

A
TOUR
IN
IRELAND :
WITH
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE of that KINGDOM.

MADE IN
The YEARS 1776, 1777, and 1778.

AND
Brought down to the End of 1779.

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SEPTEMBER the 8th, left Drummoland, Sir Lucius rode with me through Clonmelly, to the hill above Bunratty Castle, for a view of the Shannon. Clonmelly is a division of Drumline parish, 900 acres of Corkass land in one lot, which is cheap, at 30s. an acre. I went into some of the pastures, which were stocked with very fine bullocks, at the rate of one to every acre. In this neighbourhood, Mr. Hickman has a close of 20 acres, which, when in his own hands, fattened him 2 cows per acre, and in winter fed him 100 wethers, to the improvement of 6s. each. The profit by the cows was 4l. and by the sheep 1l 10s. per acre : in all 5l. 5s. I had this fact from his own mouth. The richness of these corcasses, which are flat lands on the river side, that have been gained at different times from the salt water, is very great. When in tillage, they sometimes yield extraordinary crops ; 50 stat barrels an acre of bere have been known, sixteen of barley, and from 20 to 24 of oats are common crops. From Clonmelly Hill, the prospect is very noble. There is a view of the Shannon from Limerick to Foynes Island, which is 30 miles, with all its bays, bends, islands, and fertile shores. It is from one to three miles broad, a most noble river, deserving regal navies for its ornament, or what are better, fleets of merchantmen, the chearful signs of far extended commerce, instead of a few miserable fishing-boats, the only canvass that swelled up on the scene : but the want of commerce in her ports is the misfortune, not the fault of Ireland. Thanks for the deficiency to that illiberal spirit of trading jealousy, which has at times actuated and disgraced so many nations. The prospect has a noble outline in the bold mountains of Tipperary, Cork, Limerick, and Kerry. The whole view magnificent.

At the foot of this hill is the castle of Bunratty, a very large edifice, the seat of the O'Brien's, princes of Thomond ; it stands on the bank of a river, which falls into the Shannon near it. About this castle, and that of Rosmanagher, the land is the best in the county of Clare ; it is worth 1l. 13s. an acre, and fats a bullock per acre in summer, besides winter feed.

To Limerick, through a chearful country, on the banks of the river, in a vale surrounded by distant mountains. That city is very finely situated, partly on an island formed by the Shannon. The new part, called Newtown Pery, from Mr. Pery, the speaker, who owns a considerable part of the city, and represents it in parliament, is well built. The houses are new ones, of brick, large and in right lines. There is a communication with the rest of the town by a handsome bridge of three large arches, erected at Mr. Pery's expense. Here are docks, quays, and a custom-house, which is a good building, faces the river, and on the opposite banks is a large quadrangular one, the house of industry. This part of Limerick is very chearful and agreeable, and carries all the marks of a flourishing place.

The exports of this port are beef, pork, butter, hides, and rape-seed. The imports are rum, sugar, timber, tobacco, wines, coals, bark, salt, &c. The customs and excise, about 16 years ago, amounted to 16,000l. at present 32,000l. and rather more four or five years ago.

Salted, last year, 43,700 pigs ; average 1½lb. Horned cattle (of which many were cows) 12,200. The number of bullocks killed here in a year amounts to 13,000 ; increased pretty considerably in twenty years. They have been salting pigs all summer. Pork now 29s. 3d. per cwt. was only 12s. seven years ago. The value of bullocks hides are on an average 35s. Cows 24s. per cwt. Butter exported in casks, from two to three cwt. each, now 44s. a cwt. 6 years ago only 25s. The shipping belonging to the town - but not increased. A good deal of rape seed shipped off for Holland, and one hundred tons of rape cakes to Wells and Lynn in Norfolk, at 40s. a ton. Till this last year at 25s. a ton. Many thousand loads of dung thrown into the Shannon, both in the town and many places along the river. Within five or six years they have taken some away, but not much. Town parks let at 4l. 4s. to 5l. for ten miles every way the rent is 25s. to 30s. Much flour goes to Dublin from this county and Tipperary on the land-carriage bounty. There is a great increase of tillage : thrice the corn grown that there was formerly : There has been much pasturage broken up on this account ; some bullock land, and some sheep land. Great quantities of butter made within a few miles of Limerick. Scarce any spinning here, or in the neighbourhood, either of wool or flax. The poor live upon potatoes and milk, generally speaking, with some oatmeal. They do not all keep cows ; those who do not, buy, and pay 1d. for three quarts of skim milk. The rent of their cabbins and one-fourth of an acre 15s. to 20s. build them themselves. They are in a better situation in most respects than twenty years ago. Pigs are much increased, chiefly or entirely bred by the cottars, and the high price has been of prodigious consequence to them. They are much better clad than they were. Date their increase of this from the open cattle trade to England. Population has much increased within twenty years, and the city also, but was more populous six years ago than at present. Emigrations were known from hence ; two ships went commonly till the war. Between 1740 and 1750, there were only four carriages in and about Limerick, the Bishop's, the Dean's, and one other Clergyman's, and one neighbouring Gentleman's. Four years ago there were above seventy coaches and post-chaises in Limerick, and one mile round it. In Limerick district now 183 four wheeled carriages ; 115 two wheeled ditto.

Price of Provisions.

