a different figure for the agricultural labourers, viz. 847,954 to 733,433, p. 57.

actual strength of the age classes to be in the same proportion as that of the 100,000 given above, the decrease for the various classes will be in round numbers 12,000, 8,000, 14,000, 29,000 and 11,000 respectively.

According to the same report the age-distribution of the male population of England and Wales between the ages of 15 and 25[1] (army, navy and seamen excepted) was as follows :—

Years.	Number.	Percentage.
15 to 20 ..	1,448,500 ..	100
20 to 25 ..	1,271,400 ..	87

while that of the corresponding male agricultural population was in round numbers :—

Years.	Number and percentage, 1881.	Number and percentage, 1891.
15 to 20 ..	171,000 or 100% ..	159,000 or 100%
20 to 25 ..	108,000 or 63% ..	100,000 or 63%

The distribution among 1,000,000 males of the rural districts was [2] :—

Years.	Number.	Percentage.
15 to 20 ..	52,204 ..	100
20 to 25 ..	39,172 ..	77

Thus the above figures (given in round numbers) show that the decrease of the agricultural population of the ages between 20 and 25 as compared with that of the class between 15 and 20 was 24 per cent. more than that of the whole population, and 14 per cent. more than that of the rural districts generally. No detailed statistical proof is needed to show that this is to be attributed to migration. It falls in the years between 20 and 25, and the percentage remains the same as before.

As in the previous decade, so in the decade 1881 to 1891, the population had decreased in a number of agricultural counties, viz. in 13, eight of which are Welsh, and five English. They are :—Montgomery (11·68 per cent.), Cardigan (9·20 per cent.), Radnor (7·58 per cent.), Flint (7·01 per cent.), Huntingdon (5·51 per cent.), Merioneth (5·15 per cent.), Shropshire (4·18 per cent.),

[1] P. 105.
[2] P. 31.

Hereford (3·93 per cent.), Rutland (3·84 per cent.), Anglesey (2·57 per cent.), Cornwall (2·43 per cent.), Brecknock (2·34 per cent.), Pembroke (2·00 per cent.). And while the decennial rate of increase for the whole of England and Wales was 11·65 per cent., it was under 5 per cent. in Lincoln (·91), Carnarvon (1·44), Dorset (2·17), Cambridge (2·60), Wilts (2·68), Suffolk (2·77), Westmoreland (2·96), Norfolk (3·03), Denbigh (3·29), Oxford (3·49), Somerset (3·84), Gloucester (4·52) and Devon (4·60). The counties near London show a very considerable rate of increase: the coal-mining districts come next, and lastly the manufacturing districts.

The number of English emigrants had never since 1851 been so considerable as in the decade under consideration. It was:—

1851–61	..	..	640,316
1861–71	..	..	649,742
1871–81	..	..	996,038
1881–91	..	..	1,572,717 [1]

(*d*) The Causes of the Rural Exodus.[2]

The causes driving the labourers to the towns, to the United States, and to the Colonies were of course various. The first and most important was lack of employment,[3] which needs no further discussion after what has been said above. In most neighbourhoods only so many labourers as could be regularly employed remained. Demand and supply were "fairly balanced."[4] It is true that this may seem to be contradicted by the complaints of the farmers as to the scarcity of labourers, and the information as to the existence of a superfluity of labour in the large villages: nor do these two points seem to be in agreement with each other. But on closer inspection the contradictions are solved. The farmers did not like to see the best and strongest labourers departing; and they had difficulty

[1] *Census of England and Wales, General Report*, pp. 7, 8, 126.
[2] Cp. Ashby and King, op. cit., pp. 196 f.
[3] "Three-fourths of the migration, at all events up to the last two or three years, may probably be attributed to want of work." Op. cit.
[4] Pt. VI., p. 11, 16. Pt. V., pp. 6, 7, and 7, 8. Pt. III., p. 7, 7. Pt. II., p. 18, 42.

in supplying their occasional demand for extra labour:[1] while the superfluous labourers in the large villages consisted partly of old men and bad workmen, partly of good men who claimed high wages.

The theory that the agricultural population in general was unconquerably attracted by the towns cannot be seriously maintained. It was necessary that some of the labourers should leave the land. Their going profited those who remained, by preventing wages from falling with the falling prices of provisions. But this was naturally not profitable for the farmer: for him, from the economic point of view, a larger supply of labour would have been desirable. It is not surprising that it was precisely the youngest and strongest element which found its way to strange parts. The young were still free; and they had the best hope of quickly making an income far above that of the ordinary agricultural labourer. Their position in the country was by no means so satisfactory that a strong, energetic, intelligent young man would not naturally strive to improve it. And finally it was because the young men received lower wages than their elders that the farmer employed them by preference.

This view of the case may be supported by various other observations. The labourers did not depart where good allotments could be obtained, where good houses could be had at a fair rent, where, as on Lord Tollemache's estates, three acres of pasture was provided with every cottage, or where they had a good hope of becoming independent.[2] This was repeatedly remarked in Cumberland and Lancashire. There much arable had been turned into pasture, and mines and great manufacturing towns with their pleasures were in the neighbourhood, but nevertheless the labourers migrated very little:[3] the farm-servants received high wages and saved so that they might

[1] Pt. I., p. 8, 4. Pt. VI., p. 11, 16. Pt. II., p. 15, 42 f. "In the larger corn- and root-growing countries . . . . the pinch in busy times is most severe. In Monmouth there is in harvest-time a desperate struggle to gather in the crops." Pt. IV., p. 7, 6.

[2] Pt. IV., p. 7, 7. Ashby and King, June, 1893, p. 198. Pt. II., pp. 12, 20 and 13, 28.

[3] Pt. III., p. 7, 7.

some day be able to rent a small farm. So that it was a very superficial view which attributed the exodus solely to the neighbourhood of the railways and the pleasures of the great towns. So acute an observer as Bolton King was of opinion that " the neighbourhood of railways had no doubt considerable influence in the past, but now that communication is easy from any spot, its influence is too general for it to be classed as a special cause."[1] Certainly we cannot generalise from his statement that " the fascination of town life has practically no effect in this district; men prefer country life in itself"; for evidence to the contrary was given before the Commission: we hear of " the desire for a less dull, less monotonous life." But in the first place evidence of this kind is infrequent, and probably relates rather to the women than the men; and secondly, it does not appear whether the motive was not rather the shorter hours of the industrial workers, together with the possibility of independence during leisure. One of the Assistant-Commissioners expresses this view without any qualification; [2] and it is supported by the fact that there was special difficulty in keeping unmarried cowmen and married stablemen. Perhaps, too, the old semi-feudal, patronising relationships of English village life were no longer quite pleasing to the younger generation; though in the south coal clubs, clothing clubs and blanket charities were still gladly accepted.[3]

The attraction of the towns seems to have been more felt by the younger population in Northumberland than elsewhere. For as regards Northumberland there can be no talk of men being driven into the towns by unsatisfactory economic conditions or by want of employment. Wilson Fox expresses with great certainty the opinion that the young people of both sexes went to the towns in order to lead a life of greater freedom and variety than would be possible on an out-of-the-way farm. But he

[1] Op. cit., p. 197.

[2] "The very long hours and the consequent entire absorption of the labourer's time . . . . . the great cause driving young men into the towns." Pt. IV., p. 7, 7.

[3] On this and similar points cp. *Life in our Villages*, 1891, p. 54.

adds the significant words "and at the same time to raise themselves in the social scale."[1] Indeed it is very difficult to explain why young people on one side of the mountains, i.e. in Cumberland and Lancashire, found so little fault with the monotony of their lives, while on the other side, in Northumberland, the desire for a fuller existence was so strongly developed. But a comparison of conditions and prospects shows that in Northumberland they remained longer under the parental roof, working to swell the family income; and the young man could not become independent till he was in a position to employ several maid-servants. And even if he did attain independence he did not ordinarily rise above the headship of a similar patriarchal labourer's household.

Similar facts were reported from the south of England. Mr. Chapman writes: "Young men constantly seek service in the police force, the post office, or railways, or in tramway companies where the pay is often small, but the rise is certain and a pension probable. And in enumerating the causes of migration (a higher standard of comfort, the desire for a freer and a less dull life, the low standard of wages, the miserable condition of many of the cottages, and the reduction of the working staff on many farms) he includes "the absence of any prospect of making provision for old age."[2]

Nevertheless, although the opinion that the agricultural labourer was simply attracted by the pleasures of the town can be refuted, the fact must be emphasised that a disinclination for the old kind of life was increasing in the younger generation. The women, who were much freer than formerly from ordinary field-labour, liked to live in the villages, where they had opportunities for conversation with their neighbours and where the children could get to school without having miles to go; in the village the labourer, now associated with others for common ends in his union or co-operative society, and taking part in political life more than he used, was better able to keep in

[1] Pt. III., p. 7, 7.
[2] Pt. II., p. 12, 20.

touch with his comrades, and had more opportunities of reading both books and papers. So, too, benevolence had taken new and more modern forms: libraries and reading rooms were provided, and kindly landlords opened their parks for the favourite games, e.g. for cricket. In short, there was an increasing desire for society and social life.

Thus many English labourers at the period we are discussing showed a strong desire for economic and personal independence, a less monotonous existence and a higher standard of life. They wanted better dwellings, and were not content with the miserable cottages still to be found in many neighbourhoods. They would no longer be patronised in the old fashion, and they stood over against the employers to sell their wares, that is to say their labour; they preferred to go some miles to get to the village, and to pay more in rent, rather than to live in a house near the farm but belonging to the farmer. The relation of labourer to farmer varied in different parts of the country, but seems to have been best where the social gulf between them was small, as in pasture-farming districts and those with middling and small farms, and to have been least cordial where that gulf opened most widely, as in corn-growing and large farming districts. In Warwickshire, where the Agricultural Union movement began, the lack of cordiality even became an armed neutrality. In some districts, rather curiously, the new spirit resulted in mutual recognition of the fact that the farmer's concern was not solely with the payment of wages. In a psychological aspect all this meant that the labourer had made moral progress; and indeed the point is emphasised again and again. We are told that he was more sober, more temperate, and came less into conflict with the law, though, as has been mentioned already, the same could not be said for his wife.

The old farm system, then, seemed to be shaken to its foundations. A labouring class, dependent solely upon wages and producing a multitude of children destined to

the same lot, seemed to have no long future before it. Out of this conviction grew the proposals made for overcoming existing difficulties. Innocent politicians hoped everything from an extension of piece-work. They did not consider that piece-work can only profit the labourer if there is a greater quantity of work to be done; whereas in this case the farmers were obliged to save labour as much as possible. Under these circumstances it simply meant less employment and less wages. Others proposed profit-sharing, or agricultural co-operation, though one of the two celebrated farms at Assington, in Suffolk, which used to be cited in every publication on the subject, had fallen a victim to the agricultural crisis. Attempts of the kind have hitherto had so little practical result that in a historical work like the present we cannot discuss them in detail.[1] Mr. Bolton King thought that societies of the kind might in the future arise out of the needs and endeavours of allotment-holders. Thus there were already among them threshing-associations, hiring a threshing-machine in common.[2] But to create them at that time, and artificially, seemed, judged by all experience, to be premature as regarded the immense majority of agricultural labourers.

The one thing which offered a prospect of immediate success was the allotment or cow-pasture. Allotments had multiplied greatly between 1885 and 1893. Where labourers did not take them when opportunity offered (the hinds of Northumberland and married farm-servants excepted) it was generally because they already had vegetable-gardens and potato-patches, for which they paid sometimes manure, sometimes labour, sometimes money, and sometimes nothing at all; or because the rents demanded were high; or the allotments were at a distance from the cottages; or the land was bad. In the north, labourers had apparently the same disinclination to take allotments as formerly, but they were by no means

[1] Stubbs, *The Land and the Labourers*, gives an exhaustive account of them. And for two examples of very successful profit-sharing see Pt. III., p. 10, 14, and Pt. II., p. 15, 41 (Northumberland and Berkshire).

[2] Ashby and King, March, 1893, p. 13.

dis-inclined to take cow-pastures. These were not infrequently to be found in pasture districts; but nothing similar to the old commons approved itself.[1] Cows, however, were much less commonly kept than pigs, unless where a farmer forbade the keeping of the latter for fear of thefts.

Three results of experience, taken from the articles by Messrs. Ashby and King, may be stated here. First, the gross produce of the spade-cultivated allotments was on an average 25 per cent. higher than that of land cultivated in the ordinary way; and the results were best on heavy clay soils. Secondly, hired labour was more and more used by allotment holders: many labourers found themselves in a position intermediate between those of farmer and labourer. Thirdly, the experience of the labourers was that allotments had hindered the fall of wages, both because they directly and indirectly increased the demand for labour, and because they created a reserve-fund similar to that of a trade union. Here, again, therefore, the conclusion obtained by inductive methods contradicts the deductive conclusion of J. S. Mill; and it may be taken as trustworthy, since one of the writers was himself a labourer and an allotment holder. The harm which has been done by the deductive proposition needs no discussion.[2]

Still greater hopes were set, and were increasingly set, upon small holdings: partly because the wife would there have a greater sphere of activity. The labourers desired them greatly: but the cost of the necessary buildings stood in the way of their establishment. Many labourers might have had them without leaving their village.[3] They had generally been successful when they had been pasture-farms, or in fruit- and vegetable-growing districts, or where the small holder had well-paid work for a farmer in his leisure time. Small farmers who were entirely independent still led a poverty-stricken existence, largely from lack of capital. Only the greatest exertion of their own

[1] Pt. IV., p. 19, 25.
[2] March, 1893, pp. 8 f. Cp. also Stubbs, pp. 13 f. and 35 f.
[3] Pt. II., p. 14, 20 f.

powers and those of their dependents sufficed to keep them above water.

(*e*) The Labourer in Wales.

The condition of the labourer in Wales was dependent on three circumstances: first, the prevalence of pasture-farming; secondly, the great number of small and middle-sized peasant holdings; and thirdly, the considerable expansion of mining and manufactures. The two first caused farm-servants living in the farmhouse to preponderate over day-labourers, and secured to the labourer constant employment, and board in the farmhouse. Even if he was nominally hired by the week, the farmers made sure at the hiring-fair of his services as well as of those of the servants. The third point meant an attraction for all superfluous labour, and the rise in wages. Thus Wales exhibited the phenomena of primitive and highly developed agriculture side by side. Beside small farmers depending on their families for the greater part of their labour, and on occasion taking part in it themselves, and middling farmers whose work depended on unmarried servants, and few of whom knew anything of book-keeping, there were piece-workers, whose high wages had to compensate them for times of unemployment; and other labourers who as occasion served turned from agriculture to industry, to which their employers made no objection. In the south-east the native labourers had so entirely disappeared in many neighbourhoods that an immigration from England had taken place; while in the south-west, in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, the eighteenth-century custom of annual hiring, with an obligation on the wife to help in the work,[1] still persisted.

[1] "The labourer as a rule has a holding of a few acres which a farmer sublets to him as a 'bound tenant,' that is on the condition that he is to work on that particular farm. He is also paid, in cash, wages from 6s. to 7s. a week . . . His employer carries his hay and coal, and if he tills the land, it is also ploughed for him and his corn is carried home . . The wives . . . . should work when required . . . . for turnip-hoeing and general harvesting." Vol. II., pp. 18, 37, and 10, 15.

It is interesting too to note that the endeavour to save in the labour-bill had led to a further extension of the farm-servant system. While in England the farmer would have been glad to be able to keep the labourer in the cottages belonging to the farm, his Welsh contemporary forced his labourers off the farm, so that villages arose where formerly there had been almost nothing but squatter-settlements. (So the Keltic tribal system, it will be remembered, was distinguished precisely by a manner of settlement in which the holdings of the members of the tribe did not lie together in villages or towns, but were scattered over the country.[1]) And the labourer was not sorry to go; he, too, had a sense of independence, and wanted more society, and opportunities for his children's education, desires which were still more strongly developed in the women.

In Wales there was, properly speaking, no labour question, but a servant question. The farmer complained that he could get no maids; the attraction of town life drew them away: and the men complained of bad food and unsatisfactory sleeping accommodation, or that they could not sit by the kitchen fire after supper. It is characteristic, too, that the short-lived strike associations chiefly endeavoured to obtain shorter hours, and that the strongest union aimed indeed at furthering the interests of the labourer at all times, but was especially to agitate "in favour of better accommodation for servants at farmhouses."[2] The fact is, however, surprising, for the Commission of 1867 showed an increase of labourers, at least in North Wales.[3]

The hours, though shortened, were still longer than in England; ten and a half to eleven and a half in summer,

[1] Seebohm, *English Village Community*, p. 149. So Mr. Llewellyn Thomas writes that "village life is not a marked characteristic of rural Wales . . . . each family leads a life of comparative isolation . . . There are scores of parishes that have no villages at all, and in such districts the labourer dwells in cottages that line the roadside or dot the mountain slopes. The ecclesiastical parish is the sole bond of union." Vol. II., p. 22, 48.

[2] Ibid. p. 29, 64.

[3] See Appendix VI., below.

and from sunrise to sunset in winter. Possibly the much smaller demand for allotments may be connected with this fact: but the labourers had often gardens and potato-plots, which of course was to a great extent the explanation. As in other districts where pasture-farming was the chief agricultural employment, the labourers expressed a strong desire for small holdings, which the wife could manage when they went to work. Few of them had cows; and pig-keeping, though still frequent, had decreased, both because there was often no ground to let the animals run on, especially when the labourer had moved into the village, and because sanitary regulations had made it more difficult to keep them. The pig, however, has not so much to do with the consumption side in the labourer's budget as with the income. He is considered by the Irish and Welsh as "the gentleman who pays the rent."

Generally speaking, conditions in Wales as well as in England were said to be satisfactory. In North Wales things had been perhaps rather better with the labourer in 1879 than they were at the beginning of the 'nineties; but in South Wales he had never been in so good a position. As elsewhere, the demand for labour had fallen, but mining, industry and migration had prevented the flooding of the market. In Wales as in England the system of money-wages was extending, and though there was still much equality of social position between the farmer who worked for himself and his servants and labourers, yet this network of mutual relations was being more and more broken up, and the pure "cash-nexus" was being formed, favoured probably by the growth of villages which lay at a distance from the farmhouse. But no such abuse of this relation as we have seen in Dorsetshire at an earlier date appears to have existed, and in Wales, too, the labourers had become more independent both socially and economically. I have no space to dwell longer on this point, but I may indicate to sociologists a sphere in which a departed social order may be still frequently discerned through the existing economic conditions. So also, condemned though it is both by our Christian morality and by our modern

economy, which depends on private property and monogamy, the frequency and even regularity of ante-marital sexual intercourse in Wales cannot be explained solely by the opportunities offered, since the opportunities belong, as is evident, to the customs of the country. Thus Lleuffer Thomas considered that "hereditary and racial characteristics may have something to do with these ante-marital irregularities."[1] Wherever Kelts dwell or have dwelt these irregularities are found: the church and Christianity have not succeeded in suppressing them, and Lleuffer Thomas remarks "that this peculiar deviation from moral rectitude is perhaps greatest in those very countries that are most distinguished by their zeal for orthodox belief," namely in Scotland and Wales.