Wheat, 1s. 1d. a stones.
 Barley and oats, 5d¾, to 6d.
 Scotch coals, 18s. Whitehaven, 20s.
 A boat load of turf, 20 tons, 45s.
 Salmon, three halfpence
 Trout, 2d. very fine, per lb.
 Eels, 2d. a pound
 Rabbits, 8d. a pound
 Teal, 10d, a couple,
 Wild ducks, 2d. to 2s. a couple
 Plover, 6d. a couple.
 Widgeon, rod. ditto.
 Hares, is. each, commonly sold all the year round
 Woodcocks, 20d. to 2s. 2d, a brace
 Oysters, 4d, to 1s. a 100
 Lobsters, 1s. to 1s, 6d, if good.

Land sells at twenty years purchase. Rents were at the highest in 1765, fell since, but in four years have fallen 8s. to 10s. an acre about Limerick. They are at a stand at present, owing to the high price of provisions from pasture. The number of people in Limerick, are computed at 32,000, it is exceeding populous for the size ; the chief street quite crowded ; many sedan chairs in town, and some hackney chaises. Assemblies the year round, in a new assembly-house, built for the purpose ; and plays and conceits common.

Upon the whole, Limerick must be a very gay place, but when the usual number of troops are in town, much more so. To shew the general expenses of living, I was told of a person's keeping a carriage, four horses, three men, three maids, a good table, a wife, three children, and a nurse, and all for 500l. a year.

	1. s. d.	to	1. s. d.
A footman	4 4 0	to	6 6 0
A professed woman cook			6 6 0
A house-maid			3 0 0
A kitchen maid			2 0 0
A butler	10 0 0	to	12 0 0

A barrel of beef or pork, 200 lb. weight. Vessels of 400 tons can come up with spring tides, which rise 14 feet.

Soil, Face of the Country and Climate.

To judge of Ireland by the conversation one sometimes hears in England, it would be supposed that one half of it was covered with bogs, and the other with mountains filled with Irish ready to fly at the sight of a civilized being. There are people who will smile when they hear that in proportion, to the size of the two countries, Ireland is more cultivated than England, having much less waste land of all sorts. Of uncultivated mountains there are no such tracts as are found in our four northern counties, and the North Riding of Yorkshire, with the eastern line of Lancaster, nearly down to the Peak of Derby, which form an extent of above an hundred miles of waste. The most considerable of this sort in Ireland are in Kerry, Galway, and Mayo, and some in Sligo and Donnegal. But all these together will not make the quantity we have in, the four northern counties ; the vallies in the Irish mountains are also more inhabited, I think, than those of England, except where there are mines, and consequently some sort of cultivation creeping up the sides. Natural fertility, acre for acre over the two kingdoms, is certainly in favour of Ireland ; of this I believe there can scarcely be a doubt entertained, when it is considered that some of the more beautiful, and even best cultivated countries in England, owe almost every thing to the capital art and industry of the inhabitants.

The circumstance which strikes me as the greatest singularity of Ireland, is the rockyness of the soil, which should seem, at first sight against that degree of fertility ; but the contrary is the fact. Stone is so general, that I have great reason to believe the whole island is one vast rock of different strata and kinds rising out of the sea. I have rarely heard of any great depths being sunk without meet-ing with it. In general it appears on the surface in every part of the kingdom, the flattest and most fertile parts, as Limerick, Tipperary and Meath, have it at no great depth, almost as much as the more barren ones. May we not recognize in this the hand of bounteous providence, which has given, per-haps, the most stoney soil in Europe to the moistest climate in it ? If as much rain fell upon the clays of England (a soil very rarely met with in Ireland, and never without much done) as falls upon the rocks of her sister island, those lands could not be cultivated. But the rocks here are clothed with verdure ;— those of lime stone with only a thin covering of mold, have the softest and most beautiful turf imaginable.

Of the great advantages resulting from the general plenty of lime stone, and lime-stone gravel, and the nature of the bogs, I shall have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter.

The rockyness of the soil in Ireland is so universal, that it predominates in every sort. One cannot use with propriety, the terms clay, loam, sand, &c. it most be a *stoney* clay, a *stoney* loam, a *gravelly* sand. Clay, especially the yellow, is much talked of in Ireland, but it is for want of proper discrimination. I have once or twice seen almost a pure clay upon the surface, but it is extremely rare. The true yellow clay, is usually found in a thin stratum under the surface mould, and over a rock ; harm, tenacious, stoney, strong loams, difficult to work, are not uncommon ; but they are quite different from English clays.

Friable sandy loams dry, but fertile, are very common, and they form the best soils in the kingdom, for tillage and sheep. Tipperary, and Roscommon, abound particularly in them, The most fertile of all, are the bullock pastures of Limerick, and the banks of the Shannon in Clare, called the *Corcasses*, These are a mellow, putrid, friable loam.

Sand, which is so common in England, and yet more common through Spain, France, Germany, and Poland, quite from Gibraltar to Petersburg, is no where met with in Ireland, except for narrow slips of hillocks, upon the sea coast. Nor did I ever meet with, or hear of a chalky soil.

The bogs of which foreigners have heard so much, are very extensive in Ireland ; that of Allen extends 80 miles, and is computed to contain 300,000 acres. There are others also, very extensive, and smaller ones scattered over the whole kingdom ; but these are not in general more than are wanted for fuel. When I come to speak of the improvement of waste lands, I shall describe them particularly.

Besides the great fertility of the soil, there are other circumstances, which come within my sphere to mention. Few countries can be better watered, by large and beautiful rivers ; and it is remarkable, that by much the finest parts of the kingdom, are on the banks of these rivers. Witness the Suer, Blackwater, the Liffy, the Boyne, the Nore, the Barrow, and part of the Shannon, they wash a scenery that can hardly be exceeded. From the rockyness of the country however, there are few of them that have not obstructions, which are great impediments to inland navigation.