In one point Wales showed some superiority over England. Even here there was not much opportunity for intellectual stimulus or rational recreation, but the ancient national Eisteddfods, a kind of Olympian contest in song and Keltic literature, lifted the people a little above the spiritless uniformity of economic life. Lleuffer Thomas thought that the religious communities, which it is well known are very powerful in Wales, might well step in to supply these social needs. The hiring-fairs were the great festivals of the Welsh labourer's life. The farmers complained of them still as they had done in the eighteenth century, saying that they were occasions of vice and extravagance, and inclined servants to change their places. One complaint, however, they prudently hid in their own bosoms, namely, that the fairs offered servants a favourable opportunity of studying the labour market and obtaining fairer and better wages.

Finally let me add that in Wales as in England the development of technical education was expected to do away with the unskilfulness of the labourer, and therefore with many connected difficulties.

[1] Vol. II., p. 32, 70.

CHAPTER VI

THE LABOURER FROM 1894 TO 1906.

ONLY after long hesitation have I ventured to set the title "Chapter VI." at the head of these few pages, the contents of which are plainly inadequate to it. But the plan of the book allows of no other designation; and I find some comfort in the fact that the inadequacy is due to no fault of mine.

In the year 1894 everything pointed to the conclusion that the next ten or twelve years would see a radical change in the position of the agricultural labourer. The Act of that year laid the way freely open to new developments. But as a matter of fact very little has happened. The Acts have borne little fruit: according to Miss L. Jebb[1] only five County Councils have organised small holdings, namely those of Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Worcestershire, Hants, and Cambridgeshire. In Lincoln and Norfolk the demand was so great that the land at the disposal of the Councils was not sufficient, and had to be cut up into very small parcels. Miss Jebb also tells us that in Worcestershire some Parish Councils have provided allotments.

Nor did it seem possible that greater results should be achieved without some reform of the existing legislation Two things were necessary; first, that the authorities should have power to acquire more land, and secondly that it should be made easier for tenants to purchase their holdings. Bills were introduced after 1900 "To provide facilities for the sale of land to occupying tenants and others in England and Wales," and "To amend the Small Holdings Act, 1892"; but they did not pass into law.

[1] L. Jebb, *The Small Holdings of England*, 1906, p. 44.

Fortunately, the increase of small holdings does not entirely depend on the initiative of the County Councils; and Miss Jebb is able to report cases where they have been provided by landowners, speculators and societies. The societies devoted to this purpose are the Lincolnshire Small Holdings Association and the Norfolk Small Holdings Association.[1]

Thus attempts have been made to follow the road whose goal is at once an improvement in the lot of a labourer and a sounder basis for English agriculture: but they have been so insignificant in view of the greatness of the task that it is impossible to consider their results as remedies for the evils in question.

The Census of 1901 showed that the number of agricultural labourers had decreased again since 1891; it was 732,927 as compared with 780,777.[2] And complaints of the continued exodus of the younger generation from the land are louder than ever, as is shown especially by Mr. Rider Haggard's admirable work on *Rural England*.[3] Moreover if Mr. Haggard is right, the motives for the change are no longer what they were, but are such as to make the future of English agriculture, at least in some parts of the country, almost hopeless; that is, assuming that it continues to move in the old ruts. Fifteen or twenty years ago, according to the judgment of the best observers, there were still plenty of labourers quite content with their position and their work, provided they could get good wages, decent cottages, and allotments. But if what Mr. Haggard says is correct, that generation seems to have died out, or to be ending its days in the workhouse; and

[1] L. Jebb, *The Small Holdings of England*, 1906 pp. 33 f.

[2] According to the Summary Tables of the Census Returns (1903) 1,071,040 persons were occupied in agriculture. But of these 202,757 were farmers or graziers, 123,125 were gardeners, 6,480 owners or operators of agricultural machinery, and 5,757 came under the head of "others engaged in or connected with agriculture." This makes altogether 338,113. 338,113 taken from 1,071,040 leaves 732,927.

[3] I call it admirable, because the author's endeavour has been to observe with perfect freedom from prejudice and partisanship, so that the book makes an unusually favourable impression. But unfortunately his enquiries were made among farmers only, so that his description of the conditions obtaining among the labourers lacks perfect objectivity.

the new generation which has grown up is, at any rate in many parts of the country, no longer content with these advantages, but altogether despises the position of an agricultural labourer. Mr. Haggard writes:—"The farm-labourer is looked down on, especially by young women of his own class, and consequently looks down upon himself. He is at the very bottom of the social scale." And it requires no remarkable knowledge of psychology to understand that if this is so "he does not care for learning the finer arts of husbandry."[1] Besides, greater emphasis is now laid on the attractions offered by the social life and pleasures of the towns, and on the possibility of rising in the social scale, or of losing identity among the mass of the inhabitants, whereas under country conditions a man can never get away from the fact of his own social position or the incidents of his family life. It is worth noticing that similar observations have been made in north-east Germany, where there is a labouring class very much like that of England.

However, no exclusive importance attaches to these points, for Mr. Haggard tells us also that men go to the towns for the sake of higher wages. And so, having given due weight to these considerations, we are brought back to our own immediate subject.

The consequence of the exodus is that labour is scarce in many parts of the country, and especially in the neighbourhood of the great cities and the mining and manufacturing districts. This sends up wages, while the work is badly done, because those who remain behind are for the most part either old or bad workmen; so that the labour cost of production increases and makes the struggle for existence more than ever difficult for the farmers. It is true that at the beginning of the period wages were low, especially in the eastern counties; but the year 1896 was a turning-point, and since then the average rate seems to have gone up continuously. The following figures, taken from the *Report on Changes of Wages*, show this

[1] Rider Haggard, *Rural England*, ed. 1906, *Conclusions*.

upward movement very clearly for the period up to the end of the last century[1]:—

1895	−	£2,629	1898	+	£7,190
1896	+	£ 383	1899	+	£6,469
1897	+	£2,411	1900	+	£9,939

We have also two exhaustive enquiries by Mr. Wilson Fox, which cover the whole ground, and enable us to penetrate more deeply into the conditions obtaining; but too much faith must not be rested on his data, seeing that they mostly come from farmers, though some, and in particular the figures for the money-wages, are from the chairman of the Rural District Councils. We know, too, that statistics of weekly earnings give rather too favourable an impression. Still, they suffice to show the differences existing between one country and another.

For 1898[2] Mr. Wilson Fox puts the average weekly earnings of the ordinary agricultural labourer, taking money-wages and the estimated value of allowances together, at 16s. 10d. for England, and 16s. 5d. for Wales. The highest rates were those paid in Durham (20s. 9d.) and Glamorgan (19s. 1d.), the lowest, those in Suffolk (14s. 5d.) and Cardigan (14s. 9d.). In North Lancashire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland farm-servants got two meals more than formerly. These estimates do not include the wages of stewards, bailiffs or casual labourers.

The second of Mr. Wilson Fox's Reports appeared in 1905,[3] and relates to the year 1902; but the author expresses his conviction that "the figures now published for 1902 substantially apply to the years 1903 and 1904." According to his reckoning the average weekly earnings had risen since 1898 by 4 per cent. in England and 6·6 per cent. in Wales:—

	Ordinary Agricultural Labourers. 1898.[4]	1902.	All classes of Agricultural Labourers.
England	16s. 9d.	17s. 5d.	18s. 3d.
Wales	16s. 6d.	17s. 7d.	17s. 3d.

[1] The *minus* sign denotes a fall in wages per week, and the *plus* sign a rise.

[2] *Report of Mr. Wilson Fox on the Wages and Earnings of Agricultural Labourers*, 1900.

[3] *Second Report by Mr. Wilson Fox on the Wages and Earnings . . . of Agricultural Labourers*, 1905.

[4] I do not know why the figures for 1898 in the *Second Report* differ from those in the first.

Durham and Glamorgan still show the highest weekly average, with 22s. 2d. and 21s. 3d. respectively, while Oxford and Cardigan now stand lowest, with 14s. 6d. and 15s. 8d. Elsewhere wages moved between these two extremes in such a way as to show the effect of the competition of mines, trade and manufacture in raising the rate above the minimum. The following counties had a high average:—Northumberland (21s. 7d.), Derbyshire and Lancashire (20s. 7d.), Middlesex (20s. 4d.), Cumberland and Westmoreland (20s.), Surrey (20s.), Yorkshire (19s. 10d., 19s. 2d., and 18s. 10d. in the respective Ridings), Nottingham (19s. 9d.), Kent (19s. 7d.), Monmouthshire (18s. 10d.) and Cheshire (18s. 9d.).

But if we proceed to analyse these figures, and to enquire the rates of money-wages and the value set upon allowances, we shall be somewhat surprised at the amount allowed in some counties for payments in kind. In Hants, for example, it runs to 4s., in Dorset to 3s. 7d., in Cambridgeshire and Somerset to 3s. 5d., in Devonshire to 3s. 4d.: estimates which speak for themselves to anyone acquainted with the history of wages in these counties. Subtracting the amounts set down for allowances, the rate of wages falls to 11s. 11d. in Dorsetshire, 12s. in Oxfordshire, 12s. 4d. in Norfolk, 12s. 8d. in Cambridgeshire, 12s. 9d. in Wilts, and 12s. 11d. in Gloucestershire.

I cannot avoid the impression, therefore, that in spite of all the talk about a great rise of wages, the lot of the rural labourer is still no enviable one in many parts of the midlands, south, south-east and south-west, and that consequently he still has strong inducement to turn his back on the land, even where his sense of self-respect is comparatively undeveloped. It must be remembered, too, that in many places the housing is still wretched, and both allotments and small holdings are wanting.

Recalling in conclusion some of the more prominent characteristics of agricultural labour at the present day—the diminishing number of the labourers, their loss of interest in their work, and the rise of wages in many parts of the country—we shall be led to conclude that the unions,

which thirty or more years ago were expected to solve the problem of rural labour as well as those of the town artisan, must be moribund. And so in fact they are. In 1892 there were twelve unions for agricultural labourers and fishermen, with 36,986 members. In 1897 only six remained, with a membership of 3,879. Two years later the membership had fallen by more than one-third, and showed only 2,323. In 1901 five unions survived, with a membership of 1,840 :[1] and in August 1906 two only were left, the one registered, in Norfolk, the other, unregistered, in Dorset. The Norfolk Union does not limit membership to agricultural labourers; and it consists for the most part of men of the older generation.

[1] The figures given above are from the *Annual Abstracts of Labour Statistics in the United Kingdom.*

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION.

In concluding such a work as the present the author is in danger of passing from the rôle of historian to that of politician. It is a danger which he must avoid, especially if he be a foreigner. All that becomes him is to emphasise the main points in the history he has traced, and briefly to state what, in his opinion, will be the future course of development.

Up to the present time the two most important stages in the history of the agricultural labourer have been, first, his acquisition of personal freedom, and secondly his severance from land and capital. The first was an historical process, desired by many but (in its totality as apart from its various steps) intended by no one. The second was, on the contrary, definitely intended, end as well as means, by many people. They desired to place a proletarian labouring class at the disposal of the farmer, believing that such a step was in the interest both of employers and the public. Those who so believed looked at things from the farmers' standpoint; possibly they thought themselves political economists; but they were no statesmen. To be a statesman a man must be able to hold in one view all the manifold and interdependent interests of the community, and to estimate correctly the total probable result of any measure. But the eighteenth-century politicians who understood how to influence the Government conceived the activities of the nation solely from the point of view of private, not of national, economy; and their measures had precisely the opposite effect to that which they expected.

The consequences of their endeavour to create a labouring class owning neither land nor capital have been for

the labourer in the southern part of England physical deterioration (particularly evident in Norfolk); loss of skill in his labour and of interest in his work; and, in the worst period of his history, demoralisation both of himself and his womankind, crime of all kinds, from thefts of wood to incest and arson, the loss of every motive restraining undue increase of population, and the blunting of all sense of independence and self-respect. The land has been progressively depopulated: first by the landlords, who expropriated farmers, cottiers and squatters, and therewith placed an agricultural proletariat at the disposal of the large farmer; then by the large farmer himself, whose efforts were above all directed to economy in wages and labour; next by the Poor Law authorities, in disbanding the army of parish poor created (chiefly) between 1795 and 1834; and finally by the labourers themselves, who have sought by the method of migration and emigration, widely and strongly applied, to increase their income and to raise wages for those who remain on the soil. It was long before they adopted this method, and then it was not willingly, as Girdlestone and Arch had occasion to learn in the 'sixties and seventies. But now it is with a light heart that they turn their backs on home. We need only refer in passing to the effect of all this in undermining the existence of various other classes in the villages and small towns, and lessening the effective demand from the country for the products of English industry in the towns.

At the present day landlords and farmers are complaining of lack of hands, but the remedy they both alike apply is a further reduction in the number of labourers they employ. They increase the size of farms, use machinery to a greater extent, and add to the area under permanent pasture.[1] And yet facts have proved to demonstration that the system of the large farm cannot by itself meet the crisis, but on the contrary must tend to

[1] "Things are moving in something of a circle. The want of money and the scarcity of labour are evolving the system of large farms, and the system of large farming is tending to dispense more and more with the need of labour." *Life in our Villages*, p. 14.

make things worse. It is noteworthy that neither landlords nor farmers have asked for any abolition of or limitation on the right of free migration. They know too well that they themselves have caused the exodus: theirs was the policy of the enclosures, the campaign against the peasantry, the engrossing of farms, the introduction of machinery, the extension of permanent pasture, the reduction in wages, and the substitution of women's and children's labour for that of men.

But if no one has dreamt of attacking the labourer's liberty of movement, his condition, as determined by his expropriation, the high prices of the eighteenth century, and the mistakes of the poor laws and settlement laws, can hardly be described as one of complete personal freedom. And what would have happened if the interests of the upper classes had not chanced to cause them to amend those laws, while humanitarian considerations led to the passing of the Gangs Acts and the Education Acts, no one can say.

I have already indicated that even the private ecomomic interest—profit making—and the national interest, so far as production is concerned, have had to suffer in consequence of the proletarianisation of the labourer. For, as we have often had occasion to note, what is wanting to-day is not merely labour, but also skill and interest on the part of such labourers as there are, and that varied agricultural production which was the natural consequence of a more varied rural society.

As to the psychological motives which lead the labourer to depart from the land, agricultural work and village life do not offer sufficient attractions, nor sufficient material reward, in a country which has reached a high state of economic development, to compete in the long run with the higher wages and the pleasures of the town. Only the strongest of motives can turn the balance; and such a motive is found when the labourer has rights over the soil. If he can hope to improve his position by acquiring a holding of his own, he will stay on the land, and marry there, and for his children farm-service and day-labour

will be a stage on the road to independence, so that employers will be at no loss for labour. It should be added that this desire for a bit of land at his own disposal is very deeply rooted at any rate in the villager's breast: and it also develops in those born and brought up in a town if they live in the country for long together.

Thus on social grounds it seems very probable that a connection between land and labour will once again be established: for there is no other way out of existing difficulties. Sismondi admirably expressed the importance of such measures when he said:—"A l'égard de la population agricole la tâche générale du gouvernement consiste à réunir sans cesse le travail avec la propriété, à accélérer cette réunion par tous les moyens indirects de la législation, à donner la plus grande facilité pour les ventes d'immeubles."[1] Moreover such measures accord with the needs of agriculture itself. For the agricultural products which require little labour, or machine and not hand labour, now come from countries with much land and a thin population. Only the products which require hand labour and, in many cases, much of it, remain to European agriculture. And such work can, for well-known reasons, only be done on small or middle-sized holdings; which have besides an advantage over large farms from the social point of view, in that their occupiers can more easily on occasion suit their manner of life to an unfavourable conjuncture.

Parliament will probably be led by these considerations to pass the legislation needed to bring about a distribution of landed property which will reunite the labourer to the land. It is not impossible that Kent's ideal will be realised at last, more than a century after its enunciation; and it is more than probable that not only social and economic grounds, but also considerations of general policy, will contribute to this result.

There is the more reason to expect this since hitherto failure has attended all attempts to apply to problems of agricultural labour the principles of reform which have

[1] *Nouveaux principes*, 1819, II., 339.

been effective in the realm of industrial labour. As examples we need only mention labour laws, benefit clubs, trade unions, and even co-operation. What has any of these done for the rural labourer? Obviously, the problem of agricultural labour differs in kind from the problem of industrial labour. Not that I mean to assert that the latter can be finally solved by the methods indicated. But at all events our present economic order depends on the institutions of liberty and private property in the means of production; and it is unthinkable that in a state of society recognising equality of rights private property should be permanently denied to a large class. Unless indeed all citizens renounce this right too, or in other words unless individual private property gives way altogether to collective property.

One more point may be mentioned in confirmation of the view here taken of the probable future development of the agricultural labouring class. Protection profited this class nothing; in fact, for reasons already given, the worst period of its history was passed under protection. Protectionists, therefore, will not in future bring out this prescription when the agricultural labourer problem is under discussion. But if they are wise they will press for the widest possible extension of small and middle-sized holdings, because such occupiers will be the strongest pillars of the protectionist party, as is convincingly proved by the experience of France, Germany, and Switzerland. If England possessed a numerous class of small and middling peasant landholders, the victory of protection would be assured; and if in the nineteenth century she had had some hundred thousands of yeomen, the transition to free trade would have been an impossibility.

APPENDIX I

THE MEANING OF THE WORD ENCLOSURE.

THE word *enclosure* is used to denote both the process of hedging-in wastes and commons, or parts of wastes and commons, or the strips of arable land previously lying open on the common fields, and the land itself when fenced. Enclosures have gone on from the Middle Ages down to the present day; and the question therefore arises whether they have borne the same character during all these centuries. The answer appears to be in the negative. Marshall, for example, draws a distinction between "old" and "new" enclosures. Old enclosures, he says, are easily distinguished from new by their irregular forms and unequal sizes, broad fields and tiny scraps of land lying side by side, while new enclosures, if properly laid out, are from 8 to 12 acres, or an average of 10.[1] The reason for this difference is that the old enclosures were mostly made on the individual motion of this or that large or smaller landowner, the larger often enclosing wastes, commons and arable fields, or parts of them, for the sake of pasture-farming, while the small men were glad enough to be able to buy up and throw together some few acres.[2] But the enclosures which Marshall calls new were for the most part made on a common plan for the whole village, settled either by the voluntary agreement of all the landowners of the parish, or by the commissioners appointed in consequence of the demand of a three-fourths majority of owners for a private Act. Not till the process had thus become in some measure a collective operation could the enclosures take on any regular or universal character. Of course, however, not even collective enclosures could always turn out fields of from 8 to 12 acres in extent, since small owners necessarily often received small portions.

A further difficulty in the way of classification on this basis is that one kind of enclosure seems to be intermediate between the "old" and the "new," i.e. the enclosure, without parliamentary intervention, of a whole village by one person who had become proprietor of the whole area. According to Marshall's distinction it must be classed with the new en-

[1] T. Lawrence held that the smaller the enclosure the greater its value. The larger they were, the more they resembled the common fields. *A New System of Agriculture*, 1726, p. 47.