The mountains of Ireland, give to travelling, that interesting variety, which a flat country can never abound with. And at the same time, they are not in such number as to confer the usual character of poverty, which attends them. I was either upon or very near the most considerable in the kingdom. Mangerton, and the Reeks, in Kerry ; the Galties in Corke ; those of Mourne in Down ; Crow Patrick and Nephin in Mayo ; these are the principal in Ireland, and they are of a character, in height and sublimity, which should render them the objects of every traveller's attention.

S O I L A N D C L I M A T E .

Relative to the climate of Ireland, a short residence cannot enable a man to speak much from his own experience ; the observations I have made myself, confirm the idea of its being vastly wetter than England ; from the 20th of June, to the 20th of October, I kept a register, and there were in 122 days, 75 of rain, and very many of them incessant and heavy. I have examined similar registers I kept in England, and can find no year that even approaches to such a moisture as this. But there is the register of an accurate diary published, which compares London and Corke. The result is, that the quantity at the latter place, was double to that of London. See *Smith's Hist. of Corke*.

From the information I received, I have reason to believe, that the rainy season sets in usually about the first of July, and continues very wet till September or October, when there is usually a dry fine season of a month or six weeks. I resided in the county of Corke, &c. from October till March, and found the winter much more soft and mild, than ever I experienced one in England. I was also a whole summer there (1778), and it is fair to mention, that it was as fine a one, as ever I knew in England, though by no means so hot. I think hardly so wet, as very many I have known in England. The tops of the Galty Mountains, exhibited the only snow we saw and as to frosts, they were so light and rare, that I believe myrtles, and yet tenderer plants, would have survived without any covering. But when I say that the winter was not remarkable for being wet, I do not mean that we had a dry atmosphere. The inches of rain which fell, in the winter speak of, would not mark the moisture of the climate. As many inches will fall in a single tropical shower, as in a whole year in England. See *Mitchel's Present State of Great Britain, and North America*. But if the clouds presently disperse, and a bright sun shines, the air may soon be dry. The worst circumstance of the climate of Ireland, is the constant moisture without rain. Wet a piece of leather, and lay it in a room, where there is neither fun nor fire, and it will not in summer even, be dry in a month [1]. I have known gentlemen in Ireland deny their climate being moister than England ;— but if they have eyes let them open them, and see the verdure that cloathes their rocks, and compare it with ours in England where rocky soils are of a ruslet brown however sweet the food for sheep.

Does not their island lye more exposed to the great Atlantic, and does not the west wind blow three-fourths of a year ? If there was another island yet more to the westward, would not the climate of Ireland be improved ? Such persons speak equally against fact, reason, and philosophy. That the moisture of a climate does not depend on the quantity of rain that falls, but on the powers of aerial evaporation, Dr. Dobson has clearly proved. *Phil. Trans.* Vol. lxxvii. part i. p. 244.

Tillage in Ireland is very little understood. In the greatest corn counties, such as Louth, Kildare, Carlow and Kilkenny, where are to be seen many very fine crops of wheat, all is under the old system, exploded by good farmers in England, of sowing wheat upon a fallow, and succeeding it with as many crops of spring corn as the soil will bear. Where they do best by their land, it is only two of barley or oats before the fallow returns again, which is something worse than the open field management in England, of 1. fallow ; 2. wheat ; 3. oats ; to which, while the fields are open and common, the farmers are by cruel necessity tied down. The bounty on the inland carriage of corn to Dublin has in-creased tillage very considerably, but it has no where introduced any other system. And to this ex-treme bad management of adopting the exploded practice of a century ago, instead of turneps and clover, it is owing, that Ireland, with a soil, acre for acre, much better than England, has its products inferior.

But keeping cattle of every sort, is a business so much more adapted to the laziness of the farmer, that it is no wonder the tillage is so bad. It is every where left to the cottars, or to the very poorest of the farmers, who are all utterly unable to make those exertions, upon which alone a vigorous culture of the earth can be founded ; and were it not for potatoes, which necessarily prepare for corn, there would not be half of what we see at present. While it is in such hands, no wonder tillage is reckoned so unprofitable ; profit in all undertakings depends on capital, and is it any wonder that the profit should be small when the capital is nothing at all ? Every man that has one gets into cattle, which will give him an idle, lazy, superintendence, instead of an active attentive one.

That the *system* of tillage has improved very little, much as it has been extended in the last fourteen years, there is great reason to believe, from the very small increase in the import of clover feed, which would have doubled and trebled, had tillage got into the train it ought.

Of the Tenantry of Ireland.

IT has been probably owing to the small value of land in Ireland before, and even through a considerable part of the present century, that landlords became so careless of the interests of posterity, as readily to grant their tenants leases for ever. It might also be partly owing to the unfortunate civil wars, and other intestine divisions, which for so long a space of time kept that unhappy country in a state rather of devastation than improvement. When a castle, or a fortified house, and a family strong enough for a garrison, were essentially necessary to the security of life and property among protestants, no man could occupy land unless he had substance for defence as well as cultivation ; short, or even determinable tenures were not encouragement enough for settling in such a situation of warfare. To increase the force of an estate leases for ever were given of lands, which from their waste state were deemed of little value. The practice once become common, continued long after the motives which originally gave rise to it, and has not yet ceased entirely in any part of the kingdom. Hence, therefore, tenants holding large tracts of land under a lease for ever, and which have been relet to a variety of under-tenants, must in this enquiry be considered as landlords.