[2] N. Kent, *Agriculture of Norfolk*, 1794, p. 22.

closures, since the owner generally laid it out in good-sized fields.

It would seem to follow that the terms "old" and "new" enclosures are somewhat misleading, and that a better distinction would be between partial and general enclosures. This has other reasons in its favour. The partial enclosures, the enclosures, that is, of a few acres by small landowners, do not seem to have been in all cases of old date. On the contrary, it appears that their number increased in the eighteenth century (perhaps because the old village community was then in process of decay); and both Nathaniel Kent, in reporting on Lincolnshire, and Arthur Young, in reporting on Norfolk, state that they were going on alongside of the new or collective enclosures: though so far as I am able to judge the latter predominated from the eighteenth century onwards, and it is this fact which justifies Marshall to a certain degree. Similarly the enclosure of wastes and commons by lords of manors did not take place only in the thirteenth century, and in the sixteenth, when the statutes of Merton and Westminster were revived, but also as late as the eighteenth century. And enclosures of the "new" type, by means of private Acts, began as early as the seventeenth century.

But not even the classification into partial and general removes all obscurity: and it seems desirable to consider the enclosures from an historical point of view. The common-field system and the intermixture of strips naturally meant that originally there was only one system of agriculture followed by all the inhabitants of the village, and that there were no enclosures beyond the actual farmstead, perhaps already including a garden. Perhaps also the little enclosed strips of grass-land in the neighbourhood of the farmstead, which existed in the eighteenth century and were then intended to be used as runs for the calves and "baiting and nursery grounds for other farmstock,"[1] may have made their appearance at the beginnings of the village community. But later on, when the demesne land began to be consolidated for the home-farm, when new clearances of the manorial woodland were made, when the manorial lord appropriated common pasture, when he began to separate his strips in the open fields from those of the villagers, and the tenants of the home-farm to follow his example, then, in the course of this partial enclosure, the "old," irregular closes, large and small, began to appear alongside of the commons and open fields. This movement did not at first involve any attempt to destroy the village community or to supersede its system of agriculture: the lord was aiming simply at the possession of more land. Still, he sometimes thereby endangered the continuance of the village

[1] Marshall, *On the appropriation and inclosure of commonable and intermixed lands*, 1801, p. 3.

economy, and therefore the statutes of Merton (1256) and Westminster (1285) defined the limits within which he might enclose waste land hitherto serving as common pasture, and withdraw it from public use for his own private profit. They require him to leave sufficient pasture to satisfy the needs of the free inhabitants of his own and neighbouring manors.[1]

But the owner or tenant of such enclosures was able to adapt his sytsem of cultivation to the demands of the market more easily than could the members of the village community, tied to their general system. He began to profit by his opportunities, and introduced pasture-farming, convertible husbandry, and later the Norfolk four-course system. This gave a new impetus to partial enclosures. Henceforward two agricultural organisations existed side by side, the one based on liberty, the other on order; the one individual, the other collective. Other advantages of the free, individual husbandry in enclosed fields, touched upon above in Chapters I. and II., began to be understood, and enthusiasm for enclosures spread far and wide. Strips in the open fields were voluntarily exchanged, and contiguous strips were bought so that on the fields small enclosures of the partial type were formed. But only general enclosures sufficed to bring about a thorough change. Rich men bought out all other proprietors on a manor, and enclosed the whole; or the owners of a parish, where they were few, agreed on the separation of the intermixed lands and the division of the commons, and enclosed. More striking, however, were the enclosures by Act of Parliament. By these all the scattered open-field strips of a given manor or village, together with its meadows and pastures, were consolidated, divided, and allotted to the several owners according to the value of their previous holdings in the fields and rights on the commons, the allotments being in one or several continuous pieces of land. Then each had to fence in his portion. This last and final act has appeared to the English mind so much the most important that the whole process has come to be known by the word "enclosure," which properly applies to this last act alone. And so the word comes further to mean the abolition of the old communal organisation of agriculture. The "engrossing of farms," too, so often accompanied enclosure that the word is sometimes used to include that phenomenon also.

I must not leave the subject without a warning to the reader not to suppose that a general enclosure always comprised the whole area of a manor or a village. Wastes were often left out when by reason of their distance from the village

[1] Scrutton, *Commons and Common Fields*, Chapter III.: and Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*, pp. 272 f.

or the nature of their soil they were of no value to the generality of proprietors, and their enclosure would have involved great cost without any corresponding advantage. Further, I must contradict the idea that an enclosure by Act of Parliament always meant the concurrent consolidation of holdings and division of commons. There are Acts for the consolidation and separation of intermixed arable strips only, and there are others for the division of commons only. Still, according to Nathaniel Forster, the processes were as a rule concurrent.

The enclosures were often accompanied by a change in the distribution of population. Isolated farms made their appearance when the case was one of clearances, conversion of arable to pasture, enclosure of the better commons or of lands hitherto waste, or of the draining of boggy moorlands, or when the landlord destroyed a whole village for the purpose of turning it into one farm. But general enclosures of villages where the proprietors were numerous did not as a rule break up the old group-settlement, the "feudal village."[1]

The peculiar conditions in the West of England should also be noted. There, isolated farms existed; and there was no intermixture of strips, but every farmer's land lay near his house, and was enclosed, though the enclosures were generally small and irregular. There were, however, commons; and often very large ones, on account of the mountainous nature of the ground. The economic reason for this difference seems to be that the original system of agriculture here was a primitive kind of convertible husbandry, and not the two-, three-, and perhaps four-field system of the rest of England. The sociological reasons are beyond the scope of this digression. They are examined in the writings of Dr. Seebohm and others.

1 "Where the lands have been inclosed from the state of woodlands, or from that of stinted pastures, or hams, as in the west of England, . . . there we find farmhouses and offices, standing conveniently within the farm lands." But when "such allotments have been inclosed, by piecemeal, by the several small proprietors, as was formerly the case," no such results followed. "In more recent times, when the common field townships have been inclosed by statute of Parliament, the Commissioners have (or ought to have) done everything to rectify those inconveniences, as far as given circumstances would permit. Where one or more considerable properties occurred in a township, farms of some size have been laid out, on the commons and stinted pastures, but rarely in the arable fields, unless the whole belonged to one, or very few proprietors. But where the property was vested in numbers—as it mostly was—that desirable measure was of course impracticable. In this case impartial justice required that each proprietor should have a portion of land situated near the place of his fixed residence, and other parts at a less convenient distance from it, without having it in their power to form entire farms, within the areas of the common-field lands, of a size sufficient to admit of suites of farm-buildings in each." Marshall, *A Review of the Reports from the Midland Department of England*, York, 1816, p. 349.

APPENDIX II

ENCLOSURES AND THE REVOLUTION IN PRICES.

TOOKE, in his well-known work on the history of prices, attributes the eighteenth-century rise in the price of corn almost exclusively to the bad seasons. He does notice also that the increase of population had a tendency to drive up the price of necessaries, but thinks that the great improvements in agriculture and manufacture must have counteracted this tendency.

I agree with him that the seasons did influence corn-prices, but it seems to me that his information as to the "improvements in agriculture" was deficient, and this is the point which I want to discuss in what follows. I am therefore merely supplementing one part of Tooke's researches, and am far from attempting to unravel the whole problem of the revolution in prices.

I.

In the first place we have to get rid of the mistake which has done more than anything else to spread a false conception of the enclosures of the eighteenth century. As has already been indicated, it was not so much, after about 1730 at all events, that pasture was turned into arable, as that good arable land was laid down as grazing land, or, be it remarked by the by, in not a few cases to form gentlemen's parks.[1] Davenant had already noticed, quite generally, that the profit on an acre of pasture was much more than on an acre under corn: and when we come to Arthur Young we find this greater profit calculated with painful exactitude. Of course this substitution of pasture for arable was by no means peculiar to the eighteenth century. From the fifteenth onwards we hear at frequent intervals that corn-growing does not pay and that pasture-farming does. What happened in the fifteenth century has been told in section iv. of Chapter I. In the sixteenth, Hales' *Brief Conceipt* lays down the proposition that ten acres of pasture bring their owner more profit than twenty of corn-land. And in the seventeenth we are told in an official publication, "Soe Wolle risen above two-thirds holdeth almost

[1] "Such quantities of the best lands converted into useless parks and chases. These new-made parks are much complained of, and inveighed against by the lower classes." Young, *Annals*, XXXVI., p. 333.

a proportion with all other commodities treble improved by the encrease of moneys. And Corn little more than double, is the reason of convertinge arable to reduce the profits equal to the Husbandmen."[1] The reasons inducing English farmers towards the end of the same century and in the beginning of the next to return to corn-growing have been noticed in Chapter I., as likewise the motives which made many give it up again about the middle of the eighteenth century. Thus our present task must consist in hearing some witnesses who prove my proposition concerning the conversion of arable to pasture.

In the 2nd edition of his report on Somersetshire, Billingsley communicates the fact that the better soil in the valleys was destined for pasture-farming, the new enclosures on the hills for corn-growing. And he adds that the real causes of the rise of the price of corn were the bad harvests and "the prevailing disposition of converting arable to pasture."[2] Turner's survey of Gloucestershire, Wedge's of Warwickshire, and Pitt's of Worcestershire, make similar observations.[3] In the West Riding of Yorkshire the uninterrupted demand for milk, cheese and butter had corresponding effects on the agricultural system of the county, and in Lincolnshire, even after the breaking-up of wastes, no more grain could be grown than was necessary for feeding its people during three months in the year.[4] Pitt reports that in Leicestershire a rich soil "is compelled to lay at grass," and he shows by one instance how enclosures worked in that county. On the Duke of Rutland's estates in the Vale of Belvoir the enclosure had turned everything upside down. The richest ground in the Vale was converted to pasture, and the poorer soils on the hillsides or on the skirts of the valley, which had been used as sheep walks, were broken up for arable.[5] At the same time rents were raised to three times what they had been. And this is only a typical case. The enclosures of the eighteenth century had sometimes similar results to those of the fifteenth and sixteenth; houses were pulled down, or left to decay, and the inhabitants departed, so that two shepherds would be left alone where a populous village once stood; and they equally roused the wrath of many eminent persons, whom Arthur Young set himself to answer. Writing in 1774, he said that in the midlands, and especially in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and parts of Warwickshire, Huntingdonshire and Buckingham-

[1] Quoted in Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, II., 899.

[2] P. 62, 153.

[3] Turner, 1794, p. 8; Wedge, 1794, p. 21 f.; Pitt, 1813, p. 531.

[4] Rennie, Brown and Shirreff, *West Riding*, 1794, p. 39; Holt, *Lancashire*, 1794, p. 13 f., and Dickson and Stevenson, 1815, pp. 230, 392.

[5] William Pitt, *General View of the Agriculture of Leicestershire*, 1809, p. 14.

shire, large tracts of land, formerly covered with open fields and cultivated on the three-field system, had been enclosed and converted into pasture in the last thirty years, for the reason that the wetness of the soil made it better suited for pasture than for arable:[1] and he adds, for the benefit of those who were not edified by the enclosures, a sarcastic enquiry as to what they had to say to those in Norfolk, Suffolk, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and all the northern counties. The poor sandy soils of the three first-named counties could have been made fit to produce corn, mutton and beef in no other way; in the wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, rentable farms had arisen on bare heaths hitherto let at a shilling an acre; in Derbyhire gloomy wastes had been turned into fruitful fields, and on the moorlands of the northern counties these same enclosures had created smiling corn-fields out of stretches which had been as dreary as night.[2]

Thus enclosures of the first-mentioned kind had diminished the surface under corn, but, as Arthur Young stated in 1774, this had been compensated for by the enclosure of poor, sandy soils and barren heaths or moors in the east and north. Unfortunately we have no statistics as to the area under cultivation, nor are the figures published as to the quantity of corn grown in England of any value; but even Young's own information awakens doubts as to the improbability of any considerable increase in corn-production; and it further appears very probable that the cost of production had risen. What we know, however, is that with the last quarter of the eighteenth century exports of corn steadily decreased and imports as steadily increased, while the price rose, and in 1773 the Stuart-Orange corn-law policy, after lasting about one hundred years, received such a blow as thenceforth to be dead for all practical purposes, and statesmen reverted to the policy of limiting exportation and favouring importation.

II.

But let us look at another side of the problem, and one which allows of more thorough elucidation. The best results of the new farming were of course shown in the districts where the celebrated exponents of agricultural progress were opening up new paths—Bakewell of Dishley with his sheep-breeding, Lord Townshend with his turnip-planting, and a few decades afterwards Coke, who later became Lord Leicester. But

[1] Leicestershire is already said to be celebrated for "breeding and feeding cattle" in Defoe's *Tour*. "Most of the gentlemen are graziers, and in some places the graziers are so rich that they grow gentlemen; 'tis no uncommon thing for graziers here to rent farms from £500 to £2,000 a year." 3rd ed., 1742, II., 373. Cp. also the first ed. of 1724–5.

[2] *Political Arithmetic*, 1774, pp. 148 f.

obviously not all cultivators possessed the same intelligence as these men, nor yet had the same soil and the same capital at their disposal.

In Durham, where the open fields had been enclosed after the Restoration, the common pastures still remained on "ancient inclosures."[1] In Abington Piggotts, enclosed in 1770, the farmers kept to the three-field system after cultivation ceased to be in common, while rents, which had been 7s. an acre, or 16s. on the best lands, were raised to 20s.[2] In Knapwell, enclosed in 1775, rents went up from 5s. to 10s., but the system of cultivation remained much the same as before.[3] In Cambridgeshire leases for enclosed fields expressly stipulate that the three-field system shall be followed, even in the nineteenth century.[4] The reader of von Thünen's *Der Isolirte Staat* will understand how this came about without any blame to the cultivator. At all events, we have proof here that separation did not necessarily mean technical progress. And it may also be questioned whether the introduction of rotation of crops would have meant a larger production of corn. Where the Norfolk four-course system was thoroughly carried out there were six corn-harvests every twelve years, whereas on the three-field system there were eight, to say nothing of the difference in size of field. Of course the yield was generally larger under the first system if the necessary conditions were fulfilled by the cultivator,[5] his soil and his capital. But that was very often not the case, and the transition from the old to the new system often proved a great loss, and not seldom meant bankruptcy to the farmer.

In the official *General Report on Enclosures* published by the Board of Agriculture in 1808 (the President of the Board being of course Sinclair, and its Secretary Arthur Young) it is stated that many agriculturists were with good reason opposed to consolidation, since the operation lasted frequently for two, three, four, and even five or six years, and while it lasted the cultivators concerned had to suffer. Their farming was entirely upset, for as they did not know where their land would ultimately lie, they stored their manure, till much of it was

[1] Marshall, *Northern Department*, p. 142.

[2] Young, *Annals*, Vol. XLII., p. 494.

[3] Ibid. p. 501.

[4] Gooch, *Agriculture of Cambridgeshire*, p. 38. "Where enclosures have taken place, leases have in general been granted, and the usual covenant respecting cropping has been two crops and a fallow, viz. the course allowed before enclosing, and the course observed by many since."

[5] Young reckons the gross produce per acre per annum under the three-field system at £3 6s. 8d., and under the Norfolk rotation at £4 16s. 3d. *Political Arithmetic*, p. 163. He admits that "half the period is applied to their support (cattle) and wheat occupies only a fourth. After the wheat many farmers add 5, pease or beans, Which is another year given for cattle." Ibid. p. 159.

worthless, and took less interest in their work, so that the fields were exhausted and did not come into their old condition again for years, if ever. Meantime rents were high, and were raised much too suddenly.[1]

Thus separation meant a lessening of productivity for some years at all events. Gooch expressly says that from the moment when a parish began to think seriously of enclosures all improvements ceased, and not merely the customary annual manuring, but even weeding and the like ; so that immediately after enclosure less corn was produced, fewer cattle were fed, and, in general, products of all kinds decreased.[2]

If lands exhausted in this way by reckless treatment and the three-field system were to be strengthened, large applications of capital, energy and industry became necessary. Whereas it was often supposed that nothing was needed but the introduction of a new method of cropping.[3] Still greater was the disillusionment in many cases where arable had been turned into pasture. Thomas Stone is very emphatic about them, champion of enclosure though he was, and no one was better acquainted with the agriculture of the eastern counties. He ascribes the failures to the poverty of the farmers and their bad management ; they did not cultivate and prepare the land properly before converting it to meadow ; nor were they good at choosing the right kinds of grass for the various soils ; and finally they were in too great a hurry to mow before the grass was properly set.[4] For the marvellous fertilizing properties of the climate of Westmoreland, already celebrated in the eighteenth century, were not to be found everywhere ; whereas almost everywhere there was a desire to share in the high profits of pasture-farming.

Yet again, in many cases great expenditure of capital and labour proved to have been entirely wasted, when unsuitable land was broken up for corn. The *General Report* tells of wide tracts in various parts of the kingdom, but especially in the north, which still remained in the same waste condition in

[1] *General Report on Enclosures*, p. 31.

[2] Gooch, op. cit., p. 62. See also Young, *Annals*, Vol. XLII., p. 44, on Knotting, Beds.

[3] " Enclosing without a consequent improvement is of little advantage." Lloyd and Turnor, *Cardiganshire*, 1794, p. 29. Bailey and Culley, *Cumberland*, 1794, describe how enclosed lands were exhausted by a series of corn-crops, p. 32.

[4] Thomas Stone, *Suggestions for rendering the inclosure of common fields and waste lands a source of population and of riches*, 1787, p. 39. One of his objects in writing was to enquire " into the causes of the ill-success which for a series of years has attended the inclosure of common fields and waste lands " (p. 1). Dickson and Stevenson, *Lancashire*, 1815, p. 421, lament the want of " cleansing, enriching, preparation of grass, inattention to the seeds " : and Murray, *Warwickshire*, 1813, p. 128, the " defective way of laying down," etc.

which they were when the Enclosure Bills became law. This it attributes in every case to "ill-judged" attempts to produce corn on unsuitable soils or at an undue altitude.[1] May not some of these attempts have been among those which Arthur Young, in his earlier days, had praised in the *Political Arithmetic*? And had not some of these wastes perhaps served as pasture-grounds for the cows of small farmers and cottiers so long as they remained unenclosed? Between 1760 and 1800 not less than 559,942 acres of "waste land" had been enclosed.[2]

The continuance of the movement, with its too frequent lamentable or pernicious consequences, moved various persons to define the limits within which a change of system could be beneficial. Already in Addington we read that no great improvements were possible on good land. "As to heaths, a light, sandy, or strong soil, there inclosing facilitates such improvements in tillage as will do real service both to individuals and the public . . . . But the best lands are usually laid down for pasture, though very little improvement can be made there except by some few proprietors who will occupy their own estates." Poor clay soils, says Stone, allowed of no real change: it was best to keep there to the old methods of cultivation. Where neither turnips nor artificial grasses could be grown, and the land was not good for grass, there was no use in enclosing.[3] Watkinson, again, was of opinion

[1] See *General Report*, p. 23, and Strickland, *East Riding*, 1812, pp. 90 f.