The obvious distinction to be applied is, that of the occupying and unoccupying tenantry : in other words, the real farmer, and the middle man. The very idea, as well as the practice, of permitting a tenant to relet at a profit rent, seems confined to the distant and unimproved parts of every empire. In the highly cultivated counties of England the practice has no existence, but there are traces of it in the extremities ; in Scotland it has been very common ; and I am informed that the same observation is partly applicable to France. In proportion as any country becomes improved the practice necessarily wears out.

It is in Ireland a question greatly agitated, whether the system has or has not advantages, which may yet induce a landlord to continue in it. The friends to this mode of letting lands contend, that the extreme poverty of the lower classes renders them such an insecure tenantry, that no gentleman of fortune can depend on the least punctuality in the payment of rent from such people ; and therefore to let a large farm to some intermediate person of substance, at a lower rent, in order that the profit may be his inducement and reward for becoming a collector from the immediate occupiers, and answerable for their punctuality, becomes necessary to any person who will not submit to the drudgery of such a minute attention. Also, that such a man will at least improve a spot around, his own residence, whereas the mere cottar can do nothing. If the intermediate tenant is, or from the accumulation of several farms becomes, a man of property, the same argument is applicable to his reletting to another

intermediate man, giving up a part of his profit to escape that trouble, which induced the landlord to begin this system, and at the same time accounts for the number of tenants, one under another, who have all a profit out of the rent of the occupying farmer. In the variety of conversations on this point, of which I have partook in Ireland, I never heard any other arguments that had the least foundation in the actual state of the country ; for as to ingenious theories, which relate more to what might be, than to what is, little regard should be paid to them.

That a man of substance, whose rent is not only secure, but regularly paid, is in many respects a more eligible tenant than a poor cottar, or little farmer, cannot be disputed, if the landlord looks no farther than those circumstances the question is at an end, for the argument will be allowed to have its full weight even to victory. But there are many other considerations : I was particularly attentive to every class of tenants throughout the kingdom, and shall therefore describe these middle men, from whence their merit may be the more easily decided. Sometimes they are resident on a part of the land, but very often they are not. Dublin, Bath, London, and the country towns of Ireland, contain great numbers of them ; the merit of this class is surely ascertained in a moment ; there cannot be a shadow of a pretence for the intervention of a man, whose single concern with an estate is to deduct a portion from the rent of it. They are however sometimes resident on a part of the land they hire, where it is natural to suppose they would work some improvements ; it is however very rarely the case. I have in different parts of the kingdom seen farms just fallen in after leases of three lives, of the duration of fifty, sixty, and even seventy years, in which the residence of the principal tenant was not to be distinguished from the cottared fields surrounding it. I was at first much surprized at this, but after re-peated observation, I found these men very generally were the masters of packs of wretched hounds, with which they wasted their time and money, and it is a notorious fact, that they are the hardest drinkers in Ireland. Indeed the class of the small country gentlemen, chiefly confiding of these profit renters, seem at present to monopolize that drinking spirit, which was, not many years ago, the dis-grace of the kingdom at large : this I conjecture to be the reason why those who might improve are so very far from doing it ; but there are still greater objections to them.

Living upon the spot, surrounded by their little undertenants, they prove the most oppressive species of tyrant that ever lent assistance to the destruction of a country. They relet the land, at short tenures, to the occupiers of small farms ; and often give no leases at all. Not satisfied with screwing up the rent to the uttermost farthing, they are rapacious and relentless in the collection of it. Many of them have defended themselves in conversation with me, upon the plea of taking their rents, partly in kind, when their undertenants are much distressed : “ What,” say they, “ would the head landlord, sup-pose him a great nobleman, do with a miserable cottar, who, disappointed in the sale of a heifer, a few barrels of corn, or firkins of butter, brings his five instead of his ten guineas ? But we can favour him by taking his commodities at a fair price, and wait for reimbursement until the market rises. Can my lord do that ?” A very common plea, but the most unfortunate that could be used to any one whoever remarked that portion of human nature which takes the garb of an Irish land jobber ! For upon what issue does this remark place the question ? Does it not acknowledge, that calling for their rents, when they cannot be paid in cash, they take the substance of the debtor at the very moment when he can not sell it to another ? Can it be necessary to ask what the price is ? It is at the option of the creditor ; and the miserable culprit meets his oppression, perhaps his ruin in the very action that is trumpeted as a favour to him. It may seem harm to attribute a want of feeling to any class of men ; but let not the reader misapprehend me ; it is the *situation*, not the *man*, that I condemn. An injudicious system places a great number of persons, not of any liberal rank in life, in a state abounding with a variety of opportunities of oppression, every act of which is profitable to themselves. I am afraid it is human nature for men to fail in such posts ; and I appeal to the experience of mankind, in other lines of life, whether it is ever found advantageous to a poor debtor to sell his products, or wares, to his richer creditor, at the moment of demand.

But farther ; the dependence of the occupier on the resident middle man goes to other circumstances, personal service of themselves, their cars and horses, is exacted for leading turf, hay, corn, gravel, &c. insomuch that the poor undertenants often lose their own crops and turf, from being obliged to obey these calls of their superiors. Nay, I have even heard these jobbers gravely assert, that without undertenants to furnish cars and teams at half or two-thirds the common price of the country, they could carry on no improvements at all ; yet taking a merit to themselves for works wrought out of the sweat and ruin of a pack of wretches, assigned to their plunder by the inhumanity of the land-holders.