[2] *General Report on Enclosures*, p. 23. In Nottinghamshire rabbit-warrens were enclosed, and, after vain attempts had been made at cultivating them, had to be allowed to go back to their original condition. See Lowe, *Nottingham*, 1798, p. 181.

[3] "That inclosures have most often been mismanaged, may evidently be seen by their present condition; gentlemen of landed property, having in view by such a measure the immediate increase of their rentals, have, in many instances, hastily set about the business, without maturely considering the nature and properties of the soil to be inclosed, so that in some instances poor, thin-stapled clays have been inclosed, which will not admit of any material alteration from the ancient mode of husbandry . . . . in other cases, the lands have been let out in very large farms, and let to persons incompetent to the occupation of them." Stone, op. cit., p. 81. See also p. 82:—"Before any new inclosure is set about, the proprietors (ought to) consider well whether the soil is of a nature to admit of the cultivation of turnips, cole seed, cabbages, or artificial grasses; or of being converted into pasture land that will increase in goodness or quality the longer it remains in that state. If the soil is not possessed of any of these properties, the improvement by means of inclosure is doubtful, considering the expenses. . . . . When an inclosure is determined upon, care must be taken that the land is not cross-cropped, or driven out of heart by successive crops, and the manure of the respective farms wasted . . . . and that persons are appointed commissioners who will rather prevent enormous and unnecessary expenses than incur them." Stone also complains of the mistakes made on enclosure in his *Agriculture of Bedford*, 1794, p. 26, and *Agriculture of Huntingdon*, 1793, p. 19.

that enclosures had paid best on good light soils. The improvement, on heavy wheat-lands was less evident ; less wheat was produced because a smaller surface was sown, and the attempt to convert the land to pasture often failed.[1]

Now, why were so many partially or entirely abortive attempts at improvement made? We have already heard enough to recognize that one cause was inexperience and want of intelligence on the part of the gentlemen who set the enclosures going : but there were other causes besides. The *General Report* says that the open fields were as a rule (in spite of the scattering of strips) worked with a smaller capital than enclosed fields, and that though the profit on the latter was on an average far above that on the former, this result was entirely dependent on the proper application of the capital. This was ten times more the case where the consolidated holdings were converted into pasture ; for good pasture needed a much larger capital than did the common-field husbandry. Farmers who could not afford so much often found it advisable to turn to some other investment and make way for new men more suited to introduce the new system. And if the profit were calculated as a percentage on the capital employed, it was very possible that the old system at the old rents was really yielding more ; at any rate that was the opinion of the farmers. Moreover, a man who had worked all his life under the routine of the three-field system and had never possessed so much as ten acres of pasture might find himself considerably bewildered when set to buy and sell cattle, a matter in which the profit depended largely on skill and experience.[2]

Davis' *Survey of Wiltshire* brings out another point. He remarks that even if the common-field system does not improve the land it prevents its deterioration : whereas since not everyone understands agriculture equally well, it sometimes happens that after enclosures absolutely less corn and cattle are produced over a whole parish than before ; not because the farmers have been in any way wanting in industry, but simply because they have been following a bad system. If that is the case, it is evident that however much rents may have been improved, agriculture has not. And he quotes a frequent remark to the effect that enclosure makes a good farmer better and a bad one worse. It should be always kept in mind, he thinks, that the great end of all enclosure is the permanent improvement of the land and not a temporary rise in rents.[3] What the old-fashioned farmer lacked, it appears, was not simply capital, but also experience and the mental qualities required by a commercial society : namely independence, enterprise and a taste

[1] Pitt, *Agriculture of Leicestershire*, p. 76.
[2] *General Report on Enclosures*, p. 31.
[3] Op. cit., 1813, p. 45.

for trade and speculation.[1] Hence it was that so many of them had to give up their holdings: some indeed because the engrossing of farms made them superfluous, but others because they were ruined. In Laighton-Broomswold, in Huntingdonshire, Arthur Young reported that for fifteen or twenty years after the enclosure there was great distress, and many farmers went bankrupt and had to leave their farms.[2] And we are also told of the loss of productivity which frequently followed the passing of farms into new hands in consequence of the new farmers' ignorance of the particular holding and its conditions.

III.

Looking at this series of mistakes and failures, one is hardly inclined to suppose that the production of corn increased between 1700 and say 1793. What did happen was an alteration in the relative quantities of the various kinds of corn produced. The area under wheat and oats appears to have increased. It seems at first sight more probable that the production of meat, etc., increased, for though there had been serious difficulties in the way of the transition to pasture-farming and the introduction of the rotation of crops, the area given up to stock-feeding had been very greatly extended. But this argument overlooks several essential points. In the first place there was about this time an extraordinary increase in the number of horses kept, a fact which even Arbuthnot and Arthur Young admitted to be for the most part bad for agriculture. As the old small-farm system died out they were made more use of by farmers; as old roads were improved and new ones made, commerce increased, and more draught-horses were employed; while as luxury grew people kept more riding and carriage horses.[3] No attempt will be made here to estimate the quantity of corn consumed by these animals: but a point of more importance is that in consequence of the replacing of

[1] In Stevenson's *Surrey* there is a fine description of the old-world farmers there, "who have so little of the impartial spirit of commerce that they prefer selling their grain to an old customer at a lower price to deserting him and accepting a higher offer from one with whom they have not been in the habit of dealing," p. 88. Young, *Annals*, XLIV., p. 178, notes that in Barham improvement is less than usual, "for they are chiefly old tenants and owners, that have not been put out of their way, not flourishing at all."

[2] *Annals*, XLIV., p. 174.

[3] Arbuthnot states that the increase of post-horses in the twenty years 1753 to 1773 was as ten to one, and that of stage-coaches very considerable; so also that of "waggon-horses"; "these last, indeed, have been in consequence of internal trade; yet all these, directly or indirectly, in consequence of luxury, which has established so many fashionable places of resort for people of all ranks and denominations, and in which list the City of London has furnished no inconsiderable part." *An Inquiry into the Connection*, 1773, p. 56.

oxen by horses there were fewer beasts to go to the butcher, though of course the meat of draught-oxen had often been of poor quality.[1] Arthur Young noted this, and wished to see the use of oxen re-introduced :[2] and Arbuthnot says that as more oats had to be grown for horses, amd more pasture devoted to feeding them, it was obvious that there was so much the less for oxen.[3] The second point overlooked is the fact, confirmed by the experience of various countries and easily explained, that small holders keep a relatively larger number of cows and draught-animals than are kept on large farms, especially when the latter are chiefly occupied in fatting cattle. Arthur Young denies this in the *Farmer's Letters* (1771) ; but forty years later, in his *Minutes concerning Parliamentary Inclosures taken on the Spot* (published in the *Annals*), as also in the *General Report on Enclosures* and even in the *Tour through the North of England*,[4] his view was different. We are told that even in Leicestershire, after an enclosure made for the purpose of introducing pasture-farming "the number of horses, horned cattle, and sheep now kept is not more than in the open state," and absolutely less corn, though relatively more, was grown. It is added, however, that though there were no more sheep than before, they were "of better quality, with much fewer losses, and sold fat instead of lean."[5] On the whole, therefore, we are led to conclude that the enclosures did not increase the number of cattle kept, though they very probably did mean a larger production of the better qualities of mutton and beef,[6] first, by greater application of capital and labour to that purpose, and secondly, because the better breeds supplanted the stock not merely of the small farmers, but also of the cottiers.

The existence of this stock is very often forgotten when the change of prices is under discussion : but it was relatively large in many parts of the country, even towards the end of the century ; it was fed on the commons and wastes, and pork, poultry and eggs were largely produced besides. Even Adam Smith, who was entirely favourable to the new system of farming, wrote :—"The great rise in the price of hogs and poultry has in Great Britain been frequently imputed to the

[1] The author of *A Political Enquiry* (1785) calculates that at that time 1,200,000 horses were used in agriculture, while a short time previously about half the work had been done by oxen. P. 85.

[2] *A Farmer's Letters*, I., 170, 3rd ed., 1771.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 63, 64, 68, 69.

[4] "The larger the farms, the fewer the draught cattle. The smaller the farms, the greater the number of cows." *Northern Tour*, IV., p. 234.

[5] Pitt, *Agriculture of Leicestershire*, p. 72.

[6] "Middling farms (300 to 500 acres) have near three times more fatting cattle than small ones, and near five times as many as large ones." *Northern Tour*, l.c.

diminution of the number of cottagers and other small occupiers of land, an event which has in every part of Europe been the forerunner of improvement and better cultivation": and he goes on to explain how cheaply such stock can be fed on the holdings of the small cultivator:—"The little offals of their own table, their whey, skimmed milk and butter-milk supply these animals with a part of their food, and they find the rest in the neighbouring fields without doing any sensible damage to anybody. By diminishing the number of these smaller occupiers, therefore, the quantity of this sort of provisions, which is thus produced at little or no expense, must certainly have been a good deal diminished, and their price must consequently have been raised both sooner and faster than it would otherwise have risen."[1] If the prices of pork and beef are compared for the second half of the eighteenth century, it is very striking to see how the price of the latter increases as the years go on. The *Annals of Agriculture* show the prices for the years 1740 to 1795, though not for every year. The following are the averages for the periods which are comparable:—

	Beef (per cwt.).	Pork (per cwt.).
1740–1747 ..	21s. 4d. ..	27s. 6d.
1769–1782 ..	26s. 10d. ..	42s. 2d.
1788–1795 ..	29s. 9d. ..	46s. 7d.

Adam Smith had said in the passage just referred to, on the authority of Buffon, that in France, with its small farmers, "the price of pork is nearly equal to that of beef." Nathaniel Kent, with his wide knowledge of English and Flemish agriculture, is of opinion that when the small farmer vanishes "the manufacturer and mechanic next feel the blow. The vast number of poultry, the quantity of pork, and a variety of other small provisions are no longer supplied in their former abundance. Since little farms have been swallowed up in greater, there are thousands of parishes which do not export so many cows as they did by 50 or 60 in a parish."[2] And John Fox, the writer of the *Survey of Monmouthshire*, said of small farms that they "promote plenty, population and industry, and prevent monopoly by constantly supplying the markets."[3] This opinion is represented even in Young's *Annals*, where we are told that though enclosures must "undoubtedly" increase the means of subsistence, "owing to the greater quantity of land which is brought into cultivation," yet "if it be a necessary step to the carrying the agriculture to the highest pitch of perfection, ... it is counterbalanced by many serious evils." For the small farmers "grew sufficient for their subsistence and sent the surplus to market. This created a

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I., pp. 354 f. of 9th ed. (1799).
[2] *Hints to Gentlemen*, 1st ed., 1775, pp. 212 and 216.
[3] *Agriculture of Monmouth*, 1794, p. 13.

competition, and consequently a lower price in the commodities thus produced." Now that the farmers have been transformed into labourers, "the present inhabitants grow nothing for themselves, but in times of sickness and scarcity must depend for a great proportion of their subsistence on parochial relief." So that "it prevents that progressive supply of markets which necessarily arises from the regularly ascending series of farms. Many little articles of provisions produced by little farmers are totally neglected."[1] This explains why in 1795 plans were put out for getting rid of the large farms and reverting to small ones.[2]

IV.

The difficulty in the way of understanding the true effects of enclosures and engrossing is the lack of statistical evidence. So far as I know, there are only two studies of agricultural productivity before and after enclosure which are at all comprehensive, and they are not sufficient for our purposes. The first is to be found in Young's *Annals*,[3] and is an account by Arthur Young, junior, of twenty-eight Worcestershire parishes, very superficially given. The writer has taken no pains to obtain really accurate figures, and in many cases is satisfied to give merely the opinion "increased" or "decreased," so that we cannot get any idea of the total supposed gain or loss. Thus on p. 504 we are told that "before the enclosure, 1,400 sheep, of a small inferior kind, were kept . . . . not one in 50 of which was fattened for the market. At present 600 sheep . . . are regularly sent fat to market." Pigs, we are told on p. 501, have on the other hand "greatly decreased"; but when we ask by how many, we obtain no answer. Again, on p. 500, the writer expresses his "fear" that the poor "have been too frequently robbed of their common rights, their cows sold." How many were sold? What was their weight? We do not know: and we might go on to ask a score of similar questions, equally in vain. The second unsatisfactory attempt to take some statistics of productivity in face of the continual complaints is found in the *General Report on Enclosures*.[4] Here we have reports from 134 parishes, but not all the questions

[1] Young, *Annals*, Vol. XXXVI., pp. 114 f.

[2] The author of *A Letter to Sir T. C. Banbury, Bt., on the Poor Rates and the High Price of Provisions*, 1795, wants to see cottages built and land given to every cottager, in order to bring down the prices of bacon, eggs, fowls, and honey. So the author of *A Short Address on the Monopoly of Small Farms*, 1795, thinks that if the great farms were put down, prices would fall.

[3] Vol. XXXVII., pp. 496 f.

[4] Pp. 278 f.

asked have been answered in every case. As to cattle 42 make no reply, as to sheep 33, and as to corn 7. According to the figures which were sent in the production had been:—

	Cattle.	Sheep.	Corn.
Decreased in	37	40	9
Increased in	39	46	112
The same in	15	14	5
	91	100	126

But if our suspicions are awakened by the curious inequality in the number of parishes which answered the various questions, they will be increased by the fact that nearly half the reports sent in come from the particular county which had made the greatest agricultural progress, namely Norfolk. The counties reporting are :—

Essex	1	Beds	14
Middlesex	1	Cambridge	18
Surrey	2	Huntingdon	23
Hants	5	Norfolk	63
Suffolk	7		
		Total	134

It seems distinctly probable that the results would have been different if reports had been asked for from all counties in numbers corresponding to their area, and if all questions had been answered, and figures given instead of mere statements of "decrease" or "increase." In the absence of figures we may perhaps safely conclude that after the enclosures there were fewer of the commodities which had been produced in small quantities by numerous little farmers and cottiers, such as pork, poultry, eggs, and milk, and less of the poor mutton sold in the little market towns: while on the other hand there was a considerably larger production of good beef and mutton for the great cities where commerce, manufacture, or society brought men together. The diminished supply of commodities of the first kind, however, contributed to send up the price of the second. Probably the increase of the consumption of the towns was about parallel with the decrease of the consumption of the lower classes of the agricultural population. The commons had, as it seems, been used mainly as pasture for milch-cows and the wastes as runs for young stock, whereas under the new conditions the same areas served chiefly for fattening purposes. It should also be mentioned that Arbuthnot explains the high prices of beef and mutton in part by the increase in the consumption of lamb and veal.

v.

The non-agricultural classes of a community are of course from an economic point of view interested only in the surplus which remains at their disposal after the demands of the agriculturists and their beasts have been satisfied, and in its exchange value. A well-known proposition of political economy is that, in agriculture, production on a small scale gives a larger gross return than production on a large scale, because under the former a greater quantity of labour is expended on a given area; but a smaller net return, or surplus, because a greater number of men and beasts is employed. Thus it may seem that in spite of the mismanagement of the enclosures the farmers under the new system must have sent more victuals into the towns in consequence of the increase of net produce. I need not here point out that the proposition omits to consider that the factor labour is of greater importance in the production of some commodities, and the factor capital in that of others, that the transition to large farming often means the introduction of new methods of cultivation, and so forth; but if the eighteenth-century evidence be fairly and candidly weighed, quite another side of the problem will make itself evident: it will appear that the small farmer usually finds his economic position such that he must sell the whole of his product beyond what he needs to maintain a poor existence, and very often sell at a time unfavourable to himself, when the large farmer, in spite of a higher standard of life, less thriftiness, and a wife and daughters who do no farmwork, is able to keep back his commodities. Thus small farming so far tends to supply the market in larger quantities and at lower prices. Stone[1] says that poverty has often contributed to the provision of superfluities, as for example in filling the corn-markets to overflowing between Michaelmas and Christmas, the farmers being too poor to do anything but sell the greater part of their product. The same thing is said by Davies[2] of Wales. "Several of the lower kind of farmers" had been forced to sell almost the whole of their corn in order to pay their rents and taxes. Of Cardiganshire we hear that rents and wages both had to be paid between Michaelmas and Christmas, and consequently the farmers paid away again all that they had gained on their cattle, and were forced to thresh and sell their corn at an unfavourable time, and then to buy again later on at a price 50 per cent. higher. If only they could have managed to keep back part till it became scarcer they would have been far better off and prices would have been

[1] Stone, *Suggestions for rendering the inclosures a source of population and riches*, 1787, p. 71.

[2] Davies, *Agriculture of North Wales*, 1813, p. 357.

steadier.[1] Arbuthnot admits candidly that the larger farmer knows how to keep his corn, while "the little farmer is obliged to bring his corn to market before Christmas, to enable him to pay his rent."[2] From Kent we hear that the little farmers worked harder and lived worse than the labourers:[3] and from Cheshire that the small and middling farmers consumed little fresh meat, contenting themselves most of the week with bacon and home-cured beef, a little of which served as a relish to their great dishes of potatoes and cabbage.[4] The "Country Farmer" in 1786, ascribed "the rapid progress of all kinds of provisions" to the following causes. Formerly the land had been in the hands of five times as many farmers, and at half the present rents: the rents could only be paid by dint of the greatest industry, the farmers had never been wealthy, and had found it necessary to turn everything they possibly could into money. Hence the markets were abundantly supplied, and the farmers' wives had put all their care and industry into the production of poultry and eggs, and into making as much as they could of their dairy-produce. What they made in this way had gone to provide all kinds of shop-wares for household use, and what remained they spent on the various little articles they required for themselves or their children, never asking their husbands for a penny. Under the new conditions the farmers were fewer and richer; they need not sell unless they got their own price, and so they threw every burden on the consumer; and if they had not done so they would not have been in a position to pay the enhanced rents.[5]

Of more economic value is the description given by that anonymous predecessor of Adam Smith whom Marx discovered, and whose book the British Museum catalogue dates at 1750, but Marx, probably more correctly, about 1740. He says that it is recognized everywhere on the land that soon after harvest, about Michaelmas, when labourers' wages have to be paid and the landlord demands his rent, a glut of farmers' commodities comes upon the market, and the traders use the numbers and necessities of the farmers to set the price as pleases themselves. At times, by making them advances, they even induce them to enter into contracts to deliver to them the whole, or at least a certain part, of their output of a given class of commodity at the same low price, so that "the necessities of some set the market price of their neighbours."[6]

VI.