In a word, the case is reducible to a short compass ; intermediate tenants work no improvements ; if non-resident they cannot, and if resident they *do not* ; but they oppress the occupiers, and render them as incapable as they are themselves unwilling. The kingdom is an aggregate proof of these facts ; for if long leases, at low rents, and profit incomes given, would have improved it, Ireland had long ago been a garden. It remains to enquire, whether the landlord's security is a full recompence for so much mischief.

But here it is proper to observe, that though the intermediate man is generally better security than the little occupier ; yet it is not from thence to be concluded, as I have often heard it, that the latter is beyond all comparison beneath him in this respect : the contrary is often the case ; and I have known the fact, that the landlord, disappointed of his rent, has *drove* (distrained) the undertenants for it at a time when they had actually paid it to the middle man. If the profit rent is spent, as it very generally is in claret and hounds, the notion of good security will prove visionary, as many a landlord in Ireland has found it : several very considerable ones have assured me, that the little occupiers were the *best* pay they had on their estates ; and the intermediate *gentlemen* tenants by much the *worst*.

By the minutes of the journey it appears, that a very considerable part of the kingdom, and the most enlightened landlords in it, have discarded this injurious system, and let their farms to none but the occupying tenantry ; their experience has proved, that, the apprehension of a want of security was merely ideal, finding their rents much better paid than ever. At the last extremity, it is the occupier's stock which is the teal security of the landlord. It is that he distrains, and finds abundantly more valuable than the laced hat, hounds and pistols of the gentleman jobber, from whom he is more likely in such a case to receive a *message*, than a remittance.

And here let me observe, that a defence of intermediate tenants has been founded upon the circum-stance of lessening the remittance of absentee rents ; the profit of the middle man was spent in Ireland ; whereas upon his dismissal the whole is remitted to England. I admit this to be an evil, but it appears to be in no degree proportioned to the mischiefs I have dwelt on. It is always to be remembered, that in the arrangement of landed property, the *produce* is the great object ; the system of letting, which encourages most the occupying tenant, will always be the most advantageous to the community. I think I have proved that the middle man oppresses the cottar, incomparably more than the principal landlord ; to the one he is usually tenant at will, or at least under short terms, but under the other has the most advantageous tenure. This single point, that the person most favoured is in one instance an idle burthen, and in the other the industrious occupier, sufficiently decides the superiority. To look therefore at the rent, after it is paid, is to put the question on a wrong issue ; the payment of that rent, by means of ample products, arising from animated industry, is the only point deserving attention ; and I had rather the whole of it should go to the antipodes, than exact it in a manner that shall cramp that industry, and lessen those produces.

When therefore it is considered, that no advantages to the estate can arise from a non-resident tenant, and that a resident intermediate one improves no more than the poor occupiers who are prevented by his oppressions, that the landlord often gains little or nothing in security from employing them, but that he suffers a prodigious deduction in his rental for mere expectations, which every hour's experience proves to be delusive. When these facts are duly weighed, it is presumed. that the gentlemen in those parts of the kingdom, which yet groans under such a system of absurdity, folly and oppression, will follow the example set by such a variety of intelligent landlords, and be deaf to the deceitful asseverations with which their ears are assailed, to treat the anecdotes retailed of the cottar's poverty, with the contempt they deserve, when coming from the mouth of a jobber ; when these blood-suckers of the poor tenantry boast of their own improvements, to open their eyes and view the ruins which are dignified by such a term, and finally determine, as friends to themselves, to their posterity and their country, TO LET THEIR ESTATES TO NONE BUT THE OCCUPYING TENANTRY.

Having thus described the tenants that ought to be rejected, let me next mention the circumstances of the occupiers. The variety of these is very great in Ireland. In the North, where the linen manufacture has spread, the farms are so small, that ten acres in the occupation of one person is a large one, five or six will be found a good farm, and all the agriculture of the country so entirely subservient to the manufacture, that they no more deserve the name of farmers than the occupier of a mere cabbage garden. In Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, Meath and Waterford, there are to be found the

greatest graziers and cow-keepers perhaps in the world, some who rent and occupy from 3000l. to 10,000l. a year : these of course are men of property, and are the only occupiers in the kingdom, who have any considerable substance. The effects are not so beneficial as might be expected. Rich graziers in England, who have a little tillage, usually manage it well, and are in other respects attentive to various improvements, though it must be confessed not in the same proportion with great arable farmers ; but in Ireland these men are as errant slovens as the most beggarly cottars. The rich lands of Limerick are in respect of fences, drains, buildings, weeds, &c. in as waste a state as the mountains of Kerry ; the fertility of nature is so little seconded, that few tracts yield less pleasure to the spectator. From what I observed, I attributed this to the idleness and dissipation so general in Ireland. These graziers are too apt to attend to their claret as much as their bullocks, live expensively, and being enabled, from the nature of their business, to pass nine-tenths of the year without any exertion of industry, contract such a habit of ease, that works of improvement would be mortifying to their sloth.

In the arable counties of Louth, part of Meath, Kildare, Kilkenny, Carlow, Queen's, and part of King's, and Tipperary, they are much more industrious. It is the nature of tillage, to raise a more regular and animated attention to business ; but the farms are too small, and the tenants too poor, to exhibit any appearances that can strike an English traveller. They have a great deal of corn, and many fine wheat crops ; but being gained at the expence and loss of a fallow, as in the open fields of England, they do not suggest the ideas of profit to the individual, or advantage to the state, which worse crops in a well appointed rotation would do. Their manuring is trivial, their tackle and implements wretched, their teams weak, their profit small, and their living little better than that of the cottars they employ. These circumstances are the necessary result of the smallness of their capitals, which even in these tillage counties do not usually amount to a third of what an English farmer would have to manage the same extent of land. The leases of these men are usually three lives to protestants, and thirty-one years to catholics.