We may sum up the results so far obtained as follows. i. It

[1] Lloyd and Turnor, *Agriculture of Cardigan*, 1795, p. 31.
[2] Arbuthnot, *An Enquiry into the Connection*, 1773, pp. 15 f.
[3] Boys, *Agriculture of Kent*, 1796, p. 32.
[4] Holland, *Agriculture of Cheshire*, 1808, p. 298.
[5] *Cursory Remarks on Enclosures by a country farmer*, 1786, pp. 19 f.
[6] *Some Thoughts on the Interest of Money in General*, p. 75.

is very improbable that after about 1730–40 the area under corn was extended. If the compensation adduced by Arthur Young really took place, corn being grown on worse soils, its cost of production very probably increased. And it has to be remembered that the increased number of horses must have consumed a great deal of the corn grown. ii. The fact of the mismanagement of enclosures is confirmed by so many writers that we must conclude that it sent up not only the price of corn, but also that of other necessaries of life. iii. There is in particular a consensus of opinion to the effect that the price of those products which had been brought to market by the little farmers, cottiers and labourers, such as poultry, eggs and the like, was immoderately raised: the reason being that the commons were no longer available. iv. Many observers also concurred in the opinion that the great numbers and necessitous circumstances of the little farmers had tended to keep prices down. These were supplanted by large farmers who were able to put prices up to a height which would cover both their own profits and the enhanced rents (comprising the expenses of enclosure) which they had to pay to their landlords. These rents the generality of small farmers had been unable to pay. and many of them had been ruined. We have given evidence of this tendency and have noted the complaints that rents were driven up much too fast and too high; and by no means infrequently simply on the ground that enclosures had been made. Thus the interests both of the landlords and of the capitalist farmers were opposed to the interests of the consumers. The antagonistic tendencies may be stated in the formula:—Productivity had decreased, rentability had increased.[1]

But doubtless there were exceptions to this rule: and I believe these fell under two heads. First, it is obvious that where good land hitherto unused was taken into cultivation, or where exhausted soils were well manured and wet fields drained, better systems of farming were introduced, the danger of infectious disease lessened by the enclosure of pastures, and in general capitalistic large farming was wisely and cautiously introduced, the total produce would be increased, and a higher rent could be paid, irrespective of any rise in prices.[2] This undoubtedly did take place, though we do not know in what

[1] According to Thorold Rogers, the system of rack-renting developed in the seventeenth century, when rents stood at from 4s. 6d. to 5s. an acre. Towards 1725, "though prices were generally low, rents rose . . . . . to 7s." *Industrial and Commercial History of England*, p. 352. They stood at 10s. in 1770, according to Arthur Young.

[2] Many notices of the good effects of enclosure were published by Young in the *Annals*: as an example I give the following, from Chippenham (Vol. XLIII., p. 51):—

	Before the enclosure.	Since.
Wheat	5 coombs.	6 coombs.
Barley	4 ,,	8½ ,,
Oats	4 ,,	20 ,,

number of cases, and certainly it was not the rule,[1] as the champions of reform assume that it was. Secondly, the consolidation of holdings, especially when grass-land and arable were well distributed, meant that less labour was necessary to work the same area in the same way. The products could be obtained at a smaller cost, and again a higher rent could be paid without enhancing prices. But neither can this have been the rule.

There were two other methods of raising rental value which cannot be viewed in the same light. The substitution of large farms for small improved the landlord's income even if prices remained the same and the new farmers paid no more than the old, because he saved in the cost of repairs.[2] But it is evident that in this way both the landlord's capital and the national capital were diminished. Other habitations had to be provided for some part at least of the farmers thus turned out.

Secondly, the landlord made a positive gain in rent in so far as after enclosure he leased the parts of the common or waste which fell to him, whereas before he had received little or nothing from his tenants for their rights there.[3] In this way the enclosure of commons was particularly profitable to him.[4] The farmer, of course, could pay a higher rent because he had now the pasture at his sole disposal. But, equally of course, this was only possible because the stock which had belonged to

[1] See e.g. Boys, *Kent*, p. 36 ; Davis, *Wills*, 1813, p. 48 ; and Arbuthnot and Howlett, passim.

[2] Many landlords felt the cost of repairs very heavy. Thus Stone found "the principal cause of the reduction of the number of small farmers" in the fact that "the generality of gentlemen of landed property . . . . have pusued the fallacious idea of reducing the number of buildings on their respective estates, with a view to contract their expenses." *Suggestions*, p. 43. Kent reckoned the cost of repairs on large farms at 7 per cent. and on small farms at 10 per cent. per annum, which would mean a gain of £40 on an estate worth £1,000 a year. On the other hand the rents of small farms were 15 per cent. higher than those of large. *Hints to Gentlemen*, p. 207. Arthur Young says that on very small farms "the gain by rent is often lost in repairs." *Farmer's Letters*, 3rd ed., 1771, I., 120.

[3] The writer of the Radnorshire Survey has it that the lords of the manor "of course expect some rent from it" after enclosure : to which he adds, "Here rests the root of the whole evil." John Clark, *Agriculture of Radnor*, 1794, p. 24 :—"Whatever little profit the tenant makes by his cattle's depasturing the commons in their present state he considers as clear gain, because he pays neither rent nor taxes for it." The author of the *Enquiry into the Consequences of Enclosing Waste Lands* (1785) also remarks that as a rule nothing was paid for the use of the common. Sometimes every inhabitant paid 4d. or 6d. a year for every head of cattle pastured, and sometimes a farmer paid a high rent for exclusive rights of pasture on one particular waste. But as a rule nothing was paid "for the right engaged in common with the rest of the inhabitants of the parish." P. 43.

[4] "In Stanwell 500 acres waste raised from nothing to 20s. an acre, open field from 14s. to 20s." "On Lincoln Heath old rent 1s., new 10s." *General Report on Enclosures*, pp. 217, 213.

the small men had disappeared. Therefore, though the rental value might be improved, it does not follow that there was an improvement in productivity.

The *Cursory Remarks on Inclosures* contains a very interesting attempt to calculate the meaning of the rise of rents on the conversion of an arable to a pasture farm :—

Expenses of the Farmer (I.) before and (II.) after enclosure :

I.

	£	s.	d.
Rent	1,027	17	0
Ploughing and sowing: ..	1,200	0	0
Labour	780	0	0
Harvest..	190	0	0
Poor rate	36	0	0
Church rate	11	0	0
Roads	40	0	0
Cattle	260	0	0
Interest on capital	200	0	0
Total expenses..		£3,744	17 0

II.

	£	s.	d.
Rent	1,691	10	2
Four shepherds	100	0	0
Eight maids	144	0	0
Poor rate	50	0	0
Church rate	11	0	0
Roads	40	0	0
Cattle	300	0	0
Interest on capital	200	0	0
Total expenses..		£2,536	10 2
Difference in favour of enclosure		£1,208	6 2

Now, why this difference ?

Production (I.) before and (II.) after enclosure :

I.

	£	s.	d.
1,100 qrs. wheat at 28s. ..	1,540	0	0
1,200 qrs. barley at 16s. ..	960	0	0
900 qrs. beans at 5s.	625	0	0
250 tods wool at 16s.	200	0	0
600 lambs at 10s.	300	0	0
5,000 lbs. cheese at 1½d. ..	31	5	0
6,000 lbs. butter at 5d. ..	125	0	0
100 calves at 20s.	100	0	0
150 pigs at 12s.	90	0	0
Fowls and eggs	80	0	0
Total		£4,101	5 0

II.

	£	s.	d.
Fat cattle	960	0	0
Sheep and lambs	760	0	0
Calves	165	0	0
Wool	235	0	0
Butter	190	0	0
Cheese	100	0	0
Horses	150	0	0
Total ..	£2,660	0	0
Loss to consumers, value per annum	1,441	5	0
Income of the four farmers ..	£2,660	0	3
Net rent	£1,691	10	2
Profit ..	£968	9	10

The rise in rent and profits, says the writer, is thus bound up with a decrease in the produce at the disposal of the consumer, and with the loss of work to three hundred persons, of whom many died of starvation.

I do not know of any such thorough study of productivity and rental value on the transition from the three-field system to a more intensive method of cultivation. The best thing of the kind which we have seems to be the description of Milton Bryant, Bedfordshire, given by Arthur Young in Vol. XLII. of the *Annals*, pp. 22 f. The course before enclosure was: 1. fallow, 2. wheat, 3. beans. After enclosure it was: 1. fallow, 2. wheat, 3. beans, 4. oats, 5. seeds. The product was:—

	Bushels
BEFORE ENCLOSURE.	
Arable, three-fourths of 1,120 acres, 840: of which one-third wheat, or 280 acres, at 17½ bushels to 3 roods, or 23¼ to statute measure are ..	6,510
280 acres of beans, at 20 bushels the statute acre	5,600
SINCE ENCLOSURE.	
One-fifth of 1,120 acres of wheat, 224 at 22½ bushels	5,040
One-fifth beans, 224 acres, at 25 bushels	5,600
One-fifth oats, 224 acres, at 33 bushels	7,392
Loss of sheep, 630 (before, 930, now 600)	
Loss of cows, 7 (before, 82, now 75)	

Expenses of inclosure, £1,600, or 25s. 4d. per acre. Rent before, 18s. on average for 3 roods, tithable; now 20s. per statute acre, tithe free in consideration of a corn rent paid by landlord, £185 a year; the glebe worth £15.

VII.

We come now to our last point. The enclosures when followed by the introduction of pasture-farming, or even by

the "engrossing" of farms which remained arable, meant a decrease in the agricultural population, the superfluous agriculturists turning in many cases to trade or manufacture. Meantime the town population itself was increasing and becoming increasingly proletarian: and thus in two ways the market demand for agricultural produce was increasing. Meat being an unattainable luxury for many families, this growing demand was largely for an increased supply of corn; so much so as to contribute to its rise in price.[1]

It would be outside the scope of the present enquiry to describe the special causes which drove up the prices of provisions in the towns. The extraordinarily rich material offered by the literature of the period shows that with the changes in production were bound up changes in distribution which in the result made commodities dearer: and so far as this concerns the agricultural labourer it has been dealt with above in Chapter II.

[1] "The increased demand for it (wheaten bread) has undoubtedly been owing in a great measure to their inability to buy meat. . . . . This increased demand . . . . must have raised the price of bread-corn, unless the quantity annually produced has increased proportionally along with it: which there is good reason to believe has not been the case." Davies, *The Case of Labourers*, p. 49 (1795). Arbuthnot had taken the same view even in 1772, ascribing the rise in the price of wheat in the main to "real scarcity," adding that "the consumption of wheaten bread is greater than it was when many of these fed on barley, rye or oats." *Inquiry into the Connection*, p. 65. There was not enough land under wheat, though more had been "taken into culture." For "a greater part has been devoted to the growth of food for horses." Ibid. p. 64.

APPENDIX III

A CRITICISM OF CERTAIN VIEWS EXPRESSED BY ARTHUR YOUNG.

A FEW remarks on the subject of Young's views will not be out of place here. If, as he claimed, more labourers were required on the same area as a result of the agricultural changes, why were so many cottiers and small farmers obliged to leave their homes? Does he not justify the engrossing of farms by saying that "the useless hands before supported by the land . . . . . take refuge in towns . . . . You had before a population useless, because not industrious; who instead of adding to the national wealth, only eat up the earth's produce; this population is changed for industrious manufacturers, artisans and seamen, who eat up the earth's produce, but pay you amply for it."[1] But almost immediately afterwards we hear that "I have . . . taken for granted, that in the latter period fewer hands are employed on the soil, which would be the case if the agriculture was the same in both, but improvements far more than balance the number of farmers, and render the population of the modern period far greater in the country than that of the remoter one." In that case, whence, we must enquire, came this population? for he has just told us that it had left the land. Or, if it was still required upon the land, why had it migrated?

It is not worth while to go into details as to the foundations offered for his statements; they have already been criticised in the text of Chapter II. They consist in juggling with the contrast between the three-field system and the Norfolk rotation, and between poor and ignorant small farmers and rich and intelligent large ones. But we must pay a little attention to certain particular assertions.

Young is guilty of confusing "improvements" with increased demand for agricultural labour. He remarks that the large farmer uses better implements, buys more manure, and so on, and therefore gives more employment. Now everyone who knows anything of agriculture knows that a number of small cultivators will use much more plant and many more tools, etc.,

[1] *Political Arithmetic*, p. 70.

on a given area than would one large farmer cultivating the whole; and Arbuthnot notes as an advantage of large farming that the large farmer has to spend less on waggons, carts, etc. The greater cost of buildings was adduced as a reason for getting rid of the small men. Addington laments the ruin of rural handicrafts in consequence of the enclosures. But Arthur Young knows nothing of all this. However, for our present purpose all this is irrelevant. For the work in question falls to the industrial and not to the agricultural population; which is also true of the expenditure on manures, artificial cattle-foods, and drain-pipes. We shall have to show in the course of this appendix how the large farm, at its highest development, means a large expenditure on all such matters, but economy in agricultural labour.[1]

No one who knows Arthur Young will be surprised to find him, in another place, comparing the "considerable farmer" with the "wealthy manufacturer," and in spite of the fact that he had previously tried to convince us that the system of the large farm required so many more hands, now laying it down as a principle of rational management that "the fewer employed (consistently with good husbandry) the better; for then the less produce is intercepted before it reaches the markets, and you may have so many the more for manufacturers, sailors and soldiers."[2] Economy of labour is certainly a characteristic of industry on a large scale: but it remains to be asked whether it is so also of agriculture on a large scale. Let us consider what it is that we understand by the latter.

The progressive development of industry leads to an increasing size of businesses, and a decrease in the relative number of hands per business; but as regards agriculture, the law expressed by Thünen more than eighty years ago still holds good:—"That as the value of the soil increases, holdings of a medium size come to have more and more advantage over large holdings; and in fact we find in all countries where the land is in a high state of cultivation that holdings are of small or medium extent."[3] But the smaller the size of the holding, the less division of labour or application of machinery—the causes of increasing productivity in the realm of industry—is possible, and the greater becomes the importance of the personal factor. Thus progress in industry means increasing size and decreasing proportional employment of labour, while progress in agriculture means decreasing size and increasing

[1] A good illustration is given by the result of Young's *Tour in the North of England*. The average area of a farm was 287 acres, and there was one labourer to every 57 acres, and Young himself observes, "Very few farmers employ the hands they ought." Vol. IV., p. 204. Arbuthnot assumes 32 hands to a farm of 300 acres! Op. cit., p. 28.

[2] *Political Arithmetic*, pp. 288, 296.

[3] *Der Isolirte Staat*, I., p. 136.

proportional employment. The "considerable farmer" who uses machinery, economizes labour, and is comparable with the wealthy manufacturer is not to be found at the highest stage of the agricultural development of modern nations, but at its beginning and its end. He is found in the western States of America, but no longer in the eastern; while in Europe his appearance is a sign that agriculture is on the down-grade. The highest stage of agricultural development is to be found in a position of equilibrium as between capital and labour. The one-sided intensity of capital found on the large farm is a lower stage than the one-sided intensity of labour found on the small farm, but both fall short of the ideal.

In the *Farmer's Letters* Young gives the following description of the "little farmers":—"They fare extremely hard—work without intermission like a horse—and practise every lesson of diligence and frugality, without being able to soften their present lot—all the comfort they have, which the labourer does not possess, lies in the hope of increasing their little stock enough to take a larger farm."[1] He had already said that the labourer "does not work near so hard." In the *Political Arithmetic*, on the other hand, we read, "In a great farm there is but one idle person, in a small one there is the same."[2] Assertions like this explain why Karl Marx named him Arthur Polonius Young.

But we have not yet arrived at the first cause of the confusion which has been brought into this question by Young and Arbuthnot. Both of them are guilty of two errors. They count, or rather calculate from a basis of uncertain figures, the number of paid labourers on small and large farms respectively, but they do not count or calculate the unpaid labour done by the wife and children of the small man. We will not stop to notice their assumption that paid and unpaid workers get through the same amount of work. In the second place they mix up two different things, namely increase of labour and increase of population. Under small farming a larger number of people remained on the land, but the increase of population was slower because marriage was put off till economic independence was attained: while under large farming fewer people remained on the land, but the increase of population was accelerated, because the hope of independence vanished. For examples of the confusion of the two conceptions, compare p. 295 of the *Political Arithmetic*, where Young is trying to show in detail that the largest farmers employ most labour. Unconsciously the idea of population substitutes itself in his mind for the idea of employment. He writes:—"The single circumstance of much of

[1] I., p. 112.
[2] P. 293.

the labour of small farms being servants unmarried, and nine-tenths of that of great ones labourers married, makes a great difference." Again, in Vol. IV. of his *Northern Tour*, p. 253, he lays down the proposition that "*Good* culture, in most places, is but another word for *much* labour"; moreover "the great farmers . . . . use a much greater proportion of . . . . extra labour." Then he goes on to state that "In the next place, I should observe that great farmers do not keep near the proportion of servants, maids, and boys that smaller ones do. Their superiority in population lies totally in labourers . . . . Now it is not the employment of single hands that promotes population, but that of men who have families; and this circumstance must operate strongly, in giving so great a superiority to large farms." It is not worth while to waste words in criticising this glorification of the multiplication of a proletarian population, or in praising the healthily slow increase which went with the old small farming system. The point was that the large farm system produced not merely corn and meat for the urban population, but also proletarian children for the factories. Arbuthnot puts in evidence figures which have about as much statistical value as the biblical statements regarding the ages of the patriarchs. He compares the population on one estate when cut up into eight small farms with what it would be when engrossed into one large farm as follows (p. 30):—

	Married Men.	Married Women.	Single Men.	Single Women.	Children.
Eight small farms ..	16	16	16	2	48
One large farm ..	27	27	5	2	81

I think that these examples will suffice to show that Young and Arbuthnot fought the battles of the large farm in a way which can hardly be described as fair. And the same is true, as we have seen, of the campaign against the cottiers, the squatters, and the commons and wastes.

A less prejudiced and better founded estimate of the matter is to be found in the *Farmer's Letters*.[1] There Young distinguishes four classes of arable farms, the first of an average extent of twenty acres, the second of fifty-six acres, the third of a hundred and forty-three acres, and the fourth of more than that. He praises the third most, as producing the greatest quantities and employing the largest numbers. He also attributes considerable merit to the second class. The first he altogether dislikes, as producing least and giving little employment, being unable to make the best use of the soil, keeping too many horses for the area, and having insufficient capital. The fourth he would allow where the land was bad. With pasture farms the case was different. Here small farms were quite permissible, and needed little more

[1] *A Farmer's Letters*, 3rd ed., I., pp. 88 f.

capital than arable farms of the same size. The returns were more secure, the cost of production less, one horse sufficed, and little labour was needed.

But his discussion is by no means exhaustive. For to settle the question of the proper size of holdings, soil, climate, position of markets, methods of cultivation, the kind of product and the economic intelligence of the cultivator all have to be taken into consideration, and Young did not consider them, or did not consider them adequately. Further, he entirely fails to recognize the socio-political importance of the small farm: whereas if our present economic order is to persist, it must be possible for every man of character, industry, intelligence and enterprise to acquire property. If it is not possible, then either the present order will be replaced by a socialistic system, or if that cannot succeed in establishing itself the modern nations will die of old age. Therefore they ought to rejoice to find that the small holding is economically possible in agriculture, and that as regards industry joint-stock companies as well as co-operative societies supply the legal basis on which a workman can acquire a share in the capital of his business, while the wages of labour are rising to a height which makes it possible for the labourer to save.

APPENDIX IV

SOME THEORIES REGARDING THE SOCIAL VALUE OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

It is interesting to note that many expressions of old writers friendly to the labourers have a ring of modern socialism about them, as though their authors had known the labour theory of value. Even in the sixteenth century, at the time when the lower classes were most oppressed, it was claimed that "the whole welth of the body of the realme riseth out of the labours and workes of the common people."[1] Harrison said that the servants of the yeomen were no "idle servants" like those of the gentlemen, but "such as get both their own part and of their masters' living." In 1649 the author of the brochure *The Poore Man's Advocate* says that "The wealth and strength of all countries are in the poore; for they do all the great and necessary workes, and they make up the maine body and strength of armies." The proposition contained in *Bread for the Poor* (1678) :—"The labours of the Poor are the Mines of the Rich" was repeated almost word for word by John Bellers in his *Proposals for Raising a Colledge of Industry* (1696) :—"The labour of the Poor being the mines of the rich." And again he says: "the rich have no other way of living, but by the labour of others." "Without them (labourers) they cannot be rich." "For, if one had 10,000 acres of land and as many pounds in money, and as many cattle without a labourer, what would the rich man be but a labourer?" Bellers even makes the very doubtful proposition :—"And as labourers make men rich, so the more labourers, there will be the more rich men."

In opposition to the standpoint of Bellers we find the view of Gregory King, which considers labourers, sailors, soldiers, etc., to be that part of the population which diminishes the national wealth, while the upper classes increase it, because the former are dependent on alms, poor-rates and gifts for their support. And the socio-political ideas of Fletcher, as contained in the *Second Discourse on the Affairs of Scotland* are very instructive for such Liberals as imagine the English and Scottish champions of free institutions in the second half of

[1] See Schanz, *Englische Handelspolitik*, I., 470, n. 3.

the seventeenth century to have been enthusiasts for social equality :—" Fletcher of Saltoun, who was a republican for the rich and well-born, but had no interest in the fortunes of the workmen, suggested, as part of the noble edifice of liberty, that the mass of the people should be doomed to hopeless bondage."[1] Mandeville, writing at the beginning of the eighteenth century, occupies a peculiar middle position. He accepts the view of the defenders of the working-class as regards their social and political importance, and therefore concludes that they must be kept in a poverty-stricken condition.[2] *The Angliæ Notitia* says in a similar strain : " The lower members, the feet of the Body politick, are the day labourers " (ed. of 1726, p. 177).

These two opposed views continued to be discussed throughout the eighteenth century, and Marx (*Das Kapital*, p. 265 of the 3rd edition) has already described the course of the controversy. It was now connected with a definite economic theory, by no means favourable to the lower classes, which had been worked out in Charles II.'s time by Sir William Temple, Houghton, and Sir William Petty. Irish and Dutch experience had led them to the conclusion that high corn prices and indirect taxes on necessaries were good for the nation, because they forced labourers to do more work than they would do when necessaries were cheap. This, of course, meant that the labourers were conceived as idle, and as living in the grossest materialism. The theory can be traced right through the century up to Adam Smith ; for example in Hume, in Sir James Steuart, and in France in François Quesnay ; while through the influence of the two latter it is to be found in Arthur Young. Its discussion, as carried on by Postlethwaite and Vanderlint on the one side and the anonymous author of the *Essay in Trade and Commerce*, and the *Considerations on Taxes* on the other, is to be found in the passage of *Das Kapital* just indicated : but I propose to quote here a few other writers on the same subject.

Nathaniel Forster, to whom I have so often referred, is particularly friendly towards the labourers. In his *Enquiry into the Causes of the Present High Price of Provisions* (1767) he disputes in the first place the proposition " that the poor will be industrious only in the degree that they are necessitous," and that therefore they should be highly taxed, controverting it with great warmth, and attributing it to " vices of the heart rather than of the head." He claims that the labourer will work the more, the more hope he has of improving his position, adducing Mirabeau's principle : " j'ai dit que l'industrie est fille de la nécessité, mais de la nécessité

[1] Rogers, *Agriculture and Prices*, V., 662.
[2] Cp. my article on Mandeville in *Schmoller's Jahrbuch*, 1890.

courageuse déterminée et non d'accablement."[1] Then follows:—"I profess myself an advocate for the poor. And I glory in this profession, both as a man and as a citizen. As a man I would give them every enjoyment their situation admits, even though I should lose by it as a citizen. But in this relation, I am confident, I should be infinitely a gainer. *The Poor are the real strength and support of a State. And the greater or less happiness of their condition is perhaps its truest barometer* . . . . 'Honorez les pauvres,' says the humane Marquis de Mirabeau. The truth is that we are apt in general to expect too much from them. We are apt to expect those to be the most faultless who have the fewest lights for their direction." And he cites Helvétius, *de l'Esprit*, II., 38: "La moindre faute que fait le misérable est un prétexte suffisant pour lui refuser tout secours. On veut que les malheureux soient parfaits."

Adam Smith represents on the whole a similar view of the value and importance of the lower classes, but his ethical, political and economic bases are more secure. All goods are created by the labourer, and it is therefore just that he should have a fair share of them. Labourers form the majority of the nation, and "no society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable." And again, "The liberal reward of labour . . . increases the industry of the common people . . . . Where wages are high, accordingly, we shall always find the workmen more active, diligent and expeditious, than where they are low." Goodwill in general includes patriotism, and therefore goodwill towards the poor.[2]

The influence of this theory, which considers the labourer as an individual striving continually to better his position in life, is everywhere evident in the next period. Leaving out foreign writers, e.g. St. Simon, we confine ourselves to England. Howlett's opinion of the ungenerousness of grumbling at the burdensomeness of the poor "from the labour of whose hands and the sweat of whose brows" all wealth is derived, and who have within the past forty years augmented rent by eight or ten millions, and profits in an "infinitely greater" degree, has already been quoted.[3] Davies takes the same view as Smith: "In every nation the welfare and contentment of the lower denominations of people are objects of great importance, and deserving continual attention. For the bulk of every nation consists of such as must earn their daily bread by daily labour. It is to the patient industry of these that the higher ranks

[1] Mirabeau, *L'ami des Hommes*, III., 87.

[2] *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I., Chapter VIII., and *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, Chapter VI.

[3] Howlett, *Insufficiency of the Causes*, p. 75.

are everywhere indebted for most of their enjoyments. It i chiefly on these that every nation depends for its population strength and security. All reasonable persons will therefor acknowledge the equity of ensuring to them at least th necessary means of subsistence. But of all the denomination of people in a state, the labourers in husbandry are by far th most valuable." For they "provide the staff of life for th whole nation," and their wives "rear those hardy broods o children, which, besides supplying the country with the hand it wants, fill up the voids which death is continually making in camps and cities."[1]

And even Arthur Young, whom Marx counts among the opponents of the labourers, says: "Their (the labouring poor's) welfare forms the broad basis of public prosperity it is they that feed, clothe, enrich and fight the battles of al the other ranks of a community; it is their being able to support these various burthens without oppression which constitutes the general felicity; in proportion to their ease is the strength and wealth of nations; public debility will be the certain attendant on their misery."[2]

[1] *The Case of the Labourers in Husbandry*, p. 1.
[2] *A Tour in Ireland*, Part II., p. 18. Cp. also the *Farmer's Letters*, I., 276, 3rd ed.

APPENDIX V

THE REPORTS OF THE MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

A FEW words of preface as to the occasions which gave rise to these Reports may not be out of place here. When in the eighteenth century, in consequence of the agrarian and industrial revolutions, multitudes poured into the narrow confines of the old towns, new requirements arose which could hardly be satisfied under the existing law and the existing system of local government. Local Acts created the necessary outlines of policy concerning building, protection from fire, street cleansing and lighting, drainage and water-supply. When these Local Acts grew to form an unwieldy mass, the Clauses Acts, laying down certain standard regulations, were brought in to stop the perpetual recurrence of the same provisions,[1] in the same way as was done in the case of the Enclosure Acts. After the formation of the central Poor Law authority in 1834 conflict arose between it and the representatives of local self-government. The latter wished to cover the cost of various matters, such as e.g. the repair of a pump, or the expense of a fire-engine, out of the poor-rate, while the central authority objected that such things did not "fall within the limits of lawful expenditure under the new poor law."[2] But this controversy provoked the wider question, "how far was it desirable that matters which tended to increase pauperism, and so raise the rates, should be dealt with in an early stage at the public cost?"[3]

In the winter of 1837 such a violent fever raged at Spitalfields that the return of the cholera was feared. The Poor Law Commissioners sent Drs. Arnold, Smith, and Kay to make an enquiry, and they, in their Report issued in 1838, ascribed the outbreak to insufficient drainage and bad ventilation.[4] The Commissioners next informed Lord John Russell that an Act of Parliament was required to alter this state of affairs. But the Government was not inclined to pass any such Act. Thereupon the Bishop of London brought the question before

[1] Cp. Gneist, *Englisches Verwaltungsrecht*, third ed., 1884, p. 846.

[2] See an article on *Sanitary Progress* in the *Edinburgh Review*, V 173, 1891.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Appendix A, No. 1 to the Poor Law Commissioners' *Fourth Annual Report*, and Appendix C, No. 1 to the *Fifth Annual Report*.

Parliament, and moved for an enquiry as to whether such causes of disease were to be found among the working-classes in other parts of the country. The proposal having received the assent of the Crown, Lord John Russell charged the Poor Law Commissioners with the enquiry, and they reported in 1842.[1] The Report was written by Chadwick, the Secretary to the Commissioners, from information which had been poured in upon them.

We are only concerned with that part of the enquiry which deals with conditions on the land, and naturally the Report only touches on places where fever was known to occur. It is thus mainly a description of housing conditions. And after what I have said on this subject more than once in the course of my description, and what we know of the way in which cottages were pulled down or left to go to ruin, and the way in which they were put up, the revelations of the Report will hardly surprise the reader.

In Dorsetshire the lowest classes were huddled together in old parish poor-houses, which had become superfluous since the erection of the Union Workhouses. Here the inhabitants paid no house-rent. In the cottages of one parish water frequently came through the clay floors, and channels were made to conduct it to the door, while the door was taken off its hinges and put for the button-making children to set their feet on. This, however, was impossible when the cottage stood below the level of the road. In such cases, when it rained, the floor frequently became a mere soaking mass. However, for the better-to-do section of the labourers there were better cottages, with one living and two sleeping rooms. So in Somersetshire. Poor-houses had been turned into "labourers' dwellings," with one common door, and consisting of one room to a family. Dirt and poverty went hand in hand. Close to the labourers' huts wers pigsties, which in the heat of summer gave forth an intolerable stench. But the regularly employed labourer and the married farm-servant fared better. In Bedfordshire the cottages were mostly overcrowded and often damp, badly situated, cold, smoky and "comfortless." In the Toddington district only a minority of houses had sanitary conveniences which could be used; and by almost every dwelling stood a manure-heap, on to which every sort of filth was thrown; whole families not seldom slept together in one room. In a part of the Ampthill Union where fever had broken out, the cottages had been built for election purposes and then left to fall to pieces. In the Epping Union some dwellings were neither water nor wind tight, light shone through the roof, and there was no fire-place in the rooms.

[1] *Report to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State . . . on an inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England*, 1842.

If anyone died of an infectious disease, the body must either remain in the common sleeping-room or be laid out in the living-room. The houses which the Northumbrian hinds received as part of their wages were no better. They were built of stone or rubble, and the masonry was bad and full of chinks, so that a heavy shower would result in pools of water on the floor; and eight, ten, or even twelve persons would live in a hut from twenty-four to sixteen feet high. When in 1840 an enquiry was made in Wiltshire as to the age at death of persons living on the land, it appeared that 119 gentlemen and persons belonging to the liberal professions, with their families, reached an average of fifty years, and 218 farmers and their families that of forty-eight, while 2,061 labourers with their families only reached the age of thirty-three. Illness was found as much in the country as in the towns: neither steady employment, high wages, nor variety and abundance of food secured the labourers from it.

In some counties, however, the greatest landlords had built better dwellings, namely, in Bedford, Stafford, Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincoln.

Between 1840 and 1850 these unsatisfactory conditions led to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry, and of a Royal Commission, to comprehensive legislation, and in 1848 to the foundation of a Board of Health, whose duties were after various vicissitudes divided in 1858 between the Home Secretary and the Privy Council. Sir J. Simon, who had been Medical Officer of the Board of Health, now became Medical Officer to the Privy Council, and in this position he displayed much activity. He published a number of Reports on the sanitary conditions of working-class life, of which the sixth and seventh, published in 1864 and 1865 are of special interest for a general description like the present.[1] We shall take them in the reverse order, as the second of them dealt with housing conditions in the middle of the 'sixties, and therefore follows naturally on our description of those of 1842. The reader will not find much that is new, although it is with new points that we shall chiefly concern ourselves; but the old facts

[1] *The Papers relating to the Sanitary State of the People of England*, written by Dr. Greenhow, with an introduction by Simon, and published by the Board of Health in 1858, are very instructive, but are intended rather for the medical profession than for the general reader.

The *Third Report* (1861) gives in its last section, pp. 176 f., some information as to the domestic industries of the south of England. It corroborates the view that they were injurious to health, but does not give material for any adequate comparison with purely agricultural districts. The writer states that the stooping position of the lace-makers, the sedentary life of the glove-sewers, and the badly-aired and over-crowded rooms in which the straw-plaiters worked, all produced diseases of the lungs.

The Reports of the Select Committee and Royal Commission mentioned above contain nothing of interest for our purposes.

were now submitted to a more exact enquiry than ever before ; and moreover this enquiry included the whole of England. It is also to be noted that the *Sixth Report* appeared before the report on the gang system which has already been discussed, and contributed not a little to the institution of that enquiry. The study of housing conditions contained in the *Seventh Report* was suggested by the results of the census of 1861.

Dr. Hunter, who conducted the enquiry, gives its essential results in two tables. In 821 country parishes the number of inhabitants had increased between 1851 and 1861 from 305,567 to 322,064, while the number of houses had fallen from 69,225 to 66,109. At the earlier date there were on an average 4·41 persons to a house, now there were 4·87. In the 5,375 typical cottages taken for the purpose of the enquiry, there were 8,805 bedrooms, which had to serve for 13,432 adults (i.e. persons over thirteen) and 11,338 children ; that is to say, an average of from two to three persons per room. Only 250 of the cottages had more than two bedrooms. As to the air-space in the sleeping-rooms, the law required 240 cubic feet per person in common lodging-houses, the Poor Law authorities required 500, and the Board of Health put the necessary amount as high as 800 cubic feet : but in the ordinary labourer's dwelling there were only 156. The roofs were often warped, the houses were badly aired, the floors were often rotten or full of holes, the rooms had no windows, or perhaps glass was stuck into a mere opening in the wall. On the other hand here and there were to be found "model dwellings," erected by generous but indiscreet landlords, which neither did nor could pay, and which in consequence frightened others from cottage-building. As to the causes of these unsatisfactory conditions, the chief of all was the Poor Law, which created all over England the contrasting open and close villages. The close villages were show places, where dwelt the squire's retainers—shepherds, gardeners and keepers. A few miles away lay the open village, with miserable huts, neglected cabbage-gardens, and inhabitants who sought work for miles round : which was left at once by anyone with sufficient means, and was a sort of penal colony for men of bad character from the whole neighbourhood. And the labourer dared not migrate to some place where he might hope to obtain better wages, because he was so poor that he was afraid of being imprisoned as a vagabond, or because he had some vague anxiety lest he might lose his right to relief and would end his life among strangers.

The open villages often owed their origin to squatters, and also in earlier times many little cottages had been built by the parish, or from the income of charitable institutions, for the benefit of the poor. Others again were put up by speculators. These were in the possession of shopkeepers or beer-

house keepers, and were often highly rented, while the labourer had to be satisfied with having found a house on any terms, and the tradesman who let it to him expected his regular custom, in return for doing him that favour. Nor was he in any better position when the cottages were let to the farmer with the farm. "Use my house," his employer told him, "or go seek a living elsewhere, without a character from me." And so a poor man with a wage of ten shillings a week had to make up his mind to pay £4 or £5 a year for a house that was not worth £20 altogether. If he wanted to improve his position, he was again met by his employer with the alternative: "Work for me at this low rate of wages, or begone at a week's notice; take your pig with you, and get what you can for the potatoes growing in your garden." Under these conditions it is obvious that there was not likely to be much speculation in cottage-building.

We have not the space to dwell longer on these points. Since that time the English people have never lost sight of the facts, and the great enquiry of 1867 paid every attention to them. But no result of sufficient importance to claim a place in our history has yet appeared.

The *Sixth Report* opens up quite a new sphere of enquiry; it concerns the dietary of the worst-nourished and poorest sections of the labouring class. The calculations were made on the basis of descriptions, by competent persons, of typical households, and among these households were 509 belonging to agricultural labourers. Their housekeeping was on the whole less penurious than that of the silk-weavers, sempstresses, stocking-weavers, etc. And the men were better fed than the women and children, especially when they boarded with their employers either as servants or as day-labourers. In that case an unreasonable proportion of the family income went to maintain the man, and an insufficient share remained for his wife and children.

Dr. Smith, who conducted this enquiry, had at the time of the cotton famine calculated a weekly minimum of food necessary to subsistence, such as appeared sufficient to keep off the diseases bred by starvation. It consisted of 28,000 grains of carbonaceous stuffs, and 120 grains of nitrogenous stuffs. The average weekly consumption of the adult agricultural labourer was 40,673 grains of carbonaceous and 1,594 grains of nitrogenous foods. Above the average for the carbonaceous foods were (given in order as the percentage above the average decreases), Northumberland, Cumberland, Warwick, Suffolk, Durham, Nottingham, Salop, Worcester, Westmoreland, Kent, Gloucester, Lancashire, Sussex and Cambridgeshire. Only in three counties did the average fall below 35,000 grains, and there it was over 31,000: namely in

Somerset, Wilts and Norfolk. One county showed a higher average of nitrogenous foods than 2,000 grains, namely Northumberland with 2,034; and fourteen others stood above the average for the rural labourer (i.e. 1,594 grains), viz. (in order as the percent age decreases), Cumberland and Westmoreland (above 1,900) · Durham (1,862); Gloucester, Herts, Suffolk, Lancashire, Warwick, Worcester and Salop (above 1,700); and Dorset, Sussex, Yorkshire, Beds and Surrey (over 1,600, or with 1,640, 1,631, 1,624, 1,614 and 1,608 grains respectively).[1] In ten counties, however, the average fell not only below the general average, but below the starvation level. These were Berks, where it was a little under 1,200; Rutland, Oxford, Hants, Stafford and Somerset (under 1,300); and Cornwall, Wilts, Cheshire and Essex (under 1,400 grains).

The following table, prepared by Sir J. Simon, serves very well to show how considerably the nutrition of the labourers varied :—

	Carbonaceous.	Nitrogenous.
Northumberland ..	48,648	2,034
Westmoreland ..	42,149	1,908
Warwickshire ..	47,557	1,732
Suffolk	47,064	1,744
Durham	44,589	1,862
Berkshire	37,059	1,193
Oxfordshire	35,651	1,322
Somersetshire ..	33,832	1,290

Counties with a specially low average of nutrition were Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, Berks, Bucks and Norfolk, that is to say those which we have found time after time to be the seats of chronic misery.