The tenantry in the more unimproved parts, such as Corke, Wicklow, Longford, and all the mountainous counties, where it is part tillage, and part pasturage, are generally in a very backward state. Their capitals are smaller than the class I just mentioned, and among them is chiefly found the practice of many poor cottars hiring large farms in partnership. They make their rents by a little butter, a little wool, a little corn, and a few young cattle and lambs. Their lands at extreme low rents, are the most unimproved, (mountain and bog excepted,) in the kingdom. They have, however, more industry than capital ; and with a very little management, might be brought greatly to improve their husbandry. I think they hold more generally from intermediate tenants than any other set ; one reason why the land they occupy is in so waste a state. In the mountainous tracts, I saw instances of greater industry than in any other part of Ireland. Little occupiers, who can get leases of a mountain side, make exertions in improvement, which, though far enough from being complete, or accurate, yet prove clearly what great effects encouragement would have among them.

In the King's county, and also in some other parts, I saw many tracts of land, not large enough to be relet, which were occupied under leases for ever, very well planted and improved by men of substance and industry.

The poverty, common among the small occupying tenantry, may be pretty well ascertained from their general conduct in hiring a farm. They will manage to take one with a sum surprisingly small ; they provide labour, which in England is so considerable an article, by assigning portions of land to cottars for their potatoe gardens, and keeping one or two cows for each of them. To lessen the live stock necessary, they will, whenever the neighbourhood enables them, take in the cattle at so much per month, or season, of any person that is deficient in pasturage at home, or of any labourers that have no land. Next, they will let out some old lay for grass potatoes to such labourers ; and if they are in a county where corn acres are known, they will do the same with some corn land. If there is any meadow on their farm, they will sell a part of it as the hay grows. By all these means the necessity of a full stock is very much lessened, and by means of living themselves in the very poorest manner, and converting every pig, fowl, and even egg into cash, they will make up their rent, and get by very slow degrees into somewhat better circumstances. Where it is the custom to take in partnership, the difficulties are easier got over, for one man brings a few sheep, another a cow, a third a horse, a fourth a car and some seed potatoes, a fifth a few barrels of corn, and so on, until the farm among them is tolerably stocked, and hands upon it in plenty for the labour.

But it is from the whole evident, that they are uncommon matters of the art of overcoming difficulties by patience and contrivance. Travellers, who take a superficial view of them are apt to think their poverty and wretchedness, viewed in the light of farmers, greater than they are. Perhaps there is an impropriety in considering a man merely as the occupier of such a quantity of land, and that instead of the land, his capital should be the object of contemplation. Give the farmer of twenty acres in England no more capital than his brother in Ireland, and I will venture to say he will be much poorer, for he would be utterly unable to go on at all.

I shall conclude what I have to say upon this subject, with stating, in few words, what I think would prove a very advantageous conduct in landlords towards the poor tenantry of the kingdom, and I shall do this with the greater readiness, as I speak not only as a passing traveller, but from a year's residence among several hundred tenants, whose circumstances and situation I had particular opportunities of observing.

Let me remark, that the power and influence of a resident landlord is so great in Ireland, that what-ever system he adopts be it well or ill imagined, he is much more able to introduce and accomplish it than Englishmen can well have an idea of ; consequently, one may suppose him to determine more authoritatively than a person in a similar situation in this kingdom could do. The first object, is a serried determination never to be departed from, to let his farms only to the immediate occupier of the land, and to avoid deceit not to allow a cottar, herdsman, or steward, to have more than three or four acres on any of his farms. By no means to reject the little occupier of a few acres from being a tenant to himself, rather than annex his land to a larger spot. Having by this previous step, eased these inferior tenantry of the burden of the intermediate man, let him give out, and readily adhere to it, that he shall insist on the regular and punctual payment of his rent, but shall take no personal service what-ever. The meanest occupier to have a lease, and none shorter than twenty-one years, which I am inclined also to believe is long enough for his advantage. There will arise, in spite of his tenderness, a necessity of securing a regular payment of rent : I would advise him to distrain without favour or affection, at a certain period of deficiency. This will appear harsh only upon a superficial consideration. The object is to establish the system, but it will fall before it is on its legs, if founded on a landlord's forgiving arrears, or permitting them to encrease. He need not be apprehensive, since they, who can under disadvantages, pay the *jobber*, can certainly pay the *landlord* himself, when freed from these incumbrances. At all events, let him persist in this firmness, though it be the ruin of a few ; for he must remember, that if he ruins five, he assuredly saves ten : he will, it is true, know the fall of a few, but many with an intermediate tenant might be destroyed without his knowing it. Such a steady regular conduct would infallibly have its effect, in animating all the tenantry of the estate to exert every nerve to be punctual ; whereas favour shewn now and then would make every one, the least inclined to remissness, hope for its exertion towards himself, and every partial good would be attended with a diffusive evil ; exceptions however to be made for very great and unavoidable misfortunes, clearly and undoubtedly proved. This stern administration on the one hand should be accompanied on the other with every species of encouragement to those, who shewed the least disposition to improve ; premiums should be given, rewards adjudged, difficulties smoothed, and notice taken, in the most flattering manner, of those whose conduit merited it. I shall in another part of these papers point out, in detail, the advantageous systems ; it is here only requisite to observe, that whatever novelties a landlord wishes to introduce, he should give seed gratis, and be at a part of the expence, promising to be at the whole loss, if he is well satisfied it is really incurred. From various observations I am convinced, that such a conduct would very rarely prove unsuccessful. The profit to a landlord would be immense ; he would in the course of a lease find his tenantry paying a high rent, with greater ease to themselves, than they before yielded a low one.