Thus so far the Report[2] has only given further evidence for what we already know, and put it into statistical form, while defining certain points more closely. But a comparison between the four parts of the United Kingdom gives us the new fact that on an average the Welsh, Scotch and Irish labourers were better fed than the English, and in particular consumed more milk :—

	Carbonaceous Foods.	Nitrogenous Foods.
England ..	40,673 ..	.. 1,594
Wales[3] ..	48,354 ..	.. 2,031
(Wales) ..	(42,144) ..	.. (1,785)
Scotland ..	48,980 ..	.. 2,348
Ireland ..	43,366 ..	.. 2,434
Average for the three kingdoms	45,343	2,101

[1] P. 16, n. 1.

[2] The *Sixth Report* contains variations between Dr. Smith's description as given on pp. 234 f., the Table on p. 294, and the introductory Report of Sir John Simon. I have, however, followed the Table, as Sir J. Simon was professing to do.

[3] These figures are of small value, since the little island of Anglesey

If, however, we compare the agricultural labourers with the lowest section of the industrial population—the silk-weavers, sempstresses, glove-makers, stockingers and shoemakers—there can be no doubt, as we have already seen, that the former were the better nourished :—

	Carbonaceous Foods.	Nitrogenous Foods.
Agricultural labourers	45,343	2,101
Industrial ,,	28,876	1,192
Subsistence minimum	28,600	1,330

Accordingly Dr. Smith comes to the following conclusions. The English agricultural labourers, as distinct from their families, were as a class not badly fed : and life in the farm-house was particularly favourable to good nutrition. But the position of the labourers varied greatly : a fact which is to be attributed to the variety of classes into which they were divided. Things were worst with them in winter, as then their expenses rose (they had to provide more fuel), whereas their income fell considerably. In no county was the standard of feeding so low as in the industrial districts to which the enquiry extended, though in some the nitrogenous foods fell below the subsistence minimum. The labourers were in a very unfavourable position in cases where they had several children under ten years old, where the wife could find no by-employment, the house rent was high, vegetables could not be produced for sale as well as consumption, or where no fairly large town was near enough to allow of the other necessary purchases being made there. Among the requirements set out by Dr. Smith we may note the following :—Sound dwellings at a low rent ; an extension of natural economy such as to allow of a larger quantity of the necessary provisions being produced at home, the supply of milk being specially deficient ; the purchase of other goods in bulk by the landlord, to be retailed at cost price ; weekly payment of wages, so that credit, enhanced prices and the slavery of debt might be avoided ; and education of the women in domestic economy.

brings up the average too high :—

	Carbonaceous.	Nitrogenous.
Anglesey	60,784	2,521
North Wales	45,613	1,765
South Wales	38,675	1,806

It would be better to leave Anglesey out of account : in which case we get the figures given above in brackets.

APPENDIX VI

THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION OF 1867.

I.—The Eastern and South-Eastern Counties.

THE abstract of the Reports here laid before the reader is arranged under five groups of counties, for reasons already explained in the text, the first group being that of the eastern and south-eastern counties. Norfolk, part of Suffolk, Essex and Sussex were one of the spheres assigned to the Rev. J. Fraser. They were mainly corn-producing counties: Essex had some hops and market-gardens, and some straw-plaiting and clothing manufacture: Sussex was still more markedly a hop county, and its woods gave occupation to a good number of persons. But none of these occupations was sufficiently widespread to change the general character of the district: and as I shall discuss the influence of market-gardening and domestic industry in connection with other counties, I am here speaking only of the conditions in the corn-growing districts, though it should be remembered that these were least predominant in Sussex, where, too, there were many small farmers. Sussex excepted, this was also the district of close parishes, casual labour, and the gang system. Mr. Fraser says little of private gangs: possibly the districts he selected were comparatively free from them. The dominant fact over the whole district was the insufficiency of wages, which varied between ten and thirteen shillings per week. Mr. Fraser asks how, if even the most capable labourers were in consequence unable to sacrifice their children's earnings to higher ends, the class below them, and only casually employed, could possibly be expected to do so. Where poverty was greatest he found even children of seven to ten years old in the fields, though as a rule the age for beginning work was later. Thus we see that the conditions of life were not determined simply by the necessities of agriculture. So also with the employment of women; for here again it is noted that in one district they might not be employed at all, the work usually assigned to them being done by men; in another their employment might be rare, while in a third it was common.

In the hop districts of Kent, which is of course the chief seat of hop-cultivation, two-thirds of the surface under that crop being in this county, some farmers would only employ a man

if he undertook that his wife and children should work too, at least during hop-harvest. It will be remembered that the Report of 1843 showed that women and children were extensively employed here. Another characteristic of the hop districts was piece-work. Men as well as women could undertake it, and children often helped their parents. During hop-picking "every child that can walk is wanted; and it is estimated that every one over twelve years of age can earn on the average from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per day for a period of three weeks." Nor was the home population sufficient for the work. At one time Irish labourers had made their appearance at hop-harvest, but since improved methods of cultivation had shortened the picking time, thousands of small London tradespeople, mingled with very doubtful elements, yearly made an economic pilgrimage into the country. The drawbacks to this extra work at given times, with its high wages, were, first, that it caused "many men who obtain these wages in summer to be thrown out of employment in the winter," though at that season there was fairly plentiful work for the older women; and secondly, the irregular attendance at school, which came to an end altogether at ten years old, and sometimes at nine. As soon as the hop-gardens were left behind, the ordinary conditions of agricultural labour appeared, as in the neighbouring counties of Essex and Sussex.

In south Cambridgeshire a man's wages were 10s. to 11s., and in the northern part 12s. to 13s.; a woman's only 10d., and a child's from 4d. to 6d. Private gangs were to be found everywhere, and in the north public gangs too; children of six were employed, and many of seven and eight; and education was very backward. Small farmers were to be found in this county, working four or five to ten acres with the assistance of their children, who were no better off than those of the labourers. Their parents were too poor to hire labour, and so the children's help was valuable. Nevertheless, many poor labourers were ready and willing to sacrifice the additional income obtained by their children's work. Others, however, felt differently, and Portman says that in too many cases there was a silent understanding between farmer and labourer by which the latter was employed all the year round, and in return put the labour of his wife and children at the employer's disposal when required.

Turning south-west from Cambridgeshire, we come to Bedford and Buckinghamshire. Mr. Culley calculated that the cost of labour was higher there by 7s. per acre than in the north of Northumberland. He ascribed this among other things to the fact that in the north the work was done by a class of women workers who were almost equal to the average labourer of the two more southern counties, and that the hind, though

receiving a somewhat higher wage, was in the end a much cheaper article. He reckoned the income of a Northumbrian family at £60 9s. 6d., and that of a labourer in Beds or Bucks at £43 1s. 9d., or an average of 13s. 6d. to 14s. 6d. per week, running in some neighbourhoods up to 15s. and 15s. 6d. if the income from allotments, which were common in those parts, were included. So that if the income of the south-country labourer was to be brought up to the standard of the northerner, a grown-up daughter must be employed in lace-making or straw-plaiting, and there was "the chance of having children employed younger in farm labour than would be the case in the north." But the earnings of domestic industry were uncertain. Mr. Culley came to a conclusion which confirms a point we have noticed before. The income of the northern labourer was very little higher than that of the labourer in Bedford or Buckinghamshire; and yet mentally and physically there was a difference which a wage three or four times as high could not have explained. The chief causes of the superiority of the north countryman were as follows:—First, he needed to join no benefit society; he had his yearly contract, and his wages were paid him as punctually when he was ill as when he was well. Secondly, his earnings and his children's went into the family purse, and were subject to little variation. Thirdly, he was not accustomed to drink beer, unless once a year at the hiring fair; therefore his children got the more milk. It will be remembered that his food, though not what is called tasty, was much more nourishing and more abundant than the southerner's; and his daughters, instead of ruining their health in domestic industries, developed in the fresh air into vigorous, muscular girls. In the south, contracts were usually by the week, but this did not exclude the chance of days with no work and no pay. Sickness and bad weather therefore tended to depress the yearly income, so that it could not be arrived at by multiplying the nominal weekly wage. Many labourers were only casually employed, and had to be supported by the work of their children in domestic industries. Naturally, therefore, the children had to go to work earlier than in the north. Still, children under ten were rarely employed, and there were not many women at work on the land, nor were gangs at all common. Among 501 boys and lads employed in Bedfordshire, 241 were between thirteen and eighteen, 204 between ten and thirteen, 55 between eight and ten, and only 1 under eight. Among 760 in Buckinghamshire, 373 were between thirteen and eighteen, 297 between ten and thirteen, 86 between eight and ten, and 4 under eight. Among 36 girls and women employed on the land in Bedfordshire, 11 were between eight and ten, 10 between ten and thirteen, 4 between thirteen and eighteen, and 13 over eighteen. In Buckinghamshire,

of 145 girls and women, 7 were between ten and thirteen, 8 between thirteen and eighteen, and 13 over eighteen. The reason for this was the competition of two domestic industries, lace-making and straw-plaiting. "Speaking generally, in North Beds and North Bucks all the females are engaged in making lace, in South Beds and the centre of Bucks all the females and not a few boys and men are engaged in plaiting straw."

On the north-east of Bedford and Bucks lies Northamptonshire. In this county Mr. Norman found very few gangs; women did not commonly work in the fields; but instead, many boys were employed as early as eight years of age, and at ten it was the rule for them to be at work. The average wage was only 12s. a week, about 11s. in the south, 13s. 4d. in the north. Women received 8d. to 10d. a day, or in the north 1s. Here too allotments were numerous, and many labourers had gardens besides.

The Hon. E. Stanhope reported on Lincoln, Nottingham and Leicester. The old conditions, of which we have heard already, still ruled in the Wolds. Alongside of an aristocracy of labour resembling the hinds of Northumberland, having yearly contracts and wages up to £40 to £45, paid partly in kind, was a plebeian mass irregularly employed and living from hand to mouth. The children of the first class, unlike those of the Northumbrian hinds, did no work in the fields: but both the women and children of the second class, and the children often from their tenderest years, were employed on the gang-system. The conditions were quite different in north-east Lincolnshire: the Car district and the Isle of Axholme, and also the Fens, had long been populated by small freeholders, who cultivated their own land with the help of their families, and set their children to work very early. From July, when the potatoes were set, up to potato-harvest towards the end of November, we are told that almost the whole population of women and children were occupied in the fields. In other parts of Lincolnshire, and in parts of Nottinghamshire, where turnips were largely grown, boys of nine to twelve were employed, chiefly in the winter. In the Fens boys of from seven to eleven and girls of seven to thirteen found work almost the whole summer through in weeding and various other employments. In one half of Nottinghamshire gangs of children went stone-picking practically all the summer and even through part of the winter: and in the other half, where the ground was heavy, they began sometimes at eight years old to lead the plough-horses. In Leicestershire, where wages were only from 11s. to 13s., and the labourer's standard of life was very low, boys of from nine to twelve were "taken permanently on the farm for ploughing, and younger boys are occasionally wanted for 'tending birds.'"

In Oxfordshire and Berkshire Mr. Culley found that the weekly wages of better-class labourers were from 13s. 6d. to 14s. 6d.,

and those of the lower class from 12s. 6d. to 13s. 6d. Young men of eighteen or twenty got from 8s. to 11s.; lads of fifteen and upwards 5s. to 10s.; boys of ten or twelve about 3s. to 4s. Under ten few children were employed; if they were employed they got from 1s. to 1s. 6d. Women's wages were ordinarily about 8d. a day; sometimes 1s. Here glove-making and the slop-clothing trade were in competition with agriculture: and it again appeared that the latter was both physically and morally healthier than domestic industry. Gardens and allotments were provided by many landlords, but some parishes had few to show, and those at a high rent. Mr. Culley here as elsewhere expresses the conviction that every labourer ought to have a garden, but that the casually employed would be best transformed into small farmers, who in times of unusual pressure would work for wages, and who could provide the labourers with milk all the year round. Machinery and farming on a large scale had greatly increased in these counties.

Rutland and Hertfordshire need no special mention, as their conditions did not differ from those of the counties adjoining them.

II.—The Northern Counties.

Mr. Henley's Report carries us from the south-east to the extreme north. As in earlier enquiries, Northumberland stands out as a bright spot. Generally speaking, the old organization of labour still stood, hardly shaken by the agitation of ignorant demagogues against this "system of villeinage": and it still showed its old advantages—yearly hirings and payment by the year; no necessity for overtime or piece-work; and good food. The woman-assistant was disappearing. The work she had done in the turnip-fields at certain times was now done by the labourer's daughters, not by his wife, who devoted her time to home-duties. Women's labour was not, however, confined to such work and to work in harvest: women and girls did every sort of work, from lading dung-carts to driving the horses and working in the barns. It did not appear that field-work had much bad effect on morality. The frequency of illegitimate births was ascribed by good authorities to the frequent changes of service, the crowding together in few rooms, and to customs peculiar to the county. Children were only employed in summer, and not below eleven years of age: regular work began at about fourteen; so that they had time to acquire useful knowledge in the schools. Their labour was important to their parents, because they contributed actual money to the predominantly natural economy of the home. Money-wages were not so high in the northern part of the county as they were in the southern part, where the labourer received fully £1 a week; but on the other hand his wife had to work with him, and so neglected her household. Henley

notes, too, that fuel was cheap, so that not only could cooked food be provided, but wet clothes could be dried during the night. No doubt the drawbacks of a system of payment in kind did make themselves felt. The hind received little money; his house was as a rule bad; and when the harvest was poor he was paid in bad corn and bad potatoes. But we do not hear that employers tried to exploit the system in their own interests, and the labourers understood theirs, and concluded their wage-contracts accordingly.

Durham showed conditions similar to those of Northumberland, but here in some parts small farms existed, and farmers' children were put to work earlier than the children of labourers.

The Hon. E. B. Portman takes us into a third north-eastern county, namely Yorkshire. Here wages were high—14s. a week on an average, or 2s. 6d. a day, for the man, 1s. for his wife, and 10d. to 1s. for a child, besides harvest-earnings, and frequent piece-work. The cottages mostly had gardens, and where gardens were wanting there were allotments; and not seldom there was grass land for a cow. The old custom of boarding servants hired by the year in the farm-house was still fairly general; there were no gangs; children were only employed during harvest, and were kept at school.

Mr. Tremenheere reported on Cumberland, Westmoreland, and North Lancashire. The two first retained many of their old characteristics—a preponderance of pasture-farming, small farms and freeholds, extensive employment of servants living in the farmhouse, both male and female, with relatively few day-labourers. Poultry-breeding had been added to pasture-farming; many small farms had disappeared and been united with others; the number of freeholders was steadily decreasing, owing among other things to sale by the heir by reason of indebtedness, but they were still by no means unimportant; two-thirds of the work done was done by farm-servants, including women; but the latter had now to be drawn from a lower class than before, since here again the distaste for field-work was increasing. Servants were hired at half-yearly hiring fairs; they were unmarried, and had abundant and substantial board in their employers' house. The men-servants saved, and married late, so as to be able to acquire a farm; but as the number of farms was diminished and the capital required increased, it became more and more difficult for them to rise to an independent position; and accordingly the number of labourers, though still small, was increasing. However, these customs caused the increase of population to be slow. On the other hand they had incidentally an undesirable result in the high percentage of illegitimate births, which was from 7·5 to 8·5 per cent., as against 5 per cent. for the whole of

England. Such births were universally considered simply as a "misfortune," a view which is obviously explained by the economic position. In every other respect the morality of these people, so far as statistics can show it, was particularly high; and naturally so, since all crime is in great part attributable to undue increase of population.[1] Such labourers as there were received excellent wages, and they also were boarded in the farmhouse. As in Northumberland, the economic position did not admit of gardens or allotments; potato-patches only were to be found. With such a well-to-do people and such a labour system any immoderate employment of women and children was of course excluded; the sons of small freeholders were set to work youngest. But school-attendance by no means corresponded to the favourable conditions. In some parts gangs existed, being accounted for by the smallness, slow increase, and scattered distribution of the population, together with migration to the mining and manufacturing districts; and when Mr. Tremenheere visited these parts, no one knew anything of the existence of a Gangs Act!

North Lancashire showed some similarities to Cumberland and Westmoreland. It was an industrial county, and agriculture was short of hands. Except on pasture farms, where two labourers could work 800 acres, farmers had to depend partly upon their servants, of whom they employed many, mostly of the male sex, but some of them extremely young, and partly on wandering Irish labourers, who slept on the straw in barns and sheds, had wheat bread for their sole substantial nourishment, and took home £10 or £12 at the end of the half-year. "They are most efficient labourers, and a more industrious, honest, cheerful, easily managed and well-conducted class of men is nowhere to be found." Women were hardly employed at all, children were in request as servants, but unknown as day-labourers, and gangs were unheard of. The cottages had as a rule large gardens, and allotments had almost as little economic importance for the Lancashire labourers as for those of the northern counties. As in Cumberland and Westmoreland, the men liked to rest after their day's work, and so preferred tiny field-gardens which required little labour, but where in leisure hours they could smoke their pipes and enjoy a chat with their neighbours.

In Derbyshire the lot of the labourer was determined by three conditions: first, the neighbourhood of manufactures and

[1] "They are singularly exempt from crime. Such serious offences as burglaries and highway robberies are unknown . . . . there was not recorded a single person or house under the respective designations of known thieves or depredators, receivers of stolen goods, prostitutes, suspected persons, houses of receivers of stolen goods, beer-shops of bad character, coffee shops of bad character, houses of ill-fame, and other suspected houses." P. 151.

mines, by which wages were raised and coals were cheapened; secondly, by the prevalence of pasture-farming, which required relatively few day-labourers and cheapened milk; thirdly, by the prevalence of small farming, which employed by preference servants lodged and boarded in the farmhouse. A labourer earned on an average 15s. a week, and found himself comfortably off; the more so as he could hire a relatively large cow-allotment. Servants received £14 and £18 a year, and were in a position to save.

III.—The Western Counties.

Dorsetshire deserves special notice; because there the labourer's lot was particularly bad, and yet a superficial consideration seems to show certain similarities with Northumbrian conditions. In both parts the labourer was hired for a considerable period—for a year in the case of Dorsetshire—and received part of his income in kind, and in both he sold the labour of his family as well as his own. But the circumstances were very different. In Dorsetshire the wage was 8s. with and 9s. without a cottage: and in addition there were privileges, perquisites or allowances for married men. Here and there these "privileges" consisted simply of cider or beer; sometimes the farmer provided a potato-patch, ploughed and manured; sometimes he drew fuel for the labourers, or provided the fuel itself, or wheat, at or under the market-price. But no farmer gave all these privileges together; and the goods supplied were often so bad that even when allowed under market-price they were paid for at their full value. And besides these allowances the farmer made other payments in kind, so that the labourer often got none of his wages in money, or perhaps so little that forty-eight hours after pay-day he had not a shilling left. Then, as the reader will remember, the employer claimed the labour not of one assistant only, but of several, to whom he paid a very low wage: and if grown lads, tired of receiving mere boys' wages, left the place, the employer would give their father notice, on the ground that his family was not large enough to do the work. Moreover, wages were not paid by the year, but (as everywhere in the south) nominally by the week, and really by the day, nothing being paid for days on which the labourer was unemployed, nor in times of illness, in spite of the yearly contract. A man's wages, including additions from all sources, would be from 10s. to 11s.; his grown-up sons often received two or three shillings less; and the women, who were largely occupied on the land, received 6d. or 8d.; but if the larger sum, then the man would often receive less in allowances. The only satisfactory point, in Mr. Stanhope's opinion, was that the labourers usually possessed large gardens, and many in regular work had also a patch of potato-ground, while allot-

ments were numerous. Without these, he says, "the wages would sometimes hardly be sufficient to support life." However, these excellent institutions profited the landlord as well as the labourers:—"A good many are bringing in a profit of £4 an acre to their owners, and cannot, therefore, be described as any favour granted to the peasant." In conclusion it should be mentioned that many Dorsetshire women and girls found employment in the domestic industry of glove-making. Everything contributed to create an overworked population. Children had to work with their father at six years old and even younger. Nowhere else did Mr. Stanhope find such low wages, nor on the other hand such small children at work. "Boys' labour has partly displaced that of men, and on this ground alone some restriction as to the age of continuous employment would be of great value." The greatest difficulties stood in the way of education.