A few considerable landlords, many years ago, made the experiment of fixing, at great expence, colonies of palatines on their estates. Some of them I viewed, and made many enquiries. The scheme did not appear to me to answer. They had houses built for them ; plots of land assigned to each at a rent of favour, assisted in stock, and all of them with leases for lives from the head landlord. The poor Irish are very rarely treated in this manner ; and when they are, they work much greater improvements than common among these Germans ; witness Sir William Osborne's mountaineers ! a few beneficial practices were introduced, but never travelled beyond their own farms ; they were viewed with eyes too envious to allow them to be patterns, and it was human nature that it should be so : but encourage a few of your own poor, and if their practices thrive they will spread. I am convinced no country, whatever state it may be in, can be improved by colonies of foreigners, and

whatever foreigner, as a superintendant of any great improvement, asks for colonies of his own countrymen to execute his ideas, manifests a mean genius and but little knowledge of the human heart ; if he has talents he will find tools wherever he finds men, and make the natives of the country the means of encreasing their own happiness. Whatever he does then, will live and take root ; but if effected by foreign hands, it will prove a sickly and short lived exotic ; brilliant perhaps, for a time, in the eyes of the ignorant, but of no solid advantage to the country that employs him.

Of the Labouring Poor.

SUCH is the weight of the lower classes in the great scale of national importance, that a traveller can never give too much attention to every circumstance that concerns them ; their welfare forms the broad basis of public prosperity ; it is they that feed, cloath, enrich, and fight the battles of all 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, as public debility will be the certain attendant on their misery. Convinced that to be ignorant of their state and situation, in different countries, is to be deficient in the first rudiments of political knowledge. I have upon every occasion, made the necessary enquiries, to get the best information circumstances would allow me. What passes daily, and even hourly, before our eyes, we are very apt entirely to overlook ; hence the surprizing inattention of various people to the food, cloathing, possessions and state of the poor, even in their own neighbourhood ; many a question have I put to gentlemen upon these points, which were not answered without having recourse to the next cabbin ; a source of information the more necessary, as I found upon various occasions, that some gentlemen in Ireland are infected with the rage of adopting *systems* as well as those of England : with one party the poor are all starving, with the other they are deemed in a very tolerable situation, and a third, who look with an evil eye on the administration of the British government, are fond of exclaiming at poverty and rags, as proofs of the cruel treatment of Ireland. When truth is likely to be thus warped, a traveller must be very circumspect to *believe*, and very assiduous to see.

Labouring Poor.

Oppression.

Before I conclude this article of the common labouring poor in Ireland, I must observe, that their happiness depends not merely upon the payment of their labour, their cloaths, or their food ; the subordination of the lower classes, degenerating into oppression, is not to be overlooked. The poor in all countries, and under all governments, are both paid and fed, yet is there an infinite difference between them in different ones. This enquiry will by no means turn out so favourable as the preceding articles. It must be very apparent to every traveller, through that country, that the labouring poor are treated with harshness, and are in all respects so little considered, that their want of importance seems a perfect contrast to their situation in England, of which country, comparatively speaking, they reign the sovereigns. The age has improved much in humanity, that even the poor Irish have experienced its influence, and are every day treated better and better ; but still the remnant of the old manners, the abominable distinction of religion, united with the oppressive conduct of the little country gentlemen, or rather vermin of the kingdom, who never were out of it, altogether bear still very heavy on the poor people, and subject them to situations more mortifying than we ever behold in England. The landlord of an Irish estate, inhabited by Roman catholics, is a sort of despot who yields obedience in whatever concerns the poor, to no law but that of his will. To discover what the liberty of a people is, we must live among them, and not look for it in the statutes of the realm : the language of written law may be that of liberty, but the situation of the poor may speak no language but that of slavery ; there is too much of this contradiction in Ireland ; a long series of oppressions, aided by many very ill judged laws, have brought landlords into a habit of exerting a very lofty superiority, and their vassals into that of an almost unlimited submission : speaking a language that is despised, professing a religion that is abhorred, and being disarmed, the poor find themselves in many cases slaves even in the bosom of *written* liberty. Landlords that have resided much abroad, are usually humane in their ideas, but the habit of tyranny naturally contracts the mind, so that even in this polished age, there are instances of a severe carriage towards the poor, which is quite unknown in England.

A landlord in Ireland can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer, or cottar dares to refuse to execute. Nothing Satisfies him but an unlimited submission. Disrespect or any thing tending

towards sauciness he may punish with his cane or his horsewhip with the most perfect security, a poor man would have his bones broke if he offered to lift his hand in his own defence. Knocking down is spoken of in the country in a manner that makes an English man stare. Landlords of consequence have assured me that many of their cottars would think themselves honoured by having their wives and daughters sent for to the bed of their master ; a mark of slavery that proves the oppression under which such people must live. Nay, I have heard anecdotes of the lives of people being made free with without any apprehension of the justice of a jury. But let it not be imagined that this is common ; formerly it happened every day, but law gains ground. It must strike the most careless traveller to see whole firings of cars whipt into a ditch by a gentleman's footman to make way for his carriage ; if they are overturned or broken in pieces, no matter, it is taken in patience, were they to complain they would perhaps be horse-whipped. The execution of the laws lies very much in the hands of justices of the peace, many of whom are drawn from the most illiberal class in the kingdom. If a poor man ledges a complaint against a gentleman, or any animal that chuses to call itself a gentleman, and the justice issues out a summons for his appearance, it is a fixed affront, and he will infallibly be *called out*. Where MANNERS are in conspiracy against LAW, to whom are the oppressed people to have recourse ? It is a fact that a poor man having a contest with a gentleman must—but I am talking non-sense, they know their situation too well to think of it ; they can have no defence but by means of protection from one gentleman against another, who probably protects his vassal as he would the sheep he intends to eat.