In Devonshire Mr. Portman found privileges, allowances, and low wages, as in Dorset. A courageous clergyman there, Canon Girdlestone, had exposed the unsatisfactory lot of the labourer, and had induced numbers of men to migrate to the north. He described the conditions as follows:—Wages had been 8s., but as a result of his agitation had risen to 9s., and there was an allowance of from three pints to two quarts of cider. Stablemen and shepherds, who had longer hours and were not free on Sundays, received 9s., with house and garden free. Besides this, bad wheat was sometimes given at a price agreed upon—an advantage when the market price was high, but the contrary when it was low. Firing was seldom allowed, except in the form of permission to grub up the roots of old hedges. High rents were demanded for potato-ground. Women got 7d. to 8d. a day, which hardly compensated for the wear and tear of their clothes: many of them would have preferred not to work on the land at all, but some of the farmers would only employ a man on condition that his wife worked too. Mr. Portman found this account substantially correct. The same system of payment extended into Cornwall, but there, in consequence of the competition of mines, slate-quarries and fisheries, wages were higher. The men got 12s. a week, the women 8d. a day. In Hampshire men's wages were 10s. to 11s., and women's 8d. The women were employed there to as great an extent as in Dorsetshire, weeding in the corn-fields, picking stones, spreading manure, and sometimes during winter in the barns. In Devon and Cornwall they were not employed to so great an extent as formerly, and much labour was absorbed by lace-making round Honiton and glove-making in the Torrington district. As a rule, children under ten were seldom at work. In these counties, too, gardens and allotments were very general.

In Shropshire, conditions were particularly deplorable in the south-western parts on the Welsh border. There again the system of allowances flourished as in Dorsetshire: further, the hours of work, which in most places were limited, were there unfixed and no particular payment was made for overtime:—"The usual remuneration for such extra labour is in food, but it is a mere matter of charity, given or not at the pleasure of the employer." Neither wages nor their method of payment were as a rule matter of contract. Married labourers were often boarded in the farmhouses, because their cottages, which were described as "tumble-down and ruinous," lay at a distance: the system had its advantages, here as elsewhere—e.g. in Yorkshire and in Wales—for employer and labourer, but was bad for the labourer's family.

IV.—The Midland Counties.

This district had marked characteristics of its own. It extended, though not continuously, from Herefordshire to Surrey, and included besides these two counties Wilts, Warwick and Worcester. Little room was left in it for ordinary agriculture: Herefordshire and Worcestershire had their apple and pear orchards, and also hop-gardens, Surrey its market-gardens, the districts round Birmingham and Coventry in north Warwickshire and round Kidderminster in north Worcestershire had their celebrated industries, and Bradford and other places in Wilts a decaying manufacture of wool and silk. But the decaying industries of Wilts and Warwickshire, and especially the ribbon-weaving of Coventry, had contributed to increase the number of agricultural labourers. Women's labour was largely employed, except where it had been replaced by machinery: they had not only their ordinary agricultural duties, but work in connection with the vegetable, fruit, and hop-gardens. Their wages were sometimes as low as 6d., but ordinarily from 8d. to 10d., and 1s. in harvest: while in Surrey during hay-harvest they were paid 1s. 6d. a day. Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, the dislike of field-work had increased, and Irish-women were employed in Surrey, as they had been a hundred years before, and also in Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Most of the women workers were married. Boys were employed to a great extent, and at a very early age, and their education suffered in consequence. Wages varied very considerably as between the different parts of the district. They rose from 12s. in western Surrey to 15s. in the neighbourhood of London, from 11s. in South Warwickshire to 13s. in the northern manufacturing districts, from 9s. in west Worcestershire to 12s. in the east, and sometimes, in the Vale of Evesham, to 13s., while in Wiltshire and Herefordshire they were from 9s. to 11s. We must add a regular allowance of cider

in the fruit-districts of Hereford and Worcestershire, and piece-work earnings, especially during harvest, which were estimated at about 1s. to 2s. a week over the whole year. Shepherds and carters, here as elsewhere, received about 2s. a week more than the labourers. Potato-land, free or at a low rent, and free drawing of fuel, were privileges which were not enjoyed by all labourers. In Surrey and in Herefordshire, where almost every cottage had its garden, allotments were less common than in Wilts, Warwick and Worcestershire. Some estates had holdings of from two to three, and sometimes even of from twenty to thirty acres let to labourers; the latter a system as to the success of which different opinions were held; but which even the greatest well-wishers did not think suitable for all labourers. One of them thought that such holdings should only be given to men who had reached a certain age, who could be depended on as a reserve force at times of special pressure of work. Another, in a district where the supply of labour was large, saw their value in the fact that they gave work and food to the irregularly employed at times when they were out of work. Conditions in Gloucestershire hardly differed from those of the neighbouring counties. It, too, had large labourers' holdings. Staffordshire was mainly an industrial district. The labourers usually had gardens, allotments were not uncommon, and some had cow-pastures, an institution which justified its existence here as elsewhere.

V.—Two Pasture Counties in the West of England.

In Cheshire Mr. Stanhope found that almost the whole of the land was under permanent pasture. There were few day-labourers, and almost fewer cottages. Small dairy-farmers were numerous and their only regular labourers were boarded and lodged in the farmhouse, Irish labour being made use of during harvest. Migration to the manufacturing and mining districts went on apace. The labourers' wives were only employed to milk the cows, and in hay-harvest, and the greater part of the woman's work was done by the wives of the small farmers and by maid-servants who received high wages, and who were apparently so scarce that they could have the key of the house one night in every week! Wages were only from 11s. to 12s., and there were but few opportunities of adding to the ordinary income. However, butter-milk was cheap and plentiful, firing was not dear, gardens were common, and though allotments were rare, many labourers possessed pasture for a cow.

Somersetshire was not found by Mr. Boyle to be a particularly fruitful field of research. It was mainly a pasture country, and especially a breeding ground for cattle, the grass being only

second to that of Yorkshire ; and accordingly there was little agricultural employment for women and children. In the south of the county women and girls earned their bread by glove-making. But the wages earned by the men were the main point in determining the employment or non-employment of women. Where, as in the neighbourhood of Bristol, they ere 12s. a week, few women were occupied outside of their own houses : but it was otherwise in the east and south, where wages fell to 8s. There were only two properly agricultural districts, one in the north-west on the borders of Devonshire, and the other in the south, round Somerton : and in both women and children were very largely employed. The Dorsetshire wage-system appeared in the parts bordering on that county, but here apparently with better results.

VI.—Wales.

Figures taken from the *Agricultural Returns* shows how small was the area under cultivation here. Of 4,734,487 acres more than half, viz. 2,503,646 acres, was moor or mountain ; permanent pasture (sheep-walks not included) covered another 1,415,327 acres, so that only 888,117 remained for agriculture, and of these 328,232 were meadow. The demand for labour was further diminished by the existence of numerous small farmers and freeholders, while the occupiers of the sheep-walks were of the shepherd rather than the employing class. None of these needed much hired labour, and so far as they did, they preferred that of farm-servants ; otherwise they worked with the assistance of their families only. The social standing of farmers and labourers was either the same or almost the same, so that servants were boarded and lodged in the house of their employer, and labourers also, when employed, were boarded. In Pembroke and Carmarthen Culley found the organisation of labour described by Davies still in existence.

We should expect from these facts that wages would be very low. But the great wealth of coal in Wales, together with its manufactures, and the railways, with their facilities for the exchange of goods and the migration of population, had in many places created so great a demand for labour that money wages were high as compared with many parts of England. In Carnarvon, Pembroke and Flint they were from 12s. to 14s., in Glamorgan and Brecknock 12s. to 15s., in parts of Monmouth and Radnor 13s. to 14s., in Anglesea 11s. to 12s., in Merioneth 12s. to 15s., in Montgomeryshire 15s. to 18s. in summer, and 12s. to 14s. in winter. The most unsatisfactory conditions were in the inland counties. There large numbers of children were employed at an early age ; but they were not all the children of labourers. Very many of the small farmers and freeholders liked to see their children in service as soon as possible. It

was not uncommon for boys of ten years old to work as servants on a farm for eight months in the year, receiving 6d. and their board, which was much better than they would have got at home. Many well-to-do labourers were entirely indifferent to their children's education ; they sent them to school irregularly or not at all. One good result of the high wages was that the employment of women as day-labourers was on the decrease, though in some parts, where middle-sized farms worked by farm-servants were common, much field-work was done by women.[1] Gangs existed here and there, but they were rare.

The wage-system as to the day-labourers was as a rule that which we have seen in Dorsetshire and the neighbouring counties. And as potato-grounds were among the various privileges and allowances, and good gardens were not uncommon, allotments were not in use to any great extent. Here again Mr. Culley praises the "cow gates," or allotments of pasture, as better than agricultural land, and offering a more suitable sphere of activity to the labourer's wife. Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, Rutland and Derbyshire also possessed these cow-allotments—an institution which reminds us of the proposed reforms of Kent and his friends. Other eighteenth-century problems are also re-discussed in this volume, Welsh conditions offering occasion for such discussion as did now no others but those of Cumberland and Westmoreland. For example, the question was raised whether it would not be well to transform the small farmers into simple labourers, and the same pros and cons were argued as had been argued a hundred years before.

[1] The following table shows that in North Wales servant-labour was decreasing and day-labour increasing :—

	Servants.		Day-labourers.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
1851	9,032	5,928	11,690	170
1861	6,638	2,020	12,499	158

APPENDIX VII

LIST OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED.

COMPILED BY THE TRANSLATOR.

IN the following list the place of publication is named where the British Museum Catalogue shows it as other than London; and in the case of publications later than 1800 the publisher's name is quoted where the same authority gives it. Parliamentary papers are distinguished by the printing of the letters P.P. before their title; and statutes by the printing of the date of the year before, instead of as in all other cases after, their title. The title of statutes are from the Statutes at Large.

The classification is as follows, the authorities named under each head being arranged as far as possible in order of publication; except in the case of section IV., ii., which is arranged alphabetically according to the names of the counties.

I.—THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER GENERALLY.

II.—THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREE LABOUR.

i. General.
ii. The manorial economy.
iii. The break-down of the manor.
  a. The Peasants' Revolt.
  b. The Enclosures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
  c. The decay of villeinage.
iv. Economic policy at the end of the Middle Ages.
  a. General.
  b. The Statutes of Labourers.
  c. Enclosure Acts.
  d. Corn Laws.

III.—THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

i. General.
ii. Economic policy, 1601 to 1750.
  a. General.
  b. Corn Laws.

c. Encouragement of cattle-breeding.
d. Encouragement of the woollen trade.
e. Poor Laws.
f. Private Enclosure Acts before 1710.

IV.—PROLETARIANISATION AND DEMORALISATION.

i. General.
ii. The Agricultural Surveys published by the Board of Agriculture.
iii. The Gang System.
iv. Economic Policy.
a. The General Enclosure Acts, 1756 to 1879.
b. The old Poor Law.
c. Corn Laws of 1756 to 1822.

V.—THE LABOURER FROM 1834 TO THE PRESENT DAY.

i. The movement to re-establish a connection between the labourer and the land.
ii. The labourer, 1834 to 1850.
a. General.
b. The new Poor Law and its effects.
c. The effects of the introduction of Free Trade.
iii. The labourer, 1850 to 1875.
a. General.
b. The Agricultural Unions movement (to 1894).
iv. The labourer and the agricultural depression of 1875–9.
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b. The rural exodus.

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1388. 12 Ric. II. c. 3. No servant shall depart from one hundred to another without a testimonial.

1388. 12 Ric. II. c. 4. The several penalties for giving or taking more wages than is limited by statute.

1388. 12 Ric. II. c. 5. Whosoever serveth in husbandry until twelve years old shall so continue.

1388. 12 Ric. II. c. 6. No servant in husbandry, or labourer, shall wear any sword, buckler or dagger. Unlawful games prohibited.

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1388. 12 Ric. II. c. 8. The rates of labourers' wages shall be assessed and proclaimed by the justices of peace.

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1555. 2 & 3 P. & M. c. 2. The statute 4 Hen. VII. c. 19 confirmed, and a commission to be appointed to enquire concerning offences.

1555. 2 & 3 P. & M. c. 3. An Act for the keeping of milch kine.

1562–3. 5 Eliz. c. 2. For the maintenance and increase of tillage.

1589. 31 Eliz. c. 7. Against erecting and maintaining of cottages.

1593. 35 Eliz. c. 7. Repeals part of 5 Eliz. c. 2 touching keeping in tillage.

1597–8. 39 Eliz. c. 1. Against the decaying of towns and houses of husbandry.

1601. 43 Eliz. c. 9. The statute 39 Eliz. c. 1. Against decaying of towns, continued.

d. Corn Laws.

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1436. 15 Hen. VI. c. 2. Corn being of small price may be carried forth of the realm without licence.

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1685. 1 Jas. II. c. 19. An Additional Act for improvement of tillage.

1689. 1 W. & M. c. 12. For the encouraging the exportation of corn.

c. Encouragement of cattle-breeding.

1666. 18 & 19 C. II. c. 2. Against importing cattle from Ireland and other ports beyond seas.

1667–8. 19 & 20 C. II. 6. 7. An additional Act against the importation of foreign cattle.

1670. 22 C. II. c. 13. For improvement of tillage and the breed of cattle.

1680. 32 C. II. c. 2. For prohibiting the importation of cattle from Ireland.

1691. 3 & 4 W. & M. c. 8. For the encouragement of the breeding and feeding of cattle.

d. Encouragement of the woollen trade.

1647. For prohibiting the export of wool, etc.

1660. 12 C. II. c. 32. For prohibiting the exportation of wool, woolfells, fullers earth, or any kind of scouring earth.

1662. 13 & 14 C. II. c. 18. Against exporting of sheep, wool, woolfells, etc.

1678. 30 C. II. c. 3. For burying in woollen.

1680. 32 C. II. c. 1. An additional Act for burying in woollen.

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iii. The Gang System.

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iv. Economic Policy.

a. The General Enclosure Acts, 1756 to 1879.

(For a complete list of such private Enclosure Acts as included enclosures of common fields, see Appendix B to Dr. Slater's *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields*;

and for a statistical summary, chapter XIII. of the same work ; also Appendix A for a statistical summary of private Enclosure Acts including common pasture and waste only.)

1756. 29 Geo. II. c. 36. An Act for inclosing by the mutual consent of the lords and tenants, part of any common for the purpose of planting and preserving trees, etc.

1758. 31 Geo. II. c. 41. An Act to amend and render more effectual the (29 Geo. II. c. 29).

1773. 13 Geo. III. c. 81. For the better cultivation, improvement and regulation of the common arable fields, wastes, and commons of pastures in this kingdom.

1774–5. 15 Geo. III. c. 32. To repeal the Act of 1589 touching erection of cottages.

1801. 41 Geo. III. c. 109. For consolidating in one Act certain provisions usually inserted in Acts of inclosure.

1821. 1 & 2 Geo. IV. c. 23. To amend the Law respecting the inclosing of open fields, pastures, moors, commons, and Waste Lands in England.

1833. 3 & 4 Will. IV. c. 35. To remedy certain defects as to the recovery of rates and assessments made by (Commissioners of Enclosure).

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1834. 4 & 5 Will. IV. c. 30. To facilitate the exchange of lands lying in common fields.

1840. 3 & 4 Vict. c. 31. To extend the powers and provisions of the several Acts relating to the Inclosure of open and arable fields in England and Wales.

1845. 8 & 9 Vict. c. 118. An Act to facilitate the Inclosure and Improvement of Commons and lands held in common, etc.

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1848. 11 & 12 Vict. c. 99. To further extend (the 8 & 9 Vict. c. 118).

1849. 12 & 13 Vict. c. 83. To further facilitate the Inclosure of Commons and the Improvement of Commons and other lands.

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1852. 15 & 16 Vict. c. 70. To amend and further extend the Acts for the Inclosure, Exchange and Improvement of Land.

1854. 17 & 18 Vict. c. 97. To amend and extend the Acts for the Inclosure, Exchange and Improvement of Land.

1857. 20 & 21 Vict. c. 31. To amend and explain the Inclosure Acts.

1859. 22 & 23 Vict. c. 43. To amend and extend the provisions of the Acts for the Inclosure, Exchange and Improvement of land.

1860. 23 & 24 Vict. c. 93. To amend and further extend the Acts for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales.

1868. 31 & 32 Vict. c. 89. To alter certain provisions in the (Tithe Commutation, Copyhold and Inclosure Acts).

1876. 39 and 40 Vict. c. 56. The Commons Act, 1876.

1878. 41 & 42 Vict. c. 56. The Commons (Expenses) Act, 1878.

1879. 42 & 43 Vict. c. 37. The Commons Act, 1879.

b. The old Poor Law.

P.P. REPORT from the Select Committee appointed to inspect and consider the Returns made by the Overseers of the Poor . . . together with the Abstracts of the said Returns, 1777. Reprints, First Series, Vol. IX., p. 297.

1781–2. 22 Geo. III. c. 83. For the better relief of the Poor (Gilbert's Act).

P.P. AN ABSTRACT of the returns made by the Overseers of the Poor. . . . 1787. Reprints, First Series, Vol. IX., p. 553.

1790. 30 Geo. III. c. 49. For the better relief of the Poor.

1794–5. 35 Geo. III. c. 101. To prevent the Removal of Poor Persons, until they shall become actually chargeable.

1795–6. 36 Geo. III. To amend so much of the (9 Geo. I. c. 7) as prevents the distributing occasional relief to poor persons in their own houses, under certain circumstances or in certain cases.

P.P. ABSTRACT of Answers and Returns under the Act 43 Geo. III., relative to the expense and maintenance of the poor in England. S.P. 1803–4 (175).

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P.P. Documents in the possession of the Poor Law Commissioners with regard to the Labour Rate Bill. S.P. 1833 (619). (Quoted in the text as Extracts from the information as to the Poor Laws).

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NICHOLLS, SIR GEORGE.—A history of the English Poor Law. New ed., King & Son, 1898–9.

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