The colours of this picture are not charged. To assert that all these cases are common, would be an exaggeration, but to say that an unfeeling landlord will do all this with impunity is to keep strictly to truth : and what is liberty but a farce, and a jest if its blessings are received as the favour of kindness and humanity, instead of being the inheritance of RIGHT ?

Consequences have showed from these oppressions which ought long ago to have put a stop to them. In England we have heard much of whiteboys, steelboys, oakboys, peep-of-day-boys, &c. But these various insurgents are not to be confounded, for they are very different. The proper distinction in the discontents of the people is into protestant and catholic. All but the whiteboys were among the manufacturing protestants in the north. The whiteboys catholic labourers in the south : from the best intelligence I could gain, the riots of the manufacturers had no other foundation, but such variations in the manufacture as all fabrics experience, and which they had themselves known and submitted to be-fore. The case, however, was different with the whiteboys ; who being labouring catholics met with all thole oppressions I have described, and would probably have continued in full submission had not very severe treatment in respect of tythes united with a great speculative rise of rents about the same time, blown up the flame of resistance ; the atrocious acts they were guilty of made them the object of general indignation, acts were passed for their punishment, which seemed calculated for the meridian of Barbary ; this arose to such a height, that by one they were to be hanged under certain circum-stances without the common formalities of a trial, which though repealed the following sessions marks the spirit of punishment ; while others remain yet the law of the land, that would if executed tend more to raise than quell an insurrection. From all which it is manifest that the gentlemen of Ireland never thought of a radical cure from overlooking the real cause of the disease, which in fact lay in themselves, and not in the wretches they doomed to the gallows. Let them change their own conduct intirely, and the poor will not long riot. Treat them like men who ought to be as free as your-selves : put an end to that system of religious persecution which for seventy years has divided the kingdom against itself ; in these two circumstances lies the cure of indirection, perform them com-pletely, and you will have an affectionate poor, instead of oppressed and discontented vassals.

A better treatment of the poor in Ireland is a very material point to the welfare of the whole British empire. Events may happen which may convince us fatally of this truth.—If not, oppression must have broken all the spirit and resentment of men. By what policy the government of England can for so many years have permitted such an absurd system to be matured in Ireland, is beyond the power of plain sense to discover.

Emigration

Before the American war broke, the Irish and Scotch emigrations were a constant subject of conversation in England, and occasioned much discourse even in parliament. The common observation

was, that if they were not stopped, those countries would be ruined, and they were generally attributed to a great rise of rents. Upon going over to Ireland I determined to omit no opportunities of discover-ing the cause and extent of this emigration, and my information, as may be seen in the minutes of the journey, was very regular. I have only a few general remarks to make on it here.

The spirit of emigrating in Ireland appeared to be confined to two circumstances, the presbyterian religion, and the linen manufacture. I heard of very few emigrants except among manufacturers of that persuasion. The catholics never went, they seem not only tied to the country but almost to the parish in which their ancestors lived. As to the emigration in the north, it was an error in England to suppose it a novelty which arose with the increase in rents. The contrary was the fact, it had subsisted, perhaps, forty years, insomuch that at the ports of Belfast, Derry, &c. the *passenger trade* as they called it, had long been a regular branch of commerce, which employed several ships, and consisted in carrying people to America. The increasing population of the country made it an increasing trade, but when the linen trade was low, the *passenger trade* was always high. At the time of Lord Donnegall's letting his estate in the North the linen business suffered a temporary decline, which sent great numbers to America, and gave rise to the error that it was occasioned by the increase of his rents : the fact, however, was otherwise, for great numbers of those who went from his lands actually sold those leases for considerable sums, the hardship of which was supposed to have driven them to America. Some emigration, therefore, always existed, and its increase depended on the fluctuations of linen ; but as to the *effect*, there was as much error in the conclusions drawn in England as before in the *cause*.

It is the misfortune of all manufactures worked for a foreign market to be upon an insecure footing, periods of declension will come, and when in consequence of them great numbers of people are out of employment, the best circumstance is their enlisting in the army or navy ; and it is the common result ; but unfortunately the manufacture in Ireland (of which I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter), is not confined as it ought to be to towns, but spreads into all the cabbins of the country. Being half farmers, half manufacturers, they have too much property in cattle, &c. to enlist when idle ; if they convert it into cash it will enable them to pay their passage to America, an alternative always chosen in preference to the military life. The consequence is, that they must live without work till their substance is quite consumed before they will enlist. Men who are in such a situation that from various causes they can not work, and won't enlist, should emigrate, if they stay at home they must remain a burthen upon the community; emigration should not, therefore, be condemned in states so ill governed as to possess many people willing to work, but without employment.

[1] *I have had this happen myself with a pair of wet gloves.*

The myriads of flies also which buz about one's ears, and are ready to go in shoals into one's mouth at every word—and those almost imperceptible flies, called midges, which perfectly devour one in a wood, or near a river, prove the same thing.

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